

Review Committee Annual Report 2019/2020



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2 Glossary

CSP	Community Safety Partnership
ICT	Information and Communications Technology

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3 Introduction

- 3.1 During the 2019-2020 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 had 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 Decisions Document on a monthly basis.

4 Review of the Constitution

- 4.1 Following the LGA peer review which stated that the Council's constitution was in need of modernisation, Members stated at the December 2019 meeting that they wished to look at the effect this recommendation would have on the annual Constitution update and requested that a report be made.

5 ICT Review

- 5.1 Following the team's initial report to the Committee in June 2019, the team met with officers several times to monitor the migration of the Council's servers and associated costs to completion.

6 Initial 2019/2020 Work Programme

- 6.1 At the June 2019, July 2019 and September 2019 meetings, the Committee considered the list of possible topics for the work plan and agreed the following:-
- Grass cutting and management of open spaces in new developments. A report from the Assistant Director, Place & Environment, would be considered later in the year.
 - Off-street parking provision and facilities. A report would be submitted to the Committee later in the year, after the initial review had been undertaken by the Leader and Portfolio Holder.
 - Animal welfare strategy. It was noted that when the new animal welfare legislation is in force, a briefing note would be issued, and Member training provided later in the year. A review could be undertaken by the Committee later in the year if appropriate.
 - Green agenda, broken down into smaller reviews, starting with the Council's use of single-use plastics. A report would be submitted to the Committee on this topic, after which the Committee could consider undertaking reviews of other areas of the green agenda.

- The Asset Strategy in terms of the green agenda, considering how the redevelopment of the Freight House scheme would impact on the Council's carbon footprint.
- The Emergency Plan. There would be an officer report on this to a meeting of the Committee.
- Recycling and Waste. It was agreed that there would be a report to the Committee, after which the Committee could decide whether to investigate this further.

7 Community Safety Partnership

- 7.1 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 must meet at least once a year to fulfil this function.
- 7.2 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.
- 7.3 At the March 2020 meeting, Members were advised of the progress made against the 2019/20 Rochford District Community Safety Partnership action plan along with updates on the CSP's activities during the year.

8 Overview of the Key Decisions Document

- 8.1 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 Decisions Document on a monthly basis asking for further details as and when they felt it necessary.
- 8.2 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.

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 receive a report on any changes that are required to be made to the Council's Policy and its use of RIPA during the previous year.

- 9.2 The Committee considered the report of the Assistant Director, People & Communities, updating Members on the use of RIPA over the previous year at the October 2019 meeting.

10 Other items considered by the Committee

- 10.1 It was agreed during 2012 that the Committee would in future be responsible for systematically scrutinising the Treasury Management Strategy in advance of this being reported to Council. The Council received three reports during the year, in July 2019, December 2019 and February 2020.
- 10.2 During the year, Members from the Review Committee formed a working group to discuss and formulate a Waste & Recycling Strategy with a budget of £40,000 made available for consultancy to assist with the procurement process and to help inform the working group. The report and finalised strategy will be presented at the October 2020 meeting.
- 10.3 At the September 2019 meeting, it was agreed that a working group would be formed to understand the implications and recommend a policy to the Council on how it could reduce its carbon footprint and become carbon neutral by 2030. An update was received at the July 2020 meeting.
- 10.4 The Planning Enforcement Plan and Policy Report from the Assistant Director, Place & Environment, was considered at the October 2019 meeting and recommended to be adopted.
- 10.5 The Committee considered the report of the Assistant Director, Place & Environment, at the November 2019 meeting. This report provided information on the concerns and possible solutions to the issues around the management of public open spaces in new developments by private management companies. A working group was formed to look at how the Council could provide householders in both new and existing housing developments with assistance when dealing with issues in their relationship with management companies and managing agents, and to investigate whether a policy could be drawn up to provide guidance.
- 10.6 At the December 2019 meeting, the Committee considered details of the Private Member's Bill, which had been considered by the last Parliament. The Committee noted that the Bill had not progressed beyond its first reading in the House of Commons.
- 10.7 The Committee considered the report of the Assistant Director, Assets & Commercial, at the January 2020 meeting regarding Emergency Planning. It was requested that an updated report be presented at the April 2020 meeting regarding training for Members who may be contacted out of hours.

- 10.8 The Committee considered the report of the Assistant Director, Legal & Democratic Services at the March 2020 meeting regarding the 'Connect' Cultural and Transformation Programme, and the call-in of an Executive Decision. Members discussed the ability for staff to be able to work remotely due to the Council's investment in software applications in the Azure cloud, and that £293,000 of funding from underspend reserves in 2019/20 would fully fund the programme.

11 Performance Measures

- 11.1 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
Constitution Review	To be agreed		Scope of the project/ Covid-19
ICT review	To be agreed	June 2019	

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

The Review Committee has not submitted any reports to the Executive during this Municipal year.

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

During this year the Committee has heard from representatives of one external body 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.

None

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

During the year one decision has not been subject to call-in.