

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE SAFER AND STRONGER COMMUNITIES
POLICY & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD AT COUNTY HALL, CHELMSFORD, ON
6 APRIL 2009**

Membership

Councillors:-

* P. Baker (Chairman)	Miss R. Liebeschuetz
* E. Bishop	* Dr. A. Naylor
Mrs. T. Higgins(Vice Chairman)	* D. Robinson (Vice Chairman)
* R Howard	* M. Tomkins
* M.Lager	

(* present)

Councillor John Jowers, Cabinet Member for Localism and Planning, Councillor K Bobbin and Councillor R. Pearson were also present

The following officers were in attendance throughout the meeting:-

Graham Redgwell Governance Officer
Janet Mills Committee Officer

The meeting commenced at 10.00 am

21. Apologies and Substitutions

The Committee Officer reported apologies from Councillor T. Higgins and Councillor R. Liebeschuetz.

22. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 March 2009 were agreed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

23. Declarations of Interest

None recorded.

24. Summary of Issues Considered by the Committee in 2008/09

The Committee received an oral report from Graham Redgwell Governance Officer. The report outlined the scrutinies, which had been undertaken by the Committee over the last year: These Included the following:

- Links with the Voluntary Sector- Single Funding Gateway.
- Drugs and Alcohol Services
- The Gateway Programme
- The Community Initiative Fund (CIF)
- Police Neighbourhoods
- CCTV (surveillance) cameras
- Sadlers Farm Boot Fair

Members discussed each topic and noted the following beneficial outcomes from the Committee's scrutinies.

- Assisting Officers by ensuring all ECC directorates used the Single Funding Gateway Portal
- Assisting the DAAT to raise a funding matter with the PCTs
- Recommending how the process for application for CIF could be updated
- Positive Policing at the Sadlers Farm Boot Fair

The Committee noted that a Scrutiny Annual Report, which contained the outcomes of scrutinies completed from all the PSCs, would be presented at the full Council meeting on 21 April 2009.

In answer to questions from Members, Councillor J Jowers Cabinet Member for Localism and Planning advised the Committee as follows:

- That recommendations from PSCs' were considered to be very important as they gave a cross party view about an issue. They were used as a decision making tool.
- The Essex Rural Commission was a topic, which could be scrutinised by a number of different committees. In this case the Cabinet Members would receive a number of cross cutting reports.
- If a PSC recommendation was not implemented then Cabinet Members should be asked to attend the Committee to explain why.

Members suggested that Committees should be given feedback from Cabinet Members as to how their recommendations had influenced Cabinet Member Decisions.

The role of the Essex Forums and how they had been and could be involved in scrutiny was briefly discussed.

25. Issues to be Taken Forward Post Election

Members discussed the need to ensure continuity and the need to continue to monitor the outcomes of the Committee's previous recommendations.

The Committee noted that further work on existing scrutinies was required and recommended that the following matters be considered by the new post election committee:

- Drug and Alcohol Services – a meeting to take place prior to July, to facilitate liaison with PCTs and possibly representatives of the Strategic Health Authority to ascertain available funding.
- Links With the Voluntary Sector – continue to monitor all directorates of the Council to ensure they are working uniformly.
- CCTV (surveillance cameras) – some further work on cameras generally as there were clearly many other users outside the statutory sector.

The Committee discussed and recommended that the following matters be considered by the new post election committee:

- **Street Lighting Pilot Scheme.**

Members were advised that there was a great deal of public interest in the matter and it was suggested that a number of witnesses, from outside the Council should be called and this scrutiny should be webcast.

- **Road Safety**

Members suggested that scoping of this scrutiny should include:

- What measures are used in Essex
- What works well and what doesn't
- Pitched advertising campaign
- Safety cameras limit/average speed

- **Partnership Working**

Members suggested that scoping of this scrutiny should include:

- Performance Management in ECC and in Other Organisations
- LSPs- what value do they add?
- Community Leadership
- Beyond County Issues
- Performance Reward Grant

- **Area Forums**

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The role Forums could play in scrutiny in future.

- **Committee Terms of Reference**

The Committee's terms of reference were discussed. It was suggested that the Scrutiny Board may wish to review the terms of reference of each of the scrutiny committees to sort out any anomalies.

- **Information to a Wider Audience**

The Committee discussed the need to ensure that information would be made available to non committee Members and a wider audience. It was suggested that information should be published in the Signpost internal publication.

- **Scrutiny Methodology**

All the scrutiny issues had been considered by the full Committee rather than by Task and Finish Groups. Members noted that this approach had been beneficial as the Committee was able to complete some early scrutinies which were available for perusal during the CPA inspection visit in September 2008. Members concluded that the Committees approach to Scrutiny had worked very well. It was recommended that this approach be continued in the future.

- **Evidence from Wider Arena**

Members discussed the need to gain more evidence from witnesses from outside the ECC. It was acknowledged that some people would not wish to speak at a formal public Committee meeting but would wish to

contribute in their own environment. For this reason it was recommended that there was the need to go out into the community to gather evidence.

- **Joint Committee Working**

The Committee acknowledged that some issues would naturally be reviewed by one or more Committee. It was recommended that, where appropriate, there should be joint committee working.

26. Date of Next Meeting

Members confirmed the date and time of the next scheduled meeting as being Monday 13 July 2009, at 10 am in Committee Room 1.

Members expressed thanks to Councillor Baker Chairman of the Committee for ensuring that all Members had been given the opportunity to fully participate.

The Chairman gave a vote of thanks to Graham Redgwell, Governance Officer and Janet Mills Committee Officer, for their hard work and for the smooth running of the Committee.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 11.15 am

Chairman