

Report to: **East Sussex Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC)**

Date: **27th November 2008**

By: **Director of Law and Personnel**

Title of report: **Local Involvement Network (LINK) – update report**

Purpose of report: **To update the Committee on the development of the East Sussex LINK.**

RECOMMENDATIONS

HOSC is recommended:

- 1. To consider and comment on the development of East Sussex LINK.**
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1. Background

1.1 In June 2008 HOSC noted progress to date in developing a Local Involvement Network (LINK) for East Sussex. LINKs replaced the system of Patient and Public Involvement Forums (PPIFs) nationally from 1st April 2008.

1.2 East Sussex County Council has a duty to contract with a 'host organisation' to provide support to the LINK. HOSC agreed to monitor this contracting process and the associated preparations for establishing an East Sussex LINK. In June 2008 HOSC concluded its monitoring of this process as the host, East Sussex Disability Association (ESDA) and the embryonic LINK were successfully in place.

1.3 This paper updates HOSC following a significant milestone in the LINK's development – the election of a core group and agreement of governance arrangements.

2. Development of East Sussex LINK

2.1 It was always anticipated that an initial period of around 6 months would be required for the LINK to put necessary governance arrangements, policies and procedures in place before being fully able to undertake its activities. In addition, the host organisation would need a period of time to appoint staff, establish an office base and develop communication tools like a database and website (this is now available at www.thecountylink.net).

2.2 Since June 2008 the LINK's 'interim core group' of volunteers has continued to work, with the support of ESDA, to develop the necessary policies and governance as a priority, since the LINK could not begin full activities until these were in place. However, in parallel, the LINK has worked on communicating its existence, recruiting new participants, involving existing participants and building relationships with health and social care organisations. LINK activities in relation to health and social care issues during this period have, by necessity, been limited and largely reactive to invitations from health and social care organisations to participate in working groups and committees. The interim core group particularly focussed on maintaining the representation by their predecessor PPIFs on key bodies such as the Boards of NHS organisations and HOSC.

2.3 A further key task for the first six months was to organise an election process to appoint a substantive core group. The core group's roles include agreeing the LINK work programme, policies and activities, thus performing a key decision making role in the LINK's governance. The LINK held a meeting in September 2008, open to all participants, to agree the election process and make-up of the core group.

3. Core group and election process

3.1 LINK participants decided that the core group would be made up of 10 individuals elected by LINK participants, plus six representatives of voluntary and community organisations who would be nominated by Speak Up, the voluntary sector forum for East Sussex. The individual places are structured to ensure representation from across the county – there is one allocated place for an individual from each district/borough area and a further five places for individuals from anywhere in the county. It should be noted that the LINK has decided that commissioners/providers of health and social care services and County, District and Borough Councillors cannot stand for election to the core group, but town/parish councillors may stand.

3.2 In order to ensure both a turnover of membership and continuity, the LINK will elect a third of the core group membership each year (after year one). Core group members can serve a maximum of three terms of three years (i.e. nine years in total). The electorate is made up of anyone who has registered an interest with the LINK.

3.3 Following these agreements the LINK opened nominations for the individual places and received 14 candidates to contest the 10 places. The election was held during October and results announced on 6 November 2008. The core group individual membership is listed at appendix 1. The voluntary sector representatives will be nominated by Speak Up shortly.

3.4 As well as having a substantive core group now in place, the LINK has agreed the required governance arrangements and notified the County Council of its intention to begin substantive projects. One of the new core group's first tasks will be the development of the LINK's work programme to enable the LINK to begin proactive work on health and social care issues of concern to local people as soon as possible.

4. Performance management and monitoring

4.1 A performance framework has been agreed between the County Council and ESDA as the basis for performance monitoring of the host organisation's support to the LINK. This comprises a set of indicators by which the effectiveness of ESDA's support to the LINK can be monitored and evaluated. A number of indicators have also been agreed to help monitor the LINK's activity, although these do not form part of the formal performance management arrangements for ESDA, since the LINK is accountable to its participants and the public, not to the Council or to ESDA.

4.2 The 'LINK Liaison Group', which brings together LINK representatives with voluntary sector, County Council, NHS and Social Care representatives, continues to support the development of the LINK. The group has two main roles – to help the LINK establish relationships with health and social care partners and to provide input into the performance management of the County Council's contract with ESDA. The HOSC Scrutiny Lead Officer is a member of this group. The group will meet quarterly for the next year, then review its role and whether it needs to continue.

5. HOSC's relationship with the East Sussex LINK

5.1 Ongoing HOSC liaison with the LINK will be through the LINK representative on HOSC and the range of other communication methods agreed by the Committee in March 2008.

ANDREW OGDEN
Director of Law and Personnel

Contact officers: Claire Lee: Telephone: 01273 481327

East Sussex Local Involvement Network (LINK)

Core Group Membership

Individuals

1. Eastbourne area representative – Margaret Stanton MBE
2. Hastings area representative – Geoff Thomas
3. Lewes area representative – David Lawrance
4. Rother area representative – Janet Colvert
5. Wealden area representative – Sue Weiner
6. Anthony Moore
7. June Jarrett
8. Raymond Barrett
9. Ivy Elsey
10. Maureen Lawrence

Voluntary and community sector representatives

Six representatives to be nominated by Speak Up.