

Review Committee Annual Report 2010/2011



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2 Glossary

ECC	Essex County Council
LSP	Local Strategic Partnership
RIPA	Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000
RRAVS	Rayleigh, Rochford and District Association for Voluntary Service

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3 Introduction

- 3.1 During the 2010-11 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 to conduct Reviews it also has the duty to scrutinise decisions made by the Executive and during the year one item has been called in by the Committee for consideration. As part of this role the Committee study the Forward Plan on a monthly basis to consider whether there are any items requiring further investigation or monitoring by the Committee.

4 Local Strategic Partnership and Crime and Disorder Partnership

- 4.1 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.
- 4.2 The Chairmen of both of these partnerships attended the June 2010 meeting and provided an update on the two groups work. In December 2010 the Chairman of the Local Strategic Partnership attended the Committee to advise Members on the partnership's strategy following the reduction in its funding stream.

5 Overview of the Refuse Collection, Recycling, and Street Cleansing Contracts

- 5.1 Representatives of SITA UK attended the Committee in October 2010 and brought Members up to date with progress on the waste and street cleansing contracts.

6 Overview of the Forward Plan

- 6.1 Following on from last year, the Committee continued to look at the Forward Plan on a regular basis. A number of items were selected from the Plan and the relevant Executive Portfolio Holders were invited to attend Committee meetings to discuss the details behind proposed decisions.
- 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 Area Committees

- 7.1 It was agreed by the Committee at its meeting in June 2010 that a project team would be formed to look into the Area Committees. The team obtained evidence from Members, the Parish/Town Councils and the public in their investigation. They also looked at other local Authorities to ascertain what alternatives there might be to the Area Committees.
- 7.2 The report was submitted to the January 2011 meeting of the Review Committee and recommendations produced.

8 Review of Surface Rainwater Drainage Systems – the Ownership and Maintenance of Ditches in the District

- 8.1 This review was instigated following concerns that came out of the flooding events that affected parts of the Country in 2007. Since the inception of the Review the findings from the Pitt Review have been published followed by the Government's response. This has resulted in two acts being passed, The Flood Risk Regulations 2009, and the Floods and Water Management Act 2010.
- 8.2 Under The Flood Risk Regulations 2009 a lead local flood authority is designated for an area. In the case of the Rochford District this is Essex County Council. The County Council has a duty to prepare a flood hazard map and also a flood risk map.
- 8.3 The Committee heard from the Flood Partnership Manager at ECC at its meeting of the 8 February 2011 and it was resolved to close the review and to invite the representative from ECC back in 2012 for an update.

9 Review of the Member Role on Outside Bodies/ benefit to the Council/Outside Body

- 9.1 This topic was selected as worthy of consideration during the June 2010 meeting of the Committee.
- 9.2 A small team was formed from the Committee to look at this topic with a final report submitted to and agreed at the February 2011 meeting. The Committee submitted recommendations to the Executive for consideration.

10 Capital Programme update – Open Spaces and Cherry Orchard Country Park – Call-In

- 10.1 In November 2010 the Review Committee decided to call-in a decision made by the Portfolio Holder for the Environment relating to funds from the Open Spaces Capital Programme being utilised for the provision of fencing at the Grove Woods play area.
- 10.2 Members of the Committee felt that the cost of this work was too high and, therefore, wished to find out more details about the proposed work.
- 10.3 Following detailed discussions with Portfolio Holders and Heads of Service during the December 2010 and January 2011 meetings the Committee recommended to the Portfolio Holder for the Environment that the decision be reconsidered.

11 Other items considered by the Committee

- 11.1 In September 2010 the Committee heard from The Rayleigh, Rochford and District Association for Voluntary Service (RRAVS). Members had expressed an interest in hearing from representatives of the group when the Local Strategic Partnership attended the Committee.
- 11.2 The Committee received a presentation from the Chairman of the Rochford Hundred Association of Local Councils in July 2010 and this was followed by a presentation from the Essex Association of Local Councils in November 2010.
- 11.3 Rather than invite the Council's Leisure Contractor, Virgin Active, to a Committee meeting it was agreed that Members of the Committee would take a tour of the Authority's Leisure facilities. The tour took place in September 2010 and Members had the chance to visit the Rayleigh Leisure Centre, Mill Hall and Clements Hall.
- 11.4 In March 2011 the Committee considered a report from the Head of Legal, Estates and Member Services relating to the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA). It was agreed that the Committee would review the Council's use of RIPA and the policy on an annual basis in the future.

12 Topics for future work programme

- 12.1 The following topics are being forwarded as worthy of consideration by the Review Committee during the 2011/12 Municipal year:-
 - Annual Review of key partnership arrangements
 - Highways maintenance in the District
 - The emerging structures around health and wellbeing and the changing role of the District Council in this context.
 - Update on the Climate Change Agenda and a review of the Council's progress in this area.
 - Update on the operation of Choice Based Letting.
 - Allocation of disability grants.

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
Review of Surface Rainwater Drainage Systems – the Ownership and Maintenance of Ditches in the District	Originally February 09 but project put on hold to await the Government response to the Pitt Review	Review Closed on 8 February 2011 in light of recent legislation and Essex County Council's role as lead flood authority for Essex.	see first column
Review of the Member Role on Outside Bodies/ benefit to the Council/Outside Body	March 2011	February 2011	
Review of Area Committees	March 2011	January 2011	

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

During this Municipal year the Review Committee has submitted 2 reports to the Executive. 71% 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 five 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 Area Committees was undertaken following requests from a number of Parish/Town Councils and included feedback from over 100 residents of the District.

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 six 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 there could be value in making sure that the witness is fully briefed and understand what powers the Review Committee has.

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

Following the submission of the Review Committee's report on Area Committees the Executive agreed to replace such Committees with Community Forums. This will see a saving in the Council's budget of approximately £15,000 per annum. A new mechanism to enable residents to ask questions of Members has also been agreed following proposals put forward by the Committee.