

Review Committee – 13 June 2006

Minutes of the meeting of the **Review Committee** held on **13 June 2006** when there were present:-

Chairman: Cllr K H Hudson
Vice-Chairman: Cllr Mrs R Brown

Cllr K J Gordon
Cllr Mrs S A Harper
Cllr Mrs J R Lumley

Cllr P K Savill
Cllr P F A Webster

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr T Livings

OFFICERS PRESENT

P Warren - Chief Executive
R J Honey - Corporate Director (Internal Services)
P Gowers - Overview & Scrutiny Officer
J Bostock - Principal Committee Administrator

194 CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS

In opening this, the first meeting of the Review Committee, the Chairman referred to the worthwhile role that the Committee could play in contributing to the effective operation of the Council and taking a value for money approach to the Council's work with partners and stakeholders.

Each Member had particular strengths that would help the Committee in its work. The year ahead would be both busy and exciting. In progressing projects, Members would need to be mindful of resource/workload implications and not "biting off more than they can chew".

195 OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY OFFICER

The Chairman was pleased to welcome Mr Paul Gowers, the recently appointed Overview & Scrutiny Officer, to the meeting.

196 METHODOLOGY AND OVERALL WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee proceeded to consider its method of operation and work programme.

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At this stage, Members felt that the approach taken to each work project should be as flexible as possible with a view to utilising the strengths of individual Members and applying the Member/officer resource in a business like and effective manner. For example, it may be that, in some cases, it will be appropriate for an individual Member to be tasked with a particular area of work. In other cases, a group of Members or the whole Committee would be more appropriate.

Members concurred with the Chairman that, at this stage, there would be merit in commencing review work in the following project areas:-

- Bus services.
- The operation of planning enforcement.
- Monitoring of the Committee system – how Committees are progressing their remit.
- Issues around anti-social behaviour.
- Contract content and processes - particularly focussed on the work around the emerging refuse collection, street cleansing and grounds maintenance contracts.

It could be recognised that other matters are likely to arise during the Municipal Year, including those that officers may wish to bring forward. It was envisaged that project leaders would report on progress/recommendations to each scheduled meeting of the Review Committee on an ongoing basis pending work conclusion. An all Member approach is likely to suit broad/involved projects, such as the consideration of issues around anti-social behaviour. There would be value in considering inviting appropriate external representatives to work with Members on this type of project.

During discussion, officers advised that:-

- It will be important to be mindful of overall work volume/capacity when considering commencing work on a project. Effective scoping (the setting of objectives and milestones) would be key. Where investigatory work is commenced, those involved will need to be sure that this continues to match initial objectives. Regular reporting back to the main Committee will be important.
- Subject to effective allying with contract timescales, the Committee is likely to be able to usefully contribute to the forthcoming contracting process for the Council's refuse collection, grounds maintenance and street cleansing contracts.
- Review activity in the area of anti-social behaviour could be assisted with the involvement of the local Divisional Police Chief Inspector, the District Council's Anti-Social Behaviour Co-ordinator (and the

Community Safety Officer as appropriate) and the Social Services Partnership Co-ordinator, Essex County Council. Chief Inspector J Walker was due to attend the July meeting of the Council's Policy, Finance & Strategic Performance Committee to update the Council on the development of neighbourhood policing in the District and the details of the proposed Police merger. The information produced for the Committee meeting could provide useful background information for commencing work on issues around anti-social behaviour.

- The youth facility at 57 South Street, Rochford is due to be reviewed by the Council's Community Services Committee this Municipal Year. Airport policy considerations would be part of the discussions relating to the Local Development Framework, which is to be considered by the Council's Planning Policy & Transportation Committee. Questionnaires associated with the forthcoming statutory Best Value General Satisfaction Survey are likely to include ascertaining the views of the public on the fear of crime.
- Different approaches will suit different projects. In terms of being an individual resource, the Overview & Scrutiny Officer can be seen as a facilitator/co-ordinator.

Members recognised that the Committee's work could contribute indirectly to the policy making role of other Committees and Full Council. The recent review of overview and scrutiny had established that there is no one right approach. In addition to undertaking project activity, the Committee could look at issues such as benchmarking and will need to be mindful of its own agreed performance measures.

It was agreed that, in the first instance, the Overview & Scrutiny Officer could usefully liaise with appointed Member Project Leaders to develop scoping documentation.

Resolved

- (1) That work be commenced in the following areas with the project leader/s identified:-

Area	Project Leader/s
Bus services	Councillor T Livings
The operation of planning enforcement	Councillor K J Gordon
Monitoring of the Committee system	Councillor Mrs R Brown
New contracts overview	Councillor K H Hudson

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- (2) That, in the first instance, the Overview & Scrutiny Officer liaise with the appointed Member Project Leader/s to develop scoping documentation.
- (3) That Project leader/s report progress into each scheduled meeting of the Review Committee.

The meeting closed at 8.57pm.

Chairman

Date