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## **PARTNERSHIP REVIEW**

### **1 SUMMARY**

1.1 The Council has a programme to review its major partnerships with approximately five reviews completed each year. This report presents the results of the reviews undertaken of five partnerships that the Council is involved in and which have not previously been reviewed. The reviews were on the following partnerships:-

- Castle Point & Rochford Domestic Violence Panel
- Thames Gateway Area Waste Joint Committee
- Crouch & Roach Estuary Management Group
- Star Partnership
- Essex Online Partnership

### **2 INTRODUCTION**

2.1 The reviews have looked at four key components of each partnership, and these are:-

- The need for the partnership to continue
- The commitment, role and responsibilities of the various partners
- The value of the partnership to the Council, and its own role and responsibilities
- The governance, performance management, financial and risk management arrangements of the Partnership

2.2 The outcome of each review has been sent to the relevant Partnership for their comments. The results of each review and any responses received are detailed below.

### **3 CASTLE POINT & ROCHFORD DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PANEL**

3.1 The aim of the Partnership is to encourage victims of domestic violence to report incidents, in order to assess the extent of the problem. The Partnership will then broaden its approach and address some of the issues surrounding domestic violence.

3.2 This Partnership is a sub group of the Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) and its membership comprises:-

Rochford District Council	Castle Point Borough Council
Citizens Advice Bureau	Essex County Council
Basildon Women’s Aid	Essex Police
Essex Fire & Rescue Service	National Probation Service
Castle Point & Rochford PCT	StAR Partnership
(South East Essex PCT wef 1/10/06)	Paul Robinson Solicitors
Victim Support	

3.3 Rochford District CDRP contributes £7,200 from the Safer & Stronger Communities Grant and the Council also provides £9,900 from the Homeless Fund towards the Drop-In Project.

3.4 The Domestic Violence Officer and Cllr Susan Harper are the representatives for Rochford District Council. The Essex County Council representative chairs the meetings, having been voted in by the other members.

3.5 While the review concluded that the partnership should continue, there were some weaknesses within the governance of the partnership. These issues related to an improved layout of the action plans, the provision of a financial spreadsheet at meetings, and evaluation sheets showing the number of clients using the projects.

3.6 The Chairman of the partnership has responded to the review, and his detailed response is attached as an appendix to this report. Whilst agreeing with the suggestions made, the partnership does not have the resources to put them into place. The Council will continue to review this partnership and report back in 6 months’ time on progress in implementing the recommendations.

**4 THAMES GATEWAY AREA WASTE JOINT COMMITTEE**

4.1 To undertake / oversee on behalf of each partner Authority the procurement exercise and to obtain a final proposal from the preferred private sector partner for the provision of waste management services, assets, facilities and solutions in the Thames Gateway Area Group. This does not include individual authority’s waste contracts.

4.2 The members of this partnership are:-

Essex County Council	Rochford District Council
Castle Point Borough Council	Basildon District Council
Southend Borough Council	

4.3 Rochford District Council’s financial contribution to the partnership totals £9,271 over the last 3 years, representing 0.9% of the total funding. Essex County Council has contributed 84% of the overall funding and they have also provided administrative resources.

4.4 The Partnership has been able to use the services of consultants to make assessments on Kerbside Analysis Techniques and tendering procedures.

The partnership have contributed to the County Council acquiring a lease on a site that will be converted to a waste management centre that will sort recyclable materials, treat household black sacks via mechanical biological treatment, compost garden and food waste. This will enable this Council to improve the quality and efficiency of their waste collection and disposal.

- 4.5 The review concluded that there were no issues with this partnership, and that the Council's support should continue.

## **5 CROUCH & ROACH ESTUARY MANAGEMENT GROUP**

- 5.1 This partnership was set up to administer the Crouch and Roach for the enjoyment of members of the public. It was included in the review, although it has been defunct since the agreement ended at the end of March 2006.

- 5.2 The membership of the partnership was:-

Rochford District Council	Essex County Council
Maldon District Council	Natural England
Crouch Harbour Authority	Crown Estates Commissioners
DEFRA	Environment Agency

- 5.3 Rochford District Council's financial contribution to the Partnership over the three-year period of the agreement, which ended in March 2006, was £25,000.

- 5.4 Although the partnership itself is no longer in place, a management plan was drawn up, and several of the objectives within the plan are being continued by external agencies. A monetary refund has been agreed for the monies remaining at the end of the agreement.

- 5.5 This Partnership will be deleted from the Register of Partners held by the Council.

## **6 STAR PARTNERSHIP**

- 6.1 The aim of this partnership is to improve the lives of residents in the district of Rochford with a special emphasis on those who live in pockets of deprivation through a variety of projects.

- 6.2 The membership of the partnership is:-

Essex County Council	Rayleigh Library Service
Rochford District Council	Rochford Community Projects
Castle Point & Rochford	Primary Care Trust
Genesis Housing Group	Footprints Community Group
Rayleigh & Rochford District	The Adult College – South Essex
Association of Voluntary Services (RAVS)	
Extended Schools – Rochford	

- 6.3 Rochford District Council did contribute £18,000 per annum towards the Project Co-ordinator post from the Council's Community Safety budget for a two-year period. However that has now lapsed. The Primary Care Trust has funded the remainder of the post. Other funding comes from grants and bids for external funds, and these are for named projects within the partnership.
- 6.4 The review concluded that this partnership is clearly meeting the needs of the local community and is contributing to the growing self-esteem of residents and helping them to feel safer in the area. The local residents have identified what is needed in their community, and the projects have been based on their suggestions. More people are now working together in the area, and projects are gradually getting more people on board.
- 6.5 The review concluded that there were no issues with this partnership, and that, if requested by the partnership, further funding support within budget provision should be given.

## 7 ESSEX ONLINE PARTNERSHIP

- 7.1 The aim of this partnership is to establish an Essex e-government framework to provide socially inclusive, integrated, accessible and higher quality services to citizens and local businesses in ways that are convenient to them and help authorities to become more efficient.

- 7.2 The membership currently comprises:-

Essex County Council	Basildon District Council
Braintree District Council	Brentwood Borough Council
Castle Point Borough Council	Chelmsford Borough Council
Colchester Borough Council	Epping Forest District Council
Essex Police	Essex Fire & Rescue
Essex Strategic Health Authority	Maldon District Council
Rochford District Council	Tendring District Council
Uttlesford District Council	Southend Borough Council
	Harlow District Council

- 7.3 The partnership is funded on a subscription basis and Rochford District Council's contribution was £14,781 in 2006/07 but this is estimated to reduce to £11,500 for 2007/08. The partnership has generated a number of savings for the Council, which have been included in our Annual Efficiency Statements and include:-

- Use of shared network facilities for the links, which allow the NNDR operation to be carried out in Chelmsford.
- Integrated telephone service with Essex County Council, which enables RDC to benefit from cheaper call costs.
- A reverse auction for the purchase of IT equipment at costs of around 41% cheaper than previous suppliers.

The network facilities and integrated telephony are saving about £24,000 while the reverse auction will generate non-cashable savings now that Sungard Vivista are purchasing the equipment via this route.

- 7.4 The review concluded that there were no issues with this partnership, and funding should be continued.

## **8 NEXT REVIEWS**

- 8.1 The intention is to have a rolling programme of reviews of the major partnerships that the Council is involved in. The partnerships identified for the next tranche of reviews are:-

- The Essex Waste Management Advisory Group
- The Groundwork Trust South Essex
- The Procurement Agency for Essex
- Castle Point and Rochford Drug & Alcohol Reference Group
- Thames Gateway South Essex Housing Strategy Forum

- 8.2 The reviews suggested for 2008/09 are based on the Local Strategic Partnership groups, namely:-

- Children and Young Persons' Strategic Partnership
- Healthy Communities and Older Persons Partnership
- Economic Development Regeneration Group

## **9 RISK IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 Partnership working is becoming an increasingly important way for local authorities to work. It is therefore important that the Council has a risk management process that specifically considers the risks associated with significant partnerships and obtains assurance about the management of those risks. These reviews form part of that assurance which require the Council to:-

- Regularly review the financial performance and outputs of significant partners, sharing the results with the partners and acting upon the results.
- Confirm that appropriate governance arrangements are in place and regularly reviewed and updated.
- Ensure that Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and Scheme of Delegation make specific reference to partnerships.

**10 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 Two of the partnerships under review have been set up to tackle crime and disorder issues and they play an important part in encouraging community involvement.

**11 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1 Rochford District Council's financial contribution to the individual partnerships has been included in the body of the report. Partnership working is a way of improving value for money as evidenced by the savings achieved through the Essex on-line partnership. Partnership working will become an increasingly important part of the assessment of the Council's Use of Resources. One of the Level 4 criteria for excellent practice under Value for Money is for the Council to have a clear understanding of the total resources at the disposal of the partnerships and that there is a track record of partnerships delivering improved Value for Money. These reviews have provided evidence that the Council is meeting this particular criteria.

**12 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 12.1 The Council needs to ensure that there are sound governance arrangements in place for significant partnerships so that issues of liability are addressed and managed.

**13 RECOMMENDATION**

- 13.1 It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES**
- (1) To endorse the findings of the reviews
  - (2) To receive a report in March 2008 on the implementation of the recommendations made in respect of the Castle Point and Rochford Domestic Violence Panel.
  - (3) To agree the next reviews as detailed in the report.
  - (4) To agree that at the next review of the Council's Constitution, the Financial Regulation and the scheme of delegation will make specific reference to partnerships.

Yvonne Woodward

Head of Finance, Audit and Performance Management

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**Background Papers:-**

Partnership Reviews

For further information please contact Mrs Y Woodward on:-

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If you would like this report in large print, braille or another language please contact 01702 546366.

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Partnership review

Castle Point & Rochford Domestic Violence Panel

Further to the Partnership review of the above Panel I would like to thank you on behalf of the Panel for your comments and conclusion which we feel are very positive.

With regard to section D of the conclusion concerning governance, performance management and financial and risk management arrangements we have the following comments to make.

Action plans

You are correct that the column headed progress to date is often left blank as entries are made when only further progress has taken place. The main reason for this however is because of the lack of human resource to undertake both the chasing up and the physical updating of the document. This action plan forms part of the main action plan of the CDRP which is a substantial document. The overall aim would be to update this document on a three monthly basis but to be candid, the CDRP Partnership struggles to update the document once a year and without more resource it would be difficult to improve upon this situation.

With regards to minutes written during the meetings, we would only be too pleased to add a column which signifies who should undertake what action.

Financial information – spreadsheets

We would be very happy to produce a spreadsheet listing expenditure from funding gained by the panel, however it should be noted that much of the funding received is not necessarily for a single objective but may meet several objectives in the action plan.

Bank Account

The DV bank account currently held by Basildon Women's Aid does in fact have two signatories.

Evaluation

Our comments regarding undertaking evaluation on a quarterly basis are similar to those under the heading of Action Plans. We think this is an excellent idea however there is again a resource issue around the collation and publication of figures this frequently. It should also be noted that although partners within the DV Panel are very committed individuals, asking them to undertake this task on a quarterly basis would be difficult to implement.



Termination Agreement

As with all partnerships that I am aware of, the unwritten protocol when a partner wishes to withdraw is to tender their resignation to the Panel. It is common practice for an agency to assign a replacement as and when this occurs. Because of this practice, drawing up a termination agreement would seem superfluous although I will ask for the matter to be raised at our next DV meeting. I will also ask the group to look at our current terms of reference with a view to updating them as necessary.

I hope that the above comments are helpful and should you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact us.

Kind regards

John Zammit

John Zammit, Chairman – Domestic Violence Panel