

# Cabinet Issues

## 1. **'Delivering a Stronger Relationship with the Voluntary and Community Sector' (VCS): a refreshed VCS Strategy for Essex County Council**

Cabinet to approved a refreshed and updated VCS strategy entitled 'Delivering a Stronger Relationship with the Voluntary and Community Sector'.

The strategy sets out a vision and three-year action plan for the Council to work in close partnership with the VCS in order to deliver 'enhanced quality of life to local communities'. The rationale behind the refresh and update was twofold. First, in a spirit of continual improvement, it was considered timely to revisit the earlier strategy and to identify areas for improvement, development and of opportunity. The new strategy contains a three-year action plan to address these. Second, developments in the political and economic spheres, at both a national and local level, prompted a strategic review of how the Council works with the VCS. The new strategy thus addresses the Council's relationship with the VCS in the light of the developing 'Big Society' agenda, the Council's 'transformation' programme, and the post-CSR public-sector funding environment.

## 2. **Changes to the processing of Section 106 Agreements (S106)**

Section 106 Agreements are used by the Council to acquire the funding and infrastructure works necessary to off-set the impact of development on the County's transportation network. Section 106 Agreements under the Town and Country Planning Act form a contractual agreement between parties, in this case the Council and a Developer. They are binding on the land and so transfer with ownership. A S106 Agreement will also cover a number of other issues which provide protection to the Council. This would not be the case with a condition in respect to the delivery of works or/and a financial contribution, such as timing of contributions and insurances and other indemnities where works are proposed.

However, the negotiation and preparation of such Agreements can require a considerable amount of officer time. In view of this and considering the current economic climate, Cabinet has agreed that the Council should charge for this service going forward. The charges proposed cover three activities currently undertaken by Council staff with respect to their involvement in the processing of S106 Agreements:

- The charge for processing a Unilateral Undertaking (a short one-sided S106) a variation or a supplemental to an existing Agreement will be £100.00
- The charge for processing a minor S106 agreement or related Section 278 Agreement will be £200.00.

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- The charge for processing a major S106 Agreement will be £400.00.

Subject to commercial activity it can be expected that this level of charging will generate funds in the region of £28,200 per annum for the Council.

The charging regime proposed should not deter developers from entering into a Section 106 Agreement. It has to be recognised that there is no statutory requirement so to do and a developer could rely on a condition or a Unilateral Undertaking to deliver the planning obligation.

Peter Martin  
Leader of the Council