

		AGENDA ITEM 5
		PSEG/19/14
Committee:	Place Services and Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee	
Date:	26 June 2014	
WORK PROGRAMME AND TOPIC SELECTION (Minute 7/ May2014)		
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Purpose of report

The purpose of this report is to propose a way forward for the effective planning and management of Committee activity over the coming year. It summarises the results of work championed by the Chairman to investigate and prioritise topics for inclusion in the Committee's work programme.

Background

Given the Committee's broad and interesting remit it is inevitable that there is a vast array of topics that could be scrutinised. However, in practice it does not have an infinite capacity to deal with all the topics Members might wish to delve into. Over the past year they have had the opportunity to reflect upon the way that the Committee has conducted its work, and how they can both collectively and as individuals develop better good scrutiny practice. Experience has reinforced the argument that the Committee would be more effective if it adopted a more pragmatic approach to the way it plans and manages its work programme.

It is the Committee's prerogative to determine its own work programme and in doing so it must take account of relevant information to make informed choices. The onus is upon the Committee to manage effectively the resources at its disposal, and to prioritise the consideration of those topics where its input adds value to Council activity and may influence in practice the decisions made. It can use a variety of different approaches to the way it tackles a scrutiny review. However, it is not an effective use of resource if its programme is made up of issues where the Committee's impact will be minimal for instance the timing of a review is poorly instigated, it is duplicating work for which resources have already been allocated by other parts of the organisation, or topics may be of interest but the ability to influence future outcomes is unclear or extremely limited.

There are two appendices attached to this report that summarise the selection of topics for inclusion in the work programme.

Appendix A - sets out the proposed work programme for 2014/2015, and illustrates how resources may be allocated on a monthly basis towards topics and reviews.

Appendix B – collates a number of draft scoping documents that provide background on individual topics.

Although good practice advocates that a more managed approach will promote more effective co-ordinated committee activity, it is recognised that it can be difficult for the Committee to have overall control of the ad hoc demands it has to face from time to time. For example the call in of Cabinet decisions, petitions, and requests made by individual councillors.

Methodology

Although a work programme was developed last summer, it proved impossible to deliver and critically momentum was lost in the way it evolved in practice as unplanned work dominated its agenda. Consequently a more rigorous approach has been pursued this year in order to produce a new programme that takes account of experience of what has or has not worked well, and with reference to the good practice advocated in the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Handbook and was part of the Scrutiny Training that Members' took part in last summer. .

Work on topic selection has been taken forward by the Chairman and Scrutiny Officer. Topics have been identified from various sources including Cabinet Members, Officers, past Committee activity, and not least suggestions put forward by Councillors themselves. All the topics have been investigated further to be able to prioritise them for inclusion or otherwise in the work programme and, in some cases, to highlight other pertinent measures to update Members on relevant activity.

The Chairman has also liaised with the Vice Chairmen and Group representatives during the development of the programme, and their input has been fed into the overall topic selection process not only in terms of individual topic but in the mixture of activity now proposed.

The scoping document template has proven to be a useful tool to collate information for the topic selection process. An abbreviated version of topics incorporated in the proposed work programme has been attached for the purposes of this report to provide a flavour of how the Committee might investigate certain aspects of a topic in a way that it can influence any future decisions that are made by the Cabinet. While the scoping documents have been drafted for the purposes of the topic selection process, it should be pointed out that the detailed planning of an individual review will be undertaken by the Committee and that planning will be incorporated into a fully developed scoping document.

The following extract from the Overview and Scrutiny Handbook sets out the parameters that have been taken into account in the development of the draft Committee work programme for 2014/2015.

Aims of the Work Programme

‘Overall the work programme will:

- Meet the criteria for chosen topics;
- Be balanced –
in terms of some being of longer duration and some being suitable for shorter study; and
of being balanced between the various OS roles identified in legislation and Government guidance in order to ensure that value is being added in different areas by the scrutiny process.
- Be mixed in terms of covering different topics/ services;
- Take into consideration the resources available to support scrutiny;
- Take account of members’ capacity so that unreasonable demands are not placed upon their time, as well as the demands upon support officers and what amount of time they can dedicate in support of the particular subject;
- Consider timescales for instance what are the deadlines in relation to other Council meetings, statutory deadlines, and the deadlines of other external partners. There should also be capacity in the timetable to enable flexibility within the work programme and the capacity to undertake ad hoc work if the committee regards it as a priority; and
- Regularly review and update the programme to ensure that new topics can be factored in and any changes accounted for.

At the end of this process a committee should have an agreed work programme, where the relative priority of items has been assessed, an indication of when each item is to be considered and how the item is to be reviewed.’

Extract from the Council’s own Overview and Scrutiny Handbook chapter on “Selection of Topics”

The selection of topics for inclusion in the work programme has not been an easy task. In line with the selection criteria set out in the Overview and Scrutiny Handbook, the following questions have been asked to assess the relative priorities of suggested issues for review:

1. **RELEVANCE:** How relevant is the review topic to the Council and the people of the county?
2. **FEASIBILITY:** How feasible is it to undertake the review within the parameters set regarding timescale and resources?
3. **CLARITY:** How clearly defined is the review topic or does more work need doing to define the scope of the review?
4. **TIMING:** Why is it proposed to undertake the review now? Is the proposed duration of the review realistic?
5. **SUPPORT:** Are resources available to support the review? This would include member and officer time, expertise, finance, availability of information?
6. **PROPORTIONALITY/ OUTCOMES:** Are the outcomes of the review likely to justify the investment in this review?
7. **OPPORTUNITY COST:** What other reviews may have to be foregone in order to carry out this review?
8. **DUPLICATION:** Does the review duplicate review activity which is taking place elsewhere?
9. **PUBLIC INTEREST:** Does the need for public accountability require a review of the issue? Some reviews may be necessary even when there are no obvious outcomes for change.
10. **COMMITMENT/ ENTHUSIASM:** How strong is the commitment to undertaking the review and driving it forward to a successful conclusion?
11. **ADDED VALUE:** Are there particular advantages in Overview and Scrutiny members undertaking this review over other methods of review?

Analysis

In essence an important part of gathering information has been to focus upon identifying how the Committee might influence and add value to Council activity, the relationship to other work taking place or planned in the future including the timescales for any identified Executive activity so that any scrutiny work may be planned so its recommendations would in fact have the greatest impact upon actions proposed to be taken by the Council, and the overall impact a topic may have for the whole community.

Given the number of potential topics and wish to accommodate Members' interests a critical feature of the process has been to consider how different approaches to a topic could be harnessed to maximise resources. At the same time it has been necessary to balance the Committee's ability to cover a greater number of topics

than would be possible by concentrating totally on in depth projects without trying to cover so many topics that the scrutiny role is superficial. Based on the information obtained different methods of committee activity have been suggested for different topics ranging from -

task and finish groups conducting in depth reviews over a period of months,

to seminars where other expert contributors (both internal and external to the organisation) could be invited to assist Members in the examination of a topic, with a report being produced setting out the Committee's conclusions,

to briefings. For instance where the aim is to ensure that the Committee is updated on the various Cabinet Member portfolios falling within its remit.

It should also be noted that from time to time Cabinet Members also promote seminars and briefings designed to engage all County Councillors in the consideration of specific issues, rather than the more limited membership of one committee. Also information is disseminated electronically to all Councillors on a regular basis, and there are other means available to the individual Councillor to obtain information eg by making direct enquires of Cabinet Members, including in the case of Councillor Bass taking advantage of his regular Highways Surgeries.

It is also worthwhile pointing out that Cabinet Members may set up 'Member Reference Groups'. These groups are made up of non-executive councillors who will provide a sounding board for the Cabinet Member usually in the development of specific policies. They are not part of the Council's scrutiny committee framework, and do not draw on the scrutiny budget. While such a group would not preclude scrutiny activity on a related issue, it would not be an efficient use of resource to duplicate work and therefore any scrutiny committee involvement would have to be planned carefully to ensure a distinct role in any consideration of related work and proposals.

'Scrutiny' is sometimes seen as a useful opportunity to deflect a problem by Executive and Scrutiny Members alike. Scrutiny committees have been used as a means to disseminate or obtain information where alternative methods might be more appropriate without tying up limited scrutiny resources including agenda where realistically tangible outcomes are minimal.

By adopting an ongoing disciplined approach to the design and implementation of its work programme the Committee may over time create bedrock for a more effective scrutiny function in Essex through targeted, incisive, and timely work. Aside from the selection of topics there are other ingredients that are critical to that function including Members' own behaviour and team working.

The Work Programme for 2014/2015

The work programme as now proposed at Appendix A is based upon the objective prioritisation of potential scrutiny projects coupled with a realistic assessment of what may be achievable given the resource available. It is proposed that no more than two task and finish groups conducting in depth reviews be underway at any one time, and that some topics be addressed through seminars where a report may be written to record any conclusions and recommendations reached by the Committee, or a briefing where the primary aim is to update and inform Members on a topic. It is not possible for officers to support formal committee meetings on a monthly basis in addition to the full range of activity envisaged as part of an effective scrutiny function the work programme is intended to deliver, and the resources available to support that function (both in terms of Members and Officers).

The work programme as attached illustrates that while 'committee activity days' will continue to be scheduled on a monthly basis, it does not necessarily follow that a formal meeting will be held on that day. However, other relevant Member activity will be scheduled for those days. It is necessary to remind Members of earlier requests for them to set aside the full day in their diaries. It is a more efficient use of the Member and Officer resource to plan work on those days. If the work programme is to be implemented efficiently it will be important for task and finish groups to plan their work so their meetings etc. can be included in the overall timetable, then everyone involved in the scrutiny process will be better informed and able to manage their individual diaries.

To illustrate the allocation of resources over the course of the work programme, the attachment also sets out ongoing work on a monthly basis. This reinforces the fact that there is a range of work to be managed aside from activity days that is undertaken on behalf of the Committee, and why it is so important for work to be prioritised and planned in advance.

While an agreed work programme will assist in managing committee activity, this report has already alluded to the fact that unforeseen matters will arise from time to time that will affect Members' ability to achieve the goals published in the programme. However, it is hoped that by devising a more robust work programme not only will the Committee become more effective in managing its potential workload and producing positive results, other people will also develop a better understanding of the scrutiny processes in place. Other parties wishing to engage with the Committee will need to reciprocate with better practice in the way that engagement takes place, and provide earlier warning of potential issues for scrutiny. Critically the work programme will enable the Committee to lead in its scrutiny role by setting out its intentions sooner rather than later in the course of its activities.

In summary the work programme as now proposed comprises:

- **Task and Finish Group Activity**

It is proposed that the following in depth reviews be initiated during the summer with an emphasis on the establishment of task and finish groups to undertake the detailed planning of each project prior to any evidence being collated:

- Flood Management and Third Party Responsibilities ('Flood Management')
- Jobs, Welfare and Skills
- Communications Protocol issue arising a recommendation from the COMAH Scrutiny Report ('COMAH')

While this report proposes that no more than two task and groups take place at any one time, the mixture of reviews has been carefully chosen, and as an exception three reviews have been put forward for the following reasons:

- The Committee received a briefing on the topic of the preventative measures available to the County Council that may be taken to enhance improvements in flood management across Essex with particular emphasis upon the enforcement of third party responsibilities following its last meeting on 29 May. It is anticipated that the Flood Management review will be of a longer duration, and will require careful planning that could be usefully undertaken over the summer before any evidence is taken, and its work can be planned more flexibly within the Committee's overall work programme as it is envisaged as a longer running review perhaps around six months. The timing of the review is also important as its early inclusion in the programme will enable its findings to influence the emergence of related policies.
- For the Jobs, Welfare and Skills review additional resource from the Policy and Strategy Team is being made available to support a task and finish group for this particular project thus enabling its launch over the summer. It is suggested that a group should comprise no more than four committed members as it will be an intensive project and involve a lot of discussion with contributors from external organisations, so that co-ordination and communication across the whole group will be vital to its success or otherwise. The successful operation of the former Financial Inclusion Task and Finish Group could provide a useful model for this review.
- While it is acknowledged that from first appearance that the COMAH Communications Protocol review is not significant when compared to some of the other topics that have been prioritised, it is important in terms of the original scrutiny review together with the need to reinforce the monitoring of scrutiny outcomes. Overall it should be a short review and require no more than three or four group meetings depending on how its membership plans its investigation. It would be helpful to complete the review over the summer before other priorities accumulate over the autumn months.

Each task and finish group will be expected to undertake detailed planning for its proposed investigation and complete a scoping document setting out the framework for its investigation for the Committee's approval.

In the autumn it is proposed that subject to other group activity being concluded that a new in depth review of the opportunities to develop the Recycling Centres for Household Waste Service be initiated. The review will be introduced by way of a briefing following the recently concluded customer survey, which will be incorporated as a part of a site visit to the new waste facility at Courtauld Road, Basildon. Again the timing of the review is proposed so that it may inform the way that a modern service could be developed in the future, and its role in terms of the provision of broader recycling facilities.

- **Seminars**

Aside from in depth reviews to be conducted by task and finish groups it is proposed that over the course of the programme a number of seminars be organised with the aim of developing Members' understanding of topics, and providing a channel for the Committee to feed its views to the Cabinet.

For the purposes of the work programme it is intended to distinguish 'seminars' from 'briefings'. Seminars are likely to incorporate contributors from outside of the organisation, and will provide a mechanism for the Committee to cross examine various evidence that may be put forward. This scenario will require that Members participate in the planning of arrangements so that contributors are well briefed beforehand on what information is being sought from them, as well as the Committee demonstrating effective questioning and listening skills on the day. Depending upon the particular seminar a report can be drawn up setting out any conclusions reached by the Committee, and recommendations agreed at a formal meeting for forwarding to the Cabinet. Arising from seminars specific issues may be identified for more consideration as part of the topic selection process for possible inclusion in a future work programme.

It is suggested that this approach be adopted for the following topics:

- Energy Waste Strategy (NB This is scheduled for September 25 in order to influence planned Executive activity)
- Highways Maintenance (NB This is scheduled for October 23)
- Ringway Jacobs Contract (This will be scheduled when an opportunity arises depending on the scrutiny resource available)

- **Briefings**

Although it intended that briefings be designed to be more informative in nature and can require a less intensive use of scrutiny resources, they will form a crucial role in the Committee's activity by ensuring that Members are informed about topics that

are likely to feature in its future work programme, and to develop a better understanding of topics within its remit. The Local Transport Plan and Economic Growth is an example of a proposed briefing where an in depth scrutiny review could be conducted in the longer term. Also there is an item elsewhere on today's meeting agenda for an introductory briefing on the background for the provision of public transport.

Aside from topical briefings it is proposed to incorporate in the work programme specific briefings when Cabinet Members will be invited to attend a meeting to update the Committee on their portfolios, and to answer Members' questions. As part of these briefings Cabinet Members will be asked to cover issues that have been identified as particular areas of concern for instance an update on Country Parks and operational changes at Cressing Temple.

- **Future Work Programme**

As part of the topic selection criteria and allocation of resource, it is inevitable that some topics have to be deferred because other topics have greater priority than others or in terms of timing there are good reasons for delaying their consideration in order to be able to produce better scrutiny outcomes in the longer term. For this reason the following topics have been identified for inclusion in the longer term work programme or for maintaining in a list of topics for further consideration when the programme is reviewed.

- Local Highways Panels. It is proposed that a review be initiated in Spring 2015 when the Panels have been in operation for three years, and their effectiveness can be more investigated more fully.

The following topics will be included in a list of items to be considered for future review and potential inclusion in a future work programme:

- Parking Partnerships
- Economic Growth Partnership Working

The next steps...

Moving forward once the new work programme is agreed by the Committee, it is suggested that in future it could be reviewed on a bi annual basis when topics highlighted in the interim may be prioritised using the selection criteria. It is also proposed that where suggestions are made at meetings for more in depth work to be undertaken that has not been highlighted already in the work programme eg the setting up of a task and finish group, then any decision on its inclusion or otherwise be deferred until a future committee meeting. Cabinet Member proposals will be treated in the same way. This will enable the background necessary to be collated for a more objective view to be made of whether or not to pursue a project in light of its impact upon the programme as a whole.

Following this meeting Member preferences for the various proposed task and finish groups will be sought, and collated for consideration and confirmation at the next Committee meeting on 24 July.

Action required by the Committee at this meeting:

- 1. To consider for approval the work programme now submitted at Appendix A and for action to be taken seek Member preferences for membership of the following Task and Finish Groups so that the projects may begin over the summer:**
 - **Flood Management and Third Party Responsibilities**
 - **Jobs, Welfare and Skills**
 - **Communications Protocol issue arising a recommendation from the COMAH Scrutiny Report**
 - 2. To consider for approval the approach to the implementation of the work programme as set out in this report, and the good practice guidance set out in the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Handbook.**
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Appendix A – Provisional PSEGSC Work Programme

Committee Activity Dates	Committee Activity Day/ Focus of Meetings	Ongoing Activity
2014		<i>NB in addition to specific work identified below as ongoing activity work will include preparation of agenda, arrangements for future meetings as well as unplanned matters arising such as call in of decisions, which will affect momentum of work now scheduled.</i>
June 26	26 June Formal Meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Work Programme – seek approval for topic selection and schedule ○ Part Night Lighting – seek endorsement scrutiny report ○ Financial Inclusion – seek endorsement scrutiny report ○ Briefing on Public Transport Network for Essex ○ Cllr Bass, Cabinet Member Q&A Session 	Work programme development
July 22 Extra briefing date related to following formal meeting (Full Committee)	Briefing on Commissioning Strategies Also briefing on another topic identified in work programme such as Local Transport Plan/ Economic Growth - TBC	
July 24	Formal Meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Commissioning Strategies 	July Flood Management & Third Party Responsibilities

	<p>Followed by Task and Finish Group activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ COMAH Communications TFG (NB need agree timetable to ensure completed before next formal Committee meeting in October) ○ Flood Management & Third Party Responsibilities TFG – agree meeting dates for planning of review ○ Jobs, Welfare and Skills TFG - agree meeting dates for planning of review <p>Cabinet Member Update Briefing – afternoon – TBC</p>	<p>TFG – plan review (NB longer term aim completion New Year)</p> <p>COMAH Communications TFG – plan review, and investigate (NB limited review, aim completion in Autumn)</p> <p>Jobs, Welfare and Skills TFG – plan review (NB longer term aim completion New Year)</p>
August	Mixture of seminar/visits/ task and finish groups	Ditto
September 25	<p>Full Committee visit to Courtauld Road with briefing with external contributors at the site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To update Members on Waste and Recycling issues • To initiate TFG RCHW Service in depth review • To consider options for Waste Energy Strategy • Cllr Walters, Cabinet Member Update 	<p>Arising from visit a report would have to be prepared for subsequent Committee agreement where it may wish to put forward comments to the Cabinet Member</p> <p>Also during September</p> <p>COMAH Communications TFG – completion of scrutiny report for Committee endorsement</p> <p>Flood Management & Third Party Responsibilities TFG – <i>investigation</i></p> <p><i>Jobs, Welfare and Skills TFG - investigation</i></p>

2 nd or 9 th October Additional formal meeting to be scheduled	<p>Date to be agreed</p> <p>Formal meeting to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ COMAH Communications TFG Scrutiny Report – if completed require endorsement for forwarding report to Cabinet Member ○ Update from Jobs, Welfare and Skills TFG – require Committee approval of scoping document ○ Update from Flood Management TFG – require Committee approval of scoping document ○ Report Cabinet Member response to PNL Scrutiny report <p>Followed by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Cabinet Member Update Briefing ○ Task and Finish Group activity 	<p>October</p> <p><i>COMAH Communications TFG – completion of scrutiny report for Committee endorsement</i></p> <p>Flood Management & Third Party Responsibilities TFG – <i>investigation</i></p> <p><i>Jobs, Welfare and Skills TFG - investigation</i></p> <p>Compile report arising from September visit to Courtauld Road</p>
October 23	Highways Maintenance Seminar – Full day	Arising from Seminar a report would have to be prepared for subsequent Committee agreement
November 27	<p>Formal Meeting:</p> <p>To catch up on any business that needs endorsement. However, in view of various TFG activity need to ensure that no new projects initiated to enable momentum to be achieved in in depth investigations. Committee meetings will be staggered hereinafter to take account of work programme requirements overall.</p>	<p>November</p> <p>Flood Management & Third Party Responsibilities TFG – investigation</p> <p>Jobs, Welfare and Skills TFG - investigation</p> <p>RCHW Service TFG – plan review and investigation, and draft scoping document</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Report Cabinet Member response to COMAH Communications Scrutiny Report ○ Report on Courtauld Road Visit ○ Updates from various Task and Finish Groups <p>Followed by: Cabinet Member Update Briefing</p> <p>Task and Finish Group activity</p>	Compile report on Highways Maintenance Seminar
December 18	Focus upon TFG activity and in depth investigations otherwise momentum likely to be lost in that work with knock on effects	<p>December</p> <p>Flood Management & Third Party Responsibilities TFG – draw conclusions/ finalise scrutiny report</p> <p>Jobs, Welfare and Skills TFG - draw conclusions/ finalise scrutiny report</p> <p>RCHW Service TFG – plan review and investigation</p>
2015		
January 22	<p>Formal meeting: To catch up on any business that needs endorsement followed by other TFG activity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Flood Management & Third Party Responsibilities TFG – seek endorsement of scrutiny report ○ Jobs, Welfare and Skills TFG - seek endorsement of scrutiny report 	<p>January</p> <p>RCHW Service TFG – investigation</p> <p>Flood Management & Third Party Responsibilities TFG</p> <p>Jobs, Welfare and Skills TFG</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Report of seminar on Highways Maintenance ○ Updates from Task and Finish Groups <p>Followed by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Briefing - TBC ○ Cabinet Member briefing 	Review the Work Programme and report to subsequent meeting
February 26	Combination of seminar/visits/ task and finish groups	February RCHW Service TFG – Conclude investigation
March 26	<p>Meeting to conduct Committee’s formal business/ followed by other activity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ RCHW Service Scrutiny Report – Update report ○ <i>Updates from various Task and Finish Groups</i> 	March RCHW Service TFG
April 23	Combination of seminar/visits/ task and finish groups	April RCHW Service TFG
May 28	<p>Meeting to conduct Committee’s formal business/ followed by other activity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Local Highways Panel: Briefing to initiate new in depth review ○ <i>Updates from various Task and Finish Groups</i> 	<p>May</p> <p>RCHW Service TFG</p> <p>Local Highways Panel TFG – <i>plan review</i></p> <p>Financial Inclusion TFG to liaise on Cabinet Briefing</p>

June	Combination of seminar/visits/ task and finish groups	June RCHW Service TFG Local Highways Panel TFG – <i>plan review</i>
July	Formal meeting: To catch up on any business that needs endorsement followed by other TFG activity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Financial Inclusion – progress report/ briefing to be commissioned from Cabinet ○ <i>Updates from various Task and Finish Groups</i> 	July Local Highways Panel TFG – <i>plan review</i>
August	Combination of seminar/visits/ task and finish groups	August Local Highways Panel TFG - <i>investigation</i>
Topics where briefings/ seminars to be incorporated into the Committee's schedule of meetings subject to resource; to be considered for inclusion in the Committee's work programme in the future: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ringway Jacobs Contract (<i>see scoping document focus on governance and performance issues</i>) ➤ Local Transport Plan/ Economic Growth Briefing – overview as longer term in depth review more appropriate for 2015 		

Topics to be considered for inclusion in the Committee's work programme in the future:

- Highways Maintenance Strategies
- Parking Partnerships
- Economic Growth Partnership Working

Topics to be addressed in as part of Cabinet Member Update Briefings:

- Cressing Temple and Country Parks
- Carbon Emissions

Appendix B

Scoping Documents

Please note that while the scoping documents now attached are an abbreviated version of the full document template used for scrutiny planning purposes, they do nonetheless set out background to the topics that have been considered as part of the topic selection process to develop a viable and effective work programme for the Committee. For each project that is taken forward Members will produce a full scoping document to demonstrate the framework that they have planned to take the Committee's overview and scrutiny role forward, and how resources will be managed

List of Scoping Documents Attached

Third Party Responsibilities and Flood Management

Jobs, Welfare and Skills: Scrutiny of National Programmes in Essex

COMAH: Communications Protocol

Review of Recycling Centres for Household Waste Service

Developing a Better Public Transport in Essex

Essex County Council's Local Transport Plan (2015 – 2021) Strategy and Priority
Projects for Stimulating Economic Growth

Waste Energy Strategy

Highways Maintenance and Potholes

Ringway Jacobs Contract

Local Highways Panels

Economic Growth and Partnership Working

Parking Partnerships

Cressing Temple Barns

Review Topic (Name of review)	Third Party Responsibilities and Flood Management
Committee	Place Services and Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee
Terms of Reference	To consider the preventative measures available to the County Council that may be taken to enhance improvements in flood management across Essex, with particular emphasis upon the enforcement of third party responsibilities.
Relevant Corporate Links	The Council has new statutory flood management responsibilities under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 coupled with existing powers under the Highways Act 1980. Consequently it would be appropriate for a review to establish how to use effectively the various powers available to it to reduce the incidence of flooding particularly as the Council now has enhanced powers as a Lead Flood Authority and the function has implications for more than one of its services requiring an effective use of its overall resources, both financial and staffing. Failure to discharge some of its duties could result in claims against the Council.
Timescales	Although in depth review the review would be focussed upon the powers available to the Council and the way that those powers may be exercised effectively. Consequently it could be contained within a six month period subject to detailed planning.
Rationale for the Review	<p>Flood management in various context has been a popular area of interest for Members given public interest in the topic especially as the incidence of flooding has increased recently. Furthermore there have been major changes in national legislation, and the County Council as the Lead Local Flood Authority now has overall responsibility for local flooding (surface water, groundwater and ordinary watercourses). There is increasing expectation on ECC to utilise its powers, with the number of flooding cases being referred to the Lead Local Flood Authority for action. Member briefings have been held to promote understanding of the changes that have taken place.</p> <p>The Council has various statutory and permissive powers bestowed upon it that it may take to prevent and manage flooding. With particular reference to third party responsibilities, it may take similar action using various legislation to enforce necessary works that prevent or mitigate flooding. Given the opportunities that are now available to the Council to exercise its community leadership role around this topic, it is important to ensure that it is making effective, consistent and transparent use of those powers.</p>

	<p>At present the County Council has not developed its policies or protocol with regard to using its powers or enforcing third party responsibilities associated with flooding or drainage. Given the nature of the topic and public interest (and indeed potentially competing interests of rural/urban landowners and residents) a scrutiny review could provide a vehicle for raising awareness, as well as a forum for the consideration of a policy and resources required where the Council may set a precedent for a more transparent and effective use of the range of enforcement powers that it may exercise.</p>
<p>Key Lines of Enquiry</p>	<p>What are the County Council's overall roles and responsibilities in relation to flood management?</p> <p>What measures does it have at its disposal to prevent and manage flooding with particular reference to its powers on public and private land? When do which enforcement powers apply, and what options are available to the County Council where there are third party responsibilities?</p> <p>How many flooding cases are referred to the Council where it has potential to take enforcement action upon third parties to effect improvements or prevent flooding?</p> <p>What resources and experience are available across the Council to exercise effective enforcement in relation to flood management?</p> <p>How can the Council embed effective enforcement action and promote good practice to prevent flooding in Essex using the powers available to it?</p> <p>What are the strengths and weaknesses of using the various powers available? What are the barriers to the effective use of those powers?</p> <p>How can the Council make effective use of its communications resources to inform the public on enforcement and preventative action that may be taken to alleviate flooding?</p>
<p>Other Work Being Undertaken</p>	<p>Changes in national legislation mean that flood management is evolving as a new area of activity for County Councils, and there is a lot of national and local activity taking place in relation to those changes as well as addressing the effects of major flooding that has taken place in recent years across the whole country. Consequently there is an increasing amount of information being gathered at the same time as pressure to address local issues and improvements in the way flooding is managed.</p>

What resources are required for this review?	<p><i>In planning the review it is necessary to identify what resources are required to undertake the review, and any costs associated with the committee's activity. Given that the resource available is finite, it will be necessary to consider carefully the timing of the review within the Committee's overall work programme.</i></p>
Indicators of Success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear and consistent policy for ECC regarding cross-service flooding and drainage enforcement matters and third party responsibilities • Improvements in decision making process and service delivery • Reduced expectation on ECC to undertake works which are a third party responsibility. • Reduction in the number of flooding cases referred where third party responsibilities have not been fulfilled
Notes	<p>Proposed inclusion in work programme beginning July 2014</p> <p><i>This document dated June 2014</i></p>

Review Topic	Jobs, welfare and skills: scrutiny of national programmes in Essex
Committee	Place Services and Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee
Terms of Reference	<p>The review is proposing to analyse and scrutinise a number of national programmes linked to jobs, welfare and skills. These National Programmes are commissioned by Departments such as Business Innovation and Skills (BIS) (via the Skills Funding Agency (SFA)), Department of Education (DfE) (via the Education Funding Agency (EFA)) and Department of Work and Pensions (DWP))</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do national programmes, aimed at getting people into employment and equipping them with the right skills to progress into gainful employment, deliver effective results for the people and employers of Essex? • What examples of good practice can be seen locally and nationally? • How can the Council and its key partners engage more effectively with the development and delivery of national programmes, to help address some of the issues affecting Essex?
Relevant Corporate Links	<p>Economic growth of Essex</p> <p>Jobs and skills are vital to the economic growth of Essex. Currently there are multiple national programmes operating locally, including the <i>Youth Contract</i>, the <i>Work Programme</i> and <i>Help to Work</i>, that should be contributing to the wider economic growth ambitions of Essex.</p> <p>Skills are an essential part of economic growth, facilitating progression in the workplace as well as boosting higher level skills, which are attractive to business. This draws in SFA provision which is delivered through colleges, training providers and national programmes.</p> <p>Everyone in Essex should be prepared to participate in contributing to the health of the economy. For some people, low skills impede their life chances which leave them stuck in the revolving door between low-paid work and periods of unemployment.</p> <p>Ensuring that skills and welfare to work services deliver in a coherent and effective way is a key ambition of ECC. This ambition is reflected in the development of the Economic Plan for Essex and the Strategic Economic Plan and EU Structural and Investment Fund Plan for the South East LEP. These documents went to Cabinet in Spring 2014.</p>

	<p>Programmes commissioned by BIS/ SFA, DfE/ EFA and DWP contribute to the following indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of working age people in employment • Percentage of young people aged 16-19 not in education, employment & training • Percentage of Essex businesses who think they can recruit suitable people <p>It is also believed that by making education, skills and welfare to work support more responsive to the market by being more business-led, they can contribute to delivering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job growth in key locations and key sectors <p>These feature in three of the seven outcomes in the Corporate Outcomes Framework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People in Essex enjoy good health and wellbeing • People have aspirations and achieve their ambitions through education, training and lifelong-learning • Sustainable economic growth for Essex communities and businesses <p>ECC is also in the process of developing a Child Poverty Strategy for Essex. The provisional research for this strategy has highlighted that the majority of children in poverty are in households with at least one worker. Hence there may be a connection between low-paid, low-skilled work and child poverty. Whilst this review is not intending to look at any measures to address child poverty directly, any improvements to employment, skills and welfare to work provision in Essex are likely to have an impact on child poverty rates.</p> <p>Current work plan of committee A review of the Place Services and Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee's work plan is currently taking place.</p>	
Timescales	<i>To be confirmed –treat as guideline only at this stage</i>	
	July 2014	Planning Initial research and background. Invitations sent to agencies and partners. Confirmation of work timetable.
	September/ October 2014	Partners invited meetings Further research identified. Site visits, if necessary.
	November 2014	Final draft of report
	December 2014	Final report for committee
Rationale for the Review	<p>The purpose of the review is to challenge the performance of national skills and welfare to work programmes operating in Essex with a view to improving outcomes for people and businesses. Additionally, the review would also enable a spotlight to be shone on areas of good</p>	

practice and highlight where things are working well.

Skills and employment are issues of strategic importance for Essex in its pursuit of economic growth.

Having previously contributed a significant body of local evidence and lobbying on these issues through the All Party Parliamentary Group, Local Growth and Skills and the Whole Essex Community Budget. Currently, Essex County Council is working with the Local Government Association and the County Council Network to influence Central Government to decentralise decision making and delivery of employment, skills and welfare to work provision to enable it to be more responsive to the needs of local businesses and more accountable to local people.

The review would give Members sight of an area of policy that impacts directly on residents in Essex. Members would attempt to understand better the delivery, performance and barriers and, where necessary, hold to account, providers that seek to address issues on employment, skills and helping people back to work. The Committee would provide a valuable public arena to scrutinise issues of significance for Essex residents and strengthen the way that council engages at a national level. Members have a significant role to play in achieving ECC's strategic goal of local determination of this policy area.

DWP's welfare to work provision (i.e. the Work Programme) is due to be re-let in 2016. This review is timely as it will contribute to ECC's strategic influence over this currently disjointed and poorly performing policy area potentially offering greater leverage to local communities.

This direction of travel is consistent with the Whole Essex Community Budget programme, the Economic Plan for Essex (EPfE) and the Strategic Economic Plan (SEP).

Background to the review

Descriptions of the programmes that this review is likely to focus on are below. Further details on the background and emerging issues are found in the Appendix at the end of this document.

The Work Programme and Help to Work

The Work Programme is commissioned by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). Help to Work began in April 2014 as a new set of intensive measures to help the long-term employed back into work.

Youth Contract

The Youth Contract pledged by Government is national programme containing three main elements. The first is additional support for unemployed 18-24 year olds (delivered by DWP). The second is subsidies for small businesses taking on an apprentice aged 16-24

	<p>(delivered by BIS). The third is a programme of additional support aimed at 16-17 year olds who are not in education, employment or training (delivered by DfE).</p> <p>Post-16 skills provision Post 16 education and skills funding comes through the Department for Education (DfE) for young people aged 16-18, and through Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) for those aged 19 and above. Whilst BIS is responsible for skills policy, the SFA is an administrative agency of BIS. The National Apprenticeship Service is a division of the SFA.</p> <p>To keep the scope of the review meaningful and manageable, this review is not intending to consider the mainstream education and training funding for 16-18 year olds that comes through the DfE.</p>
Key Lines of Enquiry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of the programmes, including national performance data for comparison • Performance monitoring – is information available, reliable and accessible to enable us to monitor performance? • How does the programme work in Essex? • What is our relationship with the local providers? • How are they performing? • What mechanisms are in place to respond to local needs, including the need of businesses? • What recommendations would we make to Government Departments to improve the programme nationally and locally? • What can we do to improve local performance?
Other Work Being Undertaken	<p>The review would need to engage with the Employment and Skills Board, Employability and Skills Unit, work on welfare reform and responsible officers (as stated in scoping document), as part of planning for scrutiny.</p>
What resources are required for this review?	<p>In planning the review it is necessary to identify what resources are required to undertake the review, and any costs associated with the committee's activity. Given that the resource available is finite, it will be necessary to consider carefully the timing of the review within the Committee's overall work programme.</p> <p>From June 2014, the strategy function can offer support, including research, to enable scrutiny of these important issues.</p>

Indicators of Success	<p>Of the review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear understanding of how all parties can work together to improve outcomes • An action plan that all parties can agree to adopt to deliver outcomes • An understanding of the impact on outcomes for Essex residents <p>Of the expected overall outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in length of time people are unemployed • More people into gainful work and reduced benefit churn • Reduction in skills deficits in Essex businesses that impinges of growth • Reduction in child poverty/ in work poverty
Notes	<p>Proposed inclusion in work programme beginning July 2014</p> <p><i>This document dated June 2014</i></p>

Review Topic (Name of review)	COMAH / Communications Protocol
Committee	Place Services and Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee
Terms of Reference	To undertake further monitoring of the outcomes of the recommendations made to the Council's Cabinet arising from the Scrutiny Report on Off Site Emergency Planning Requirements around COMAH Sites in Essex approved in February 2013, with particular reference to recommendation 4: <i>'That, in view of the importance of community resilience and the County Council's statutory duties, it be recommended to the Cabinet Members for Communities and Planning, the Leader, and Finance and Transformation Programme, that a protocol be developed to ensure that the services provided by the corporate Communications and IS Teams to the ECPEM Team are modern up to date, effective, and user friendly in the support and delivery of public information on emergency planning in Essex taking into account the needs of individual residents.'</i>
Relevant Corporate Links	This project centres upon monitoring the outcomes of recommendations already submitted to the Council's Executive.
Type of Review	Completion of monitoring review of outcomes of scrutiny activity to be undertaken by a Task and Finish Group as agreed by the Committee (Minute 5/ September 2013)
Timescales	Autumn 2014 – aim to complete
Rationale for the Review	<p>An in depth investigation on this topic was conducted and a scrutiny report was agreed by the former Economic Development, Environment and Highways Policy and Scrutiny Committee (EDEHPSC) in February 2013 (Minute 4).</p> <p>The Scrutiny Report has attracted wider attention, and the monitoring of its outcomes will assist in identifying the contribution that the investigation made towards promoting/ improving the issues investigated.</p> <p>At the Committee's September meeting the Cabinet Member's response to Scrutiny Report recommendations were reported. While the Report had been well received, full feedback on recommendation 4 proposing a communications protocol was incomplete. Consequently it was agreed that a Task and Finish Group be formed to investigate in more detail the Executive response to that recommendation.</p>

Scope of the Topic	The monitoring exercise will focus specifically upon the outcomes achieved or otherwise from the recommendations set out in the scrutiny report, and no new issues will be introduced for review as part of this exercise.
Key Lines of Enquiry	<p>To cross examine the evidence and witnesses on the response and outcomes of recommendation 4 as set out in the scrutiny report. The key lines of enquiry that will be along the lines:</p> <p>In term of the proposal for the development of a Communications Protocol to address the concerns set out in the Scrutiny Report –</p> <p>What existing processes and procedures are in place both internally with the Council's own services and externally with partners? Are there any protocols in place? Are there any proposals to introduce a protocol as set out in the recommendation?</p> <p>What evidence is there to demonstrate that the concerns set out in the scrutiny report are being addressed together with any relevant data? (It would be helpful for the TFG to be shown actual materials/ technology used)</p> <p>With regard to website, the TFG would like to be shown examples on how its content has been improved and the steps that a member of the public could obtain information from the Council's own website in an emergency situation.</p> <p>What literature has been produced for vulnerable members of the community, and those without electronic means to access information?</p> <p>What is 'social media'? What proof is that that it is an effective means of promoting understanding about services as opposed to alerting the public about incidents?</p>
Other Work Being Undertaken	Seek advice from officers./ Various innuendos about upgrading IS/ communication mechanisms but what in practice is currently taking place, and timelines.
What resources are required for this review?	<i>In planning the review it is necessary to identify what resources are required to undertake the review, and any costs associated with the committee's activity. Given that the resource available is finite, it will be necessary to consider carefully the timing of the review within the Committee's overall work programme.</i>

Notes	<p>Inclusion in the work programme beginning in July and completion no later than October 2014</p> <p><i>This document dated June 2014</i></p>
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Review Topic (Name of review)	Future of the Recycling Centres for Household Waste (RCHW) Service
Committee	Place Services and Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee (PSEGSC)
Terms of Reference	To contribute to the development of a longer term vision for the operation of the Recycling Centres for Household Waste (RCHW) Service in Essex.
Relevant Corporate Links	
Timescales	In the autumn it is proposed that subject to other group activity being concluded that a new in depth review of the opportunities to develop the Recycling Centres for Household Waste Service be initiated. The review will be introduced by way of a briefing following the recently concluded customer survey, which will be incorporated as a part of a site visit to the new waste facility at Courtauld Road, Basildon. Again the timing of the review is proposed so that it may inform the way that a modern service could be developed in the future, and its role in terms of the provision of broader recycling facilities.
Rationale for the Review	<p>The former Economic Development, Environment and Highways Policy and Scrutiny Committee (EDEHPSC) approved an interim scrutiny report on the RCHW Service in January 2013 (Minute 5), and recommended that an in depth review be conducted on the future of the Service. The PSEGSC received a briefing in January 2014 on a survey that was due to be launched on public use of the Centres that will be used to inform the development of future proposals.</p> <p>The evidence collated as part of this review and conclusions reached will be forwarded to the Cabinet Member to contribute to the way that options and proposals are developed and, inter alia, the formulation of future decisions in relation to the Council's future recycling facilities.</p>
Key Lines of Enquiry	<p>The EDEHPSC proposal for this review proposed that account be taken of the following issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does the implementation of the Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy affect the role of the RCHW Service in practice? For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How has the development of kerbside collections affected the volume and type of material deposited at recycling centres, and what changes are envisaged in the future?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How will the operation of the Courtauld Road facility impact upon the RCHW Service? • Given the changing role of recycling centres: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What type of modern facilities will be required in the future? ○ How many centres in total may be necessary and where should they be located? ○ What are the key factors that should be considered in developing the future design of the service • What is the impact upon the type and frequency of visits to recycling centres given the variation in kerbside collections operated by WCAs, which may be impacting the ability of ECC to deliver an effective RCHW service, and how can those variations be addressed effectively? • What other recycling collection models exist across the country and what has been their impact upon the associated RCHW Services? • Across Essex how can the recycling of commercial waste be improved, whilst ensuring the RCHW service does not become overburdened?
Other Work Being Undertaken	The Council has conducted a survey on current public use and expectations of the RCHW Service, which would be taken into consideration as part of any review.
What resources are required for this review?	<i>In planning the review it is necessary to identify what resources are required to undertake the review, and any costs associated with the committee's activity. Given that the resource available is finite, it will be necessary to consider carefully the timing of the review within the Committee's overall work programme.</i>
Notes	<p>Proposed inclusion in the work programme Autumn 2014</p> <p><i>This document dated June 2014</i></p>

Review Topic (Name of review)	Developing a Better Public Transport Network for Essex
Committee	Place Services and Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee
Terms of Reference	<p>Briefing :</p> <p>To understand the legal basis for the provision of bus services in England.</p> <p>To understand the role and responsibilities of the County Council in regard to the provision of passenger transport services</p> <p>To consider whether there are any further opportunities within that legislative framework that might merit consideration for all or part of the County, the most obvious being Quality Bus Partnerships and/or Quality Bus Contracts</p> <p>To assist the Committee in any future consideration of public transport related issues.</p>
Relevant Corporate Links	<p>All of the corporate outcomes rely on the residents of Essex being able to access the services or amenities through which they will be realised. Local transport services play a key role in enabling this access and underlie and support all these outcomes by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Children in Essex get the best start in life. By providing access to schools, colleges, training, work, health and leisure services. B. People in Essex enjoy good health and wellbeing. By providing access to health services, shopping, leisure activities, employment, reducing isolation and increasing independence. C. People have aspirations and achieve their ambitions through education, training and lifelong-learning. By providing access to learning and training opportunities, supplier workforce training and apprenticeships. D. People in Essex live in safe communities and are protected from harm. By providing access to care services and providing safe transport for access to health, education, work and leisure services, reducing the number of people killed or seriously injured (KSIs). E. Sustainable economic growth for Essex communities and businesses. By attracting inward investment by offering improved connectivity, access to work and leisure opportunities and reducing congestion. F. People in Essex experience a high quality and

	<p>sustainable environment. By reducing congestion and CO₂ emissions.</p> <p>G. People in Essex can live independently and exercise control over their lives. By enabling access to key services and improving community involvement and buy in to decisions regarding transport provision.</p>
Timescales	<p>The briefing is proposed for the June 2014 meeting so that Members have a greater understanding of the topic.</p> <p>Briefing the June Committee meeting on the statutory framework with further briefings may be planned later in the year in parallel with the development of any proposals.</p>
Rationale for the Review	<p>The purpose of the review is to consider the strategic approach the County Council should adopt in developing any revised policy toward the provision of Public Transport services in light of the Council's legislative duties, its corporate outcomes and the need to get the most effective use out of its investment in transport services. In particular the committee is invited to consider the merits of other opportunities within the legislative framework, in particular the introduction of quality bus partnerships and/ or quality bus contracts..</p> <p>Essex CC currently spends some £64.2m annually on transport services across its functions carrying over 17.7 m passenger journeys each year (including local bus, schools, social care, community transport-for split, please see attached document). In addition the NHS spends an estimated £10m on non-urgent patient transport.</p> <p>The commercial local bus network carries around 38 million passengers a year.</p> <p>Given this level of expenditure, the underlying importance of transport to achieving the County Corporate Outcomes and the cross functional nature of the county's involvement, a cross functional review of its strategy towards the provision of public transport could offer a significant opportunity both to improve the overall service on offer to Essex residents and to obtain best value for the investment made.</p> <p>Consequently it is important that the Committee's membership is well informed on the relevant statutory framework and local circumstances to provide a foundation for developing any future scrutiny work on the topic. The breadth of the topic also opens up opportunity to consider revised regulatory framework for the provision of both contracted and commercial services, in the form of enhanced quality bus partnerships or quality bus contracts.</p>

Key Lines of Enquiry	<p>Specify the key lines of enquiry that will underpin the initial planning of the review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To understand the legal basis for the provision of bus services in England. • To understand the role and responsibilities of the County Council in regard to the provision of passenger transport services • To consider the merits of other options within the legislative framework, most notably Quality Bus Partnerships and/or of Quality Bus Contracts
Other Work Being Undertaken	<p>What other work is currently being undertaken in relation to this topic that may have a bearing upon its conduct, and any appropriate timescales and deadlines for that work.</p> <p>The Director for Commissioning, Transport and Infrastructure is working with other Place and People Commissioners to consider a revised policy and strategy for developing an improved public transport network.</p>
What resources are required for this review?	<p><i>In planning the review it is necessary to identify what resources are required to undertake the review, and any costs associated with the committee's activity. Given that the resource available is finite, it will be necessary to consider carefully the timing of the review within the Committee's overall work programme.</i></p> <p>Officer and Member time</p>
Notes	<p>Briefing 26 June 2014</p> <p><i>This document dated June 2014</i></p>

Review Topic (Name of review)	Essex County Council's Local Transport Plan (2015 – 2021) Strategy and Priority Projects for Stimulating Economic Growth
Committee	Place Services and Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee
Terms of Reference	To receive a briefing to investigate the links between employment and growth and the highways infrastructure, which will contribute to identifying a scrutiny role in the future development of any proposed activity.
Relevant Corporate Links	<p>It is a cross cutting topic that draws in various highways infrastructure and economic growth strategies and plans, as well as joint working with other organisations such as the SELEP. An overview of those links is attached at the Appendix.</p> <p>Cabinet approval of Strategy Minute 6/ February 2014</p>
Timescales	Two stages: Briefing followed next year by longer term in depth review
Rationale for the Review	<p>Since 2012 the Council has adopted a number of strategies to promote Economic Growth In terms of Transport there is the Local Transport Plan, but in the wider context there is the Integrated County Strategy, the Economic Growth Strategy and more recently the Essex Plan for Growth and the Strategic Economic Plan that will support and stimulate the delivery of economic development across the county. All stimulate the economy vis transport infrastructure proposals or in the case of the LTP policy lines to promote growth and prosperity.</p> <p>Given the significance of the topic it is important to raise awareness and understanding of the issues, and encourage support across the whole community at the same time as managing those expectations.</p> <p>Members have shown an interest in in undertaking a scrutiny review that links economic growth and transport infrastructure issues given the need to provide good infrastructure and transport networks to support access to businesses and jobs.</p> <p>To assist the Committee to direct its attention onto narrower significant issues it is suggested that a review could usefully examine how growth as identified by District Council Local Plans affects the need for new infrastructure; how such infrastructure is required both close to sites earmarked in Local Plans and wider strategic Transport networks; the prioritisation of such projects in strategic documents and how all projects are to be funded.</p>

Key Lines of Enquiry	<p>Given the breadth of the topic, any investigation could be broken down into parts that build up relevant knowledge to achieve the overall aims of the review.</p> <p>What are the various strategies and plans relating to the county's infrastructure that have been adopted to stimulate economic growth, and what is their significance?</p> <p>Who are the Council's partners in the delivery of the strategies?</p> <p>What do we mean by economic growth?</p> <p>How does transport drive/inhibit economic growth.</p> <p>The assessment of economic impact.</p> <p>The affect a focus on economic growth has on the type and location of programmed schemes.</p>
Other Work Being Undertaken	<p>Cabinet approval of Strategy Minute 6/ February 2014</p>
What resources are required for this review?	<p><i>In planning the review it is necessary to identify what resources are required to undertake the review, and any costs associated with the committee's activity. Given that the resource available is finite, it will be necessary to consider carefully the timing of the review within the Committee's overall work programme.</i></p>
Notes	<p><i>This proposal also links in with points made by Cllr Henderson, and some discussion at December 2013 briefing on Economic Growth Strategy.</i></p> <p><i>Cabinet Minute 6/ February 2014</i></p> <p><i>Incorporate briefing July 2014</i></p> <p><i>This document dated June 2014</i></p>

Review Topic (Name of review)	Waste Energy Strategy
Committee	Place Services and Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee
Terms of Reference	To receive a seminar on the operation of the new Courtauld Road waste facility, and consider the longer term options for Refuse Derived Fuel.
Relevant Corporate Links	The solutions being explored are driven and determined by the Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy for Essex which has been adopted by the County Council and 11 of the 12 Essex District Councils.
Timescales	Briefing to be held at the Courtauld Road facility on 25 September 2014.
Rationale for the Review	As part of the wider Energy Commissioning Strategy, the long term options for use of the fuel produced by the Residual Waste Treatment Plant were discussed at PLT on 14 th April, and the Cabinet Member has suggested that this is an area where the Committee's comments would be welcome.
Scope of the Topic	<p>The County Council, as Waste Disposal Authority, currently sends 377,000 tons of municipal waste to landfill. When the Mechanical Biological Treatment (MBT) facility in Basildon starts to become operational in the late summer of 2014 the volumes of waste going to landfill will eventually reduce to zero.</p> <p>The MBT plant will produce circa 177,000 tons of Refuse Derived Fuel (RDF) which can be used to generate power. Cabinet have already agreed to the procurement, which will commence in April 2014, of a short term off-take arrangement for this material. It should be noted that RDF legally remains classified as a waste and:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attracts a cost to dispose of. This cost is, however, anticipated to be lower than landfilling the material; • Needs to be processed in a facility subject to the Waste Incineration Directive. <p>At the end of the commissioning period (Summer 2015), the plant is targeted to produce a higher quality Solid Recovered Fuel (SRF), meeting predefined guaranteed standards relating to composition, moisture content and calorific content, which should have reduced disposal costs. The longer term arrangements for SRF need to be</p>

	<p>determined and could include:-</p> <p>Option A Continuing with short term spot-market off-take contracts;</p> <p>Option B Enter into long term off-take arrangements;</p> <p>Option C Enter into some form of partnership with a high energy user to construct new energy generation facilities;</p> <p>Option D The County Council building its own SRF power station (the capital investment required to deliver such a facility would be circa £120 - £150m – although this could be project funded).</p>
Key Lines of Enquiry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acceptability of the high level options identified above • The ongoing role of scrutiny throughout the life-cycle of this project.
Other Work Being Undertaken	Scrutiny examination of the long term strategy for Recycling Centres for Household Waste.
What resources are required for this review?	<i>In planning the review it is necessary to identify what resources are required to undertake the review, and any costs associated with the committee's activity. Given that the resource available is finite, it will be necessary to consider carefully the timing of the review within the Committee's overall work programme.</i>
Notes	<p>Arising from the seminar a report will be prepared setting out the Committee's conclusions.</p> <p><i>This document dated June 2014</i></p>

Review Topic (Name of review)	Highways Maintenance and Potholes
Committee	Place Services and Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee
Terms of Reference	To promote a seminar designed to provide Members with a better understanding of how highways maintenance including the repair of potholes is managed and the choices made. It will contribute to any future scrutiny role in the consideration of related issues.
Relevant Corporate Links	By its nature the topic is underpinned by corporate policies and framework for highways maintenance, and has significant budgetary implications.
Timescales	A seminar will be arranged in Autumn 2014
Rationale for the Review	<p>Highways maintenance and potholes are probably two of the most popular topics referred by residents to councillors. While they are often raised for discussion at meetings, Members continue to express concerns about their own lack of knowledge on how maintenance is undertaken, and the choices made. In fact the Council's management of pothole repairs and highways maintenance is well documented on its website, albeit some of the literature is technical in nature and designed for operational purposes.</p> <p>In the longer term it has been identified that at a national level the Government is planning changes to future highways maintenance strategies, and at that time the Council will review its own strategies in the light of any national changes. It is anticipated that this activity will take place in 2015/2016, and nearer the time the Scrutiny Committee can consider how to influence any new strategies.</p> <p>In the meantime Members continue to demand to be given a better understanding of highways maintenance and pothole control. In the short term it is proposed to design a briefing(s) to enhance Members' understanding of the County Council's responsibilities, its maintenance management, the national/ local context, and local operational issues. A seminar would be a means of building the foundation for more informed debate in the future and a more in depth scrutiny review once there is greater clarity on any changes to national strategies.</p>

Key Lines of Enquiry	<p>The aims of a briefing would be to develop a better understanding of the topic –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initially from a strategic rather than parochial point of view, • its background from a technical perspective, processes and procedures, • financial context, • communications and publicity, and • national context. <p>Consideration of the topic also raises questions around the need to develop the Committee's understanding of the way that those services within its remit are funded and how budgetary considerations affect the way that decisions relating to the allocation of funds for highways maintenance are made in practice. Rather than solely focussing on the bigger picture it would also be useful to break down some of the costs so that they may be considered in terms of cost per head of population in Essex, and proportion of council tax funding.</p>
Other Work Being Undertaken	<p>Various Central Government initiatives are anticipated that will have an impact upon what the Highways Authority may or may not do in relation to this topic. This will be an important factor in the timing of Committee engagement in the longer run.</p>
What resources are required for this review?	<p><i>In planning the review it is necessary to identify what resources are required to undertake the review, and any costs associated with the committee's activity. Given that the resource available is finite, it will be necessary to consider carefully the timing of the review within the Committee's overall work programme.</i></p>
Indicators of Success	<p>The Committee will be better informed about the strategic issues associated with the topic, which will support a more objective approach to the planning of any future in depth related scrutiny. The conclusions of the seminar will be set out in a report.</p>
Notes	<p>Topic raised at Council, and request from Cllr Kendall to review topics. Outline above takes these points into consideration.</p> <p>Proposed that the seminar be held on the Committee's scheduled activity day on 23 October 2014.</p> <p><i>This document dated June 2014</i></p>

Review Topic (Name of review)	Ringway Jacobs Contract
Committee	Place Services and Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee
Terms of Reference	<p>To promote a seminar designed to promote a better understanding of the management of the Ringway Jacobs Contract and the governance arrangements. It will contribute to the development of any future scrutiny in the consideration of related issues.</p> <p>The conclusions of the seminar will be set out in a report.</p>
Relevant Corporate Links	By its nature the topic is underpinned by the corporate framework and policies, and has significant budgetary implications.
Timescales	In the shorter term an in depth briefing be organised to encourage better Member understanding of the Ringway Jacobs Contract.
Rationale for the Review	Given the significance of the Ringway Jacobs Contract in the way that highways services are provided in Essex, it is important that Members understand how it works in practice. A briefing will also assist in the identification of more specific related issues where the Committee could perform a beneficial scrutiny role.
Key Lines of Enquiry	<p>The aims of a briefing(s) would be to develop a better understanding of the topic –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historical context, and identify the original objectives of the Contract. • What is the relationship between the County Council, Ringway Jacobs, and sub-contractors? • How is the Contract managed and how is work co-ordinated between the respective parties? • What are the governance arrangements and how are decisions made? • How is performance measured, and what lessons have been learned so far and improvements made? • financial context, • communications and publicity.

	<p>As part of the briefing it would be helpful to promote understanding by incorporating some case studies to illustrate how the Contract works in practice, eg the various stages of a capital project, routine maintenance, and how complaints are addressed.</p>
Other Work Being Undertaken	<p>The Performance Framework is under review currently.</p>
What resources are required for this review?	<p><i>In planning the review it is necessary to identify what resources are required to undertake the review, and any costs associated with the committee's activity. Given that the resource available is finite, it will be necessary to consider carefully the timing of the review within the Committee's overall work programme.</i></p>
Notes	<p>To be scheduled into the work programme when an opportunity arises, and resource is available.</p> <p><i>This document dated June 2014</i></p>

Review Topic (Name of review)	Local Highways Panels
Committee	Place Services and Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee
Terms of Reference	The overall objective of the review could be around whether or not the Local Highways Panels (LHPs) have achieved their original objective, and what lessons have been learned to inform more effective working in the future?
Relevant Corporate Links	LHPs are part of the Council's evolving localism framework, and underpin prioritisation of highways capital projects
Timescales	Suggested that any review of this topic be programmed in the longer term ie 2015/2016 as the Panels would have been operational for 3 complete years, and so more experience will be available to inform an investigation and produce more effective outcomes.
Rationale for the Review	<p>The LHPs were first introduced in 2012 and are devised on localities based on District boundaries with a mixture of County and District Council representation. They are an example of putting a mechanism into place to promote localism. Given the variety of practice that they have shown, it would be pertinent for an impartial review of what may or may not have worked well, to compare their operation, and address criticisms in order to identify good practice.</p> <p>They are still relatively new in their workings, and a scrutiny review after three years of operation would enable enough time to elapse to be able to review their development and the implementation of projects in practice. It is too early in their operation to make a proper assessment of their success or otherwise. As each Panel has approached its objectives based upon local preferences, a review would enable the Committee to investigate and compare best practice with a view to improving their overall performance across the county.</p> <p>Given the nature of the partnership working it would also be preferable to give advance warning to all the LHPs of plans to scrutinise their activities following this financial year, and the success or otherwise of their planned work programmes. The Cabinet Member has attended Committee meetings and advised on his proposals to enhance LHP working, and action is underway to underpin more effective working in the coming months.</p>

	<p>Although Members have been advised about the operation of the LHPs, individuals Members have continued to express concerns about their individual local Panels. It would be preferable that the planning of any review should be based upon a better understanding of the strategic objectives to enable a more holistic approach to be taken into the investigation of their development across Essex, and likelihood of the Committee reaching more informed conclusions in order to promote tangible improvements to their future operation.</p>
Key Lines of Enquiry	<p>Knowledge required:</p> <p>What were the original objectives for setting up the LHPs?</p> <p>What are the current role and responsibilities of the LHPs? How have they been set up including their governance arrangements?</p> <p>Operation:</p> <p>How do the twelve LHP s operate in practice, and how do they differ in practice?</p> <p>How have they allocated the funding that is available to them?</p> <p>What lessons of good practice have been learned?</p> <p><i>It would be necessary for a review to develop a framework of relevant common questions to address to every LHP to establish experience, allocation of funds, and priorities.</i></p>
Other Work Being Undertaken	<p>The LHPs are still in the process of developing their activity, and the Cabinet Member has been reviewing their operation and introduced some changes since last year to improve their effectiveness, which he has advised the Committee upon.</p>
What resources are required for this review?	<p><i>In planning the review it is necessary to identify what resources are required to undertake the review, and any costs associated with the committee's activity. Given that the resource available is finite, it will be necessary to consider carefully the timing of the review within the Committee's overall work programme.</i></p>
Notes	<p>Topic has been referred to the Committee in the past as as call in, and it has been the subject of briefing</p> <p><i>This document dated June 2014</i></p>

Review Topic (Name of review)	Economic Growth and Partnership Working
Committee	Place Services and Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee
Terms of Reference	To identify the different forms of place-related partnerships that exist currently in Essex, and consider the most effective form of partnership working to support economic growth
Relevant Corporate Links	The issue of partnership working around economic growth does not feature in the corporate plan, but it is critical to the successful delivery of the Economic Plan for Essex, the work previously commissioned through the Economic Growth Strategy and the South East LEP's Strategic Economic Plan, for which all of our work is a key contributor.
Timescales	<i>To be considered in the future</i>
Rationale for the Review	Following on from the briefing planned on the Economic Growth Strategy the Committee undertake an in depth review on partnership working associated with economic growth in Essex. There are a variety of formal and informal models such a SELEP, Haven Gateway, Thames Gateway South Essex, West Essex Alliance, Heart of Essex and local sector based or business groupings all with an interest in the economic growth agenda. A number of Members have asked for more background on existing partnerships and their governance arrangements. Given that partnerships are being set up as a popular means of promoting change, the Committee will scrutinise the effectiveness of different approaches to partnership working, and raise awareness of their activities.
Key Lines of Enquiry	<p>What is the role of local authorities in terms of the economic growth agenda?</p> <p>What partnerships exist currently in Essex to promote economic growth?</p> <p>What are the objectives of the various Partnerships and are those objectives being achieved, and are benefits been delivered across the community in Essex?</p> <p>How are the governance arrangements of the partnerships eg set up, support arrangements, sources of funding, decision making framework, accountabilities?</p> <p>What makes a successful partnership and how can good practice be shared and implemented?</p>

Other Work Being Undertaken	<p>ECC are currently doing a piece of work around broader partnership support and engagement which is directly relevant.</p> <p>Additionally, the South East LEP has recently submitted its Strategic Economic Plan, which relies heavily on the success of local delivery partnerships – including the Greater Essex Business Board.</p>
What resources are required for this review?	
Notes	<p>Not to be prioritised at this time but to be considered as a topic for inclusion in a future work programme.</p> <p><i>This document dated June 2014</i></p>

Review Topic (Name of review)	Parking Partnerships
Committee	Place Services and Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee
Terms of Reference	Are the original objectives of the Parking Partnerships being delivered, and what lessons have been learned to inform more effective partnership working in the future?
Relevant Corporate Links	While the County Council remains the Highways Authority a review of the Parking Partnerships entails the scrutiny of externally managed bodies.
Timescales	The Committee received a briefing on this topic in Autumn 2013. Any further review will be considered for selection in a future work programme.
Rationale for the Review	<p>The Parking Partnership is a relatively new organisation based on partnership working which, from 1 April 2011, brought together all street-based parking services in Essex. The service is council-run and is a partnership between Essex County Council and two lead councils underpinned by formal agreements: It is in two areas; the North Partnership is led by Colchester Council and the South Partnership by Chelmsford Council.</p> <p>The aim is to run parking enforcement to a fair and consistent standard in order to provide the same level of service but in a more efficient way. The two Partnerships are responsible in each area for the on-street Civil Enforcement Officers; the parking enforcement process together with challenges to, and payments of, parking penalties plus administration of the parking restrictions and the management of the scheme.</p> <p>A review of the Parking Partnership was identified for inclusion in a scrutiny committee work programme once sufficient time had elapsed for scrutineers to be able to investigate the effectiveness of its operation.</p> <p>NB The Parking Partnerships form a discreet area of traffic management activity based upon formal agreements and working practices, and are in fact joint committees subject to statutory considerations. They are distinct in nature from other bodies such as the Local Highways Panels.</p>

Key Lines of Enquiry	<p>The County Council established the Parking Partnership with the formal agreement of all Essex Borough, City and District Councils.</p> <p>What were the original objectives for setting up the Parking Partnerships? What were the issues that the local authorities were aiming to resolve?</p> <p>How have the Parking Partnerships been formally set up including the governance arrangements?</p> <p>How are the Parking Partnerships intended to operate, and how do they differ in practice? What lessons of good practice have been learned?</p>
Other Work Being Undertaken	<p>Necessary to liaise with the Partnerships nearer the time that the Committee may decide to undertake a review to ascertain if any individual districts are conducting any work into the operation of the Partnerships.</p> <p><i>It is also noted that the County Council Cabinet Member will be reviewing the Partnerships later this year.</i></p>
What resources are required for this review?	<p>In planning the review it is necessary to identify what resources are required to undertake the review, and any costs associated with the committee's activity. Given that the resource available is finite, it will be necessary to consider carefully the timing of the review within the Committee's overall work programme.</p>
Notes	<p>As part of the topic selection process to prioritise topics and allocate resources, it is not proposed to include a review of parking partnerships at this time in the work programme. However, it will be kept in the list of potential items for the future.</p> <p><i>This document dated June 2014</i></p>

Review Topic (Name of review)	Cressing Temple Barns
Committee	Place Services and Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee
Terms of Reference	ie the overall objective of the review
Relevant Corporate Links	Member request relates to operational issues at Cressing Temple
Timescales	
Rationale for the Review	<p>Councillor Kendall has requested a review for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concern about the loss of experienced full and part time staff • The budget available for maintenance • The ongoing viability of the Brans and gardens and their historic importance to Essex County Council <p>He cites that 'The Friends of Cressing Temple Gardens' have serious concerns about the changes being made at Cressing Temple. In terms of staffing cuts, maintenance of the buildings and gardens and the long term viability of the site.</p>
Key Lines of Enquiry	<p>Specify the key lines of enquiry that will underpin the initial planning of the review</p> <p>What are the operational changes being made at Cressing Temple? How will those changes affect the future of the historical site?</p>
Other Work Being Undertaken	<p>What other work is currently being undertaken in relation to this topic that may have a bearing upon its conduct, and any appropriate timescales and deadlines for that work.</p>

What resources are required for this review?	<p><i>In planning the review it is necessary to identify what resources are required to undertake the review, and any costs associated with the committee's activity. Given that the resource available is finite, it will be necessary to consider carefully the timing of the review within the Committee's overall work programme.</i></p>
Indicators of Success	<p>Councillor Kendall cites the desired outcome of a review to be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the staffing numbers are fully reviewed to ensure Cressing Temple remains viable. • There is a sensible budget in place for maintenance • County Members have a far better understanding of what is happening.
Notes	<p>Cressing Temple was referred to as part of a Committee briefing in December 2013, and the changes that were being made both at that site and across the Country Parks Service.</p> <p>It is proposed that the Cabinet Member will provide an update on the topic when he is invited to address the Committee on his portfolio as part of scheduled activity.</p> <p><i>This document dated June 2014</i></p>