



East Lothian's Community Engagement Strategy 2007-10

Working together, sharing decisions, improving services



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**WORKING
TOGETHER
FOR A BETTER
EAST LOTHIAN**



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Making it work together



East Lothian Learning Partnership

east lothian  community planning



Welcome

Welcome to East Lothian Community Planning Partnership's Community Engagement Strategy – working together, sharing decisions, improving services.

Community engagement is all about communities and service providers working together to improve services.

This strategy is a framework to help us take steps to improve the way we work with people and communities. We want to enable and encourage them to share in making decisions on the services they use or that affect them. In this way our services can truly meet their needs.

This strategy document is for organisations, departments and staff who provide services. It will help us to learn more about community engagement and improve the way we work with different communities.

It is also for Councillors who work with service providers and communities and have influence over the way services are provided.

It is also for community leaders and groups who are interested in influencing the way service providers work and the steps we will take together.

Community engagement is inseparable from community planning and both subjects feature in this strategy.

This strategy was approved by the Community Planning Implementation Group on the 20 June 2007. Revisions were made based on the Equalities Impact Assessment.

February 2008.

Our Priorities

In East Lothian there are many good examples of communities, Councillors and service providers working together to improve their services. Some of this is highlighted further on in the strategy.

We want to build on what we have learned so far. This strategy aims to help us share these experiences and strengthen the ways we work together. We want the ways we work together to be based on: listening, inclusiveness, openness, honesty, dialogue, shared decision-making and sharing information.

We have identified the following priority areas for action to help us achieve this way of working together:

- Strengthen and extend community planning structures and mechanisms
 - **so that people can get involved wherever and however is most appropriate for them and so that they link together at different levels**
- Increase the involvement of all communities, particularly children and young people, disabled people, those from different ethnic groups as well as other under-represented groups, in community planning processes at local level and around subjects that they are interested in
 - **so that their different experiences, needs and views can be taken into account in our services**
- Build the capacity of management, staff, community leaders and groups and individuals in community engagement
 - **so that we have the confidence, skills, knowledge and resources we need to work together as equal partners**

- Increase the coordination of our efforts in community engagement, sharing experiences, knowledge, skills, resources and funds
 - **so that we can support each other, learn from our experiences and celebrate our successes**

The end result we aim for is:

People and communities are fully engaged in determining the way services are provided through community planning processes in their local community or through an interest group.

With people and communities fully engaged in community planning processes:

- * our services can truly meet the needs of the people who use them or are affected by them
- * we can achieve the 6 core priorities set out in East Lothian's community plan
- * everyone involved can get a lot more out of working together – new skills and knowledge, feeling useful and valued in our work and our communities, embracing and celebrating diversity and even make new friends and have fun.

What do we mean by Community Planning and Community Engagement?

Community planning is the way service providers work in partnership with communities to improve how services are planned, coordinated and carried out.

Community engagement is key to the community planning approach.

The community planning approach and community engagement became a statutory obligation for all partners in the 2003 Local Government in Scotland Act.

This Act means that community planning partners have to engage with communities – rather than ask communities to engage with them.

The Scottish Executive introduced the National Standards for Community Engagement (NSCE) in 2005 to help service providers learn new ways of working with people and communities and to help people and communities influence the planning and delivery of services – see a summary of these in Appendix I.

Community engagement is the process of involving communities in the **planning, development and management** of services such as health, education and housing.

It may also involve other issues which concern us all, or it may be about tackling the problems of a neighbourhood or of **a particular group of people**, such as crime, drug misuse, **lack of culturally appropriate services** or lack of play facilities for children.

Community engagement takes many shapes and forms. It can involve simple exercises in consultation, through to the formation of multi-agency partnerships with community representation at the centre.

Underlying effective community engagement is the commitment of service providers and planners to listen to those for whom services are being planned and **based on these views and needs make changes in the services.**

From the Community Engagement 'How to Guide', Communities Scotland

Note: Our own emphasis and additions are highlighted in bold

Community Engagement – Communities at the Heart of Community Planning

East Lothian Community Planning Partnership (ELCPP) is an umbrella group which brings together all the key agencies from the public, voluntary and private sectors, elected members and community networks. ELCPP also includes all public-based partnerships, networks and forums operating in East Lothian. This means that if your organisation is a member of ELCPP or if you participate in a group providing any kind of service to communities, then you are involved in community planning.

These organisations and groups have agreed to work together towards a shared vision and joint community plan. They are working towards delivering the Community Plan 'Working Together for A Better East Lothian' which has 6 core priorities. The Community Plan makes a strong commitment to involving communities and promoting equal opportunities for all in community planning processes.

The Community Planning Implementation Group (CPIG) has responsibility for directing and checking the progress of the community plan and ensuring community planning and community engagement take root throughout East Lothian. CPIG members come from the public and voluntary sectors, elected members and community networks.

East Lothian Community Plan 2007-16

Working Together for a Better East Lothian

Core Principles

1. Increase the supply of Affordable Housing
2. Keep our environment Clean & Green
3. Help build Safer Communities
4. Raise Educational Attainment
5. Encourage Enterprise & Skills
6. Promote Healthy Living and improve Social Care



East Lothian's 2020 Vision

In 2020 East Lothian will have an established reputation as having the highest quality of life in the United Kingdom and the quality of our environment will be recognised as amongst the best in Europe.

Our dynamic and flourishing economy will support strong, sustainable, safe and inclusive communities where the demand for affordable, high standard housing will be met; our world class education service will encourage all our children and young people to achieve their full potential; and, all our citizens will have access to the highest quality public services and a modern integrated transport infrastructure.

In 2020 our citizens will be proud of East Lothian.

Community Planning Implementation Group (CPIG)

- Association of East Lothian Community Councils
- Communities Scotland
- East Lothian Council
- East Lothian Councillors
- East Lothian Community Health Partnership
- East Lothian Learning Partnership
- East Lothian Tenants and Residents Panel
- East Lothian Voluntary Organisations Network
- Lothian and Borders Police
- Lothian and Borders Fire and Rescue Service
- NHS Lothian
- Queen Margaret University
- Scottish Enterprise Edinburgh and Lothian
- Volunteer Development East Lothian

East Lothian's Community Plan makes a strong commitment to engaging with communities:

- Communities are at the heart of community planning
- Promoting equal opportunities for all so that our services are non-discriminatory
- All areas within our partner organisations take forward the National Standards for Community Engagement

Our Priorities for Community Engagement within Community Planning

In East Lothian, there are many examples of people working together to seek changes in services. To do this they are developing new ways of working together around services. You can see examples in the section 'How are communities influencing services so far?' and also in the following 4 priorities areas of action for this strategy:

Priority 1

We need to strengthen and extend community planning structures and mechanisms – so that people can get involved wherever and however is most appropriate for them and so that they link together at different levels.



These are some of the things we have done so far

- The Community Plan 2007-16 has been agreed by the Community Planning Partnership and all partners and coordinating groups are working towards this
- Community Planning was reviewed in 2005 and structures have begun to change to bring in wider representation. For example CFIG was set up in 2006 as the new strategic community planning group with members from community, voluntary and statutory sectors
- Localised community planning has begun. A Local Service Planning Management Group of service providers, elected members and local people has been set up in the Preston-Seton-Gosford ward area and a similar group is being set up in Fa'side building on the Tranent SIP initiative
- We are developing an East Lothian Compact between Voluntary Sector organisations and public service providers to strengthen joint working
- A Voluntary Sector Children and Young People's Forum was set up in 2006 to work with and influence community planning around children's services as well as build the capacity of members
- The Community and Police Partnership (CAPP) 2006 pilot in Musselburgh where local residents, councillors and the police define monthly priorities for the community beat officer to act on is now being extended across East Lothian
- East Lothian Council has signed up to a partnership with the Scottish Youth Parliament. Following this East Lothian Youth Council had a first meeting in April 2007. The Youth Council aims to be a focal point for young people to influence services and a catalyst for dialogue between groups and for developing a youth network around the county.

- East Lothian Council has supported VDEL in its work with the Big Lottery Fund Young People's Panel which involves young people in community planning processes

What we plan to do now

- > Establish joint-working groups who are responsible for developing community planning mechanisms and community engagement throughout East Lothian
- > Map existing community planning mechanisms
- > Extend community planning mechanisms to include each ward area as well as interest groups, ensuring they link together and through strategic levels
- > Establish a Community Planning/Engagement website
- > Produce a Creative Communications Plan for Community Planning/Engagement



The Community and Police Partnership (CAPP) Project

CAPP began as a 6 month pilot in Musselburgh in August 2006 and is being extended throughout East Lothian and beyond. CAPP started with Police Surgeries which enabled local people and the police to get together informally so that people were able to discuss the issues that affected them.

This developed into meetings with residents, the local Councillor, representatives from Council departments and young people from the local secondary school who joined after a couple of months. This group tasks the Community Beat Officer with three priorities on a month to month basis who reports back to the community on progress and new priorities are decided.

Some of the issues that have been dealt with are:

- Drug dealing in specific areas. This led to targeted leafleting and house searches based on residents' reports
- smoking and alcohol among young people. Discussion led to local shopkeepers joining a bottle marking scheme. This showed that sales were often from other neighbourhoods



Recent example of communities and service providers working together to improve services across East Lothian



Priority 2

We need to increase the involvement of all communities, particularly children and young people, disabled people, those from different ethnic groups as well as other under-represented groups, in community planning processes which are relevant to them – so that their different experiences, needs and views can be taken into account in our services

These are some of the things we have done so far

- Community Councils are active across East Lothian. Each one has its own budget and support from East Lothian Council. The Association of East Lothian Community Councils is a member of CPIG
- East Lothian Tenants and Residents Panel is active across East Lothian and has a growing number of local associations. ELTRP has its own budget provided by East Lothian Council. The panel works with Housing and Property Maintenance on the Programme Implementation Board and is a member of CPIG
- East Lothian Community Health Partnership set up the Public-Partnership Forum in February 2007. This forum has two permanent representatives on ELCHP sub-groups
- ELCPP funds the Dialogue Youth Coordinator as a focal point to develop the voice of young people across East Lothian and their involvement in Community Planning
- Children's Services are piloting the online survey system, Viewpoint, to look at how to involve service-users in decision-making processes and the development of services. Viewpoint is designed to elicit the views of young people and their carers. The pilot focuses on four service-user groups
- Joint Planning Groups for community care services for Older People, Carers', People with Learning Disabilities and Physical Disabilities have been set up. The joint planning groups bring together the local authority and health services and service users and their carers
- ELC's Community Learning and Development staff already provide expertise in community engagement and other services and organisations have begun to appoint dedicated community engagement staff, e.g. ELCHP's Patient Involvement worker



- East Lothian statutory partners participate in the Lothian Equalities Network which brings together key agencies. Together they are developing a joined up approach to equalities in community planning and developing local equalities networks. This builds on individual commitments to delivering equal opportunities
- East Lothian has at least 20,000 active volunteers who help to deliver all kinds of services. VDEL is developing volunteering opportunities with all kinds of people across all sectors. East Lothian Council has a Volunteer Policy developed by partners in the Volunteer Policy Group

What we plan to do now

- > Find out more about which subjects communities are most interested in and the best ways for them to become involved and use this information to guide the way we work together
- > Extend capacity building work with communities and individuals to build their confidence and skills so that they can participate in community planning
- > Encourage all organisations large and small to evaluate the way they engage with different communities and develop their own strategies and guidelines to improve the way they do this
- > Partners allocate staff time, resources, training and funds to enable communities to become engaged
- > Develop a Community Planning Partnership Volunteering Strategy for East Lothian and review East Lothian Council's Volunteer Policy to extend volunteering options, recognize the role of volunteers in developing services and strengthen Employer Supported Volunteering
- > Develop the CPP Annual Conference as a key event for building joint working and skills and bringing together service providers and a range of communities

Tranent Football Project

This project began in January 2006. Through streetwork with young people Community Support Officers and Neighbourhood Outreach Workers found out what local young people were interested in doing. They set up weekly football training. This was accompanied by informal education sessions around health and other issues at the Loch Centre. Other agencies and services became involved and a mid-week Youth Drop-in with youth workers was set up in the Loch Centre.

The changes have been:

- New services have been set up based on what the young people want
- Barriers have been broken down between Loch Centre staff and young people and the relationship has improved
- Young people are using the Loch Centre more

Recent example of communities and service providers working together to improve services across East Lothian



Priority 3

We need to build the capacity of management, staff, community leaders and groups and individuals in community engagement so that we have the confidence, skills, knowledge and resources we need to work together as equal partners

These are some of the things we have done so far

- We have carried out awareness raising activities around the National Standards for Community Engagement with community planning partners and local planning groups and communities
- The East Lothian Learning Partnership Community Capacity Building Forum brings together a range of community planning partners who are working on this as well as their particular service
- Community Learning and Development practice groups focus on capacity building for staff, volunteers and community groups e.g. providing a training and support programme and a resource pack for management committees
- East Lothian Tenants and Residents Panel have a capacity building training programme to equip their representatives and members of local groups to work with service providers
- ELC takes account of the varying support needs of volunteers and assures that community partners do likewise, within available resources



What we plan to do now

- > Provide joint training for community planning partners involving training and development departments
- > Include community engagement courses within corporate training programmes
- > Improve the availability of independent development support for community groups to enable them to effectively influence community planning
- > Set up a Community Engagement Resource Bank which any partner can access including locally available resources, expertise and funds and signposting to other areas

Playpark and Ball Court at Macmerry

Macmerry & Gladsmuir Community Council worked in partnership with East Lothian Council Landscape & Countryside, a local Youth Development worker, schools and other groups. The Community Council hired a consultant to ask residents what facilities they wanted. Options were shown at Open Night to which young people of all ages – Primary, Ross High, Mother & Toddlers – were invited. Designs were produced and the children chose the equipment.

The Community Council completed the design and consultation and presented final plans to East Lothian Council who paid for the work to be done. The playpark was finished in March 2007 and the ball court will be ready in June.

This way of working has meant that

- The park is exactly what people wanted and is in non-stop use
- 'Ownership' of the park by children reduces vandalism
- The project was completed quicker and may not have happened otherwise



Recent example of communities and service providers working together to improve services across East Lothian



Priority 4

We need to increase the coordination of our efforts in community engagement, sharing experiences, knowledge, skills, resources and funds - so that we can support each other, learn from our experiences and celebrate our successes

These are some of the things we have done so far

- East Lothian Council has established a Consulting Communities database with details of information-gathering activities across East Lothian. The information is regularly updated and is available on the Council website
- Many newsletters circulate which feature community involvement in developing services and community planning, e.g. ELC's Focus and Homefront, ELLP and ELVON e-bulletins/newsletters, Community Planning News ...
- Directories such as ELVON's East Lothian Directory of Voluntary and Community Services and the East Lothian Learning Network's 'Opportunities East Lothian' are widely distributed and are free of charge
- LivingEastLothian is an online database of community organisations run by the Library Service – see www.livingeastlothian.co.uk
- East Lothian Learning Partnership's on-line learning map of East Lothian and database of learning providers on www.ellp.net
- Volunteer Centre East Lothian is supported in partnership by East Lothian Council in celebrating volunteering and increasing awareness of volunteering.

What we plan to do now

- > Establish a Community Engagement information bank on the Community Planning website.
- > Improve recording of community engagement activities and the use of this information by organisations and groups involved in developing services
- > Make this information easily and publicly accessible e.g. through the forthcoming Community Planning website and promote its use with local organisations and planning groups
- > Champion successful initiatives of volunteers, communities and service providers working together to improve services

Involving Young People in Children's Services

In 2004, five young people in throughcare and aftercare made a video, No Exit, about their experiences. No Exit, which has been shown widely, has been a great success and is now used as a training resource throughout the Council. The group went on to arrange a consultation event for the council with young people affected by disability or illness, which resulted in the Listen Up report, which is now informing Council policy.

After this, Children 1st worked with a group of young people being looked after by the Council to produce information packs for children and young people aged from 13 - 16 coming into council care. Using their own experiences, they pulled together the information that they found useful, wrote it up and designed the pack.

This is the first time that young people anywhere in Scotland have produced information for looked-after young people. Now they are producing a similar pack for 8 to 12 year-olds to be published in summer 2007.

Recent example of communities and service providers working together to improve services across East Lothian





Community Housing Business Change Working Groups/Housing Allocations Policy

These Business Change Working Groups aim to develop new ways of working for major service areas, such as housing allocations, voids and repairs. They bring together service providers, elected members and community organisations.

ELC Housing Allocations Policy is a recent project started in February 2007. Tenants wanted a new fair, open and accountable housing allocation system that could be easily monitored. The Housing Allocations Policy Working Group has included members of ELTRP, ELTRP Development Worker, Community Housing and Property Management staff (frontline, middle and senior management) and elected members throughout the process. ELTRP was involved from the start setting the timescales for each stage of the process jointly with ELC departments and feeding back on progress to members through Open Meetings and newsletters.

Information and feedback mechanisms for the Housing Allocations Policy consultation process have been through a special edition ELC newsletters, website, freephone, 6 roadshows as well as an independent ELTRP Conference.

The new allocations policy went live on 2 July 2007. There has been tenant input to every decision taken along the way. The consultation process has indicated that tenants support the proposed changes and believe the system will be fairer and more accountable.

Recent examples of communities and service providers working together to improve services across East Lothian

Partners in Advocacy

This project was initiated through the East Lothian Learning Disability Joint Planning Group in November 2006. The aim was to provide individual and collective advocacy for people with a learning disability in East Lothian. The Joint planning Group has strategic responsibility for planning health and community care services throughout East Lothian.

The East Lothian Learning Disability Forum represents the views of service users and their carers at the Learning Disability Joint Planning Group. Carer and voluntary sector representatives from this Forum have raised the absence of advocacy as a gap for many years. Although legislation forced individual advocacy up the agenda it was the positive impact of representation from the Learning disability Forum that led the Joint Planning Group to priorities money for collective advocacy.

The first result

- There is now support for a service user to participate in this strategic Joint Planning Group.



East Lothian Big Lottery Fund Young People's Panel

This is part of a national Big lottery initiative to ensure that young people assess local applications for their Young People's Fund in Scotland – a 2 year grants programme with £20 million to award to projects which enable young people to learn new things, feel good about themselves and enjoy healthy and positive activities. Young People's Panels look at local applications that can be funded through the grants programme and make recommendations based on the needs and demands of local young people. All panel recommendations are considered by the Big Lottery National Committee which makes the final decision based on money available.

East Lothian's panel was set up in March 2006 and ends in October 2007. It has 10 members representing all 6 ward areas. Involvement was encouraged across communities by advertising in every youth facility, secondary school and homeless accommodation. 45 application forms were requested, 16 young people were invited for interview, 10 were selected for the panel with 4 on a reserve list.

So far the results are:

- Panel members have attended 5 meetings and have discussed and made recommendations on 6 funding applications.
- 3 young panel members have registered with the Adam Smith College for a Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework level 5 course in Participative Democracy.

Patchwork EH32, Prestonpans

Patchwork provides a friendly meeting place / drop in clinic for parents with children aged 0 to 5 years. – started off as a pilot project, now an established group. A group of parents, health providers and community workers began this group in September 2006. They wanted to address a gap in health visitor support to parents after the 6 week check due to a change in their remit (to attend only vulnerable families) and also to involve parents in developing an all round approach to health, take part in wider health promotion activities and to encourage peer support.

What has changed?

- Parents have a broader support for health and parenting issues
There is now a community based health service catering for very young babies
- Parents now have access to Health Visitors who attend the group for 2 hours each week
- More parents are showing confidence to deal with service providers



Preston-Seton-Gosford Local Services Management Group/ Port Seton Walkabout

The Management Group was set up in 2005 to bring together staff who provide services, local organisations, elected members and residents to develop and improve services for the area. They have agreed priority areas for action with working groups. The Community Safety and Wellbeing Group is one of these. At the March 2007 meeting, the group identified litter and dog fouling in Port Seton as key concerns and decided to have a 'walkabout' to assess the situation at a date and time suitable for local people. In April, three Port Seton residents and two ELC staff (Principal Amenity and Community Learning and Development officers) walked together through the community and along the beach noting their findings. These were discussed at the next meeting and action points agreed which the Principal Amenity Officer undertook to deal with through his and other departments and report to the June meeting.

Changes so far:

- Bins & Signage: in place and assessing further needs. Dog fouling is now taken up in the local CAPP (Community and Police Partnership)
- Benches matching the bins have been designed and manufactured locally. They are now in place and being checked for durability
- Grass cutting standards: improvements needed and a review meeting with senior management is planned for the new year on the grounds maintenance programme, resources and standards.
- Community Centre Play Area: currently working with the local community to secure funding to extend the Skate Park, upgrade the Play Area and complete the overhaul of the rear area
- Beach: Seeking volunteers from Edinburgh to join with ELC resources. Heavy items to be removed in the Spring with community assistance

Recent example of communities and service providers working together to improve services across East Lothian



Who is responsible for taking this forward?

This strategy and the steps we need to take this forward are everyone's responsibility. So all community planning partners and their staff are involved in the Community Engagement Action Plan.

CPIG has a key role to play. CPIG provides strategic direction for this strategy and in ensuring the action plan is carried out.

The Community Planning Task Group (CPTG) brings together lead officers from different service areas and working with particular communities and groups. The CPTG takes the lead on the action plan and is responsible for the activities relating to community planning.

The Community Engagement Task Group (CETG) brings together staff from a range of services and organisations with particularly skills in working with communities and is responsible for activities in the action plan relating to engagement.

These task groups report on progress to CPIG and to East Lothian communities through CPIG meetings and community planning groups in general and by circulating information widely (Community Planning website, newsletters, presentations, etc.).

ELCPP's Dialogue Youth Coordinator is a focal point for involving young people in community planning processes and ensuring their views are taken on board in joint working groups.

ELC's Community Safety Officer and Equalities Officer are focal points for their subject areas and have input into community engagement.

ELC's Community Planning Officer is the focal point for both Community Planning and Community Engagement. This includes working closely with the CPTG, CETG and community planning groups; taking forward specific actions and providing information to people living and working in East Lothian.





Taking Action

The steps that we need to take forward this strategy are outlined in our action plan 'Taking Action'. As yet only 2007-08 has been timetabled and resourced and the task groups will review and cost the plans for the following years. The action plan is a live document which can be found on the Community Planning webpage:

<http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/content/0,1094,6165,00.html>

The action plan will be resourced as follows:

- Existing staff time from a range of partners
- Partners' own resources
- Existing community planning resources
- Partners contributing additional resources
- Signposting and seeking additional resources

Further information

If you would like to find out more about this strategy or about community planning and community engagement please contact:

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Appendix I National Standards for Community Engagement (summary)

The Ten Standards

1. **Involvement**
We will identify and involve the people and organisations who have an interest in the focus of the engagement
2. **Support**
We will identify and overcome any barriers to involvement.
3. **Planning**
We will gather evidence of the needs and available resources and use this evidence to agree the purpose, scope and timescale of the engagement and the actions to be taken.
4. **Methods**
We will agree and use methods of engagement that are fit for purpose
5. **Working Together**
We will agree and use clear procedures that enable the participants to work with one another effectively and efficiently.
6. **Sharing Information**
We will ensure that necessary information is communicated between the participants
7. **Working with Others**
We will work effectively with others with an interest in the engagement.
8. **Improvement**
We will develop actively the skills, knowledge and confidence of all the participants.
9. **Feedback**
We will feed back the results of the engagement to the wider community and agencies affected.
10. **Monitoring and Evaluation**
We will monitor and evaluate whether the engagement achieves its purposes and meets the national standards for community engagement.

For further information on the NSCE and associated materials visit:

http://www.communitiesscotland.gov.uk/groupd/punlic/documents/webnpages/cs_006607.hcsp

Appendix II Who has been involved in developing the strategy?

The East Lothian Learning Partnership and ELC's Community Learning and Development Service were charged with developing the strategy on behalf of ELCPP. The CPIG Community Engagement Strategy Working Group was responsible for the final stages.

We would like to thank the many people, groups and agencies who have been involved in developing this strategy giving their views on the focus and the actions needed. These are:

- Association of East Lothian Community Councils
- Community Care Forum
- Community Planning Implementation Group
- Community Planning Partnership members
- Community Engagement Strategy Working Group
- East Lothian Learning Partnership members
- East Lothian Tenants and Residents Panel
- Preston, Seton, Gosford, Local Service Management Group
- Staff from a range of East Lothian Council departments
- Tranent SIP

People participated in many different ways, for example: a dedicated community engagement strategy working group; series of workshops with local community planning groups, community planning partners and in the ELLP/CPP annual conference 2006; interviews; emails and informal chats round a desk!

