

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CENTRAL SERVICES POLICY AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD AT COUNTY HALL, CHELMSFORD ON 25 JANUARY 2010

Membership

Councillors

	B Aspinell	*	G McEwen
*	Mrs S Barker Chairman)	*	L Mead (Vice-Chairman)
	J Dornan	*	J Pike (Substitute for M Lager)
*	E Johnson	*	Mrs M Webster
*	J Knapman	*	A Turrell (Vice-Chairman)
*	S Mayzes		
*	present		

Also present were Councillors W Dick, M Page, K Twitchen and Mrs E Webster.

The following officers were present in support throughout the meeting:

Vivien Door	Committee Officer
Hannah Cleary	Governance Officer

The meeting opened at 10.30

1. Apologies and Substitute Notices

The Committee Officer reported the receipt of the following apologies:

Apologies	Substitutes
B Aspinell	
M Lager	J Pike

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest reported on this occasion.

3. Minutes

The minutes of the last meeting were approved as a correct record.

4. Witness Sessions on Essex Strategy

The Chairman welcomed the witnesses to this Committee and informed them that the Committee would like to explore the issues regarding the refresh of the Essex Strategy, particularly the consultation process. Any comments arising from this meeting would then be reported back to the Essex Management Board, where the draft refresh Partnership Strategy would be approved at the end of March 2010. The Committee received the scoping document CS/01/10.

Dan Gascoyne, Assistant Director for Partnership Delivery, Essex County Council

Dan Gascoyne gave a brief background to the Essex Strategy. The 10 year strategy was launched in March 2008. The strategy was produced by a partnership from the 12 Districts and Boroughs, NHS, Police, Fire, Voluntary Sector and Essex County Council by working together. The partnership decided

to review progress of the strategy, during the recession to see if any changes were required. The review of this strategy began in March 2009:

- Collating and analysing data looking at the evidence;
- Thematic and District LSP reports were produced;
- Essex Conference took place in July 2009
- The Essex Strategy review consultation took place over a 12 week period;
- The Essex Strategy Summits enabled stakeholders and public to engage with the specific 'Wicked Issue' themes.

During discussion the following points were made:

- That only 10 written responses were received from the consultation which were mainly sent by partners. Feedback was also received at the conference and the summits, which may be the reason that so few written responses had been received;
- That the Local Area Agreement was the delivery vehicle for this strategy;
- That each District and Borough Council had their own local strategy;
- That there was no clarity in the Safeguarding the Most Vulnerable section, 8.2, that was dedicated to the specific issue of Safeguarding Children especially as there was particular concern in Essex. This would be changed in the final document to give it more prominence;
- That the final document would include all information from each District/Borough and the seven themes;
- Members felt that more facts and figures should be included in the review to enable partners to see the direction of travel;
- Members were concerned that both good and bad practice should be included in the document;
- That Members would prefer the term "wicked issues" to be changed to themes;
- That Members felt that Area Coordinators should be contacted as they would have local information as they work in the localities with various partners;
- That the Essex Strategy would not be reviewed annually but when it was felt appropriately;
- Members were concerned about the length of time this review had taken;
- Members were concerned regarding the public involvement in this strategy.

Ian Davidson, Corporate Area Assessment Lead from the Audit Commission

Essex County Council was the most complex in the country in terms of the number of public bodies within its boundaries. The level of partnership working was now more positive. The approach of the review due to the recession was welcome. The new website was also very good although the data on the website would not be complete until March 2010. The conference and the workshops were attended by 300 people with 85 partners involved. Comments were given at this event which was included in the document, which may be why so few written comments were received.

The Safeguarding of Children should be more prominent in the document as it was a key weakness in Essex. Safeguarding of Children was not just a key issue for Essex County Council but for all the partners involved with children. A clearer

statement in the document would raise its profile with all partners involved with children and enable all partners to understand how a Common Assessment Framework works.

All partners were working together on this strategy. The health inequality work was good in the document. Clarity and honesty needs to be stronger in the document.

During discussion the following points were made:

- That the joint post of Director for Public Health had helped, as PCT boundaries cover more than one District and in the south of the county their boundaries also include Unitary Authorities;
- That the work shops had been good as partners left these meetings with Action Plans;
- That Area Coordinators provide practical knowledge and information;
- That partners from Local Authorities and the NHS now understand each other's agendas and were moving to shared skills;
- Patients in Acute Care sometimes travel miles for treatment, which could then add extra pressures and resource implications for the hospital the patient had chosen;
- That the 10 year Essex Strategy needed to respond to economic changes, like recession or changes in government policies.

Kevin Jones, Head of Environment Strategy, Essex County Council

Essex County Council worked with District and Borough Councils on national indicators, 186, CO2 emissions and 188, adapting to climate change. All partners were fully engaged. Kevin Jones attended the conference and the individual summit; these two meetings illustrated how much the partnership had moved forward. One of the positives of the recession was energy efficiency. There was an acknowledgment that the carbon reduction was a longer term problem and that all partners would need to continue to work together.

During discussion the following points were made:

- The Essex Strategy had given a prominence to these issues as partners now had ownership of these issues and worked together;
- That climate change would be included in the final strategy;
- That it was difficult to collate accurate data as the energy companies did not analyse their data at a local level, for example, district by district.

Paul Bedwell, Chairman of Essex Safeguarding Adults Board

The Essex Safeguarding Adults Board comprised of 40 to 50 partners involved with Vulnerable Adults to enable the Safeguarding of Adults to be consistent across Essex. There were guidelines for when a Vulnerable Adult was abused which cover Essex, Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock Councils. There was a helpline for people needing help for Vulnerable Adults. The Board investigated case reviews when an Adult had been abused.

During discussion the following points were made:

- That the Safeguarding summit was well attended. Although the Safeguarding of Children was a main concern and this point should be strengthened in the document, Vulnerable Adults should also be included;
- The Board had not sent a written response to the consultation but had had informal discussions;
- Performance indicators should be more measurable for Vulnerable Adults in the report;
- That Vulnerable Adults include any adult was vulnerable and not just older people;
- The Safeguarding Board comprises of Directors and Chief Executives of all the bodies involved in Safeguarding Adults;
- The Board investigated 2000 cases this year;
- The Chairman was supported by administrators from the Legal Service;
- The Board was not statutory but the Government have announced that this would be changed soon;
- That there were enormous complex structures in Essex which make up the Partnership and the Board.

Councillor Pam Challis, Chairman of the Partnership Forum

Councillor Challis informed the Committee that the Essex Strategy was a joint partnership forum involving partners from all 12 Districts and Borough Councils, NHS, Police, Voluntary Sector, Essex County Council and other agencies. Essex County Council supported the partnership with administration support. This strategy had been built from the bottom up involving the Local Strategic Partnership to provide the local information into this living document. The partnership agreed to have an annual review to look at progress.

The District and Borough Councils Community Strategies fed into Essex County Council's strategy and the information flow works both up and down. All Districts and Boroughs have Citizens Panels and these were used to inform the strategy.

During discussion the following points were made:

- That Parish Councils' views were also included in this strategy;
- All Chairmen of the Local Strategic Partnerships met together at the Partnership Forums. Attendance at these meetings was good;
- Members were concerned that the document needed to be more balanced and highlight best practice and where service provision was not good;
- That the partners worked together on a project for Young People Not in Education or Training, (NEET) in the Tendring area and on Safeguarding issues in West Essex;
- That the EssexWorks logo should not be included on this strategy.

Andrea Atherton, Director of Public Health, South East Essex Primary Care Trust

The Primary Care Trust had good involvement in the Partnership from the Chief Executive and Chairman cascading down through the PCT into sub-groups. Andrea informed the Committee that she had little additional information to give to the Committee that previous speakers had not covered. The Health

Inequalities summit was attended by partners, members from LINKs and the public.

During discussion the following points were made:

- That access to services was part of health inequalities;
- That health inequalities recognised other wider local issues;
- The Primary Care Trust has had its own public meetings regarding this strategy and has included the public feedback in the document.

The Chairman thanked all the witnesses for their honesty and contributions to this meeting.

Summary

During discussion the following points were made:

- That although Essex County Council had used resources to provide the Essex Strategy, the Strategy was jointly owned by the partnership made up from public bodies in Essex;
- That the review when completed would have taken a year;
- There was little information on what triggered a review;
- The 7 “Wicked Issues” should be renamed as themes;
- The document did not include criticism where services were lacking;
- Data needed to be included to enable the reader to see any progress made;
- That this document should remain a living document and be able to react quickly to changes in circumstances;
- Performance targets were missing from the Safeguarding Adults section.

5. Forward Look

The Committee received the Forward Look CS/02/10 from the Chairman. The Committee **agreed** the Forward Look.

6. Dates for Future Meetings

The Committee confirmed the dates of the future meetings and noted that they may comprise:

- Meetings in private
- Meetings in public
- Working groups
- Sub-Committee meetings
- Outside visits

Monday 15 February 2010

Monday 15 March 2010

Monday 19 April 2010

7. Urgent Business

There being no urgent business the meeting closed at 12:55 pm

Chairman
15 February 2010