

Review Committee Annual Report 2009/2010



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2 Glossary

CEL	Connaught Environmental Limited
ECC	Essex County Council
LSP	Local Strategic Partnership

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3 Introduction

- 3.1 During the 2009-0 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 has completed its work. Details of the Reviews are outlined further on in this report.
- 3.2 In addition to the Committee's role to conduct Reviews it also has the duty to scrutinise decisions made by the Executive. As part of this role the Committee studies the Forward Plan on a monthly basis.

4 Local Strategic Partnership and Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership

- 4.1 As part of the review of the Political Decision Making structure during the 2008/09 Municipal Year it was agreed that the Committee would look at the Local Strategic Partnership and also the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership.
- 4.2 The Chairmen of both of these partnerships attended the November 2009 meeting and provided details / responded to questions on the function of the two groups and the partnership work that they are engaged in.

5 Overview of the Refuse Collection, Recycling, Street Cleansing and Grounds Maintenance Contracts

- 5.1 At its meeting in June 2009 the Review Committee considered a request from two members of the public to consider the bulky household waste collection service and, in particular, the charges associated with it. It was agreed that, rather than carry out a full scale review, this topic could be dealt with at a meeting of the Committee. A report providing an evaluation of the service was prepared for the September meeting and representatives of SITA UK attended the meeting to further inform Members. The Committee submitted recommendations to the Executive for consideration.
- 5.2 Representatives of Connaught Environmental Limited attended the Committee in July 2009 and brought Members up to date with progress since the company took over the grounds maintenance contract during the 2008/09 Municipal Year.

6 Overview of the Forward Plan

- 6.1 Following on from last year, the Committee continued to look at the Forward Plan on a regular basis. A number of items were selected from the Plan and the relevant Executive Portfolio Holders were invited to attend Committee meeting to discuss the details behind the decision.
- 6.2 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.

7 Review of Council's Community Halls and Associated Assets

- 7.1 Whilst there had been some delay by virtue of a combination of Committee workload and difficulties in arranging meetings with the appropriate parties, the final report was agreed by the Committee in January 2010 and recommendations produced.

8 Review of Surface Rainwater Drainage Systems – the Ownership and Maintenance of Ditches in the District

- 8.1 This review was instigated following concerns that came out of the flooding events that affected parts of the country in 2007. Since the inception of the Review the findings from the Pitt Review have been published, followed by the Government's response. This Municipal Year has seen the passing of The Flood Risk Regulations 2009, which came into force on 10 December 2009, and there is a further Flood and Water Bill expected to be passed by Parliament shortly.
- 8.2 Under The Flood Risk Regulation 2009 a lead local flood authority is designated for an area. In the case of the Rochford District this is Essex County Council. The County Council has a duty to prepare a flood hazard map and also a flood risk map. The Committee is aware of the work currently being undertaken by Essex County Council in this regard and has concluded that, due to the likelihood of a possible crossover, the project should be put on hold until the outcome is known. It is the Committee's intention to ask a representative from Essex County Council to report to the Committee in the Autumn to provide an update.

9 Review of Area Committee Budgets

- 9.1 It was agreed by the Committee in the last Municipal Year, during the review of the political decision making structure, that a separate review be undertaken on the possibility of introducing budgets for the Area Committees.
- 9.2 A small team was formed from the Committee to look at this topic with a final report submitted to and agreed at the March 2010 meeting. The Committee submitted recommendations to the Executive for consideration.

10 Car Parking Issues Review

- 10.1 This topic was selected as worthy of consideration during the June 2009 meeting of the Committee. The Committee split into two teams to

look at the issues surrounding on-street parking and off-street parking. An interim report concerning the Approach Car Park in Rayleigh was submitted to the January meeting and recommendations agreed. The final report of the teams is being submitted to the April 2010 meeting.

11 Review of the Service Provision for our Ageing Population

- 11.1 This topic was selected as a possible topic for Review by the Committee in June 2009. Once it was established that the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) was undertaking a similar review amongst its partners, it was agreed that it would be appropriate for the Review Committee to be a consultee in development of the final report.

12 Other items considered by the Committee

- 12.1 During the year the Committee also heard from a representative of Essex County Council's Education Department in relation to Section 106 monies and how they are distributed to benefit education within the District.
- 12.2 In September 2009 the Committee heard from the trustees of the Massive Project on how they were creating a youth centre for the local young people in Eldon Way, Hockley.
- 12.3 The Committee has received a presentation from Rochford Housing Association on how it was meeting the promises contained in the offer document and has visited two of the Association's sheltered housing schemes that have been refurbished over the last year.

13 Topics for future work programme

- 13.1 The following topics are being forwarded as worthy of consideration by the Review Committee during the 2010/11 Municipal Year:-
- Member role on outside bodies/benefit to the Council
 - Role, responsibilities and resources available to the Local Parish / Town Councils
 - Annual Review of key partnership arrangements
 - Provision of facilities and services for children and young people in the District
 - Area Committees

14 Performance Measures

14.1 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
Review of Surface Rainwater Drainage Systems – the Ownership and Maintenance of Ditches in the District	February 09	Currently on hold	New legislation has been passed during the year, which has appointed a Lead Local Flood Authority (Essex County Council (ECC)) for each area. The project is on hold until the outcome of ECC work in this area is known.
Review of Council's Community Halls and Associated Assets	December 2009	January 2010	As the Committee did not have a meeting in December 2009 this item was carried over to the January 2010 meeting.
Review of Area Committee Budgets	December 2010	March 2010	During the course of the investigation the team recognized the value of confirming its findings with the Group leaders before submitting the final report.
Car Parking Review	April 2010	April 2010	

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

The recommendations from the Political Decision Making Structure Review were submitted to the Executive following the meeting of 7 April 2009. 53% of the recommendations were approved by the Executive and subsequently introduced.

During this Municipal Year the Review Committee has submitted 4 reports to the Executive / Portfolio Holders. 20% of the recommendations have been approved. These figures do not include the Car Parking Issues Review, which will be presented to the Portfolio Holder following the Review Committee's April meeting.

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

During this year the Committee has heard from representatives of five different external bodies 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.

The discussions around the bulky household waste collection service emanated from a request from two residents.

The Car Park Review undertaken this year has included a survey, to which 203 residents responded.

5. Number of call-in notices received per annum.

No items have been called in by the Committee this Municipal Year.

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

During the year all decisions have been subject to call-in.

7. Whether sufficient information is provided to witnesses about the Overview and Scrutiny process.

The feedback received indicates that it could be worthwhile to look at the procedures for briefing witnesses.

8. Witnesses' views of value added by Overview and Scrutiny meetings.

The response received would indicate that there could be value in making sure that the witness is fully briefed and understands what powers the Review Committee has.

9. What has changed as a result of the Overview and Scrutiny function?

When the recommendations from the Review Committee relate to the Authority's internal workings, members of the public are often unaware that anything has changed. This year a team from the Review Committee has been examining the issues around car parking. Part of this work involved asking for residents' views and, from the responses, the team has formulated a number of recommendations to the Executive Member responsible for Planning & Transportation. It is hoped that those members of the public who commented on the situation at The Approach Car Park and requested that the pricing structure be looked at will recognise that the team has responded to their comments.