Appendix B

Review Committee of Rochford District Council







Review Committee Annual Report

INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Rochford District Council

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2 Glossary

CCTV	Close circuit television

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3 Introduction

3.1 Since the initial meeting of the Review Committee in June 2006 the Members have conducted a number of Reviews either as a full committee or in smaller teams depending on the Review being undertaken. 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 Policy Committees of the Council and during the year two items were called in by the Committee for consideration. Further details of these are included in sections 4 and 5 of this report.

4 CCTV Call in

4.1 In July 2006 the Review Committee decided to “call in” a decision made by the Policy, Finance & Strategic Performance Committee relating to the replacement of some existing Analogue CCTV cameras with digital cameras.

4.2 Following detailed discussion by the Committee and advice given by the Police a recommendation was submitted to Council that the original decision be reconsidered. The Policy, Finance & Strategic Performance Committee was asked to reconsider the decision and agreed with the recommendation from the Review Committee.

4.3 This provided estimated savings of £29,000 for the Authority and solicited an agreement with the Police to use their own covert cameras whenever a need was identified.

5 Window Cleaning Contract Call in

5.1 In October 2006 a further decision of the Policy, Finance & Strategic Performance Committee relating to the Authority’s window cleaning contract was called in.

5.2 Following discussions by the Committee the contract was referred back to the Policy, Finance & Strategic Performance Committee with a recommendation that the original contract figure was adhered to.

5.3 On reflection the Policy, Finance & Strategic, Performance Committee agreed with the Review Committee recommendation saving the Council any additional unbudgeted expenditure for this item.

6 Overview of the Refuse Collection and Recycling Contract process

6.1 At the beginning of the municipal year the allocation of the new Council contracts was identified as an area that might benefit from the Review Committees involvement.

6.2 In accordance with the Councils decision of the 31 October 2006, it was agreed by the Review Committee that the Chairman, Cllr K H Hudson, would represent the Committee in the overview of the refuse collection and recycling contract process.

6.3 Already two recommendations have been made. This process will be ongoing until such time as the contract has been agreed and signed.

7 Mental Health Services /Provision

7.1 A work stream for the Committee for next year is the Mental Health Services /Provision relating to the new facility at Rochford and contact has been made with the Health Overview & Scrutiny Department at Essex County Council in order to obtain the necessary delegated powers to allow for this review to progress.

8 Anti Social Behaviour Review

8.1 This Review is being undertaken by the whole of the Review Committee with the assistance of four advisors who were appointed at the start of the Review.

8.2 During the course of the Review, input has been received from a number of sources and various sites have been visited by the Chairman of the Review Committee, including the Rochford Youth Council.

8.3 The Review has tried to obtain a spread of views from those people involved in combating Anti Social Behaviour as well as those that are involved with youth work in general.

8.4 It is hoped that a number of recommendations will come out of this review towards helping to mitigate the problems seen in the District with regard to Anti Social Behaviour. The review is nearing completion.

9 Bus Services Review

9.1 Cllr T Livings, who has always had an interest in all forms of public transport, undertook this Review. It had been pointed out by various Councillors and members of the public that the existing bus services in the district were not seen as adequate and that some of the more outlying parts of the District were not serviced by any buses.

9.2 The Review attempted to establish whether there was proof of sufficient demand to be able to demonstrate to the local bus operators that there was a commercial demand for additional routes within the district.

9.3 Unfortunately, despite a petition from local residents being forwarded to the local Bus operators, no commercial demand could be established and therefore the areas of concern that were identified during the review were directed to Essex County Council's Highways & Transportation Department for consideration by way of providing a subsidised service.

9.4 During the course of the Review a report was produced by the Government highlighting the problems with regard to Public Transport

(the bus services in particular) that confirmed what the Review had established.

9.5 A final report was produced by Cllr T Livings with a number of recommendations to be taken forward.

10 Committee Review

10.1 Following the changes to the Committee structure at the beginning of the 2006-07 municipal year it was recommended that a team from the Review Committee monitor the new structure.

10.2 The team was led by the vice chairman Cllr Mrs R Brown and supported by Cllr Mrs J R Lumley and Cllr P K Savill.

10.3 The team's remit was to monitor the new structure and to ensure that the committees were progressing their remits in a timely fashion.

10.4 During the year they made a number of suggestions and observations in an attempt to improve the structure.

10.5 The team also canvassed both Members and officers to obtain their thoughts on the new Committee structure and other issues affecting Members.

10.6 A final report has been produced by the team and it is expected that, with the changes to the structure being made again this year, this Review will continue to be a necessary work stream for the Committee.

11 Planning Enforcement Review

11.1 An area of the Council's business that had been causing concern was that of Planning Enforcement. There was a perception among Members that there was too many cases outstanding and that these numbers were not manageable.

11.2 A team was formed with Cllr K Gordon as leader supported by Cllr Mrs S A Harper and Cllr P F A Webster.

11.3 A detailed study was conducted of the Service provided to the public. This included studying the documentation produced to explain the service as well as meeting with members of the planning enforcement team to discuss various areas of their work in order to gain a better understanding of the topic being reviewed.

11.4 A final report was prepared with a number of recommendations which has been presented to the Planning Policy & Transportation Committee for consideration.

12 Issues requested for consideration by the Review Committee

12.1 The following four topics have been brought to the attention of the Chairman of the Committee and will be brought to the Committee's attention for consideration in next year's work schedule:-

- Understanding of Planning Appeal Procedures and the effectiveness of different forms of representation.
- Mental Health Services/Provision specifically with respect to the emerging new facility at Rochford.
- Operation of the New Political Decision Making Structure.
- Implications of Global Warming agenda on Rochford District and the role the District Council and its communities might play.