

**Request by Member for Scrutiny Review
2007/08 Work Programme**



Please complete the form below to request consideration of your issue by the
Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Proposers Name: Antoinette Cooper	Date of Request 2 October 2007
Supporting Councillors (if any):	
<p>Summary of Issue you wish to be scrutinised:</p> <p>Communications and Access to Information within this Council and between this Council, Essex County Council and its partners and residents.</p> <p>To ensure Ward Members are included or at least made aware of issues that affect their Wards. This should equip them to be better able to deal/answer Residents questions & queries.</p> <p>On a basic level provide;</p> <p>A Hierarchy Chart of the Council's staff and structure</p> <p>A flow chart that plots the passage from start to finish of an issue through The Council's Committee system.</p> <p>Look at what else can be done to assist New Members to familiarize themselves with systems and protocols.</p> <p>All of the above should also help the public.</p> <p>How can Officers be more inclusive to ensure Ward Members are aware of the issues in their Wards. Many Officers sit on LAA's, LSP's. These are all partnerships which seem to exclude Members.</p> <p>To list all meetings to enable Councillors to be able to choose to sit in if they feel this would be helpful to them. The meeting with County Councillors, local MP's could help bridge the gap.</p> <p>Look at a system where members can review different meetings and their purpose to allow them to sign up to receive Agenda/Minutes if they wish.</p> <p>Consider publishing official diaries of Portfolio Holders.</p> <p>Look at a system for storing information in the Members room, organised more like a library ie whats in there, where is it, online on paper. When is it updated. One report for all Councillors to share is this adequate?</p> <p>An index for the Council Bulletin to assist Councillors to locate the issues they feel most relevant to them. Flag up need to know items ie cancelled meetings.</p>	

I have attended twice to find meeting cancelled. The other to sit waiting for others to attend.

Essex CC has a strong influence/directive as does the Government. How can we draw attention to those issues that will have an impact on some or all parts of the District, in particular those which are time sensitive eg Essex CC removing TPO's.

Lengthly reports could they have a précis sheet? We do not all speed read or understand the jargon. Financial reports are some in question. The reduction of members Connect allowance. I'm sure I was not the only person surprised by this.

Planning, all members can sit on an Area Plans Committee. How many are aware of the Structure Plan? Familiar with Local Plan Alterations or indeed the Local Development Scheme plans? Strategic roads etc.

How can these issues be addressed?

How can members be included to look at the big picture? Ad hoc one off planning applications viewed in isolation are not helping support an economic viable District meeting the needs of residents and promoting quality of life for residents.

Review this Council's own Policies to ensure these are being met eg

General Principles of Conduct in Public Service – Q12

1. Selflessness, never improperly confer a disadvantage?
- 5 Openness – How do we do this if not privy to all the facts?
- 6 Personal Judgement – Do we have a conflict of interest here? ie political
- 7 Respect for others? Promote equality?

Article 3 – Do we actively promote this?

NOTE: ENTRIES BELOW RELATE TO ISSUE CATEGORIES OF THE PICK PROCESS. PLEASE REFER TO THE EXPLANATORY NOTES TO THIS FORM FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Public Interest Justification:

To ensure open, responsive and accurate information is being provided to the public in line with its own policies and procedures in an efficient, timely

manner and thus protecting the integrity of the Council.

Impact on the social, economic and environmental well-being of the area:

Responsive and timely action on the part of the Council impacts on all these areas.

Failure to respond and take action could have a negative impact on all the above and could result in the Council facing legal action, a poor public image

Although Essex County Council is responsible for many services. The public still regard Epping Forest as their main contact and therefore need to have up to date and accurate information upon which to base decisions upon and respond to public enquires.

Council Performance in this area (if known: Red, Amber, Green):

Not Known

Keep in Context (are other reviews taking place in this area?)

Not known

Office Use:

Pick score:

Considered By OSCC: