

Review Committee – 14 June 2011

Minutes of the meeting of the **Review Committee** held on **14 June 2011** when there were present:-

Chairman: Cllr Mrs J R Lumley
Vice-Chairman: Mrs H L A Glynn

Cllr Mrs P Aves
Cllr K A Gibbs
Cllr Mrs A V Hale

Cllr J R F Mason
Cllr R D Pointer
Cllr I H Ward

VISITING MEMBER

Cllr T G Cutmore

OFFICERS PRESENT

P Warren	- Chief Executive
C Milton-White	- Local Strategic Partnership Officer
L Jeffries	- Leisure and Cultural Services Manager
M Yolland	- Community Safety Co-ordinator
P Gowers	- Overview & Scrutiny Officer
M Power	- Committee Administrator

ALSO PRESENT

Chief Inspector G Westley - Essex Police

146 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 5 April 2011 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

147 ROCHFORD DISTRICT COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Executive, which provided Members with an update of the achievements of the Rochford District Community Safety Partnership (RDCSP).

G Westley, in his role as Chair of the RDCSP, responded to Members' questions, as follows:-

- A meeting of the working group to implement the amalgamation of Rochford and Castle Point CSP's is scheduled for 22 June. The working group will comprise: Chief Inspector Paul Howell (Castle Point), Chief Inspector Glen Westley (Rochford), M Yolland, H Collins (Castle Point Community Safety Officer), 2 LSP officers and representatives from the Probation Service and Essex County Council.
- Measures taken by the Police to achieve the reported 65% reduction in robbery crime include crime impact analysis, regular patrols in relevant

areas and at specific times; and articles in Rochford District Matters and the local press. Neighbourhood Watch Schemes also play a part in raising awareness in the community. In addition, there has been a move to increase public awareness around bag theft in town centres and vehicle theft.

- While the 35.8% reduction in the reported number of repeat incidents of domestic violence (DV) is significant, continued emphasis will be focussed on raising awareness of domestic violence and encouraging people to report DV crimes.
- Residents are consulted on their perception of crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB) via Citizens Panels, Neighbourhood Action Panels, Information Days and the former District Council Area Committees. The new Community Forums, which have replaced the Area Committees, will provide a further mechanism for gathering intelligence to develop priorities and focus resources. ASB and perception of safety are always areas of concern to all age groups in the community.
- The dispersal order in Market Square, Rochford has been successful and although there have been no specific diversionary measures taken, there is no evidence of any impact on nearby locations as a result of the dispersal order. ASB Issues have been identified in Hockley and an application for a dispersal order is being considered for that area. The Police will work closely with British Transport Police at Hockley Station.
- Sergeant Barnes of the Southend Police licensing unit will be doing work now in Rochford District as well as Southend, which should have a positive impact on the enforcement of licensing laws, both inside and outside licensed premises. Work between ECC, the CSP and Police around the confiscation of alcohol from youths on the streets was ongoing.
- Funding streams for the CSP have been considerably reduced for 2011/2012 and will be further reduced to next to nothing next year. Although the CSP's role is focussed on crime and disorder reduction, diversionary activity and proactive youth work is important. In the past, the CSP has provided funding for youth groups in Rochford (St Marks), Hockley (The Massive Project) and Rayleigh (Legacy) and the challenge for this year and future years will be around maintaining activities with very little funding.
- Because of the drastic cut in funds available to the CSP, greater focus is now on early intervention work and funding for projects that are sustainable. Grant awareness training will be provided to Parish and Town Clerks by the Council's Assistant Community Safety officer, which will cover how to apply for funding for specific projects and how to write a bid for direct grant funding.

- However, this year resources will be available to provide ASB training in schools across the District, which will cover interactive activities on the impact of ASB on residents. This will be by jointly between the RDC ASB officer and the Essex Police Schools Liaison officer.
- All unused 'Domestic Violence' Careline units are collected if they are no longer needed (the Police are asked to confirm this is the case). Those who still need the support will have Careline funded for 10 weeks, after which time the user will have to fund the service themselves in the region of approximately £1.40 per week.
- Although the level of sexual offences in the District is not high, it has been identified as one of the 2011/12 priorities because priorities are based on historic, current and emerging factors and it is projected that sexual crimes will increase. Focus will be on early intervention and raising awareness of personal safety and the dangers of alcohol in respect of sexual offences.
- Hate crime figures are low but projected to increase. The target in 2011/12 is to increase reporting levels of hate crime and to reduce the number of repeat offences, which will help to reassure the population. A Rochford Hate Crime Panel has been established and faith groups have been invited to its forthcoming meeting as they are keen to get involved in these issues. The definition of hate crime has now been revised: if the victim perceives an action as hate crime, it will be investigated and logged as hate crime.
- The CSP has a strong involvement with Trading Standards (TS), including providing funding for the "Challenge 25" initiative and test purchases undertaken by TS. Operation "Greenbelt", which works with off licences, pubs and clubs in the District, will be undertaken by the Police and TS on Friday and Saturday nights.
- The Home Office implementation of Section 9 of the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004, which places a duty on CSP's to undertake multi-agency reviews of domestic homicides in their area will potentially place additional strain on resources should an incident occur within Rochford District.

Resolved

That the contents of the report be noted.

148 ROCHFORD LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Executive, which provided Members with an update on the Rochford Local Strategic Partnership (LSP), which had recently merged with the Castle Point LSP to become a single Joint Partnership.

Cllr Cutmore updated the Committee on progress to date. He was Chairman of the Rochford LSP but now that the LSP had been merged with Castle Point's LSP, he would be sharing the chairmanship of the new body with the Leader of Castle Point, Cllr Mrs Challis. She would be the Chairman for this year, with him as Vice-Chairman, whereas next year the roles would be reversed. In response to specific queries, Cllr Cutmore pointed out that:-

- It will be difficult to measure the precise savings/effect as a result of the merger, as this will not become apparent until a number of years in the future.
- The plethora of meetings currently held by various agencies of the Rochford and Castle Point LSP will be replaced by just one meeting to which all the agencies will be invited. Essex County Council and the GP commissioning bodies will also be involved.
- A report relating to the future of the two Rochford LSP staff posts would be going to the July meeting of the Executive.
- The importance of encouraging a volunteering culture was noted and Rochford District Council runs a staff volunteering scheme, which is facilitated by RRAVS.

Resolved

That the contents of the report be noted.

149 THE FORWARD PLAN

The Committee reviewed the Forward Plan and noted its comments.

26/10 Eco-Enterprise Centre

Due to staffing resource issues this decision will not be progressed at present.

1/11 ICT Contract Joint Procurement

The Executive on 9 June endorsed the tender specification and evaluation criteria in respect of the Invitation to Tender part of the joint procurement process. There are five potential suppliers and if the tender process is successful a decision will be taken by the Executive in October 2011.

3/11 Upgrading Electrical Wiring at 3-15 South Street, Rochford

Work to replace the time expired electrical wiring will take place this financial year.

6/11 Green Travel Plan

Various options are being considered prior to the travel plan being brought into the Executive for agreement.

150 OVERALL WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee deliberated on a number of topics for consideration by the Review Committee for its 2011/12 programme. Some of these topics had been included in the Review Committee's 2010/11 Annual Report. The Chief Executive's report to Full Council on 22 February 2011 on the Key Policies and Actions for 2011/12 also contained suggestions for possible reviews.

Following Member discussion, it was decided that the following topics would be reviewed:-

- The annual review of key partnership arrangements. This is ongoing.
- Highways maintenance in the District. The Essex County Council (ECC) Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation would be invited to attend a Review Committee meeting to provide an update. A decision would then be made as to whether this review would be pursued further.
- To monitor the Government's new legislation in respect of the health and well being agenda and what it will mean for the District Council. This is an emerging agenda as public health moves away from the Primary Care Trusts to come under the ambit of County and District Councils. A representative from ECC will be invited to attend a Review Committee meeting towards the end of 2011 to provide a briefing. At this time, it may be clearer what the future public health agenda is likely to be and what the implications will be for Rochford District Council in terms of developing its role in public health.
- Update on the Climate Change Agenda and a review of the Council's progress in this area. The RDC Head of Environmental Services will be invited to attend the July Review Committee meeting.
- Update on the operation of Choice Based Letting. The Portfolio Holder for Council Tax Collection, Benefits and Strategic Housing Functions and the Head of Community Services would be invited to attend the October Review Committee to provide an update.
- Process and timescales around disability grants from performance statistics. Members felt that there is a need to ascertain which agencies are involved in the grant process as well as a continued need to oversee processing times and delays. The Portfolio Holder for Council Tax Collection, Benefits and Strategic Housing Functions and the Head of Community Services will be invited to attend a meeting to provide an initial overview.
- Library services in the District. It was agreed that the ECC Cabinet Member for Heritage, Culture and the Arts would be invited to attend a meeting of the Review Committee. Members would like to understand the basis on which the recent cuts had been determined and how the cuts will impact and any anticipated future changes.

- Bus services in the District, the withdrawal of subsidies and what the future holds. This could be combined with the Highways Maintenance in the District review (see above) to which the ECC Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation would be invited.
- Advertising Regulations within the District. It was agreed that the Head of Planning and Transportation be asked to attend a meeting to provide a summary of advertising regulations and discuss how enforcement of regulations is achieved across the District.
- Charging fees for pre-planning application advice. The Head of Planning and Transportation would be asked to attend a Review Committee meeting, prior to the Member budget away day in November, to discuss the merits of introducing a structure of fees for pre-planning application advice, especially in the case of large planning applications under the Local Government Act 2003, which gives authorities the discretionary power to introduce such fees.

The latest Localism Bill Summary would be circulated to Members of the Committee.

In July ECC would be holding a meeting on youth service provision. The Cabinet Member for Education could be invited to a meeting of the Committee to outline the ramifications this might have for the District.

Resolved

That the topics outlined above would be reviewed as detailed above in 2011/12.

151 METHODOLOGY

The Committee gave consideration to the methodology it proposed adopting in order to achieve its work programme.

Following Member discussion, it was agreed that the disability grants review would be undertaken by the whole Committee.

Resolved

- (1) That the disability grants review would be undertaken by the Review Committee as a whole.
- (2) That methods of operation to achieve the remainder of the work programme would be decided during the course of the year.

The meeting closed at 10.02 pm.

Chairman

Date

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