

Review Committee Annual Report 2015/2016



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2 Glossary

CSP	Community Safety Partnership
ECC	Essex County Council
ICT	Information and Communications Technology

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3 Introduction

- 3.1 During the 2015-16 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.
- 3.2 In addition to the Committee's role of conducting 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.

4 Commercial Use of Car Parks Charging Policy – Call In

- 4.1 In May 2015 the Review Committee decided to call-in a decision made by the Portfolio Holder for Enterprise relating to the commercial use of car parks charging policy.
- 4.2 Members had concerns that charging the NHS for parking breast screening units in the Council's car parks was inappropriate as the NHS provides a health service for Rochford District residents. They also needed clarification of how the fee charged to the NHS was calculated, as it was unclear in the report.
- 4.3 Following detailed consideration the decision was referred back to the Portfolio Holder.

5 Housing Allocation Scheme – Call In

- 5.1 In May 2015 the Review Committee decided to call-in a decision made by the Portfolio Holder for Community relating to amendments to the Council's Allocation Scheme for Social Housing.
- 5.2 Members were concerned that by increasing the period for establishing residence in the District the Council was imposing a stricter criterion than that imposed by the District's Housing Associations, which had no such restriction.
- 5.3 Following detailed consideration the decision was referred back to the Portfolio Holder.

6 Community Safety Partnership

- 6.1 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 (CSP), as a whole, in terms of how they are tackling crime and disorder for the benefit of the local communities. This function is undertaken by the Review Committee. Under the Act the Committee has to meet at least once a year to fulfil this function.
- 6.2 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.
- 6.3 Representatives from the CSP attended the July meeting of the Committee to update Members on developments taking place. Following the meeting it came to light that the Police were undertaking a consultation on how they were going to deploy their

resources and were expecting local authorities to deal with certain types of Anti Social Behaviour.

- 6.4 Representatives from the CSP attended a further two meetings as the effects of the changes were explored by the Members of the Committee.

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 it 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 2015/2016 work programme

- 8.1 It was agreed by the Committee at its meeting in June 2015 that a project team would be formed to look at the Review of Planning Enforcement. Due to the reorganisation in the management structure of the Council the team were not able to meet with the new Assistant Director – Planning Services until December. It was clear at that meeting that the Assistant Director was in the process of carrying out a review of the service. A report with recommendations to the Executive was submitted to the 1 March 2016 meeting.
- 8.2 The Committee agreed to a Review of the Council's actions prior to the fire at Michelins farm on 10 March 2015. It was decided that this review would be carried out by the Committee as a whole and a meeting to examine this was arranged for 3 November 2015. A report following the meeting was prepared with recommendations to the Executive and this was agreed at the 1 March 2016 meeting.
- 8.3 The Committee also agreed to delegate authority to a task and finish group to consider the three Treasury Management Reports prior to their submission to Council.

9 Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA)

- 9.1 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 2016.

- 9.2 A report was submitted in October 2015 when the Committee reviewed the Council's policy and use of RIPA.

10 Other items considered by the Committee

- 10.1 At the July meeting of the Committee Members were provided with details about the complaint process at the Council. An update of the process was taking place within the Council and so this item returned in January 2016 so Members could hear what changes had been made.
- 10.2 In September 2015 the Committee heard from representatives from the local Health Organisations about the changes that had been made due to the Social Care Act.
- 10.3 Last year the Committee undertook a review of the Council's third party software and one of the recommendations to come out of this review was to revisit the topic in a year's time to see if any savings could be achieved. In January 2016 the Committee revisited this topic. The Committee heard that a saving of 9.7% had been made before spending on additional software and licenses was taken into account.

11 Topics for future work programme

- 11.1 The following topics have been identified as possible topics for the work programme for the next Municipal year:-
- (a) Working with other authorities
 - (b) Pot holes
 - (c) ECC Highways re speed limits
 - (d) Planning conditions and scheme of delegation, RDC Planning Protocol
 - (e) Building Control
 - (f) Homelessness and the Council's Housing Strategy
 - (g) Disabled Facility Grants
 - (h) Green Waste Collection

- (i) Suitability and relevance of the Constitution

12 Performance Measures

12.1 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.

Project	Scheduled Completion date	Actual Completion date	Reason for extension of date
Planning Enforcement	April 2016	March 2016	
Michelins Farm	April 2016	March 2016	

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

The Review Committee has submitted two reports to the Executive in March 2016 and a response is still awaited.

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

During this year the Committee has heard from representatives of three 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.

Two items have 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 seven 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.