
MATTERS REFERRED TO THE EXECUTIVE AND REPORTS FROM OTHER COMMITTEES/SUB-COMMITTEES/AREA COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN

1 REPORT OF THE CHARTER IMPLEMENTATION GROUP

- 1.1 As part of its work towards achieving accreditation to the Charter for Elected Member Development, the following two items have been referred by the Charter Implementation Group to the Executive:-

(a) System of feeding back information on Outside Body activity through Full Council Meetings

- 1.2 In considering ways in which the Council disseminates learning, the Charter Implementation Group felt that it would be appropriate to introduce a mechanism whereby, in addition to appointees being able to report on outside body activity through the Members Bulletin, there can be reports into Full Council meetings.
- 1.3 Appendix A sets out the mechanism proposed by the Group. It is proposed that the Executive **RESOLVES** to endorse the mechanism for introduction in the new municipal year. (HLEMS)

(b) Role Profiles

- 1.4 In considering the Charter accreditation requirement that Member roles are clearly set out for the purpose of helping inform the content of Member training programmes, the Charter Implementation Group has developed some Member role profiles.
- 1.5 The profiles are based on role descriptions developed by the Council in 2006 and take account of the type of profiles produced by other Authorities in their work towards achieving Charter Accreditation.
- 1.6 Copies of the role profiles are attached at Appendix B. It is proposed that the Executive **RESOLVES** to endorse these profiles for the purpose of helping inform the content of Member training and development programmes and achieving Charter accreditation. (HLEMS)

2 REPORT OF THE REVIEW COMMITTEE

Review of Area Committee Budgets

- 2.1 At its meeting on 9 March 2010 the Review Committee approved a final report on its review of Area Committee Budgets, which included recommendations for consideration by the Executive.
- 2.2 A copy of the final report, as approved by the Review Committee, is appended.

2.3 It is proposed that the Executive considers the final report, which has recommendations to the Executive as follows:-

- (1) That Area Committee budgets are allocated for a trial period of 2 years with effect from the 2010/11 municipal year, subject to provision that the Head of Finance, Audit and Performance Management can return to the Executive earlier if the costs of administration prove onerous.
- (2) That the Community Safety Reserve of £15,000 be reallocated to the Area Committees.
- (3) That if recommendation No 2 is agreed then the budget of £15,000 be split equally between the three Area Committees.
- (4) That there should be minimal administrative arrangements so that funds can be allocated at minimum cost.
- (5) That any expenditure by the Area Committees is only made if there is no apparent other source of funding and is applied to issues identified during the course of a meeting that could provide a 'quick win'.
- (6) That Area Committees can allocate monies for the purpose of pump priming if considered appropriate and if it will attract additional funds from other sources.
- (7) That there be a limit of £750 to each item that the Area Committee allocates funds to.
- (8) That the Area Committees should not allocate funding to projects that would involve the District Council in ongoing maintenance costs.
- (9) That any proposed expenditure made by the Area Committees is signed off by the Head of Finance, Audit and Performance Management as the S151 Officer to ensure that it conforms to the Council's aims and objectives, is legal and meets probity requirements.
- (10) That a funding schedule identifying the situation with regard to spend to date and remaining monies available is produced for each Area meeting, allied to Area Committee updates.
- (11) That any funds allocated by an Area Committee, but not drawn down, can be carried over to the next municipal year but must be spent within 6 months and that a maximum of £2,500 of an Area Committee's unallocated budget can be carried over to the following year.

Proposed system of feeding back information on Outside Body activity through Full Council Meetings

- Retain current principle of requiring appointees to report in twice per year via the Members' Bulletin.
- Expand the Leader's speech at Council to pick up on the outside bodies attended by the Leader - Regional Assembly, Essex Partnership Forum, Local Strategic Partnership and Thames Gateway South Essex - and through this speech link to relevant Portfolio Holders to report as appropriate on outside bodies they attend.
- For all other outside bodies, there could be an item following 'Leaders report' on the Council agenda, entitled 'Outside Bodies Feedback'.
- This could be trialled for 6 to 12 months.
- Council will receive reports back on up to 4 outside bodies per meeting. In terms of process, a letter would go out well in advance of the meeting. The first 4 returnees would be selected for the meeting (if oversubscribed, they could be invited to present at the next meeting). There could be a policy that, once there has been a report on a particular body, Council would not normally expect a further report within 6 months unless there is a matter of significance.
- A verbal report into Council would equate to one written report via the Bulletin.
- Maximum time allowed per report to be 5 minutes.
- Members to stand when they present their verbal feedback.
- Members' questions to be allowed on the verbal feedback.
- Where there is more than one Member on the outside body, one Member could lead the presentation with contribution from the other Members on that body. However, the presentation/feedback would still be subject to the 5 minute rule.
- This could be implemented from the next municipal year 2010/11.

Role Profiles

Chairman of the Council

Role and Responsibilities

- To represent the District Council on a non-political basis and fulfill the role as first citizen to maintain the civic standing of the Council and to represent and promote the Council within the community.
- To attend appropriate civic functions, as well as community events, to fulfill the role of first citizen. To be visible in the public arena.
- To act as a non-political Chairman of meetings of the Council to ensure that order is preserved and that matters are considered in a business-like and effective fashion.
- To maintain, develop and build upon good relationships between the political and managerial process to the benefit of the community.
- To provide a point of contact with the community on civic matters and events.
- To provide a link between the Council as a whole and the community it serves and feedback on the views of the community as raised through the conduct of civic functions.

Skills and Knowledge

Leadership

- Ambassadorial skills to be able to represent the Council both within and outside the Council.

Chairing

- Chairing skills.

Team Working & Relationship Building

- Relationship building skills.
- Supporting and encouraging relevant contribution from Members of the Council at Council meetings.

Communication

- Listening and questioning skills
- Presentation skills.
- Public speaking skills.
- Ability to deal with the media.

Role Profiles

Organisational Skills and Personal Effectiveness

- Ability to plan and prioritise.

Knowledge

- Understanding of Council processes.

Vice Chairman of the Council

The Vice-Chairman will support the Chairman and deputise when necessary and where appropriate.

Role Profiles

Leader of the Council

This role profile identifies the responsibilities, skills and knowledge required of the Leader of the Council, which are in addition to those set out for a Portfolio Holder.

Role and Responsibilities

- To provide leadership to the Council and its political administration.
- To lead on the development of key policy and budget priorities for consideration by Committees, the Executive and/or the Council as a whole.
- To maintain, develop and build upon the relationships between the political and managerial processes to maximise delivery of the Council's functions to the communities that comprise Rochford District.
- To be visible in the public arena and provide the principal point of contact to all forms of media interest, to ensure appropriate information is provided on Council activity.
- To act as the Council's principal political spokesperson and representative with Government, other Authorities, agencies and partners both on a one-to-one basis and in a variety of fora.
- To be the principal link between the political administration and the Chief Executive/Head of Paid Service.
- To chair meetings of the Executive.

Skills and Knowledge

Leadership

- Ability to develop a vision for Rochford District and drive the Council and its partners towards achieving that vision.
- Ambassadorial skills to be able to represent the Council both within and outside the Council at sub-regional, regional and national levels.
- Ability to provide political leadership for their political Group.
- Ability to, when necessary, mentor Members of their Group.

Chairing

- Chairing skills

Role Profiles

Team Working & Relationship Building

- Relationship building, particularly with other parts of the political management structure.
- Tact and diplomacy to be able to work across the full range of Council services, partners and political groups, to the benefit of the community.

Organisational Skills and Personal Effectiveness

- Ability to plan and prioritise the business of Council and the Executive.

Communication

- Listening and questioning skills.
- Presentation skills.
- Public speaking skills.
- Ability to deal with the media.

Knowledge

- Understanding of the strategic role of the Leader of the Council.
- Understanding of the role of the Chief Executive and other senior officers.
- Knowledge of the work of national, regional and sub-regional bodies and the role of the Leader and Council within them.
- Understanding of the national policy framework and its impact on local policy development.
- Knowledge of the role of local partners and the services they deliver.
- Understanding of the relationship between national politics and local political leadership.
- Understanding of the wider, national issues facing Councillors and the practical implications for Rochford District Councillors.
- An understanding of project management principles.

Deputy Leader of the Council

Role and Responsibilities

The Deputy Leader will assist the Leader in providing leadership of the Council and appropriate strategic and operational direction and assist the Leader in carrying out his/her role and responsibilities, deputising when necessary and where appropriate.

Role Profiles

Group Leader

Role and Responsibilities

In addition to their role of elected Councillor and to the duties attaching to any other position of office to which they are appointed by the Council:-

- To chair meetings of the relevant political group or ensure there are arrangements in place for chairing meetings.
- To provide leadership to the group and act as the principal spokesperson/contact for the group.
- To act as point of contact for the group with the Chief Executive on matters of Council business.
- To assume overall responsibility for the management and behaviour of the group in the context of Council business.

Skills and Knowledge

Leadership Skills

- Ability to provide political leadership of their Group and manage the tensions between the political demands and expectations of the Group, and the needs of the Council.
- Ambassadorial skills to be able to represent the Council both within and outside the Council including at regional and national level.
- Ability to maintain the discipline of Members of their political Group, when necessary.
- Political sensitivity to be able to address difficult issues with other Groups.

Team Working & Relationship Building

- Tact and diplomacy.
- Ability to build effective relationships with other parts of the political management structure.
- Political sensitivity to be able to address difficult issues across all groups.

Communication

- Listening and questioning skills.
- Presentation skills.
- Public speaking skills.
- Ability to deal with the media.

Organisational Skills and Personal Effectiveness

- Ability to plan and prioritise the business of the Group.

Role Profiles

Other Skills and Abilities

- Ability to assimilate and analyse complex information.
- Research skills and policy development.

Knowledge

- Understanding of the roles of Leader of the Council, Executive Members and the Leader of an Opposition Group within the Council.
- Knowledge of the work of national, regional and sub-regional bodies and the role of the Council within them.
- Understanding of the national policy framework and its impact on local policy development.
- Understanding of Council strategy, policies and operations.
- Knowledge of the role of local partners and the services they deliver and their relationship with the Council.
- Understanding of the relationship between national politics and local political leadership.
- Understanding of the wider, national issues facing Councillors and the practical implications for the Councillors in their Group.

Role Profiles

Portfolio Holder

These responsibilities are in addition to those detailed in the role description of a Member of the Council.

Role and Responsibilities

- To take responsibility for a specific Portfolio and share in undertaking executive responsibility for developing and progressing overall key policy and budget priorities.
- To give direction on, and ensure the development of, services within the Portfolio so that they are consistent with the overall strategic approach of the Council.
- To work as a team with other Executive Members
- To be spokesperson in relation to Portfolio responsibilities including representing the Portfolio at Full Council, representing the Council to the media and on relevant external bodies, and developing and maintaining effective working relationships with the public, local businesses, the media and voluntary and community groups in the area.
- To ensure that, where appropriate, input from other Members, both sought and given, is taken into account in any decisions taken.
- To be responsible for personal development and undergo appropriate development and continuous improvement for any role undertaken

Note: Portfolio Holders can take decisions either individually or collectively as the Executive.

Skills and Knowledge

Leadership

- To be able to lead in areas of individual responsibility.
- Ambassadorial skills to be able to represent the Council both within and outside the Council.

Chairing

- Chairing skills.

Team Working & Relationship Building

- Relationship building, particularly with other Executive Members, senior officers, the Review Committee and partners.
- Ability to work as part of an Executive team to drive forward the continuous improvement of the Council.

Communication Skills

- Listening and questioning skills.
- Presentation skills.
- Public speaking skills.
- Ability to deal with the media.

Role Profiles

Organisational Skills

- Ability to manage a busy and complex workload to deadlines.

Other Skills and Abilities

- Research skills and policy development skills.
- Ability to assimilate and analyse complex information

Knowledge

- Knowledge of the key areas relating to their Executive Portfolio and its relationship with other portfolios.
- An understanding of the strategic role of the Executive within the Council.
- Understanding of Council strategy, policies and operations.
- Understanding of the national policy framework and its impact on local policy development.
- Knowledge of the work of national, regional and sub regional bodies and the role of the Council within them.
- Knowledge of the role of local partners and the services they deliver.
- An understanding of project management principles.

Role Profiles

Member of the Council

Role and Responsibilities

- To contribute to the discussion and determination of Council policies and the budget.
- To serve on Council and Committee meetings as appointed.
- To act as community champions for their area, identify local concerns and issues, mediating between and helping to reconcile local views and interest, and helping their communities to resolve local problems.
- To develop effective systems of communication, liaison and consultation with the local community and individuals within it.
- To assist constituents with matters concerning service provided by the Council.
- Act as the Council's appointee on outside bodies and provide linkages between those bodies and the Council.
- Maintain, develop and build upon good relationships between the political and managerial processes of the Council.
- To participate in the appropriate Committees and Sub-Committees as appointed by the Council.

Skills and Knowledge

Leadership

- Ability to lead and champion the interests of the local community.

Team Working & Relationship Building

- Ability to develop relationships with key Council officers and representatives from partner agencies.
- Ability to build effective relationships with all sections of the community (in order to be able to represent their needs to the Council).

Communication Skills

- Listening and questioning skills.
- Presentation skills.
- Public speaking skills

Organisational Skills and Personal Effectiveness

- Manage casework.

Role Profiles

- Basic administration skills.

Knowledge

- Knowledge of the issues within the ward and the wider locality.
- Understanding of how the political decision-making structure works.
- Knowledge of the Code of Conduct for Councillors, including ethics and standards.
- Knowledge of the strategic priorities and key policies of the Council.

Role Profiles

Chairman of the Appeals Committee

Role and Responsibilities

- To chair meetings in which appointed as Chairman to ensure they operate in an effective and efficient manner and are run in accordance with the Council's Constitution.
- To provide the opportunity for effective and appropriate contributions to be made by Committee Members on all approved subject areas under consideration within the remit of the Committee.
- To maintain, develop and build upon good relationships between the political and managerial processes of the Council.
- To liaise with relevant officers concerning the work of the Committee and the items on the agenda.
- To act as point of contact with the media on matters within the remit of the Committee to provide a response on the Council's position as required.
- To ensure the business of the Council delegated to the Committee is carried out and progressed.
- To be responsible for personal development and undergo appropriate development and continuous improvement for any role undertaken (including attendance at the mandatory Appeals Committee training session held each year).

Skills and Knowledge

Leadership

- Ambassadorial skills to be able to represent the Appeals Committee both within and outside the Authority.
- When appropriate, progressing objectives on behalf of the Appeals Committee.

Chairing

- Chairing skills.
- Impartiality and objectivity.

Team Working & Relationship Building

- Relationship building, particularly with officers supporting/advising on the appeals processes of the Council and Committee Members.
- Tact and diplomacy to be able to work to the benefit of the local community.

Role Profiles

- Supporting and encouraging relevant contribution from each Member of the Appeals Committee.
- Ensuring maximum contribution from Appeals Committee Members.

Communication

- Listening and questioning skills.
- Presentations skills.
- Public speaking skills.
- Ability to deal with the media.

Organisational Skills and Personal Effectiveness

- Ability to plan and prioritise the business of the Committee having regard to its terms of reference.

Other Skills and Abilities

- Ability to obtain and weigh up evidence to reach conclusions and make recommendations based on that evidence.

Knowledge

- Understanding of the Appeals process.
- Knowledge of legislation relating to appeal subjects.

Vice Chairman of Appeals Committee

The Vice Chairman will support the Chairman of the Appeals Committee in his/her duties and to deputise when necessary and appropriate.

Role Profiles

Chairman of an Area Committee

Role and Responsibilities

- To chair meetings in which appointed as Chairman to ensure they operate in an effective and efficient manner and are run in accordance with the Council's Constitution.
- To provide the opportunity for effective and appropriate contributions to be made by Committee Members on all approved subject areas under consideration within the remit of the Committee.
- To maintain, develop and build upon good relationships between the political and managerial processes of the Council.
- To liaise with relevant officers concerning the work of the Committee and the items on the agenda.
- To act as point of contact with the media on matters within the remit of the Committee to provide a response on the Council's position as required.
- To ensure the business of the Council delegated to the Committee is carried out and progressed.
- To ensure the Area Committee operates in a manner that effectively represents the interests of the wider local community.
- To be responsible for personal development and undergo appropriate development and continuous improvement for any role undertaken.

Skills and Knowledge

Leadership

- Ambassadorial skills to be able to represent the Area Committee both within and outside the Council.
- When appropriate, progressing objectives on behalf of the Area Committee.

Chairing

- Chairing skills, with particular emphasis on chairing meetings where there is community involvement.

Team Working & Relationship Building

- Relationship building, particularly with Area Committee Members and partners.
- Tact and diplomacy to be able to work to the benefit of the local community.

Role Profiles

- Supporting and encouraging relevant contribution from each Member of the Area Committee.
- Ensuring maximum contribution from Area Committee Members.

Communication

- Listening and questioning skills.
- Presentation skills.
- Public speaking skills.
- Ability to deal with the media.

Organisational Skills and Personal Effectiveness

- Ability to plan and prioritise the business of an Area Committee having regard to its terms of reference and key challenges facing the local area.

Knowledge

- Understanding of the Area Committee processes.
- Knowledge of the role of local partners and the services they deliver.
- Understanding of the relationship between the role of the Council and its Area Committees.
- Knowledge and understanding of locality working.

Vice Chairman of an Area Committee

The Vice Chairman will support the Chairman of the Area Committee in his/her duties and to deputise when necessary and appropriate.

Role Profiles

Chairman of the Audit Committee

Role and Responsibilities

- To chair meetings in which appointed as Chairman to ensure they operate in an effective and efficient manner and are run in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders and statutory requirements.
- To provide the opportunity for effective and appropriate contributions to be made by Committee Members on all approved subject areas under consideration within the remit of the Committee.
- To maintain, develop and build upon good relationships between the political and managerial processes of the Council.
- To liaise with relevant officers concerning the work of the Committee and the items on the agenda.
- To act as point of contact with the media on matters within the remit of the Committee to provide a response on the Council's position as required.
- To ensure the business of the Council delegated to the Committee is carried out and progressed.
- To be responsible for personal development and undergo appropriate development and continuous improvement for any role undertaken.

Skills and Knowledge

Leadership

- Ambassadorial skills to be able to represent the Area Committee both within and outside the Council.
- When appropriate, progressing objectives on behalf of the Audit Committee.

Chairing

- Chairing skills.

Team Working & Relationship Building

- Relationship building, particularly with Audit Committee Members.
- Supporting and encouraging relevant contribution from each Member of the Committee.
- Unbiased and objective attitude towards other Members, external auditors and inspectors and officers.

Role Profiles

Communication

- Listening and questioning skills
- Presentation skills.
- Public speaking skills.
- Ability to deal with the media.

Organisational Skills and Personal Effectiveness

- Ability to plan and prioritise the business of the Audit Committee, having regard to its terms of reference and key challenges facing the local area.

Knowledge

- Understanding of the Audit Committee processes.
- A broad understanding of the financial, risk, control and corporate governance issues facing local authorities generally and the Council specifically.

Vice Chairman of the Audit Committee

The Vice Chairman will support the Chairman of the Audit Committee in his/her duties and to deputise when necessary and appropriate.

Role Profiles

Chairman of the Development Committee

Role and Responsibilities

- To chair meetings in which appointed as Chairman to ensure they operate in an effective and efficient manner and are run in accordance with the Council's Constitution.
- To provide the opportunity for effective and appropriate contributions to be made by Committee Members on all approved subject areas under consideration within the remit of the Committee.
- To maintain, develop and build upon good relationships between the political and managerial processes of the Council.
- To liaise with relevant officers concerning the work of the Committee and the items on the agenda.
- To act as point of contact with the media on matters within the remit of the Committee to provide a response on the Council's position as required.
- To ensure the business of the Council delegated to the Committee is carried out and progressed.
- To be responsible for personal development and undergo appropriate development and continuous improvement for any role undertaken.

Skills and Knowledge

Leadership

- Ambassadorial skills to be able to represent the Committee both within and outside the Council.
- When appropriate, progressing objectives on behalf of the Development Committee.

Chairing

- Chairing skills, including the ability to manage conflict.
- Impartiality and objectivity.

Team Working & Relationship Building

- Relationship building with senior officers involved in the planning function, agents and developers in accordance with the principles of Development Management.
- Tact and diplomacy to be able to work to the benefit of the local community.

Role Profiles

- Supporting and encouraging relevant contribution from each Member of the Development Committee.
- Ensuring maximum contribution from Development Committee Members.

Communication

- Listening and questioning skills.
- Presentations skills.
- Public speaking skills.
- Ability to deal with the media.

Organisation Skills and Personal Effectiveness

- Ability to plan and prioritise the business of the Committee having regard to its terms of reference.

Knowledge

- Knowledge of planning issues and protocol relating to Planning procedures and the Development Committee.
- Understanding of the role of Ward Councillors in the planning process and how to handle conflicts of interest.
- Understanding of the role of planning officers.

Vice Chairman of Development Committee

The Vice Chairman will support the Chairman of the Development Committee in his/her duties and to deputise when necessary and appropriate.

Role Profiles

Chairman of the Licensing Committee

Role and Responsibilities

- To chair meetings in which appointed as Chairman to ensure they operate in an effective and efficient manner and are run in accordance with the Council's Constitution.
- To provide the opportunity for effective and appropriate contributions to be made by Committee Members on all approved subject areas under consideration within the remit of the Committee.
- To maintain, develop and build upon good relationships between the political and managerial processes of the Council.
- To liaise with relevant officers concerning the work of the Committee and the items on the agenda.
- To act as point of contact with the media on matters within the remit of the Committee to provide a response on the Council's position as required.
- To ensure the business of the Council delegated to the Committee is carried out and progressed.
- To be responsible for personal development and undergo appropriate development and continuous improvement for any role undertaken.

Skills and Knowledge

Leadership

- Ambassadorial skills to be able to represent the Committee both within and outside the Council.
- When appropriate, progressing objectives on behalf of the Committee.

Chairing

- Chairing skills.

Team Working & Relationship Building

- Relationship building, particularly with Committee Members and partners.
- Tact and diplomacy to be able to work to the benefit of the local community.
- Supporting and encouraging relevant contribution from each Member of the Licensing Committee.
- Ensuring maximum contribution from each Member of the Licensing Committee.

Role Profiles

Communication

- Listening and questioning skills.
- Presentation skills.
- Public speaking skills.
- Ability to deal with the media.

Organisational Skills and Personal Effectiveness

- Ability to plan and prioritise the business of the Licensing Committee having regard to its terms of reference and key challenges facing the local area.

Knowledge

- Understanding of Licensing Committee processes.
- Knowledge and understanding of relevant legislation and local/national developments on licensing matters.

Vice Chairman of the Licensing Committee

The Vice Chairman will support the Chairman of the Licensing Committee in his/her duties and to deputise when necessary and appropriate.

Role Profiles

Chairman of the Review Committee

Role and Responsibilities

- To chair meetings of the Review Committee to ensure they operate in an effective and efficient manner and are run in accordance with the Council's Constitution.
- To provide the opportunity for effective and appropriate contributions to be made by Committee Members on all approved subject areas under consideration within the remit of the Committee.
- To act as a focus for communication with the Leader, Committee Chairmen and all other Councillors in respect of matters which fall within the terms of reference and work programme of the Review Committee.
- To maintain, develop and build upon good relationships between the political and managerial processes of the Council.
- To liaise with relevant officers concerning the work of the Committee and the items to be placed on the agenda.
- To ensure the business of the Council delegated to Committee is carried out and progressed.
- To be responsible for personal development and undergo appropriate development and continuous improvement for any role undertaken.

Skills and Knowledge

Leadership

- Ambassadorial skills through the representation and championing of the scrutiny function inside and outside the Authority.
- Objective setting and progressing those objectives on behalf of the scrutiny function.

Chairing

- Chairing skills.

Team Working & Relationship Building

- Relationship building, particularly with Committee Members and partners.
- Tact and diplomacy to be able to work with partners to the benefit of the local community.
- Supporting and encouraging relevant contribution from each Member of the Review Committee.
- Ensuring maximum contribution from each Member of the Review Committee.

Role Profiles

Communication

- Listening and questioning skills.
- Presentation skills.
- Public speaking skills.
- Ability to deal with the media.

Organisational Skills and Personal Effectiveness

- Ability to plan and prioritise the business of the Review Committee having regard to its terms of reference and the key challenges facing the local area.

Knowledge

- An understanding of Review Committee processes.
- An understanding of project management principles.

Vice Chairman of the Review Committee

The Vice Chairman will support the Chairman of the Review Committee in his/her duties and to deputise when necessary and appropriate.

Role Profiles

The following role profile relates to a role which is not undertaken by an elected Councillor, but by an Independent Member of the Standards Committee.

Chairman of the Standards Committee

Role and Responsibilities

- To chair meetings of the Standards Committee in an effective and efficient manner and in accordance with the Council's Constitution.
- To be available to chair one of the three Standards Assessment Sub-Committees dealing with allegations of breach of the Code of Conduct and to conduct hearings.
- To work with the Council's Monitoring Officer in promoting and supporting standards of behaviour and ethics among all Councillors on Rochford District Council and Parish and Town Councils in the area.
- To liaise with officers on the content of the agenda for Committee meetings.
- To act as a spokesperson for the Standards Committee.
- To be responsible for personal development and undergo appropriate development and continuous improvement.

Skills and Knowledge

Leadership

- Ability to represent the Standards Committee to Members, the community and the media.

Chairing

- Chairing skills.

Organisational Skills

- Prioritising and managing the work of the Standards Committee.

Other Skills

- Assimilating and analysing complex and sometimes contradictory information
- Obtaining and weighing up evidence and making decisions based on that evidence.
- Keen interest in standards in public life.
- Objectivity, independence and impartiality.
- Experience in arriving at balanced judgments.

Team Working & Relationship Building

- Relationship building - with the Council's Monitoring Officer, Members of the Standards Committee, other Councillors, including Parish and Town Councillors, senior officers.

Communication

- Listening and questioning skills.
- Presentation skills.
- Public speaking.

Role Profiles

- Ability to deal with the media.

Knowledge

- Broad knowledge of the role and functions of the Council and its members and of its structures and procedures.
- Broad knowledge of the role and function of Town and Parish councils.
- A detailed awareness of the national and local importance and role of the Standards Committee, and the role of the Standards Board for England.
- An understanding of the Council's Code of Conduct and the constitutional arrangements relating to the Standards Committee.
- Political awareness

Vice Chairman

The Vice-Chairman will support the Chairman where appropriate.

District, Independent and Parish Members

Role and Responsibilities

- To help promote and maintain high standards of conduct by Councillors.
- To champion the ethical agenda within the Council and, where appropriate, with Partner Organisations.
- To assist Councillors to observe the Code of Conduct.
- To be available to chair one of the three Standards Assessment Sub-Committees dealing with allegations of breach of the Code of Conduct and to conduct hearings.
- To observe confidentiality at all times.

Skills and Knowledge

- A keen interest in standards in public life.
- The ability to be objective, independent and impartial.
- Sound decision-making skills.
- Questioning skills.
- Leadership qualities.
- The ability to chair meetings (Independent Members).

Final Report of the Project Team
as approved by the Review Committee

Review of Area Committee Budgets



Review of Area Committee Budgets

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2 Glossary

If you would like this information in large print, braille or another language please contact 01702 546366

Review of Area Committee Budgets

3 Introduction

- 3.1 Area Committees were introduced by the Council in 2007. Since their introduction there have been discussions about whether each Area Committee should have its own budget and, if so, what it should be used for. In the past, Review Committee project teams have considered the decision making process relating to the Area Committees.
- 3.2 The Review Committee agreed that the review would be carried out by a small team of three Members.

4 Terms of reference

- 4.1 The Review Committee agreed that the team should examine the feasibility of providing a budget allocation to each of the Area Committees. No other aspects relating to the Area Committees would be examined during the course of the review.

Review of Area Committee Budgets

5 Methodology

5.1 The team agreed to look at:-

- The arrangements of other Authorities who had introduced budgets for their Area Committees or equivalent, and whether this had been of benefit to the residents of the Area.
- Which items could be the subject of budget allocation and how monies could be divided between the three Committees.

5.2 The team decided to meet with the Council's Area Committee Chairmen and Group Leaders to seek their views on the allocation of budgets to Area Committees.

Review of Area Committee Budgets

6 Findings**6.1 Other Essex Authorities**

- 6.1.1 The team identified three Essex Authorities that had either allocated budgets for Area Committees or funds to Members to spend on local projects. The authorities were Braintree District Council, Castle Point Borough Council and Tendring District Council.

Braintree District Council

- 6.1.2 In 2007 Braintree District Council made a number of changes to its constitution with the intention of giving frontline Councillors greater focus on community leadership. Local Committees were introduced, each with their own budget and the freedom to financially support local projects. Each Committee would operate a grant funding scheme to attract a wide range of applicants and promote the role of the ward member who would support and monitor an application. The arrangements were reviewed during 2008/09 and it was concluded that the funding available to Local Committees ought to be directed to local priorities rather than awarded through a grant system.

- 6.1.3 There are three Area Committees. The budget for each Committee is related to how many Members there are on a Committee. The budget is divided into Revenue and Capital and for 2009/10 by way of example, the budget for the Braintree Local Committee was £65,000 capital and £26,000 revenue.

Castle Point Borough Council

- 6.1.4 Castle Point Borough Council has 5 Neighbourhood meetings which are the equivalent of the Rochford District Area Committees. The Authority currently allocates £70,000 of its budget to its Neighbourhood meetings. A difference between Rochford District Council and Castle Point Borough Council is that, whilst Rochford District is fully parished, there are areas of Castle Point that are not covered by a Parish Council.
- 6.1.5 The use of the budget by Neighbourhood Meetings must be in accordance with a 'Neighbourhood Plan' and confined to local area purposes under the general heading of "Civic Pride", where expenditure will be non-recurring and will not have future implications for maintenance or other ongoing expenditure.
- 6.1.6 The decision on the use of a budget can only be made at a Neighbourhood Meeting following the consideration of a written report from a Neighbourhood Director confirming:-
- The estimated cost of the proposal.

Review of Area Committee Budgets

- Confirmation that the proposal meets the provisions of the Council's scheme, including a statement that the proposal does not result in future ongoing costs.
- An estimated timescale for implementation.

Tendering District Council

- 6.1.7 Tendering District Council do not have Area Committees but identify a budget for allocation by individual Members. The team studied this system as an example of a way that ward councillors could have direct involvement with residents.
- 6.1.8 Since the 2008/09 Municipal year Tendering has operated a Small Schemes Grant System where each of the 60 Tendring Councillors are allocated £2,000 to spend on schemes of their own choice during each year. Unallocated funds are carried over into the next year.
- 6.1.9 Councillors are allowed to select deserving groups and organisations in their wards. Where there is more than one Councillor in a Ward they have the option to pool resources for a larger project.

6.2 Authorities outside Essex

- 6.2.1 The team considered the arrangements at a number of Authorities outside Essex that had awarded budgets for Area Committees. These included Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council, Sefton Council and Swale Borough Council. The team took the opportunity to look at the application process for grant funding that these authorities had put in place and the way that applications were dealt with by the Area Committees.

6.3 Conclusions

- 6.3.1 Further to discussions with Rochford District Council's Area Committee Chairmen and Group Leaders and, having studied the detail of other Authorities schemes, the team developed recommendations around the following factors:-
- The value of a trial period arrangement.
 - Funding sources and an easy to apply allocation.
 - Minimising both bureaucracy and administration costs.
 - Avoiding conflict with other funding arrangements whilst providing a useful facility that will allow an Area Committee to make a difference.
 - Monitoring arrangements.

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- 6.3.2 The team felt that Area Committees should be allocated a budget and that arrangements should be trialled over two years subject to provision for earlier review if the costs of administration prove onerous.

Recommendation No 1

It is recommended to the Executive that Area Committee budgets are allocated for a trial period of 2 years with effect from the 2010/11 municipal year, subject to provision that the Head of Finance, Audit and Performance Management can return to the Executive earlier if the costs of administration prove onerous.

- 6.3.3 During its deliberations the team met with the Head of Finance, Audit and Performance Management to discuss possible funding streams that could be reallocated for use by the Area Committees. The Community Safety Reserve of £15,000 was identified as being a possible source of funding that could be reallocated to the Area Committees.

Recommendation No 2

It is recommended to the Executive that the Community Safety Reserve of £15,000 be reallocated to the Area Committees.

- 6.3.4 The other Authorities examined allocated funding to their committees using formulas based around aspects such as number of wards covered by the Committee, number of Members on the Committee or population of the Area. The team felt that, given the size of the amount involved, a simple approach would be to split the funding equally between the three Area Committees so that each Committee would have a budget of £5,000.

Recommendation No 3

It is recommended to the Executive that if recommendation No 2 is agreed then the budget of £15,000 be split equally between the three Area Committees.

Review of Area Committee Budgets

- 6.3.5 One of the concerns of the Area Committee Chairmen that was raised with the team was the costs of administering any system.
- 6.3.6 Whilst administrative systems used by other Local Authorities can be large and bureaucratic, the amount they have to allocate is also large and the system of distribution needs to reflect this. For example Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council use a twenty page application form. If the costs of administering a scheme were to include allocation panels etc, then the Council could end up spending more to administer applications than the £15,000 available to distribute.

Recommendation No 4

It is recommended to the Executive that there should be minimal administrative arrangements so that funds can be allocated at minimum cost

- 6.3.7 Another concern of the Area Committee Chairmen was the possible conflict with other sources of funding within the District.
- 6.3.8 It would be appropriate for any expenditure made by the Area Committees to only be made if there is no apparent better source. Therefore, most groups should be expected to follow the existing grant aid process or look to other sources, such as the Parish/Town Councils or the County's Community Initiative Fund.
- 6.3.9 An Area Committee budget could usefully be applied to items identified by Members during the course of a meeting that would benefit from immediate funding to provide a 'quick win'. It could be used for, say:-
- Local housekeeping jobs(such as provision of winter grit bins or signage)
 - Community Safety matters (such as additional lighting)
 - Small scale environmental work (such as shrub or tree planting)
 -

Recommendation No 5

It is recommended to the Executive that any expenditure by the Area Committees is only made if there is no apparent other source of funding and is applied to issues identified during the course of a meeting that could provide a 'quick win'.

- 6.3.10 It was envisaged that there may be cases when a Committee would wish to apply funding to the work of a group for pump priming purposes and to so attract additional funding from other sources.

Review of Area Committee Budgets

Recommendation No 6

It is recommended to the Executive that Area Committees can allocate monies for the purpose of pump priming if considered appropriate and if it will attract additional funds from other sources.

- 6.3.11 Due to the amount of funds available to each Committee, the team agreed that it would be appropriate for there to be a limit to the amount that can be allocated to each item, thereby ensuring that the full budget would not be spent on one item.

Recommendation No 7

It is recommended to the Executive that there be a limit of £750 to each item that the Area Committee allocates funds to.

- 6.3.12 During discussions the problems of providing funds for projects that incurred ongoing maintenance costs was considered. The team felt that arrangements needed to be agreed prior to the allocation of funds to ensure that the District Council did not become involved in ongoing maintenance costs. In certain circumstances it may be possible for, say, the District Council to provide the initial costs and a Parish/Town Council to agree to take on the ongoing costs.

Recommendation No 8

It is recommended to the Executive that the Area Committees should not allocate funding to projects that would involve the District Council in ongoing maintenance costs.

- 6.3.13 Whilst the team felt that any administration should be kept to a minimum any expenditure should conform with the Council's aims and objectives.

Recommendation No 9

It is recommended to the Executive that any proposed expenditure made by the Area Committees is signed off by the Head of Finance, Audit and Performance Management as the S151 Officer to ensure that it conforms to the Council's aims and objectives, is legal and meets probity requirements.

Review of Area Committee Budgets

- 6.3.14 The team agreed that, in order for the public and Members to be able to track expenditure and to ensure transparency, details of funding needs to be readily available.

Recommendation No 10

It is recommended to the Executive that a funding schedule identifying the situation with regard to spend to date and remaining monies available is produced for each Area meeting, allied to Area Committee updates.

- 6.3.15 The team noted that most of the schemes run by other Authorities allowed for funds to be carried over to the following year. It was felt that funds allocated but not drawn down should be carried over for a maximum period of 6 months. The team felt it would be inappropriate to store funds and, to encourage the Committees to allocate funds, it should not be possible to roll over the complete budget indefinitely.

Recommendation No 11

It is recommended to the Executive that:-

- Any funds allocated by an Area Committee but not drawn down, can be carried over to the next municipal year but must be spent within 6 months.
- A maximum of £2,500 of an Area Committee's unallocated budget can be carried over to the following year.

Review of Area Committee Budgets

7 Summary of Recommendations

Recommendation No 1

(Page 7, Section 6.3.2)

It is recommended to the Executive that Area Committee budgets are allocated for a trial period of 2 years with effect from the 2010/11 municipal year, subject to provision that the Head of Finance, Audit and Performance Management can return to the Executive earlier if the costs of administration prove onerous.

Recommendation No 2

(Page 7, Section 6.3.3)

It is recommended to the Executive that the Community Safety Reserve of £15,000 be reallocated to the Area Committees.

Recommendation No 3

(Page 7, Section 6.3.4)

It is recommended to the Executive that if recommendation No 2 is agreed then the budget of £15,000 be split equally between the three Area Committees.

Recommendation No 4

(Page 8, Section 6.3.6)

It is recommended to the Executive that there should be minimal administrative arrangements so that funds can be allocated at minimum cost

Recommendation No 5

(Page 8, Section 6.3.9)

It is recommended to the Executive that any expenditure by the Area Committees is only made if there is no apparent other source of funding and is applied to issues identified during the course of a meeting that could provide a 'quick win'.

Review of Area Committee Budgets

Recommendation No 6

(Page 9, Section 6.3.10)

It is recommended to the Executive that Area Committees can allocate monies for the purpose of pump priming if considered appropriate and if it will attract additional funds from other sources.

Recommendation No 7

(Page 9, Section 6.3.11)

It is recommended to the Executive that there be a limit of £750 to each item that the Area Committee allocates funds to.

Recommendation No 8

(Page 9, Section 6.3.12)

It is recommended to the Executive that the Area Committees should not allocate funding to projects that would involve the District Council in ongoing maintenance costs.

Recommendation No 9

(Page 9, Section 6.3.13)

It is recommended to the Executive that any proposed expenditure made by the Area Committees is signed off by the Head of Finance, Audit and Performance Management as the S151 Officer to ensure that it conforms to the Council's aims and objectives, is legal and meets probity requirements.

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It is recommended to the Executive that a funding schedule identifying the situation with regard to spend to date and remaining monies available is produced for each Area meeting, allied to Area Committee updates.

Review of Area Committee Budgets

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