

SINGLE NON EMERGENCY NUMBER - 101

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report informs Members about the implementation of the Single Non-Emergency Number (SNEN) in Essex and seeks approval for this Council to sign up as part of the overall Essex bid.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 SNEN is a central Government initiative with the timescale that it will be operational across the country in 3 phases by 2008. It is already implemented in “wave 1” areas that include Northumbria and Hampshire.
- 2.2 SNEN is a new service that will provide the public with direct access, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, to community safety advice, information and action by dialling the number 101. The cost of a 101 call will be 10p.

The 101 service will cover

- Vandalism and graffiti
 - Noisy neighbours
 - Intimidation and harassment
 - Abandoned vehicles
 - Rubbish and litter including fly-tipping
 - People being drunk and rowdy in public places
 - Drug related anti-social behaviour
 - Street lighting
- 2.3 The SNEN service will also have the effect of freeing up the 999 emergency services to handle emergency incidents.

3 THE ESSEX 101 PARTNERSHIP

- 3.1 Essex has been invited by the Home Office to submit a bid to be in wave 2 of the roll-out of the project in 2007. The potential benefit of this is that there is likely to be a higher level of funding available from the Home Office for wave 2 partnerships, instead of waiting to 2008 and wave 3 that will cover the rest of the country.
- 3.2 The Essex 101 Partnership has been awarded a grant of £100,000 to develop the bid. This fund is being administered by the Essex Police Authority. The project is being organised by a Programme Manager (funded by the Home Office grant) and other support staff, including a Chief Inspector from Essex Police. These staff report to the Essex SNEN Project Board, the membership of which comprises the Chief Executives of the Essex Districts, the 2 Unitaries of Southend and Thurrock, Essex County Council, Essex Police Authority and the Chief Constable. Tendring is the only Authority at the current time that is

not part of this preparatory process although it now seems likely that they will join the Partnership.

- 3.3 The proposal to operate the 101 service in Essex has to be submitted to the Home Office by 6 October 2006. The invitation to make the bid was only received in July and so the timescale to develop it to meet the very detailed 101 service specification required by the Home Office is tight. The final meeting of the Essex SNEN Project Board will be on 3 October at which the bid will be agreed.
- 3.4 The work in Essex is currently focusing on where the 101 calls will be answered and by whom. Two local authorities - Essex County Council and Thurrock Council - who both have capacity in their existing contact centres, are bidding to be the 'call-taking partner' to take the 101 calls for the whole Partnership. The decision on the preferred call-taking partner will be made by the Essex SNEN Project Board on 15 September.

4 IMPLICATIONS FOR ROCHFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL

- 4.1 Should this Council decide to be part of the Essex Partnership, we will be a 'service delivery partner'. What this means in practice is that the call-taking partner will take the 101 calls on a 24/7 basis, and then pass the details on to this Council to deal with as part of the normal working day. We will not be required to expand our hours of operation.
- 4.2 Should the bid be successful, we will then have to identify our service standards for the 101 functions so that a call handler can inform a 101 caller how quickly, for example, we remove an abandoned vehicle. Our performance in meeting our defined 101 service levels will be monitored and results published on a monthly basis. There is no requirement for uniform service levels for the 101 functions across the Essex Councils.
- 4.3 Once the preferred call-taking partner has been selected and the technology identified, we will then be in a position to identify the costs to us of being in the Essex Partnership and implementing 101. Our costs will then be fully reflected in the bid to the Home Office.
- 4.4 The level of calls Rochford receives in the seven 101 function areas has been obtained, where collected, and is set out in Appendix A. These are the lowest call volumes in Essex; for example in June 2006 against the 96 calls in Rochford, Castle Point received 145 calls, Maldon 294 calls and Basildon 2634 calls.
- 4.5 It is likely, at least initially, that the introduction of the 101 service will have a limited impact on Council's operations, although over time if the 101 service is well used demand could increase. However, the benefits of participation in the Essex Partnership at this time are:-
- extending access hours for residents to report issues;

- providing a single reporting point for residents for issues that may require responses from the Council, the County and the Police;
- a positive initiative to report in the Access to Services Best Value review being carried out by the Audit Commission in December 2006;
- better information about the demand for the 101 services enabling better service planning and delivery;
- meeting the central Government agenda and being able to point to this in the next round of CPA;
- better level of Government funding available for wave 2 partnerships.

5 RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There is a risk to the Council's reputation that there is likely to be adverse comment if we do not participate in the Essex 101 Partnership in the context of the CPA or the Best Value inspection. Also, public perception of our non-involvement, given the participation of other organisations, may be adverse.

6 CRIME & DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The introduction of the SNEN 101 service aims to improve the public's access to and confidence in non-emergency public services by providing high quality advice, information and effective co-ordinated action on community safety on a 24/7 basis.

7 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Until the preferred call taking partner is selected and the technology they use identified, it is not possible to definitively identify the resource implications. However, the following costs will probably need to be covered:-
- Software enhancement to the existing Comino electronic records management system so that the details of 101 calls can be passed electronically into our back office system - £11,000 one off cost and £1,900 per annum.
 - An enhancement to our telephone system – £7,000 one-off cost and £300 per annum.
 - Costs in officer time in managing/monitoring the 101 calls and ensuring we respond in the set timescales.

The intention is to make sure that the costs to this Authority are fully identified and fully reflected in the bid to the Home Office so that our participation is cost neutral.

8 RECOMMENDATION

8.1 It is proposed that the Committee RESOLVES

to be part of the Essex 101 Partnership wave 2 bid to operate the SNEN service in Essex, subject to the Council's costs being fully identified and covered by Home Office funding.

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Background Papers:-

Notes of meetings of Essex 101 Project Board and Working Group.

Home Office 101 service specification.

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