

Minutes of the meeting of the **Partnership Sub-Committee** held on Wednesday **17 January 2001** when there were present:

Cllr R S Allen – Chairman

Cllr Mrs J Hall
Cllr G A Mockford

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor T G Cutmore (Rochford District), Councillor M Farrant (Hullbridge Parish), Councillor G Fox (Rochford District), Councillor Mrs E M Hart (Essex County Council), Councillor M Morgan (Hawkwell Parish), H E Morris (Clerk, Great Wakering Parish), Councillor S Murton (Rawreth Parish), Councillor I Puzey (Paglesham Parish), Councillor P D Stebbing (Great Wakering Parish), Councillor Mrs L Vingoe (Hockley Parish) and Councillor Mrs M J Webster (Rochford District)

SUBSTITUTE

Councillor J E Grey.

REPRESENTING ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL

Cllrs K Bobbin, R Boyd and Mrs T Chapman.

REPRESENTING TOWN & PARISH COUNCILS

Mrs H Allen	(Barling Magna Parish)
P Beckers	(Rayleigh Town)
Mrs M Beckers	(Rawreth Parish)
Mrs L Campbell-Daly	(Hullbridge Parish)
D Collins	(Hockley Parish)
J R Colvell	(Ashingdon Parish)
A Dobson	(Sutton Parish)
M J Ewers	(Rochford Parish)
Mrs P M V Pearse	(Rayleigh Town)
Mrs J Rigby	(Clerk, Stambridge Parish)
I Rooke	(Hawkwell Parish)
Mrs J Smith	(Canewdon Parish)
B Summerfield	(Sutton Parish & Barling Parish)
Mrs M S Vince	(Rochford Parish)

Officers Attending

P Warren	Chief Executive
A Hudson	Assistant Chief Executive, Essex County Council

A Smith
Ms L Cain
G Brazendale

Head of Administrative and Member Services
Principal Strategy Officer, Essex County Council
Committee Administrator

103 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 19 October 2000 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

104 COMMUNITY STRATEGIES

The Sub-Committee considered the report of the Chief Executive which outlined the key elements of the finalised guidance issued by Central Government concerning the development of Community Plans, and proposed a role in that process for the Partnership Sub-Committee.

Members were informed of the contents of the guidance on the following topics:-

- What is a Community Strategy: objectives, components, and guiding principles
- Key elements of an effective strategy
- Councillors' involvement
- Establishing a local strategic partnership, comprising the main partners operating in the area covered by the strategy
- Establishing a vision, aiming to arrive at a broad consensus about what the area should look like in 10-15 years' time
- Implementation of Community Strategies

The report also outlined the implications of the guidance for the District.

In his introduction to the report, the Chief Executive explained that the strategy was likely to take between eighteen months and three years to develop and implement. It was intended to involve, in addition to representatives of the three tiers of local Government, the Police, Probation and Health Services as well as other public, private and voluntary organisations. Co-ordination between the action plans and strategies currently being developed in relation to a wide range of the Council's activities and initiatives and the Community Strategy would be of paramount importance.

The Chairman introduced and welcomed to the Meeting Mr Andrew Hudson, Assistant Chief Executive, Essex County Council, who outlined progress to date in developing Community Strategies at the County level. The County Council would be seeking to identify ways in which individual Districts' strategies could be linked across Essex, and

to develop an overall Community Strategy for the County. The latter would clearly be influenced by input from local communities whilst, conversely, initiatives relating to services provided by the County Council, such as education, would impact upon Districts' strategies. The Essex Chief Executive's Association had established a Working Group to draw up detailed proposals, including "mock ups" of possible structures to encourage partnership working, for discussion by the Association of Essex Councils.

It was likely that the Group would present its report to the Association in March. Concurrently, the County Council's Corporate Management Team would be considering ways of ensuring co-ordination of the Districts' strategies, identification of issues common to all Districts, the maximisation of public involvement and the implications of the initiative for staff time.

During discussion, the following main points arose:-

- The role of Parishes. Parish Councils could use their local knowledge to identify the needs of communities for services provided by the County/District Council and other agencies, in particular highlighting the location of, and reasons for, shortfalls or deficiencies in service delivery. As part of this process, however, the resources available to the various service providers would need to be considered to determine what could practicably be achieved, and the limitations imposed by other Government legislation would also need to be recognised.
- The views of Districts' links Committees concerning the White Paper would be communicated to the appropriate Cabinet Member/Select Committee of the County Council within whose remit this particular issue fell.
- Within the District Council's new political structures, it was likely that a links body would need to be established as a forum to co-ordinate, and contribute towards, the development of a Community Strategy.
- Involvement of the voluntary sector, and service users, in the Strategy's development was considered essential.
- The complexity of the proposals, and their implications for Officer/Member time should not be underestimated. There could be a need to obtain expert, independent advice, which would itself need to be scrutinised.
- A long term commitment to the policy by the Government was considered essential to its success.

- The need to reconcile the Community Strategy with the requirements of other policies and legislation affecting the District, for example in relation to planning, was recognised.

It was acknowledged that the development of a Community Strategy would be a demanding task in shire areas, such as Rochford, where there are effectively three tiers of public authority – the County Council, the District and the Town and Parish Councils – together with numerous other partner agencies. It was therefore agreed that this Sub-Committee, which brings together the three tiers of local government in the area, would provide a useful forum for co-ordinating the Community Planning process, at least in its initial stages, with other partner agencies being involved as the process develops. A report would therefore be presented to the next meeting outlining future action and the timeframe involved, taking the views of the partner agencies into account.

RECOMMENDED

That, subject to the views of its constituent bodies, the Partnership Sub-Committee should initially be responsible for overseeing and progressing work in association with the development of a Community Strategy, or Strategies, for Rochford District. (CEX)

105 OUR COUNTRYSIDE: THE FUTURE

The Sub-Committee considered the report of the Head of Planning Services which provided an introduction to the White Paper entitled “Our Countryside: the future” published in November 2000. A summary of the main points within the White Paper was appended to the report.

Members were reminded that the report had already been examined by Planning Policy Sub-Committee, at which a wide range of issues had been considered in detail.

Officers advised as follows in relation to Member questions:-

- It was recognised that Rochford District was neither fully urban nor fully rural in character and therefore would often not qualify for available Government funding under the initiatives proposed in the White Paper. Rochford was a member of the Town and County Financial Issues Group, which sought to lobby on behalf of such authorities. It is unlikely that Rochford itself would meet the criteria for assistance from the market town regeneration fund.
- It was doubtful whether government initiatives to address rural crime would result in a significant increase in Police numbers for the District.

County Officers undertook to provide responses to specific Member questions concerning the application of environmental impact

assessment procedures at the Barling landfill site and the possibility of achieving speed limit reductions in the District's villages.

RECOMMENDED

That the summary of the White Paper "Our Countryside: the future" be noted and that further reports be brought to appropriate Committees as the individual elements of the proposals outlined in the document are developed by the Government. (HPS)

106 OUR TOWNS AND CITIES: THE FUTURE

The Sub-Committee considered the report of the Head of Planning Services which outlined the key elements of the White Paper entitled "Our Towns and Cities: the future" published in November 2000. A summary of the main themes within the White Paper was appended to the report.

The report had been considered by Planning Policy Sub-Committee on 4 January 2001.

In responding to a Member question, the Principal Strategy Officer informed the Sub-Committee of the County Council's education for citizenship initiative which sought, through the establishment of School Councils, to strengthen pride in local communities in order to achieve a cleaner local environment.

RECOMMENDED

That the summary of the White Paper "Our Towns and Cities: the future" be noted and that further reports be brought to appropriate Committees as the individual elements of the proposals outlined in the document are developed by the Government. (HPS)

107 NEXT MEETING

The following were identified as possible topics for the next meeting on 19 April 2001:

- Community Strategy: Proposals for development
- District Council's Committee Structure: Update on the possible new political structure
- Presentation by the Police concerning youth nuisance/vandalism

The meeting closed at 9.00pm

Chairman _____

Date_____