

SHAPING THE FUTURE OF ESSEX – A COMMUNITY STRATEGY 2004 - 2024

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report introduces the final draft of the Community Strategy for Essex for consideration and comment. A copy of the draft Appended.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 Members may recall that the County Council has been working on producing a Community Strategy for Essex, with Partner organisations, for the past 3 years. Reports were presented to this Council in 2002 (Min. 233/02) and 2003 (Min. 152/03) as part of the consultation process.
- 2.2 A final draft strategy has now been produced for partner consideration, on the understanding that if agreeable to the partner organisation, that organisation will be prepared to sign up to the strategy and help achieve its delivery.
- 2.3 It is anticipated that the document will be finally ratified at a countywide Essex Partnership meeting in October. A series of action plans will accompany the strategy, but as yet these have to be finalised

3 DETAILED CONSIDERATIONS

Content of Strategy

- 3.1 The strategy identifies 8 key areas of life for the future of Essex:
- being part of a community
 - feeling safe
 - being healthy
 - creating opportunities
 - getting around
 - being served well and fairly
 - conserving our environment
 - having fun
- 3.2 In addition, it identifies the main challenges for Essex as follows:-
- Balancing pressures for development with the need to protect the quality of the environment

- Helping people to get around the County
- Promoting active citizenship
- Developing Essex's relationship with London by making the best of the opportunities and pressures which result.
- Taking positive action to conserve the County's unique environment and heritage
- Making the most of the image of Essex
- Helping to improve peoples' quality of life.

- 3.3 The strategy sets out priorities for improving the quality of life in Essex and it is envisaged that these will be reflected in the strategies and policies of Partnership members as these develop. The strategy recognises that progress will be dependent on resources being available and must demonstrate value for money for the people of Essex.

Officer Comment

- 3.4 As an aspirational document, there is little, if anything, within the content of the strategy that the District Council, in general terms, would not wish to support.
- 3.5 The headings used in the document are similar to those contained in the Rochford Community Strategy, which has recently been approved by the Local Strategic Partnership, and there is a broad linkage between the two.
- 3.6 The County Strategy aims to address issues which are prevalent at a County level, and includes partners who work at this level, whereas the Rochford Strategy aims to address local issues and work with local partners. In this way the two Strategies avoid duplication and will complement one another.
- 3.7 However, whilst the general content is supported, it is difficult to provide more meaningful comment, in terms of the detailed implications of the strategy for the District Council and the level of commitment likely to be required, until the detailed actions are developed, resourced and costed.

4. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The priorities for the 'Feeling Safe' Vision are consistent with the Rochford Crime & Disorder Reduction Strategy.

5. RISK IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Strategic Risk

If all the District Councils sign into the Essex Community Strategy other than Rochford then there is a danger of isolation and potential set-back in terms of partnership working.

5.2 Resource Risk

At this stage no detailed resource commitments have been identified as such. There is a danger that if the Council commits itself to supporting the document prior to these being identified and clarified, the Council might not be able to fulfil any potential commitments. On the other hand, once more detail is available in connection with the proposed actions and resources required, it would be possible to firm up an 'in principle' commitment.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The actions for 'Conserving our Environment' Vision are consistent with Rochford District Council policies.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Production of a Community Strategy is a requirement of the Local Government Act 2000.

8. RECOMMENDATION

- 8.1 It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES**

Subject to any further comments by Members, to support the principle of signing up to the Strategy as drafted, with the qualification that such support will need to be further assessed in the light of the detail emerging in the Action Plans.

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Background Papers:

County Strategic Partnership Consultation – Shaping the Future of Essex – January 2003.

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