

Review Committee – 21 November 2006

Minutes of the meeting of the **Review Committee** held on **21 November 2006** when there were present:-

Chairman: Cllr K H Hudson
Vice-Chairman: Cllr Mrs R Brown

Cllr K J Gordon
Cllr Mrs S A Harper
Cllr T Livings

Cllr Mrs J R Lumley
Cllr P F A Webster

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr P K Savill and C Milton-White

ALSO PRESENT

A Spalding	- Team Manager, South Essex Youth Offending Team
M Armstrong	- Police Officer seconded to South Essex Youth Offending Team
M Hughes	- Divisional Manager (South), Essex County Youth Service
Chief Inspector J Walker	- District Commander, Essex Police and Chairman of Rochford Crime and Disorder Partnership
J Zammit	- Essex County Council Partnership Co-ordinator for Castle Point and Rochford
County Councillor Mrs E M Hart	

OFFICERS PRESENT

Paul Warren	- Chief Executive
P Gowers	- Overview and Scrutiny Officer
J Bostock	- Principal Committee Administrator

402 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 24 October 2006 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to it being noted that a Member had requested information from the County Youth Service on how much expenditure there is within the Rochford District.

403 PROJECT POSITION SCHEDULES

(1) Anti-social Behaviour Review

Prior to receiving the update position schedule for the anti-social behaviour review, the Committee heard from Alison Spalding and Michael Armstrong on the role of the South Essex Youth Offending Team followed by Mark Hughes

on Essex County Youth Services and Chief Inspector John Walker on the role of the Police.

The Youth Offending Team (YOT)

Responding to questions, Alison Spalding and Michael Armstrong advised that:-

- In terms of line management the YOT is part of Essex County Council Social Care. The service is 50% funded by the Home Office.
- The “early intervention programme” is a new initiative involving twelve family workers embedded in District Council areas. The programme works with 8 to 13 year olds who are on the brink of offending.
- YOTs are run along similar lines in each local authority, although departmental reporting arrangements may differ.
- There are strict criteria for intervention by social work teams. The YOT is designed to be multi-layer to aid inter-organisational communication and maximise the ability to identify cases. Its complexity can be seen as a strength.
- At the current time the South Essex YOT team is dealing with approximately 100 to 120 referral orders and 50 to 60 final warnings. There are approximately 200 to 250 cases per year and a high number of assessments. Specific information can be provided on the figures, including the number of cases associated with Rochford District. A difficulty can be the complexity of targets. For example, the bringing of more young people into the system earlier can mean that the re-offending statistics appear to have worsened.
- An individual subject to a youth supervision order will be seen twice a week. The nature of YOT work can depend on the content of a court order.
- Approximately 25 of every 100 first-time cases will re-offend. Of the 25, approximately 15 may continue to offend. The work of the YOT removes a number of individuals from the criminal justice system.
- The local YOT comprises a team of 18 staff with a range of disciplines.
- The YOT reviews difficult cases on the basis of an individual’s risk to the public and to themselves.
- The primary youth bench for the YOT is Basildon, although services are also provided to Southend and Grays.
- Families are very much involved, and there has been training in intervention parenting.

- When victims of youth offenders are involved in the process they give a high satisfaction rating (over 90%.) Legislation protects young people from adverse publicity, and issues of victim recompense are not a matter for a YOT. Victims have a right to civil redress.
- The YOT has been involved in multi-agency working for six years and is often used as a model for such working.
- The County Head of Service for the YOT will be asked to provide information on both the local budget for the YOT and the overall County YOT budget.

It was observed that the complicated nature of the inter-agency working typified by the work of the YOT pointed to there being merit in Members receiving refresher information, perhaps once or twice per year.

The Chairman thanked Alison and Michael for attending the meeting and for their contributions.

Essex County Youth Service

Responding to questions, Mark Hughes advised that:-

- The national staff shortage related particularly to full-time staff. Whilst universities provided theoretical training, this did not necessarily provide individuals with the skill set for youth service work, such as the ability to work with partners, supervise and interpret policy. The service does appoint some individuals who have a passion for youth work and who can be trained to deliver at a local level.
- There are four youth service divisions within the County. The Central Division has a budget of £1.1 million, the West Division £1 million, the East Division £1.1 million and the South Division (which covers Rochford, Castle Point and Basildon), £1.29 million. The latter is broken down as £525,000 for Basildon, £302,000 for Castle Point and £288,000 for Rochford. 66% of the Rochford figure is applied to staffing. A copy of the detailed budget figures will be provided to Members.
- In terms of staffing, the local division will be sufficiently staffed by January 2007 to match its work plans. Plans include ensuring youth clubs will be open, although there is constantly a demand for additional youth service delivery. There is the need for a balanced youth offer across the District.
- A discrepancy can be identified between the figures provided at the meeting and a youth service brochure that identifies a budget of £8m. This may relate to the age of the brochure but would need investigating.

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- Budgets are allocated on a per head of 13-19 year olds basis, with some weighting for deprivation and social isolation. A request has been made for the weighting formula to be reviewed, although other changes may override this.
- Whilst it is hard to point to failures, there are some initiatives that could have been better. A difference can be identified between partnership and inter-agency working. Effective partnership working can be a challenge with effective outcomes related to commitment.
- The image of young people portrayed in the media is disappointing. Young people undertake a lot of good work and activities.
- It could be observed that there have been differing expectations placed on the 57 South Street, Rochford youth facility. The physical nature of the building is such that it is not particularly suited to some activities. Effective work has been undertaken with smaller groups. The youth service will respond to needs at a local level.
- Rochford town can be identified as an area where there could be additional youth service delivery.
- When considering the possibilities for youth facilities at school sites account needs to be taken of the context of the site and whether there may be problems associated with, say, individuals from other schools attending.
- It could be observed that the service is not particularly good at marketing/promoting its activities.
- Mobile bus provision lends itself well to areas such as the Rochford District. New vehicles have been ordered and are due to arrive in the New Year. In terms of location, the service is aware that there is an issue with young people around the car park in Hockley. The outreach team will pick this up.
- Young people have seen the benefits of the extended schools detached team agenda.
- The County Council will be asked to provide figures on how many young people are excluded from school. Schools have mechanisms for identifying individuals for a service education programme aimed at raising self-esteem and confidence. An alternative programme is targeted at Year 11 students.
- There have been a number of instances of effective working with the police. It would be expected that the police would be advised of the location of detached youth workers.

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- The prison no way programme is being extended to other areas. There are two aspects to the programme – targeting those at risk and targeting those who have already been through the courts. In terms of Hullbridge, attendees will be subjected to the standard six to nine month follow up.

The Chairman thanked Mark for attending the meeting and for his contributions.

Essex Police

Responding to questions, John Walker advised that:-

- Engaging young people in an endeavour to direct them away from crime, combined with addressing the needs of victims, have both been factors in the fall in crime numbers. An increase in the neighbourhood policing resource and the work of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership, combined with the identification of hot spots and offenders, has also helped. Young people are engaged by the police in a number of ways (football matches, dodge ball and so on) and there is an awareness that persistent and prolific offenders will be dealt with.
- The majority of crime is committed by a small minority, and the knowledge of individuals that the police are aware of them and prepared to act is an effective deterrent.
- In terms of future initiatives, it would be good to see closer working with young people, improved engagement with the youth service and further working with the Children and Young Persons Strategic Partnership. Activity in dealing with individuals who have committed minor crimes has also proven to be of value. This can include the introduction of voluntary anti-social behaviour orders (a pre-cursor to the full anti-social behaviour order (ASBO) stage).
- Whilst post conviction ASBOs can be introduced, the nature of a court sentence can negate the need. Individuals who claim that ASBOs are not effective have not necessarily been the subject of one.
- It could be observed that dispersal orders are not particularly effective. Whilst they are a tool to reduce crime, practical application has established that they operate best in a small location. They are also resource intensive and take intensive administration to monitor.

The Chief Executive confirmed that the District Council has developed an ABSO guide, a copy of which will be sent to County Councillor Mrs E M Hart. The Chairman thanked Chief Inspector Walker for his contributions.

The position schedule relating to the anti-social behaviour review was noted.

(2) The Operation of Planning Enforcement Review

It was noted that:-

- A meeting had been held between Councillor Mrs S A Harper and the Team Leader of enforcement and the Planning Manager on the 16 November. A further meeting had been arranged for 1 December to clarify outstanding details.
- A meeting is to be arranged between the team and the Head of Planning and Transportation to discuss findings.
- Parts of the final report have been drafted.

The position schedule relating to the operation of Planning Enforcement Review was noted.

(3) Monitoring of the Committee System

It was noted that:-

- The Project Team had met on 6 November.
- Questionnaires had been sent out to all Members and appropriate officers for their views on the Review Committee and the new Committee structure. Thirty had been returned to date.

The position schedule relating to the monitoring of the Committee Review was noted.

(4) Bus Services Review

It was noted that:-

- A copy of Mrs V Lane's letter with petition had been forwarded with a covering letter to the two main commercial bus companies in the District. A response had already been received from First to indicate that they had no plans to introduce any further commercial services in the area. Essex County Council is aware of the petition and feels that these routes are already well serviced despite passengers needing to change services on route.
- Cllr T Livings and the Overview and Scrutiny Officer had attended a meeting of passenger transport representatives for the District organised by Essex County Council. First had given the 56 days statutory notice to the Transport Commissioner that they were going to withdraw the 35 service (Southend – Rayleigh – Great Baddow – Chelmsford) via Rawreth and Battlesbridge. This route will still be served in parts by the 30X and the new 1 service from Canvey. There will be a lack of coverage through Rawreth and the Park School area.

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- Drafting had commenced on some sections of the bus service report.

It was observed that the final report will address the position with regard to the shortage of a bus service in Hullbridge and other subsidy aspects.

The Committee was pleased to note that the Chairman had invited County Councillor Mrs T Chapman, Portfolio Holder for Children & Families, to attend the January meeting of the Committee with regard to the Anti-social Behaviour Review Project.

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer confirmed that he would seek responses from Chief Inspector Walker to the following questions:-

- How many police incidents/responses there had been in the five main areas of the District since the October meeting and the Police response/outcome of the incidents.
- Any suggestions the Police have to overcome comments made at a meeting of the Youth Service on the difficulty the Youth Service has in contacting the Police to advise them of the areas that their detached Youth Workers are operating in during an evening.

The meeting closed at 10.06 pm.

Chairman

Date