

COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP AND PARTNERSHIPS COMMITTEE

23 MAY 2016

Present:- Councillor Z Fairley (Chairman), Councillor A P H Baker (Vice-Chairman), Councillor C D Amos, Councillor I J Henderson, Councillor K T King, Councillor M C Newton, Councillor R E Raby, Councillor M Skeels (Jnr) and Councillor J B Chapman.

Substitute Members:- Councillor J B Chapman

Also Present:- Councillors G V Guglielmi (Enforcement and Community Safety Portfolio Holder) and R J Bucke.

In Attendance:- Chief Executive (Ian Davidson), Head of Regeneration (Tom Gardiner), Management and Members' Support Manager (Karen Neath) and Democratic Services Officer (Janey Nice)

Also in Attendance:- Maurice Mason (Assistant Chief Constable, Essex Police)

(7.30 p.m. - 10.01 p.m.)

1. WELCOME

The Chairman of the Committee extended a warm welcome to Maurice Mason from Essex Police and to the Members of the new Community Leadership and Partnerships Committee following the merger with the former Education and Skills Committee

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Councillor Yallop with Councillor Chapman substituting and also from Councillors Gray and Land.

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the special meeting of the Committee, held on 6 April 2016, were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none at this time though later in the meeting under Minute 5 below, Councillor Chapman declared a personal interest in that her son works for Essex Fire and Rescue Service

5. COMMUNITY SAFETY HUB

During consideration of this item Councillor Chapman declared a personal interest in that her son works for Essex Fire and Rescue Service.

The Chief Executive (Ian Davidson) informed the Committee how Community Safety Hubs (CSH) demonstrated how public service providers could come together as community leaders and how the Council had a good relationship with other providers of the CSH and at the last meeting of the Hub 47 partners turned up. He explained how they worked together to address the issues that affected their areas and despite ever decreasing budgets got the right results for our residents.

Mr Davidson said that the Community Safety Partnership's main priorities included tackling anti-social behaviour, protecting vulnerable people, reducing drugs and alcohol misuse within communities and reducing re-offending. He said that gangs were now a serious issue especially where they preyed on vulnerable people, taking over their homes for the sale of drugs with the vulnerable person being paid with either drugs or money and living with the fear of assault. He said that the Hub were working with charities in London who have had more experience of gang problems and how that issue could be tackled in a different way with the Hub partners coming together.

Mr Davidson said that the Community Safety Hub:

Hub – Responsive to local issues;
Ethos – Not a Model or a Structure; and
Hub – One size does not fit all

He said that the CSH was not telling Essex this was the way to work but this was working for the Tendring District. He added that there had been a Roadshow and the Home Office had advised that the Roadshow explaining how the Hub works should be used more. Furthermore, he said, that the previous Police and Crime Commissioner (Nick Alston) had been keen on the Partnership way of working and the new Police and Crime Commission (Roger Hirst) had indicated he also agreed with this.

Mr Davidson said all of the Partners' budgets were being reduced but they were all shrinking together so this was all about working together and working more efficiently. He then gave examples of ways of how joint working helped prevent crime and informed the Committee that a person could be prosecuted not necessarily for the crime intended but could be caught another way, citing that the notorious American gangster Al Capone was finally caught by tax evasion.

Mr Davidson then informed the Committee about the practicalities of a Hub which were:

Hub Tasking Group:

- Dynamic priorities
- Driving CSP Priorities
- Delivery Mechanism for CSP

Co-location:

- Core partners co-located
- Hot Desking/Drop In/Occasional/Virtual
- Satellite Hubs

He said that the day to day management of the Hub was done by a Police Inspector and the Hub Tasking (Chair) was the Council's Community Safety Manager, Leanne Thornton and that they worked together as they were the most skilled to do this particular job.

The Assistant Chief Constable (Mr Mason) talked about the Managing of the Hub and how it had made a difference and explained how this had been achieved. He talked about urban street gangs and how they had become an increasing problem in the Tendring area especially with violence between the different gangs and he also re-iterated about how the street gangs preyed on the most vulnerable. He explained also how they recruited their members through social media and gave an example of an 11-year old becoming a runner for a gang.

Mr Mason said one way of tackling the gangs was hitting where it hurt the most, in the pocket. He said the Police had worked with Her Majesty's Revenue Service, the Essex Fire Service and how effective ridicule of the street gangs had worked in Stoke which meant it could work here. He said that there was a whole range of people who were

willing to help, from members of the public to Neighbourhood Watch. He added, however, that serious violence in this District was miniscule compared with other areas of Essex.

He said that resources could be focused:

- With the Local Authority/Police staff/others
- Community Policing Teams
- Gang worker
- CSP staff
- Special Constables
- ASB Co-ordinators/Licensing/Youth Teams
- Hate crime
- Police Community Support Officers
- Analysts

Mr Mason informed the Committee another area to look at was antisocial behaviour and especially how that type of behaviour affected communities, also he said, another area was the night time economy. He said there were issues with serious violence and disorder, not necessarily inside premises but associated with them and the Hub needed to be confident in the way it dealt with night time issues.

He said that in the summer months Clacton's population increased by approximately 22% and that the Hub would organise additional resources for Clacton by utilising the operational support group who were highly skilled and trained individuals.

Mr Mason mentioned the issue of the travelling community and said it was only a small number causing problems who spoiled it for the rest of them. He said he was not prepared to stand back to allow anyone to break the law and get away with it and would act around Section 51. He said that crime had not increased in this area as much as in other places and said crime was up in Essex by 9% while crime in Tendring was up by 1%. He further informed the Committee that crime in the Clacton Town Centre was up by 1%, crime in Harwich was down by 23% and two years ago crime was up by 50% in the Clacton Town Centre.

He said that while crime figures were better in the Tendring area, street gangs were still proving to be a problem. He added that that the Community Safety Hub would like to know if things were not working and were not right, he personally wanted to know where there were problems so he could help as he had committed himself to make the Hub and Partnership safety plan work.

Mr Davidson commented on the Hub's interaction with the Police and said that Mr Mason was responding to issues at a local level.

Mr Mason mentioned of how a successful Hub worked by co-ordinating activity, raising awareness of partner issues, gave additional support to problem locations and was tackling issues before they spiralled out of control. He gave the Committee a case study of successful Hub working and how certain individuals had been convicted and of how one Fagan type individual had been ordered by court action to pay back £92,000 to recover his criminal assets.

Mr Davidson informed the Committee that it was important to inform people of what was happening with the Community Safety Hub and that even the Home Office had expressed an interest in how it was working, he added it was not perfect but it was working, and commented on how things might have been if the CSH had not been in place.

The Chairman took questions both from the Committee and from the audience. Discussion was had on the following points:-

- Were gangs coming from London and recruiting here? - Mr Mason said yes they were definitely coming to the Clacton area, recent work had shown this was happening. He said that the Urban street gangs believed there were rich pickings to be had in Tendring and were preying on vulnerable people, he did not want Tendring to be seen as a viable market as violence could be quite considerable especially when innocent members of the public become victims. Mr Davidson said that they were looking at preventative work and looking at budgets, also looking at their understanding of families and other issues;
- Concern was raised over cut backs over recent years especially as the Police would visit schools and pick-up information and concern about the public losing confidence with the Police. Also mention was made of Family Solutions who had dealt with some of the problems but had found some people did not want to be helped. Mr Davidson commented that the point raised about Family Solutions was right, however Family Solutions was working with a number of families but had been more successful in Clacton than Harwich. Mr Mason added that he thought the work being done was working, that there were more special constables now who were working with the community. He mentioned that the Fire Service had a target figure of visiting 100% of schools which was a good example of partnership working and he added that he was determined to make Partnership working work.
- One Member passed on his personal thanks to the Police Officers working on their own when dealing with the street gangs. It was mentioned that while the preventative work was working in Clacton and Harwich there was concern about the rural parts of the District, elderly residents and mental illness etc. how would this be addressed? Mr Mason said that concentration was mainly concerned with urban areas but that community working picks up on rural areas and that the partners would focus on areas where needed. He added that intensive recruitment and training was being done with special constables and that retention of the specials had dropped from 10-12 losses to only 4 a month and that there was a team of special constables with a rural officer who were centrally based but could be called to any area where needed. Mr Davidson commented that even with fewer resources it did mean working in a different way.
- Concern was expressed about Jaywick with a lot of vulnerable people with a high rate of mental health issues and the question was asked would there be more bobbies on the beat down there? Mr Mason said that the mental health professionals were available 24/7 and that police custody was not the place for people with mental health problems. He said that the specials worked with mental health workers and were keen to use their skills along with the paramedics etc. He said that while Jaywick was officially recognised as a deprived area there could not be a police presence all of the time, there was a need to collate information from various sources. He commented that street gangs liked to brag and that a policeman loves a bragger! He said the community needed to work together with volunteers especially to receive intelligence of what was going on. Mr Davidson said that the new Corporate Plan was to have a huge effect on residents and that community leadership was important especially when associated with the fear factor. He added that residents went to their Councillors with their problems and only cared about who could help them and said that the Hub was a team that would help.

Mr Davidson mentioned residents with mental health issues who may not turn up for Jobcentre appointments on time, then had more and more sanctions placed on them, they could not take up work and Mr Mason more flexible working was needed.

The Chairman thanked both Mr Mason and Mr Davidson for attending the meeting and Councillor G V Guglielmi thanked the Chairman for letting him attend the meeting. He was keen to see how money could be recycled back into resources, the reduction of crime and he liked the sound of a community approach. He said that he was very pleased that Tendring was one of the first Councils in Essex to take up the Community Safety Hub process and that the Hub was extremely worthwhile.

Mr Mason mentioned that the proceeds of the Crime Act becoming successful in getting

money back was being spent primarily on Community issues. He said that in Colchester a team of community workers meet with a PCSO, and while they used the name of the Home Guard he was not sure about the use of that name.

The Chairman asked Mr Davidson if Leanne Thornton was the Council's contact and he confirmed she was as the Council's Community Safety Manager.

It was RECOMMENDED that Mr Mason be invited back to talk to the Community Leadership and Partnerships Committee in about six months to give an update on the Community Safety Hub.

6. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND BUSINESS SUPPORT

The Regeneration Manager (Tom Gardiner) introduced the structure of his presentation to the Committee and spoke about the Economic Context which was:

- The Tendring economy contributed around £2.1 billion to the UK economy and comprised around 35,400 jobs and some 4,700 businesses;
- The economy is characterised by relatively high level of employment in sectors that were generally seen as relatively low value adding;
- Health, Retail and Education were the largest sectors in terms of the number of jobs and together represented circa 45% of the District's total employment base (circa 15,800 jobs);
- 17% of jobs were in the public sector (broadly in line with the UK average);
- Employment levels in industries that were higher value adding (such as business services) were comparatively low;
- The economy was also characterised by relatively high levels of part-time employment. This accounted for circa 41% of all jobs in the District;
- Tendring had experienced a contraction in its business base in recent years;
- The District had relatively low enterprise levels and declining business survival rates;
- Qualification Levels within the local labour market were lower than average; and
- GCSE performance had improved but Key Stages 2 and 4 and the proportion with no qualifications remained an issue.

Mr Gardiner explained that whilst Tendring was home to some large businesses (such as (Hutchinson Ports UK) (HPUK), the District's economy was for the most part characterised by mostly small and some medium sized businesses.

Mr Gardiner also explained that the District was also characterised by low pay, low skills and a part-time workforce representing circa 41% of all jobs in the District. The prospect and opportunity for progression within many of the District's "staple industries" was poor.

Mr Gardiner introduced the Council's Economic Development Strategy and talked through the objectives it contained. Mr Gardiner advised Members that the document was being used to inform the Council's local and strategic interventions and that it had also been used to inform the development of Essex County Council's Economic Plan for Essex and the South East Local Enterprise Partnership's (SE LEP) Growth Deal and Strategic Economic Plan.

He said that Overarching objectives of the Tendring Strategy were to:

- Support Growth Locations – Harwich, Clacton and West Tendring;
- Target Growth Sectors – Offshore Renewables, Care and Assisted Living and the Visitor Economy;
- Develop Skills through training, apprenticeships and workforce development; and
- Facilitate Population Growth to support the economy via housing development.

Mr Gardiner advised the Committee that the ECC and SE LEP priorities for Essex were to:

- Improve skills across Essex;
- Focus investment on the infrastructure along four strategic growth corridors which were the A.120, A.12, A.13/127 and M11; and
- Enhancing productivity in the Essex economy, focussing support on five growth sectors; Advanced Manufacturing, Low Carbon and Renewables, Life Sciences and Healthcare, Digital Cultural and Creative and Logistic.

Mr Gardiner advised the Committee that increasingly the LEP structure across England was being used by central Government as its primary mechanism through which to channel funding identified for regeneration and economic development. In view of this it was critical that Tendring's priorities mirrored that of the SE LEP if the District was to be successful in securing SE LEP/ Government funding in support of its growth ambitions.

He said that the SE LEP had secured £442 million Single Local Growth Fund with 70% of the budget being linked to the Department of Transport and this would be available for the period covering 2015 to 2020. He added that a further £1.8 billion would be available nationally from 2017.

Mr Gardiner talked to the Committee about Projects and Interventions Supporting Business which included the Council's SME Growth Fund Scheme and said that details and information about the Scheme were available on the Council's website. Mr Gardiner also distributed a newly printed brochure providing information about the Scheme.

He then mentioned the Tendring Blue Ribbon Business Awards Event which was being facilitated by the Council in partnership with Jamesons Accountants, Barclays Bank and Dream 100. The event was being held to celebrate the success of businesses in Tendring.

Mr Gardiner mentioned the Harwich Innovation Centre which (if delivered) would focus on securing growth in the following sectors::

Maritime;
Ports and Logistics;
Offshore Renewables; and
Engineering

He said that Mermaid House in Harwich had been identified as a possible location for the facility, and that this building, would provide a gross internal floor area of around 10,000 sq. ft. Technical studies would be commissioned in the next few weeks to further inform the Council's position. He added as part of a Demand and Need Study undertaken earlier in the year 26 companies had expressed a firm interest in securing space within a managed office environment in Harwich with a work space requirement to support 87 employees. Mr Gardiner provided estimated figures for the refurbishment of Mermaid House, should the project proceed, and advised Members that monies had been earmarked by both Tendring and Essex Councils. However the various costs would need to be investigated before the project could move into the delivery phase.

Mr Gardiner then outlined various ways the Council was supporting retail businesses via Social Media Courses, Window Dressing and Vacancy Monitoring. He also outlined details of external funding and from where the Council had secured external funding. He further added details of the Best Growth Hub whose existence was not widely known, as it was a relatively new facility and he advised the Committee that details of the Best Growth Hub could be found at: <http://www.bestgrowthhub.org.uk/>.

Mr Gardiner explained how the Regeneration Team worked with Planning to identify strategic employment sites for inclusion in the emerging Local Plan (as appropriate).

Finally, Mr Gardiner explained how the Regeneration Team had worked to secure Assisted Area Status for a significant proportion of the District and how it had also secured CORE (Centre for Offshore Renewable Engineering) status for Harwich and Brightlingsea as part of the reconfigured South East CORE. Mr Gardiner circulated copies of the Harwich Offshore brochure, which the Team had prepared in partnership with Essex County Council and the Haven Gateway Partnership.

The Chairman asked about the SME growth fund and Mr Gardiner informed her and the Committee that Scheme focussed on the District's growth sectors.

The Chair then took questions both from the Committee and discussion was had on the following points:-

- Concern was raised over the number of charity shops in Clacton and whether there was enough contact with large businesses. Mr Gardiner said that in the last week he had had contact with Asda who were currently building a new supermarket in Clacton, and that a member of his Team spent much time focussed on attracting the better known High Street brands (such as Costa) to occupy empty units in Clacton. However Mr Gardiner advised the Committee that most of the retail units in Clacton were of an age and too small for the national chains stores to occupy, although the Clacton Shopping Village on the outskirts of Clacton had bigger units available. Referring to Mr Gardiner's vacancy statistics a Member expressed surprise at the news of empty units in her own area Mr Gardiner confirmed that his figures were accurate (as at the time of compilation) but said he/his staff would check to see if the situation had changed on the ground, and update the statistical record accordingly;
- A Member express concern over the Clacton Shopping Village currently building a new car park and cinema as it was worrying when businesses closed down and stay empty for a long while and gave an example of the empty Somerfield Supermarket in Great Clacton, also the empty TSB bank premises which had been empty for some while. Mr Gardiner said he had been looking into this issue and again made reference to the unit sizes in Clacton, the areas peripheral location and the difficult in attracting the national chains to the District;
- A Member congratulated Mr Gardiner and his team on all of the hard work they had put in;
- It was suggested that the SME scheme could help by giving business access to grant funding (free money provided the applicant met the approved criteria). Mr Gardiner confirmed that the Scheme could help qualifying businesses to expand and advised Members that the whole point of the initiative was to promote business and jobs growth. A Member enquired whether the Scheme was sufficiently flexible to enable the Executive to support bids that did not fit the criteria. Mr Gardiner said that whilst Officers would work to help applicants meet the criteria, the Scheme's parameters did not allow got Officers to operate outside of the agreed criteria. He added that the success of the Scheme should be assessed in six months time and if it at that time it was judged not to be working, then the criteria could subsequently be reviewed and amended as necessary.
- A question was raised about Gas House Creek (GHC) at Harwich as it had been leased out on the condition it would revitalise Harwich, the Member wanted to know why nothing had happened with the site and why it had remained empty for such a long time. Mr Gardiner said that the Team was not responsible for the management of Council assets but that he was aware that when Gas House Creek was let there were specific clauses in the lease requiring the tenant to perform specific tasks. Mr Gardiner agreed to contact the Council's Asset Manager for further information. Mr Gardiner advised Members that if the GHC came back to the Council then it might be of use in negotiations with Trinity House over the Council's use of Mermaid House should the Innovation Centre project proceed;
- The empty supermarket store was mentioned as a possible site for a Rollerworld as it

was unlikely it would be a supermarket again and was the Council looking at it for other uses than retail. It was also suggested that the Council invested in retail businesses. Mr Gardiner said he had been liaising with partners and had been waiting for them to respond, he added that the Team always looked very carefully at planning applications that required a change of use, as invariably this meant employment sites being promoted as housing sites – which if successful would mean the loss of valuable employment land within the District. Housing development offers better margins and increased profit for developers, and this prospect encouraged land owners and developers to promote residential development;

- A suggestion was made that the newly refurbished Pier Hotel at Harwich could be used for Corporate functions, i.e. business breakfasts and lunches. Mr Gardiner said he would investigate the opportunity, but pointed out that this venue already had a track record in hosting such events;
- If an applicant for the SME came along would the panel help the applicant? Mr Gardiner said that the Grants Panel had the responsibility of ensuring that grants are awarded in line with the agreed criteria, but that the overall approach was to find ways of supporting applicants wherever possible within the parameters of the Scheme; and
- Was there any way small business could be encouraged i.e. pop-up shops. Mr Gardiner said that this approach had been successful in the past, and if vacancies in the District's High Streets became a problem again, this initiative would be re-visited.

It was RECOMMENDED by the Committee that the Regeneration Manager attend the Committee again in six months time.

7. COMMUNITY STRATEGY

The Chairman asked the Committee to have a look at the Community Strategy, take it away with them, see what they thought could be done and what they wanted to see on it.

8. WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2016/17

The Chairman asked Members for feedback on the planned Workplan for the Community Leadership and Partnership Committee, perhaps an extra meeting might be needed to cover the items scheduled to be held in November because with the new Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) attending there might not be enough time to cover all subjects thoroughly.

Councillor I J Henderson suggested that the PCC and Mr Mason could attend the meeting together and that the Corporate Antisocial Behaviour Policy could be moved to another date. Ms Neath commented that the item came within the remit of Community Safety and was usually on the Agenda with the PCC item.

Councillor Baker asked about the item that had originally been agreed for the three bidders for the rail franchise and was informed by Ms Neath that it was being announced in June 2016 when the successful bidder was as the consultation had finished but as soon as the successful bidder had been announced it would be invited to attend a meeting of the Committee.

After further discussion the updated work plan was AGREED but consideration would be given to moving the Community Safety item in November to another date.

9. CHAIRMAN'S CLOSING REMARKS

The Chairman thanked Mr French, Mr Stidson and Ms Speller for attending what had been a very interesting and informative meeting.

The meeting was declared closed at 9.05 pm

10. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee noted the items due to be considered at the next three scheduled meetings of the Committee. It was commented that, at the Committee's next meeting, scheduled to be held on 22 September 2013, the review of the Community Rent Off-setting Scheme (CAROS) would need to start making recommendations since a lot of information had now been gathered. At the scheduled 4 November 2013 meeting, the provision of a new GP Surgery at Holland-on-Sea was due to be discussed and it was suggested that the maternity service provision issue in Harwich and Clacton be included.

The meeting was declared closed at 9.05pm.

11. POTENTIAL LEASE OF LAND AT GAS HOUSE QUAY, HARWICH (REPORT TO FOLLOW)

The Cabinet considered the principle of leasing Council owned land at Gas House Quay, Harwich either as a whole or in two parts.

Members had submitted to them as Appendix 'B' to item A.7 of the Report of the Acting Head of Corporate Performance a letter which had been received from the High Steward of Harwich. The Cabinet were also aware of a petition which had been received calling on the Council to create a car park at Gas House Quay. The full petition was available at the meeting.

The Executive Leader expressed his disappointment that the confidential report on this matter, to be considered later in the meeting, had been leaked to the press.

It was moved by Councillor Halliday, seconded by Councillor Henderson and:-

RESOLVED – That, having considered both correspondence received from the High Steward of Harwich and the petition, the land be let for commercial use, subject to consideration of terms later in the meeting.

12. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED - That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

Chairman