



**MINUTES of
Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting as the
CRIME AND DISORDER COMMITTEE
29 SEPTEMBER 2010**

PRESENT

Chairman	Councillor R C Laurie
Vice Chairman	Councillor A J Cussen
Councillors	A R Cheshire and Miss M R Lewis
Substitute Member	Councillor Mrs S M Young

415. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTION NOTICE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors N R Pudney and Rev A E J Shrimpton. In accordance with notice duly given, Councillor Mrs S M Young was attending as a substitute for Councillor Shrimpton.

416. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 21 April 2010 be approved and confirmed.

417. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None were received.

418. PRESENTATION – NEIGHBOURHOOD ACTION PANELS

The Committee received a presentation from Inspector Nigel Cockrell of Essex Police on the current review of Neighbourhood Action Panels (NAPs). Copies of a review paper produced by Essex Police were circulated at the meeting.

It was noted that NAPs had been introduced in 2006 as part of policing pledge in response to a Government initiative to establish formal community engagement. Six NAPs had been set up within the Maldon District. The review concluded that these varied in the way they operated and had generally been unsuccessful in terms of public support, with relatively low-key issues such as nuisance behaviour and speeding traffic being raised. The present arrangements were therefore unsatisfactory and amongst the various recommendations coming out of the review it was clear that if NAPs were to continue then there needed to be a consistency of approach, together

with the removal of any 'closed' sessions, to achieve more effective community engagement. The response of Essex Police chief officers to the review was awaited.

In the discussion that followed, the following points were raised:

- Panel meetings had become 'talking shops' with no real community empowerment;
- Neighbourhood Watch Schemes were a good example of community engagement and empowerment and should continue to be supported;
- The lack of public support for NAPs might have been due to the lack of publicity and meetings moving around Parishes within the rural parts of the District;
- The police reporting link (normally through PCSO's and Community Officers) with Parish and Town Councils was valuable and should be encouraged;
- The relatively low-key issues being raised at NAPs might be indicative of the lack of significant crime and disorder problems within the District;
- Any early effectiveness of NAPs had disappeared and to continue their operation would be a waste of police resources.

The Head of Leisure and Liveability confirmed that the Committee's comments would be fed back to the continuing consultation on this with the Community Safety Partnership.

Inspector Cockrell was thanked for his presentation.

419. COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP 2010 / 11

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Leisure and Liveability on the present position regarding the financial spending plans of the Maldon Community Safety Partnership (CSP) for 2010 / 11 and providing an update on priorities for 2011 / 12.

A copy of the financial statement of the CSP as approved by the Responsible Authorities Group (RAG) was attached at Appendix 1. A copy of the Basic Command Unit Fund (BCU) spend to date and a list of proposals for the remainder of the financial year, also approved by RAG had been circulated as Appendix 2 subsequent to the agenda issue. Appendix 3 to the report set out details of priorities for next year identified by the Community Safety Solutions Group (formerly the Partnership Steering Group) and RAG for submission to the Crime and Disorder Network Executive at Essex County Council. On the latter item, it was noted that given the current uncertainties over budgets including the Government's Area Based Grant, it was too early to assemble a definitive spending plan for 2011 / 12.

The Community Development Officer, acting as Interim Community Safety Partnership Manager, explained the report in detail, including the current community safety team structure and funding arrangements. It was noted that only the Community Safety Partnership Manager post was wholly funded by the District Council, and the RAG had expressed the hope that this would continue.

Concern was expressed within the Committee that as useful and interesting the information was, it lacked detail in terms of assessing the effectiveness of the various projects and initiatives. As with funding bids being supported by business cases at the outset, subsequent evaluation needed to be properly evidence based. This would also help inform bids for further funding. Concern was also expressed at the potential posts at risk and whether this had been adequately 'flagged up' in this Council's budget prioritisation exercise.

The Officers accepted the need for more evaluation and for this information to accompany future reports. It was however pointed out that this Council was just one participant in the CSP, and other partners could better evaluate the effectiveness of certain initiatives. The Head of Leisure and Liveability drew Members' attention to the impending joint Peer Review of the Maldon and Chelmsford CSPs, which would be looking at how the CSP operated and whether there were alternative methods of operation in order to meet its minimum requirements given future financial constraints. It was anticipated that the conclusions of the Peer Review would be available by the end of October, and therefore able to inform the budgetary considerations of this Council.

In the continuing discussion, the view was reiterated that it was necessary to show that this area of work was effective and had significant value, and that the expenditure could be justified to the public. In response, the Head of Leisure and Liveability said that the structure within which the CSP sat provided for the monitoring by the RAG of spending, and in terms of effectiveness the Home Office had recognised the reduction in crime levels over recent years. In this and other examples, the success and effectiveness was not down to one individual partner but rather the partnership as a whole. A Strategic Assessment was produced and published annually, supported by an action plan and a spending plan. A draft was submitted to the Committee six months ago, and would provide the basis for subsequent review.

Subject to the points as set out above, the Committee noted the report.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.00pm.

R C LAURIE
CHAIRMAN

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