

Community Influence & Partnership Working in Developing East Lothian's Single Outcome Agreement

The East Lothian Environment Forum (ELEF) steering group, has a diverse range of representatives from public sector organisations, community and voluntary groups, as well as individuals with particular specialisms. Established in 2008, the ELEF steering group has played a key role in progressing the sustainability agenda with Community Planning Partners through the development of East Lothian's Single Outcome Agreement 2009/10.

BACKGROUND

About the East Lothian Environment Forum (ELEF)

The East Lothian Environment Forum (ELEF) was established in 2008 as part of the Administration's manifesto 'Our Contract with the People'. This Forum is integral to the Community Planning Framework and has a steering group, which consists of a diverse mix of representatives from the public sector, volunteer and community groups, as well as interested local individuals with particular specialisms. The ELEF steering group aims to advise the Council and the wider Community Planning Partnership on global and local environmental issues, engage with local communities and assist with co-ordination and networking across local environmental groups.

ELEF was launched in May 2008 through an event, which set out to:

- Vision a sustainable East Lothian in a global context and identifying the key challenges and choices that individuals and institutions have to make.
- Define what the Environment Forum would look like and how it should engage with local communities.

ELEF Involvement in East Lothian's SOA

The steering group has been involved in developing the environment section of the Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) 2009/10, working up the priorities for the county identified at the ELEF launch event, identifying local outcomes and ensuring that sustainable development is an overarching theme throughout the Plan.

The unusual make-up of the group and its influence on the SOA and the Environment Strategy currently under development ensures that exciting, challenging ideas are put forward, highlighting the positive opportunities for service providers and communities alike to address the impact of climate change and at the same time build a more satisfying lifestyle for all.

The key local outcomes that the group directly influenced include:

- East Lothian has well connected communities with increased use of sustainable transport modes
- East Lothian has an attractive and healthy environment, with a rich diversity of wildlife, habitats and distinctive historic built environments, which enhances peoples' lives
- East Lothian will be a less resource intensive, oil dependent county, by reducing its ecological and carbon footprints by 80% by 2050

The group aims to improve upon traditional measurement of progress (i.e GDP), which can only describe fiscal flow. Instead, the focus will be upon better indicators of wealth and worth - measuring what matters, such as social capital, core biodiversity, a healthy productive landscape, supporting local jobs and building resilient local communities.

KEY CONTACTS

Amber Moss
Sustainable Development Officer, ELC
amosse@eastlothian.gov.uk

Veronica Campanile
Community Planning Officer, ELC
vcampanile@eastlothian.gov.uk

E Lothian Community Planning Website
www.eastlothiancommunityplanning.org.uk



LOOKING AHEAD

A regional Environment Strategy is currently being drafted with input from the ELEF steering group. The Strategy will include an Action Plan, which will not only make steps towards the long-term low carbon economy vision for East Lothian in 2050, but encourage and adopt action to bring immediate benefit.

The Forum has hosted free screenings of the climate change film, the *Age of Stupid*, across East Lothian during summer / autumn 2009, to raise awareness of climate change issues. ELEF is planning to show more films with a sustainability theme over the coming year, together with a climate change conference and a biodiversity day.

ELEF is keen to support community initiatives which seek to address climate change and peak oil at the local level. Sustainable Haddington and Sustaining Dunbar are already established, with new groups forming in North Berwick and Musselburgh. The long-term aim is for East Lothian to become a Transition County, ensuring resilience across our towns, villages and all of our communities.

