

Community Overview & Scrutiny Committee – 9 February 2005

Minutes of the meeting of the **Community Overview & Scrutiny Committee** held on **9 February 2005** when there were present:

Cllr T Livings (Chairman)
Cllr Mrs M A Starke (Vice-Chairman)

Cllr Mrs R Brown
Cllr C J Lumley
Cllr P K Savill

Cllr D G Stansby
Cllr Mrs M S Vince
Cllr P F A Webster

VISITING MEMBER

Cllr D Merrick

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Mrs T J Capon

OFFICERS PRESENT

P Warren	- Chief Executive
S Clarkson	- Head of Revenue & Housing Management
G Woolhouse	- Head of Housing, Health & Community Care
K Doyland	- Licensing Manager
A Law	- Solicitor
M Martin	- Committee Administrator

ALSO ATTENDING

R McLean - STAR Partnership

54 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 18 January 2005 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

55 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Cllr Mrs M S Vince declared a personal interest in item 5 of the Agenda by virtue of being the Chairman of the STAR Partnership.

56 PROGRESS ON DECISIONS

The Committee received the Schedule relating to Progress on Decisions and in response to Member questions the following was noted:-

Housing Strategy and Housing Revenue Account Business Plan

Verbal indications at this stage were that both the Housing Strategy and Housing Revenue Account Business Plan would receive a 'fit for purpose' assessment.

De-Regulation of Francis Walk, Crown Hill, Clarence Road and Tendring Avenue, Rayleigh

The Head of Revenue & Housing Management reported that around 40/50 properties were currently designated for pensioner occupation at these sites. The Housing Management Sub-Committee had been set up to consider the financial status of those pensioners on the housing register. The Head of Service had reported the difficulties associated with analysing this information and Members had indicated that they did not wish to see changes in the status of these four blocks. In view of the District's ageing population it was, therefore, considered appropriate not to progress this, particularly in the light of the awaited outcome of the housing needs study and option appraisal process.

Resolved

That no further consideration be given to the de-regulation of Francis Walk, Crown Hall, Clarence Road and Tendring Avenue, Rayleigh until the outcome of the housing needs study and option appraisal process is known. (HRHM)

Outstanding issues would be carried forward.

57 STAR PARTNERSHIP

Note: Cllr T Livings declared a personal interest by virtue of the fact that his wife is one of the suppliers to the WI market in Rayleigh.

The Chairman welcomed Russ McLean of the STAR Partnership to the meeting and Members noted the Partnership's report on the work undertaken by them recently. The Chief Executive advised Members that it would not be wise to pursue the suggestion of including the words 'Rochford District Council' within the name of the Partnership, as the Council is not the major funding agency and this could hinder the Partnership's chances of attracting funding.

Nevertheless, the Partnership had been set up at the time of the preparation of the first Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy focussing specifically on the St Andrews and Roche Wards to deal with issues which could not be addressed through the more usual channels. The STAR Partnership had now grown into a body which reached out to the whole District. A name that better reflected the current position ought, therefore, to be considered, such as 'STAR Partnership for the Rochford District'. Mr McLean agreed to take this suggestion back to the members of the Partnership.

In response to Member comment/questions, Mr McLean advised that:-

- He was working towards handing over the day to day management of projects so that his personal involvement would be more remote. This would free him up to do more strategic partnership work and to continue to develop more projects.
- With the partnership growing, more organisations within it needed to take a lead.
- Since the report had been written a further £6,500 funding had been received for the Dads 'n' Kids Club.
- A new project around mental health issues was being investigated and a model in Southend was being looked at. It would be targeted at the late teen/early 20's age group and would operate a 'buddy' scheme. Opportunities for funding were being sought.
- Core funding for the partnership comes from the Primary Care Trust (PCT) and the Council. This pays for Mr McLean's salary and provides for a non-salary budget.
- All other external funding is directed towards projects and is managed by the partnership organisations. The PCT is the host organisation in terms of management.
- The Partnership runs on an informal, but efficient basis. A detailed list of those who form the community leadership group would be included in the next report to the Committee. This group meets every three months and operates as a discussion forum with agenda and minutes.
- Mr McLean currently takes day-to-day decisions, but is accountable to his line manager within the PCT. A model for the future of the Partnership would need to be considered.
- The Partnership's next report to this Committee would provide detail around the structure and indicate where the authority lies.
- It would probably be difficult to attract sellers to a farmers market at Rayleigh, due to the fact that most are already involved in a number of other such markets in the surrounding area. In Rochford the market is held under cover and the STAR Partnership provides refreshments to the sellers. It may be possible to attract some to the WI market held at the Mill Hall in Rayleigh on Wednesdays. There have been no adverse comments from the Chamber of Trade in Rochford, as shopkeepers usually indicate increased trade in a town as a result of the farmers' market.
- The Partnership's projects need to fit with the priorities of the key funding agents, for example, the Council's Performance Plan and Budget Strategy and the PCT's Health Improvement Plan.
- The STAR Partnership's sporting projects are co-managed with the Council's Sports Development Officer.
- A new project is being developed in conjunction with Connexions, the Youth Service and the County's Social Services, which involves working with older young people.

In summary, when the Partnership started out, there were a limited number of community groups and a shortage of funding for specific projects to help the local community. The statutory organisations wanted to be able to provide advice to charitable organisations and individual community organisations in the area on how to attract funding pots. The PCT is the primary risk taker. The Partnership has become a large collection of groups that can learn from each other with Mr McLean providing the direction. Individually, the Partnership does not manage any of the projects.

58 CONSULTATION ON GOVERNMENT PROPOSAL – ‘DRINKING RESPONSIBLY’

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Housing, Health & Community Care introducing the consultative document published by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) inviting Member comment.

By way of clarification, officers advised that:-

- Alcohol Disorder Zones were only intended to provide a short term measure while a problem existed and would be targeted at all licensed premises within the designated area. This could be considered as unfair for those premises that operate restricted opening hours, when incidents have occurred outside of that time. This could, therefore, create a practical problem of accurately apportioning blame and costs.
- Incidents should be reported to the Police, although residents could still contact the Council, who can keep a premises log. The Licensing Authority itself could not trigger a review of premises.
- Overtime bills for the Police and the Licensing Authority could be levied against the premises, but the costs of, for example, health services would be difficult to calculate.
- The main aim of the proposals is to try and control binge drinking and disorder on streets.
- Premises could be closed under the new powers for a short-term period of around 24/48 hours to deal with the immediate problem.

Resolved

That the suggested responses set out in the appendix to the officer's report be approved. (HHHCC)

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The meeting closed at 9.07 pm.

Chairman

Date