
Minutes of the meeting of the **Partnership Sub-Committee (Essex Links)** held on **23rd March 2000** when there were present:

Cllr G Fox - Chairman

Cllr P A Beckers
Cllr T G Cutmore

Cllr G A Mockford
Cllr Mrs M S Vince

VISITING MEMBER

Cllr Mrs M J Webster

Representing Essex County Council: Cllr R H Boyd.

Representing Town and Parish Councils: Mrs M R Beckers (Rawreth Parish Council), Mrs R Brown (Hullbridge Parish Council), M J Ewers (Rochford Parish Council), Mrs P Pearse (Rayleigh Town Council), I Rooke (Hawkwell Parish Council), Mrs J V Rigby (Stambridge Parish Council) and P Stebbing (Great Wakering Parish Council).

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from County Cllrs K Bobbin and Mrs E M Hart and Town/Parish Council representatives K Attridge (Rochford Parish Council), Mrs M Liles (Rayleigh Town Council) Mrs D Lucas (Rawreth Parish Council), C Lumley (Rayleigh Town Council) and Mrs J Lumley (Rayleigh Town Council).

Some of the Members present served at more than one tier.

91 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 25 January 2000 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

92 PERIODIC ELECTORAL REVIEW

The Sub-Committee received a verbal report from the Head of Administrative and Member Services on the District Council's submission to the Local Government Commission.

In presenting his report, the Head of Service expressed his gratitude to Town and Parish Councils for communicating their views on proposals to the District during the consultation stage. The Sub-Committee was reminded that the key purpose of the review was to secure equality of representation across the District and advised of the main features of the submission.

In terms of the next stage, the Local Government Commission would be publishing draft recommendations in late June 2000 and providing for a consultation period into September. Final recommendations would be published in November, at which point the Secretary of State would be required to make final decisions. There would be a period to enable lobbying of the Secretary of State.

The Sub-Committee joined with the Chairman in thanking the Head of Administrative and Member Services for his work in consulting the Town and Parish Councils and co-ordinating the District Council's submission.

93 MODERNISING LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The Sub-Committee received the report of the Principal Strategy Officer, Essex County Council which provided a summary of pilot political management arrangements recently approved by the County Council.

In presenting the report, the Principal Strategy Officer outlined the background work (including consultation activity) undertaken by the County Council since 1998. A key objective of arrangements was to ensure that the County Council was working closely with the Community. The County would be reviewing how pilot arrangements matched Government guidelines. Arrangements would be in place until May 2001, at which point they could be either implemented or subjected to a further pilot period. Whilst the House of Lords had recently voted against political structure aspects of the Local Government Bill, the impact was not clear at this stage.

Responding to Member questions, the Principal Strategy Officer advised that:-

- The County Council's Modernising Panel had been keen to facilitate closer working between Councillors and two of the Political Groups had indicated that the Party Whip would not operate within Select Committee arrangements.
- Rules on pro rata representation would be applied to Committees.
- Whilst there had been many differing views in the early stages, general consensus had been reached that it would be appropriate for the County to concentrate on formulating a pilot scheme which reflected one of the models proposed by the Local government Bill.
- The County Council had appointed an independent panel to undertake a review of Member allowances, the results of which would soon be released. Comparison data on allowances was freely available and a number of organisations had produced Best Practice Reports.

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- The proposed Development Control and Regulation and Appeals Committees would operate on a pro rata basis and have full delegatory authority.

During debate, Members noted that the County Council had been faced with major re-organisations on three other occasions over the last six years. From the Member perspective, there had been broad political consensus that the introduction of pilot modernising arrangements could both enhance the work of the Authority and enable the County to contribute to future Government debate with some authority and from a position of experience. It could also be recognised that aspects of the new arrangements, such as Select Committees, offered exciting and effective ways of working.

The Meeting closed at 8.44pm.

Chairman

Date