

Review Committee – 7 December 2010

Minutes of the meeting of the **Review Committee** held on **7 December 2010** when there were present:-

Chairman: Cllr Mrs J R Lumley
Vice-Chairman: Cllr M Maddocks

Cllr Mrs H L A Glynn

Cllr Mrs G A Lucas-Gill

VISITING MEMBERS

Cllr T G Cutmore
Cllr M J Steptoe

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Mrs P Aves, T Livings and P F A Webster.

OFFICERS PRESENT

R Evans	-	Head of Environmental Services
C Milton-White	-	Local Strategic Partnership Officer
M Yolland	-	Community Safety Co-ordinator
P Gowers	-	Overview and Scrutiny Officer
M Power	-	Committee Administrator

300 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 16 November 2010 were agreed and signed by the Chairman, subject to the amendment to Minute 291 that the EALC's primary source of income is from 'Member Councils' rather than from the District Associations.

301 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr T G Cutmore declared a personal interest in Item 5 of the Agenda by virtue of being Chairman of the Local Strategic Partnership. Cllr Mrs J R Lumley declared a personal interest in Item 5 of the Agenda by virtue of being a Trustee of RRAVS.

302 ROCHFORD LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Executive, which provided Members with an update of the Rochford Local Strategic Partnership (LSP).

The option of forming a joint Rochford and Castlepoint LSP was being considered. Currently Rochford and Castlepoint LSP's are jointly running a pilot project on the place-based budget, with a focus on examining the referral routes to health services for frequent users. A funding bid under the Central

Government 'Community Budgets' had been made by Essex County Council on behalf of the joint Rochford/Castlepoint LSP project team for funding continued work around referral routes to services for frequent service users. Work had been undertaken by the Rochford LSP in the area of health and inequalities, with the aim of providing a fairer spread of health care across the population.

In response to Member questions, the following was noted:-

- The place-based budget funding was provided by Central Government and, apart from officer time, no funding was provided by Rochford District Council, Essex County Council or the Primary Care Trust.
- The District Council Local Strategic Partnership Officer post was funded until August 2011.
- Rochford Parish Council had taken over as organiser of the monthly Rochford Farmers' market from the Star Partnership and the Education and IT programme for people over 55 had been passed to RRAVS to run. The Star partnership was applying for funding to enable it to continue to run its existing projects at St Marks Hall, Rochford, which were run in partnership with Rochford Parish Council. A recent launch night had been held to try to recruit more volunteers to the Star Partnership so that projects could be extended across the District. Although Star concentrated its projects in St Marks Hall, other groups provided facilities in other parts of the District, including the teen café in Great Wakering, the youth club in Hullbridge and the Massive project in Hockley.
- The Rochford LSP had established a third-sector community involvement group and had supported the recent RRAVS information day at Rayleigh Mill.

303 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 (CSP).

The Rochford District Council Domestic Abuse Reduction officer post had been funded for a 2-year period. Government funding for the CSP had been reduced significantly for 2011/12, making the future of CSP's across the UK uncertain. A Safer Essex workshop event was held in October to discuss priorities for Essex and how to deliver more effectively against these priorities. Local meetings of community safety teams would feed back to the Safer Essex meeting scheduled for January 2011. A Police and Crime Commissioner would be elected in May 2012 and this may further impact on CSP's.

In response to questions, the following responses were given:-

- The CSP supports Neighbourhood Watch schemes in the District, which are operational in Rochford and Rayleigh. Neighbourhood Watch now has its own dedicated website, which can be a useful way of recruiting volunteers. Neighbourhood Watch bike tagging events have been taking place across the District, which are being used as a mechanism to increase awareness and promote the work of Neighbourhood Watch. Members requested that Parish and Town Councils be contacted to ask that the work of Neighbourhood Watch be promoted in their parish newsletters. Articles with information on Neighbourhood Watch schemes in the District have appeared in Rochford District Matters.
- Officers had attended training to enable them to organise Citizens Panels in-house rather than relying on employing an external company. The first in-house Citizens Panel would be run in February 2011 around either anti-social behaviour or domestic abuse awareness and how to get appropriate help and support.
- A joint Essex Police Authority and Rochford District CSP public meeting held in Hockley in November had been well attended by members of the public (there was a statutory requirement to have one such public event each year).
- The Alcohol Harm Reduction National Support Team visited SE Essex in November to review the work being undertaken in each CSP area to address alcohol misuse. It was identified by the Support Team that a significant reduction in alcohol-related offences in the District had been seen.
- A dispersal order had been implemented in Rochford town centre and surrounding area for a six-month period from 1 December 2010. The effectiveness of the order will be reviewed throughout but consideration for renewal cannot be made until the end of the six month period.

304 CAPITAL PROGRAMME UPDATE – OPEN SPACES AND CHERRY ORCHARD COUNTRY PARK

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Legal, Estates and Member Services on the call-in for scrutiny of an Executive decision relating to the following aspect: 'That the Open Spaces Capital Programme is utilised for the provision of fencing at the Grove Woods play area, together with minor electrical improvements at Hockley Woods'.

The original report of the Head of Environmental Services and the decision by the Portfolio Holder for the Environment stated that the cost of installing low level fencing around the perimeter of the Grove Woods play area would be in the order of £35,000. It was proposed to fund this from the unallocated open spaces budget.

Members had requested further detail to understand how the decision had been made. The Head of Environmental Services advised that, due to an error, the estimate in the report was in fact considerably higher than it needed to be. After further detailed consideration, it had been ascertained that a sum of approximately £15,000 would be sufficient to complete the proposed fencing works.

In answer to questions, Members were advised that:-

- The budget estimate in the original report should be regarded purely as an estimate and the best possible price would be negotiated when the Portfolio Holder had agreed to proceed with the work.
- The proposed bow top fencing would be 4 feet high, about 200 metres in length, of mild steel construction and would cost in the region of £75 a metre. An amount of £480 for minor electrical works and £3000 in respect of the drainage works at Sweyne Park was also required.
- The design and specification of the proposed fencing would be similar to fences installed around play areas with play equipment in the District.
- It was reported that dog fouling in the Grove Woods play area had been an issue since the equipment had been installed. Members felt, however, that although fencing would provide a natural barrier between some dogs and children in the play area, the revised sum of £15,000 was a large sum to be paid for fencing that would not necessarily stop the problem of animals accessing the play area.
- The Council is obliged under bye-laws to erect signage in areas where action is to be taken against dog fouling. Although the Council employs dog wardens, their availability is limited to certain hours during the day. Residents would often raise issues about dog fouling in the play areas and Connaught staff who visit facilities regularly will report any problems they encounter.
- Essex County Council had approached District Councils to establish if they were interested in having a facility for natural play in their District. The Committee was advised that the Council's Leisure team had identified potential sites and had communicated details of the decision to the relevant Portfolio Holders, Cllrs Mrs L A Butcher and K J Gordon, and Ward Members.
- The play area had been installed towards the end of 2009, with the original aim of creating an unfenced play space of a natural design that would complement the natural aspect of the surrounding area. It consisted of natural features, including mounds of earth and sandpits. All other play areas in the District are fenced to minimise the problem of dog fouling.

- Although the play area was designed and installed using external funding, there was no provision in the grant for fencing of the area.

Members felt they needed additional information and an opportunity to visit the play area site before they could make an informed decision. It was requested that the Head of Community Services attend the Review Committee meeting scheduled for 11 January to discuss the terms of the agreement with Essex County Council, when it was agreed that a natural play area would be established and the implications of fencing an open, natural play area. It was also requested that information be available around who made the decision to accept the funding and install the play area and the level of Member involvement in the decision. It was requested that a detailed specification and pictures of the proposed fencing be provided at this meeting. Review Committee Members individually could visit the play area.

305 THE FORWARD PLAN

The Committee heard from the Head of Environmental Services on Cherry Orchard Country Park – Review of Capital Scheme.

It was emphasised that the Friends of Cherry Orchard had been consulted as an interested section of the community but that they would not be part of the decision-making process. The Council has engaged an external consultant to undertake work on the Cherry Orchard Country Park project. A Member Advisory Group, comprising Ward Members and chaired by the Portfolio Holder for the Environment, had been established and would work through suggestions made by the consultant and interested parties. A final decision would be made by the Executive.

The play space at the Country Park would be completed by February 2011, although funding opportunities for the visitor centre at the Park have now changed. It was confirmed that the Member Advisory Group will ensure that Members are kept informed of developments. It was felt that all Members should be consulted on a project of this size, which affects the whole of the District.

The meeting closed at 9.35.

Chairman

Date

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