

South Derbyshire Local Strategic Partnership

Report to the Board

Date of meeting: 12 June 2007

Agenda Item 13

Opportunities for future LSP Forums

Issue

To present to the board, the issues raised in discussion by the Strategic Co-ordination Group (SCG), regarding the future organisation of LSP forums.

Background

The LSP traditionally holds 2 forum meetings per year. These meetings are held to showcase the LSP's activities and achievements and by inviting a wider audience from across the South Derbyshire communities, allow people the opportunity to take part in debates and consultations on important issues.

The forums consist of one meeting being dedicated to the LSP's Annual General Meeting, held in January each year and a second forum meeting in the summer of each year.

The Board has raised a number of issues regarding forum events at their meetings, particularly in terms of the level of attendance by members of the community. The SCG has been asked to examine opportunities for how they, or something similar might be run in the future.

The Opportunities for All working group is co-ordinating an action in the 2006/8 action plan to establish a baseline of awareness in the community of the LSP. Part of this is looking at ways in which the LSP forums or similar initiatives would engage greater numbers of the community. The working group has formed a smaller task panel to pursue this and the issues arising from their discussions are set out below with recommendations.

Details

There are two key factors that are central to this issue: -

1. The current timings of the events and their format, and
2. A lack of awareness of the LSP amongst the local communities.

It was felt that the timing of the January forum does not allow enough time to plan an effective event and it was generally regarded that people are often

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unenthusiastic about forum events immediately after Christmas. Furthermore, the July meetings tend to fall at the start of the summer school holiday.

There was feeling amongst the group that the forum meetings in their current form may 'put off' local people because they do not understand or realise what the LSP is working to achieve. The group believes that a more effective method would be smaller 'roadshow' type activities, that could be set up in localities across the district for example Area Meetings and at events that attract larger audiences such as Liberation Day; Festival of Leisure etc. where awareness of the LSP can be raised and the LSP's achievements demonstrated more practically.

The group also felt that a great deal of the work in terms of preparing and developing the events falls to the District Council. It believes that a more inclusive approach should be afforded to developing them and should involve the Chairs of the working groups and others as necessary. The Strategic Co-ordination Group could be given the 'watching brief' or overview for developing the events, supported by a working panel/task panel to organise and manage the activity required.

The business of the Annual General Meeting, which is part of the January forum meeting, would need to be retained in some form. This meeting is often regarded as very 'administrative' and is where board members are appointed and the annual report is received. The group's thoughts are that this meeting could be run in the same way as an ordinary board meeting and is open to the public to attend.

In the short term, the next LSP forum event is scheduled for 26 July 2007 and as this falls in the school summer holidays it is being proposed that this event be cancelled and focus be given to future opportunities for the events.

The group's recommendations to the board are: -

- Smaller roadshow type activities are considered instead of larger forum events. These could be set up at other events as illustrated above but timed to avoid school holiday periods.
- The LSP's AGM is held as an open board meeting in March/April each year to coincide with the financial year and remains the meeting where the annual report is presented and published, board members are elected and if necessary, Chairs and Vice-Chairs elected.

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- Greater involvement of LSP partners in the preparation and management of activities is encouraged together with an overview from the Strategic Co-ordination Group.
- The Summer 2007 forum, scheduled for 26 July 2007 is cancelled as described above.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Board: -

1. Considers and adopts the recommendations put forward above,
2. Delegates to the Opportunities for All working group, responsibility for implementing these recommendations as part of their wider work on improving communication, consultation and involvement with local people.

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