

ROCHFORD COMMUNITY STRATEGY CONSULTATION

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report outlines the feedback received to date on the draft Community Strategy for Rochford District for Members consideration and comment in respect of the draft strategy.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 Members may recall that the draft Strategy was considered at the meeting of 29th July 2003 and that comment on the draft was deferred pending further feedback on the public consultation taking place (min. 368).
- 2.2 This report presents an analysis of the findings of the public consultation to date. The results from the questionnaires from Rochford District Matters and the Consultation Panel have yet to be fully analysed, nonetheless, the responses of the consultation carried out to date and processed are outlined below.

3 CONSULTATION RESULTS ANALYSED SO FAR

- 3.1 Approximately 460 responses, covering a wide range of ages and from a variety of parishes, have been analysed to date.
- 3.2 The consultation comprised the following questions: -
- What is good about where you live?
 - What needs improving?
 - Your three priorities for action
 - If the Partnership could achieve one thing over the next three years, what would you like it to be?
- 3.3 The responses received reveal that residents like the District due to its quietness and rural nature, with parks and countryside among the top comments. Shops and schools, both primary and secondary, score highly. Community spirit and the people also rank highly for making the District a good place to live.
- 3.4 By far the highest ranking comment for what needs improving amongst the responses received is more for young people to do and places for them to go; this comment has been made by 16% of the responses analysed. Improved

bus services also figure highly with a high proportion of comments on buses being made by residents of villages. Policing is an issue high on the residents' agenda, with most comments being that people would like to see a greater presence with local police officers visible in their area. Many people accept that the crime rate is comparatively low, but felt that a more visible presence would reduce the youth nuisance, graffiti and vandalism, which is considered to be an issue. There was a feeling that shops are in need of improvement; these comments were made with regard to the variety of shops in the District's centres generally although the poor state of some of the shops in Hockley in particular is commented upon. Car parking in the towns is also raised, with some people wanting to see a change in the scale of charging to allow for shorter stays and some wishing to see the first half an hour being free of charge. Another issue which ranks highly is the amount of building and new development that is going on around the District, with comments mainly concerned with the lack of infrastructure and amenities to cope with it.

- 3.5 When asked to consider priorities, it is clear that there is a very strong desire to see more visible policing in both the rural areas and the towns. Activities to occupy young people is also coming out strongly. Traffic features highly here with many comments analysed being about congestion along the main routes through the District. There is a strong desire to see a clean and tidy District with many feeling that there is a need to further develop a pride in the District.
- 3.6 When asked what one thing the partnership should focus on, the comments analysed strongly reflect the previous answers with more police and more visible policing coming top, followed by more for the youth.
- 3.7 Feedback from the Consultation Panel recruited jointly with Castle Point Borough Council and the Castle Point and Rochford Primary Care Trust should be available by the end of October and its conclusions will be reported orally if available.

4 COMMENTS

- 4.1 Council may now like to formally give its views as a consultee as to what it feels should be the main priorities that should be addressed through the Community Strategy. Clearly, the Council itself, through its own strategies and plans, has a range of priorities already in place. However, the consultation allows for the Council to give a view, particularly on the priorities it considers should be addressed in those areas where it is not the main driving force and where the main responsibilities may rest with one or more of the other partners.

5 RISK IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Strategic Risk

The Community Strategy is seen as a key element of Comprehensive Performance Assessment.

5.2 Reputation Risk

Conclusions drawn from the consultations will need to be considered along with how actions could be delivered. Non delivery of actions could affect the reputation of the Authority.

5.3 Regulatory Risk

The Community Strategy needs to be completed and acted upon as this is a legal requirement.

6 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The Community Strategy includes a theme of “Feeling Safe” which incorporates potential actions to deal with crime and disorder.

7 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The Community Strategy will incorporate Local Agenda 21 Strategy issues.

8 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Once the Community Strategy has been completed and an action plan drawn up, it may incur a resource implication for the Authority and these will need to be considered as part of the budget making process.

9 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The production of the Community Strategy is a requirement of the Local Government Act 2000.

10 PARISH IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The Parish and Town Councils are represented on the LSP Steering Group.

11 RECOMMENDATION

- 11.1 It is proposed that the Council **RESOLVES**

To give its views on the key priorities which should be addressed through the Community Strategy, given the initial feedback now reported on the consultation exercise.

Paul Warren

Chief Executive

Background Papers:

Draft Community Strategy

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