

# Review Committee Annual Report 2013/2014



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## 2 Glossary

ECC	Essex County Council
LSP	Local Strategic Partnership
OSC	Office of Surveillance Commissioner

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### **3 Chairman's Foreword**

This report provides a summary of the work of the Review Committee during the 2013/14 Municipal Year.

This year has been a challenging one for all Members of the Committee. I became the new Chairman at the start of the year. At the same time the Committee was enlarged from eight to fifteen Members. We started the year with four topics to feed into the budget process, with an October deadline. The fact that the Committee achieved this deadline was down to the Committee Members who attended numerous project team meetings to delve in to the complexities of the topics set.

Officially the Committee meets formally ten times a year; the reality is that not a week goes by without a meeting of one or other of the project teams. This does not include the phone calls between Members of the team and officers to confirm understanding and obtain clarification on various issues.

Of the 26 recommendations put forward by the Committee relating to these initial topics, 24 were accepted by the Executive, although one of the recommendations regarding car parking charges was subsequently overturned by Council during its budget deliberations.

Since October the Committee has been looking into two topics that came out of the initial reviews.

Recently, the Members have debated how the Committee should function and have agreed that this should be for the next year's membership of the Committee to decide.

Whilst the workload as Chairman has been high, the results that have been achieved would not have been possible without the support and dedication of the other Members of the Committee.

## **4 Introduction**

- 4.1 During the 2013-14 Municipal Year the Review Committee has considered a number of topics both as a whole Committee and in smaller teams reporting back to the main Committee once the team has completed its work. Details of the Reviews are outlined further on in this report.
- 4.2 In addition to the Committee's role to conduct Reviews it also has the duty to scrutinise decisions made by the Executive. As part of this role the Committee studies the Key Decision Document on a monthly basis.

## **5 Local Strategic Partnership and Community Safety Partnership**

- 5.1 As part of the review of the Political Decision Making structure during the 2008/09 Municipal Year it was agreed that the Committee would look at the Local Strategic Partnership and also the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (now the Community Safety Partnership).
- 5.2 Due to the changes in the health representation in the district and following on from the visit of the local clinical commissioning group (CCG) last year the Committee decided that they would like to take a more in depth look at the thematic partnerships that make up the LSP and therefore in October 2013 the Health and Wellbeing Board attended a meeting of the Committee.
- 5.3 The Committee followed this up with a meeting with the Vice Chairman of the LSP in March 2014.
- 5.4 Under the Police and Justice Act 2006, every local authority is required to have a Crime and Disorder Committee with the power to scrutinise the local Community Safety Partnership, as a whole, in terms of how they are tackling crime and disorder for the benefit of the local communities. Under the Act the Committee has to meet at least once a year to fulfil this function.
- 5.5 These requirements were enacted by the Crime and Disorder (Overview and Scrutiny) Regulations 2009 which came into force for local authorities in England on 30 April 2009.
- 5.6 Representatives from the CSP attending the Committee in September 2013 and February 2014 to update Members on the work they were undertaking in the District.

## **6 Overview of the Refuse Collection and Recycling, Street Cleansing Contracts**

- 6.1 Representatives of SITA UK attended the Committee in December 2013 and brought Members up to date with progress on the waste and street cleansing contracts. The Committee were pleased to note that the Council had been recently judged the number one recycling authority for 2013. The update covered an outline of the achievements within the contracts over the last twelve months and plans and projects for the forthcoming year to enhance the recycling and street scene services.

## **7 Overview of the Key Decision Document**

- 7.1 During the year the Committee continued to monitor the decisions due to be made by the Executive and its members. The Committee studied the Key Decision document on a monthly basis asking for further details as and when they felt necessary.
- 7.2 The Committee has found this a useful way to explore the reasons behind decisions being made and to reduce the need to consider the call-in of a decision after it has been made.

## **8 Initial 2013/2014 work programme**

- 8.1 The Chief Executive's report to Full Council on 26 February 2013 on the key Policies and Actions for 2013/14 contained a number of suggested topics for review that could aid the budget process for 2013/14. These suggestions were:-
- Review of the Council's car parks and parking charges
  - Review of options for change and financial savings that could be negotiated with the Street Cleansing and Waste Management Contractor
  - Review of woodlands, including opportunities of additional funding streams
  - Review of Leisure Service provision and the Leisure Services Contract
- 8.2 It was agreed by the Committee at its meeting in June 2013 that four project teams would be formed to look at these topics. Due to the need to feed into the budget process it was necessary to complete these reviews by the end of October 2013.
- 8.3 All the teams produced their reports by the deadline and a number of recommendations were submitted to the Executive and then into the budget process.

## **9 Additional items added to the work programme**

- 9.1 The initial reviews brought to the attention of the Review Committee other items that the Committee members felt should be investigated and, therefore, two further project teams were formed to complete the following reviews:-
- Review of maintenance of the buildings within the leisure contract
  - Review of the Council's sports provision in open spaces including the pavilions and possible improvements

- 9.2 During the year it was put forward by Members that they would like to look at the Council's ICT contract and this item would be carried over into next year.

## **10 Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA)**

- 10.1 As part of the Council's procedures around the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act members of the Review Committee are given bi annual training related to RIPA along with the officers who might have to submit a request to use the powers from the Act. This training took place in January 2014.
- 10.2 A report was submitted in April 2014 when the Committee reviewed the Council's policy and use of RIPA.

## **11 Other items considered by the Committee**

- 11.1 It was agreed during 2012 that the Committee would in future be responsible for systematically scrutinising treasury management strategy in advance of this being reported to Council. The Committee received three reports during the year in July 2013, November 2013 and February 2014.
- 11.2 In November 2013 the Committee was provided with an update on how the recommendation from its review of how voluntary and community groups function in the District were being implemented. The Committee was pleased to note the changes that had come about as a result of the recommendations that the Committee made.
- 11.3 In February 2014 it was agreed that the Committee would look at the Council's newspaper, Rochford District Matters, and a report was considered at the April meeting of the Committee.

## **12 Topics for future work programme**

- 12.1 The following topics have been identified for the work programme for the next Municipal year:-
- Car parking charges: to review April – June 2014 figures for car parking income.
  - Rochford District Matters – following the April meeting of the Committee it was agreed that a further review of Rochford District Matters would be undertaken in 2014/15.

- 12.2 It was agreed that, prior to the first meeting of the Committee, a training session facilitated by an independent trainer would help determine the work programme.

## 13 Performance Measures

- 13.1 The Review Committee has previously agreed a set of performance measures. These are listed below with the results or comments linked to them.

1. Completion of Overview and Scrutiny work programme on time.

<b>Project</b>	<b>Scheduled Completion date</b>	<b>Actual Completion date</b>	<b>Reason for extension of date</b>
Review of the Council's car parks and parking charges	October 2013	October 2013	
Review of options for change and financial savings that could be negotiated with the Street Cleansing and Waste Management Contractor	October 2013	October 2013	
Review of woodlands, including opportunities of additional funding streams	October 2013	October 2013	
Review of Leisure Service provision and the Leisure Services Contract	October 2013	October 2013	

<b>Project</b>	<b>Scheduled Completion date</b>	<b>Actual Completion date</b>	<b>Reason for extension of date</b>
Review of the Council's sports provision in open spaces including the pavilions and possible improvements	April 2014	Ongoing	
Review of maintenance of the building within the Leisure Contract	April 2014	April 2014	.
Review of the operation of the ICT contract.	To be agreed		

2. The percentage of Overview and Scrutiny recommendations approved/rejected/acted upon by the Executive.

During this Municipal year the Review Committee has submitted four reports to the Executive and 24 of the 26, or 92% of the recommendations, have been approved.

3. Number of external representatives involved in Overview and Scrutiny work per annum.

During this year the Committee has heard from representatives of seven different external bodies in relation to the items that have been examined.

4. Number of items on the work programme suggested by the public or in response to issues raised through surveys, comments or complaints.

None

5. Number of call-in notices received per annum.

One item has been called in by the Committee this Municipal Year.

6. The number of times that the Executive state that a decision is urgent and not subject to call-In.

During the year five decisions have not been subject to call-in.

7. Whether sufficient information is provided to witnesses about the Overview and Scrutiny process.

The responses from witnesses would indicate that they are happy with the information supplied to them prior to the meeting.

8. Witnesses' views of value added by Overview and Scrutiny meetings.

The responses received would indicate that witnesses think that their contribution has been worthwhile.

9. What has changed as a result of the Overview and Scrutiny function?

Due to the work the Members of the Committee undertook at the start of the year on areas surrounding the budget various savings have been made.