

Review Committee – 13 March 2018

Minutes of the meeting of the **Review Committee** held on **13 March 2018** when there were present:-

Chairman: Cllr J C Burton
Vice-Chairman: Cllr R Milne

Cllr N L Cooper	Cllr Mrs C M Mason
Cllr R R Dray	Cllr J R F Mason
Cllr B T Hazlewood	Cllr J E Newport
Cllr N J Hookway	Cllr Mrs L Shaw
Cllr M Hoy	Cllr C M Stanley
Cllr Mrs J R Lumley	Cllr A L Williams

VISITING MEMBERS

Cllrs Mrs D Hoy and M Webb

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Mrs J R Gooding.

SUBSTITUTES

Cllr M J Lucas for Cllr Mrs J R Gooding.

OFFICERS PRESENT

S Scrutton	-	Managing Director
L Moss	-	Assistant Director, Community and Housing Services
J Bostock	-	Assistant Director, Democratic Services
P Gowers	-	Overview and Scrutiny Officer
M Power	-	Democratic Services Officer

55 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 6 February 2018 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

It was noted in respect of Minute 30/2018 that the interest rate for the Council's overnight deposits quoted at the meeting was incorrect. The overnight deposit rate for the Council's Lloyds Bank current account should have been stated as 0.4% and not 0.2%.

56 COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP

The Committee considered the report of the Assistant Director, Community and Housing Services, which provided an update on the annual review and refresh of the joint Castle Point and Rochford District Community Safety Partnership (R&CPCSP) priorities and actions.

The Committee was advised that, due to the need to attend a serious policing incident, Chief Inspector Westley had been unable to attend the meeting to provide an update on local crime statistics but would provide responses to any questions raised by Members following the meeting.

The Assistant Director, Community and Housing Services advised that the Partnership Action Plan was due to be finalised by the Steering Group imminently. Some of the actions within the Partnership priorities for 2018/19 had been carried forward from 2017/18, including the provision of one to one support for domestic abuse survivors. The success of this initiative depended on working closely with the Police and other partners. It had been confirmed that funding for the R&CPCSP for 2018/19 would be the same as 2017/18, at £12,337.

In response to questions, the following was noted:-

- There was currently nothing locally to provide support for the perpetrator of domestic abuse, although there were Police and Essex County Council initiatives that Rochford fed into. It was recognised that such initiatives could have a positive impact on future behaviour by helping to break the cycle of abuse, which could reduce reoffending rates. This could be considered going forward as part of Partnership discussions.
- Members could be provided with details of the criteria used to determine how much grant is allocated to each Policing area and if this represented a fair distribution to the R&CPCSP compared with other policing areas.
- It was not possible to confirm a direct link between the 33% decrease in dwelling burglary and crime prevention measures put forward by the Police, such as increasing lighting, locking doors, installing alarms. It was often the case that a few individuals commit many of the burglaries, so there can be a big impact if these individuals are apprehended. The reduction of dwelling burglaries remained a priority of the R&CPCSP.
- There is no follow-up evaluation from senior safety days to see if participants had taken the advice given on safety measures, only feedback on the day. The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner had requested that all local authorities measure the impact of prevention projects on crime rates more effectively. However, prevention initiatives were difficult to measure. Outcomes could be more easily measured if the R&CPCSP focussed on larger-scale projects. There continued to be survey work to establish whether the intervention by the R&CPCSP had directly caused a fall in crime statistics. The Crucial Crew event had been followed up and was generally regarded as a success.
- There was approximately one case seen each week under the 1-2-1 domestic abuse initiative, which provided support and practical advice. Referrals come from partners and Rochford District Council housing staff. The initiative is grant funded by Central Government and all partners have

access to it.

- Awareness can be raised of door to door scams by way of press releases and social media. The Council links in with the Essex County Council initiative.
- Statistics can be presented in a variety of ways and Chief Inspector Westley could be asked to advise Members of the extent to which he reviews the process of reporting of crime statistics in the Division to ensure accuracy and that they are not misleading.
- The Police and Crime Commissioner had recently headlined the problems experienced by residents in reporting crime via the 101 service as a matter of concern and Chief Inspector Westley would be asked if progress had been made in respect of the unacceptably long delays in answering calls.
- Chief Inspector Westley would be asked if additional officers would be employed in Essex, in view of the increase in the Police precept for 2018/19, and why there had been no commensurate increase in the budget for the CSP for 2018/19. The Portfolio Holder for Community advised that following the increase in the Police precept the Police and Crime Commissioner had stated that there would be 113 new front line police officers across the county and that a fair share of these new police officers would be assigned to Rochford/Castle Point. However, because of a need to train new recruits, it might take up to a year before these officers were operational.
- The Police organisation was aware of issues around serving police officers suffering with stress due to pressures of the job and provided support to officers with stress and other mental health issues.
- There was a drive to recruit additional Special Constables. The Police had asked that Council officers be asked if they wanted to volunteer under the Employer Supported Policing Scheme.
- Senior Safety Partnership Days could be extended to take place in sheltered accommodation for the elderly and this was an area that housing providers could get involved in.
- Chief Inspector Westley would be asked to provide an update on the progress on promoting Neighbourhood Watch and the current status of Community Messaging.

Resolved

- (1) That the report be noted.
- (2) That Chief Inspector Westley be asked to provide the Committee with information in response to the questions raised above.

57 'THE VOICE OF THE COUNCILLOR' – FINAL REPORT OF THE DE MONTFORT UNIVERSITY AND MUNICIPAL JOURNAL COUNCILLOR COMMISSION

The Committee considered the report of the Managing Director and the Assistant Director, Democratic Services which identified how the recommendations within the Commission's report impact on the Council.

Members agreed that a Working Party be formed to look at the report in detail, including engagement with the Chairman of the Commission, Professor Colin Copus. To provide all Members of the Council with the opportunity to be involved in discussions, Professor Copus could be invited to make a presentation to a meeting of Full Council. The Committee invited the Assistant Director, Democratic Services to attend meetings of the Working Party. There would be an initial scoping meeting in the following two weeks to decide on the specific areas within the report that would be reviewed, how this would be undertaken and an appropriate Council meeting identified. The Working Party could decide whether there was a need to seek the input of others; for example, a Member of the Cabinet, or a representative from the East of England Local Government Association. The Assistant Director, Democratic Services observed that the Committee may find it useful to consider a recently published House of Commons report on the effectiveness of local authority overview and scrutiny committees.

Resolved

That a Working Party be formed to consider 'The Voice of the Councillor' report, comprising: Cllrs Mrs J R Lumley, Mrs C M Mason, J R F Mason, J E Newport, R Milne, J C Burton and C M Stanley.

58 SOUTH ESSEX 2050

The Committee received a verbal update from the Managing Director on South Essex 2050.

The Leaders and Chief Executives/Managing Directors of the South Essex Local Authorities had been having discussions on whether proposals could be developed, working together on issues of mutual interest, including infrastructure, industrial strategy and strategic planning. A series of workshops had been held with a view to recommendations being developed, with recommendations for formal consideration by the respective Local Authorities in June 2018. Recommendations would include a proposed structure for governance arrangements.

A written report had been made to the Executive on 7 February on the broad framework of discussions in relation to South Essex 2050 and a related Memorandum of Understanding, which provides the framework for the current informal working arrangements.

Members asked for an outline of what the Leader and the Managing Director felt should be the appropriate governance arrangements and what Rochford District Council's objectives were. It was observed that authorisation from Full Council should be a consideration prior to discussions being entered into or the consideration of proposals put forward by other Councils on any of the four work streams identified. Governance arrangements should also be considered by Full Council prior to negotiations with other Councils.

The Managing Director advised that the importance of an agreed arrangement for governance in relation to the proposed Association was recognised and was being carefully considered as part of informal discussions. Once basic principles were established, proposals would be submitted to the individual local authorities, when each Council would make a decision on whether to accept them.

Also under discussion was a proposal to prepare a Joint Key Strategic Plan.

Central Government had awarded £871,000 in relation to the South Essex 2050 Vision and the preparation of a joint strategic plan. The Managing Director emphasised that Local Authorities working together in this way would be provided with an opportunity to bid for Central Government and Local Enterprise Partnership funding for infrastructure that would not be available to individual authorities. This would capitalise on potential opportunities that would benefit residents.

The Managing Director would provide Members with a response as to whether the Council would receive money towards costs of £262,000 already associated with the Essex Strategic Housing Market Assessment.

The Committee agreed that the Leader/Deputy Leader and Managing Director be invited to attend the 10 April meeting of the Review Committee or a special meeting at a separate date in April with a written report on how the Council would approach issues of governance and democratic process prior to taking negotiations further with other local authorities.

Resolved

That a further report be made to a meeting of the Review Committee in April 2018 to which the Leader/Deputy Leader and Managing Director are invited to attend.

59 KEY DECISIONS DOCUMENT

The Committee considered the key Decisions Document and noted the following:-

2/18 A127 Air Quality Project – Strategic Outline Business Case. Questions could be put to the Environmental health Team Leader. The document was available for the public to view.

3/18 A127 Air Quality Project – Outline/Final Business Case. The Council was working within Government timeframe.

4/18 Street Scene Enforcement Strategy. The report would identify which of the Council's existing officers may be given powers of enforcement where an infringement occurs.

60 WORK PLAN

The Committee considered its work plan.

The proposed Operation of the Development Committee review would be undertaken in the next Municipal Year.

Sanctuary Housing had asked to attend the meeting on 10 April in respect of the Sanctuary Housing Development Programme item. However, as this would be a review of the agreement the Council has made with Sanctuary Housing, it would not be appropriate for Sanctuary Housing to be present. A separate item could be scheduled for Sanctuary Housing to attend.

The meeting closed at 9.20 pm.

Chairman

Date

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