

REPORT TO THE MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE 4 DECEMBER 2013

PORTFOLIO: OVERALL STRATEGY & POLICY DIRECTION

REPORT FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

SUBJECT: PEER REVIEW – UPDATE ON PROGRESS

1 DECISION BEING RECOMMENDED

- 1.1 That Members note the progress update on the agreed Action Plan as at November 2013 (Appendix 1).

2 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 In February 2013, and following on from the Peer Review of this Council in Late 2012, the Executive agreed an Action Plan to address the main points raised (min. 27/2013).
- 2.2 Work has been undertaken in a number of areas highlighted and Appendix 1 provides Members with an update on progress as at November 2013. The Action Plan was always envisaged as being implemented in stages over a period and the next key area of activity will emerge through the work done in connection with the 2014/15 budget and subsequent revisions and updates to the Corporate Plan.
- 2.3 Once that is concluded, it will trigger further work on organisational development. The one area where not much progress has been made to date relates to a revised Housing Strategy and the actions that will follow on from that. Unfortunately, that work is dependent upon the signing off of an updated Strategic Housing Market Appraisal Assessment for Thames Gateway South Essex. Work on that document is now close to finalisation.

I confirm that the above recommendation does not depart from Council policy and that appropriate consideration has been given to any budgetary and legal implications.

SMT Lead Officer Signature: _____

Chief Executive (Retiring)

Background Papers:-

None.

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PEER REVIEW CHALLENGES – Update on Progress – November 2013

Review Corporate Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Align timeframe with MTFS • Refocus/review core priorities – wealth, prosperity and housing • Use Corporate Plan to re-enforce/clarify role of Rochford in partnership context – South Essex 	<p>MTFS will remain a 5 year plan.</p> <p>Corporate Plan has been redrafted to focus on 3 priority areas suggested by the Review Team – wealth creation, provision of housing and delivery of efficiency savings.</p> <p>A comprehensive review of the Corporate Plan is in progress.</p>
MTFS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work on link to above • Review and re-evaluate through 2014 • Develop series of internal/external VFM work programmes on key budget issues for deliver by Oct/Nov 2013 to feed into Budget process 	<p>Contract extension on Kerbside Recycling and Street Cleansing has now been negotiated with SITA and, following consideration by Review Committee, was agreed by the Executive in September. That will achieve savings in the region of £150K in 2014/15 and £383K in 2015/16. The Executive have now considered the reports from the Review Committee on Woodlands & Open Spaces, Leisure Services and car parking. The outcomes will feed into the budget process as necessary.</p>
Organisational Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review organisation/HOS responsibilities in light of revamped Corporate Plan • Review Executive roles/responsibilities in light of revamped Corporate Plan • Further review following final alignment of Corporate Plan/MTFS work and completion of Organisational Development Plan 	<p>Portfolio Holder roles were reviewed and changes made to responsibilities from the 2013/14 municipal year in the light of changes to the Corporate Plan. In terms of organisational change/Head of Service responsibilities, these will be further reviewed as the Corporate Plan/Budget process for 2014/15 and beyond is finalised.</p>

Organisational Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Re-name Workforce Development Plan as Organisational Development Plan. Review and re-align with revised Corporate Plan priorities and re-working of MTFS. 	The Organisational Development plan needs to be about how we meet our objectives and deliver on the 3 priority themes. A draft will be drawn up once the 2014/15 budget process is nearing an end and the Housing and Economic Development strategies are more advanced. The current workforce development plan is in place until the end of March 2014 so a final Organisational Development plan needs to be in place by 1 April 2014.
Partnership Structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete initial review Test against revised Corporate Plan Refresh in light of completion of revised Corporate Plan/MTFS review and Organisational Review 	A SMT and Middle Management initial review of partnerships has taken place with revised partnership guidance produced. This will be re-visited on an annual basis, in line with the Corporate Plan/Budget process.
Review Commissioning Strategy/Client side and procurement arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To feed into revised MTFS Jan 2014 May also impact on organisational structure and organisational development 	Procurement arrangements have now been centralised to provide support to service managers in managing the tender process. Basildon Borough Council was engaged to oversee the recent procurement of the Grounds Maintenance Contract. A Portfolio Holder report is being prepared on joining the Braintree Procurement Hub for an initial trial period to evaluate whether on-going membership is in the Council's best interests. Commissioning/Procurement will continue to be examined as part of the budget process to ensure the organisation has the capacity and skillsets to meet its requirements.
Develop New Housing Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In conjunction with South Essex partners 	This has currently been delayed and is awaiting the production of the final version of the Thames Gateway South Essex Strategic Housing Market Assessment.

Focus on Housing Delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use internal Economic Regeneration Group for internal co-ordination and secure organisational buy-in • Establish HA forum to meet/progress 4 X per year • Review relationship with RHA – are we too dependent? 	<p>Economic Regeneration Group now considers housing delivery as part of its agenda.</p> <p>Relationship with RHA has been revised to ensure better Member involvement both through the Portfolio Holder and with RDC members on the Board</p>
Review Overview & Scrutiny Function	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look at functions of Review – Can it be used for <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ More robust/systematic look at Finance throughout the year and more service improvement/development work – tied into internal IMG work programme? ➢ More joint reviews of external services with CPBC; and also possibly SBC? ➢ Review membership – extend to 15? Same as Licensing? 	<p>Capacity of the Review Committee increased to comprise 15 Members from May 2013. This has enabled greater engagement and focus on budget issues. See MTFS comments above.</p> <p>In addition, the Review Committee has now reviewed the Treasury Management Strategy 2013/14 before it was adopted by Council.</p> <p>Timetable this year has not been conducive to taking quarterly financial management reports into Review as it creates too much delay in reporting to the Executive. However, this will be reviewed for 2014/15 reporting.</p>
Strengthen Member Leadership Capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop work shadowing/support/reference initiative for Executive Members – 2 to 3 Members per Executive Member 	<p>Process for shadowing Executive members agreed. To date, Cllr Mrs Roe shadowing Cllr Maddocks.</p>
Strengthen Community Leadership Role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review success/effectiveness of Community Forums • Review 2 yearly meetings with Parishes. • Could Review do more around this? 	<p>Community Forums deleted but replaced with meetings facilitated with the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Clinical Commissioning Group. Twice yearly meetings with parishes retained but RDC member representation increased. Agreed to hold other public meetings on an as and when basis.</p>