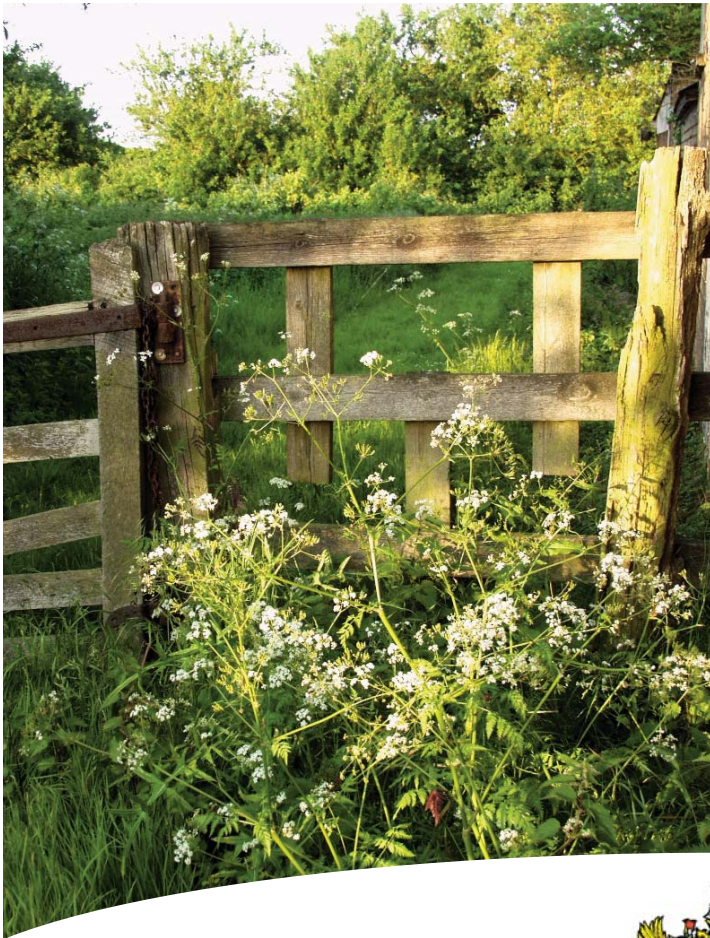


Review Committee Annual Report 2012/2013



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2 Glossary

DFG	Disabled Facilities Grant
ECC	Essex County Council
LSP	Local Strategic Partnership
OSC	Office of Surveillance Commissioner

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3 Introduction

- 3.1 During the 2012-13 Municipal Year the Review Committee has considered a number of topics both as a whole Committee or in smaller teams reporting back to the main Committee. Details of the Reviews are outlined further on in this report.
- 3.2 In addition to the Committee's role in conducting Reviews, it also has the duty to scrutinise decisions made by the Executive. As part of this role the Committee studies the Key Decisions Document on a monthly basis.

4 Local Strategic Partnership and Community Safety Partnership

- 4.1 It has been agreed that the Committee will look at the work of the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) and also the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) each year.
- 4.2 Representatives of both of these partnerships attended the Committee's October 2012 meeting and provided an update on their work. A further meeting with the CSP took place in February 2013. Representatives from the LSP attended the Committee's March 2013 meeting to update Members on the changes taking place to structures around health and wellbeing.

5 Overview of the Refuse Collection and Recycling Contract and the Street Cleansing Contract

- 5.1 Representatives of SITA UK attended the Committee in December 2012 and brought Members up to date with progress on the refuse collection and recycling contract and the street cleansing contract. 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.

6 Overview of the Key Decisions Document

- 6.1 During the year the Committee continued to monitor the decisions due to be made by the Executive and Portfolio Holders. The Committee studied the Key Decisions document on a monthly basis, asking for further details as and when felt necessary.
- 6.2 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.

7 Review of the Disabled Facilities Grant Process

- 7.1 Following on from last year's review, the Head of Community Services and the Portfolio Holder for Council Tax Collection, Benefits and Strategic Housing Functions attended the Committee's January 2013 meeting to update Members on the changes that had been made to the Disabled Facilities Grant process and the effect this had had on waiting times for the applicants.

8 Review of How Voluntary and Community Groups function in the District

- 8.1 It was agreed by the Committee at its meeting in June 2012 that a project team would consider how Voluntary and Community Groups function in the District. The team met with a number of groups both within and outside the District. A questionnaire was submitted to a large number of the voluntary groups within the District.
- 8.2 The team's recommendations were submitted to the January 2013 meeting of the Review Committee.

9 Provision of Housing for the District's Ageing Population Review

- 9.1 The Committee agreed to undertake some work around the provision of services for older people. Following a meeting with the Council's Community Planning Officer to discuss the scoping of this piece of work the Committee decided to concentrate its research on the provision of housing for the District's ageing population.
- 9.2 A project team met with officers from Rochford District and Essex County Council as well as with the Chairman of the Community and Older People Policy & Scrutiny Committee at the County Council. Various visits have been arranged by the project team to see first hand the facilities available.
- 9.3 Due to the information gathered during the review and the need to examine previously unidentified factors it has been agreed that this Review will continue 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 receive biennial 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 February 2013 following changes in government legislation.
- 10.2 A report was considered in April 2013 when the Committee reviewed the Council's policy and use of RIPA.

11 Other items considered by the Committee

- 11.1 At the June 2012 Committee meeting Members expressed an interest in hearing about the Council's promotion of Shop at my Local. The District Council's Head of Planning and Transportation attended the Committee in July 2012.
- 11.2 It was agreed during the year that the Committee would in future be responsible for systematically scrutinising the Council's treasury management strategy in advance of this being reported to Council. The first report on this subject was presented at the February 2013 meeting, Members are to receive additional training to assist them in this new role.
- 11.3 In March 2012 the Committee heard from Kevin McKenny, Chief Operating Officer of the Castle Point & Rochford Clinical Consortia Group and Jane Richards, Assistant Director of Public Health (Health Improvement & Health Inequalities), NHS North Essex about the emerging structures around health and wellbeing and the changing role of the District Council in this context.

12 Topics for future work programme

- 12.1 The following topics are being forwarded as worthy of consideration by the Review Committee during the 2013/14 municipal year:-
- 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 the Council's car parks and parking charges.
 - Review of Leisure Service provision and the Leisure Services Contract.

The aim of the above reviews would be to feed into the 2014/15 Budget Process.

- 12.2 Other work areas for consideration include :-
- Partnership arrangements, including the statutory requirement around the Community Safety Partnership (possibly jointly, with Castle Point Borough Council).
 - Implementation of the changes to the Welfare System.
 - The delivery of local highway maintenance services (possibly jointly, with Castle Point Borough Council).

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.

Project	Scheduled Completion date	Actual Completion date	Reason for extension of date
How Voluntary and Community Groups function in the District	April 2013	January 2013	.
Provision of housing for the District's ageing population	April 2013		Due to the information gathered during the review it has been agreed to carry this project into the next municipal year.

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

During this municipal year the Review Committee has submitted one report to the Executive and 100% 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.

The review of how voluntary and community groups function in the District was undertaken following concerns being expressed about how the voluntary sector was coping with the recession and included feedback from over 40 community groups within the District.

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

No 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 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 response 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?

Following the publication of the report on how Voluntary and Community Groups function in the District Members are more aware of the challenges facing the groups in this sector.

Since the Committee's review of Disabled Facility Grants (DFG) the recommendations have been implemented. The Committee heard from the Head of Community Services and the Portfolio Holder for Council Tax Collection, Benefits and Strategic Housing Functions in January 2013. The number of weeks that a person waits from receipt of the Occupational Therapist's recommendation until the DFG works are completed has come down from an average time of 50 weeks to an average time of 30 weeks.