

ASSOCIATION OF ESSEX COUNCILS – LOCAL AGENDA 21 MEMBERS GROUP UPDATE

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report is to bring members up to date with progress of the Association of Essex Councils Local Agenda 21 Members group, and to discuss the current work of the Group.
- 1.2 Local Agenda 21 is a discretionary service.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 As members will be aware, there are four Member Steering Groups of the Association of Essex Councils (AEC). These are Community Safety, Local Agenda 21, Economic Development (now dissolved), and Enhancing Local Democracy for Young People.
- 2.2 The following timetable shows the Association of Essex Councils Local Agenda 21 process (which began in 1997):
 - Stage One:* Development of the Sustainability Report (1998)
 - Stage Two:* Launch of the Sustainability Report (early 1999)
 - Stage Three:* Local Authorities to report back to the AEC Members group their proposed action programmes (October 1999)
 - Stage Four:* Each Local Authority Strategy/Action Plan to feed into a strategic plan for Essex (end 2000)
 - Stage Five:* Combined Action Plan document to be launched at the full Essex Environment Forum (early 2001).
- 2.3 The main achievements of the Local Agenda 21 Group to date have therefore been the publishing of the Essex Sustainability Report, and the Essex Local Agenda 21 Youth Forum.
- 2.4 The Essex Sustainability Report contains a set of sustainability indicators, which aim to provide an illustration of the present state of the environment in Essex. The indicators set out in the report will be used as the basis against which we can measure change – as the report is updated over time, a picture of how the Essex environment is altering will emerge

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- 2.5 The Local Agenda 21 Youth Forum was designed to involve students from Essex Secondary schools, and had three main aims. Firstly to involve students in environmental issues and to consider the consequences of their lifestyles on the environment. Secondly to encourage the students to develop their vision of the future and how this could be achieved. Thirdly, to ensure that the student voice is heard by involving them in the local democratic process and through awareness raising exercises.

3 THE WAY FORWARD

- 3.1 Work is now beginning on the development of an Essex-Wide Local Agenda 21 Strategy. Essex County Council have recently produced a Local Agenda 21 consultation document, originally intended for internal use by the County Council. However, it has now been suggested that this document provide the framework for the Essex-Wide Local Agenda 21 Strategy, and that input be sought from the Association of Essex Councils, district councils, water companies, health authorities and other partners. The final document would then be subject to the approval of the Association of Essex Councils Local Agenda 21 Steering Group. Refer to Appendix One for Essex County Council consultation document.

4 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Community safety is an issue that was identified at the Rochford Local Agenda 21 Forum, recognising that a high crime rate is not compatible with a sustainable society. Community Safety was also identified as an issue in the Essex Sustainability Report produced by the Association of Essex Councils, and will be included in the Strategic Local Agenda 21 document.

5 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The environmental implications associated with Local Agenda 21 are extensive. Within the context of Local Agenda 21, a wide range of environmental issues including natural resources, health, pollution, local amenity, and quality of life can be addressed.

6 RECOMMENDATION

6.1 It is proposed that the Sub-Committee RECOMMENDS

That the progress of the Association of Essex Councils Local Agenda
21 Member Steering Group be noted. (HCPI)

Shaun Scrutton

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Background Papers:

None

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