



Overview and Scrutiny Committee Tuesday, 26th November, 2013

You are invited to attend the next meeting of **Overview and Scrutiny Committee**, which will be held at:

**Council Chamber, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping
on Tuesday, 26th November, 2013
at 7.30 pm .**

**Glen Chipp
Chief Executive**

**Democratic Services
Officer:**

Simon Hill, Senior Democratic Services Officer, The Office of
the Chief Executive
email:democraticservices@eppingforestdc.gov.uk Tel: 01992
564249

Members:

Councillors R Morgan (Chairman), K Angold-Stephens (Vice-Chairman), G Chambers,
K Chana, T Church, L Girling, D Jacobs, Ms H Kane, P Keska, A Lion, A Mitchell MBE,
S Murray, J Philip, B Rolfe and D Wixley

PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS MEETING IS OPEN TO ALL MEMBERS TO ATTEND

WEBCASTING NOTICE

Please note: this meeting may be filmed for live or subsequent broadcast via the Council's internet site - at the start of the meeting the Chairman will confirm if all or part of the meeting is being filmed.

You should be aware that the Council is a Data Controller under the Data Protection Act. Data collected during this webcast will be retained in accordance with the Council's published policy and copies made available to those who request it..

Therefore by entering the Chamber and using the lower public seating area, you are consenting to being filmed and to the possible use of those images and sound recordings for web casting and/or training purposes. If members of the public do not wish to have their image captured they should sit in the upper council chamber public gallery area

If you have any queries regarding this, please contact the Senior Democratic Services Officer on 01992 564249.

1. WEBCASTING INTRODUCTION

1. This meeting is to be webcast. Members are reminded of the need to activate their microphones before speaking.

2. The Chairman will read the following announcement:

“This meeting will be webcast live to the Internet and will be archived for later viewing. Copies of recordings may be made available on request.

By entering the chamber’s lower seating area you consent to becoming part of the webcast.

If you wish to avoid being filmed you should move to the public gallery or speak to the webcasting officer”

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

3. MINUTES (Pages 7 - 14)

Decisions required:

To confirm the minutes of the meetings of the Committee held on 15 October 2013.

4. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

(Assistant to the Chief Executive). To report the appointment of any substitute members for the meeting.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

(Assistant to the Chief Executive). To declare interests in any items on the agenda.

In considering whether to declare a personal or a prejudicial interest under the Code of Conduct, Overview & Scrutiny members are asked pay particular attention to paragraph 11 of the Code in addition to the more familiar requirements.

This requires the declaration of a personal and prejudicial interest in any matter before an OS Committee which relates to a decision of or action by another Committee or Sub Committee of the Council, a Joint Committee or Joint Sub Committee in which the Council is involved and of which the Councillor is also a member.

Paragraph 11 does not refer to Cabinet decisions or attendance at an OS meeting purely for the purpose of answering questions or providing information on such a matter.

6. ECC CONSULTATION ON THE FUTURE OF CHILDREN'S CENTRES (Pages 15 - 42)

To consider the attached report on the consultation by Essex County Council on their Children’s Centres.

Attending the meeting to answer any questions will be Henrietta Barkham, the ECC Area Commissioner Early Years & Childcare and Stacy Randall, Spurgeon's Regional Manager.

7. PRESENTATION FROM YOUTH COUNCIL

In 2012/13 this Committee had requested an annual presentation from the Youth Council giving an update on the developing Youth Council programme.

Members of the Youth Council will attend the meeting to outline:

- (i) achievements from the last year;
- (ii) the plans for the Youth Council for the coming year; and
- (iii) new youth engagement and volunteer initiatives for 2014-15.

8. CABINET REVIEW

RECOMMENDATION:

To consider any items to be raised by the Chairman at the Cabinet meeting on 2 December 2013.

(Assistant to the Chief Executive). Under the Overview and Scrutiny rules the Committee is required to scrutinise proposed decisions of the Executive. The Chairman is also required to report on such discussions to the Cabinet.

The Committee is asked to consider the 2 December 2013 Cabinet agenda (previously circulated) to see whether there are any items that they wished to be raised at the Cabinet meeting.

9. REVIEW OF LICENSING SUB-COMMITTEE ARRANGEMENTS (Pages 43 - 68)

(Director of Corporate Support Services) To consider the attached report. This went to the Constitution and Member Services Standing Panel on 19 November 2013.

10. CORPORATE PLAN KEY OBJECTIVES 2013/14 - QUARTER 2 PROGRESS (Pages 69 - 90)

(Deputy Chief Executive) To consider the attached report.

11. FINAL REPORT OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REVIEW TASK AND FINISH PANEL (Pages 91 - 132)

To consider the final report of the Overview and Scrutiny Review Task and Finish Panel.

12. ALLOCATIONS OF COSTS - FINANCE STANDING PANEL SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT (Pages 133 - 144)

RECOMMENDATION:

The Committee is asked to consider, comment on and note the report.

Attached is the report of the sub-committee of the Finance and Performance Management Standing Panel set up to look at Cross Charging (recharging) in the council. A copy of that report is attached along with a report from Peter Maddock answering some of the questions raised by the sub-committee's report.

13. SIX MONTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REVIEW (Pages 145 - 162)

To consider the attached report on the six monthly work programme.

14. APPOINTMENT TO THE FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT STANDING SCRUTINY PANEL

RECOMMENDATION:

To agree the nomination of Councillor H Mann to the Finance and Performance Management Standing Scrutiny Panel.

To appoint a member to the Finance and Performance Management Scrutiny Standing Panels in accordance with the pro-rata rules. This is the result of the vacancy left by the late Councillor Finn. The Committee is asked to agree the nomination of Councillor H Mann to fill this vacancy.

15. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

Exclusion: To consider whether, under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press should be excluded from the meeting for the items of business set out below on grounds that they will involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the following paragraph(s) of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act (as amended) or are confidential under Section 100(A)(2):

Agenda Item No	Subject	Exempt Information Paragraph Number
Nil	Nil	Nil

The Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, which came into effect on 1 March 2006, requires the Council to consider whether maintaining the exemption listed above outweighs the potential public interest in disclosing the information. Any member who considers that this test should be applied to any currently exempted matter on this agenda should contact the proper officer at least 24 hours prior to the meeting.

Confidential Items Commencement: Paragraph 9 of the Council Procedure Rules contained in the Constitution require:

- (1) All business of the Council requiring to be transacted in the presence of the press and public to be completed by 10.00 p.m. at the latest.
- (2) At the time appointed under (1) above, the Chairman shall permit the completion of debate on any item still under consideration, and at his or her discretion, any other remaining business whereupon the Council shall proceed

to exclude the public and press.

- (3) Any public business remaining to be dealt with shall be deferred until after the completion of the private part of the meeting, including items submitted for report rather than decision.

Background Papers: Paragraph 8 of the Access to Information Procedure Rules of the Constitution define background papers as being documents relating to the subject matter of the report which in the Proper Officer's opinion:

- (a) disclose any facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the report is based; and
- (b) have been relied on to a material extent in preparing the report and does not include published works or those which disclose exempt or confidential information (as defined in Rule 10) and in respect of executive reports, the advice of any political advisor.

Inspection of background papers may be arranged by contacting the officer responsible for the item.

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EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MINUTES

Committee: Overview and Scrutiny Committee **Date:** Tuesday, 15 October 2013

Place: Council Chamber, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping **Time:** 7.30 - 8.45 pm

Members Present: Councillors R Morgan (Chairman, Overview and Scrutiny Committee) (Chairman) K Angold-Stephens (Vice-Chairman) G Chambers, K Chana, T Church, L Girling, Ms H Kane, P Keska, A Lion, A Mitchell MBE, S Murray, J Philip, B Rolfe, J M Whitehouse and D Wixley

Other Councillors: Councillors Mrs A Grigg, Ms G Shiell, D Stallan, Ms S Stavrou, G Waller, Mrs E Webster and J Wyatt

Apologies: Councillors D Jacobs

Officers Present: D Macnab (Deputy Chief Executive), C Overend (Policy & Research Officer), S G Hill (Senior Democratic Services Officer), T Carne (Public Relations and Marketing Officer), A Hendry (Democratic Services Officer) and M Jenkins (Democratic Services Assistant)

By Invitation: S Chambers (Citizen Advice Bureau) and J Woods (Citizen Advice Bureau)

38. WEBCASTING INTRODUCTION

The Chairman reminded everyone present that the meeting would be broadcast live to the Internet, and that the Council had adopted a protocol for the webcasting of its meetings.

39. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

It was noted that Councillor Jon Whitehouse was substituting for Councillor D Jacobs.

40. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the last two meetings of the Committee held on 27 August and 3 September 2013 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

41. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made pursuant to the Council's Code of Member Conduct.

42. PRESENTATION FROM THE CITIZENS' ADVICE BUREAU

The Chairman welcomed Stephanie Chambers the Epping Forest Citizens' Advice Bureau (CAB) District Manager and Janet Woods the Chair of the Epping Forest District CAB. The meeting noted that they are a registered charity and had started in 2008 as a joint branch by combining the three existing branches in the district, namely those at Epping, Loughton and Waltham Abbey. This had also saved them money as they reduced three management committees down to one. Each branch has a Service Manager responsible for the delivery of advice from each outlet. They have nine volunteer officers on the governing trustee board along with two non-voting councillors. They currently have a three year Service Level Agreement (SLA) with the District Council from which they receive £113,840 per annum. They have renegotiated the SLA for another three years but that has not as yet been signed off

The CAB is operated on the service level by highly trained volunteers who undergo a nationally supported training programme to become advisors and they continue to have on-going training, especially in benefits and aspects of the law. The Citizens' Advice Bureau sets out the standards that their branches must adhere to and audit the branches every three years; this district's offices had received an 80% rating which put them in the top 15% in the country.

Up to the end of September this year they had three main offices across the district that cost them approximately £15,500 per annum. In September 2011 owners of their Epping office property, the Theydon Trust, informed them that they wished to redevelop the site and build a two storey building which it was envisaged would be used mainly by the CAB. Planning permission was granted in 2012 and the proposed rent would be approximately £28k p.a. excluding rates. They did not have the funds for this and EFDC advised the CAB that it did not envisage any more core funding being made available in respect of the additional annual rental costs. They had looked into the possibility of other buildings being used but these were considered to be too expensive, particularly bearing in mind the additional costs required for them to be fitted out for their use.

There were also longer term problems at their premises in St Mary's Church, Loughton, which was in a somewhat dilapidated state. The Church wanted to redevelop the site, although they had indicated that there would be room for an outreach office for the CAB. Other options had been looked at but they were not considered suitable.

Accordingly the CAB decided the best option would be to rent the new Theydon Trust building in Epping once completed some 12-18 months hence. The only way to meet the increased rent was through staff cuts. Theydon Trust understood the CAB's funding position in that they could not guarantee to pay their rent for more than one year at a time. They had met with the paid and voluntary staff and told them of the Board's decision. The Board had proposed a new staffing structure and that was presently being considered by the staff. Their views are due to be given by the end of November, when the consultation period ends.

New clients were given a diagnostic interview known as a 'gateway assessment'. If they are from outside this area then they would be referred to their local authority area or another suitable organisation that could help them. The exception being the need for emergency interventions.

They have specialist voluntary advisors who have chosen to specialise in a particular area, and pro-bono legal advice from some solicitors who work voluntarily for them. Currently they do not have the facility to offer an email service, but hope to do so in the future. Each branch had a service manager responsible for the standards for that branch.

They currently operate outreach services from Abridge and Limes Farm. Customers would receive exactly the same advice as they would in the main branches.

They noted that they now have a new computer system known as Petra. However, because of technical issues which still had to be resolved they could not extract the relevant statistics that the Council had requested. They were pressing to get better statistics (such as on the 'bedroom tax') and would forward it on, once received.

Last year they saw 3,397 clients and helped with 14,096 issues. They were mostly asking for advice on benefits and tax credits followed closely by debt advice.

They then went on to consider the questions received by them before the meeting:

Q. What will be the impact of the Universal Credit System be on the workload of the CAB? What steps have the CAB taken to ensure they are in a state of readiness for dealing with the additional queries which will inevitably arise?

A. They were awaiting training on this at present.

Q. Many organisations are looking at the potential for 'sharing' backroom and other services as a means of reducing costs and making efficiencies. Has EFD CAB discussed this possibility with neighbouring and other CAB's and, if so, which services have been identified?

A. They noted that Harlow CAB had taken a lot of their files for storage, but other than that they have very little in backroom services.

Q. What advantages is the CAB taking of in terms of developments in IT? Will these developments improve the service offered further and, if so, how?

A. They would like to improve on IT but lack of finances get in the way. They were still using computers that were over 10 years old, although they have a rolling programme of replacement.

Q. If the CAB were to be re-housed in the Hemnall Street offices once the re-development was completed what opportunities would this present? What would be the disadvantages?

A. The CAB offices are to be built to their design; they would have 6 small interview rooms and could be open longer, maybe even on weekends. But the cost of the rent was high and they did not want to cut back on staff. They would like to stay in Loughton or Debden. Loughton Town Council was generous to them and they did not want to reduce the service given. Also, not all of their volunteer staff may want to work in Epping.

Q. Will EFD CAB be utilising the whole of the refurbished Hemnall Street premises? If not, would any space not required be sub-let to bring in additional income for EF CAB? Has the possibility of bringing all three CAB's under one roof been considered with possibility of more 'one off', localised outreach services being undertaken?

A. It was anticipated that the CAB would have use of all the new building, apart from one large room which would be used as an office for Theydon Trust. There would be a slight decrease in the rent to allow for this. They would still have a small CAB Office in Waltham Abbey. It is small but it gives them a presence in the area. They were aware that travelling by bus from Loughton or Debden to Epping was not straightforward. They intended to provide a good outreach service to both Loughton and Debden once the centre at St Mary's closed.

Q. The Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Wellbeing who agrees the payment of funding for the SLA Grant needs to be kept fully informed of the discussions and decisions made relating to services in the District as do the District Councillors who attend CAB Board meetings. Please outline the existing arrangements for keeping them informed and how these might be improved, bearing in mind the technological advances you envisage in your working methods.

A. All their board papers go to all board members including representatives from EFDC and LTC. A copy also went to Citizens' Advice and to the Liaison Officer at EFDC to distribute as necessary. New EFDC representatives are invited to visit the CAB so they can get a first hand picture of what they do. They had spoken to Councillors Shiell and Webster about their premises problems.

At their last board meeting on 11 September when the board was making an important decision about premises they spoke directly to Councillors Shiell and Jill Angold-Stephens from Loughton TC about this and also to various other Town Council representatives such as Councillors Jon Whitehouse and Webster, hopefully so they could understand the reasoning behind their decision. They would gladly welcome any suggestions on how they could use any technological advances to keep people informed.

Q. How many residents have visited their offices across the district requesting assistance and information regarding the Spare Room Subsidy since its introduction?

A. This could not be answered at present as they did not have any information.

Q. How many residents have visited their office on Limes Farm requesting assistance and information regarding the Spare Room Subsidy since its introduction and how many attended requesting assistance on other matters?

A. They had five residents in August visit Limes Farm (who were regular clients), two of whom had asked for assistance on Council Tax matters.

Q. How many residents have visited their offices across the district requesting assistance and information regarding welfare reform issues in general?

A. This had been covered in their hand-outs. They were also awaiting training on the new welfare reforms. One of the changes would be that the majority of the forms would have to be filled out on-line, but this may pose problems with their old computers.

Q. The North/South divide in the district – a lot of our resident to the north of the district tend to go up to the Harlow CAB or over the border to Hertfordshire, and not bother to travel south to Epping – could you provide information on the services they can access there.

A. Many clients do go across the border to Hertfordshire and Harlow, this is usually because this was where they were working and also, because of the hours we open they find it easier to attend in their lunchtime. We will ask East Herts and Harlow for any statistics they may have on this. However, this cross border assistance is now stopping as they tend to refer clients back to their local authority area.

The meeting was then opened out to questions from committee members.

Councillor Murray thanked them for their presentation. He wondered what would happen once their office in Loughton closed down and how people would access their services. Ms Chambers said that the honest answer was that she did not know as they were unaware when that office would be closed. They were consolidating their services in Loughton and Waltham Abbey as the Epping office had now closed.

They may have a telephone assessment service and were looking to set up outreach services when they have to close the Loughton office.

Councillor Lion felt that the date on the tabled sheets were confusing, and queried whether the figures were for 2012/13 or 2011/12. He also sought clarification regarding the figure of 3,397 clients being assisted. Ms Chambers replied that it was an error and that the figures were for 2012/13 and that they had helped 100% of their clients in some way, i.e. all 3,397 of them.

Councillor Kane asked how much the CAB get from EFDC and was told that it was £113,840 pa in terms of the core service. In addition the District Council was also currently funding two Welfare Mitigation posts.

Councillor Wixley said that they had mentioned 9 volunteers; how many paid staff did they have, how many redundancies were anticipated and much money would be saved? Ms Chambers said that there were 12 paid staff, including part timers and 60 unpaid volunteers in all. They were trying to save £24,000 in all and had put some proposals to the staff in a consultation exercise. It would be unfair to comment on the consultation at present given the potential for redundancies. They still hoped to cover a similar number of hours as before.

Councillor Wixley then asked about the quality of service to be provided. He was told that they were going down from 3 to 2 branches, but with no drop in the quality of the service offered. They had to keep their standards up as they were monitored by Citizen's Advice.

Councillor Jon Whitehouse said it was helpful to go to board meetings as an Epping Town Councillor; but he asked what impact the closure of the Epping Office would have. He was told that it was still too early to assess this as yet. But to date it had not been as bad as they thought it would be. They would like to increase their telephone services to help see this through.

Councillor Girling asked if they had any other funding streams that they could access annually. Ms Chambers said that they received some money from the three town councils and also from a Loughton Charity. They raised money from some projects and donations and also had a 'friends of EFCAB' who help raise money for them. Councillor Girling asked if they ever approached national sources for money. He was told that they approached everyone and anyone. Last year they got £7,000 in small grants. This year, they have not got any partners as yet. Every year they start their fund raising exercise, looking at what's available from Government or elsewhere. They get approximately 10% of all the bids they apply for; so they have to apply for a lot. Also, a lot of organisations only like to fund one piece of work at a time.

Chris Overend, EFDC Policy & Research Officer, noted that for a number of years they received a grant from the County Council, and enquired as to the latest situation? He was told that they got a small grant from ECC; last year it was just over £11,000; they have received the same for this year, but were told that next year they may not get it at all.

Councillor Keska asked where in Abridge was their office located. He was told that it was in Abridge Village Hall. It was there once a month, and was funded by the Local Parish Council. They were also looking at providing an IT alternative for Ongar, by providing a 'kiosk' with a touch screen system. They have been in touch with Ongar PC about this.

Councillor Murray noted that they were looking to save £24,000 on staff costs, and asked how much were they spending presently? He was told that they were spending in the region of £150k on staff. Councillor Murray noted that EFDC were giving them a grant of £113,840 pa but Essex County Council was only giving £11k. The ECC Councillors should note this particularly bearing in mind that a significant number of cases dealt with by the CAB fell within categories which related to services which were a County Council responsibility.

Councillor Lion asked about working in conjunction with the Library services. Ms Chambers noted that the problem would be that they would need a small interior room for interviews etc. but it could be done. They have had talks about going to Epping Library but have been 'knocked back' every time. Part of the issue was that if they were located there this may result in the CAB being associated with the County and not as a separate entity.

Councillor Waller congratulated the CAB on obtaining a high score in their recent quality audit. He noted that they had a rather large number of staff in comparison to an MP who may deal with a comparable number of cases in a year, but without giving the detailed advice. He noted that travelling was difficult in our area; could outreach services be extended to people in the north of the district? Ms Chambers was aware of the problems in travelling north/south in the district. They tend to have an interchange of customers with Harlow but would need to find suitable locations in the north. As for staffing numbers, not one of them were full time, they may have two managers but they are also part time along with the supervisors.

Councillor Girling noted that they needed considerable storage space and wondered whether there was a requirement for paper files to be kept? He was told that there was a legal requirement to keep files for six years and in debt cases for twelve years. They were trying to scan as much as they could and were aware that that they had to reduce their paperwork, but a lot had to be kept for legal purposes. Councillor Girling asked if there would be a time when they would require less office space and could apprentices help with the scanning of the files. Ms Chambers noted that their new computer system was not quite up to speed and will be revamped next year. They cannot say what they could do until they found out what their new system would do. One day they may well be paper free, but they needed it now.

The Chairman thanked Ms Chambers and Ms Woods for their informative and interesting presentation and for answering the follow up questions.

43. CABINET REVIEW

The Committee noted the Cabinet agenda of 21 October. Councillor Murray said, in relation to agenda item 13 (Civic Offices – Committee Room Tables) that he was not convinced that the council should be spending £10k on new tables in the present financial situation and wondered how this could be justified.

44. WORK PROGRAMME MONITORING

The Committee reviewed the Overview and Scrutiny work programme.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

It was noted that the Youth Council was to go to their November meeting when they would update the committee on the work they did during the past year and their plans for the future.

Housing Scrutiny Standing Panel

Councillor Murray reported that the Housing Standing Panel would be reviewing Parking Enforcement on Housing Managed grassed areas and noted that they had recently gone through the conditions of tenancy and reviewed the Housing Service Standards.

Constitution and Member Services Standing Panel

Councillor Philip noted that they had last met on 24 September where they considered the appointment process for the vice chairman of Council. They were now consulting members via the Members Bulletin.

Safer Cleaner Greener Standing Panel

Noted that the next meeting will be held on 28 October.

Planning Services Standing Panel

Councillor Wyatt informed the Committee that at their September meeting the Panel received an update on electronic records for wider public access and endorsed the idea of providing Parish and Town Councils with officer support at their planning meetings to gauge their IT needs. A report will be submitted to the forthcoming Local Council's Liaisons Committee. They also agreed the content of the draft revised planning application checklist and discussed the Brentwood Borough Local Plan Preferred Options Consultation. They were not convinced that Brentwood was unable to make full provision for housing needs. They felt that there was no indication of how they intended to make provision for 2,100 new dwellings outside their boundary and concluded that the Brentwood Local Plan may struggle at examination in public. They also supported the draft Local Enforcement Plan, which set out the priorities for investigation.

Finance and Performance Management Standing Panel

Councillor Lion noted that at their last meeting they had reviewed the KPIs and the Financial Performance Monitoring quarterly figures. He noted that these warned of tough times ahead for the Council. In addition they received an interim report on cross charging that a sub committee was looking at. A full report will go to their next meeting.

Overview and Scrutiny Review Task and Finish Panel

It was noted that their final meeting was scheduled for 31 October 2013, when they would consider their final report.

CHAIRMAN

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SCRUTINY



Report to Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date of meeting: 26 November 2013

Subject: Essex County Council Children Centres - Consultation

Officer contact for further information: G Wallis Ext 4557

Committee Secretary: Adrian Hendry ext. 4246

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

(1) To receive a presentation on a current Essex County Council consultation on the future of the County's Children Centres;

(2) To consider a draft response to the consultation prepared by officers in consultation with members and the Portfolio Holder

Report:

1. Essex County Council is currently undertaking a formal consultation on the future provision of Children's Centres in Essex which ends on 5 December 2013. The consultation is about the need to make £2.5m of savings from the Children Centres Budget from 2014/15.

2. Councillor Girling has requested that this matter come before members for discussion.

3. The County Council's Children's Centres offer a wide range of services for families and others caring for children under five. Each Children's Centre is different, offering a variety of services according to the needs of local families. Activities are delivered from a main site, a delivery site, or through a range of outreach venues. All Children's Centres work closely with health, schools, GPs and other local service providers. Services include:

- information and advice on childcare and early learning provision
- health services including pre- and postnatal support
- parent / carer groups, including dads' and grandparent groups
- access to children's communication and early language support
- links to Jobcentre Plus
- family support services.

4. Essex County Council has proposed that the following site be closed and be merged with the Sunrise Centre:

Little Buddies Children's Centre
Roding House
2 Victoria Road
Buckhurst Hill IG9 5ES

5. The reasons stated for this proposal are that "it is in an area of lesser deprivation compared to neighbouring Epping children's centres; we are trying to prioritise resources to areas of greater need. The site suffers from accessibility issues as it is on a busy high street with limited parking. Neighbouring centres in Epping Forest are easier and safer to access. Good transport links between Buckhurst Hill and neighbouring centres in Loughton and Debden will also serve to minimise the effects of this closure."

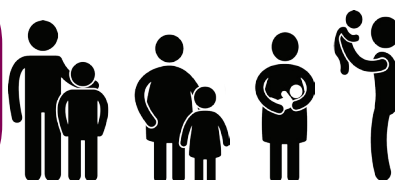
6. Officers have met with the Portfolio Holder and other members to discuss the issues and attached is a draft Council response to the consultation for consideration. This response is attached as Appendix 1 to this report.
7. The full consultation report is attached as Appendix 2.
8. At the meeting there will be a presentation from Lorna Baker, (ECC) and Stacy Randall (Spurgeons – the Lead Body) who will explain the proposals in detail.
9. Members are asked to agree or amend the proposed response in order that the Council can meet the consultation deadline of 5 December 2013.

Your Essex
is changing

let's talk

about it

Have your say...



Shaping Future Services
from April 2014

Essex Sure Start Children's Centres

Shaping Future Services from April 2014

Public Consultation

17 October 2013 - 5 December 2013

Essex County Council wants your views as it starts a formal public consultation into children's centre service delivery



Essex County Council

Foreword

Sure Start¹ children's centre services are an important part of delivering early support for children, young people and their families in Essex. Essex County Council is committed to delivering children's centre services at a time when the financial challenges that we face are unprecedented. Reduced funding from central government, together with the impact of inflation and increasing demands for services means Essex County Council needs to save around £215m by 2016-17. This is on top of the £365m already saved over the previous three years. Simply put, we can't afford to deliver everything we want to.

We are therefore consulting on making savings of £2.5m from the children's centre budget between 2014 and 2016 and this can only be achieved by working smarter and focussing use of our resources on actual services for children and less on buildings and other overheads.

We are pleased to be able to announce proposals we believe can achieve these objectives in the most efficient way possible, making maximum use of buildings and the staff delivering services. We propose to extend our current contracts from April 2014 until March 2016 to ensure that children's centre services continue across the county for another two years with no overall reduction in the level of services currently being delivered. These will be provided through a re-structured model of a combination of 37 Main Sites and 37 Delivery Sites. Thirty seven children's centres will be re-designated from a Main Site to a Delivery Site with an overall reduction of 11 premises countywide from the current model. The proposed re-designations and closures have been identified with the aim of delivering services where families most need them across the county. The proposals outlined in this document, if implemented, will enable families to continue to access a range of advice and support services through our extensive children's centre network.

We are working closely with our children's centre service providers (Barnardo's, 4Children, and Spurgeons) to make sure that the impact of these proposals on services is kept to a minimum. By planning at this early stage, and by ensuring that every penny we spend makes a difference, we can protect as much of what we know works as possible. We are focused on the achievement of outcomes for our communities and residents, not wedded to historic ways of doing things.

In the summer we asked you to tell us what you wanted from your children's centre as part of our *Children's Centre Family Survey 2013*. We are building on the results of that survey to now seek your views on the changes being proposed for 2014-2016. We want you to tell us what you think about the proposed changes to children's centre services in your area and the proposed hours of opening for your Main sites and Delivery Sites.

We would encourage you to complete the survey as it is important that we make the right decisions for you.

Councillor Dick Madden

Cabinet Member for Families and Children

¹ All references to children's centres in this document only concern Sure Start children's centres. The statutory definition of a Sure Start children's centre is set out on page 6 of the *Sure Start Children's Centres Statutory Guidance (Dept of Education, April 2013)* which can be found at:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/aboutdfe/statutory/g00224078/sure-start-statutory-guidance>

What is a Children's Centre?

Children's centres offer a wide range of services for families and others caring for children under five. Each children's centre is different, offering a variety of services according to the needs of local families. Activities are delivered from a main site, a delivery site, or through a range of outreach venues. All children's centres work closely with health, schools, GPs and other local service providers. Services include:

- information and advice on childcare and early learning provision
- health services including pre- and postnatal support
- parent / carer groups, including dads' and grandparent groups
- access to children's communication and early language support
- links to Jobcentre Plus
- family support services.

There are currently 85 children's centres in Essex, all of which are designated Main Sites. Essex County Council commissions three providers to deliver these services across four areas. These are as follows:

Mid Essex (Braintree, Chelmsford and Maldon): **4Children**.

North East Essex (Colchester and Tendring): **Barnardo's**.

South Essex (Basildon, Brentwood, Castle Point and Rochford): **Barnardo's**, with a number of centres being delivered in partnership with the Pre-school Learning Alliance (PSLA) and Castle Point Association of Voluntary Services (CAVS).

West Essex (Epping Forest, Harlow, Uttlesford): **Spurgeons**.

Why are we consulting?

- We need to consult on making savings of £2.5m from the Council's children's centres services budget between 2014 and 2016.
- We want to make sure that any savings we make are made in a way that has least impact on the services which matter most to families.
- We want to save money (where we can) on running buildings and other overhead costs.
- We want to make sure that we continue to meet the needs of children and their families, particularly those who need our support most.

Who are we consulting with?

We are seeking the views of key stakeholders which includes, but is not limited to, parents, carers, local communities, children's centre advisory boards, children's centre staff, voluntary and community sector organisations, early years providers, local MPs and local councillors and organisations who share the same site with children's centres eg schools and community centres.

What information have we used to inform these proposals?

A range of information has been used which includes:

- local knowledge and statistical data which has told us how children's centres are currently accessed and used
- an analysis of children's and families' needs, which provides information that supports decisions made on what services are needed to support families with children aged pre-birth to 11 years living within Essex, including the most vulnerable families
- a countywide family consultation survey and eight targeted family focus groups
- local engagement outcomes workshops with stakeholders
- Equality Impact Analyses.

This information can be viewed in more detail in the *Children's Centre Needs Assessment (July 2013)* document which can be accessed at <http://www.essexinsight.org.uk/Resource.aspx?ResourceID=705>

What do we know already?

- Some children's centres are used more than others.
- Most families use more than one centre.
- Many families access a range of universal services (available to everybody) as well as targeted services (specialist support).
- Families are prepared to travel to access joint services in one children's centre, but would be willing to spend less than half an hour total time to do so.
- Service users most value:



(taken from *Children's Centre Focus Group Report, QA Research July 2013*)

How we are proposing to deliver services from April 2014?

We have worked with our children's centre provider partners to develop proposals for the four areas across Essex. These aim to ensure that the money available for children's centres in Essex is spent on:

- direct services which improve the health and well-being of children under five and their families
- children's centre services rather than buildings

- delivering services from buildings that are accessible and convenient to children and families
- enabling parents and expectant parents to have a choice about which centre and services they use.

The proposal is to move to a Main Site and Delivery Site model which will mean:

- a reduction from 85 registered children's centre Main Sites to 37 registered children's centres Main Sites and 37 registered children's centres Delivery Sites
- a closure of 11 buildings from April 2014, merging services with neighbouring children's centres to support families to continue to access children's centre services locally
- outreach services, targeted one to one support in the home and on-site pre-school and nursery provision will continue to be delivered in addition to, and alongside, the proposals in this consultation.

What is a Main Site?

Main sites are buildings which are proposed to be open to the public for drop in visits and service delivery. Services to families will be available through a combination of centre opening hours and telephone service operating times for a minimum of 50 operating hours a week. Operating hours will vary from centre to centre dependent on locally defined needs. Please see individual centres for the proposed allocation of hours per week. It is intended that website information, including the centre's weekly activity timetable will be available twenty four hours a day.

What is a Delivery Site?

These proposed sites will be open for a dedicated number of hours each week, and provide a number of services for the area. This will vary from site to site and will be based on local need. Please view individual centres listed later in this document for the proposed hours of opening. It is intended that website information, including the centre's weekly activity timetable will be available twenty four hours a day.

What does merging children's centres mean?

This proposal will see the closure of some buildings across Essex from April 2014. Services will continue to be provided by merging neighbouring children's centres. Some of these buildings may continue to be used for outreach activities to meet local need.

What happens to Outreach Services, One to One support and Nursery Provision?

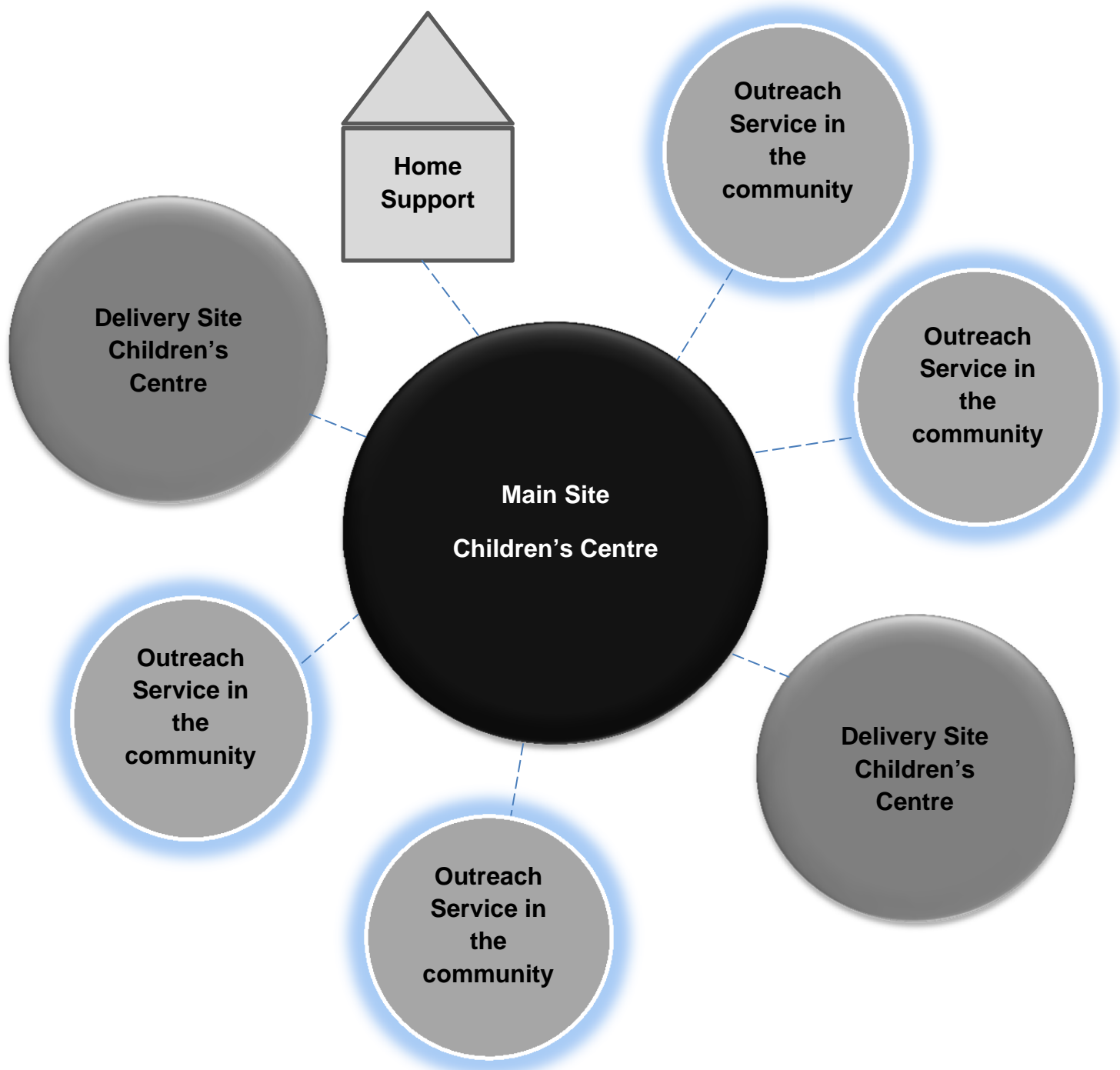
Outreach services are held in community venues such as church halls, village halls, libraries or health centres from which children's centre services are delivered. Services delivered from these venues are often flexible and the sites from which they are offered can change according to local need, therefore they are not included as part of these proposals. This will also apply to targeted one to one support in the home and pre-schools and nurseries on children's centre sites.

What are we consulting on?

This consultation will ask for your views on:

- the Council's overall proposal to move to a combination of Main Site and Delivery Sites for the county's children's centres
- any proposed changes for individual centres.

This document will explain these proposals and show what they mean both for different areas of Essex and individual children's centres.



How can I feed in my views?

You can feed in your views during the consultation either by:

- completing a consultation questionnaire online at www.essex.gov.uk/childrenscentres
- completing a paper survey which can be printed off at www.essex.gov.uk/childrenscentres or ask your nearest children's centre for a copy. Please complete it and either post it to Children's Centre Consultation, Early Years and Childcare, Essex County Council, PO Box 47, Chelmsford CM2 6NW or drop it in at your nearest children's centre. To find your nearest centre please go to www.essex.gov.uk/fis

You can also talk to staff at your local children's centre who will explain the consultation in more detail. They will be able to help you complete the questionnaire.

It is entirely your choice whether or not to participate and taking part in the consultation is voluntary. This also means you do not have to answer any questions that you do not want to and you can withdraw at any time.

Further comments

You can feed in your views and preferences during the consultation, however, those who wish to comment further should write to Haveyoursay@essex.gov.uk, Customer Care Team, Essex County Council, Schools, Children and Families Service, PO Box 297, County Hall, Chelmsford CM1 1YS or use the online comments form at www.essex.gov.uk should then choose the 'get involved, tell us what you think, complaints, comments and compliments' section and follow the instructions. Comments will be taken into account; however it will not be possible to reply to people individually.

Essex County Council would like to thank you for taking the time to read this. We hope you will now take the time to add your views into the survey.

What happens after the consultation?

The Children's Centre Consultation runs from Thursday 17 October to Thursday 5 December. At the end of this consultation period the Cabinet Member for Families and Children will consider the feedback and views expressed by all interested parties during the consultation and will make a recommendation on the children's centre proposals to be implemented, taking into account the feedback and views expressed. The recommendation will be presented by the Cabinet Member for Families and Children to Essex County Council's Cabinet to consider and approve any recommended proposals in January 2014. If you would like to view the findings from this consultation, please ask your local children's centre who will be able to tell you how to access this; we anticipate this being ready by end of January.

Frequently Asked Questions

Does this mean you are focusing more on targeted provision rather than the universal offer?

As we face financial pressures we will have to make decisions that will mean that funding focuses on those that need it most. However, whilst this restructure allows for more targeted outreach work to take place we still recognise the importance of the universal offer and expect this type of service to continue.

How did you decide which site should be the Main Site, which should be the Delivery Site and which site to close?

Essex County Council has worked closely with our providers across the county to plan which sites should become Main Sites, Delivery Sites and which sites are no longer required. We have looked at the sites in terms of demand, location, size, condition, running costs and suitability for delivering children's centre services.

What is happening to the 11 sites you are closing? Will services stop?

Essex County Council currently leases the properties that we are proposing to no longer use. If it is decided that these buildings should no longer open as children's centres we will terminate leases.

In Essex, children's centre provision has always been about services and not buildings. The closure of some sites/buildings does not mean that services will stop – although the building is no longer operational the families still exist and still need to receive a service. Services will be delivered by neighbouring Delivery or Main Sites or will continue as part of the outreach work delivered in the community.

Will any particular services no longer be provided?

Whilst it may be the case that services may be delivered at different times and locations it is our intention that families will not lose services they value.

Will the name of my local children's centre change?

Within the proposed model, all Main and Delivery Site children's centres will keep their current names.

Will low income families/those most at risk be supported to travel further to access the service

If families are unable to access their local children's centre we will review what support can be offered or whether the service can be offered more locally, or take the service to the family.

When will changes be made?

Any approved changes will start being implemented from 1 April 2014.

What are the staff implications?

At this point in time, staff at children's centres have been briefed about the public consultation and we will work with the providers to identify any potential implications arising from these proposals.

Proposals for Mid Essex

Mid Essex covers: Braintree, Chelmsford and Maldon

Provider responsible for children's centre service delivery: 4Children

No. of children under five living in Mid Essex: 21,645 (*based on Child Benefit data 2012*)

Current number of children's centre main sites: 22

Proposed number of closures: 2

Proposed number of Main Sites: 9

Proposed number of Delivery Sites: 11

The tables below set out any proposed changes for each centre in Mid Essex. Each centre will also have its own website enabling families to access information, including each centre's weekly activity timetable.

Centre Name	Proposals for Merging Centres from April 2014
<p>Little Lanes Children's Centre Black Notley Community Hall John Ray Gardens Black Notley Braintree CM77 8NE</p>	<p>It is proposed that this centre will merge with the neighbouring centre Seesaw Children's Centre, Lancaster Way, Braintree, CM7 5UL which will continue to be designated a Main Site. You can see where Seesaw Children's Centre is located by going to our online children's centre search at www.essex.gov.uk/fis</p> <p>It is proposed that Little Lanes Children's Centre will be closed. The reason we have identified this children's centre for closure is that it offers limited available facilities for families. It is also in a rural location where families already access services from neighbouring children's centres which provide better facilities. We may continue to provide some services at the hall to meet local need and to minimise the effects of closing this children's centre.</p>
<p>Stock Children's Centre Stock Village Hall Common Road Stock Ingatestone CM4 9NF</p>	<p>It is proposed that this centre will merge with the neighbouring centre Chetwood Children's Centre, Shirebourne Vale, Off Gandalf's Ride, South Woodham Ferrers, Chelmsford CM3 5ZX which will continue to be designated as a Main Site. You can see where Chetwood Children's Centre is located by going to our online children's centre search at www.essex.gov.uk/fis</p> <p>It is proposed that Stock Children's Centre will be closed. The reason we have identified this children's centre for closure is that it offers limited available facilities for families. It is in a rural location with families already accessing services from neighbouring children's centres which provide better facilities. We may continue to provide some services at the hall to meet local need and to minimise the effects of closing this children's centre.</p>

Please note that all the children's centres listed below are currently designated as Main Sites and their current opening hours range from 14 - 50 hours per week.

Centre Name	Proposed operating hours per week	Proposed type of site after April 2014
Acorn Children's Centre The Old School Hall Beridge Road Halstead CO9 1JH	No change – telephone service is in addition to current hours 40 hrs. (centre open) 10 hrs. (telephone service)	Main
Beeches Children's Centre Adult Community College Beeches Close Chelmsford CM1 2SB	10 hrs. (centre open)	Delivery
Bumblebee Children's Centre The Old School House Main Road Danbury CM3 4NQ	10 hrs.(centre open)	Delivery
Carousel Children's Centre Chapel Hill Braintree CM7 3QZ	40 hrs. (centre open) 10 hrs. (telephone service)	Main
Chelmsford Central Children's Centre Chelmsford Library Market Road Chelmsford CM1 1LH	10 hrs. (centre open)	Delivery
Chelmsford West Children's Centre Dixon Avenue Chelmsford CM1 2AQ	No change – telephone service is in addition to current hours 40 hrs. (centre open) 10 hrs. (telephone service)	Main
Chetwood Children's Centre Shirebourne Vale Off Gandalf's Ride South Woodham Ferrers Chelmsford CM3 5ZX	40 hrs. (centre open) 10 hrs. (telephone service)	Main
Galleywood Children's Centre Galleywood Library Watchhouse Road Galleywood, Chelmsford CM2 8PU	5 hrs. (centre open)	Delivery
Harlequin Children's Centre Spa Road Witham CM8 1NA	40 hrs. (centre open) 10 hrs. (telephone service)	Main
Larkrise Children's Centre Larkrise Primary School Dorset Avenue Great Baddow CM2 9UB	40 hrs. (centre open) 10 hrs. (telephone service)	Main
Maldon Children's Centre Maldon Library Carmelite House White Horse Lane Maldon CM9 5FW	2 additional hours, alongside additional telephone service 40 hrs. (centre open) 10 hrs. (telephone service)	Main

Please note that all the children's centres listed below are currently designated as Main Sites and their current opening hours range from 14 - 50 hours per week.

Centre Name	Proposed operating hours per week	Proposed type of site after April 2014
Perryfields Children's Centre Perryfields Community Centre Lawn Lane Chelmsford CM1 7PP	40 hrs. (centre open) 10 hrs. (telephone service)	Main
Rainbow Children's Centre Hedingham High School Yeldham Rd Sible Hedingham Halstead CO9 3QH	5 hrs. (centre open)	Delivery
Roundabout Children's Centre Templars Infant School Cressing Road Witham CM8 2NJ	10 hrs. (centre open)	Delivery
Seesaw Children's Centre Lancaster Way Braintree CM7 5UL	40 hrs. (centre open) 10 hrs. (telephone service)	Main
Silver End Children's Centre Silver End Village Hall Broadway Witham CM8 3RQ	20 hrs. (centre open)	Delivery
Sunflower Children's Centre Broomfield Library 180 Main Road Broomfield Chelmsford CM1 7AH	5 hrs. (centre open)	Delivery
The Dengie Children's Centre Ormiston Rivers Academy Southminster Rd Burnham-on-Crouch CM0 8QB	10 hrs. (centre open)	Delivery
Valley Children's Centre Earls Colne Primary School Park Lane Earls Colne Colchester C06 2RH	10 hrs. (centre open)	Delivery
Yellow Brick Road Children's Centre Great Totham Primary School Walden House Road Great Totham CM9 8PN	5 hrs. (centre open)	Delivery

Proposals for North East Essex

North East Essex quadrant covers: Colchester and Tendring

Provider responsible for children's centre delivery: Barnardo's

No. of children under five living in North East Essex: 17,810 (*based on Child Benefit data 2012*)

Current number of children's centre main sites: 19 (plus one additional delivery site)

Proposed number of closures: 4

Proposed number of Main Sites: 9

Proposed number of Delivery Sites: 7

The tables below set out any proposed changes for each centre in North East Essex. Each centre will also have its own website enabling families to access information, including each centre's weekly activity timetable.

Centre Name	Proposals for Merging Centres from April 2014
<p>ABC Together Children's Centre [formerly Willowtree Children's Centre] Chingford Avenue Clacton on Sea, CO15 4US</p>	<p>It is proposed that this centre will merge with the neighbouring centre Rainbow Children's Centre, 13 Old Pier Street, Walton on the Naze, CO14 8AW which will continue to be designated a Main Site. You can see where Rainbow Children's Centre is located by going to our online children's centre search at www.essex.gov.uk/fis</p> <p>It is proposed that ABC Together Children's Centre will be closed. The reason we have identified this children's centre for closure is due to limitations on the availability of space within a busy private day nursery, it is not possible to base a staff team on site. Therefore, following consultation with local service users, this centre has already been linked to another neighbouring centre. We may continue to provide services from this site to meet local need and to minimise the effects of closing this children's centre.</p>
<p>Highwoods Children's Centre The Ark Highwoods Methodist Church 2 Gavin Way Colchester CO4 9FF</p>	<p>It is proposed that this centre will merge with the neighbouring centre Beehive Children's Centre, Queen Boudica Primary School, Cowper Crescent, Colchester CO4 5XT which will continue to be designated a Main Site. You can see where Beehive Children's Centre is located by going to our online children's centre search at www.essex.gov.uk/fis</p> <p>It is proposed that Highwoods Children's Centre will be closed. The reason we have identified this children's centre for closure is that there are limitations on the availability of delivery space. We can continue to provide services from an adjacent health clinic and GP surgery to meet local need to minimise the effects of closing this children's centre.</p>
<p>Holland Valley Children's Centre Unit 4 30 Oxford Road Clacton-on-Sea CO15 3TB</p>	<p>This centre is already co-located with St James Children's Centre and therefore the two will merge to become one Main Site centre at St James Children's Centre, Unit 4, 30 Oxford Road, Clacton-on-Sea, CO15 3TB</p> <p>It is proposed that Holland Valley Children's Centre will merge with St James Children's Centre as they already share the same site.</p>

Centre Name	Proposals for Merging Centres from April 2014
Manningtree Children's Centre Mistley Health Clinic New Road Mistley Manningtree CO11 1ER	<p>It is proposed that this centre will merge with the neighbouring centre Windmill Children's Centre, Two Village Primary School, Mayes Lane, Ramsey, CO12 5EO which will continue to be designated as a Main Site. You can see where Windmill Children's Centre is located by going to our online children's centre search at www.essex.gov.uk/fis</p> <p>It is proposed that Manningtree Children's Centre will be closed. The reason we have identified this children's centre for closure is due to limited available facilities for families, due to space restrictions at the site. It is also a rural site and we may continue to provide services from outreach sites to meet local need.</p> <p>The health activities running at Mistley Clinic will continue, as will children's centre services that are currently delivered at other delivery sites in the Manningtree area.</p>

Please note that all the children's centres listed below are currently designated as Main Sites and their current opening hours range from 30 – 50 hours per week.

Centre Name	Proposed operating hours per week	Proposed type of site after April 2014
Beehive Children's Centre Queen Boudica Primary School Cowper Crescent Colchester CO4 5XT	50 hrs. (centre open)	Main
Berechurch Children's Centre The Ormiston Centre School Road, Monkwick Colchester CO2 8NN	No change 50 hrs. (centre open)	Main
Birch and Rural Children's Centre Birch C of E Primary School School Hill, Birch Colchester CO2 0LZ	5 hrs. (centre open)	Delivery
Colne Children's Centre YMCA Hall 55 High Street Brightlingsea CO7 OAQ	20 hrs. (centre open)	Delivery
Discovery Children's Centre King George V Pavilion Clairemont Road Colchester CO3 9BE	15 hrs. (centre open)	Delivery
Greenstead Children's Centre Greenstead Community Centre Hawthorn Avenue Colchester CO4 3QE	No change 50 hrs. (centre open)	Main
Harwich Town Children's Centre Noah's Nursery (Administrative site) Barrack Lane Harwich CO12 3NS	20 hrs. (centre open)	Delivery

Please note that all the children's centres listed below are currently designated as Main Sites and their current opening hours range from 30 – 50 hours per week.

Centre Name	Proposed operating hours per week	Proposed type of site after April 2014
St Nicholas Hall (Delivery site) Stour Road Harwich CO12 3HS		
Little Hands Children's Centre Stanway Fiveways Primary School Winstree Road Colchester CO3 0QG	50 hrs. (centre open)	Main
New Town Children's Centre St Stephen's Church Centre Canterbury Road Colchester CO2 7RY	20 hrs. (centre open)	Delivery
Rainbow Children's Centre 13 Old Pier Street Frinton-on-Sea CO14 8AW	50 hrs. (centre open)	Main
Shrub End Children's Centre Shrub End Community Centre Boadicea Way Colchester CO2 9BG	50 hrs. (centre open)	Main
St Annes and Castle Children's Centre Harwich Road Colchester CO4 3DH	25 hrs. (centre open)	Delivery
St James Children's Centre Unit 4 30 Oxford Road Clacton-on-Sea, CO15 3TB	No change 50 hrs. (centre open)	Main
Sydney House Children's Centre Sydney House 61a Langham Drive Clacton-on-Sea CO16 7AG	No change 50 hrs. (centre open)	Main
Windmill Children's Centre Two Village Primary School, Mayes Lane Ramsey Harwich CO12 5EL	No change 50 hrs. (centre open)	Main
Please note the children's centre listed below is currently a Delivery Site and its opening hours range is currently 10 hours.		
Hemmington House 51-53 Broadway Jaywick CO15 2EX	15 hrs. (centre open)	Delivery

Proposals for South Essex

South Essex quadrant covers: Basildon, Brentwood, Rochford, Castle Point.

Provider responsible for children's centre delivery: Barnardo's.

No. of children under five living in South Essex: 24, 075 (based on Child Benefit data 2012).

Current number of children's centres: 27

Proposed number of closures: 2

Proposed number of Main Sites: 10

Proposed number of Delivery Sites: 14 (15 including The Limes which is not yet open)

The tables below set out any proposed changes for each centre in South Essex. Each centre will also have its own website enabling families to access information, including each centre's weekly activity timetable, twenty four hours a day.

Centre Name	Proposals for Merging Centres from April 2014
<p>The Ark Children's Centre Becket Keys Church of England Secondary School Sawyers Hall Lane Brentwood CM15 9DA</p>	<p>It is proposed that this centre will merge with the neighbouring centre, Larchwood Gardens Children's Centre, Larchwood Primary School, Larchwood Gardens, CM15 9NG which will continue to be designated a Main Site. You can see where The Ark Children's Centre is located by going to our online children's centre search at www.essex.gov.uk/fis</p> <p>It is proposed that The Ark Children's Centre will be closed. The reason we have identified this children's centre for closure is that it is in an area of lesser deprivation and we are trying to prioritise resources to areas of greater need. The site also offers limited available facilities for families due to space restrictions. We may continue to provide services from outreach sites to meet local need to minimise the effects of closing this children's centre.</p>
<p>Little Treehouse Children's Centre Richmond Hall Community Centre High Road Benfleet, SS7 5HA</p>	<p>It is proposed that this centre will merge with the neighbouring centre, Little Handprints Children's Centre, Thundersley Primary, Dark Lane, SS7 3PT which will continue to be designated as a Main Site. You can see where Little Treehouse Children's Centre is located by going to our online children's centre search at www.essex.gov.uk/fis</p> <p>It is proposed that Little Treehouse Children's Centre will be closed. The reason we have identified this children's centre for closure is that the site offers limited available facilities for families due to space restrictions at the site. We may continue to provide services from outreach sites such as the community centre hall to meet local need to minimise the effects of closing this children's centre.</p>
<p>The following two centres will be moving to a new site as detailed below:</p>	
<p>The Hill's Children's Centre c/o The All About Children's Centre Leinster Road Laindon, SS15 5NX</p>	<p>This children's centre will be moving to a new building at: The Limes Children's Centre, 93 New Century Road, Laindon, SS15 6AQ. However, families can also access other neighbouring children's centres.</p> <p>The Hill's Children's Centre has already transferred to the All About Children's Centre due to limited available space for</p>

Centre Name	Proposals for Merging Centres from April 2014
	service delivery at the previous site. The Limes will provide dedicated children's centre delivery space for families, and outreach services will continue to be delivered in this area.
Laindon Park Children's Centre c/o The All About Children's Centre Leinster Road Laindon, SS15 5NX	This children's centre will be moving to a new building at: The Limes Children's Centre, 93 New Century Road, Laindon, SS15 6AQ. However, families can also access other neighbouring children's centres. The Laindon Park Children's Centre has already transferred to the All About Children's Centre due to the previous building being demolished. The Limes will provide dedicated children's centre delivery space for families living in this area

Please note that all the children's centres listed below are currently designated as main sites and their current opening hours range from 10 – 50 hours per week.

Centre Name	Proposed operating hours per week	Proposed type of site after April 2014
All About Children's Centre James Hornsby High School Leinster Road Laindon SS15 5NX	No change 50 hrs. (centre open)	Main
Billericay Children's Centre Billericay Library 143 High Street Billericay CM12 9AB	5 hrs. (centre open)	Delivery
Canvey Community Children's Centre Canvey Resource Centre Little Gypps Road Canvey Island SS8 9HG	15 hrs. (centre open)	Delivery
Cherry Tree Children's Centre The Knightsway Centre 32 A Knightsway Brentwood CM13 2AZ	15 hrs. (centre open)	Delivery
Cherrydown Children's Centre Relate South Essex Building 4 Cherrydown West Basildon SS16 5AT	15 hrs. (centre open)	Delivery
Fryerns Farm Children's Centre Greenshoots Adult Community College Ely Way Basildon SS14 2EQ	15 hrs. (centre open)	Delivery
Highcliffe Children's Centre Rettendon View Wickford SS11 8JX	50 hrs. (centre open)	Main
Kaleidoscope Children's Centre 27 Riverview Court Basildon SS16 4NF	No change 50 hrs. (centre open)	Main

Please note that all the children's centres listed below are currently designated as main sites and their current opening hours range from 10 – 50 hours per week.

Centre Name	Proposed operating hours per week	Proposed type of site after April 2014
Ladybird Children's Centre The Grange Community Centre Little Wheatley Chase Rayleigh, SS6 9EH	15 hrs. (centre open)	Delivery
Larchwood Children's Centre Larchwood Primary School Larchwood Gardens Pilgrims Hatch CM15 9NG	50 hrs. (centre open)	Main
Little Acorns Children's Centre Westwood Academy Beresford Close Hadleigh Benfleet SS7 2SU	10 hrs. (centre open)	Delivery
Little Handprints Children's Centre Thundersley Primary School Dark Lane Thundersley SS7 3PT	No change 50 hrs. (centre open)	Main
Little Lions Children's Centre Northwick Park Primary School Third Avenue Canvey Island SS8 9SU	No change 50 hrs. (centre open)	Main
Little Tewkes Children's Centre Dovervelt Rd Canvey Island SS8 8EJ	15 hrs. (centre open)	Delivery
Northlands Park Children's Centre Davenants Basildon SS13 1QX	No change 50 hrs. (centre open)	Main
Sea Shells Children's Centre Great Wakering Primary School High Street Gt. Wakering Southend on Sea SS3 OEJ	15 hrs. (centre open)	Delivery
StartBright Children's Centre Pitsea Library Northlands Pavement Pitsea SS13 3DU	5 hrs. (centre open)	Delivery
Sunnyside Children's Centre Rosebay Avenue Billericay CM12 0GH	50 hrs. (centre open)	Main
Sunshine Children's Centre Shenfield Library 63 Hutton Road Brentwood, CM15 8NJ	5 hrs. (centre open)	Delivery

Please note that all the children's centres listed below are currently designated as main sites and their current opening hours range from 10 – 50 hours per week.

Centre Name	Proposed operating hours per week	Proposed type of site after April 2014
The Limes Children's Centre <i>(currently delivering services from outreach sites in the community until building refurbishment is complete. This is showing as an additional delivery site)</i>	25 hrs. (centre open)	Delivery
The Oak Tree Children's Centre Grove Wood Primary School Grove Road Rayleigh SS6 8UA	50 hrs. (centre open)	Main
The Triangle Children's Centre Downtowner Irvon Hill Road Wickford SS12 0AQ	10 hrs. (centre open)	Delivery
Willows Children's Centre Riverside Primary School Ferry Lane Hullbridge, SS5 6ND	15 hrs. (centre open)	Delivery
Wishing Well Children's Centre Waterman Primary School The Boulevard Rochford SS4 1QF	No change 50 hrs. (centre open)	Main

Proposals for West Essex

West quadrant covers: Epping Forest, Harlow and Uttlesford

Lead body responsible for children's centre delivery: Spurgeons

Current number of children's centres: 17

No. of children under five living in West Essex: 18,550 (*based on Child Benefit data 2012*)

Proposed number of closures: 3

Proposed number of Main Sites: 9

Proposed number of Delivery Sites: 5

The tables below set out any proposed changes for each centre in West Essex. Each centre will also have its own website enabling families to access information, including each centre's weekly activity timetable, twenty four hours a day.

Centre Name	Proposals for Merging Centres from April 2014
<p>ABC Children's Centre Aneurin Bevin Centre Garden Terrace Road Old Harlow CM17 0AT</p>	<p>It is proposed that this centre will merge with the neighbouring centre Potter Street Children's Centre, Carters Mead, Harlow CM17 9EU which will continue to be designated as a Main Site. You can see where Potter Street Children's Centre is located by going to our online children's centre search at www.essex.gov.uk/fis</p> <p>It is proposed that ABC Children's Centre will be closed. The reason that we have identified this children's centre for closure is that it is in an area of lesser deprivation in Harlow and we are trying to prioritise resources to areas of greater need. Neighbouring centres are purpose built and have the capacity to deliver services to families, some of whom have already been accessing services at such centres.</p>
<p>Little Buddies Children's Centre Roding House 2 Victoria Road Buckhurst Hill IG9 5ES</p>	<p>It is proposed that this centre will merge with the neighbouring centre Sunrise Children's Centre, Alderton Schools, Alderton Hall Lane, IG10 3HE which will continue to be designated as a Main Site. You can see where Sunrise Children's Centre is located by going to our online children's centre search at www.essex.gov.uk/fis</p> <p>It is proposed that Little Buddies Children's Centre will be closed. The reason we have identified this children's centre for closure is that it is in an area of lesser deprivation compared to neighbouring Epping children's centres; we are trying to prioritise resources to areas of greater need. The site suffers from accessibility issues as it is on a busy high street with limited parking. Neighbouring centres in Epping Forest are easier and safer to access. Good transport links between Buckhurst Hill and neighbouring centres in Loughton and Debden will also serve to minimise the effects of this closure.</p>
<p>Sunflowers Children's Centre Sumners Leisure Centre Broadly Road Harlow CM195RD</p>	<p>It is proposed that this centre will merge with the neighbouring centre The Treehouse Children's Centre, Parnall Road, Harlow, CM18 7NG which will continue to be designated as a Main Site. You can see where Treehouse Children's Centre is located by going to our online children's centre search at www.essex.gov.uk/fis</p>

Centre Name	Proposals for Merging Centres from April 2014
	It is proposed that Sunflowers Children's Centre will be closed. The reason we have identified this children's centre for closure is that it is geographically in close proximity to The Treehouse Children's Centre which is a large purpose built site with better facilities for service delivery. Many families within the Sunflower Children's Centre reach area are already accessing services at The Treehouse.

Please note that all the children's centres listed below are currently designated as Main Sites and their current opening hours range from 10 – 50 hours per week.

Centre Name	Proposed operating hours per week	Proposed type of site after April 2014
Abbeywood Children's Centre Waltham Abbey Library 37 Sun Street Waltham Abbey, EN9 1EL	15 hrs. (centre open)	Delivery
Brambles Children's Centre Epping Library St John's Road Epping CM16 5DN	No change 40 hrs. (centre open) 10 hrs. (telephone service)	Main
Burnt Mill Children's Centre Burnt Mill Secondary School First Avenue Harlow CM20 2NR	15 hrs. (centre open)	Delivery
Fairycroft Children's Centre 37a Fairycroft Road Saffron Walden CB10 1ND	No change 40 hrs. (centre open) 10 hrs. (telephone service)	Main
Hazelwood Children's Centre Hill House Primary School Ninefields Waltham Abbey, EN9 3EL	No change 40 hrs. (centre open) 10 hrs. (telephone service)	Main
Little Goslings Children's Centre Little Goslings North Street Great Dunmow CM6 1AZ	15 hrs. (centre open)	Delivery
Little Oaks Children's Centre Loughton Resource Centre Torrington Drive Loughton IG10 3TD	15 hrs. (centre open)	Delivery
Little Star Children's Centre Shelley Primary School Milton Crescent Shelley Chipping Ongar CM5 0FF	15 hrs. (centre open)	Delivery
Potter Street Children's Centre Carters Mead Harlow CM17 9EU	No change 40 hrs. (centre open) 10 hrs. (telephone service)	Main

Please note that all the children's centres listed below are currently designated as Main Sites and their current opening hours range from 10 – 50 hours per week.

Centre Name	Proposed operating hours per week	Proposed type of site after April 2014
Spangles Children's Centre Lower Street Off Chapel Hill Mountfitchet Stansted CM24 8LR	No change 40 hrs. (centre open) 10 hrs. (telephone service)	Main
Sunrise Children's Centre Alderton Schools Alderton Hall Lane Loughton IG10 3HE	No change 40 hrs. (centre open) 10 hrs. (telephone service)	Main
Meadows Children's Centre Harberts Road Harlow CM19 4DL	No change 40 hrs. (centre open) 10 hrs. (telephone service)	Main
Treehouse Children's Centre Parnall Road Harlow CM18 7NG	No change 40 hrs. (centre open) 10 hrs. (telephone service)	Main
True Stars Children's Centre The Limes Centre, Limes Farm, Chigwell IG7 5LP	No change 40 hrs. (centre open) 10 hrs. (telephone service)	Main

This publication is issued by
Essex County Council, Early Years and Childcare.

You can contact us in the following ways:

By email:

eycomms@essex.gov.uk

To complete the online consultation questionnaire please go to:

www.essex.gov.uk/childrenscentres

The information contained in this leaflet can be translated, and/or made available in alternative formats, on request.

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Essex Sure Start Children`s Centres – Shaping Future Services from April 2014

Epping Forest District Council has considered the proposals detailed within Essex County Council`s consultation document, “Essex Sure Start Children`s Centres – Shaping Future Services from April 2014 “.

It is regrettable that Essex County Council intends to make savings of £2.5m from the overall children`s centre budget between 2014 and 2016, however, the Council is pleased to note that there will be no change to four of the district`s eight centres;

Brambles Children`s Centre
Epping Library
St John's Road
Epping CM16 5DN

Hazelwood Children`s Centre
Hill House Primary School
Ninefields
Waltham Abbey, EN9 3EL

Sunrise Children`s Centre
Alderton Schools
Alderton Hall Lane
Loughton IG10 3HE

True Stars Children`s Centre
The Limes Centre,
Limes Farm,
Chigwell IG7 5LP

The Council supports the designation of the above centres as “Main Sites” and is pleased to note that each centre will continue to be open for 40 hours per week, with 10 hours telephone service per week.

Essex County Council has proposed that the following three centres are designated “Delivery Sites” which will each be open for 15 hours per week and “provide a number of services for the area”;

Abbeywood Children`s Centre
Waltham Abbey Library
37 Sun Street
Waltham Abbey, EN9 1EL

Little Oaks Children's Centre
Loughton Resource Centre
Torrington Drive
Loughton IG10 3TD

Little Star Children's Centre
Shelley Primary School
Milton Crescent
Shelley
Chipping Ongar CM5 0FF

It is not clear from the consultation document how many hours per week each of the above centres is currently open, therefore, it is difficult for respondents to understand the full extent of this particular proposed change. The Council is, however, aware that services from these sites has historically been delivered primarily in the form of out-reach sessions. The Council recognises the value and importance of providing flexible out-reach programmes within the community and is pleased to note, on page 4 of the document, that this element of the children's centres remit is "not included" as part of the proposed changes.

Most crucially, Essex County Council has proposed that the following site be closed and be merged with the Sunrise Centre:

Little Buddies Children's Centre
Roding House
2 Victoria Road
Buckhurst Hill IG9 5ES

The reasons stated for this proposal are that "it is in an area of lesser deprivation compared to neighbouring Epping children's centres; we are trying to prioritise resources to areas of greater need. The site suffers from accessibility issues as it is on a busy high street with limited parking. Neighbouring centres in Epping Forest are easier and safer to access. Good transport links between Buckhurst Hill and neighbouring centres in Loughton and Debden will also serve to minimise the effects of this closure."

The Council is extremely concerned about the impact of this closure on local children and families. The Council feels that transport links are limited, expensive and not easily accessible, particular when travelling with buggies or for family members with disabilities. In the event that this proposed closure is implemented, the Council would expect that a comprehensive programme of locally delivered out-reach sessions be provided in Buckhurst Hill for families who are unable to travel to the Sunrise Centre.

The Council is disappointed that the consultation document did not provide full and specific details in relation to the rationale behind the proposals put forward; however, we are advised by Essex County Council that a range of information has been used to inform the proposals. We have been advised that this includes statistical data which has highlighted how centres are currently accessed and used, a needs analysis, local workshops and so on. We are also aware that Essex County Council has worked closely with Spurgeon's, the provider currently commissioned to deliver Epping Forest's children's centre service, in the formulation of the proposals.

Whilst the Council is extremely disappointed that the current level of children's centre service cannot continue as it is, it is recognised that the approach taken in developing the proposals is logical and measured under the circumstances and, with the exception of the

proposed closure of the Little Buddies Centre, the model will provide services in the district's key super output areas, whilst retaining a full out-reach programme for local children and families.

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**Report to Constitution and Members
Services Scrutiny Standing Panel
Date of meeting: 19th November 2013**



Portfolio: Support Services & Safer Greener and Transport

Subject: Premises Licences – Review

Officer contact for further information: Alison Mitchell Assistant Director (Legal)

Committee Secretary: Mark Jenkins

Recommendations:

- (1) That the Panel undertakes a review of the recommendations of the Licensing Services Task and Finish Panel (as amended by the Council);**
- (2) To consider matters relating to the review that should be raised with the Licensing Committee at their Extra-ordinary meeting on 3 December 2013 including whether Scrap Metal Dealers Licences and any other licence to which members of the public do not have the right to make a representation should be heard at a day time meeting.**
- (3) To note the proposed report to the Cabinet seeking “in principle” funding; and**
- (4) To consider the outcomes of the review and make, if appropriate, recommendations to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet on:**
 - (i) The continuation or amendment of the new Licensing Subcommittee meeting procedures; and**
 - (ii) The level of funding required to continue with evening and the additional level of meetings.**

BACKGROUND

1. Until the decision of the Council on 23rd April 2013, the Licensing Sub-Committees met during the day and heard all types of licensing applications. There was usually one meeting a month but, because of statutory time limits, there were occasions when two meetings were held. For the period April 2012 until March 2013 there were fourteen meetings.
2. The Authority followed the statutory procedure for undertaking consultations which prescribes that a notice is placed in a local paper and displayed on the premises.
3. Concerns had been raised that the public and Councillors who are employed during the daytime were not able to attend the sub-committee meetings and that there was not sufficient advertising of the premises applications to bring the application to the attention of members of the public.
4. The Licensing Services Task and Finish Panel was established in September 2012

under the Chairmanship of Cllr. Mrs. P Smith:

- a. To review the operation and effectiveness of the Licensing Sub-Committees structure.
- b. To have regard of the Licensing Act 2003 on consultations.
- c. To review the feasibility of moving some meetings to the evening.
- d. To review the feasibility of creating a new Licensing Sub-Committee structure to enable local councillors and interested persons to have more input.
- e. To review the most appropriate methods of informing people of their rights to make representations in respect of Licensing Applications and review hearings.

2. The Panel's final recommendations were reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as follows:

“Composition of Licensing Committees and sub-committees

- 1) That a Licensing Committee of 15 members continues as it is currently set up at present.
- 2) That one calendared meeting be included in a time table to be held during the day per month to consider applications relating to taxi licences.
- 3) That one calendared meeting be included in a time table to be held per month, with a 6.30pm start (with a 3pm early start for exceptional meetings) to consider all other applications regarding licences;
- 4) If there were more than one application relating to a premises licence a month additional meetings be organised for each application;
- 5) That these new procedures be reviewed after 12 months of operation;
- 6) That the Constitution and Member Services Standing Panel be asked to carry out the review;

Notification of Premises Applications

- 7) That notification of an application should be sent to the occupiers of neighbouring properties within a radius of 150 metres of the application premises;
- 8) The envelopes should state that “Important – Notice of Licensing Consultation”
- 9) That the draft sample letter informing the occupiers of the application which was considered by the Panel and as annexed be used when notifying residents provided that it is updated when required (similar letters will be prepared for other types of licences); and
- 10) An interim 6 month report be submitted to the full Licensing Committee.

Financial Implications

- 11) That Cabinet agree a bid for a supplementary estimate in the sum of £58,770.72 annually together with a single payment of £5,000 as detailed in the Resource Requirements on page 13 “

3. The report was the considered by full Council on 23rd April 2013. It was decided as follows:

Report as first moved ADOPTED

RESOLVED:

(1) That, having considered the comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Licensing Committee and the Cabinet, the recommendations set out in the report of the Licensing Services Task and Finish Panel be adopted subject to (2) below;

(2) That recommendation (5) in the report of the Panel be amended to reflect the view of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee that a review of operation of the new scheme be commenced at nine months rather than one year; and

(3) That a District Development Fund supplementary estimate in the sum of £63,770.72 for 2013/14 be approved.

REVIEW

4. This Panel is asked to carry out the review of the licensing committee and sub-committee meeting arrangements set out in numbers 1 – 6 of the Licensing Services Task and Finish Panel. The new procedure for consultations started after 23rd April 2013 and the first application to come before the evening meeting of the Licensing Sub-committee after the implementation of the new procedure was on 6th June 2013.

5. The new procedures have led to an increase in the number of sub-committee meetings. For a comparable period from 1st June to 31st October in 2012 and in 2013 members are referred to the table attached as Appendix 1 to this report

5 meetings were held in 2012/13, and
20 meetings were held in 2013/14.

2 meetings of the Full Licensing Committee were held in each period.

The reasons for the increase in meetings arose because:

- The taxi licensing meetings are now held separately during the daytime from other licensing applications held at night.
- Only one premises licence application is held in an evening whereas in the daytime meetings two could be heard as well as taxi applications.
- In 2012 there were 7 premises applications which went to the sub-committee whilst in 2013 there were 15.

6. The Council's decision required that the review of the new arrangements should take after nine months of the introduction of separate meetings but this report has been prepared earlier because the budget for the continuation of the meetings ends in March 2014 and it will be necessary to put money into the next year's budget if members decide to continue with the consultation requirements and evening sub-committee meetings. A report will be made to Cabinet requesting finance which will be dependent upon the decision of Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Licensing Committee.

7. The applications are not received in a regular manner and the numbers of meetings

held in each month was as follows:

Month	Day time	Evening	Full Licensing Committee (day)
June	1	2	
July	1	2	
August	1	0	
September	1	5	1
October	1	6	1

8. If the same level of meetings is held over the latter part of the year it is estimated that approximately 48 sub-committee meetings would be held before April 2014. There are likely to be at least 4 committee meetings in financial year. Into this mix the licensing of Scrap Metal dealers and sites has now been added by government, the likelihood of temporary road closures and these are likely necessitate additional meetings.

9. As a consequence of the review last year, members approved a temporary post of Democratic Services Assistant to help deal with the increase in meetings and administration and a temporary post in Licensing to undertake work arising from the 150 metre radius consultation and the increased numbers of meetings. This provision ceases in May 2014.

10. If members are to continue the current processes, the permanent retention of these posts is necessary. This is against the background of steadily increasing levels of meetings supported by Democratic Services which, with internal meetings and webcasting of meetings, has risen to 390 supported meetings and events in the last year. New licensing requirements of scrap metal dealers means that the Licensing service has had increasing levels of work.

COSTS

11. For the period 1st May 2013 until 31st October 2013 the costs are as follows:

CONSULTATION

GIS. time in identifying properties within 150 metres	£300.00
Printing/envelopes	£645.00
Temporary officer appointed to support the new consultation procedure (assuming that a temp had been employed from 1 st May to 31 st Oct)	£10,958.00

EVENING COMMITTEES

Legal officer	£769.86
Committee Officer salary (£21,000 pa pro rata)	£10,500.00
Committee officer (evening meeting allowance)	£ 769.86
1 or 2 licensing officers	£1,184.52

Total to date £25,127.24

If these figures are projected forward for the pro rata for the whole year the costs will be £50254.48

12. A report has been prepared for the Cabinet meeting on 2 December 2013 which seeks in principle approval to the provision of Continuing Services Budget (CSB) for 2014 onwards for these costs pending the results of the review by this Panel and the views of the Licensing Committee on matters of licensing policy.

CONSULTATION

13. Forms were handed out to those who attended the meetings and those returned are attached. The comments are mostly positive and adverse comments relate to the facilities not the timing. These forms are attached as Appendix 2

14. Members were asked to comment and emails received are attached as Appendix 3.

SCRAP METAL

15. The licensing authority has recently taken on the responsibility for licensing Scrap Metal Dealers. Prior to the change in regulations dealers were required to register. Limited information was obtained and entered onto a public register. The Council had 10 applications on the register and officers were uncertain as to numbers of applications for licences that would be received. There are currently 10 applications but more are expected as dealers become aware of the legislation. In addition, the Licensing Committee has required officers to carry out compliance visits for each premises twice yearly. This is a continuing addition to the Licensing services workload

16. No applications have yet lead to a reference to the Licensing sub-committee. However, more applications are expected and this will increase the sub-committee workload. The decision of the Council required that only taxi licence hearings should take place during the day. However, only the police and other regulatory bodies may object to an application for a scrap metal dealer's licence. Members may consider that any hearings for Scrap Metal Licences and any other licence where members of the public cannot object should take place during a daytime meeting.

ROAD CLOSURES

17. Essex County Council has until recently undertaken temporary road closures to allow street parties etc. to take place. The County Council has decided that it will no longer make these road closures and are referring applicants to the District Council's Licensing Service. This was reported to the last meeting of the Licensing Committee who decided that: they could not make a decision as to whether to recommend that the District exercise those powers until it had more information. However not to do so could put other authorities and individuals at a disadvantage e.g. Waltham Abbey Festival of Lights and could lead to a judicial review if both council's refuse to undertake this work.

18. This Authority has the power to make road closures and courts are likely to require the Council to have considered an individual application prior to refusal. Whilst the County Council was making road closures orders for these purposes it would have been an adequate defence that this work was being undertaken by the Highways Authority. However, if challenged now there would be no such defence.

19. Consultations with other Districts, who undertake this work, indicated the numbers of road closures are likely to be about 22 annually but also more applications will be received when events such as Golden Jubilees occur. The Authority needs adequate staffing level and supporting resources to be able to cover the usual expected annual workload.

20. Having reviewed the procedure from a neighbouring authority, if this work is to be undertaken, and there seems little option but to do so at present, then it is estimated that additional staff time equally 8 hours per month would be required. Although there is no formal appeal permitted under the Act, if a party disputed a decision the matter would be referred to the sub-committee. Under the current rules this hearing would take place in an evening.

CONCLUSION

21. The consultation process means that there is an increased workload in the licensing service arising from increasing contact with members of the public and greater requirements to mediate. The increases in the numbers of meetings adds to workload for Democratic Services and Licensing and adds to the numbers that member will be required to attend. Changes in legislation mentioned above may increase the numbers of meetings but it is expected that this will be to a small extent.

22. The evening meetings and the additional time spent in discussions with those making representations and applicants' means that Licensing officers are delaying other areas of work such as compliance visits.

23. The workload in the Democratic Services has increased in arranging additional sub-committee meetings from the 24 set at the beginning of the year. This is against the background of steadily increasing levels of meetings supported by Democratic Services which, with internal meetings and webcasting of meetings, has risen to 390 supported meetings and events in the last year and the likelihood that posts in the Service will be lost in the Directorate Restructuring.

24. The introduction of evening meetings has doubled the number of meetings of the sub-committee. The requirement for additional consultations has further increased the numbers of hearings held. Members are asked to review the recommendations regarding the composition of the meetings and consider:

- whether evening meetings should continue.
- If the Panel decide that evening meetings remain to consider whether those applications for which the members of the public have no right to object should be heard during the daytime meetings. ,
- That they inform the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet that it is their view that the recommendations should be fully funded as set out in this report.

Resource implications:

Budget provision: There is none in the budget. Depending upon the decision of this Panel a report will be made to the Cabinet asking for resources to be renewed for the future funding of this initiative.

Personnel: 2 additional members of staff required.

Land: None

Community Plan/BVPP reference:

Relevant statutory powers:

Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976

Gambling Act 2005

Guard Dogs Act 1975

House to House Collections Act 1939

Licensing Act 2003

Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982

Pet Animals Acts 1951 & Pet Animals Act 1951 (Amendment Act) 1983

Riding Establishments Acts 1964 & 1970

Scrap Metal Dealers Act 1964

The Game Act 1831

Town Police Clauses Act 1847

Town Police Clauses Act 1889

Zoo Licensing Act 1981

Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013

Any Regulations, Orders, Byelaws or other subsidiary legislation made under the above Acts.

Background papers:

Reports and decisions of the Licensing Services Task and Finish Panel, Overview and Scrutiny, Licensing Committee, Council

Environmental/Human Rights Act/Crime and Disorder Act Implications:

Key Decision reference: (if required)

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June to October 2012			
12 June 2012	<p>LUXE ESSEX 126 HIGH ROAD, LOUGHTON ESSEX IG10 4BE</p> <p>The Members who presided over the application were Councillors R Morgan (Chairman), A Boyce and R Gadsby.</p> <p>In attendance on behalf of the application were the agent Mr Hoddinott, owners Mr N Iyapah & Mr A Kundra, General Manager Mr D Privett and the Accountant Mr K Iyapah.</p> <p>In attendance as objectors were Mr Richardson, Environmental Health Technical Officer Epping Forest District Council and Mr Thompson, Enforcement Officer, Epping Forest District Council.</p>		<p>1 x applicant 1 x accountant 1 x general manager No objectors</p>
12 June 2012	<p>ZARA EXPRESS 23 THE BROADWAY DEBDEN IG10 3SP</p> <p>The Members who presided over the application were Councillors R Morgan (Chairman), A Boyce and K Angold-Stephens.. In attendance were the applicants Y Yaman and Mr Damis Yaman</p>		<p>2 x applicants No objectors</p>
10 July 2012 meeting	<p>THEYDON BOIS CAMP SITE</p> <p>The Members who presided over the application were Councillors Mrs M Sartin (Chairman), K Chana and R Morgan.</p> <p>.In attendance on behalf of the application were Mr M H Beckett, the applicant, and Mr K Hoddinott of James-Motion, Licensed Property Valuers and Brokers.</p> <p>In attendance as objectors were Ms S Sowerby a local resident and member of the Theydon Bois Action Group and Resident's Association, Parish Councillor P Gooch, Vice-Chairman of Theydon Bois Parish Council and Chairman of the Parish Council Planning Committee, and local residents Dr J and Mrs Warren, Mr D Jones and Mr F Sparks.</p> <p>Also in attendance as an observer was Mr P Jones, Divisional Licensing Officer, Licensing Department, Harlow Police Station.</p>		<p>1 X applicant and representative 4 X objectors</p>

	<p>THE ACADEMY FOOTBALL AND SPORTS LTD, LANGSTON ROAD, LOUGHTON, ESSEX IG10 3TQ The Members who presided over the application were Councillors Mrs M Sartin (Chairman), R Morgan and L Leonard.</p> <p>In attendance on behalf of the application were Mr Nathan representing The Academy Football and Sports Ltd, Mr M Woodward, the applicant.</p> <p>In attendance as objectors were Mr N Helm, barrister representing the Bank of England and Mr P Jones, Divisional Licensing Officer, Licensing Department, Harlow Police Station. In attendance was Mr K Hoddinott as an observer.</p>		<p>2 x applicants 2 X objectors</p>
7 August 2012	<p>APPLICATION TO RENEW A SEX ESTABLISHMENT LICENCE - UNIT 11G,CHASE FARM, VICARAGE LANE, NORTH WEALD CM16 6AL The three Councillors that presided over this item were Councillors K Angold-Stephens, R Morgan and P Smith. In attendance on behalf of the application was Mr Shazad Ahmed, the applicant. There were no objectors in attendance..</p>		<p>1 x applicant No objectors</p>
4 September meeting 2012	<p>THE WHEATSHEAF, 15 YORK HILL, LOUGHTON The members who presided over the application were Councillors R Morgan, A Boyce and P Spencer.</p> <p>In attendance was the site applicants Mrs Janet Smith, Mr James Smith and Mr Peter Smith. In attendance as an objector was Mr David Linnell on behalf of the Loughton Residents Association and a number of local residents. District Councillor Mrs C Pond was also in attendance. For the District Council was David Baker, of the Council's planning</p>		<p>3 applicants 1 x objector</p>
	<p>SHELL UK, 124 MANOR ROAD, CHIGWELL The Members who presided over the application were Councillors R Morgan, A Boyce and T Thomas.</p> <p>In attendance was the site operator Mr G Nareshkumar with Mr N Nareshkumar, and their legal rep</p>		<p>1 x applicant 1 x rep</p>
	<p>June to October 2013 Planned meetings in bold</p>	Duration	Attendance
6 June 2013	<p>VARIATION OF LICENCE FOR GAYNES PARK . In attendance was Mr .G Chisenhale-Marsh the applicant, his legal representative Mr. K Hoddinott and John O'Connor the manager of the Coach House. Also in attendance was Mr Nigel Bush the objector and his representative Mr. I Coward.</p>	<p>18.30- 21.32 2.32</p>	<p>2 x applicants 1 rep 1 objector 1 other</p>
11 June 2013	Taxis only		

20 June 2013	STREET TRADING APPLICATION – RECTORY LANE LOUGHTON In attendance was Mr. P Taylor the applicant, and his daughter Ms. J Taylor.	18.30 – 19.15 0.45	2 x applicants No objectors
9 July 2013	taxis		
18 July 2013	PREMISES LICENCE - 295 HIGH ROAD, LOUGHTON IG10 1AL The three Councillors that presided over this item were Councillors R Morgan, A Boyce and A Mitchell. In attendance was the Applicant, Mr. N Coskun, and his wife. There were no objectors in attendance.	18.30 – 19.05 0.35	2 x applicants No objectors
24 July 2013	44, QUEENS ROAD BUCKHURST HILL ESSEX The three Councillors that presided over this item were Councillors A Boyce, P Smith and L Leonard. In attendance on behalf of the application were Mr. Hoddinott, the authorised agent, Mr. & Mrs. Linch, the premises owners and Hazel Scott, designated premises supervisor. In attendance on behalf of the objectors were Mr. & Mrs. Forrester, Mr. Freeman and Mr. Rory Worrington..	18.30 – 19.53 1.23	2 x applicants 1 x rep 4 objectors 1 other
6 August 2013	Taxi only		
15 August 2013	Cancelled		
5 September 2013	APPLICATION FOR A PREMISES LICENCE - MULBERRY HOUSE, HIGH ONGAR, ESSEX CM5 9NL The three Councillors that presided over this item were Councillors P Smith K Chana and H Mann. In attendance on behalf of the application were Mr. Thirsk, the authorised agent and Mr George, the premises owner. .	18.30 – 19.03 0,33	1 x applicant 1 rep
10 TH September 2013	LICENSING COMMITTEE		
10 September 2013	Taxis only		
11 September 2013	MEZESPHERE, 112-120 HIGH ROAD, LOUGHTON IG10 4HJ The three Councillors that presided over this item were Councillors A Boyce, P Keska and H Mann. In attendance on behalf of the application were Licensing Consultant, F Fender and the applicant Mrs. A Ozkan. In attendance on behalf of the objectors was Pastor R Brown	18:30 – 19:30 1.00	1 x applicant 1 x rep 1 other

12 September	<p>APPLICATION FOR PREMISES LICENCE - LIL'S PIE AND MASH, UNIT 3C THE MALTINGS, SAWBRIDGEWORTH CM1 9JX</p> <p>The three Councillors that presided over this item were Councillors R Morgan, K Angold-Stephens and P Spencer.</p> <p>In attendance, on behalf of the application were Ms. J Morgan and Mr. C McAvoy, the applicants, there were no objectors present.</p>	18.30 – 19.25 0.33	2 x applicants No objectors
16 September 2013	<p>PREMISES LICENCE VARIATION - NU BAR, 153 HIGH ROAD, LOUGHTON IG10 4LF</p> <p>The three Councillors that presided over this item were Councillors Angold-Stephens, Gadsby and Boyce</p> <p>In attendance on behalf of the applications were: B-E Jung, Counsel; A Perera, Greene King; and M Cleary, operator of the premises.</p> <p>In attendance having made objections to the application were: S Weston, Loughton Residents Association and Loughton Town Council; A Richardson, resident; M Roach, resident; and D Roach, resident.</p> <p>Also in attendance was D Baker, Planning Officer with Epping Forest District Council.</p>	18.30 – 20.25 1.55	three x applicants one representative 4 objectors
24 September 2013	<p>WALTHAM ABBEY EXPRESS, 1 FARM HILL ROAD, WALTHAM ABBEY, ESSEX, EN9 1NE</p> <p>The three Councillors that presided over this item were Councillors L Leonard, P Keska and P Spencer.</p> <p>In attendance on behalf of the application were Ms E Guler, the applicant's solicitor and Mr Hazar, the applicant. In attendance objecting to the premises was a resident Mr Emery, Councillor Kane, Peter Jones from the Essex Police and two members of the public.</p>	18.30 – 21.30 3.00	1 x applicant 1 x solicitor 5 x objectors
1 October 2013	<p>CARLTON LONDON CAFE BAR, 38 CHIGWELL LANE, LOUGHTON IG10 3NY</p> <p>The three Councillors that presided over this item were Councillors P Spencer, A Boyce and P Smith.</p> <p>The applicant, Mr H Dheansa attended the meeting. There were no objectors present.</p>	18.30 – 18.50 0,25	1 x applicant
3 October 2013	<p>MARTINS THE NEWSAGENTS, 273-277 HIGH STREET, EPPING, ESSEX, CM16 4DA</p> <p>The three Councillors that presided over this item were Councillors P Smith, A Mitchell and P Keska.</p> <p>In attendance on behalf of the application were Anne-Marie Taylor, the applicant's solicitor and Pauline Tait, the Area Manager.</p> <p>There were no other people present.</p>	18.30 – 18.55 0.25	2 x applicant 1 x solicitor No objectors
7 October 2013	<p>9 HILL HOUSE, WALTHAM ABBEY Hill Hose Waltham Abbey</p> <p>The applicant and her licensing agent attended</p>	18.30 – 20.10 1.40	

8 October 2013 —	taxis only		
9th October 2013	LICENSING COMMITTEE		
10 October 2013	<p>THE WHITE HOUSE, MARKET PLACE, ABRIDGE, ROMFORD, ESSEX RM4 1UA The three Councillors that presided over this item were Councillors T Boyce, M Sartin and P Spencer.</p> <p>In attendance on behalf of the application were Mr Robert Jordan, the applicant's solicitor and Mr & Mrs Mathialagan, the owners.</p> <p>In attendance objecting to the application was Mr David Bermange.</p>	18.30 – 19.20 0.50	2 applicants 1 x objector
14 October 2013	<p>APPLICATION FOR A NEW PREMISES LICENCE MEZESPHERE , 74 HIGH ROAD, Epping Forest District Council The three Councillors that presided over this item were Councillors Morgan, Gadsby and Leonard Mr F Fender, the Applicant's Licensing Consultant and Agent and Ms Irfan Taskiran , the applicant were in attendance.</p>	18.30 – 19.05 0.35	2 x applicants
17 October 2013	<p>APPLICATION FOR TRANSFER OF A SEX ESTABLISHMENT LICENCE - SHOP - 105 EPPING NEW ROAD, BUCKHURST HILL, IG9 5TQ The three Councillors that presided over this item were Councillors K Angold-Stephens, R Morgan and B Rolfe .</p> <p>In attendance on behalf of the application were the applicant Mr David Bales and his son. There were no other people present.</p>		2 x applicants No objectors
24th October 2013	Cancelled		

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Licensing Sub-Committee Meetings Customer Satisfaction 2013

We are reviewing the 'Licensing Sub-Committee Meeting' arrangements and would like to know your views. Please assist us by filling in this questionnaire which will help us to improve our service.

Your Details

Q1 Name: FRANK FENDER

Q2 Address: HIGHFIELD CLOSE, NEWPORT PAGNELL, BUCKS [REDACTED]

Q3 Telephone: [REDACTED] Q4 Email: fonke@fflicensingolutions.co.uk

Q5 Are you the applicant or are you making a representation?
 Applicant Representation

Q6 Reason for attending:
Representing the applicant to obtain a new premises licence

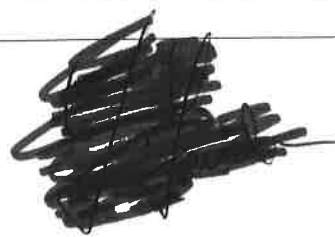
Q7 At what time of the day would you prefer the meetings to be held?
 Daytime Evening

Q8 Facilities

	Yes	No
Were the facilities satisfactory?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Did you find the officers helpful/informative?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Did you have any difficulties in your travel arrangements to the offices?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Q9 Please add any comments below.

Premises were locked on our arrival. Had to wait outside until doors were opened to allow access. Weather was not conducive to waiting outside - applicants / agents need to prepare properly and waiting like that is not good preparation.



Licensing Sub-Committee Meetings Customer Satisfaction 2013

We are reviewing the 'Licensing Sub-Committee Meeting' arrangements and would like to know your views. Please assist us by filling in this questionnaire which will help us to improve our service.

Your Details

Q1 Name:

AYSEGUL OZKAN

Q2 Address:

WOODWARDS, HARLOW, ESSEX, [REDACTED]

Q3 Telephone:

[REDACTED]

Q4 Email:

ayshe@ygtlogistics.com

Q5 Are you the applicant or are you making a representation?

Applicant

Representation

Q6 Reason for attending:

PREMISES LICENCE

Q7 At what time of the day would you prefer the meetings to be held?

Daytime

Evening

Q8 Facilities

Were the facilities satisfactory?

Yes

No

Did you find the officers helpful/informative?

Did you have any difficulties in your travel arrangements to the offices?

Q9 Please add any comments below.

EVERYBODY WAS VERY HELPFUL AND FRIENDLY.

Nuala Clark

From: frank@fflicensingolutions.co.uk
Sent: 15 October 2013 19:18
To: Nuala Clark
Subject: Re: Mezesphere Epping

Thanks Nuala

It was nice to meet you also - it has been a pleasure to work with your authority, both in respect of the licensing officers and the officers and councillors at the 2 hearings. Very helpful, very friendly, and very efficient. Thank you, and I look forward to having more clients in your area - fingers crossed!!

Kind regards

Frank

Frank Fender
FF Licensing Consultants
11 Highfield Close
Newport Pagnell
Bucks
MK16 9AZ
Tel: 07846 747833

on Oct 15, 2013, **Nuala Clark** <nclark@eppingforestdc.gov.uk> wrote:

Good morning Frank,

I have attached the formal decision letter for your records, I confirm that the licence will be sent to you shortly.

I was very pleased to meet you and Ayesha yesterday and look forward to working with you again in the future.

Licensing Sub-Committee Meetings Customer Satisfaction 2013

We are reviewing the 'Licensing Sub-Committee Meeting' arrangements and would like to know your views. Please assist us by filling in this questionnaire which will help us to improve our service.

Your Details

Q1 Name:

Paulino Tait

Q2 Address:

110 HIGH STREET RAHEIGH, ESSEX, [REDACTED]

Q3 Telephone:

[REDACTED]

Q4 Email:

ptait@mcolls.co.uk

Q5 Are you the applicant or are you making a representation?

Applicant

Representation

Q6 Reason for attending:

On Behalf of martin mcolls

Q7 At what time of the day would you prefer the meetings to be held?

Daytime

Evening

Q8 Facilities

Were the facilities satisfactory?

Yes

No

Did you find the officers helpful/informative?

Did you have any difficulties in your travel arrangements to the offices?

Q9 Please add any comments below.

Having attended a few license sub committee meetings over the years, I have to say that this was the most organised & professional one that I have attended, and the officers that were on duty that day are a credit to Epping Forest Council



Licensing Sub-Committee Meetings Customer Satisfaction 2013

We are reviewing the 'Licensing Sub-Committee Meeting' arrangements and would like to know your views. Please assist us by filling in this questionnaire which will help us to improve our service.

Your Details

Q1 Name:

MATHIALA RAN MYI LUAHANAM.

Q2 Address:

FIR TREES ABRIDGE

Q3 Telephone:

[Redacted]

Q4 Email:

mali001@hotmail.co.uk

Q5 Are you the applicant or are you making a representation?

Applicant

Representation

Q6 Reason for attending:

Rejealin off licenses premises



Q7 At what time of the day would you prefer the meetings to be held?

Daytime

Evening

Q8 Facilities

Were the facilities satisfactory?

Yes

No

Did you find the officers helpful/informative?

Did you have any difficulties in your travel arrangements to the offices?

Q9 Please add any comments below.

Licensing Sub-Committee Meetings Customer Satisfaction 2013

We are reviewing the 'Licensing Sub-Committee Meeting' arrangements and would like to know your views. Please assist us by filling in this questionnaire which will help us to improve our service.

Your Details

Q1 Name: UNADKAT

Q2 Address: 4 Wilhouse Waltham Abbey Essex

Q3 Telephone: [REDACTED]

Q4 Email: abbeynews9@btinternet.com

Q5 Are you the applicant or are you making a representation?
 Applicant Representation

Q6 Reason for attending:
license application (Premises)

Q7 At what time of the day would you prefer the meetings to be held?
 Daytime Evening

Q8 Facilities

	Yes	No
Were the facilities satisfactory?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Did you find the officers helpful/informative?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Did you have any difficulties in your travel arrangements to the offices?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Q9 Please add any comments below.

Licensing Sub-Committee Meetings Customer Satisfaction 2013

We are reviewing the 'Licensing Sub-Committee Meeting' arrangements and would like to know your views. Please assist us by filling in this questionnaire which will help us to improve our service.

Your Details

Q1 Name:

FRANK FENDER

Q2 Address:

HIGHFIELD CLOSE, NEWPORT PANELL, Bucks ~~AL11 1R~~

Q3 Telephone:

~~01298 511111~~

Q4 Email:

frank@fjlicensingolutions.co.uk

Q5 Are you the applicant or are you making a representation?

Applicant

Representation

Q6 Reason for attending:

Representing the applicant

Q7 At what time of the day would you prefer the meetings to be held?

Daytime

Evening

No preference

Q8 Facilities

Were the facilities satisfactory?

Yes

No

Did you find the officers helpful/informative?

Did you have any difficulties in your travel arrangements to the offices?

Q9 Please add any comments below.

I deal with many licensing authorities daily, and I would like to say that the licensing officers have been very helpful in all aspects of the process. Thank you.

Licensing Sub-Committee Meetings Customer Satisfaction 2013

We are reviewing the 'Licensing Sub-Committee Meeting' arrangements and would like to know your views. Please assist us by filling in this questionnaire which will help us to improve our service.

Your Details

Q1 Name:

AYSEGUL OZKAN

Q2 Address:

WOODWARDS, HAZELTON, ESSEX

Q3 Telephone:

[REDACTED]

Q4 Email:

aishao@hotmail.co.uk

Q5 Are you the applicant or are you making a representation?

Applicant

Representation

Q6 Reason for attending:

PREMISES LICENCE

Q7 At what time of the day would you prefer the meetings to be held?

Daytime

Evening

Q8 Facilities

Were the facilities satisfactory?

Yes

No

Did you find the officers helpful/informative?

Did you have any difficulties in your travel arrangements to the offices?

Q9 Please add any comments below.

Licensing Sub-Committee Meetings Customer Satisfaction 2013

We are reviewing the 'Licensing Sub-Committee Meeting' arrangements and would like to know your views. Please assist us by filling in this questionnaire which will help us to improve our service.

Your Details

Q1 Name:

MR. HELEN KANE

Q2 Address:

FARM HILL ROAD

Q3 Telephone:

~~XXXXXXXXXX~~

Q4 Email:

helen@samkane.co.uk

Q5 Are you the applicant or are you making a representation?

Applicant

Representation

Q6 Reason for attending:

OBJECTOR AS I LIVE NEARBY AND LOCAL COUNCILLOR ADDRESSING LOCAL CONCERNS

Q7 At what time of the day would you prefer the meetings to be held?

Daytime

Evening

Q8 Facilities

Were the facilities satisfactory?

Yes

No

Did you find the officers helpful/informative?

Did you have any difficulties in your travel arrangements to the offices?

Q9 Please add any comments below.

THE LEGAL ADVISOR WAS VERY HELPFUL / THE WHOLE PROCEN IS LONG-WINDED BUT IS PERFORMED IN A PROFENIONAL WAY



Licensing Sub-Committee Meetings Customer Satisfaction 2013

We are reviewing the 'Licensing Sub-Committee Meeting' arrangements and would like to know your views. Please assist us by filling in this questionnaire which will help us to improve our service.

Your Details

Q1 Name:

MR PETER JONES

Q2 Address:

% ESSEX POLICE, EPPING POLICE STN. CM16 4AP

Q3 Telephone:

~~XXXXXXXXXX~~

Q4 Email:

peter.jones@essex.pnn.police.uk.

Q5 Are you the applicant or are you making a representation?

Applicant

Representation

Q6 Reason for attending:

On and for Essex Police to detail representation.



Q7 At what time of the day would you prefer the meetings to be held?

Daytime

Evening

Q8 Facilities

Were the facilities satisfactory?

Yes

No

Did you find the officers helpful/informative?

Did you have any difficulties in your travel arrangements to the offices?

Q9 Please add any comments below.

During adjournments access to a hot drinks machine & snack machine would be useful, especially after a lengthy meeting.

From: Kim Tuckey
Sent: 29 October 2013 08:45
To: Alison Mitchell
Subject: FW: Licensing meetings

For info
From: Peter Spencer
Sent: 28 October 2013 15:09
To: Kim Tuckey
Subject: Licensing meetings

I understood that some working members wanted evening meetings so that they could attend. I believe that not all of them volunteered to join the committee and not all of the rest have been able to attend anyway.

Many more meetings have been needed as only one application is now being heard at each meeting so the members of the committee usually comprise those who are free during the day.

Also not all members of the public and members are aware that Highways and Law and Order matters cannot always be taken into account.

Evening meetings do not always attract members of the public anyway.

So the extra work needed by members and officers appears to be unnecessary.

Yours sincerely

Cllr Peter Spencer
Buckhurst Hill East

From: Kim Tuckey
Sent: 29 October 2013 08:48
To: Alison Mitchell
Subject: FW: Requested trial evening feedback

From: james hart Sent: 26 October 2013 19:46
To: Kim Tuckey
Subject: Requested trial evening feedback

Kim

Regarding your request for feedback I don't think I can contribute much other than the fact that I think six months is far too short a period to assess the success of the new arrangements.

During this trial period only one application that I was interested in came up. This application regarded the Nu-Bar and the new consultation arrangements were not properly followed so it is difficult to assess the success of the new arrangements.

James

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Report to Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date of meeting: 26 November 2013



Portfolio: Leader (Councillor C. Whitbread)

Subject: Corporate Plan Key Objectives 2013/14 – Quarter 2 Progress

Responsible Officer: S. Tautz (01992 564180)

Democratic Services Officer: A. Hendry (01992 564246)

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

That the Committee review progress in relation to the achievement of the key objectives for 2012/13, for the first six months of the year.

Executive Summary:

1. The Corporate Plan is the Council's key strategic planning document, setting out service delivery priorities over the four-year period from 2011/12 to 2014/15, with strategic themes reflecting those of the Community Strategy for the district. Updates to the Corporate Plan are published annually, to reflect the key objectives for each year of the plan period and progress against the achievement of objectives for previous years.
2. The annual identification of key objectives provides an opportunity for the Council to focus specific attention on how areas for improvement will be addressed, opportunities exploited and better outcomes delivered over the coming year. The key objectives are intended to provide a clear statement of the Council's overall intentions for each year, containing specific actions and desired outcomes.
3. A range of key objectives for 2013/14 was adopted by the Cabinet in March 2013. Progress in relation to the achievement of the key objectives is reviewed by the Cabinet and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on a quarterly and outturn basis.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

4. It is important that relevant performance management processes are in place to review and monitor progress against the key objectives, to ensure their continued achievability and relevance, and to identify proposals for appropriate corrective action in areas of slippage or under performance. This report presents progress against the key objectives for 2013/14, for the first half of the year.

Other Options for Action:

5. No other options are appropriate in this respect. Failure to monitor and review performance against the key objectives and to consider corrective action where necessary, could have negative implications for the Council's reputation and judgements made about its progress, and might mean that opportunities for improvement were lost. The Council has previously agreed arrangements for monitoring performance against the key objectives.

Report:

6. The Corporate Plan for 2011/12 to 2014/15 translates the vision for the district set out by the Community Strategy, into the Council's strategic direction, priorities and the most important outcomes that it wants to achieve. The Corporate Plan helps to prioritise resources to provide quality services and value for money.
7. The key objectives adopted for each year of the Corporate Plan are not intended to reflect everything that the Council does, but instead focus on national priorities set by the Government and local challenges arising from the social, economic and environmental context of the district. The key objectives represent the Council's high-level initiatives and over-arching goals for each year.
8. Progress against the key objectives was an area of focus in former corporate inspection processes, in order to assess the Council's progress in improving the services that it delivered, and to identify and reflect plans to secure improvement. Whilst such external assessment processes have generally been abolished, it remains important to ensure that appropriate performance management processes are in place to review and monitor progress against the key objectives, and to take appropriate corrective action where necessary in areas of slippage or behind-target performance.
9. The key objectives for 2013/14 were adopted by the Cabinet at its meeting on 11 March 2013. The delivery of the Key Objectives is supported by a range of individual actions, with target dates spread throughout the year (and beyond in some instances). Some of the actions can only be achieved incrementally or are dependent upon the completion of other actions, and the action plan is intended to be fluid to reflect changes in priorities, and can therefore be subject to some revision during the year.
10. Progress against the key objectives is reviewed and monitored on a quarterly basis, in order to ensure the timely identification and implementation of appropriate corrective action where necessary. Performance for the first quarter of the year was considered by the Committee at its meeting on 3 September 2013.
11. At the end of the second quarter of the year, 18.5% of the individual actions supporting the Key Objectives for 2013/14 had been achieved. A schedule detailing six-month progress against individual actions designed to secure the achievement of each of the key objectives (at 30 September 2013), is attached as Appendix 1 to this report.
12. In reporting progress against the objectives, the following 'status' indicators have been applied to the current position for each individual action:

Achieved (Green) - specific actions have been completed or in-year targets achieved;
On-Track (Green) - it is anticipated that specific actions will be completed in accordance with in-year targets;
Under Control (Amber) - specific actions have not been completed or achieved in accordance with in-year targets, although completion/achievement is likely to be secured by a revised target date or by year-end;
Behind Schedule (Amber) - specific actions have not been commenced or achieved in accordance with quarterly or other in-year targets;
Not Achieved (Red) - specific actions have not been completed or achieved in accordance with in-year targets; and
Pending (Grey) - specific actions have not yet been commenced, as they rely on the prior completion of other actions.
13. The Committee is requested to review current progress against the key objectives for 2013/14. This report will also be considered by the Cabinet at its meeting on 2 December 2013, and any comments or concerns raised by the Committee will be reported to the Cabinet meeting.

Resource Implications:

Resource requirements for actions to achieve specific key objectives for 2013/14 will have been identified by the responsible service director/chief officer and reflected in the budget for the year.

Legal and Governance Implications:

There are no legal or governance implications arising from the recommendations of this report. Relevant implications arising from actions to achieve specific key objectives for 2013/14 will have been identified by the responsible service director/chief officer.

Safer, Cleaner, Greener Implications:

There are no implications arising from the recommendations of this report in respect of the Council's commitment to the Climate Local Agreement, the corporate Safer, Cleaner, Greener initiative, or any crime and disorder issues within the district. Relevant implications arising from actions to achieve specific key objectives for 2013/14 will have been identified by the responsible service director/chief officer.

Consultation Undertaken:

Progress against actions to achieve specific key objectives for 2013/14 as set out in this report, has been submitted by each responsible service director/chief officer direct to the 'Ten' performance management system. Current progress in respect of each of the key objectives for 2013/14 has been reviewed by Management Board (30 October 2013) and will be considered by the Cabinet at its next meeting (2 December 2013).

Background Papers:

Six-monthly progress submissions for the key objectives for 2013/14 and relevant supporting documentation held by responsible service directors/chief officers.

Impact Assessments:***Risk Management***

There are no risk management issues arising from the recommendations of this report. Relevant issues arising from actions to achieve specific key objectives for 2013/14 will have been identified by the responsible service director/chief officer.

Equality:

Any equality implications arising from this report are set out in the Due Regard Record attached as an appendix to this report.

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Due Regard Record

SUBJECT: CORPORATE PLAN KEY OBJECTIVES 2013/14 – QUARTER 2 PROGRESS

REPORT TO: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (26 NOVEMBER 2013)

Date/Officer	Summary of equality analysis
<p>1 November 2013</p> <p>S. Tautz</p>	<p>No equality analysis necessary. There are no equality implications arising from the specific recommendations of this report.</p> <p>Relevant implications arising from individual actions to achieve key objectives for 2013/14, will have been identified and considered by the responsible service director/chief officer when the objective and associated actions were initially developed.</p>

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KEY OBJECTIVES 2013/14 – QUARTER 2 PROGRESS REPORT

Proactively promote the policies and reputation of the Council internally and externally

Action	Target Date/Status/Officer	Progress
(a) - Development of high-level internal and external communications calendar	30 June 2013	(Q1 2013/14) Proposed review of the key decision list in Leadership Team through which Directors can provide further updates on major corporate projects over a 12 month rolling period. Internal Communications plan drafted for Leadership Team.
	Behind Schedule	(Q2 2013/14) Twelve-month rolling External Corporate Communications Calendar produced for Chief Executive approval and on-going Management Board update.
	Deputy Chief Executive	
(b) - Development of a target list of media partners	30 June 2013	(Q1 2013/14) Weekly press cutting service with periodic summary reviews produced for Leadership Team by Public Relations. Resource implications for 'Contact Us' email responses. Further review into potential electronic monitoring alternatives following upgrade of Newsflash Media Management application September 2013.
	Not Achieved	(Q2 2013/14) Weekly media cutting service maintained. Newsflash application upgraded, but implementation delayed due to accessibility issues. Further discussion arranged with developer to resolve difficulties.
	Deputy Chief Executive	
(c) - Development of a Social Networking Strategy and increased use of social media	30 June 2013	(Q1 2013/14) Draft Strategy produced for consultation pending referral to Website Development Board and Leadership Team for adoption.
	Behind Schedule	(Q2 2013/14) Social Networking Strategy approved by Website Development Board. Equality Impact Assessment undertaken in anticipation of presentation of Strategy to Management Board and Cabinet with identification of financial provision required for implementation.
	Deputy Chief Executive	

Engage with communities to put them at the centre of the Council's policy development and service design

Action	Target Date/Status/Officer	Progress
(a) - Publication of Engagement Charter	30 November 2013	(Q1 2013/14) Consultation Activity reported to Finance and Performance Management Scrutiny Panel at June 2013 meeting. Forward Plan of Engagement agreed.
	On Track	(Q2 2013/14) On-going/completed corporate and service area implementation, including Crime and Disorder, Employee, Healthworks (for Harlow Partnership), Careline, Trade Waste etc.
	Deputy Chief Executive	

(b) - Identification of key stakeholders	30 September 2013	(Q1 2013/14) Identification underway in liaison with Local Strategic Partnership (LSP).
	Achieved	(Q2 2013/14) Key Stakeholders identified in liaison with LSP. The stakeholder list will be used to invite delegates to the annual LSP Conference to be held in February 2014.
	Deputy Chief Executive	
(c) - Facilitation of new Tenant Scrutiny Panel	31 May 2013	(Q1 2013/14) The Tenant Scrutiny Panel has been established and tenant members have received training from an external specialist trainer, in partnership with Uttlesford DC (in order to share costs). The Scrutiny Panel has been meeting on a regular basis and has chosen to review the way the Housing Directorate handles complaints, as the subject of its first Annual Service Review. An informal get-together between all members of the Tenant Scrutiny Panel, Tenants and Leaseholders Federation and all Housing Managers is planned, in order to introduce everyone to each other and for tenant representatives to understand which Housing Manager is responsible for which functions.
	Achieved	
	Director of Housing	(Q2 2013/14) The informal get-together has taken place. The Scrutiny Panel continues to meet.

Review the strategic direction of the Council to ensure a clear and consistent set of priorities to facilitate decision-making in constrained times

Action	Target Date/Status/Officer	Progress
(a) - Determination of the council's Housing Strategy for 2013-16	31 December 2013	<p>(Q1 2013/14) It was originally planned to produce a new Housing Strategy in 2013. However, for a number of reasons, following consultation with the Chairman of the Housing Scrutiny Panel, the Housing Portfolio has decided, in principle, that the production of the new Housing Strategy should be deferred until such time as the Local Plan Preferred Options has been published for consultation for a further year. The main reasons are that the Council's strategic direction for the Local Plan (i.e. nos. of new homes, locations and affordable housing requirements) is still under consideration, and the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) (including the supplementary report on older people's housing) has not been finalised - both of which are important foundations on which the Housing Strategy needs to be based. In the meantime, an interim Housing Strategy Key Action Plan has been formulated for the forthcoming year, which the Housing Portfolio Holder will be asked to formally approve later in July 2013, at the same time as formally confirming the proposed deferral of the production of the Housing Strategy. All members are being advised of this approach, through the Council Bulletin.</p> <p>(Q2 2013/14) The Housing Portfolio Holder has formally agreed to the deferral of formulating a new Housing Strategy until the Preferred Options Stage of the Local Plan has been completed. He has also formally approved a new Housing Strategy Key Action Plan for 2013/14. The Housing Scrutiny Panel will consider the 12-Month Progress Report on the previous Key Action Plan (2012/13) at its meeting on 22 October 2013.</p>
	On Track	
	Director of Housing	
(b) - Development of council's Economic Development Strategy	30 November 2013	<p>(Q1 2013/14) A consultant has been assisting in this task.</p>
	Behind Schedule	<p>(Q2 2013/14) Ideally, relevant information from the 2011 census should be considered as part of the development of the Economic Development Strategy, which is due for release in early 2014. A full report on progress with the Strategy will be made to the Cabinet in the third quarter of the year.</p>
	Director of Planning & Economic Development	

(c) - Development of the council's Waste Strategy	30 September 2013	(Q1 2013/14) Incorporated within the procurement of the waste services contract. The specification of the final contract will not be fully specified until after later stages of competitive dialogue. It may become necessary to extend the deadline beyond September.
	Not Achieved	(Q2 2013/14) Although the procurement of the waste contract remains on schedule, until such time as specifications are refined through the latter stages of the process, reviewing the existing strategy will not be possible. The status of the strategy review can be reconsidered early in 2014 (i.e. in the Q3 update) when the second stage of competitive dialogue will have been completed and Members will have considered in detail the service changes being offered and the merits of increased performance versus the associated costs. Consideration should perhaps be given to extending the original target to enable the strategy and procurement process to be aligned.
	Director of Environment & Street Scene	
(d) - Development of the council's Leisure Strategy	30 November 2013	(Q1 2013/14) Portfolio Holder decision to establish Portfolio Holder Advisory Group (Culture and Wellbeing) prepared. Initial research into leisure needs (including building the evidence base of the local plan) is underway. Date for initial scoping meeting of Officer Working Group has been set. Indicative timetable for the leisure management procurement process identified.
	Behind Schedule	(Q2 2013/14) The Portfolio Holder Advisory Group has yet to meet, but a scoping exercise is underway through the Officer Working Group lead by the Deputy Chief Executive.
	Deputy Chief Executive/ Director of Environment & Street Scene	
(e) - Development of the council's Operational Property Strategy	31 December 2013	(Q1 2013/14) The Operational Property Strategy comprises a number of facets on which work has commenced. Smarter Working - This element of the strategy is intrinsically linked to the ICT Strategy and changes to corporate policy/culture which should help in reducing the space requirement at the Civic Offices. The detail of how much space can be vacated will not be known until the smarter working strategy has been formulated. A small group of three Assistant Directors is scoping the methodology for achieving this including gathering evidence from other authorities that have undergone a similar transformation. HR has reviewed the Homeworking Policy that will be submitted to Management Board for discussion shortly.
	Behind Schedule	(Q2 2013/14) It is intended that the Council's direction of travel and action plan will be drafted for December 2013 with the intention to adopt the Strategy and action plan by April 2014. New telephony and broadband access will be put in place. The development of key sites will have an impact on the strategy in relation to depot requirements and future provision. The Waste Management contract is currently in procurement through competitive dialogue, but outcome in terms of future depot provision for the service is not yet known.
	Director of Corporate Support Services	
(f) - Determination of the council's approach to the 'Green Deal' initiative	30 June 2013	(Q1 2013/14) In April 2013 the Council agreed to provide information and advice on the Green Deal to local residents and has provided some information on its website.
	Achieved	(Q2 2013/14) Take up of the Green Deal has been slow. However, increasing costs of energy emphasises the importance of acting to reduce or lower energy costs.
	Director of Planning & Economic Development	

Deliver a robust and resilient Local Plan that facilitates appropriate growth, whilst protecting the special character of the district

Action	Target Date/Status/Officer	Progress
(a) - Adoption of Community & Engagement Strategy for Local Plan	1 April 2013	(Q1 2013/14) Engagement strategy agreed by Cabinet on 23 April 2013.
	Achieved	(Q2 2013/14) Action achieved, no update required.
	Director of Planning & Economic Development	
(b) - Publication of Local Plan Preferred Options Consultation	Autumn 2013	(Q1 2013/14) New timetable being considered by Cabinet on 22 July 2013.
	Not Achieved	(Q2 2013/14) New timetable approved by Cabinet on 29 July 2013. Further information has come to light as the timetable was prepared, which will be revised accordingly. New target date for completion 30 June 2014.
	Director of Planning & Economic Development	
(c) - Publication of Local Plan	Autumn 2014	(Q1 2013/14) New timetable being considered at Cabinet on 22 July 2013.
	Behind Schedule	(Q2 2013/14) New timetable approved at Cabinet on 29 July 2013. Further information has come to light as the timetable was prepared, which will be revised accordingly. New target date for completion 30 June 2016.
	Director of Planning & Economic Development	
(d) - Compliance with duty to co-operate	No target date set	(Q1 2013/14) This is a significant and ongoing effort.
	On Track	(Q2 2013/14) The Council has many neighbouring authorities with whom it has to co-operate. Inaugural and ongoing output focused meetings have been held or are to be held with them all.
	Director of Planning & Economic Development	

Promote internal cultural change to break down silo working and implement new flexible ways of working

Action	Target Date/Status/Officer	Progress
(a) - Develop overarching Organisational Development Plan	30 June 2013	(Q1 2013/14) Re-programmed for completion in fourth quarter, original target date considered too ambitious.
	Not Achieved	(Q2 2013/14) Scoping meeting held with organisational development specialist from Southend Council. Workshop planned for next Leadership Team meeting (4 December 2013).
	Chief Executive	

(b) - Review senior management structure	31 December 2013	(Q1 2013/14) Draft structure discussed with directors, assistant directors, Cabinet, Appointments Panel and unions. Formal consultation to start in August with a paper scheduled for September Council.
	On Track	(Q2 2013/14) Consultation exercise completed and market testing of comparator salaries undertaken. Request of Directorate Restructuring Panel to consider alternative structures completed. Report to Council scheduled for December 2013 meeting.
	Chief Executive	
(c) - Adoption of new organisational values and behaviours	This is the high-level action for key Operating Models action (c) See progress against the specific next level actions(c) (i) and (c) (ii)	
(c) - (i) Undertake staff attitude survey	30 June 2013	(Q1 2013/14) Survey completed
	Achieved	(Q2 2013/14) Analysis of the survey has been added to the Management Board work programme with individual reports on Christmas Closures (post 2013) and flexitime scheduled for consideration during the current calendar year.
	Director of Corporate Support Services	
(d) - (ii) Publication of organisational values and behaviours and incorporation into working practices	30 June 2013	(Q1 2013/14) Values drafted and agreed. Soft launch in July staff briefing. (Performance & Development review (PDR) process redesigned to cover values. Communications working on follow up poster/publications.
	Behind Schedule	(Q2 2013/14) Pilot PDR process for Directors and Assistant Directors to be launched with effect from 1 April 2014. First draft of posters/publications reviewed, full launch to coincide with implementation of new senior management structure in April 2014.
	Chief Executive	
(d) - Development of a more commercial approach to service delivery	This is the high-level action for key Operating Models action (d) See progress against the specific next level actions(d) (i) and (d) (ii)	
(d) - (i) Adoption of customer centric approach to service delivery	No target date set	(Q1 2013/14) Approach to service delivery to be reviewed in the fourth quarter of the year, once values and behaviours are embedded.
	On Track	
	Chief Executive	(Q2 2013/14) Pilot processes/services to be identified for review during the fourth quarter of the year.
(d) - (ii) Generation of increased revenue for traded services	No target date set	(Q1 2013/14) To be reviewed in fourth quarter.
	On Track	(Q2 2013/14) Parking charges currently being reviewed, alongside other fees and charges, as part of the preparation of the budget for 2014/15. Separate review looking at revenue opportunities at North Weald Airfield is underway.
	Chief Executive	

(e) - Consider feasibility of a one-stop-shop at the Broadway, Loughton	30 June 2013	(Q1 2013/14) Following informal discussions with the Cabinet, it has been agreed to hold consideration of the feasibility of providing a One Stop Shop at The Broadway in abeyance, until after the Senior Management Restructure has been implemented and the Council's future approach to customer contact has been determined.
	Pending	
	Director of Housing	(Q2 2013/14) No further action required at this stage.
(f) - Provision of a more effective and efficient corporate out-of-hours emergency reporting service	31 March 2014	(Q1 2013/14) Management Board has approved a draft report for consultation with the Staff Side and individual members of staff affected, proposing that the Council contracts with Mears Ltd from April 2014, as part of the existing Repairs Management Contract, to provide an Out of Hours Call Handling Service for all emergency calls to the Council received out of hours (housing and non-housing), together with a service enhancement for Council tenants enabling them to report and make appointments for all repairs out of hours. The cost of the proposed service would be around £35,000 per annum, representing an ongoing saving of round £70,000 per annum on the current cost of the in-house service. The Cabinet will be considering the proposal, following the staff consultation exercise, in September 2013.
	On Track	
	Director of Housing/ Director of Corporate Support Services	(Q2 2013/14) The Cabinet agreed the proposal at its meeting on 21 October 2013 and adopted an on-site security option to mitigate the effects of no longer having Standby Officers based at the Civic Offices during evenings and at weekends.
(g) - Introduction of a new Housing Allocations Scheme	1 September 2013	(Q1 2013/14) The Cabinet approved a completely new Housing Allocations Scheme in April 2013, effective from 1 September 2013. There is a significant amount of work being undertaken to implement the new Scheme, which is expected to remove around 3,500 applicants from the Housing Register and will require all remaining and new applicants to be re-assessed under the provisions of the new Scheme.
	Achieved	
	Director of Housing	(Q2 2013/14) The new Allocations Scheme was successfully introduced from 1st September 2013. The no. of applicants re-registered on the Housing Register as at 1st October 2013 was 1,436, although new registrations continue to be received.

(h) - Exploration of appropriate options for smarter working and changes to corporate policy and culture	31 March 2014	(Q1 2013/14) A draft ICT Strategy has been considered by the Leadership Team and this will be presented to the Finance & Performance Management Scrutiny Panel in September for initial Member consideration. This strategy does include elements around smarter working and cultural change but these themes will need to be developed and taken forward in other specific pieces of work on transformation.
	Under Control	(Q2 2013/14) The draft ICT Strategy has been considered by the Scrutiny Panel and is going to Cabinet in October for Member approval. The strategy includes elements around smarter working and cultural change but these themes will need to be developed and taken forward in other specific pieces of work on transformation. Work to change corporate culture has centred on the development and implementation of the Values and Behaviours referred to above. Initial cross-directorate meetings and soft market research indicate that policy changes which may involve greater home working (e.g. reduced desk –per–head ratio and better use of technology) require a specific transformation programme, external expertise and a clear business case. The Chief Executive is considering how best to progress this.
	Director of Corporate Support Services/Director of Finance & ICT	
(i) - Assessment of grounds maintenance service in conjunction with new waste management contract	30 September 2013	(Q1 2013/14) Decision made to consider the future of the grounds service after the first stage of competitive dialogue and the receipt of initial tenders. Cabinet to consider in October 2013.
	Behind Schedule	(Q2 2013/14) Recommendation to Cabinet on 21 October 2013 that Grounds maintenance be retained in-house and excluded from the remainder of the waste contract procurement process. Decision of Cabinet to be reported and reflected within the Q3 update.
	Director of Environment & Street Scene	
Update of Local Land and Property Gazetteer and review of mapping service structure	This is the high-level action for key Operating Models action (j) See progress against the specific next level actions(j) (i) and (j) (ii)	
(j) - (i) Achievement of the 'Silver' service grade for the Local Land and Property Gazetteer	30 April 2013	(Q1 2013/14) Good progress being made but now a risk of progress being stalled through difficulties with data protection requirements. This is preventing the temporary employment of support from Broxbourne Borough Council to deal with errors in the existing gazetteer database.
	Not Achieved	(Q2 2013/14) Further delays arose through a continuation of the issues set out in the Q1 report above, as well as the need to appoint additional staff in support of the existing LLPG Officer. The support officer from Broxbourne is now in place and progress is being made and consideration is also being given to what other resources could be applied to move the project forward at a greater pace. Greater emphasis is currently being given in ensuring the robustness of the core Gazetteer system than the status of the system with GeoPlace (the national Gazetteer custodians). It is essential that the underpinning Gazetteer data is wholly accurate, since otherwise all forthcoming required data integrations, such as for the new waste contract, may be compromised. Success in achieving this core data upgrading will in time guarantee achievement of the highest level of GeoPlace grades.
	Director of Environment & Street Scene	

(j) - (ii) Completion of the Gazetteer structure considerations	Red	30 September 2013	(Q1 2013/14) Cross functional team considering where a corporate function would best fit.
		Not Achieved	(Q2 2013/14) Delays in establishing the mechanisms for updating the Gazetteer have resulted in the completion of this part of the Project Team's work also being delayed. The work of the Project Team continues and its recommendations will be fed into the Chief Executive's final proposals for the forthcoming senior management restructure.
		Director of Environment & Street Scene	
(k) - Review of future provision of Careline Service	Green	31 March 2014	(Q1 2013/14) Although Essex County Council recommended that a new county-wide telecare contract should be procured from April 2014, it is understood that, following representation from a number of Essex providers, including this Council, Essex CC officers and members are currently considering the most appropriate way forward, having regard to the views expressed by existing providers.
		On Track	(Q2 2013/14) No further information has been received from Essex County Council about its intentions although the County Council is currently undertake a major senior management restructure which may be delaying its consideration.
		Director of Housing	

Deliver key priorities within budget

Action	Target Date/Status/Officer	Progress
Page 88 (a) - Development of revised key indicator set based on key strategies	31 March 2014	(Q1 2013/14) Revised Key Performance Indicator set adopted for 2013/14. Progress reviewed by Management Board and the Finance and Performance Management Scrutiny Panel on a quarterly basis.
	Achieved	
	Chief Executive	(Q2 2013/14) Action achieved, no update required.
(b) - Delivery of all key outcomes	31 March 2014	(Q1 2013/14) On track to date.
	On Track	(Q2 2013/14) At the end of the second quarter (30 June to 30 September 2013) of the year, 18.5% of the individual actions supporting the Key Objectives for 2013/14 had been achieved. For the same period, 74.3% of the adopted Key Performance Indicators achieved target performance.
	Chief Executive	
(c) - Consumption of resources within budget	31 March 2014	(Q1 2013/14) There is concern about the levels of income from Development Control and building Control as these are significantly below their estimated levels at the end of the first quarter. However, overall it is still anticipated that the capital and revenue outturns will be contained within budget.
	On Track	(Q2 2013/14) Concern remains about the levels of some of the Council's key income streams as some are significantly below their estimated levels. However, overall it is still anticipated that the capital and revenue outturns will be contained within budget.
	Director of Finance and ICT	

(d) - Setting of a consistently low district council tax	31 March 2014	(Q1 2013/14) The Spending Review announced that further grants will be available for Councils choosing to freeze their Council Tax for both 2014/15 and 2015/16. It is anticipated that Members will want to accept this offer and so Council Tax will continue to be frozen.
	On Track	(Q2 2013/14) A member query has arisen on the relative merits of continuing to accept the Freeze Grant or increasing the Council Tax. In response to this a report has been written for consideration at the November 2013 meetings of the Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee and Scrutiny Panel.
	Director of Finance & ICT	

Prepare for changes arising from the transfer of public health responsibilities

Action	Target Date/Status/Officer	Progress
Page 84 - Development of a District Public Health Strategy	30 September 2013	(Q1 2013/14) The local priorities for Health and Wellbeing have been established. A draft joint strategy for West Essex has been prepared in conjunction with Harlow and Uttlesford district councils, the West Essex Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and the County Council Public Health Locality Manager. There has been a delay due to the CCG not having yet established a 5-year plan and the first meeting of the West Essex Wellbeing Board being delayed due to the local government elections. Now due to meet 24 July.
	Achieved	(Q2 2013/14) It has become clear that the Council does not need the type of Public Health Strategy that was originally envisaged. A public health strategy has been developed, entitled 'The Epping Forest Health & Wellbeing Strategy' and is itself an offshoot of the Strategy for 'West Essex Health & Wellbeing' which is part of the suite of strategies overseen by the Local Strategic Partnership. Whilst it has been suggested that the Epping Forest Health & Wellbeing Strategy should reference in a little more detail the importance of core environmental health responsibilities and actions, and also those relating to housing, there is no clear need for a dedicated Epping Forest Public Health Strategy document to be developed.
	Director of Environment & Street Scene	

Maximise potential of the Council's key development sites

Action	Target Date/Status/Officer	Progress
(a) - Development of plans for development of T11 site at Langston Road, Loughton	This is the high-level action for key Strategic Sites action (a). See progress against the specific next level actions(a) (i), a (ii) and (a) (iii)	
(a) - (i) Completion of a development agreement with the owner of the T11 site	31 December 2013	(Q1 2013/14) Meetings with the owners of the T11 site are taking place. Timing is linked to the outcome of the waste contract procurement process and expected vacation of the site.
	Under Control	(Q2 2013/14) A confidential report on the progress of the development agreement and the outcome of other linked the negotiations is scheduled for the 2 December 2013 meeting of the Cabinet.
	Director of Corporate Support Services	
(a) - (ii) Facilitation of a detailed planning application for the T11 site	31 December 2013	(Q1 2013/14) Meetings with the owners of the T11 site are taking place. Timing is linked to the outcome of the waste contract procurement process and expected vacation of the site.
	Under Control	(Q2 2013/14) A report agreeing the Council's contribution to the cost of the application has been agreed by Council. The timing of the application is linked to the negotiations referred to above and is being made on behalf of the owners of the T11 site.
	Director of Corporate Support Services	
(a) - (iii) Commencement of development at the T11 site	31 March 2015	(Q1 2013/14) The procurement of the new waste management contract provides for the contractor to be able to remain at Langston Road, or an alternative site, for at least a year.
	Under Control	(Q2 2013/14) There remain too many variables to give an exact date for the commencement of development of the site, including when the refuse contractor (once selected), can vacate the site.
	Director of Corporate Support Services	
(b) - Development of plans for the council's site at North Weald, including disposal if appropriate	This is the high-level action for key Strategic Sites action (b). See progress against the specific next level actions (b) (i) and (b) (ii)	
(b) - (i) Consideration of a report reviewing the future of North Weald Airfield	30 June 2013	(Q1 2013/14) Report completed and to be presented to Cabinet on 22 July 2013.
	Achieved	(Q2 2013/14) The report was considered by Cabinet on 22 July 2013, when it was agreed that the mixed use option (Option 3 within the Deloitte report) be taken forward into the local plan 'Preferred Options' consultation.
	Director of Environment & Street Scene	

(b) - (ii) Incorporation of recommendations for North Weald Airfield into development of Local Plan	Autumn 2013	(Q1 2013/14) Outcome of Cabinet on 22 July 2013 will be incorporated within the 'Preferred Options' consultation phase of the Local Plan, scheduled for 2014.
	On Track	(Q2 2013/14) Following the decision of the Cabinet in July 2013, the appointment of consultants to masterplan suitable development of some land at North Weald Airfield (whilst retaining aviation) is underway.
	Director of Environment & Street Scene/ Director of Planning & Economic Development	
(c) - Development of plans for the disposal of all or part of the St. Johns Road site	This is the high-level action for the Key Strategic Sites action (c). See progress against the specific next level actions (c) (i) and (c) (ii)	
(c) - (i) Jointly market the St Johns Road site for sale in part or as a whole	30 June 2013	(Q1 2013/14) Joint marketing with Essex County Council and Epping Town Council is underway with a topographical survey on 15 July 2013 and viewing days on 22 and 24 July 2013.
	Achieved	(Q2 2013/14) A successful Expressions of Interest exercise has been completed and a presentation of the results has been made to Epping Town Council and EFDC members. It is intended to formally report the outcome to the Cabinet in early 2014 and to assist the Town Council as required.
	Director of Corporate Support Services	
(c) - (ii) Relocation of the Housing Repairs Depot	31 March 2014	(Q1 2013/14) A schedule of the Council's requirements for a new base for the Housing Repairs Service has been assessed and formulated - which has established that a minimum floor area of 1,045 SqM of internal space, plus a further minimum floor area of 1,000 SqM. of external space, would be required. The Council's requirements have been circulated to commercial agents to identify suitable premises.
	Under Control	(Q2 2013/14) No relocation site identified yet - awaiting clarification of overall depot requirements in the Waste etc. contract. No risk of impact on operations yet.
	Director of Housing	
(d) - Disposal of the council's nursery site at Pyrles Lane, Loughton	This is the high-level action for Key Strategic Sites action (d). See progress against the specific next level actions (d) (i) and (d) (ii)	
(d) - (i) Determination of a planning application for the nursery site at Pyrles Lane	30 June 2013	(Q1 2013/14) Planning application refused.
	Achieved	(Q2 2013/14) Action achieved. See Action (d) (ii) below.
	Director of Planning & Economic Development	

(d) - (ii) Relocation of the Nursery Service from the Pyrles Lane site	31 December 2014	(Q1 2013/14) Future of nursery service awaits clarification of depot requirements within the Waste Management etc. contract. Highly likely that glass houses will not be required.
	On Track	(Q2 2013/14) The Council is in the process of acquiring a neighbouring property with a view to addressing the concerns of the Area Plans Sub-Committee as part of a revised planning application.
	Director of Corporate Support Services	
(e) - Deliver Regeneration Action Plan for council land at The Broadway, Loughton	30 September 2014	(Q1 2013/14) The Broadway Regeneration Action Plan, which relates to the land under the control of the Council, was adopted by the Cabinet in 2012. Before the development of the land can be progressed: (a) the Parish of Loughton needs to decide whether it wishes to provide a new church and community hall on EFDC-owned land in The Broadway, enabling replacement housing to be provided elsewhere on the Church's land. This involves discussions with the Methodist Church. The Director of Housing has written to the Bishop of Barking (CofE) seeking a meeting with to discuss the Church's aspirations and intentions, in order to move forward; and (b) the outcome of the proposed re-development of the Sir Winston Churchill PH site by a private developer, which may or may not include some of the Council's land, needs to be determined. Once the way forward is clearer, the Council's Preferred Housing Association Partners will be invited to submit proposals for the development of the Council's remaining land for affordable housing. With regard to sites not under the Council's control, the proposed developer of the Sir Winston Churchill site is in discussions with the Council about a proposed development scheme. Following initial discussions with Transport for London about its development proposals around Debden Station, no further contact has been received. Negotiations with the developer are progressing well and it is hoped that Heads of Term will be agreed shortly to enable a report to be submitted to the Cabinet in September. Once approved the developer will submit a planning application and the development agreement will be finalised.
	Under Control	
	Director of Housing	(Q2 2013/14) The Bishop of Barking's development consultant has advised that the Anglican and Methodist Churches wish to work together on a vision for church provision in Loughton, which may include some church and community provision at The Broadway. A meeting with the development consultant has been arranged to discuss further. A planning application has been submitted by the developer in respect of the Sir Winston Churchill site and a confidential report relating to the Torrington Drive/Sainsbury's site is due to be considered by the Cabinet on 2 December 2013.
(f) - Development of depot provision at Oakwood Hill, Loughton	This is the high-level action for key Strategic Sites action (f). See progress against the specific next level actions (f) (i), (f) (ii) and (f) (iii)	
(f) - (i) Facilitation of a detailed planning application for Oakwood Hill, Loughton	30 June 2013	(Q1 2013/14) An additional geotechnical survey has been completed and a resubmission of the planning application is being prepared for August.
	Not Achieved	(Q2 2013/14) Following further work with interested parties and subject to consultation with the Director of Planning and Economic Development, a resubmission of the planning application is now scheduled for November 2013.
	Director of Corporate Support Services	

(f) - (ii) Procurement of the detailed design and development of Oakwood Hill, Loughton	31 December 2013	(Q1 2013/14) See Action (f) (i) above. No additional progress to report.
	Behind Schedule	(Q2 2013/14) Further progress with this action awaits the outcome of the revised planning application.
	Director of Corporate Support Services	
(f) - (iii) Commencement of development at Oakwood Hill, Loughton	31 March 2014	(Q1 2013/14) See Action (f) (i) above. No additional progress to report.
	Behind Schedule	(Q2 2013/14) See Action (f) (ii) above. No additional progress to report.
	Director of Corporate Support Services	
(g) - Commencement of the Council's new house building programme	31 March 2014	(Q1 2013/14) East Thames Group has been appointed as the Council's Development Agent for the Housebuilding Programme. A new Council Housebuilding Cabinet Committee has been formed. The Development and Financial Appraisals for the developments in the first year of the Housebuilding Programme, comprising 25 new rented homes on 3 sites in Waltham Abbey, were considered by the Council Housebuilding Cabinet Committee on 10th July 2013 and it was agreed that all three sites should be progressed to the planning application stage. The Cabinet Committee has agreed to utilise East Thames' EU-compliant Framework Agreements for the procurement of the works contractors, who will be selected through a competitive process from the Approved List.
	On Track	
	Director of Housing	(Q2 2013/14) A planning application for one of the proposed developments, at Harveyfields, Waltham Abbey, was submitted at the end of September 2013, and applications for the remainder are due to be submitted in October 2013. If planning permission is granted, it is envisaged that a start on site will take place before the end of the financial year.

Prepare and plan for the effects of welfare reforms in an effective and coordinated way

Action	Target Date/Status/Officer	Progress
(a) - Delivery of the council's Welfare Reform Mitigation Action Plan	31 December 2013	(Q1 2013/14) Following the formation of an (Officer) Welfare Reform Mitigation Project Team the Cabinet adopted a Welfare Reform Mitigation Action Plan in October 2012, which identified 59 separate actions. Progress is regularly monitored by both officers and, on a quarterly basis, the Housing Scrutiny Panel. Nearly two thirds of all the tasks have now either been achieved or nearly achieved, with most of the remaining third of all tasks either not yet being required or are no longer required. At the recent 3-Year re-accreditation assessment of the Housing Directorate's Customer Service Excellence Award, the external assessor awarded 'Compliance Plus' accreditation for the comprehensive and customer-focused approach taken by the Council to the Welfare Reforms Mitigation Project.
	On Track	
	Director of Housing	(Q2 2013/14) At 1 October 2013, 38 (65%) of the actions had been achieved. Only 3 tasks that are able to be undertaken now, have not yet been achieved. All remaining tasks cannot be undertaken until the Government makes decisions on the timing and procedures for the introduction of Universal Credit.
(b) - Implementation of an updated local scheme of support for council tax	31 December 2013	(Q1 2013/14) A report is going to the July Cabinet to start the consultation process for the 2014/15 scheme. Joint work on LSCT continues across Essex and there are no reasons at this time to suspect that the 2014/15 scheme will not be approved in time.
	On Track	
	Director of Finance & ICT	(Q2 2013/14) The consultation has now been completed and it is likely that the scheme for 2014/15 will be very similar to that for 2013/14. A report is being made to the Cabinet on 2 December 2013 to confirm the terms of 2014/15 scheme.
(c) - Retention of adequate resources to ensure the threat of fraud is effectively managed	31 December 2013	(Q1 2013/14) The Department for Work and Pensions has not yet provided any more information on their road map towards a Single Fraud Investigation Service or their timescale for achieving this objective. As part of the corporate restructure, one of the options being considered is the consolidation of fraud officers into the Internal Audit Unit. This could help in providing a consistent and co-ordinated approach to the threat of fraud.
	On Track	
	Director of Finance & ICT	(Q2 2013/14) The Department for Work and Pensions are moving towards a Single Fraud Investigation Service but have not set out the implications for individual local authorities and staff. As part of the corporate restructure, one of the options being considered is the consolidation of fraud officers into the Internal Audit Unit. This could help in providing a consistent and co-ordinated approach to the threat of fraud.

(d) - Retention of adequate resources to effectively operate council's benefit function	31 December 2013	(Q1 2013/14) & (Q2 2013/14) Further information is also still awaited from the DWP on a detailed implementation plan for Universal Credit and the future role of local authorities in the benefits system. To date staff retention has not been a problem and the performance on both changes of circumstance and new claims processing are better than the respective targets at the end of the second quarter.
	On Track	
	Director of Finance & ICT	
(e) - Publication of appropriate information in respect of welfare reforms and the implications	No target date set	(Q1 2013/14) & (Q2 2013/14) Benefits and Housing Services continue to work with partners and to provide information and assistance where appropriate. However, as set out above, there has been a lack of significant announcements on how welfare reform is to be taken forward.
	On Track	
	Director of Finance & ICT/Director of Housing	

Report of Overview and Scrutiny Review Task and Finish Panel



Date of meeting: 26 November 2013



Report of: Overview and Scrutiny Review Task and Finish Panel

Chairman: Councillor K Angold-Stephens

Officer contact for further information: I Willett (01992 564243)
Assistant to the Chief Executive

Committee Secretary: Adrian Hendry (01992 564246)
Democratic Services Officer

Recommendations:

- (1) That a report be submitted to the Council recommending that the proposals arising from this review of Overview and Scrutiny as set out in Appendix 1 be approved;**
- (2) That the amendments set out in Appendix 2 (Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules and “Call In” Protocol) be approved and recommended to the Council for adoption and publication in the Constitution;**
- (3) That this report be referred to the Audit and Governance Committee as previously requested.**

Report:

1. Introduction

- 1.1 We were appointed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 7 April 2012 to review Overview and Scrutiny arrangements within the Council with particular reference to working relationships with the Cabinet.
- 1.2 We were originally set a deadline of completing this review and making recommendations with a view to introducing the proposed changes by the beginning of the current Council year. In practice this did not prove to be possible in view of the discussion prompted by feedback from consultation.

2. Approach to the Review

- 2.1 We were provided with a comprehensive summary of all the statutory provisions relating to the Overview and Scrutiny (OS). If any members of the Council wish to review this information it can be found appended to the agenda for our meeting on 6 December 2012 (Agenda Item 5 – Appendix – Page 15). We were satisfied that the Council had met its statutory obligations and that the Council’s Constitution and, more particularly, the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules adequately reflect the statutory arrangements which apply.

- 2.2 Within the same Panel agenda, members will find further research which we commissioned as part of the review. This included:
- (a) a summary of outcomes from previous OS reviews;
 - (b) a digest of views received during consultation from Councillors and Officers about OS;
 - (c) examples from other Councils of good OS practice.
- 2.3 We reported to the Committee on 20 May 2013 with our provisional recommendations and the Committee made a number of comments and raised questions about some of our proposals. These included:
- (a) a query as to whether a call-in is still to be reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee even if it had been withdrawn by mutual consent;
 - (b) views regarding the proposal to allow only a lead “call-in” sponsor to speak to the call-in, thereby excluding other signatories;
 - (c) questions regarding our proposals for a new seating plan to deal with scrutiny of external organisations and call-in; and
 - (d) the question of whether the public should be asked to raise questions at OSC meetings or make presentations on matters of concern.
- 2.4 These concerns from the Committee had been addressed at our most recent meeting and we explain below that we have responded positively to the comments made.
- 2.5 The Audit and Governance Committee requested an opportunity to review our interim findings and also the process of the review itself, to seek assurance, from the point of view of good governance, that the review was robust. The Audit and Governance Committee received a report with the interim proposals at its meeting on 27 June 2013 and was happy with the process.
- 2.6 However, the Committee also asked for sight of the final proposals before these are submitted to the Council. With this in mind, we have asked for this report to be supplied to the Audit and Governance Committee at its next meeting.

3. Findings and Recommendations

- 3.1 Appendix 1 to this report shows our recommendations for changes to Overview and Scrutiny arrangements. A commentary is given below of our main findings in relation to a number of separate topic areas.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Chairman

- 3.2 At present, there are no specific rules concerning the appointment by the Council of an Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chairman. It is clear to us however that OS should not be a political process. We received representations as part of the consultation that the Chairman of OSC should automatically be a member of a minority party but feel that the only requirement should be that the Councillor appointed should have experience and understanding of OS in order to be qualified for the position. We also would like the Chairman of OSC to be able to attend the agenda planning group if he or she so wishes.

Cabinet/Overview and Scrutiny - Liaison

- 3.3 We feel that changes need to be made in order to facilitate closer working between the Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny. One of the roles of Overview and Scrutiny is to assist the Cabinet in the conduct of its responsibilities whilst at the same time holding the Cabinet to account for the decisions made. However, our view is that there has been too much reliance in the past on call-ins as a way of bringing the Cabinet to account and not enough emphasis on pre-scrutiny.
- 3.4 Pre-scrutiny would allow a discussion to take place between the Cabinet and the Leader of Council and OSC in order to look at the former's programme of work and decide how Overview and Scrutiny could assist in the delivery of that programme. OSC should also regularly monitor progress by the Cabinet in delivering its programme.
- 3.5 We think this can be best achieved by linking the Cabinet's forward plan with the work programme for OS. We are recommending that at the first OSC each year, the Leader of Council and his Cabinet colleagues should present their programme and answer questions. This would also give an opportunity for the Leader of Council to advise OSC of those matters which could be undertaken on the Cabinet's behalf. Likewise, with the benefit of the planning of the OS work programme, will allow OSC to indicate work to be undertaken which affects executive functions.
- 3.6 We would like to see more attendance by Portfolio Holders at Scrutiny Panel meetings as they can then answer questions and provide information which can assist the work of the Panel concerned.
- 3.7 We also propose that progress reports be given after 6 months to OS on the Cabinet forward plan for the year and the delivery of its priorities so that OS has a chance to comment on Executive activities without relying totally on "call-ins".
- 3.8 We have also looked at the process by which the Overview and Scrutiny Committee reviews the Cabinet agenda at each meeting and we think there is scope of improving the arrangements.
- 3.9 The interval between the despatch of the Cabinet agenda and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting is currently very short and we feel that this may not give OS members enough opportunity to really study Cabinet business. Pre –scrutiny of the kind we have described earlier in the report means that none of those items on the Cabinet agenda should be a surprise to OS members as there should have been discussion with the Leader of Council at the beginning of the year. The Cabinet review item is currently placed at the end of the OSC agenda and we think it should be placed earlier on the agenda to give it more prominence and to allow more time for discussion.

Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme

- 3.10 One of our concerns is that the management of the OS Work Programme should be improved.
- 3.11 We have listed in our recommendations a wide range of information from which the OS Work Programme could be drawn. For instance, there may be useful data on public concerns from the complaints or from Freedom of Information requests. We feel that the Cabinet Work Programme should also be taken into account in deciding how the OS programme should be structured.

- 3.12 We would also like to see use made of digests from Directorate Business Plans and information from petitions.
- 3.13 Another area where we feel that more work can be done is following up on previous scrutiny work. We are suggesting that once scrutiny work has been completed there should be 3 monthly oral reports from the Portfolio Holders followed by 6 monthly reviews on implementation. This should include reviews of matters such as Cabinet decisions on scrutiny reports and following up on discussions with external organisations following reviews.
- 3.14 We think the management of the OS Work Programme should be co-ordinated by the officer agenda planning group in consultation with the Chairman or Vice Chairman of the OSC. We would wish that group to review the work programme, review requests from the public and Councillors for reviews (via the pick system) and programme 3 monthly and 6 monthly follow ups. This group could also deal with any requests for reviews which are inappropriate or not relevant to OS. In our view, work programming by OS should start well before the start of the Council year. We are recommending that preparation should begin in February with a pause if necessary during April/May if EFDC Elections are due.
- 3.15 We also re-affirm the use of the “pick “system as the basis of assessing requests for reviews. The Officer Group should be strict in ensuring that items are all submitted on the form and if, requests are unclear or incomplete, refer them back for clarification.

Scrutiny Panels

- 3.16 We have no major proposals in relation to Scrutiny Panels except that we wish to see Panel Chairmen more disciplined in attending meetings of the OSC in order to give progress reports on the work of their Panels.
- 3.17 We looked at the question whether pro-rata requirements for Standing Scrutiny Panels could be discontinued in order to ensure that memberships comprised Councillors who had a keen interest in the subject matter and did not merely attend to fulfil the pro-rata formula. Although in discussion, this did find some support, it was felt that in practical terms this would not be deliverable within the Council and we have therefore decided not to make any proposals in that regard.
- 3.18 Another minor change we wish to make is to dispense with the term “Standing Scrutiny Panel” and replace it with the simpler title “Scrutiny Panel”. We feel that this shortened title will still adequately distinguish these Panels from the “Task and Finish Panels” set up from time to time.
- 3.19 That the rules concerning set up from time to time of Portfolio Holders attending Scrutiny Panels be extended to Portfolio Holder Assistants.

“Call-in” Procedure

- 3.20 The “call-in” process operated by the Council has been reviewed several times and we think that, on the whole, it is working well. We are, however, making recommendations about improving the process as discussed below.

- 3.21 We wish to introduce arrangements whereby a Cabinet member and a call-in sponsor could meet before the call in is referred to OSC. Such a meeting would be convened by the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and would explore whether an agreement can be reached on a way forward. This might allow a “call-in” to be withdrawn or modified or allow a Portfolio Holder to agree changes to the decision so as to reflect the concerns expressed. We were asked previously by the Committee about what would happen if a “call-in” is withdrawn as a result of this process. We have looked at this issue and feel that OSC should be advised for information at the next meeting of any prior discussions about the call in and the outcome.
- 3.22 The deadline for a call-in is 5 days following the publication of a notice of the relevant executive decision. We feel that this is a tight timescale, particularly as five members have to sign in order to validate the “call in”. We are pleased that officers now operate more flexible arrangements. We still feel that a signed document is still required but e-mail submissions of support by the 5 call-in sponsors are now accepted and speed up the process. In the longer term we would like the opportunities for an electronic call-in system to be investigated.
- 3.23 We have also looked at the way in which “call in” debates at OSC are structured. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee asked us to think again about the idea of only the lead call-in sponsor speaking on the call-in. We originally felt that this would allow the Portfolio Holder to respond to those comments on a balanced basis. At present the arrangement is that all 5 sponsors of the call-in would be able to speak and the Portfolio Holder would be the only person to be able to reply. Now that we have the benefit of the Committee’s views, we are recommending that the order should be:
- (a) Lead signatory to present call in;
 - (b) the next four signatories to call-in given opportunity to speak;
 - (c) Portfolio Holder responds;
 - (d) debate by OSC (as opportunity for other call-in signatories to the call-in speak if they so wish should they be more than 5 in number);
 - (e) final response by the Portfolio Holder to debate; and
 - (f) voting.
- (NB Under (b) above, if more than 5 Councillors have signed the “call in”, the lead member and the following 4 names on the form plus the portfolio holder would speak. Any other signatories would then be free to speak in the debate following the Portfolio Holder’s response.)
- 3.24 We have made recommendations on the use of the Council Chamber in the section of this report relating to the scrutiny of external organisations (see below). We recommend that the same seating arrangements should apply to call-ins, the relevant Director and the Portfolio Holder being asked sit together in the well of the Chamber to make their presentations and answer questions. We are suggesting that this arrangement should operated on a trial basis over the first 9 months of the Council year 2014/15 and then reviewed.

Scrutiny of External Organisations

- 3.25 We have probably spent more time on how to scrutinise the activities of other agencies who affect the District than on any other issue. Although a procedure regarding how such a scrutiny is to be conducted is outlined in the Overview and Scrutiny Rules we do not feel that this is fully effective.
- 3.26 The essence of scrutiny of external organisations is preparation. Currently, members of OSC have a private meeting on questions to be asked prior to the meeting. This is linked to an earlier invitation in the bulletin to put forward questions. We think that this is probably leaving matters too late for proper preparation and we would like a preliminary discussion to be held at the previous OSC to agree the topics which need to be raised. This should guide the Committee and officers on the kind of topics which need to be explored. We hope that this will enable more background information to be prepared by officers and avoid duplicating questions in debate. It will also enable the issues of concern to be sent to the organisation at an earlier stage, improving the prospects for meaningful answers being given at the meeting. We are also recommending that undertakings given by organisations should be followed up after six months and the outcomes reported back to OSC or the relevant Panel.
- 3.27 In terms of the way in which time is allocated at Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings for this kind of scrutiny, we think that time limits should be applied to presentations by external bodies. We do not propose to be prescriptive about this as we are content for the Chairman of OSC to do this. However, we do not wish to see a time limit on the period for questions. We feel that an arbitrary time limit can often prevent members from asking significant follow up questions and frustrate the main purpose in inviting external agencies, namely of finding out the true position on how the District is affected.
- 3.28 We also feel that there is an issue around the selection of organisations who attend Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings. Quite often requests are made simply to allow representatives to come to meetings to present information on some new initiative they are undertaking. In our view, this is not the same as Scrutiny. We feel that in planning the work programme for OS each year there must be regard to real issues for the Council and the community.
- 3.29 A trial of new seating arrangements for external organisations is recommended. We consider that representatives of the external organisations should be seated in the well of the Chamber because this would provide a better focus for questioning and change the relationship between the organisation scrutinised and the OSC. We are aware that when we reported our provisional recommendations to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, some reservations were expressed about this idea. However, we still wish to recommend this new seating arrangement because we feel that with representatives of external organisations sitting at the “top table” scrutiny is less effective.
- 3.30 At the end of the trial, we recommend that there should be a review of the effectiveness of this arrangement by the Constitution and Member Services Scrutiny Panel. The trial should be for 9 months but could be extended at the discretion of the Committee if insufficient external reviews have been conducted in that period.

Budget Scrutiny

- 3.31 We have reservations about the current involvement of Overview and Scrutiny in budget monitoring. Currently the activities of the Finance and Performance Management Scrutiny Panel (“Scrutiny Panel”) seem to mirror the work of the Cabinet Committee to an excessive extent. We received representations as part of consultation about the current practice of submitting the same budget papers to Scrutiny Panel as are discussed by the Cabinet Committee. We feel that all the detailed financial information is rightly the responsibility of the Cabinet Committee and budget scrutiny by Overview and Scrutiny should be on a different basis.
- 3.32 We feel that the Scrutiny Panel should be reviewing the financial issues paper produced by the Director of Finance and ICT by September each year and the mid-term financial strategy document. Throughout the budget process, the Scrutiny Panel should concentrate on policy issues, trends, problems and themes rather than trying to assimilate the vast amount of financial data which the Cabinet Committee must have to meet its responsibilities. We wish to avoid the duplication that currently exists between the Cabinet Committee and this Scrutiny Panel.
- 3.33 At our request the Director of Finance and ICT has developed an OS budget review timetable which is set out in our recommendations. Principally this will involve an initial look at the financial issues paper by September. In November this will be followed by examination of the draft growth lists and savings and the DDF programme (plus fees and charges), followed, in January, by an update of the medium term financial strategy for the next financial year. The timetable would conclude in February with the final form of the draft budget.
- 3.34 We think that this should be the basis of scrutiny of the budget each year. This will allow the Scrutiny Panel to comment on the broad issues affecting the budget without becoming unduly immersed in the detail. This process should, in our view, be coupled with training in financial procedures preceding the beginning of the budget cycle by the end of September. We are happy for the content of that report and also the timing to be left with the Director of Finance and ICT but we feel it is essential that this training is given if OS is to make a real contribution to the budget process.
- 3.35 We wish the Scrutiny Panel’s term of reference to be reviewed to avoid duplication with the Cabinet Committee and to see the joint meetings with the Cabinet Finance Committee discontinued. We also would like the Scrutiny Panel to look at the timetable for business plans so that this too can complement the OS work programme for the year.

Scrutiny of Key Performance Indicators

- 3.36 The quarterly review of Key Performance Indicators (KPI’s) is currently undertaken by the Finance and Performance Management Standing Scrutiny Panel (“Scrutiny Panel”). We wish to see this continue but we would like KPI monitoring to concentrate on those indicators which are either “red” (below target) or “amber” (i.e. within a target tolerance) although all KPIs will continue to be reported as now. We see limited value in considering indicators which are being met. Furthermore, although we support the co-ordinating role of that Panel, we feel that where other Panels are in being and have a direct interest in any KPI, they should be able to review current performance or the reasons for non achievement if more detailed review is necessary after an initial presentation has been made to the Scrutiny Panel. We are asking that the terms of reference of that Panel should also be amended to reflect this approach.

- 3.37 If there is no separate Panel in being which can deal with any KPI, these further reviews can be dealt with by the Finance and Performance Management Scrutiny Panel.

The Public Profile of Overview and Scrutiny

- 3.38 At previous reviews of Overview and Scrutiny there has been discussion regarding the public profile of Overview and Scrutiny. We feel that although the Constitution adequately reflects the need for Overview and Scrutiny to engage with the public, this has not been achieved in practice and continues to be a problem. We have a number of ideas as to how we can improve things and these are set out below.

(a) Items from the Public

- 3.39 The Overview and Scrutiny rules should be amended to allow the public the opportunity to ask questions at Overview and Scrutiny and Panel meetings and to address those bodies on issues of concern.
- 3.40 This is an issue which was commented upon by Overview and Scrutiny Committee at the provisional recommendation stage because there were fears about the public raising topics which are not otherwise on the agenda. The Committee also felt that Overview and Scrutiny should avoid a situation where the same question or request to address a Committee or Panel can be repeated.
- 3.41 We accept those concerns and are proposing that questions and requests to address a Panel or the OSC should be limited to existing agenda items. If requests are received for topics which are not included on the agenda, these need to be dealt with under the "pick" system and submitted to a later meeting. We are sure that officers will look at these proposals carefully to ensure that they are relevant before placing them before members.
- 3.42 On the question of the same matter being raised again, we are proposing that the rules should say such questions or proposals can only be dealt with once in any one year. We would also like to see more opportunities for Panels to deal with relevant subjects as questions may be better dealt with in a smaller group of Councillors with more background knowledge of the subject matter. However some matters will be more appropriate for OSC.

(b) Encouraging Participation by the Public

- 3.43 We wish Chairmen to use their discretion whenever possible at both at OSC and Panel meetings, to ensure that the public can easily engage with OS and make a real contribution. We would like to see the website used to encourage the public to come forward with questions and ideas, particularly where scrutiny of external agencies is planned. Specific publicity for those sessions should also be given.

Community Safety and National Health Service Scrutiny

- 3.44 We have reviewed the arrangements for scrutiny of Crime and Disorder and NHS issues as these are likely to be of interest to the public and Councillors alike. We are broadly quite happy with the arrangements for crime and disorder. We feel that there is a willingness by the Police and Crime Commissioner to come to this District to answer questions from the public and Councillors and we are confident that this will continue.

- 3.45 There should be adequate advanced publicity for community meetings arranged in the District under the auspices of the Police and Crime Commissioner's office. One recent event was, so far as we can see, advertised only fairly late in the day, with the result that there was a disappointing public attendance. We are recommending that the Commissioner's office should be asked to provide more notice and make use of the Council's resources to publicise such events.
- 3.46 NHS scrutiny awareness of the process is not at a high level. This is particularly concerning because this is a topic which will be of great concern to the public. Currently, statutory responsibility for NHS scrutiny lies with the County Council but we are concerned about local scrutiny of health care issues. We take the view that scrutiny on a County-wide basis may not be at a sufficiently local scale and we are proposing that an approach should be made to the County Council to carry out local review as and when the need arises. We are hopeful that Essex County Council will accept the need for local NHS reviews. However, it will be important that the results are fed back to the County Council and this Council's representatives clearly have a crucial role in acting as a link.

Training

- 3.47 We have mentioned training in relation to the budget and we are proposing that the training courses on OS should be reinstated and held each June in the years when there are Epping Forest District Council elections. We think it is very important that Councillors are constantly refreshed regarding Overview and Scrutiny techniques and particularly newly-elected Councillors, who need to be aware of the opportunities which OS opens up to non Cabinet members. We hope that this will not be the only Overview and Scrutiny training to be provided and that more specialist courses will be facilitated as and when needed.
- 3.48 Finally, we have been advised that the Tenants' Federation are forming their own Overview and Scrutiny Committee to monitor their relationship with the Council as housing authority. We are very supportive of this initiative and wish to see representatives of the Federation fully involved in any training sessions held.

4. Constitutional Changes

- 4.1 Revised Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules are attached as Appendix 2 and incorporate those proposals which require constitutional changes. The Committee will appreciate that many of the changes mentioned in our recommendations are more operational in character or merely support provisions in the Constitution which exist already. Any changes to the Rules are shown in bold type/underlined and, if approved, should be submitted to the next Council meeting for adoption and publication in the Constitution.

5. Conclusions

- 5.1 Our overriding impression of OS within the Council at present is that constitutionally it is well established but the full scope of the opportunities it offers to Councillors and the community to influence the way in which the Council and others work has yet to be fully grasped.

6. Thanks

- 6.1 The Panel wishes to acknowledge the support and responses received from all those consulted about this review. In particular we acknowledge the work carried out in support of the review by Connor Lattimer and Nicholas Trower in undertaking research and general support for the review during their summer internships in 2012.

7. Reservation by Councillor D. Stallan

- 7.1 Councillor D. Stallan is a member of the Review Panel and has asked that his opposition to recommendation 13 (f) (ii) in Appendix 1 relating to the order of speakers at a call in meetings of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee. He believes that to have 5 speakers before the Portfolio Holder responds will mean that some points could be missed in that response, because many points can be raised all of which need to be answered. As a portfolio holder who has experience of call ins, he believes that he speaks from experience.
- 7.2 However, he supports the proposal that the order of speakers be formalised.

K Angold-Stephens (Chairman)

Z:\C\OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY\REPORT – 26 NOVEMBER2013

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REVIEW – DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

Section marked thus * involve constitutional changes.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Chairman*

(1) That Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 8 be amended by the addition of a new sub-paragraph (3) as follows:

“3. The Chairman of the Committee must have experience and understanding of the Overview and scrutiny system.”

(2) That the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee shall be invited to attend agenda planning sessions conducted by officers.

Cabinet/Overview and Scrutiny Committee Liaison*

(3) That in order to improve liaison arrangements between the Cabinet and Leader of the Council with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee the following proposals be agreed and incorporated in the Overview and Scrutiny rules:

(a) that the Leader of Council attend the first Overview and Scrutiny Committee of any Council year so as to present the Cabinet’s Forward Plan and to attend after six months to update the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on progress with that plan;

(b) that at the first meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee each year, the Leader should indicate, where appropriate, any work which could be undertaken by Overview and Scrutiny on behalf of the Cabinet and likewise the Committee will indicate to the Leader work which will be undertaken by the Committee in the following year;

(c) that at the initial meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee each year, members should have the opportunity to ask the Leader of Council and Portfolio Holders questions on matters of concern regarding Cabinet business;

(d) individual Portfolio Holders should attend appropriate Overview and Scrutiny Standing Panel meetings which deal with matters relating to their portfolios and should answer questions on their portfolio from Panel members;

(e) that relevant Portfolio Holders should attend any of the appropriate Standing Panel meetings dealing with matters related to their portfolio;

(f) that all Councillors be encouraged to attend discussions with the Leader of Council and Portfolio Holders at OSC or Panels, where they have an interest in the subject matter concerned;

(g) that the Standing Item on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Agenda relating to the review of Cabinet business at its next meeting be placed earlier on the Committee’s agenda to allow more opportunity for discussion; and

(h) that the Council calendar of meetings be reviewed so as to allow more time between meetings of the Cabinet and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee so as to ease the process for call-ins and also the review of Cabinet agenda business.

Overview and Scrutiny - Work Programme*

(4) That the first meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee each year should include consideration of the work programme both for the Committee and Panels and that the compilation of the work programme should take account of the following:

- (a) significant decisions, whether or not they are key decisions, which are included in the Council's Forward Plan;
- (b) monitoring of the Cabinet Forward Plan as to progress and content of proposed decisions;
- (c) items arising from the Forward Plan to be raised as part of the Cabinet review item on Overview and Scrutiny Committee agenda;
- (d) requests by the public or Councillors;
- (e) a review of topics raised by way of formal complaints to the Council during the preceding year;
- (f) topics which have arisen in Freedom of Information Act requests during the previous year;
- (g) agreed Cabinet priorities for the year;
- (h) any outstanding work by Scrutiny Panels not completed during the previous Council year;
- (i) digests of information arising from petitions received during the previous year;

(5) That the submission of items by members of the Council or the public for consideration by Overview and Scrutiny Committee continue to be based on the "pick" work request form, use of which should be enforced and that in cases where the pick form is unclear or incomplete in relation to the nature of the work to be undertaken by Overview and Scrutiny, this be returned to the proposer with a request for greater clarity;

(6) That items or questions requested by the public be dealt with by officers so that these can be presented in the "Pick" form format;

(7) That where Overview and Scrutiny Committee or a Panel undertakes a review of Council services affecting the Cabinet, more follow-up work be undertaken as follows:

- (a) **after 3 months** – the relevant portfolio holder should give a verbal report on whether the OS recommendations have been agreed or any reasons why they have not been agreed or have been amended; and
- (b) **after six months** – the relevant portfolio holder should report back on the implementation of those recommendations.

(8) That the Overview and Scrutiny Agenda Planning Group of officers in consultation with the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be given prime responsibility for managing the Overview and Scrutiny work programme including reviews of requests from the public and members via the “pick” form procedure so as to establish the relevance and suitability of reviews requested;

(9) That the preparation of the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme should commence in February each year but with account taken of the election period April/May each year if District Council elections are taking place;

(10) That, in terms of Council budgets scrutiny, provision be made in the Council’s annual training programme for Overview and Scrutiny members to be trained in budget processes before the commencement of the budget round each year and that the Director of Finance and ICT being asked to determine the most appropriate timing and content for such training sessions.

Overview and Scrutiny Panels*

(11) That Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules 12 and 13 be amended so as to require all Chairmen of Standing and Task and Finish Panels to attend each Overview and Scrutiny Committee to give oral or written progress reports on the work of their Panels.

(12) That the term “Standing” be discontinued in respect of the titles of Scrutiny Panels with Scrutiny Panels and Task and Finish Scrutiny Panels being used in future.

Call-in Procedure*

(13) That the following changes be made to the call-in procedure set out in the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules and Protocol:

- (a) that the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, if requested either by the lead Councillor for a call-in or the relevant Cabinet member, should convene a meeting to discuss the call-in before this is considered formally by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee with a view to establishing whether there could be agreement between the Cabinet member and the call-in sponsor on proposals to modify the decision or the terms of the “Call in” so as to progress the matter;
- (b) that the present deadline for calling in decisions by the Cabinet or Portfolio Holders remain at five days and that a more flexible approach of allowing signing by separate e-mails from the members who support the call-in concerned be noted;
- (c) that further work be undertaken as to the possibility of instituting full electronic call-ins so as to speed up the process for dealing with these requests;
- (d) that a new provision be introduced so as to allow “call-in” sponsors to withdraw any objections they may have notified if having met with the Portfolio Holder and the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee their concerns are met;

- (e) that situations where the procedure outlined in (d) above has been followed, an agreement has been reached on the withdrawal of call-in objections, an information report be submitted to the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on that withdrawal and the circumstances which led to changes in the original Cabinet decision being agreed by the Portfolio Holder or the Cabinet;
- (f) that the procedure for dealing with call-ins at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings be amended to take place in the following order:
 - (i) lead call-in sponsor to speak first;
 - (ii) the four other signatories to the call-in to be given the opportunity to speak next;
 - (iii) Portfolio Holder then responds;
 - (iv) debate;
 - (v) final response by Portfolio Holder; and
 - (vi) voting.
- (g) that in cases where the number of signatories to a call-in exceeds five, the first five signatories on the call-in notification be dealt with under the previous sub-paragraph with any other signatories being able to speak only during the ensuing debate on the call-in.

Scrutiny of External Organisations

- (14) That arrangements for scrutinising the work of external organisations be amended as follows:
 - (a) that for the purposes of presentations by representatives of outside organisations, they should be seated in the well of the Chamber for a trial period of 9 months from the commencement of the 2014/15 Council year and reviewed subsequently by the Constitution and Member Services Scrutiny Panel.
 - (b) that this layout also be used on a trial basis for call-ins with the relevant Portfolio Holder and Director sitting together in the well of the Chamber in order to answer questions from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on call-in business.
 - (c) that members take a more critical approach to the selection of outside organisations to be scrutinised, ensuring that invitations are only issued to the organisations where there are public concerns.
 - (d) that a flexible approach be taken on whether or not scrutiny of an external organisation would be better conducted by a Standing or Task and Finish Panel rather than the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.
 - (e) that priority be given to preparing for external scrutiny sessions by extending existing arrangements by the addition of preliminary consideration at the meeting preceding the visit of the organisation concerned on the topics to be covered with Service Directors being encouraged to assist with background information which might assist follow-up questions to be formulated.

(f) that the Overview and Scrutiny Chairman determine the appropriate time allocation for presentations by external organisations but no time limit be set for questions from members of the Council.

(g) that more emphasis be given to monitoring undertakings given and proposals made by external organisations through follow up reviews after six months and reporting back to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or the relevant Panel.

Scrutiny of Council Finance and Budgets

(15) That a new timetable for review of the budget by Overview and Scrutiny be introduced as follows:

September – Financial Issues paper from Director of Finance submitted to the Finance and Performance Management Scrutiny Panel (“the Panel”).

November – Draft growth lists/savings and DDF programme and information on fees and charges submitted to the Panel.

January – Update of medium term financial strategy for the next financial year to be considered by the Panel.

February – Final form of draft budget to be submitted to the Panel for comment.

(16) That the timetable for the budget review be publicised in the Council Bulletin so that members who are interested in particular budget issues are aware of the meetings at which the Standing Panel will be examining proposals.

(17) That in future the Panel should concentrate on policy issues and emerging trends, problems and themes rather than individual budget details which are a matter for the Cabinet.

(18) That the Panel be asked to review their terms of reference so as to avoid duplication with the work of the Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee.

(19) That, in line with this new approach for the Standing Panel, the present practice of holding joint meetings with the Cabinet Finance Committee be discontinued so as to separate the roles of the two bodies.

(20) That, in reviewing budgets, the Panel should take account of budget issues from previous years if relevant to the current budget.

Key Performance Indicators – Role of Overview and Scrutiny

(21) That the following changes be made to arrangements for the quarterly review of key performance indicators by Overview and Scrutiny:

(a) that the Finance & Performance Management Standing Scrutiny Panel (“Standing Panel”) should continue to be responsible for the review of KPI performance on behalf of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee;

- (b) that the Standing Panel should continue each quarter to take an overview of all KPI performance but any “red” (below target) or “amber”(within target tolerance) designated KPIs be referred for further review to the appropriate Scrutiny Panel (where one exists) if more detailed analysis is considered necessary;
- (c) the Standing Panel should deal with “red” or “amber” designated KPIs for which there no other Panel exists;
- (d) that the Standing Panel be asked to review their terms of reference with these changes in mind.

Overview and Scrutiny – Public Profile

(22) That the following steps be taken so as to improve the public profile of the Council’s Overview and Scrutiny function:

- (a) that a more proactive stance be adopted with regard to engagement with the public;
- (b) that the Overview and Scrutiny rules be amended so as to allow an opportunity for the public to ask questions at Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings and Scrutiny Panels and also to address those bodies on issues of concern subject to the following:
 - (i) that the questions concerned or the matters on which the Committee or Panel is to be addressed are relevant to the powers and responsibilities of the Council or relevant to the District;
 - (ii) that questions or matters of concern only be raised once in any Council year either at a Panel or the OS Committee but not at both;
 - (iii) that matters on which questions or issues are raised should be items which are on the relevant agenda;
 - (iv) that any questions or issues raised for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or a Panel which are not set out in the agenda for the following meeting be deferred and subjected to the pick process and brought back for further discussion at the next available meeting;
- (c) that a flexible approach be adopted to facilitating the submission of business from the public for Overview and Scrutiny including the use of correspondence, email through the website and the pick form process as appropriate;
- (d) that the Forester and local press releases and the website be used to heighten the profile of Overview and Scrutiny including:
 - (i) the annual work programme for Overview and Scrutiny;
 - (ii) specific items due to be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or its Panels so as to encourage the public to submit evidence or comments, particularly where scrutiny of external bodies is planned; and

- (iii) that the Chairman of the OS Committee be allowed maximum discretion within the Overview and Scrutiny rules to allow the public to contribute fully to the work of Overview and Scrutiny

Scrutiny of Community Safety

- (23) That the current arrangements for scrutiny of Community Safety issues including the activities of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Essex be continued.
- (24) That the Police and Crime Commissioner's office be asked to give longer notice of local community meetings and to take up the Council's offer of using the Council's resources to advertise these events.

Scrutiny of National Health Service

- (25) That, notwithstanding that the health scrutiny was a County Council function, that an approach be made to Essex County Council for local health scrutiny to be undertaken under the auspices of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and conducted by the Safer Cleaner Greener Standing Panel.
- (26) That if members of the public or Councillors wish to raise specific health issues for review by the Panel, the pick form procedure be used and authority sought from Essex County Council to undertake local scrutiny.
- (27) That liaison arrangements be put in place between the Safer Cleaner Greener Standing Panel and the Council's representative on the County Council's Health Scrutiny Committee to ensure that there is proper liaison with the County Council.

Training

- (28) That the following arrangements be put in place regarding training of Councillors in Overview and Scrutiny techniques:
 - (a) that each year an Introductory Course on Overview and Scrutiny be held in June during years when there are District Council Elections;
 - (b) that Budget Scrutiny Training be given by the end of September as indicated earlier in these recommendations;
 - (c) that further specialist training in Overview and Scrutiny techniques be arranged as and when thought necessary and dependent on available funding; and
 - (d) that the Tenant's Federation which has established its own Overview and Scrutiny Committee be invited to attend future training courses on Overview and Scrutiny and that the possibility of a financial contribution towards the cost of such training from the Housing Revenue Account be researched.

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Appendix 1 Protocol on Consideration and Reporting on Executive Decisions Called in by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PROCEDURE RULES

1. ARRANGEMENTS FOR OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

- (a) The Council will, at the Annual Council meeting, appoint an Overview and Scrutiny Committee as set out in Article 6.
- (b) Each Overview and Co-ordinating Committee shall comprise 11 members, including a Chairman and Vice-Chairman appointed by the Council.

2. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - FUNCTIONS

- 1. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee will discharge the Overview and Scrutiny functions conferred by Section 20 of the Local Government Act 2000 plus those responsibilities allocated by the Council.

3. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - TERMS OF REFERENCE

- 1. The functions of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee shall be as follows:
 - (a) review of corporate strategies;
 - (b) ensuring that the decisions/actions of the Cabinet accord with the Council's policies and budget;
 - (c) monitoring and scrutinising the financial performance of the Council and making recommendations to the Cabinet in relation to annual revenue and capital guidelines, bids and submissions;
 - (d) when required, questioning members of the Cabinet or other Committees and officers about their decisions and performance whether generally in comparison with service plans and targets over a period of time, or in relation to particular decisions, initiatives or projects;
 - (e) making recommendations to Cabinet and appropriate Committees and the Council arising from the outcome of the overview and scrutiny process;
 - (f) review and scrutiny **and monitoring** of the performance of other public bodies **including the National Health Service (with the agreement of Essex County Council) and of the community safety responsibilities of the Police and Crime Commissioner** active in the District, inviting reports from them by requesting them to address the Committee and local people about their activities and performance;
 - (g) questioning and gathering evidence from any person (including Councillors, members of Council staff and others) on issues falling within the functions of the Committee;

- (h) determining terms of reference, memberships (including the appointment of Chairman and Vice-Chairman) and reporting for all Standing and 'Task and Finish' Scrutiny Panels;
- (i) scrutinising executive decisions;
- (j) considering and making responses to executive decisions which are called in either as a Committee or through referral to a Standing or 'Task and Finish' Panel;
- (k) monitoring the effectiveness of the call-in procedure, reviewing the number and reasons for call-in and making recommendations to the Council on any changes required to improve operation of the process;
- (l) monitoring and scrutiny of the Forward Plan;
- (m) review of implications of Government Consultation documents where requested by members;
- (n) reports on key performance Indicators referred to the Committee;
- (o) reports on Service Business Plans as requested by members;
- (p) receiving presentations from the Leader of the Council and other Portfolio Holders early in the Council year outlining their plans for the year ahead and reporting performance in the previous Council year;
- (q) consideration of requests from Cabinet for scrutiny involvement in policy development and determining appropriate action;
- (r) to receive evidence from a senior officer relating to a petition where the number of signatures meets or exceeds the trigger level contained in the Council's Petitions Scheme and make recommendations as appropriate;
- (s) to review, when requested by the petition organiser, the Council's response to any petition which they consider has not been dealt with properly including, if appropriate, investigating, making recommendations to the Council or Executive or arranging for the matter to be considered at a meeting of the full Council;
- (t) determining work programmes in accordance with items falling within Committee's ambit in accordance with (a)-(s) above.

4. WHO MAY SIT ON THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE?

1. All councillors except members of the Executive may be members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. However, no member may be involved in scrutinising a decision which he/she has been directly involved.

5. CO-OPTees

1. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee shall be entitled to recommend to Council the appointment of appropriate persons as non-voting co-optees.

6. MEETINGS OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

1. Meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be held in accordance with the Council's calendar of meetings in each year. In addition, extraordinary meetings may be called from time to time as and when appropriate. An Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting may be called by the Chairman, or by the Proper Officer if he/she considers it necessary or appropriate.

7. QUORUM

1. The quorum for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee shall be as set out for committees in the Council Procedure Rules in Part 4 of this Constitution.

8. WHO CHAIRS OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETINGS?

1. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be chaired by the Councillor appointed as Chairman of the Committee at the Annual Council meeting.

2. A Vice-Chairman will also be appointed by the Council at its Annual Meeting. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee will be appointed from those Councillors serving on the Committee. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman will be appointed for a term of one year and will be eligible for re-appointment.

3. The Chairman of the Committee must have experience and understanding of the Overview and scrutiny system.

9. WORK PROGRAMME

Responsibilities

1. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee shall approve an Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme. **This programme will be co-ordinated and prepared in draft by the Overview & Scrutiny Agenda Planning Group or equivalent body in consultation with the Chairman of the Committee.**
2. **The programme shall be compiled over the period February to May each year, with allowance made in the timetable for preparing the programme for the electoral period. A draft programme will be submitted to the first Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting of each Council year for approval.**

Compiling the Work Programme

2. In determining the contents of the work programme, the Committee will:
 - (a) seek proposals for inclusion from all Members of the Council through the Council Bulletin **and from the public including via the Council's website;**

- (b) invite the Leader of the Council and other Portfolio Holders **to attend the first meeting of each Council year to present the forward plan for the Cabinet for the following year in respect of the Council's executive functions, to answer questions on that plan and to indicate where appropriate work on the Cabinet's behalf which could be undertaken by Overview & Scrutiny;**
- (c) arrange for the Leader of the Council and other Portfolio Holders **to attend a further meeting of the meeting six months after the first meeting of the council year to provide a progress report on the forward plan for the year in question;**
- (d) agree with the Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holders on any items for inclusion in the work programme which may be undertaken by Overview and Scrutiny on the Cabinet's behalf;
- (e) seek proposals from any partnership organisations on any projects which Overview and Scrutiny could undertake on behalf of those partnerships;
- (f) review the work programme for Overview and Scrutiny in respect of the current year;
- (g) consider external organisations to be scrutinised during the year in question.**

Approving the Work Programme

3. The Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme shall be approved prior to the Annual Council meeting each year and shall be of twelve months' duration. The programme shall be reviewed after six months.
4. The Committee will, in determining the work programme for Overview and Scrutiny:
 - (a) review all proposals submitted to ensure that they relate to the Council's Policy Framework including the Corporate Plan , the Forward Plan and other appropriate corporate information;
 - (b) ensure the agreed work programme has sufficient member and officer resources to support it;
 - (c) identify in advance any budgetary provision required for specific projects;
 - (d) ensure that the work programme is properly prioritised.
 - (e) allocate time limits for each project;
 - (f) ensure that any projects which do not find a place in the work programme are placed in a reserve programme for further review;

- (g) ensure that all Members of the Council are informed about the work programme as part of the annual report to the Council in April each year;
- (h) review the work programme on a regular basis during the year.

Urgent Items and New Proposals

5. Where new proposals or matters of urgency arise during the currency of an annual work programme, the Committee may:

- (a) determine that any new project should be added to the programme and adjust the remainder of the programme accordingly;
- (b) determine that a new project should be deferred for review when the next work programme is considered;
- (c) decline to accept an additional project and give grounds for so doing.

6. All proposals for additional or urgent projects shall be submitted in writing and presented at a convenient meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee by the member or officer so proposing.

Motions at Council Meetings

7. Any motion adopted by the Council following due notice from a Member of the Council and which relates to the responsibilities of Overview and Scrutiny shall, on adoption, stand referred to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for consideration. In determining how to respond to the motion, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee shall consider whether the proposal should be incorporated in the work programme or held for future consideration in accordance with the procedures outlined in Paragraph 4 and 5 above. The Committee shall also advise the Council, via the Members' Information Bulletin, of the action taken on such motions.

10. AGENDA ITEMS

1. Any member of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee shall be entitled to give notice to the Proper Officer that he/she wishes an item relevant to the functions of the Committee to be included on the agenda for the next available meeting of the Committee. On receipt of such a request the Proper Officer will ensure that it is included on the next available agenda.

2. Any members of the Council who are not members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee may give written notice to the Proper Officer that they wish an item to be included on the agenda of that Committee. If the Proper Officer receives such a notification, then he/she will include the item on the first available agenda of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for consideration.

3. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee shall also respond, as soon as their work programme permits, to requests from the Council or the Executive to review particular areas of Council activity. Where they do so, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee shall report their findings and any recommendations back to the Executive and/or the Council. The Executive shall consider the report of the

Overview and Scrutiny Committee within one month of receiving it and the Council within two months of receiving it, or, in either case, as soon as is reasonably possible.

11. POLICY REVIEW AND DEVELOPMENT

1. The role of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in relation to the development of the Council's budget and policy framework is set out in detail in the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules.
2. In relation to the development of the Council's approach to other matters not forming part of its policy and budget framework, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee may make proposals to the Executive in so far as they relate to matters within their terms of reference.
3. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee may hold enquiries and investigate the available options for future direction in policy development and may appoint advisers and assessors to assist them in this process. They may go on site visits, conduct public surveys, hold public meetings, commission research and do all other things that they reasonably consider necessary to inform their deliberations. They may ask witnesses to attend to address them on any matter under consideration and may pay to any advisers, assessors and witnesses a reasonable fee and expenses for doing so.
4. In carrying out any policy review or policy development work within their terms of reference, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee may refer all or part of such matters to a Standing Scrutiny Panel or a 'Task and Finish' Scrutiny Panel for consideration in accordance with the programme approved by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

5. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee or relevant Scrutiny Panel shall receive a verbal report from the relevant portfolio holder after three months from completion of any completed scrutiny study indicating whether recommendations from that study have been agreed or modified. After six months the Portfolio Holder will give a report to the Committee or Panel on Progress with implementation of those recommendations.

12. SCRUTINY PANELS - PROCEDURAL REQUIREMENTS

1. Scrutiny Panels may be established on an annual basis by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
2. Scrutiny Panel status will be restricted to those activities of a recurring or cyclical character which require a longer term involvement by members.
3. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee shall determine the number and terms of reference of Scrutiny Panels and shall review whether they should continue in being before the end of each Council year.
4. Scrutiny Panels will:

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- (a) adhere to a work programme agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee;
- (b) have a chairman and vice-chairman appointed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee;
- (c) have memberships which reflect pro rata requirements and the lowest number of members required to achieve cross-party representation whilst allowing the inclusion of members who are not members of a political group or are not members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee;
- (d) have memberships which represent the minimum number necessary to adhere to their work programmes;
- (e) be able to make proposals to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the variation of their terms of reference or work programme;
- (f) be able to seek delegated authority from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to vary their terms of reference and work programme according to circumstances;
- (g) report **through the Panel Chairman to meetings** of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on progress with their work programme and on any recommendations for consideration;
- (h) be able, after consideration by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to report direct to the Council, the Cabinet Committee a Portfolio Holder, or any other Council body'
- (i) in the circumstances set out in (h), the report shall be submitted in the name of the Panel and presented by its Chairman, unless the work of more than one Scrutiny Panel is involved, in which case any report to another Council body will be in the name of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and presented by its Chairman;
- (j) in the event that the submission of a Panel report to another Council body is required such that it cannot be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in accordance with paragraph (h) above, the Panel report may proceed for consideration subject to prior consultation with the Chairman of that Committee as to the reasons for urgency;
- (k) extend a standing invitation to relevant portfolio holder(s) to attend panel meetings to answer questions and provide information on any matters affecting their portfolios which are under consideration; and**
- (l) hear questions and presentations by members of the public or external organisations which are relevant to the work of the Panel concerned.**

5. Any member of the Council may be a member of a Scrutiny Panel, provided that any Cabinet member may not be a member of a Panel which directly deals with matters within his or her portfolio.

6. Any member of the Council shall be able to attend any meeting of a Scrutiny Panel and be notified of the publication of the agenda.

7. The provisions of Operational Standing Order 14 shall apply to these Scrutiny Panels.

13. 'TASK AND FINISH' SCRUTINY PANELS

1. 'Task and Finish' Scrutiny Panels may be established by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in order to deal with ad hoc projects or reviews included in the annual work programme for Overview and Scrutiny.

2. 'Task and Finish' Scrutiny Panel status will be restricted to those activities which are issue-based, time limited and non-cyclical in character and have clearly defined objectives.

3. 'Task and Finish' Scrutiny Panels will:

- (a) have terms of reference, membership and a work programme approved by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee;
- (b) have a Chairman and Vice-Chairman appointed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee;
- (c) have memberships which need not be based on pro rata rules;
- (d) have memberships which represent the minimum number necessary to adhere to their work programmes;
- (e) be able to make proposals to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the variation of their terms of reference or work programme;
- (f) be able to seek delegated authority from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the variation of their terms of reference and work programmes according to circumstances;
- (g) report **through the Panel Chairman at each meeting of** the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on progress with their work programme and on any recommendations for consideration;
- (h) be able, after consideration by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to report to the Council, the Cabinet, a Cabinet Committee, a Portfolio Holder or any other Council body;
- (i) in the circumstances set out in (h), the report shall be submitted in the name of the Panel and presented by its Chairman, unless the work of more than one Scrutiny Panel is involved, in which case any report to another Council body will be in the name of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and presented by its Chairman;

(j) in the event that the submission of a Panel report to another Council body is required such that it cannot be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in accordance with paragraph (h) above, the Panel report may proceed for consideration subject to prior consultation with the Chairman of that Committee as to the reasons for urgency;

(k) extend a standing invitation to relevant portfolio holder(s) to attend Panel meetings to answer questions and provide information on any matters affecting their portfolios which are under consideration; and

(l) hear questions and presentations by members of the public or external organisations which are relevant to the work of the Panel concerned.

4. 'Task and Finish' Scrutiny Panels shall be flexible as to the number of Councillors appointed to membership. There will be no restriction on the numbers appointed.

5. Any Councillor may be a member of a 'Task and Finish' Scrutiny Panel, save that a member of the Cabinet may not be a member of any Panel which bears directly on his or her portfolio.

6. No 'Task and Finish' Scrutiny Panel shall be comprised of members of a single group only.

7. Any member of the Council shall be able to attend any meeting of a 'Task and Finish' Scrutiny Panel and to receive copies of agenda.

8. The normal arrangements for substitute members as set out in Operational Standing Order 14 shall not apply to Task and Finish Panels but the Chairman of any such Panel shall have discretion to accept alternate members to cover for existing members for any meeting.

14. NOMINATIONS TO STANDING SCRUTINY AND 'TASK AND FINISH' PANELS

1. The Leader of each political group (and any Councillor who is not a member of a political group) shall be notified before the commencement of each Council year of the number of Standing Scrutiny and 'Task and Finish' Panels to be appointed and the number of members to serve on each Panel, indicating pro rata requirements where applicable. Similar notice will be given through the Members' Bulletin to other members of the Council.

2. The Leader of each political group will also be notified of the number of Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen positions to be filled before the commencement of each Council year.

3. Group Leaders shall ensure that members of all political groups have an opportunity to nominate to any positions referred to under 1 and 2 above. Any nominations may be made up to the day before the meeting in question. Such nominations shall include a case for the position sought.

4. Nominations to these Panels shall be excluded from the calculation required under the Council's protocol regarding allocation of Chairman and Vice-Chairman positions between the political groups.

15. REPORTS FROM THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

1. Once recommendations on proposals for policy review or development, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will prepare a formal report and submit it for consideration by the Executive if the proposals are consistent with the existing budgetary and policy framework, or to the Council if the recommendation would require a departure from, or a change to, the agreed budget and policy framework.

2. If the Overview and Scrutiny Committee cannot agree on a single final report to the Council or Executive as appropriate, then up to one minority report may be prepared and submitted for consideration by the Council or Executive with the majority report.

3. Reports by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee shall normally be presented by the Chairman of that Committee, unless he or she determines that it would be beneficial for a Panel Chairman to undertake this role instead or that a joint presentation is appropriate.

16. ENSURING THAT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REPORTS ARE CONSIDERED BY EXECUTIVE

(a) Executive matters not delegated to the Cabinet, a Cabinet Committee or a Portfolio Holder

1. Once the Overview and Scrutiny Committee has completed its deliberations on any matter it will forward a copy of its final report to the Proper Officer who will allocate it to either or both the Executive and the Council for consideration, according to whether the contents of the report would have implications for the Council's budget and policy framework. If the Proper Officer refers the matter to Council, he/she will also serve a copy on the Leader with notice that the matter is to be referred to Council. The Executive will have 6 weeks or as soon as reasonably practical thereafter in which to respond to the overview and scrutiny report, and the Council shall not consider it within that period. When the Council does meet to consider any referral from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on a matter which would impact on the budget and policy framework, it shall also consider the response of the Executive to the overview and scrutiny proposals.

(b) Executive Matters Delegated to an Executive Committee or Executive Member

2. Where the Overview and Scrutiny Committee prepares a report for consideration by the Executive in relation to a matter where the Executive has delegated decision making powers to another individual member of the executive or to an Executive Committee, then the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will submit a copy of their report to that individual or committee for consideration. At the time of doing so, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee shall serve a copy on the Proper Officer and the Leader. If the member or Executive Committee with delegated decision making powers does not accept the recommendations of the Overview and

Scrutiny Committee then the matter will then be referred to the next available meeting of the Executive for debate before exercising his/her decision making power and responding to the report in writing to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Executive member or Committee to whom the decision making power has been delegated will respond to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee within 6 weeks of receiving it. A copy of his/her written response to it shall be sent to the Proper Officer and the Executive Member or Committee Chairmen will attend a future meeting to respond.

(c) Cabinet Business - Work Plan

3. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee will have access to the Executive's forward plan and timetable for decisions and intentions for consultation. Even where an item is not the subject of detailed proposals from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee following a consideration of possible policy/service developments, the committee will at least be able to respond in the course of the executive's consultation process in relation to any key decision.

17. RIGHTS OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEMBERS TO DOCUMENTS

1. In addition to their rights as councillors, members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee have the additional right to documents, and to notice of meetings as set out in the Access to Information Procedure Rules in Part 4 of this Constitution.

2. Nothing in this paragraph prevents more detailed liaison between the Executive and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (or any Scrutiny Panel) as appropriate depending on the particular matter under consideration.

18. MEMBERS AND OFFICERS GIVING ACCOUNT

1. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee or a Standing Scrutiny Panel or 'Task and Finish' Scrutiny Panel may scrutinise and review decisions made or actions taken in connection with the discharge of any Council functions. As well as reviewing documentation, in fulfilling the scrutiny role, it may require any member of the Cabinet, the Head of Paid Service, a Director or Assistant Director to attend before it to explain in relation to matters within their remit:

- (a) any particular decision or series of decisions;
- (b) the extent to which the actions taken implement Council policy; and/or
- (c) their performance;

and it is the duty of those persons to attend if so required.

2. Where any member or officer is required to attend the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or Panel under this provision, the Chairman will inform the Proper Officer. The Proper Officer shall inform the member or officer in writing giving at least 14 working days notice of the meeting at which he/she is required to attend.

The notice will state the nature of the item on which he/she is required to attend to give account and whether any papers are required to be produced for the Committee. Where the account to be given to the Committee will require the production of a report, then the member or officer concerned will be given sufficient notice to allow for preparation of that documentation.

3. Where, in exceptional circumstances, the member or officer is unable to attend on the required date, then the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or Panel concerned shall in consultation with the member or officer arrange an alternative date for attendance not less than 14 days from the date of the original attendance.

19. ATTENDANCE BY OTHERS

1. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee or Panel may invite people other than those referred to in paragraph 18 above to address it, discuss issues of local concern and/or answer questions. It may for example wish to hear from residents, stakeholders and members and officers in other parts of the public sector and shall invite such people to attend. Such attendance is optional for those invited.

2. Any member of the public or a representative of an outside organisation may ask a question or address the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, or **any Scrutiny Panel** on any agenda item (except those dealt with in private session as exempt or confidential business) due to be considered at a meeting. The following rules shall apply to such requests:

(i) requests must relate to an existing agenda item;

(ii) requests must not raise new business for the meeting concerned;

(iii) all requests must be notified to the Council by 4 pm on the day of the meeting;

(iv) the request to ask a relevant question or address the Committee or a Panel shall only be allowed once and the same question or address may not be repeated subsequently at another scrutiny body in that Council year;

(iv) requests accompanied by proposals to circulate written material must be received **five clear days** before the meeting in time to be sent to Overview and Scrutiny Committee members in advance of the meeting;

(v) requests need not be in writing;

(vi) a maximum of two persons shall be permitted to address the Committee on any one agenda item;

(vii) a time limit of 3 minutes per speaker shall apply;

(viii) the Overview and Scrutiny Committee shall be able to ask questions on any comments made;

(ix) the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee shall have discretion as to whether to limit the number of persons wishing to address the Committee if it is considered that the number of such speakers will unduly delay the proper despatch of business at any meeting.

20. CALL-IN

1. When a decision is made by the Executive, an individual member of the executive or a committee of the Executive, or a key decision is made by an officer with delegated authority from the Executive, or an area committee or under joint arrangements, the decision shall be published, including where possible by electronic means, and shall be available at the main offices of the Council normally within 5 working days of being made. All members of the Council will be sent copies of the written records of all such decisions within the same timescale, by the person responsible for publishing the decision.

2. That notice will bear the date on which it is published and will specify that the decision will come into force, and may then be implemented, on the expiry of 5 working days after the publication of the decision, unless the required number of members objects to it and calls it in.

3. During that period, the Proper Officer shall call in a decision for scrutiny if so requested in accordance with paragraph (h) below and shall then notify the decision-taker of the call-in. He/she shall consult with the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee who will determine that consideration of the call in will be referred to:

- (i) the next Overview and Scrutiny Committee; or
- (ii) **an appropriate Panel**; or
- (iii) a Task and Finish Panel.

If consideration of any executive decision is likely, under these rules, to be delayed for more than two weeks the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee may require an extraordinary meeting to be convened at an earlier date if the circumstances appear to warrant this.

4. If, having considered the decision, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or delegated Panel is still concerned about it, then it may, subject to the procedures outlined in Rule 16(a) or (b) above, refer it back to the decision making person or body for reconsideration, setting out in writing the nature of its concerns or refer the matter to full Council. If referred to the decision maker they shall then reconsider within a further 5 working days, or in the case of a Cabinet decision, as soon as practically possible amending the decision or not, before adopting a final decision.

5. If the matter was referred to full Council and the Council does not object to a decision which has been made, then no further action is necessary and the decision will be effective in accordance with the provision below. However, if the Council does

object, it has no power to make decisions in respect of an executive decision unless it is contrary to the policy framework, or contrary to or not wholly consistent with the budget. Unless that is the case, the Council will refer any decision to which it objects back to the decision-making person or body, together with the Council's views on the decision. That decision-making body or person shall choose whether to amend the decision or not before reaching a final decision and implementing it. Where the decision was taken by the Executive as a whole or a committee of it, a meeting will be convened to reconsider within 14 working days of the Council request. Where the decision was made by an individual, the individual will reconsider within 14 working days of the Council request.

6. If the Council does not meet, or if it does but does not refer the decision back to the decision-making body or person, the decision will become effective on the date of the Council meeting or expiry of the period in which the Council meeting should have been held, whichever is the earlier.

7. Where an Executive decision has been taken by an area committee, then the right of call-in shall extend to any 3 members of another area committee if they are of the opinion that the decision made but not implemented will have an adverse effect on the area to which their committee relates. In such cases, those 3 members may request the Proper Officer to call-in the decision. He/she shall call a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on such a date as he/she may determine, where possible after consultation with the chairman of the committee, and in any case within five days of the decision to call-in. All other provisions relating to call in shall apply as if the call in had been exercised by members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

8. Three members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or any five members of the Council have the right to call in an Executive decision. Such a request shall be in writing in the prescribed format and referred in Person to the Proper Officer.

9. Call in arrangements shall not apply to decisions on non-executive functions by Committees, Sub-Committees, Panels or Boards of the Council.

10. In the operation of "call in" arrangements, members of the Council shall also adhere to the terms of the Protocol approved by the Council and set out in Appendix 1 to these rules.

21. CALL-IN AND URGENCY

1. The call-in procedure set out above shall not apply where the decision being taken by the Executive is urgent. A decision will be urgent if any delay is likely to be caused by the call in process would seriously prejudice the Council's or the public interest. The record of the decision, and notice by which it is made public shall state whether in the opinion of the decision making person or body, the decision is an urgent one, and therefore not subject to call in. The Chairman of the Council must agree both that the decision proposed is reasonable in all the circumstances and to it being treated as a matter of urgency. In the absence of the Chairman, the Vice-Chairman's consent shall be required. In the absence of both, a Joint Chief Executive or his/her nominee's consent shall be required. Decisions taken as a

matter of urgency must be reported to the next available meeting of the Council, together with the reasons for urgency.

2. The operation of the provisions relating to call-in and urgency shall be monitored annually, and a report submitted to Council with proposals for review if necessary.

22. PROCEDURE AT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETINGS

1. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee shall consider the following business:

- (a) minutes of the last meeting;
- (b) declarations of interest;
- (c) consideration of any matter referred to the committee for a decision in relation to a call in;
- (d) responses of the executive to reports of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee;
- (e) **questions or requests by members of the public to address the Committee on any agenda item provided that these are relevant to the Council or the District and have not been dealt with at a previous meeting of the Committee or of any Scrutiny Panel**
- (f) the business otherwise set out on the agenda for the meeting.

23. CONDUCT OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY FUNCTIONS

1. Where the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or a Panel conducts investigations (e.g. with a view to policy development), they may also ask people to attend to give evidence at committee meetings which are to be conducted in accordance with the following principles:

- (a) that the investigation be conducted fairly and all members of the committee be given the opportunity to ask questions of attendees, and to contribute and speak;
- (b) that those assisting the committee by giving evidence be treated with respect and courtesy; and
- (c) that the investigation be conducted so as to maximise the efficiency of the investigation or analysis.

2. Following any investigation or review, the Committee/or Panel concerned shall prepare a report, for submission to the Cabinet and/or Council as appropriate and shall make its report and findings public.

24. ANNUAL REPORT

1. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee shall submit an annual report to the Council in April each year on work undertaken during the preceding 12 months.

25. PARTY WHIPS

1. To facilitate cross party working, party whips will not be applied to the overview and scrutiny process.

PROTOCOL ON CONSIDERATION AND REPORTING ON EXECUTIVE DECISIONS CALLED IN BY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

1. Purpose of Protocol

- (a) To codify how the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or delegated Panel should deal with "call in" items.
- (b) To codify how the Executive should respond to reports by Overview and Scrutiny on decisions which have been called in.

2. Validation of "Call In"

- 2.1 All "call in" requests shall be made in writing in accordance with the Council's constitution. "Call in" requests shall only be made by members of the Council who are not members of the Executive. The "call in" shall be validated by the Chief Executive and referred to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for consideration in accordance with the provisions of the constitution.

3. Consideration of "Call In" Items by Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- 3.1 Consideration of Call-ins shall be the responsibility of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee which will decide whether to consider the issue itself or direct a Panel to undertake it and report back to the decision maker. "Call in" items shall be referred to the next available date for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or delegated Panel. The provisions of the Overview and Scrutiny Rules in the Council's constitution will apply to "call in" requests which need to be dealt with more quickly.
- 3.2 At its meeting, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or delegated Panel will receive:
 - (a) copies of all documentation submitted to the Executive on which the decision was based;
 - (b) a copy of the written notification of the "call in" including the names of the relevant Councillors who requested the "call in" and their grounds for so doing; and
 - (c) any other relevant documentation.
- 3.3 The relevant Executive Portfolio Holder and at least one of the members who activated the "Call in" and who shall act as spokesperson for those members, shall attend the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or delegated Panel meeting.
- 3.4 The "Call in" decision shall be considered in the following manner:
 - (a) the **Lead Signatory to the calling in of the decision** shall describe their concerns;
 - (b) **the four remaining signatories shall then speak in support of the "Call in"**

(NB if there are more than 5 signatories, the only the lead member and the following 4 Councillors on the call in notification shall be called to speak. Any other Councillor whose name appears on the call in notification shall be able to speak during the general debate on the item – see (d) below.)

- (c) the Portfolio Holder shall then respond;
- (d) the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or delegated Panel will then debate the issues involved. The Chairman of the meeting shall have the discretion to vary the way in which evidence is gathered including speakers and public participation if appropriate but shall seek a response from the initiating Councillor(s) and the Portfolio Holder before formulating its recommendations;
- (e) The Overview and Scrutiny Committee or delegated Panel has the following options:
 - (i) confirm the decision, which may then be implemented immediately, or
 - (ii) refer the decision back to the decision taker for further consideration setting out in writing the nature of its concerns, or
 - (iii) refer the matter to full Council in the event that the Committee or Panel considers the decision to be contrary to the policy framework of the Council or contrary to, or not wholly in accordance with, the budget.
- (f) If it appears that the review of a decision of the Executive cannot be completed at one meeting, the Executive or decision taker will be informed, indicating any preliminary views the Committee or Panel may have and a proposed timescale for the completion of the review. The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee/Panel shall, if necessary, consult with the Leader of the Council regarding the urgency of the proposed decision or any other related matter;
- (g) The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or delegated Panel shall sum up the recommendations to be submitted to the Executive and these shall be incorporated in full in the Minutes or report of the meeting;
- (h) In cases where the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or delegated Panel determines that a review of the decision is not justified or that, having reviewed the decision of the Executive, it has no adverse comment to make, the Committee or Panel shall ensure that its decision is published in the Members' Bulletin;
- (i) In the circumstances outlined in (g) above, the decision of the Executive or Decision Taker may be implemented with effect from the date of that meeting;
- (i) A report detailing any appropriate recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or delegated Panel shall be reported to the Decision Taker
- (k) In presenting the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or delegated Panel, the Chairman may make general comments on the

Committee's/Panel's recommendations, answer questions and respond to comments or new proposals made by the Executive at that meeting; and

(l) The report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or delegated Panel shall be sent in draft to all its Members for approval prior to their submission to the Decision Taker.

(m) Minority reports may be made by members of Overview and Scrutiny Committee or delegated Panel in accordance with the Protocol for that purpose.

4. Consideration of Reports on "Call In" Items by the Executive

- 4.1 The report of an Overview and Scrutiny Committee or delegated Panel will be referred in the first instance to the relevant Portfolio Holder(s) for the executive function concerned.
- 4.2 If the Executive decision is one which the Portfolio Holder(s) has delegated powers to make, he or she shall consider the written proposals of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or delegated Panel, must consult the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and delegated Panel Chairmen if he or she is minded to accept or reject them. In doing so the Portfolio Holder will ensure that, in recording that decision, the reasons for accepting, rejecting or amending those views are set out in the decision notice.
- 4.3 If the Executive decision is one which the Executive itself or a Committee of the Executive (acting under delegated powers) is competent to take, the relevant Portfolio Holder will consider the proposals of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or delegated Panel and refer them, with his or her written response, to the decision making body concerned.
- 4.4 At a meeting of the Executive or of any Committee of the Executive, the following documentation shall be submitted:
- (a) the agreed report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or delegated Panel and any other supporting documents considered by it;
 - (b) a report of the Portfolio Holder indicating the response to the proposals of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or delegated Panel, indicating the options available and recommendation for acceptance, rejection or alteration of those proposals with reasons; and
 - (c) any other information.
- 4.5 The Executive or Committee of the Executive shall consider the matter as follows:
- (a) the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or delegated Panel shall present the views and recommendations of the Committee/Panel based on the report of the relevant OSC meeting and respond to questions, make general comments and respond to new proposals as appropriate;
 - (b) the relevant Portfolio Holder shall then respond by presenting his report and recommendations on the proposals of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or delegated Panel;

(c) the Executive (or Committee thereof) shall then consider the original decision, the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or delegated Panel and any proposals by the Portfolio Holder; and

(d) the Executive (or Executive Committee) will then make a final decision on whether to re-affirm the original decision, amend the original decision or substitute a new decision. This decision shall be recorded in the minutes of the meeting together with supporting reasons.

4.6 Where a Committee of the Executive is required to report to the full Executive on any matter, it shall submit a recommendation on action proposed to the Executive as part of the minutes of the meeting.

5. Implementation of Decisions When Cabinet Control or Membership Changes

5.1 Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraphs 3.4(g) and (h) above, where political control of the Cabinet or Cabinet membership changes following the Annual Council meeting each year, any decision made by the Executive and supported by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or delegated Panel following a "call-in" but not implemented before the changes occur, shall stand referred to the Cabinet for further review before action is taken.

6. Consideration of "Call In" Reports of Overview and Scrutiny Committees made to the Full Council

6.1 In some circumstances, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or delegated Panel may choose to refer the results of their consideration of "call in" items to the full Council, rather than the Executive in those instances set out in paragraph 3.4 (d) (iii) above and 6.2 below. With any necessary modification the "call in" shall be dealt with at the Council meeting in accordance with paragraphs 4.1 - 4.5 above.

6.2 In considering whether to report to the full Council, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or delegated Panel shall take account of the advice of the proper officer on:

(a) whether the Council may properly determine the matter if the function is delegated to the Executive;

(b) whether the Executive decision affects the policy or budget framework of the Authority and should properly be determined by the Council;

(c) whether the Executive decision relates to a matter which either reserved to the full Council by the constitution or by resolution; and

(d) any other advice which indicates that, for whatever reason, a report to the Executive is more appropriate to the proper despatch of Council business.

7. Restriction on "Call In"

7.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee shall at all times be aware that the decisions of the regulatory or non-executive bodies of the Council are not subject to "call in".

7.2 The "call in" procedure shall also not apply to any recommendation by the Cabinet to the full Council.

8. Withdrawal or Modification of a "Call In"

8.1 A valid "Call in" may be withdrawn at any time by the Lead signatory.

8.2 The lead signatory to a validated "Call In" or the relevant Portfolio Holder may request a meeting with the Chairman of the Committee prior to the "Call in" being considered by the Committee in order to discuss the following:

- (a) the management of the "Call in" debate at the Committee meeting concerned;**
- (b) the possibility of reaching agreement on removing any objections to the decision in question which are raised in the call in request; and**
- (c) the withdrawal of a "Call in".**

8.3 Where the lead signatory agrees to withdraw or modify a "Call in", the Councillor concerned shall notify his fellow signatories as soon as practicable and the circumstances shall be reported to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

8.4 If a "Call in" is withdrawn, the circumstances will be notified to all members of the Council via the Council Bulletin.

8.5 In cases where a Portfolio Holder has agreed to modify a decision, he or she shall issue a revised decision notice or refer the proposal back to the Cabinet, if the latter made the original decision.

8. Definitions

8.1 For the purpose of this Protocol, the following definitions shall apply:

(a) "Executive"

This term should be interpreted as referring to the Cabinet, a Cabinet Committee or an individual Portfolio Holder acting under delegated powers.

(b) "Decision"

Denotes a decision on an Executive function by the Cabinet, a Committee of the Cabinet or of an individual Portfolio Holder.

(c) "Decision Taker"

This means the Cabinet, a Cabinet Committee or an individual Portfolio Holder who made the original decision.

9. Review of Protocol

9.1 This Protocol will be reviewed by the Council as part of its constitution as and when appropriate.

Report Back to: Finance and Performance Management Scrutiny Panel
Date of Meeting: 12th November 2013

**Sub Group Members: Cllrs Alan Lion, Gagan Mohindra and Sylvia
Watson**

1. BACKGROUND

At the meeting of Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee 21st January 2013 a question was raised about the recharge of member's allowances to the housing revenue account. This resulted in a discussion about how the levels of recharges made it difficult to determine if the service was providing Value for Money (VFM). The Finance and Performance Management Scrutiny Panel were asked by the Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee to investigate recharges as members found them confusing. Additionally when questioned Directors or Officers have been unable to effectively explain cross charged costs appearing in departmental budgets.

2. METHODOLOGY

A small sub group was set up under the Chairman of Finance and Performance Management Scrutiny Panel to investigate the issues with the view to defining the problem and to understand the methodology for cross charging.

This report is presented back to the Finance and Performance Management Scrutiny Panel for consideration and comment.

3. FINDINGS SO FAR

Working with Peter Maddock Deputy Director (Accountancy) it has been possible to investigate and look below the surface of the high level budget and accounts presented to members. The council use an accounting system which enables budget holders (Budget Spending Control Officers) to assign, approve and manage costs directly attributable to their departments. This information is recorded in the Budget Spending Control and Code Book and is measured against this during the year. However common services i.e. Service Support costs, although controlled through a single budget holder control point e.g. Accommodation, IT, the Telephone system are apportioned by Finance and allocated at year end across all departmental budgets. An example section from the Budget Spending Control book is attached.

Similar calculations are made as part of the budget preparation, allowing the annual financial accounts to be compared with the budget. It is not clear as to the value gained from this for day to day management by the after the event comparison, especially given the significant amount of work involved.

This preliminary investigation has inevitably resulted in more questions.

Q – Is it a Financial Control requirement to prepare budgets that includes allocations (recharges) of costs?

Certainly the allocation of costs on a particular department from other areas have limited if any relevance to spending control officers as they are not in control of those cost items.

The allocations of costs not directly attributable to specific activities are calculated according to CIPFA rules. This is required for the annual accounts and is not necessary for management accounting.

4. THE BUDGET

The budget is a tool used in planning future activities for a particular time period and against what actually happens; this can be compared revealing variances.

Variances must be identified in good time to be able to affect remedial action to remain financially neutral. The reasons why variances have occurred must be determined to ensure that the appropriate action is taken, i.e. additional savings found or underspends justified. Revision of the budget should only happen if the original budget was not valid.

The budget should be part of the management controls to ensure that the strategic objectives of the council are met. As such it should be pro-active planning rather than “cut and see”.

5. SPENDING CONTROL

Spending control officers do not actually spend all the money attributable to them and appear to take responsibility for costs directly signed off by them but not all controllable costs. In the spending control book salaries are for example described as for Accountancy Use Only but arguably these are controllable costs. If the spending control officer is unable to directly influence the magnitude of such a cost or decide whether it should be incurred at all it begs the question “who does?” Every cost must be controllable by someone.

Because of way costs are allocated the spending control officers have items in their budgets over which they have no direct control. However this does make them aware of all their costs and the effect on council’s position.

The term “spending control” reveals an approach that is not designed to control effectiveness and efficiency where a measure of outputs would also have to be applied. Whenever a service could be obtained by outside

contracting e.g. maintenance or running canteen an outside alternative should at least be investigated to provide a benchmark for comparison.

6. CONTEXT FOR NEXT STEPS

The Chief Executive's plans to restructure the council have been presented. Should this provide an opportunity to review the management of costs in the overall context of the setting of objectives through to measuring and controlling outputs and costs?

The council's activities do not yield a readily identifiable monetary value and how much should be spent on these activities becomes a matter of judgment. The most important stage occurs when decisions are made on where to allocate resources and on which projects to undertake. Judgments about efficiency can only be made in the light of both costs and outcome and value of outcome. This is normally a matter of qualitative opinion rather than quantitative measurement. Therefore cost allocations and budgets must be looked at together with KPIs in the context of the strategic plans. Information systems that relentlessly churn out unused information could amount to nothing more than misdirected work.

This raises additional wider issues -

- a) Who is responsible for setting the budget and controlling effectiveness and efficiency;
- b) Local Government does not have a profit or competitive driver, how can the council achieve best in class. VFM, best process and clear responsibility;
- c) Benchmarking against other authorities may not be an effective measure;
- d) How to drive forward through continuous improvement and change management; and
- e) Should business plans have a role in establishing the way forward?

7. NEXT STEPS

The areas identified for further immediate information fall into two broad categories:

- Hierarchy of delegation
- Cost allocation for management purposes

As regards the hierarchy of delegation we need to establish the responsibility and scope of control of:

- a) Portfolio holders
- b) Directors
- c) Other officers

In respect of cost allocation for management purposes we need to establish:

- i) Which costs are controllable within each responsibility centre (controllable costs may include direct fixed costs e.g. depreciation if a directorate controls the fixed asset decisions and imputed interest charge based on opportunity cost of funds.);
- ii) Which fixed costs are committed costs that cannot be eliminated without a change in objectives;
- iii) Which common fixed costs are medium term costs that can be reduced without immediate major disruptions to the objectives;
- iv) Whether there is cross charging should be market based or negotiated rather than cost-based;
- v) Which costs are step costs in nature?

*Alan Lion
Gagan Mahindra
Sylvia Watson.*

BUDGET

Spending Control and Code Book

Cost Centre Code

33060

Cost Centre Name

ACCOUNTANCY

Spending Control Officer

P Maddock

A: Accountancy Use Only

Class	Type	Code	Job	Job Cost	Budget
Employee Expenses	Salaries	A			479,900
	Committee Attendance	A			1,150
	P/Fund Current Service Cost	A			59,780
	Frs17 Reversals Super Ers	0341			(41,260)
	Staff Related Insurance	A			1,550
					501,120
Transport Related Expenses	Casual Mileage	A			170
	Leased Car Mileage	A			10
	Leased Car Recharge	A			4,150
					4,330
Supplies And Services	Photocopying	3300			300
	Subsistence Expenses	3610			70
	Subscriptions	3730			530
					900
Support Services	Office Accommodation	A			27,170
	Managerial & Professional	A			58,820
	Computers - Central	A			40,260
	Office Services	A			12,260
	Health And Safety	A			1,080
	Print Operations Internal	A			520
	Telephones	A			8,260
	Corporate Training	A			3,830
					152,200
Support Service Recharges	Support Service Recharges	9610			(657,570)
					(657,570)
Recharge To Finance Misc	Recharge To Finance Misc	9650			(980)
					(980)
					0

BUDGET

Spending Control and Code Book

Cost Centre Code

33065

Cost Centre Name

BANK & AUDIT CHARGES

Spending Control Officer

P Maddock

A: Accountancy Use Only

Class	Type	Code	Job	Job Cost	Budget
Supplies And Services	Professional Fees	3420			149,570
	Banking And Cash Collection	3440			19,130
					168,700
Support Services	Office Accommodation	A			5,420
	Managerial & Professional	A			3,010
	Telephones	A			670
					9,100
Support Service Recharges	Support Service Recharges	9610			(129,370)
					(129,370)
Other Recharges	Other Recharges	9630			(59,560)
					(59,560)
Recharge To Finance Misc	Recharge To Finance Misc	9650			11,130
					11,130
					0
		Total			0

BUDGET

Spending Control and Code Book

Cost Centre Code

33070

Cost Centre Name

DEBT & INSURANCE SERVICES

Spending Control Officer

E Higgins

A: Accountancy Use Only

Class	Type	Code	Job	Job Cost	Budget
Employee Expenses	Salaries	A			126,090
	Committee Attendance	A			350
	P/Fund Current Service Cost	A			18,210
	Frs17 Reversals Super Ers	0341			(11,230)
	Staff Related Insurance	A			470
					133,890
Transport Related Expenses	Leased Car Mileage	A			30
	Leased Car Recharge	A			3,940
					3,970
Supplies And Services	Equipment - New	3010			90
	Equipment - Maintenance	3030			100
	Subsistence Expenses	3610			40
	Legal Expenses	3680			150
	Subscriptions	3730			200
					580
Support Services	Office Accommodation	A			9,020
	Managerial & Professional	A			41,730
	Computers - Central	A			24,890
	Office Services	A			3,840
	Health And Safety	A			340
	Print Operations Internal	A			70
	Telephones	A			2,610
	Corporate Training	A			1,220
					83,720
Fees & Charges	Fees & Charges	9210			(12,000)
					(12,000)
Commission	Commission	9320	FI013	Mortgage Commission	(200)
					(200)
Support Service Recharges	Support Service Recharges	9610			(169,950)
					(169,950)
Recharge To Finance Misc	Recharge To Finance Misc	9650			(40,010)
					(40,010)
					0

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Report to the Finance & Performance Management Scrutiny Panel

Date of meeting: 12 November 2013

Portfolio: Finance & Economic Development

Subject: Recharge of Support Services

Officer contact for further information: Peter Maddock (01992 - 56 4602).

Democratic Services Officer: Adrian Hendry (01992 – 56 4246)



Recommendations/Decisions Required:

That the Panel note the attached report of the Cross Charging Sub Group;

Executive Summary

The report provides some background to the reasons behind recharging Support Services costs to services that benefit from their work.

Reasons for proposed decision

To note the work carried out

Other options for action

No other options available.

Report:

1. At the meeting of the Finance Cabinet Committee of 21st January 2013, questions were raised by members about the reasons for recharging costs and there was a wish to understand the process and the reasons for it. A Sub Group was appointed to carry out this work.
2. The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) produce a document on an annual basis called the Service Reporting Code of Practice (SeRCOP). This gives guidance on how costs should be reported in an effort to get some degree of consistency across Local Authorities. There are a number of Mandatory Headings and Sub Headings to report on as well as others that are discretionary.
3. The Main General Fund headings applicable to this Council are Central Services, Cultural Related Services, Environmental and Regulatory Services, Highways and Transport Services, Housing Services and Planning Services. The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) has to be accounted for separately by law. These are the headings that appear in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement within the Statutory Statement of Accounts.
4. SeRCOP also requires a subjective analysis of each Service budget heading. A subjective heading refers to the type of expenditure, for example Salaries, Electricity, Car Allowances, Stationery, Contracted Services and Support Services to name but a few. There is also a requirement to report the 'total cost of a service' and this is defined as including all expenditure attributable to the service/activity. Both direct costs and support

costs must be included and this is the reason for the recharge process that is carried out.

5. This Council, because it is a Democratic organisation, has additional costs to bear because of this and this is referred to as the Corporate and Democratic Core which is a sub heading within Central Services. This is initially a General Fund cost but other accounts such as the HRA or Pension Fund, if applicable, should be required to contribute toward their share of the cost. This needs to be based on a reasonable estimate of the time spent on HRA matters by those involved in the democratic process.
6. The Sub Group have met and examined some of the Support Service budget sheets which show the individual budgets at subjective level. All Revenue budgets are constructed in this manner so that each Service budget is made up of a number of smaller subjective budgets. The budget is monitored at the subjective level as well as the Service total level. All Support Services must be fully allocated to the services that they support including other support services if applicable. The process is a financial accounting process intended to calculate the total cost of each service. However the total cost as defined by the code may or may not be relevant for decision making purposes but this would depend on the type of decision to be made.
7. All Support Services are allocated on the most appropriate basis. For some services there is an obvious method. Office Accommodation – floor area. Payroll – headcount. Telephone Charges – based on handsets. Cashiers – Transactions processed. Others will need to be allocated based on an assessment of the work carried out. For Example Accountancy and Legal. Some allocation processes are relatively straight forward others less so but a balance needs to be struck between getting costs broadly allocated to the correct headings and ensuring complete accuracy.
8. The current system is such that for example the Spending Control Officer for waste management is only responsible for those costs in their control and it is accepted that an element of the total cost of the waste management service will be outside that control. Having said that all costs are ultimately in the control of a Spending Control Officer albeit a different officer and also this may be in the long term rather than short term.
9. The Budget is summarised in a budget book which groups services by directorate and includes a summary subjective analysis. There is a further more detailed analysis referred to as the Spending Control Book which gives the full detail of each budget and the budget codes that can be used. A term 'accountancy use only' is used in the book which determines the budget headings that the spending officer can use to commit expenditure against. It does not necessarily denote whether it is controllable or not.

Issues raised by the Sub Group

10. The setting of the budget is the responsibility of Council. This process is directly linked to the setting of the Council Tax (General Fund) or Housing Rents (HRA) and occurs during February of each year for the financial year commencing on the following 1 April. The budget is monitored at different levels of detail by this panel, Management Board, Spending Control Officers and Finance Officers. Any significant variances that come to light are reported and where possible remedial action taken to address the issue.
11. With regard to Value for Money, work has been done in this area by this panel and the use of Benchmarking does assist up to a point but accounting is not always an exact science and differences in interpretation can distort the outcome somewhat rendering the process of limited value.
12. Business Plans should identify any needs for additional funding to meet objectives contained therein. A decision can then be made as to whether the additional investment is felt to be worthwhile.

Hierarchy of delegation

13. Since members are in overall control of the Authority they are by definition responsible for the Finances. Portfolio holders have responsibility for particular services and again it follows that they have responsibility for the finances of those services as they are inextricably linked. The budget is grouped on a directorate by directorate basis and each Director has responsibility for those budgets in their areas and below that all individual Cost Centres have a named budget holder who might be at Assistant Director level or section head level. The Spending Control Officer has delegated authority given to them by the relevant Director. Their responsibility goes down to the subjective heading level of those budgets in their control. Generally over and underspends are investigated unless they are felt to be insignificant.
14. The scheme of virement is an example of the hierarchy of delegation. A virement is the re-allocation of financial resources from one budget to another that does not increase the budget in total. A Director, in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer, can agree virements up to £20,000, the relevant portfolio holder up to £50,000, Cabinet up to £100,000 and Council over £100,000. Virements between revenue and capital are prohibited as are virements between the General Fund and HRA.

Cost Allocation for Management Purposes

15. All costs are controllable either in the short, medium or long term regardless of whether they are fixed or variable. However a spending control officer will have subjective budgets within their cost centre that are not controllable by them and therefore should not be held to account for any over or underspend in these areas. The use of an imputed interest charge in relation to fixed assets used to be part of the budget however this was discontinued some years ago as being irrelevant for establishing the total cost of a service. There is still a place for this particularly in financial decision making when wishing to compare the costs of lease or buy decisions or calculating returns on particular projects. There are however some costs that do form part of total costs that should not be considered in decision making particularly when considering cost saving exercises.
16. With regard to the costs facing the Authority any change in objectives will affect the level of costs. Some services are mandatory and the authority is only able to vary the level of service provided whereas others are discretionary and the authority has the power to provide the service or not as it sees fit. The Authority could choose to expand services but there is obviously a cost attached to that decision. Costs that are fixed in the short term can often be stepped or variable in the longer term. For example the level of HRA Housing Management costs will depend on the number of properties being managed. One Council House sale will have little effect on management costs whereas 100 might do. But equally 100 tenants that pay their rent on time and cause no nuisance cost less to manage than 10 that are constantly in arrears and troublesome generally. Housing Management costs are probably stepped whereas, maintenance costs are generally variable.
17. The allocation of costs could be market based or negotiated and the use of service level agreements for some Support Service recharges has previously been tested. However it tends to be quite time consuming and previously led to internal disputes around the level of charge or whether there should be charged at all. The end result distorted the total cost of some services and defeated the original objective of the exercise.

Conclusion

18. The charging of Support Services to the Cost Centres that they support is a requirement of SeRCOP in order to establish the total cost. There is discretion on how this is achieved but the most appropriate basis available should be used.
19. The costs that make up total cost for a particular service are not all controllable by the

responsible Spending Control Officer for that service and they should only be held to account for costs within their control. However other costs will be controllable by another officer elsewhere in the Authority.

20. The costs that the Authority faces can be Fixed, Variable or Stepped. However some costs that are fixed in the short term become stepped or variable in the longer term. When making decisions about savings that can be achieved the nature of the costs making up the total budget needs to be understood to assess the level of savings that can be achieved by a particular course of action.

21. For some financial information used in management decisions costs that are part of total cost may need to be excluded. Conversely some costs may need to be included that do not form part of total cost. The type of decision being made will determine this.

Resource Implications

The recharging of costs is an accounting process that forms part of the budget setting process.

Legal and Governance Implications

The setting of a budget ensures that there is a financial plan in place that actual costs can be measured against. This activity assists good governance/

Safer, Cleaner, Greener Implications

The Council's budgets contain spending in relation to this initiative.

Background Papers

.Budget Book, Spending Control Book and detailed estimate working papers all held in Accountancy.

Impact Assessments

Risk Management

Budget monitoring ensures that the risk of actual expenditure being significantly different from budget can be managed and remedial action taken when necessary.

Equality and Diversity:

Did the initial assessment of the proposals contained in this report for relevance to the Council's general equality duties, reveal any potentially adverse equality implications? No

Where equality implications were identified through the initial assessment process, has a formal Equality Impact Assessment been undertaken? No

What equality implications were identified through the Equality Impact Assessment process?
None

How have the equality implications identified through the Equality Impact Assessment been addressed in this report in order to avoid discrimination against any particular group?
N/A



Report to Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Date of meeting: 26 November 2013

Subject: Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme – Six Monthly Review

Officer contact for further information: Simon Hill (Ext 4249)

Committee Secretary: A Hendry (ext 4246)

Recommendations:

That the current work programme be reviewed in accordance with rule 9.3 of the Overview and Scrutiny Rules having regard to:

- (a) the resourcing and scope of the programme; and**
- (b) the reserve programme and new proposals from members.**

1. (Assistant to the Chief Executive). The Overview and Scrutiny Procedural rules state that 'The Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme shall be of six – months duration and be reviewed at or before the expiration of that six month period'.

2. The current work programme is attached. A review of this plan is therefore now due.

Task and Finish Panels

3. No Task and Finish Panels were established this year.

4. The final report of the Overview and Scrutiny Review Task and Finish Panel established in April 2012, is on this agenda.

Scrutiny Standing Panels

5. No new Standing Panels were created this year.

Reserve List.

6. A reserve list of scrutiny topics is required to ensure that the work flow of OSC is continuous. OSC will 'pull out' items from the list and allocate them accordingly once space becomes available in the work plan following the completion of existing reviews.

7. To date no new items have been added to the work programme. Members can put forward any further suggestions for inclusion in the reserve list either during the meeting or at a later date. Existing review items will be dealt with first, and then time will be allocated to the items contained in the reserve work plan.

8. Members need to bear in mind that new projects can be added but only if there is capacity among Panels and officers to undertake them.

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Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme – November 2013

Overview and Scrutiny Committee			
Item	Report Deadline / Priority	Progress / Comments	Programme of Future Meetings
(1) OS Annual Review/ Annual Report	June 2013	Final report went to the June 2013 meeting.	04 June 2013; 16 July; 27 August (Extra Meeting); 03 September; 15 October; 26 November; 28 January 2014; 25 February; and 1 April.
(2) To meet with Essex County Council in respect of Children Services and on annual basis, with the attendance of the Director of Children's Commissioning.	June 2013	Completed - Recommendation taken from the Children Services Task and Finish Panel. To invite an Officer and the Portfolio Holder. Noted that the lead county officer had moved on and the service was currently in a state of flux. To review again in the new year.	
(3) Corporate Parenting	June 2013	Completed - Essex CC has asked if they Could give a presentation on Corporate Parenting.	
(4) Scrutiny of Epping Forest Local Strategic Partnership – Chairman and Member level EFDC representatives	July 2013	Completed in July 2013 - Representatives of the partnership to report on an annual basis.	
(5) Six monthly review - (a) Monitoring of OS recommendations (b) OS work programme	For November 2013	Last completed in November 2012	

(6) To review the strategic direction of Epping Forest College, its vision for the future and its relationship with the Community	For the end of the 2013/14 municipal year - the April 2014 meeting.	Last Completed in April 11 when the Principal of Epping Forest College addressed the April 2011 meeting. A new Principal will be appointed in the autumn and they would need a little time to settle into the job.	
(7) To receive a presentation from Youth Council members	For November 2013	Last completed in Nov 12 - members of the Youth Council attended with an update on their programme of work.	
(8) Key Objectives 2012/13	Outturn report to July 2013 meeting	Completed: Outturn report for 2012/13 submitted to the July 2013 meeting. Quarterly progress reports in respect of the annual Key Objectives are made to the Cabinet and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.	
(9) Key Objectives 2013/14	Progress reports to be considered on a quarterly basis.	Quarterly progress to be considered at meetings to be held in Sept. 2013 (Qtr 1), Nov 2013 (Qtr 2) and March 2014 (Qtr 3).	
(10) To review the new organisational make up of the PCT/ West Essex Health Service and the progress made on the commissioning of local health services.	September 2013	Completed - Last looked at in Sept. 2013. Noted that County were also looking at this topic.	

(11) Mental Health Services in the District.	February 2014	To consider the state of the Mental Health Services in the District	
(12) The Essex Probation Service	For January 2014 meeting	The Essex Probation Service has asked if they could give a presentation to our members.	
(13) To receive a presentation from the local CAB on their general services, funding from the Council, the impact of recent Welfare and Budget changes and accommodation issues here in Epping and how we can help them.	October 2013 meeting	Completed - Full Council asked that the O&S Committee receive a presentation from the local Citizen Advice Bureau.	

Standing Panels

Housing Standing Panel (Chairman – Cllr S Murray)

Item	Report Deadline / Priority	Progress / Comments	Programme of Future Meetings
(1) Housing Performance Indicators - 2012/13 Out-turn (Tenant-Selected & KPIs)	June 2013	COMPLETED	17 June 2013; 23 July Cancelled; 22 October ; 22 January 2014; and 25 March
(2) Performance against Housing Service Standards and Review (<i>Recommendations to Housing Portfolio Holder</i>)	June 2013	COMPLETED	
(3) Progress Report on the Welfare Reform Mitigation Action Plan	June 2013	COMPLETED	
(4) Annual Ethnic Monitoring Review of Housing Applicants (<i>Recommendations to Housing Portfolio Holder</i>)	June 2013	COMPLETED	
(5) 12 Month Progress report on Housing Strategy Action Plan 2012/13	July 2013	No longer required – Interim Housing Strategy Action Plan agreed by Housing Portfolio Holder	
(6) Annual Review of the Housing Allocations Scheme	N/A	No review this year – Due to the introduction of the new Housing Allocations Scheme	
(7) 12-Month Progress Report on Housing Strategy Action Plan 2012/13	October 2013	COMPLETED	

(8) Six Monthly Review of the HRA Financial Plan	October 2013	COMPLETED	
(9) Six monthly Progress Report on Housing Business Plan Action Plan	October 2013	COMPLETED	
(10) Progress Report on the Welfare Reform Mitigation Action Plan	October 2013	COMPLETED	
(11) Briefing on the proposed Council rent increase for 2014/15	January 2014		
(12) Six Monthly Progress Report on Housing Strategy Action Plan 2013/14	January 2014		
(13) Proposed housing service improvements and service enhancements – 2014/15 (Recommendations to Cabinet)	January 2014		
(14) Progress Report on the Welfare Reform Mitigation Action Plan	January 2014		
(15) HRA Business Plan 2014/15 (Recommendations to Housing Portfolio Holder)	March 2014		
(16) Six Month Review of the HTA Financial Plan	March 2014		
(17) 12 Monthly Progress Report on Housing Business Plan Action Plan	March 2014		

(18) Progress Report on the Welfare Reform Mitigation Action Plan	March 2014		
(19) New Flexible Tenancy Agreement and revised Standard Secure Tenancy Agreement (Recommendations to Cabinet)	June 2013	COMPLETED	
(20) Housing Service Strategy on Allocations (Review and Update) (Recommendations to Housing Portfolio Holder)	July 2013	COMPLETED	
(21) Progress Report on Private Sector Housing Strategy	October 2013	COMPLETED	
(22) Housing Service Strategy on Harassment (Review and Update) (Recommendations to Housing Portfolio Holder)	July 2013	To be confirmed for later date	
(23) Response to Essex County Council's consultation on the Essex Housing Related Support Strategy	July 2013	Deferred – To 2014, due to delays in the draft HRS Strategy being finalised by Essex County Council	
(24) Progress Report on Private Sector Housing Strategy	July 2013	To be confirmed for later date	
(25) Review of Parking Enforcement on Housing managed grassed areas	October 2013	Referred by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at the request of Cllr H Kane. To be discussed at the December Panel meeting.	
(26) Review of the difficulties with improving communal areas of flat blocks with leaseholders	Oct 2013	Referred by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at the request of Cllr Jennie Hart COMPLETED	

(27) Housing Service Strategy on Information (Review and Update) (Recommendations to Housing Portfolio Holder)	Oct 2013		
(28) Housing Service Strategy on the Private Rented Sector (Review and Update) (Recommendations to Housing Portfolio Holder)	Oct 2013		
(29) Housing Strategy 2014-17	Oct 2013	Deferred – By Housing Portfolio Holder until the completion of the Preferred Options Stage of the Local Plan	
(30) Housing Service Strategy on Energy Efficiency (Review and Update) (Recommendations to Housing Portfolio Holder)	Oct 2013	Deferred – To January 2014, due to higher priority commitments and workload	
(31) Housing Service Strategy on Anti-Social Behaviour (Review and Update) (Recommendations to Housing Portfolio Holder)	Oct 2013	COMPLETED	
(32) Social Housing Fraud Scheme – Progress Report	Jan 2014		
(33) Sheltered Housing and Older People's Handyperson Schemes – 1 Year Review	Jan 2014		

Constitution and Member Services Standing Panel (Chairman – Cllr J Philip)

Item	Report Deadline / Priority	Progress / Comments	Programme of Future Meetings
(1) Review of Essex County Council Elections 2 May 2013	25 June 2013	COMPLETED	25 June 2013; 24 September ; 19 November 14 January 2014; and 18 March
(2) Officer Employment Procedure Rules	25 June 2013	COMPLETED	
(3) Conventions regarding Relationships between Officers and Councillors	25 June 2013	COMPLETED	
(4) Process Review on Appointment of Vice Chairman of the Council	19 November 2013		
(5) Review of Licensing	19 November 2013		
(6) Petitions Scheme	19 November 2013		
(7) Review of Officer Delegation	14 January 2014		
(8) Review of Financial Regulations	14 January 2014		
(9) Review of Polling Stations	18 March 2014		

Safer, Cleaner, Greener Standing Panel (Chairman – Cllr J Lea)
Work Programme 2013/14

Item	Report Deadline / Priority	Progress / Comments	Programme of Future Meetings
(1) Enforcement activity	October 2013	Six monthly report to Panel	09 July 2013 - cancelled
(2) Enforcement activity	April 2014	Six monthly report to Panel	28 October 2013;
(3) CCTV action plan review	July 2013	Six monthly report to Panel – last went to January 2013 meeting – went to October meeting	07 January 2014;
(4) CCTV action plan review	January 2014	Six monthly report to Panel	11 February 2014;
(5) CSP scrutiny review meetings	April 2014	Report last went to April 2013 meeting.	15 April 2014
(6) West Essex Local Policing Area Strategic Assessment	April 2014	Report last went to April 2013 meeting.	Crime & Disorder Scrutiny meeting – 09 July 2013
(7) Receive notes of Waste IAA Member meetings	As appropriate	Notes reported to Panel at first available meeting following receipt – October meeting received notes of 30 January 2013 meeting	
(8) Receive notes of Waste Management Partnership Board	As appropriate	Notes reported to Panel at first available meeting following receipt – October meeting received notes of 15 July 2013 meeting	

Safer, Cleaner, Greener Standing Panel (Chairman – Cllr J Lea)
Work Programme 2013/14

Item	Report Deadline / Priority	Progress / Comments	Programme of Future Meetings
(9) Progress against Climate Local Agreement	October 2013	Six monthly report to Panel – the Council has not yet signed up to the Climate Local Agreement and this still remains to be decided. Instead, Sarah Creitzman and Kassandra Polyzoides have worked on a charter of commitments that were more specific to EFDC. Sarah to carry this forward to Portfolio Holder and Circulate amongst GCWP members for comment.	
(10) Progress against carbon reduction strategy	October 2013	Six monthly report to Panel – Once a charter of EFDC environmental commitments has been established and agreed, a strategy will need to be written based around achieving the aims that are signed up to.	
(11) Receive notes of Bobbingworth Nature Reserve liaison group	As appropriate	Notes reported to Panel at first available meeting following receipt – October meeting received notes of the 27 March 2013 meeting.	
(12) Recycling in flats and multi-occ dwellings	October 2013	A verbal report was given to the October 13 meeting	
(13) Monitor Local Highways Panel	As Appropriate	Once established to keep a watching brief on the effectiveness of the new Local Highways Panel – October meeting received minutes from the February, April, June and Sept 2013 meetings.	

Safer, Cleaner, Greener Standing Panel (Chairman – Cllr J Lea)
Work Programme 2013/14

Item	Report Deadline / Priority	Progress / Comments	Programme of Future Meetings
(14) Review notes of SLM contract monitoring board	As Appropriate	Notes reported to Panel at first available meeting following receipt – October meeting received minutes of the 29 August 2013 meeting	
(15) Receive notes of North Essex Parking Partnership (NEPP) minutes	As Appropriate	Notes reported to Panel at first available meeting following receipt – October meeting received notes from the October 12, December 12, March 13 and June 13 meetings.	
(16) Highway accident statistics	Info will be given to the Panel when available	Report went to April 2013. A further detailed report and presentation from county officers was called for.	
(17) Monitor Police and Crime Panel Minutes	When available		

Planning Services Standing Panel (Chairman – Cllr J Wyatt)			
Item	Report Deadline / Priority	Progress / Comments	Programme of Future Meetings
1. To consider and Review Measures taken to Improve Performance within the Directorate	10 September 2013	Revised Planning Application Validation Checklist	18 June 2013; 10 September ; 10 December; and 8 April 2014
2. To consider and Review Business Processes, Value for Money and Staffing arrangements for the Directorate: a. To consider the Financial Review (Bus Plan Section 3b) b. To consider the Business and Environmental Review (Appendix Business Plan) c. To consider the Directorate Value for Money Statement (Business Plan Section 4 (f))	10 December 2013		
3. To monitor and receive reports/updates on the delivery of the Local Plan: a. To report on the progress of the Local Plan b. To provide further updates on the Local Plan	Minimum verbal report at each meeting		

4. To monitor and receive reports/updates on the Planning Electronic Document Management System	10 September 2013	Received update on Electronic Records Document Management Systems at the September 2013 meeting	
5. To consider the Business Plan	8 April 2014		
6. To establish whether there are any resource implications arising out of the topics under review and advise Cabinet for inclusion in the Budget Process each year. To provide reports/updates as and when required.	10 December 2013		
7. To report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at appropriate intervals on the above.	To consider at each meeting.		
8. Any recent meeting of the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Area and District Committees Invitation Panel	10 December 2013	Any recent meeting of the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Area and District Committees Invitation Panel	
9. To receive urgent or other consultations and consider what response to give on behalf of the Council.		a. Completed consultation in respect of Crossrail 2 – 18 June 2013 b. Completed - Brentwood Borough Local Plan Preferred Options – 10 September 2013	
10. S106 Agreements Monitoring Reports (Annually)	18 June 2013	COMPLETED	
11. Enforcement Plan	10 September 2013	Endorsed the draft Local Enforcement Plan	

Finance and Performance Management Standing Panel (Chairman – Cllr Lion)			
Item	Report Deadline / Priority	Progress / Comments	Programme of Future Meetings
(1) Key Performance Indicators – Performance Outturn 2012/13	Outturn KPI performance report to be considered at the first meeting of the Scrutiny Panel in each municipal year.	Completed - KPI outturn report for 2012/13 considered at the June 2013 meeting.	41 June 2013; Rearranged for 17 June '13 17 September;
(2) Key Performance Indicators – Performance Monitoring 2013/14	KPI performance report to be considered on a quarterly basis.	Quarterly KPI performance report for 2013/14 to be considered at the meetings to be held in September 2013 (qtr 1), November 2013 (qtr 2) and March 2014 (qtr 3).	12 November; 20 January 2014 – jointly with Fin. Cabinet Cttee; and
(3) Key Performance Indicators – Development of indicator set for 2014/15	Draft indicator set to be considered on the basis of third quarter KPI performance for 2013/14.	KPI proposals to be considered at March 2014 meeting.	11 March.
(4) Quarterly Financial Monitoring	Reports to be considered on a quarterly basis.	First quarter information to be considered September '13, 2 nd quarter in November '13 and 3 rd quarter figures at the March '14 meeting.	
(5) Annual Consultation Plan	Report considered on an annual basis. Report went to the June '13 meeting.	Completed - Consultation Plan considered at first meeting of each municipal year.	

(6) Detailed Portfolio Budgets	To the January 2014 meeting of the Cabinet Finance Committee.	Jointly considered at the January '13 meeting of the Cabinet Finance Committee – Annual review of the Portfolio Holders Budgets.	
(7) Equality Objectives 2012-2016 - Monitoring and Progress	Progress to be considered on a quarterly basis.	Quarterly progress to be considered at the meeting to be held in Sept. 2013 (Qtr 1), Nov. 2013 (Qtr 2) and March 2014 (Qtr 4)	
(8) Capital Outturn 2012/13 and use of transitional relief in 2012/13	June '13 meeting	Completed - Last considered at the June 2013 meeting	
(9) Provisional revenue Outturn 2012/13	June '13 meeting	Completed - Last considered at the June 2013 meeting	
(10) Fees and Charges	For the November '13 meeting	Last went to November 2012 meeting.	
(11) Sickness Absence	Six monthly Reports: For November '13 meeting	Half yearly figures of the Council's Sickness Absence figures - Last considered at March 2013 meeting.	
(12) ICT Strategy and Website Feedback	Sept.2013	Updating report went to the September 2013 meeting	

Task and Finish Panels

Overview and Scrutiny Review Task and Finish Panel (Chairman – Cllr Angold-Stephens)

Item	Report Deadline / Priority	Progress/Comments	Programme of Future Meetings
First meeting to define Terms of Reference.		Final Report to November 2013 O&S Committee.	6 December '12; 17 January '13; 14 February '13; 25 March '13; 20 May '13 8 July '13 31 October '13