

Review Committee – 24 October 2006

Minutes of the meeting of the **Review Committee** held on **24 October 2006** when there were present:-

Chairman: Cllr K H Hudson
Vice-Chairman: Cllr Mrs R Brown

Cllr K J Gordon
Cllr Mrs S A Harper
Cllr T Livings

Cllr Mrs J R Lumley
Cllr P K Savill
Cllr P F A Webster

ALSO PRESENT

W Bailey - Essex County Locality Youth Work Manager for Rochford District
Chief Inspector J Walker - District Commander, Essex Police and Chairman of Rochford Crime and Disorder Partnership
J Zammit - Essex County Council Partnership Co-ordinator for Castle Point and Rochford

OFFICERS PRESENT

Paul Warren - Chief Executive
R J Honey - Corporate Director (Internal Services)
P Gowers - Overview and Scrutiny Officer
J Bostock - Principal Committee Administrator

361 ESSEX POLICE – PERFORMANCE STATISTICS

In view of the need for Chief Inspector John Walker to leave the meeting as soon as possible to address police operational requirements, it was agreed that it would be appropriate to hear from the Chief Inspector prior to concluding other formalities.

Chief Inspector Walker tabled the Rochford Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership Performance Report and Statistics for August 2006. In terms of family group placing, Rochford was no lower than seventh place across the basket of crimes and in the top four in the majority of cases.

It was noted that:-

- Crime reduction targets are set by the Government and vary between Districts.
- Targets are based on a 13½% reduction for the District over a three-year period. The overall Essex average is 16%. Targets are included in the Local Area Agreement and there is likely to be additional targets added with effect from April 2007.

- In terms of publicising successes, the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership has concluded that it would be appropriate to release information covering a 12-month period, the next publication being in March 2007.
- The local Domestic Violence Panel would like to see an increase in the reporting of incidences of domestic violence. The Government Office for the East of England is aware that there is a potential dichotomy between increased reporting and meeting target reductions and understands that domestic violence needs to be seen as a particular case.
- The violent crime basket covers a wide range of crimes. 90% of the crimes within this basket are of a relatively minor nature.
- The tackling of issues such as concern about the activities of young people gathering on streets should be via a multi-agency approach. It can be the case that the feelings of individuals about personal safety can be dependant on their own attitude. There have been regular surveys on the fear of crime, which point to fear intensifying at night.
- It is not always easy to assess risks and the police would not encourage or advise individuals to tackle situations that are causing them concern.

During discussion it was recognised that the attitude taken by individuals, including young people, can sometimes come across as intimidating. It was also recognised, notwithstanding statistics, individuals can have different views about whether the fear of crime is justified.

In thanking Chief Inspector Walker for attending, the Chairman confirmed that it would be of value to receive a performance report and statistics on a monthly basis.

362 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 26 September 2006 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

With regard to the second paragraph of Minute 311(3), it was noted that the view of the Project Team monitoring the Committee system was that it would be appropriate for the Chairmen of Policy Committees to have specific meetings with Committee lead officers to facilitate involvement with agenda/meeting content. It was also recognised that, at this point, the Project Team had not submitted any recommendations to the Review Committee, only interim observations.

363 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor T Livings declared a personal interest in the Essex Youth Service Rochford Locality item by virtue of having worked with Wendy Bailey in a former role as Chairman of the Youth Strategy Group. Councillor Livings also declared a personal interest in the Bus Services Review Project by virtue of being a user of public transport.

364 PROJECT POSITION SCHEDULES

(1) Anti-social Behaviour Review Project

Prior to receiving the update position schedule for the Anti-social Behaviour Review Project, the Committee welcomed Wendy Bailey, Locality Youth Work Manager for Rochford District, who had been invited to input to the project. A summary of Wendy's main activities as they related to anti-social behaviour had been issued with the Agenda. This was supported with additional information on Wendy's own professional background. It was noted that there is currently a shortage of qualified youth workers.

Responding to questions, Ms Bailey advised that:-

- The detached youth service had previously made use of a mobile bus fitted out as a centre. Detached staff used routes that are frequented by young people and/or text young people to indicate where they will be. Locations vary as appropriate. Staff are out from 7.15 to 9.45 pm and there is a 15 minute period for the completion of evaluation sheets.
- The staff that had been involved with young offenders at Bullwood Hall had been redeployed.
- There were plans to re-open the Information Station at Rochford, which had closed due to staff resource and safety factors. Two individuals who had attended the Information Station had attended a separate youth project run during the summer.
- A feature of effective youth provision is diversity of approach.
- Information could be provided on the cost of the County Youth Service (including salaries) as a proportion of the whole of the County Council's budget.
- Contact is followed up through targeted intervention.
- Young people taking on the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme can come from a variety of backgrounds.
- There is a centre at Hullbridge.
- Holmes Place had been very accommodating to the Youth Service.

- Youth Service records would point to the service having had a presence at Clements Hall at appropriate times. The service would be happy to work with the police should there be a need to review arrangements.
- The 'prison no way' programme at Hullbridge had had mixed success. The programme had been introduced at that location so that a challenging group could be involved. All participants had received accreditation. There would be a similar programme in another locality.
- The service would welcome any Councillor wishing to accompany a detached youth worker in their activity.

The Committee noted that, whilst youth workers are frequently involved in giving advice to young people, it can be difficult to measure "prevention". It was also noted that the Chairman had been invited to attend a meeting of the Rochford District Youth Council scheduled for the following week.

Copies of advertising materials associated with the Essex County Council Youth Opportunity Fund and Youth Capital Fund, the Children's Fund Essex working with the Youth Service and the Children's Fund Essex Small Awards available for ideas from 5 to 13 year olds were tabled as part of this item. There was some concern amongst Members that the availability of such funds had not been given sufficient publicity.

Responding to questions, Ms Bailey and Mr Zammit advised that:-

- Children's Fund Essex initiatives are fed into the Children and Young Persons Strategic Partnership. Mr Zammit would check that the Rochford and Rayleigh Association of Voluntary Services had been provided with information.
- The Youth Opportunity Fund and Youth Capital Fund is still open to applicants. Details had been fed into the Children and Young Persons Strategic Partnership, the STAR Partnership and the PACT Partnership. Ms Bailey would seek clarification of take-up.
- A 'Youth Bank' involving the Rochford District Youth Council had been developed in association with these types of scheme. More information could be provided on the details of the Youth Bank.
- There is no reason a group could not put in a bid to the Youth Opportunity Fund to take people to Stubbers Adventure Centre, for example.

The position schedule relating to the Anti-social Behaviour Project was noted.

(2) The Operation of Planning Enforcement Project

Councillor K J Gordon presented the position schedule relating to the operation of planning enforcement project.

The project remained on target for the submission of recommendations in November. It was noted that Councillor Mrs A S Harper had recently met the Team Leader of Planning Enforcement and the Planning Manager.

The position schedule relating to the operation of Planning Enforcement Project was noted.

(3) Monitoring of the Committee System

Councillor Mrs R Brown presented the position schedule relating to the monitoring of the committee system project.

A recent project team meeting had included discussion on:-

- The team's view that it would be appropriate for the Chairman of Policy Committees to have specific meetings with Committee lead officers to facilitate involvement with agenda/meeting content (as referred to under Minute 362 above).
- The need for minutes to include that the Overview and Scrutiny officer would be monitoring the length of agendas against the time taken for business to be processed with a view to preparing a report in six months time.
- The consideration of questions that could be used to canvass Members and officers opinions on the Committee structure.
- The confusion associated with the format/layout of a report to a recent Audit Committee meeting. The team had noted that an executive summary sheet would be provided for such reports in the future to allow Members to focus on the issues. The team had also noted that a forthcoming meeting of the Audit Committee had been cancelled due to lack of business.
- The need for agenda documentation associated with meetings of the Planning, Policy and Transportation Committee to be despatched to all Members of the Council. A problem associated with a meeting of the Committee on 10 October had been rectified.

It was noted that the external auditor had clarified the definition of an acronym in a subsequent report. It was observed that it is entirely appropriate for a Committee meeting to be cancelled due to insufficient business given that the time table should be flexible to allow for circumstances where a Committee may need to introduce additional meetings.

The position schedule relating to the monitoring of the committee project was noted.

(4) Bus Service Project

Councillor T Livings presented the position schedule relating to the bus services project.

At this stage there were indications that bus services are adequate in the majority of areas. This was backed up by responses from the Parishes.

Specific consideration was being given to services for the Dome and the Coventry Hill area of Hullbridge. Allied to this consideration was to be given to a petition being produced by a resident of Hullbridge with the support of a resident of the Dome. A problem had been identified in relation to the Arriva No. 8 services from Southend to Spa. Costings had been sought from Essex County Council for a suggested route in the Hullbridge area.

Whilst final recommendations had yet to be developed, it may be that considerations will include the merits of one service provider for the whole District.

The position schedule relating to the bus services project was noted.

EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolved

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the remaining business on the grounds that exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 would be disclosed.

365 WINDOW CLEANING CONTRACT – REVISED COSTS

Pursuant To Overview And Scrutiny Procedure Rule 15(C)(2) the Chairman of the Review Committee had requested that the resolution of the Policy, Finance and Strategic Performance Committee relating to the window-cleaning contract be called in for scrutiny.

The discussion on this matter is set out in the exempt appendix to these Minutes.

Recommended to the Policy, Finance and Strategic Performance Committee that

(1) the resolution made at the meeting on 17 October 2006 be reconsidered and replaced with a resolution that SBS Cleaning Services be required to stand by their original four-year fixed price tender of £17,557.48, or £4,389.37 per annum, or withdraw from the window-cleaning contract. Should SBS Cleaning Services decide to withdraw, the contract to be awarded to the next lowest tenderer.

(2) future tenders for contracts relating to the cleaning and maintenance of the Council's buildings be dealt with by the Property Services department.

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The meeting closed at 9.50 pm.

Chairman

Date