

## **Report to the Cabinet**

**Report reference: C/007/2006-07.**

**Date of meeting: 5 June 2006.**



**Epping Forest  
District Council**

**Portfolios: Customer Services & ICT.**

**Subject: Single Non Emergency Number (SNEN) – Essex SNEN Partnership.**

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### **Recommendations:**

- (1) That the decision of the Joint Chief Executives to support the Essex SNEN Partnership by participating in the wave 2 'expression of interest' process be agreed; and**
- (2) That the Joint Chief Executives be requested to report back to the Cabinet in September 2006 on the draft SNEN implementation proposals and resource implications for the Council.**

### **Report:**

1. The Single Non Emergency Number (SNEN) is a new national service that will provide the public with direct access, through a new 3 digit number (101), to community safety advice, information and action, while freeing up 999 emergency call services to handle genuine emergency incidents.
2. The Government made a commitment to introduce the SNEN in its 2005 Election Manifesto, as one of a package of measures to improve community safety. The initiative is being introduced jointly by the Home Office and the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG).
3. The Government believe the SNEN service will provide the following key benefits to the public:
  - Enabling better access to non-emergency services. By offering a simple, easy to remember, single point of connection, the SNEN gives the public improved access to non-emergency services, advice and information;
  - Improving delivery of non-emergency services. The SNEN requires public services to work together, joining up the delivery of non-emergency services and improving the outcome for the public;
  - Raising confidence in public services, through easy access to high quality advice and information and effective action on community safety; and
  - Improving 999 emergency services. Calling the SNEN for non-emergencies will take pressure off the emergency services, leading to a quicker response to genuine emergency calls and improvements to service.
4. The cost of the service is to be charged at a fixed rate of 10p per call. The decision to charge calls to the SNEN service at the fixed rate of 10p per call from both landlines and mobiles was taken in consultation with a wide group of stakeholders and the Wave 1 police and local authority Partnerships. The charge is to deter inappropriate calls to the service. It was agreed that a 10p fixed rate was the fairest and most transparent way of charging for

calls to the service. The fixed rate also ensures that people calling about complex issues that can take longer to resolve do not cost any more.

5. The call charge will be subject to review once the SNEN service has been evaluated and the Programme Team has an understanding of call volumes and the average length of calls to the service.

### **Implementing Wave 1:**

6. The initial scope of the SNEN service has been developed through research with the general public, and in consultation with a wide group of stakeholders including local authority and police force partnerships. The core service will cover:
  - Vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage to property;
  - Noisy neighbours;
  - Intimidation and harassment;
  - Abandoned vehicles;
  - Rubbish or litter;
  - People being drunk or rowdy in public places;
  - Drug related anti-social behaviour; and
  - Street lighting.
7. The service will initially be launched in five Wave 1 areas and then rolled out in two further waves. The first wave involves Partnerships between police forces and local authorities in areas of Hampshire, Northumbria, Leicestershire, South Yorkshire and South Wales. The service will be available in these areas for the public in summer 2006. The second wave areas will start work during 2006 with the aim of launching in 2007 and the service will be available across England and Wales by 2008.
8. SNEN will not replace existing services but will complement them. SNEN may run concurrently at first with existing non-emergency numbers. Subsequently these may be partly or fully absorbed by the SNEN as other services are incorporated.

### **Funding for Wave 1:**

9. The Home Office will fund the Partnerships to support the development, implementation and running of the service. The Home Office is committed to the long term future of the SNEN service and is drawing up a 5 year agreement with the Partnerships that outlines the support to be provided. The exact nature of the funding for the period after 2007 will be subject to the agreement of the on-going service standards, the continuing service development and outcome of the comprehensive spending review.

### **Wave 2:**

10. Essex Police and the Essex Police Authority are the leading public services for SNEN in Essex and have set up a project group to co-ordinate its implementation. The project group has already held three meetings (20 March, 20 April and 17 May) to discuss how practicable it would be for Essex Local Authorities to participate in the SNEN Wave 2 Programme.
11. The time table for Wave 2 is:
  - 29 March 2006 'Introducing 101' Conference.
  - 2 June 2006 Submission of expressions of interest.
  - 16 June 2006 Wave 2 Partnerships announced.
  - 28 June 2006 Wave 2 'Kick off' event for selected Partnerships.

- 28 June – 5 October 2006 Wave 2 development phase.
- 6 October 2006 Submission of Wave 2 Proposals.
- 31 October 2006 Funding Agreements signed.
- 1 November 2006 Implementation of Wave 2 Partnerships begins.
- 1 January – 30 June 2007 Wave 2 Partnerships launch 101 service.

**Statement in support of recommended action:**

12. Essex Police and Essex County Council (ECC) both feel strongly that it would benefit all Local Authorities in Essex to participate in Wave 2 rather than wait till Wave 3 (the last wave). The main drivers for Wave 2 participation have been identified as:
  - Home Office funding available for both the development of proposals and implementation of Wave 2.
  - The Home Office have indicated that Wave 3 will not be fully funded.
  - Essex authorities have invested in e-Government infrastructure that SNEN could utilise.
  - Assists in Essex Authorities joint services ambitions.
13. All Essex District Council's have attended the project group meetings (Head of ICT) and the majority support Essex Police and ECC in moving forward with a Wave 2 'expression of interest'. The Home Office will only consider 'expression of interest' from those partnerships that have full support from their local authority Chief Executives.
14. At this early stage all District Council Chief Executives have been asked to sign up to the 'expression of interest' stage. This does not commit any District Council to proceed with Wave 2 implementation, but would allow the partnership to gain access to Home Office funding to develop proposals that could be considered by each District Council in September 2006. The final proposal would need to be agreed by each District Council before submission to the Home Office in October 2006.
15. During the development of the Wave 2 Proposal each District Council would need to consider its position carefully as only those Council's that agree to participate in the final proposal would take part in the Wave 2 implementation. This would not preclude any Council from rejoining the Wave 2 implementation at a later stage, when they feel in a position to do so.

**Other options for action:**

16. The Home Office and the DCLG are committed to a national rollout of the SNEN programme. Indeed the Government intend to make it mandatory for all Local Authorities to be participating in SNEN by 2008. Therefore, it would seem sensible to participate in the 'expression of interest' stage as this could secure Home Office funding to develop detailed proposals for submission in October 2006.
17. The draft SNEN proposals will be submitted to Members in September 2006, indicating any additional resource cost to the Council, for final agreement to either fully participate in Wave 2 implementation or take a 'watching brief' and consider participating at a later stage. However, it seems clear that all Local Authorities will need to participate by 2008 at the latest.
18. The option not to participate in the 'expression of interest' stage has not been considered as it would effectively block all Essex Local Authorities from participating in the wave 2 bid.

**Consultation undertaken:**

19. Discussions on the implementation of SNEN have been made with the following groups:

- Management Board;
- Essex Police and the Essex Police Authority;
- Essex Local Authorities;
- Senior Management Team;
- Essex Online Partnership; and
- Essex SNEN Partnership Group.

**Resource implications:**

**Budget provision:** None at this stage of the programme.

**Personnel:** Nil.

**Land:** Nil.

**Community Plan/BVPP reference:** None.

**Relevant statutory powers:** None.

**Background papers:** SNEN Concepts of Operation V2.0, SNEN Wave 2 Rolling out the service nationally.

**Environmental/Human Rights Act/Crime and Disorder Act Implications:** None.

**Key Decision reference:** Forward Plan 2006/7.