

## Review Committee – 18 July 2006

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Minutes of the meeting of the **Review Committee** held on **18 July 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 K Savill  
Cllr P F A Webster

### OFFICERS PRESENT

P Warren	-	Chief Executive and Chairman of Rochford Crime and Disorder Partnership
R J Honey	-	Corporate Director (Internal Services)
C Milton-White	-	Anti-Social Behaviour Co-ordinator
P Gowers	-	Overview & Scrutiny Officer
J Bostock	-	Principal Committee Administrator

### ALSO PRESENT

Cllr Mrs E M Hart	-	Essex County Council
PC S Joynes	-	Hockley & Hawkwell Neighbourhood Police Officer
J Zammit	-	ECC Partnership Co-ordinator for Castle Point & Rochford

### 245 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr T Livings declared a personal interest in the bus services review by virtue of being a user of public transport.

### 246 ENDORSEMENT OF SCOPING AND PROJECT PLANS

The Committee endorsed the proposed scoping forms and project plans drawn up in consultation with project leaders/participants.

With regard to the review of issues around anti-social behaviour, Paul Warren, Cheryl Milton-White, PC Steve Joynes and John Zammit each confirmed that they would be happy to participate as advisors. It was recognised that selected advisors did not have voting rights on the Committee.

County Councillor Mrs E M Hart indicated that she would be happy to be invited to any meetings involving the subject of anti-social behaviour. The Committee was pleased to accept this offer.

The Chairman wished to emphasise that the Committee's work should not be about fault-finding or blame attribution, but facilitating solutions in tandem with partners. Whilst there seemed to be a perception that anti-social behaviour was a significant problem, an evidence-based approach would be appropriate. At this point in time, typical considerations could include:-

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- Are there actions that should be taken immediately?
- Are punishments available against perpetrators appropriate?
- Are organisations responsible for services that could have an impact on anti-social behaviour clearly demonstrating 'joined-up thinking'?
- Can it be proved that equipment, such as Close Circuit Television (CCTV) cameras, is an effective deterrent?

The facility for the Committee to develop its own agenda means that Members can consider this type of subject without external pressures.

The Chairman invited Mr Warren in his capacity as Chairman of the Rochford Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership to offer any initial observations that he may have. Mr Warren felt that the Committee should be mindful of the following:-

- The nature of the subject is such that it is unlikely that all issues can be solved. It would be worthwhile identifying areas where a difference can be made, particularly in the area of 'joined-up working'.
- In terms of the UK as a whole, Rochford District was one of the safest locations. Resident surveys pointed to the fact that people felt safe during the day. That perception fell at night but was still relatively high compared to other areas.
- It was felt that a further concentration on the school/parenting agenda might achieve results over a period.
- It should be recognised that individual perceptions around anti-social behaviour can differ.

Mr Warren tabled a document detailing the terms of reference and structure of the Rochford Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership, a key target of which was to reduce incidences of crime by 13½% over a three year period in line with the agreed Crime & Disorder Reduction Strategy.

The Chairman invited Mr Zammit, Essex County Council Partnership Co-Ordinator, to offer any observations that he may have. Mr Zammit felt that the Committee should be mindful of the following:-

- The attitude of individuals can influence the likelihood that they will offend.
- Initiatives have been introduced through the Children and Young Persons Strategic Partnership aimed at identifying children that display characteristics which, in later life, may be associated with anti-social behaviour with a view to early correction. Current initiatives included anger management courses, extended school co-ordination and the

provision of leisure and sport activities for young people. The attitude of parents can be significant.

- 80% of crimes tend to be committed by the same core group of individuals.
- Whilst it is unlikely that problems will ever be completely eradicated, they can be reduced. A concerted effort, with partners working in concert, should be able to provide results.

During discussion, the Committee noted that:-

- There had in the past been a patchy commitment and poor attendance by some of the Partners of the Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership. However, the Partnership was still a well attended forum for discussions and deciding on issue in relation to Crime & Disorder.
- Section 59 of the Police Reform Act enabled motorcycles to be taken away from individuals, but if a fine is paid within fourteen days the motorcycle could be collected. Otherwise, the motorcycle could be crushed.
- Generally speaking the public were not aware of the detailed processes associated with taking action against anti-social behaviour.
- High visibility policing had established that individuals causing problems might move on to other areas.
- A recent County Council initiative aimed at responding to a Government requirement to cut light pollution on roads had been incorrectly portrayed in the media. The initiative was a pilot scheme only involving the targeting of certain roads in particular Districts. Rochford was not included at this stage.
- It is worthwhile considering whether CCTV has the desired effect given that systems do not always interact and picture quality could be poor. There will always be occasions when problems occur at locations where there are no cameras. Home Office studies indicated that the optimum combination was lighting and CCTV. If that is not possible, then lighting seemed preferable.
- Whilst dummy cameras might have some deterrent effect, this would probably be for a limited time span only and may not be satisfactory to the public. PC Joynes felt that covert cameras might be more effective.
- Whilst the identification of locations where young people can congregate might be helpful, access and dispersal from these areas and the potential impact on neighbours needed to be considered.

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- It was important for the Committee to ascertain the views of young people.

Recognising that Members had a number of additional questions on this subject area, the Chairman suggested that these be submitted for response via the Overview & Scrutiny Officer.

The Committee recognised that effective consultation with appropriate young people would be an important part of review activity.

It was noted that:-

- From the Police perspective, the move towards neighbourhood policing had improved police interaction with young people. The Police would be happy if Members wished to join with a neighbourhood officer as they undertake their work in any of the six neighbourhood areas (something which the Committee Chairman had already taken up).
- The County Youth Service already had an outreach facility capable of reaching young people who felt uncomfortable out of their environment and it was felt that this would be a useful avenue through which to obtain views.
- The Children and Young Persons Strategic Partnership had already undertaken two consultations with young people and feedback on that would be welcome.
- Consultation with young people would be best achieved via an arrangement whereby a small number of Members are able to meet with young people in their own environment.
- It would be appropriate to hear the views of the representatives on the Rochford Youth Assembly.

During discussion on meeting young people, it was observed that the Committee's membership was such that a number of Wards across the District were represented. The Committee agreed that it would be appropriate to liaise with the Police with a view to Members having the opportunity to go out with the Neighbourhood Police Officers over the summer months in a way that achieves a broad geographical spread. The Overview & Scrutiny Officer would, in the first instance, liaise with the Police to facilitate this.

## 247 PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The Committee noted the Performance Indicators, agreed by the former Policy & Finance Committee, which were to be used to evaluate the Council's Overview and Scrutiny process from the 2006/07 Municipal Year.

### **248 UPDATE FROM PROJECT LEADERS**

Each Project Leader updated the Committee on progress as detailed in the July position schedules. Additional observations were made as follows:-

#### **Planning Enforcement**

It was noted that statistics were set out in the Council's Quarterly Performance Report.

#### **Bus Services**

It would be useful for the observations of Councillor T E Goodwin, who had felt that this would be a good subject for review, to be sought. It would also be appropriate to give specific consideration to issues of bus availability at the site of The Dome, Hullbridge and to include aspects such as the availability of a taxi-bus /community transport scheme in looking at this issue.

#### **Committee**

Aspects already observed by the group included issues around the availability of an external representative, the use of acronyms and the length of some agendas.

In the course of discussion, it was felt that for some major topic areas, such as the Local Development Framework process, a Sub-Committee may be a useful way to proceed, given the volume of the documentation to be processed.

### **249 EVALUATION OF CCTV PROVISION**

Pursuant to Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 15(C)(2) the Chairman of the Review Committee had requested that the resolutions of the Policy, Finance & Strategic Performance Committee relating to the evaluation of CCTV provision be called in for scrutiny.

The Committee recognised that observations made relating to CCTV earlier in the meeting by the advisors to the Committee's Anti-Social Behaviour work (Minute 246 refers) were pertinent to this subject. It was agreed that it would be appropriate to recommend to the Policy, Finance & Strategic Performance Committee that consideration be given to the purchase of covert cameras (with associated publicity) and the merits of improved lighting. Also that best practice elsewhere in terms of managed CCTV systems be considered.

Following further discussion of associated aspects it was:-

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**RECOMMENDED** to Council that the decisions made on CCTV Evaluation at the meeting held on 13 July 2006 be reconsidered by the Policy, Finance & Strategic Performance Committee on the basis that alternative consideration should be given to the purchase of covert cameras (suitable for use as evidence in any criminal proceedings) and the merits of improved lighting rather than replacing the analogue provision and upgrading the older digital systems. Considerations to include:-

- Identification of the preferred Police option and clarification of the management/operating arrangements around such an option. If mobile covert cameras were the preferred choice, there would need to be agreement around publicity and usage specifically within the District.
- Examination of best practice in other authorities in terms of equipment used and management of those systems.

Nevertheless, it was felt that there was still merit in pursuing the third resolution agreed by the Policy, Finance & Strategic Performance Committee relating to discussions with third parties and so it was **RESOLVED** that early discussions be agreed around the further management and maintenance of the CCTV system involving Holmes Place, the local Chambers where they are the providers and those Town and Parish Councils who have installed their own systems, with a view to determining whether a common approach can be developed. (CE)

The meeting closed at 9.58pm.

Chairman .....

Date .....