

Delivery Plan 2004/5

Introductory Statement

This Delivery Plan has been considered by Marsh Forward's Management Team and was duly approved on the 11th March 2004. It is a true and accurate statement of Marsh Forward's proposed activities for the upcoming year. The Delivery Plan for 2004/5 is the first stage in achieving the Partnership's Vision through delivery of the Action Plan.

Purpose of the Partnership

The primary purpose of the Marsh Forward Partnership is to help improve social, economic and environmental conditions on Romney Marsh by achieving the Partnership's Vision, as identified in the Market Town Healthcheck and Action Plan Document.

The Partnership's Vision is made up of the following objectives, which are to make the target area:

- A community that is welcoming and is a place to care about.
- A successful place, making the most of its opportunities and looking towards the future.
- A lively place, full of opportunities for all generations.
- A place that is – and feels – safe and well cared for.
- A place where there it is easy for all to get around; with good transport links outside the area.
- An attractive place to do business, with a vibrant economy.

Target Area & Issues

Romney Marsh is located on the coast in the South-East corner of Kent, within the Shepway District Council boundary. The area is bordered by several large towns - Ashford to the north, Folkestone to the East and Hastings to the West. The Romney, Walland and Denge Marshes comprise almost 100 sq. miles of a distinctive rural landscape.

The target population of the area is approximately 21,000 Romney Marsh residents, with a high proportion of pensionable age. The area contains several towns – New Romney, Lydd, and Dymchurch - and a small number of villages. The whole area is defined as New Romney & Littlestone with the Marsh wards of Lydd, Dymchurch and Burmarsh, St. Mary in the Marsh and Marsh.

The area is important for tourism, attracting visitors to: its world-famous light railway, several medieval churches, good beaches, holiday camps, areas of wildlife significance etc.

The main issues identified are:

- Economic Deprivation
- Poor access to and loss of key services
- Pressure and issues relating to the elderly and the young
- High levels of isolation & social exclusion
- Lack of affordable housing
- Downscaling of the Power Stations at Dungeness and the economic impact
- Economic potential of Lydd Airport and expansion possibilities
- Seasonality and significance of employment – in tourism and agriculture
- Poor transport links

Partnership Structure and Organisation

The Marsh Forward Partnership started its work in September 2002 with the formation of a steering group and was launched officially on the 26th October 2002. During 2003 the Healthcheck was carried out under the guidance of the Countryside Agency. This involved the completion of worksheets, public consultation, focus group meetings, analysis of the feedback and the publication of an agreed Action Plan. The Action Plan consists of sixty-nine projects which contribute towards the realisation of the Partnership's vision (See Appendices – Schedule 1 Project Listing).

A Project Coordinator was recruited in October 2003 to facilitate the delivery of the Action Plan. The Project Coordinator's key role is to act as a link between the Management Team and the individual work groups, which are undertaking the individual projects.

The main purposes of the Project Coordinator's post are:

- To work with and develop Marsh Forward – working with all interested parties/stakeholders.
- To start, manage and develop projects identified during the Healthcheck process.
- Ensure all projects are planned, implemented and reviewed by appropriate project leaders.
- Work with and enthuse all members of the community to take ownership of Marsh Forward, thus empowering them to take control of their community's future.
- To maximise the up-take of funding opportunities on Romney Marsh

In order to allow the Partnership to function effectively and to begin delivering the Action Plan, certain short-term decision-making, reporting and management procedures have been put in place. These procedures will be followed whilst the Partnership develops its constitution and works towards its legal status and its subsequent formal structures and procedures.

1. Management

The Steering Group now operates as a Management Team, meeting monthly to undertake strategic management of the Partnership, to oversee the activities of the Project Coordinator and to make decisions on policy matters. Members of the Management Team are also members of the project groups, which are delivering specific projects.

2. Financial Management

Shepway District Council has agreed to be the Accountable Body for the Partnership, whilst the Partnership seeks its own legal status, which it aims to achieve in the first quarter of the 2004/5 financial year. The Project Coordinator who is currently employed by Shepway District Council is responsible for the management of budgets and other Partnership resources.

3. Project Groups

A shortlist of new projects has been taken from the Action Plan, which the Partnership is responsible for leading and/or initiating. In order to deliver the projects individual Project Groups are being established by the Partnership and are made up of various community groups & individuals, specialist external agencies, Management Team members and the Project Coordinator.

Each Project Group will establish their own structure and procedures, identifying a Project Manager, Secretary and Treasurer, who will work closely with the Partnership's Project Coordinator to coordinate, monitor and run the project.

Each Project Group will create a Business Plan which will address: objectives, issues, risk analysis, procedures, budgets, outputs etc. Project Funding will be sought by Marsh Forward for each Project Group, with costs and funding needs being identified at Project Group Level and overseen by the Project Coordinator and the Management Team.

Partnership Monitoring, Review and Evaluation

Daily project and programme management will be carried out by the Project Coordinator, who will record all progress and will report on progress at the monthly Management Team Meetings.

In addition, Management Team Meetings will include quarterly work plan and output reviews to ensure that the Delivery Plan is being achieved and hence that the Action Plan is being delivered effectively.

Day to day project progress and monitoring will be reported to the Project Coordinator, who will record all progress for reporting at the Management Team Meetings.

The Action Plan will be evaluated by the use of suitable quantifiable outputs in the Delivery Plan and by an annual report which will be produced in April 2005.

New Project Appraisal System

It is expected that applications will be received from groups seeking the Partnership's support. Only new projects which comply with the Partnership's vision will be considered.

In these instances applicants must complete a Marsh Forward New Project Form, which is then appraised by the Appraisals Team, consisting of: the Project Coordinator, the Accountable Body's Representative and a Management Team Member. If the project receives approval the proposal will be put to the Management Team at the next monthly Management Team Meeting for consideration. The Partnership has yet to establish appraisal criteria, but sustainability will be a high priority.

When a project is approved it will be added to a shortlist of pending projects until a suitably skilled Project Group becomes available – normally following the completion of a previous project.

Public Involvement

Marsh Forward is a community-driven partnership, encouraging community involvement in creation, development, management and implementation of community benefit projects.

One of the objectives of the Partnership's Action Plan is to allow the Romney Marsh community to take ownership of the Action Plan and to take control of the community's future.

The Healthcheck indicated the importance of community consultation in the Partnership's strategy. To ensure that Marsh Forward continues to represent the whole community and addresses all Romney Marsh's issues the Management Team membership is made up of partners from varied backgrounds, in geographical terms and also in terms of interests. This ensures that there is an experienced representative within the Partnership who is able to make informed input into the strategic decision-making process.

Community involvement in the project groups is vitally important. Due to the broad nature of Action Plan the Project Groups will need to be made up of partners with varied skills and from varied backgrounds, including local people. The community can then take ownership of the Marsh Forward projects and develop the means to address the specific needs of the community. In addition, community involvement will increase the Partnership's capacity for the delivery of projects and the uptake of funding opportunities.

Furthermore, as the Partnership develops over time the need for community involvement increases. Firstly, to contribute to the evaluation of the success of the Partnership's Action Plan and secondly to feed into the development of the Action Plan.

To date, increasing community involvement has been incorporated in the Partnership's publicity campaign, with a view to attracting new Management Team members and encouraging involvement in specific projects.

Since October 2003 the Partnership has attracted approximately fifteen new partners to join the Management Team and to contribute to several Action Plan projects.

Partnership Publicity

The publicity campaign will continue to raise awareness in the community regarding the economic and social benefits for Romney Marsh of Marsh Forward's Action Plan.

The publicity campaign is progressing well to date, raising the profile of Marsh Forward, creating Marsh Forward's "brand image", clarifying Marsh Forward's objectives and encouraging community involvement and support.

The ongoing publicity campaign will continue to consist of:

- Press releases to local, regional and national media
- Regular column in the local press
- Local website updates
- Newsletters & Promotional Leaflets
- Networking
- Presentations & Public Meetings
- Information Days – advising updates and plans
- Representation on external strategic bodies
- Exhibitions & Events, eg. New Romney Country Fayre
- Piggyback marketing opportunities – all parties receiving Marsh Forward support are asked to acknowledge assistance.
- Developing good working relationships with Funding Bodies
- Active presence in the community

It is the responsibility of all members of the Marsh Forward Partnership to contribute to the promotional campaign, by maximising networking opportunities, contributing to Marsh Forward promotions & events, making contributions to the local press and contributing to Marsh Forward community activities.

Forward & Exit Strategy

Short-Term

Marsh Forward's immediate forward strategy is:

- To secure funding to cover the £11,400 shortfall in the Partnership's core funding for 2004/5.
- To develop the existing Partnership into an independent regeneration body responsible for its own management and funding.

Medium-Term

The Partnership is committed to securing an effective forward strategy for the Action Plan. Numerous partners, including: County, District, Town and Parish Councils as well as other partners have a vested interest in maintaining the benefits that will accrue year on year from the scheme. Progress will be monitored year on year by producing annual Delivery Plans and annual Reviews.

Long-Term

On completion of the Action Plan certain construction projects will be complete, requiring no further external expenditure - the majority of new projects will be self-sustaining, ie. self-funding, with proactive management and with access to an effective supportive network.

Marsh Forward's ultimate aim to realise the Healthcheck Vision by completing delivery of the Action Plan. Considerable progress will have to be made to achieve this aim. Of the numerous benefits arising from the work of the Partnership the most important will be:

- Making Romney Marsh a culture of community enterprise – community empowerment, a 'can-do' attitude
- Creation of an extensive mutual support network – exchanging ideas & giving support.
- Vibrant thriving community – attracting businesses & visitors to sustain the progress initiated by the Marsh Forward Partnership. Sustained and proactive regeneration.

Exit Strategy

When Marsh Forward reaches this stage the Management Team will need to assess the forward strategy for the Partnership, identify if, within this 'can-do' culture, there is an ongoing need for the Partnership. In this case the options will be to:

1. Terminate the Partnership. Each project to have established a sustainability policy or funding streams.
2. Continue with the current Partnership arrangements seeking funding for projects from a variety of sources as opportunities arise.
3. Develop the Partnership into the implementation arm of Romney Marsh's local strategic partnership.

At the present time, the Partnership's forward strategy is to locate funding streams for core costs to achieve delivery of the Action Plan in accordance with the current Delivery Plan for 2004/5, which has been prepared during the period from December 2003 to February 2004.

Appendices

- Schedule A – Project Listing – projects to be lead on, initiated and supported
- Schedule B – Core Costs & Funding Profile
- Schedule C – 2004/5 Work plan with Key Outcomes
- Schedule D – Potential Outputs