

## **Policy, Finance & Strategic Performance Committee – 13 July 2006**

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Minutes of the meeting of the **Policy, Finance & Strategic Performance Committee** held on **13 July 2006** when there were present:-

Chairman: Cllr T G Cutmore  
Vice-Chairman: Cllr D Merrick

Cllr C A Hungate  
Cllr Mrs J A Mockford  
Cllr R A Oatham  
Cllr C G Seagers

Cllr Mrs M A Starke  
Cllr M G B Starke  
Cllr J Thomass

### **VISITING MEMBERS**

Cllrs R A Amner, K H Hudson and Mrs L Hungate.

### **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr J E Grey.

### **OFFICERS PRESENT**

P Warren	- Chief Executive
R J Honey	- Corporate Director (Internal Services)
D Timson	- Property Maintenance & Highways Manager
Z Neeld	- Corporate Policy Manager
T Harper	- Performance Improvement Officer
S Worthington	- Committee Administrator

### **ALSO ATTENDING**

Inspector A Parkman, Essex Police

### **229 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 8 June 2006 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### **230 PROGRESS ON DECISIONS**

The Committee received the Schedule relating to Progress on Decisions. Outstanding issues would be carried forward.

### **231 UPDATE ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICING IN THE DISTRICT**

The Committee welcomed Inspector A Parkman to the meeting, who had been invited to provide an update on the development of neighbourhood policing in the District.

During Inspector Parkman's presentation to Members, the following points were noted:-

- The Government was committed to the introduction of neighbourhood policing across the country by 2008.
- Neighbourhood policing was already in operation throughout Essex, with the exception of Stansted Airport, which had been left until last.
- 5,000 questionnaires were sent out to residents in Essex seeking their views on neighbourhoods, with a return rate of around 22% of questionnaires.
- Neighbourhoods were classified on the basis of weighted indices, with, for example, a 40% weighting for a specified number of reported crimes, a 30% weighting for less serious incidents and lesser weightings for demographics, employment, etc.
- Within the Rochford District there were no priority 1 neighbourhoods, 2 priority 2 neighbourhoods and 4 priority 2 neighbourhoods.
- The staffing of a neighbourhood policing team (NPT) within a priority 2 neighbourhood consisted of 1 Police Sergeant, 6 Police Constables and 1 Police Community Support Officer and within a priority 3 neighbourhood consisted of 3 Police Constables and 1 Police Community Support Officer.
- It was anticipated that the NPTs would have a positive impact on the ability of the Police to work with local people so that people felt safer within their community and should also result in strengthened links with other service providers, local communities and businesses.
- Each NPT had a named officer, who acted as a single point of contact for all policing issues arising in the area for that neighbourhood.
- Policing resources would be prioritised to work in NPTs, with limited abstractions. 70% of resources were apportioned to NPTs, with the remainder allocated to 24-hour Police cover.
- Previously the Police operated response teams, but NPTs aimed to have the right people in the right place at the right time. There would be more Police officers working in the community between 0800 – 0200 focusing on local concerns.
- There had been a successful campaign in Hockley/Hawkehill targeting under-age drinking, resulting in a number of arrests; graffiti had been tackled at the cricket pavilion at Clements Hall playing fields by means of encouraging a graffiti artist to produce a mural in place of graffiti; a high visibility policing operation had taken place at Hockley Railway Station

working with ticket inspectors which had resulted in penalty notices being issued, some prosecutions and less youth nuisance at the station.

In response to Member questions, the following points were noted:-

- The Rochford District was performing well with respect to crime reduction targets. The targets were monitored daily by the Police, were also monitored by the Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership and were included in the Essex Local Area Agreement.
- Officers could be abstracted from Rochford District's NPTs to respond to serious spontaneous incidents elsewhere within the Division, eg, to respond to a murder in Southend.
- Each NPT's named officer held a mobile phone which could be accessed for non-emergency issues. Calls to this would be answered within 24 hours, if diverted to voicemail.
- 3 arrests had been made recently in Hockley with respect to graffiti. Issues relating to graffiti at the Hockley railway bridge needed to be addressed by the railway company and Transport Police. However, the NPT was working with these bodies and with the local community with the aim of developing some form of artwork project to address this issue. The District Council dealt with offensive graffiti as a matter of urgency but had found difficulty in addressing this particular site as the railway company would not allow access, on the grounds of health and safety.
- NPT named officers were chosen for their effectiveness; it was not uncommon for officers to wish not to live and work within the same area.
- Neighbourhood Panels were being established by Essex Police as a forum for regular exchanges between the Police and Town and Parish Councils, District Councils and local residents.
- A targeted intervention programme focusing on Rayleigh High Street, Websters Way and King George V playing field was being planned by the Police, as the District's highest recorded levels of crime took place in this area. A working group would be set up as part of this initiative, to include representatives from local businesses, schools and local residents. Around £17,000 was available for problem solving, that could be used, for example, to improve fencing and lighting where appropriate. This budget could, if necessary, be supplemented from basic command unit funding. It was probable that the Police would be applying to the District Council for renewal of dispersal powers in the Rayleigh High Street area in due course as part of this targeted approach.

### **232 PROPOSED MERGER OF BEDFORDSHIRE, ESSEX AND HERTFORDSHIRE POLICE AREAS: CONSULTATION**

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Executive on consultation being undertaken by the Home Office in respect of the proposed merger of the Bedfordshire, Essex and Hertfordshire Police forces.

The Committee noted that Essex Police had today received from the Home Office formal notification of their withdrawal of the merger proposal. During debate, caution was expressed relating to what possible next steps might be taken with respect to Police Force organisation.

#### **Resolved**

That, whilst acknowledging the Home Office's latest decision to withdraw the merger proposals, this Council maintains its support for the case put forward by Essex Police Authority that Essex remains as a 'stand alone' Police Force. (CE)

### **233 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM – QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT**

The Committee considered the report of the Corporate Director (External Services) enabling Members to consider a revised format for the Quarterly Performance Report.

The Committee commended officers on the substantial improvements that had been made recently in the quarterly performance figures.

#### **Resolved**

- (1) That the format of the Quarterly Performance Report be approved, including the Planning and Social Housing Management key information.
- (2) That the arrangement be continued whereby the Quarterly Performance Report was the only report made available on a routine basis to Members in the month following the completion of each quarter. (CD(ES))

### **234 EVALUATION OF CCTV PROVISION**

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Executive updating Members on the CCTV provided by the Council across the district, assessing its effectiveness and suggesting a way forward.

Members concurred that it was important that the Authority worked closely and in a co-ordinated manner with other local organisations with respect to CCTV, with the aim of ensuring consistency and cost effectiveness of

provision. Members further considered that CCTV was most effective when it had the capability of taking live footage.

Concern was raised that Rayleigh Town Council was currently investigating the possibilities for replacing its CCTV cameras in Rayleigh and it was thus perceived that discussions around future CCTV provision and management with all interested parties should take place at the earliest opportunity.

In response to a Member enquiry relating to mobile CCTV, officers advised that no decision had been taken with respect to purchasing mobile CCTV cameras.

### **Resolved**

- (1) That the analogue cameras be removed and replaced (plus additional cameras where necessary) and that VCRs be replaced with digital equipment at the local shopping parades at an estimated cost of £20,000.
- (2) That the older digitised cameras be replaced at a cost of approximately £9,000.

On a Motion moved by Cllr R A Oatham and seconded by Cllr T G Cutmore, it was further:-

### **Resolved**

- (3) That early discussions be agreed around the further management and maintenance of the CCTV system involving Holmes Place, the local Chambers where they are the providers and those Town and Parish Councils who have installed their own systems, with a view to determining whether a common approach can be developed. (CE)

## **235 PROPOSED PARTNERSHIP GUIDANCE**

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Executive introducing a proposed Partnership Guidance for Members' consideration and approval.

### **Resolved**

- (1) That the Partnership Guidance document, as set out in the appendix to the officer's report, be approved.
- (2) That the Guidance document be used to aid the review of Partnerships, as already agreed by Council. (CE)

### **236 ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN 2006/07**

The Committee considered the report of the Corporate Director (Internal Services) seeking Members' formal approval of the Council's Asset Management Plan 2006/07.

#### **Resolved**

That the Asset Management Plan 2006/07 be endorsed. (CD(IS))

### **237 ASSET MANAGEMENT – PROPERTY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

The Committee considered the report of the Corporate Director (Internal Services) on information reported on Property Performance Indicators for the Government.

#### **Resolved**

- (1) That the changes in performance indicators from 2004/05 to 2005/06 be noted.
- (2) That the new suite of local performance indicators for 2006/07 onwards, as outlined in appendix D to the officer's report, be agreed. (CD(IS))

### **238 RAYLEIGH AND ROCHFORD ASSOCIATION OF VOLUNTARY SERVICES (RRAVS) – POSITION UPDATE**

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Executive updating Members on the current position in relation to the Rayleigh and Rochford Association of Voluntary Services.

Members welcomed the changing dynamics of the Rayleigh and Rochford Association of Voluntary Services and noted that RRAVS had asked whether the Authority would consider nominating a Member to act as a RRAVS trustee. Members, while mindful of the possibility that RRAVS might request additional funding from the Council, nevertheless considered that there would be merit in appointing a trustee, as this would complement the work of the Local Strategic Partnership and could help RRAVS to access funding streams that were increasingly becoming available to the voluntary sector.

#### **Resolved**

- (1) That the current position and the role of the Local Strategic Partnership in attempting to look at the voluntary sector and the role of RRAVS within the District be noted.

It was further:-

### **Recommended to Council**

- (2) That a Member be nominated to become a trustee of RRAVS. (CE)

### **239 EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY**

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Executive seeking Members' approval to adopt a Corporate Equalities Strategy and Action Plan setting out the Council's approach to equalities and diversity issues.

### **Resolved**

- (1) That the Corporate Equalities Strategy appended to the officer's report be adopted.
- (2) That its commitment to achieving level 1 of the Equality Standard by 31 March 2007 be confirmed.
- (3) That further reports on revisions to the Race Equalities Scheme and the development of the Disability Equality Scheme be received on a half yearly basis. (CE)

### **240 HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION – COMPULSORY LICENSING FEE STRUCTURE**

The Committee considered the report of the Corporate Director (External Services) on the setting of the fee structure for houses in multiple occupation that require a licence.

### **Resolved**

- (1) That the fee for the compulsory licensing of HMOs will be £300 for an HMO with up to five bedrooms and a further £50 for each additional bedroom.
- (2) That the licence will last for five years.
- (3) That the fee for variation will be 50% of the licensing fee.
- (4) That an HMO owned by a registered charity shall be exempt from licensing fees. (CD(ES))

### **241 PROPOSAL TO MAKE CHANGES TO THE METHOD OF THE ANNUAL CANVASS OF ELECTORS**

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Administrative and Member Services seeking the views of Members on a proposal to introduce

an internet registration system as part of the annual canvass of electors in September 2006, whilst still continuing with the postal and automated telephone response systems.

It was noted that the Electoral Administration Bill 2006 had received Royal Assent on 11<sup>th</sup> July 2006. A Members' briefing would be arranged in the autumn highlighting how the new legislation would affect the District Council.

### **Resolved**

That the system of internet registration be introduced as part of the canvass conducted from September – December 2006 in addition to the telephone registration and traditional postal returns and that the practice of direct contact with non-responders be continued during the final stages of the canvass to ensure the continued accuracy of the register. (HAMS)

## **242 ANNUAL EFFICIENCY STATEMENT – BACKWARD LOOK 2005/06**

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Finance, Audit and Performance Management seeking Members' approval on the Annual Efficiency Statement – Backward Look 2005/06.

Members congratulated officers on managing to exceed the original savings targets.

In response to a Member enquiry relating to the 57% increase in tonnage of street sweepings under the street cleansing contract, officers confirmed that this was as a result of a combination of increased litter dropping by residents and an improvement in the quality of service by Serviceteam operatives. Members also felt that the recent environmental campaign would have contributed to this increased tonnage.

Responding to a further Member question about recycling credits, officers advised that any recycling credits would be ploughed back into recycling and waste management initiatives.

### **Resolved**

That the Annual Efficiency Statement Backward Look 2005/06, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, be agreed. (HFAPM)

## **243 APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES – ADULT COMMUNITY LEARNING SOUTH ESSEX AREA GOVERNING BODY**

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Administrative and Member Services asking Members to consider recommending the appointment of a representative to a new Outside Body, the Adult Community Learning South Essex Area Governing Body.



**Recommended to Council**

That Cllr C A Hungate be appointed to the Adult Community Learning South Essex Area Governing Body. (HAMS)

**244 CONSERVATION AND HERITAGE AWARDS 2006**

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Planning and Transportation seeking Members' agreement to the appointment of a Member Panel to judge the entries to the Rochford Design, Heritage and Conservation Awards for 2006.

**Resolved**

That Cllrs R A Amner, T G Cutmore, T Livings, D G Stansby and Mrs M J Webster be nominated to form a Panel to judge the 2006 Rochford Design, Heritage and Conservation Awards. (HPT)

The meeting closed at 9.20 pm.

Chairman .....

Date .....