
REVIEW OF THE OPERATION OF THE PLANNING SERVICES COMMITTEE - SCOPING REPORT

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report seeks Members' views on the issues to be considered during the review of the operation of the Planning Services Committee.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 As part of its Improvement Plan, the Council has committed to undertake to review the effective operation of the Planning Services Committee. The timetable for the review envisages a final report in spring 2006, with agreed changes coming into operation from 1 June 2006.

3 SCOPING

- 3.1 The attached appendix provides details of the process to be followed to undertake the review. As the review progresses, the information collected will be brought together in a folder. The Committee will be provided with regular updates of progress and a copy of the folder will be placed in the Members' Library.
- 3.2 The work programme envisages several visits to Authorities to view the operation of other Planning Committees and it is suggested that three Members of the Committee be nominated to undertake that task.

4 RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Failure to complete the review will impact on the Improvement Programme.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 It is envisaged there will only be minimal costs associated with the review.

6 RECOMMENDATION

- 6.1 It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES** that, subject to views from Members, the scoping report be agreed as the framework for the review of the operation of the Planning Services Committee.

Shaun Scrutton
Head of Planning Services

Background Papers:-

None

For further information please contact Shaun Scrutton

Tel:- 01702-318100

E-Mail:- shaun.scrutton@rochford.gov.uk

Appendix 1

**OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY – SCOPING FORM FOR POLICY
 DEVELOPMENT/REVIEWS**

Committee: Environment Overview & Scrutiny	Date: 20th April 2005
Review Title: Operation of the Planning Service Committee	
Terms of Reference:	
<p>To review the operation of the Planning Services Committee and, in particular, to consider:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the size of the Committee and its effectiveness in delivering decisions; 2. the options for public speaking as part of the determination of applications; 3. the arrangements for undertaking site visits; 4. the arrangements for presenting reports to the Committee, particularly the electronic presentation of material; 5. the frequency of meetings; and 6. the form of reports. 	
Witnesses: Who? Why?	
<p>Witness 1: Chairman of Planning Services Committee, Leader of the Council, Member representative from each Group.</p> <p>Witness 2: Chief Executive, Corporate Director (LP&A), Head of Planning Services, Head of Legal Services</p> <p>Witness 3: Parish/Town Councils, Other Local Authorities.</p> <p>Witness 4: Planning Agents</p> <p>Witness 5: Audit Commission</p> <p>Witness 6: Applicants (recently determined applications).</p> <p>Information to be gathered: Perspectives on the operation of the Planning Services Committee.</p>	
Documents: What? Why?	
<p>Document 1: Primary legislation</p> <p>Document 2: Council Constitution</p> <p>Document 3: Rochford CPA Report 2004</p> <p>Document 4: ODPM : Diversity and Equality in Planning</p>	

Document 5: ODPM : Making the Planning System Accessible to Everyone

Document 6: ODPM : Community Involvement in Planning.

Information to be gathered:

Key information from documents on the delivery of a Planning Service. Note: This list is not intended to be comprehensive and will be added to as the review progresses.

Site visits: *Where? Why? When?*

Site visits to a small selection of Authorities to review the operation of Planning Committees elsewhere – look at best practice elsewhere.

Information gathered will inform the Rochford review.

Timetable to be arranged. A small group of Members from the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee to undertake the visits.

Consultation/research: *Who? Why? What?*

Questionnaire Survey of other Local Authorities in the Rochford family group (Audit Commission grouping) to gather information about size, frequency, membership, etc., of Planning Committees.

Local Focus Group to get public perception of operation of Planning Services Committee.

Information to be gathered:

The data gathered will provide a broad perspective on the operational arrangements for Planning Committees elsewhere in Authorities with similar characteristics to Rochford.

Venues to be used for evidence gathering: *Where? When?*

Civic Suite - Committee Room 4 - Informal meetings and interviews - to be arranged.

Council Chamber for formal meetings, as required.

Visits to other Authorities - to be arranged.

Officer support and other resources:

Head of Planning Services

Head of Legal Services

Timescale:
April 2005 - June 2006
Reporting line for the Review: Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee Environmental Services Committee Full Council