

Annual Report of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committees 2007/08

(Article 7.03 (d) requires the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committees to report annually to full Council on their workings and make recommendations for future work programmes and amended working methods if appropriate).

Background:

The Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committees were established at the Annual Meeting of the Council 2005 replacing the four Overview Committees that had existed previously. Both Committees can call outside bodies and expert witnesses to help them with their work. They have the power to establish specific Task and Finish Forums, comprising members of the Committee, the relevant Think Tank, and where appropriate, members of the public.

Within their terms of reference, both Committees will:

- (i) review and/or scrutinise decisions made or actions taken in connection with the discharge of any of the Council's functions;
- (ii) make reports and/or recommendations to the full Council and/or the Executive Board in connection with the discharge of any functions;
- (iii) consider any matter affecting the area or its inhabitants; and
- (iv) exercise the right to call-in, for reconsideration, decisions made but not yet implemented by the Executive Board and/or a Portfolio Holder member of the Executive Board

The two Committees have functions specific to them (as detailed in pages 29-32 of the Constitution) and principally these are:

Corporate Overview Committee: its principal role is to develop policy and evaluate its implementation. More specifically, the Corporate Overview Committee will provide the 'critical friend' challenge. The Committee assists the Council in the development of policies which it keeps under review.

Scrutiny Committee: principally owns the post decision scrutiny process on behalf of the public with a view to making an impact on the delivery of public services. It will review and scrutinise decisions made and will particularly scrutinise performance and service delivery.

Where appropriate, joint meetings of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committees are held to debate issues relevant to both Committees. A meeting to review the Council's financial position and service priorities was held on 12 September 2007 to steer the service planning and budget preparation process. The approach recommended and adopted by Council was to generate further income and reduce expenditure rather than cut services. Members also compiled a list of areas for investment should funds become available. The recommendations of the Joint Committee meeting were taken into account when the Financial Strategy and Service Plans were being prepared

Note: **The Housing Review Board** was established at the annual meeting of the Council in May 2006. Its terms of reference were agreed by the Council at its meeting on 19 April 2006. The Board comprises 5 Councillors, 5 tenants and/or leaseholders and 2 independent community representatives. The Board's purpose is to consider matters relating to the Council's landlord and housing management functions.

The annual report on the work of the Housing Review Board 2007/08 is included with these agenda papers. .

Corporate Overview Committee – annual report

Key areas considered by the Committee since June 2007:

Post Offices in East Devon	28 June 07	<p>A presentation was given to Members on the merits of retaining Post Offices in East Devon. Members wished to express their strong support for the continued successful operation of Post Offices in the district, but were mindful of the proposals for fresh business for the Post Offices being outside of the authority's control. The Association of District Councils was requested to approach Central Government to rethink their plans of removing responsibilities away from Post Offices. Recent developments have meant that the Government has now instructed Post Office Limited to enter into discussions with all authorities that have proposals to save local branches. Councillor Potter, Member Champion for Post Offices attended the meeting and made valuable contribution to the issue.</p>
Shoreline Management Plan 2		<p>Members received a presentation on the plan, covering the stretch of coast from Durston Head near Swanage in Dorset, to Rame Head near Plymouth. The plan recommended a coastal management policy, to assist in the decision making process in protecting the shoreline, taking into account social, environment and economic issues.</p>
Exe Estuary Coastal Management Study		<p>Its aim was to increase the protection to the Exmouth sea wall by improving the level of the beach, as well as to improve the amenity environmental and flood defence attributes of Dawlish Warren. Funding of £100,000 had been secured from DEFRA for the Exe Estuary Coastal Management Study, which had started in March 2007. It was hoped that the result of the study would help to achieve a long term sustainable management plan for the Exe Estuary coastline.</p>
Recommendations of the Culture Task and Finish Forum		<p>A number of recommendations were made by the Forum including increasing the number of employees working in the field of Culture. Members agreed that the financial implications and staffing levels for the proposals made in the report needed to be thought through before a positive recommendation could be made; and that the need for a holistic approach to Culture was key to improving on its success record. Alternative sources for funding were also explored. As a result of the work of the Forum, Councillor Miss V Ash was appointed Culture Champion at the Council meeting.; Also the Arts Development service had now been incorporated into the Countryside Service.</p>

Corporate Overview Committee – annual report – Key areas (cont)..

Employment Land Provision in East Devon and Employment Land Issues TaFF	26 July 07, 22 Nov 07	Members received a presentation on the Atkins study, which highlighted a number of areas that could potentially be utilised for employment land. Executive Board agreed that a comprehensive review and analysis would be undertaken with the East Devon Business Forum to help inform future policy for employment land provision. The Employment Land Issues TaFF had reviewed all locations in the district and concluded that there was very little employment land available. Their endorsed recommendation was that their final report be used to help inform production of the issues and options report for the East Devon Core Strategy; and that the Development Control Committee take full account of employment land availability issues when considering planning applications. Their final report was submitted as an addendum to the final Atkins report.
Outcome of the Vision Panel's work	12 Sep 07	Members considered jointly with the Scrutiny Committee the proposed changes to the draft Corporate Strategy, with debate on affordable homes, thriving communities, green environment, recycling, young people, customers of the Council, and inspirational council. The changes to the draft Corporate Strategy were supported by the Executive Board.
Affordable Housing Provision	20 Sept 07, 18 Oct 07 and 21 Feb 08	A key theme from the Local Development Framework, Members were advised of the requirement for Housing in East Devon for the 2006 – 2026 period, and debated the problems in allocating sufficient land. Executive Board noted the Committee's recommendations, including seeking an appropriate mix of affordable housing provision with private sector homes providing a means to subsidise affordable housing; and investigating other options such as roof tax tariff and park homes. The Exeter and Torbay Housing Market Assessment – East Devon Local Area Report was also considered as a useful source of evidence but did not offer any solutions to finding additional land to allocate for affordable housing.
Exmouth Town Centre Management	22 Nov 07	Members enjoyed an informative presentation from Tony Collins, Exmouth Town Centre Manager, on the Exmouth Town Management Business and Action Plan 2007 – 2010. The plan had five main objectives: to target high quality retailers to invest in the town, including specialist retailers and to improve the quality of the retail on offer; to make access improvements to the town centre for the benefit of all users; to raise the profile and image of Exmouth Town through effective marketing to target customers, existing businesses and potential investors; to achieve a quality environment for the

Corporate Overview Committee – annual report – Key areas (cont)..

Exmouth Town Centre Management (continued)		benefit of those who live, work, shop and spend their leisure time in the town centre; and to work with local business organisations on business initiatives which will benefit the town. The Exmouth Town Manager will be reporting back to the Committee periodically to update them on progress.
Draft Service Plans 2008/11 and Revenue and Capital Estimates 2008/09	24 Jan 08	Members considered jointly with the Scrutiny Committee the draft Service Plans and Revenue and Capital Estimates for the forthcoming financial year.
Public Speaking at Committees	21 Feb 08, 20 Mar 08	Executive Board had requested that Corporate Overview look into the possibility of introducing the facility of public speaking at committees. Members were in agreement with the principle, but had concerns about the practicalities. A fact finding visit to two other authorities was undertaken, and on reporting back, the Committee made recommendations for adoption of public speaking with detailed criteria, including restricting public speaking to three minutes per speaker; and the availability of 15 minutes for public speaking at the beginning of Executive Board, the Corporate Overview Committee, the Scrutiny Committee, and the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee. The Council's constitution will be amended to facilitate these changes.
Exmouth and Seaton Gateway Visitors Centre Task and Finish Forum	21 Feb 2008	The Forum was re-convened in March. Both Centres were proved to still be viable business projects and therefore recommendations were referred in support to the Corporate Overview Committee.
Domestic Violence Policy	21 Feb 08	Members considered and recommended adoption of the Domestic Violence Policy, which has now been referred to the Council for formal adoption.
East Devon Retail Needs and Town Centre Health Check Report	20 Mar 08	GVA Grimley LLP had been commissioned in 2007 to prepare the report, which provided an overview of trends within the retail sector; identified expenditure generated within the district and provided a quantitative assessment of future retail demand and additional retail floor space requirements for convenience and comparison goods up to 2021. The results were endorsed by the Members, and the results also shared with the Town Councils.
Draft climate change strategy	20 Mar 08	Members considered the Draft Climate Change Strategy which set out the means for achieving carbon reduction within the District. This would be measured by new performance indicators comprising CO2 reductions from the Council's operations and per capita reduction in CO2 emissions in the District. Members recommended that energy consultants be instructed to carry out an assessment of the draft strategy with the aim of producing a fully costed action plan identifying the expected carbon savings arising from the Climate Change Strategy and for the findings to be reported back to the Overview Committee.

Corporate Overview Committee – annual report – Key areas (cont)..

Draft climate change strategy (continued)		The study would need to identify the current carbon footprint for East Devon, and the potential best practice energy measures that can make to the reduction of CO2 emissions
Hiring of the Council's community venues	20 Mar 08	Members recommended adoption of the policy covering the hire of venues, subject to the addition of a comment that there was a responsibility to make a premises fit for hiring; and some clarification on hire terms.

New Task and Finish Forum set up by the Corporate Overview Committee

Task and Finish Forum	Date	Remit
Sustainable Building Task and Finish Forum	22 Nov 07	Set up to investigate and bring about implementation of a pilot of smaller scale housing projects that encompass all, or some, of the following criteria: use of alternative materials, such as wood; promote the use of sustainable materials and services in a comprehensive way; promote the use of reclaimed and recycled materials; and use a different approach such as use of a "park home" style development for affordable housing. Due to the number of Forums in operation, the start date of this TaFF has been delayed until there was capacity to run it.

Overview Committee work plan – suggested topics for discussion at future meetings:

- Final Report of Task & Finish Forum on Gateway Visitor Centres, Exmouth & Seaton
- Rolle College update
- Progress report from Member Champions - Business, Design, Town Strategic Planning (Exmouth), Culture and Equalities.
- Affordable Housing, resolving the problem of delivering in rural locations - policy obstacle preventing private sector housing subsidising affordable housing
- University of Exeter Science Park – progress report and background on the establishment of the science park company
- Operation of Development Control Committee
- Regional Spatial Strategy from GoSW
- Climate change strategy costed action plan
- T&FF Final report Beach Concessions
- Carbon management programme – interim progress report
- Dualling the A30/303, examining the case for support as a strategic route for the South West
- Review of Climate change strategy
- Implementation action plan for carbon management programme

Scrutiny Committee – annual report

Key areas of consideration by the Committee since June 2007:

Development of a vision for the newly elected Council and findings of the General User Satisfaction Survey	13 Jun 07	<p>Members debated the conclusions of the General User Satisfaction Survey, with particular emphasis being given to the responses received on how well informed residents felt about the following specific issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What standard of service you should expect from the Council? ▪ How you can get involved in local decision making? ▪ How well the Council is performing? ▪ Whether the Council is delivering on its promises ▪ What the Council is doing to tackle anti-social behaviour in your local area
Revenue and Capital Outturn Report 2006/07	13 Jun 07	<p>Members considered the Revenue and Capital Outturn figures against budgets for the 2006/07 financial year for General Fund Services, the Housing Revenue Account and the Capital Programme. Members were advised that the General Fund Balance was £0.670m above the minimum requirement. This figure would be considered in conjunction with the visioning exercise and could be ear marked for an ‘invest to save’ budget. Members noted that the size of the surplus would be affected by any alteration in Recycling and Refuse arrangements.</p>
Monitoring of performance	13 Jun 07 11 Jul 07 05 Sep 07	<p>Consideration was given to how the Council was meeting its targets, with particular areas of concern being monitored by the Committee, resulting in recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ that a detailed report on BV212: Average time to re-let Local Authority Housing be presented to a future meeting of the Scrutiny Committee as a matter of concern. The issue was subsequently acknowledged as an area needing improvement, with the Housing Review Board tasked with monitoring this improvement. ▪ that a detailed report on BV218a and BV218b Abandoned vehicles investigation and removal be presented to a future meeting of the Committee; the subsequent presentation confirmed that, user satisfaction was high on this area, and in comparison with other local authorities, the numbers of abandoned vehicles was not significant to warrant priority. <p>In November, Members made further comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • L32 Percentage of tree preservation order applications determined within 8 weeks. Officers were commended for the good results;

Scrutiny Committee – annual report – Key areas (cont)..

Monitoring of performance (continued)	7 Nov 07 6 Feb 08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • L12 Average void (empty) period for council homes (days). Officers were congratulated on their success in improving this performance indicator; • BV78a Average processing time taken for all benefit claims. Extra resources were being made available to tackle the backlog; • BV218a & b Percentage of abandoned vehicles removed within 24 hours from legal entitlement to remove. The Head of Streetscene reported that he had been able to make improvements without committing more resources. • BV109b Percentage of minor planning applications determined within 8 weeks. Members noted that if a Town/Parish Council had a genuine planning reason for objecting to a planning application then it would go before the Development Control Committee; • BV204 Number of planning appeal decisions allowed against the authority's decision to refuse. The Vice Chairman expressed his concern over the high number of appeals lost.
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In February 2008. Members highlighted the following indicators:

- L64 Proportion of Councillors trained in regulatory functions. More training sessions were being organised for the next six months for those Members who had been unable to attend a previous session.
- Planning and Benefit related indicators. Denise Lyon, Corporate Director, advised that these two service areas had been prioritised for the systems thinking reviews directly as a result of these indicator results

Civil Parking Enforcement	5 Mar 08	<p>Civil parking enforcement for on-street parking falls to County and District Councils from May 2008. Members heard from both the County Council and officers from this authority on the preparations for the handover from Police responsibility. The Committee robustly challenged the financial aspects of the new arrangements together with concerns over staffing levels, parking fees and degree of tolerance, highlighting various inconsistencies identified. The Committee recognised the importance of achieving efficiencies in on-street parking and the need to improve highway management.</p>
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Scrutiny Committee – annual report – Key areas (cont)..

Review of Leisure East Devon	5 Mar 08	<p>Members both from Scrutiny Committee and other interested Members had attended a presentation and tour on the 4 March 2008, of the East Devon Tennis Centre and later of the Exmouth Sports Centre. Members questioned the LED Chief Executive on a number of issues in relation to the level of service being provided by Leisure East Devon(LED) on behalf of the District Council. The recommendations were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ that the popularity of the PULSE scheme be recognised and that funding be again requested from the Primary Care Trust towards this valuable service; ▪ that through the monitoring of the service level agreement, the LED continue to pursue other areas of funding and revenue to maximise financial contributions outside of the Council's funding; ▪ that the continued positive work undertaken by the LED be noted.
Communications Task and Finish Forum Action Plan Review	13 Jun 07	<p>Members debated progress made on the recommendations made by the Forum; generally progress was being achieved but two points were noted for future progression by the Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ that the use of Parish Magazines as a medium for positive publicity be revisited; ▪ that consideration be given to how Members can be reminded to check their pigeon holes when visiting the Offices. <p>The reviewed Communications Strategy was presented to the Executive Board in March 2008 – the Board recommended the Strategy for approval.</p>
General user satisfaction survey	11 Jul 07	<p>Denise Lyon, Corporate Director gave a presentation on the key findings of the General Survey that applied to external communications and the key questions for the Council. Members debated key areas, such as the need to keep Ward Members informed of issues in their area. The findings of the report were endorsed and the Communications Portfolio Holder was asked to assess whether an annual General User Satisfaction Survey should be undertaken in future.</p>
Quarterly monitoring of service plans	11 Jul 07 5 Sep 07 7 Nov 07 5 Mar 08	<p>Members raised concerns over the delivery of remote working methods for Building Control Surveyors; and increases in printing and photocopying costs. They also recommended that once the new Land Terrier system to provide an improved method of monitoring and implementing property and estates matters was up and running, Members be notified so they can obtain information on matters on their own ward.</p> <p>In September, Members commented that the explanation in the Officer notes for many of the sections needed to be fuller and the document as a</p>

Scrutiny Committee – annual report – Key areas (cont)..

Quarterly monitoring of service plans (cont)..		whole needed to be in plain English. They were keen that where a service plan was amber or red (denoting areas of concern) then the Officer responsible should be available to answer Members' questions or a more detailed response be given.
Play Strategy	11 Jul 07	Members noted that the Play Strategy had helped achieve £204,000 of Big Lottery funding for play schemes in East Devon. This funding would go to seven specific sites in East Devon. All the money had now been allocated.
Appeal Status Report	11 Jul 07	Members considered the report of the Head of Planning & Countryside Services which provided an overview of the situation regarding planning appeals over the last year and drew out the themes and lessons to be drawn from that exercise. Members debated possible improvements to the process, including improving Member training on delegated decision making. At the Council meeting in February 2008, the Chairman of Development Control extended an invitation to all Councillors to sit in on the delegation meetings. A number of Councillors had already observed this process in the past and found it helpful.
Recycling pilot	05 Sep 07	Representatives from Teignbridge District Council gave the benefit of their experiences to Members on the introduction of their recycling and kitchen waste scheme. Members noted that Teignbridge operated an alternate weekly collection and were the most effective recycling authority in Devon with a percentage of 50.45% in 2006/07, at a cost of £45.81 per household, with 56,000 properties being served. An update was given on the recycling pilot scheme for the District. The food waste collection in East Devon would be on a weekly basis to alleviate public concerns. The pilot scheme would last for at least 6 months and would involve 12,000 properties in the Axminster, Seaton and Beer area. This would help East Devon plan for the roll out of the scheme in the remainder of the District. The Recycling and Refuse Partnership Board would meet more regularly during the roll out to monitor progress. Already covered.
Outcome of the Vision Panel's work	12 Sep 07	
Transport provision relating to the Science Park	3 Oct 07	Members debated the transport issues raised, relating to the Science Park and other major developments in the West of East Devon. It was emphasised that each of these developments should be seen as not setting their own separate transport challenges, but as an overall opportunity to revitalise transport in East Devon and minimise environmental impacts. Members identified key issues for officers to address in furthering the Science Park and other major developments in the West of East Devon.

Scrutiny Committee – annual report – Key areas (cont)..

Report on Scrutiny training	3 Oct 07	Councillor R Giles reported on the Scrutiny training held for Members on Thursday 13 September 2007. Members who attended the training had found it useful. The key messages that had come out of it were that scrutiny was a member led process and that agendas should be explanatory and suggest action.
IT policy for Members	7 Nov 07	Members considered the merits of the proposed strategy. The Monitoring Officer pointed out to Members that this was a very flexible policy, and that some Council's were much more prescriptive about how IT services to Members were delivered. Although there were some risks with a flexible approach, she felt comfortable that the policy proposed contained manageable risks. Members recommended that that when future arrangements were made for the supply of services from a contractor, a minimum cancellation period of 90 days be applied; that that Members should be strongly encouraged to attend ICT training; and that clearer punchier messages be provided to Members.
Anti Social Behaviour Task and Finish Forum – implementation update	7 Nov 07	<p>The key elements in tackling the issues raised by the Anti Social Behaviour Task and Finish Forum so far, have been:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Council's visioning exercise highlighted “a safe, clean and green environment” as a priority, (and work for “Children and Young People”) as well as improved corporate working. 2. Neighbourhood Assessment pro-active work (alongside our partners such as the police, town and parish councils and other agencies) indicating ‘hot spots’ and issues of public concern in our main towns. 3. Streetscene “REACT” team being formed within and from Street Cleansing, part of whose role would be enforcement, particularly around fly tipping, littering and pollution. 4. Reletting Dog Warden/Pest Control/Community Warden contracts <p>Members resolved that that a Youth Service representative be invited to attend a future meeting of the Scrutiny Committee along with the Member Champion for Youth and Communities Portfolio Holder; and that the Council attempts to achieve closer partnership working with the Police.</p> <p>The recommended that consultation go ahead with Town/Parish Councils on the issue of the design of East Devon District Council car parks; and that a bid for CCTV at West Walk's toilets, Seaton be made in the Capital Programme. These recommendations were noted by Executive Board but took no further action at that stage.</p>

Scrutiny Committee – annual report – Key areas (cont)..

Poltimore House – progress report	5 Dec 07	<p>Members considered the report of the Principal Conservation Officer on progress with Poltimore House restoration and details of the feasibility study produced. Some Members had been given a tour of parts of Poltimore House and surrounding grounds. Members recommended that the Trustees complete a full risk assessment, including a comprehensive survey of the site, and report back to Scrutiny Committee with detail on each risk identified and how each would be financially managed; and that the Trustees complete a 10 year plan of the project with sufficient detail to cover the role of the Project Officer, and the expected dates for the stages of restoration to be completed, to be reported back to Scrutiny Committee. This item will be debated again at the July 2008 meeting of the committee. Executive Board emphasised that although the Council would be very supportive of the Poltimore House Trust it was not prepared to financially assist the scheme in the future.</p>
Single set of National Indicators	5 Dec 07	<p>Members considered the Policy Manager's report on the announcement from the Government that a single set of national indicators for public bodies would be introduced from April next year. Members had concern on the proposed new indicators as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Compatibility with other areas where there are differences in community makeup ▪ Lack of objectivity when using terms like "perception" as this would be both misleading and adversely influenced by the media ▪ Acceptance that assessment would now have to be made along with our partners to cover our area, moving away from indicators that are only specific to the District Council
Future of Scrutiny	5 Dec 07	<p>The Chairman expressed to Members of the Committee that as well as the scrutiny function being to act as the "critical friend" to the Executive Board, members could set their own agenda and invited ideas from both the Committee and other members in attendance. Some ideas were debated, and the committee resolved that the appropriate Portfolio Holder and Member Champion be invited to attend Scrutiny Committee based on the issue(s) on the agenda; that the current performance monitoring be widened to include the Council's partners performance in meeting the Council's priorities; that a more diverse range of representatives be invited to speak on items on the agenda; and that future meetings be themed where possible to link together similar items.</p>

Scrutiny Committee – annual report – Key areas (cont)..

Draft Service Plans 2008/11 and Revenue and Capital Estimates 2008/09	24 Jan 08	The one-day TaFF had received presentations from each relevant Service Head on the draft Service Plans and associated budgets. A detailed examination of each Service Plan and budget implications was carried out and recommendations made for the joint Scrutiny and Corporate Overview Committees to consider. The service plans were supported and recommendations made on the special items bids.
Britain in Bloom	6 Feb 08	The Head of Streetscene presented a report on the cost to the Council of its involvement in the Britain in Bloom event in 2007, covering sustainability and the impact on other Council functions. Representatives from various Britain in Bloom groups were present to voice their support for the continued contribution to the event. Members recommended that the financial support, and support from the Streetscene service, to volunteer committees of Britain in Bloom, is continued because of the benefits including the creation of attractive communities, local pride and involvement in communities and effective achievement of value for money.
Planning appeals statistics	6 Feb 08	Members considered the Head of Planning and Countryside's report on recent statistics relating to planning application decisions and subsequent appeals. The Chairman drew Members' attention to the appeal statistics for the authority in comparison with the national average, showing that in previous years the percentage of appeals allowed had been lower than the national average, and had only recently risen slightly above it.
Devon Primary Care Trust debate	6 Feb 08 2 Apr 08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Members debated questions to put to the Chief Executive of the PCT, who attended Executive Board on the 26 March 2008. <p>The Chairman and some of the Members expressed their disappointment that at the Executive Board meeting, the Chairman had been asked to send his questions to Dr Snee, PCT, in writing. Dr Snee's reply would be circulated to Members on receipt.</p>
ICT Investment Task and Finish Forum	6 Feb 08	The Head of ICT presented a report on the recommendations drawn up by the ICT TaFF, and the draft ICT Strategy for 2007 – 2011. The Forum had reviewed the investment in the service over the past four years and had found it to be value for money. The Forum had also been keen to see that future investment enabled the service to take the Council forward. Members made a number of recommendations in line with the Forum's findings. These were referred with amendment to Council by the Executive Board for approval.

Scrutiny Committee – annual report – Key areas (cont)..

Achievement of a second passing loop on the Exeter – Salisbury line	6 Feb 08	Members considered the Chairman's paper on the Exeter to Salisbury to Waterloo railway line in specific relation to the recently published South West Regional Spatial Strategy. Members recognised the economic and social importance of the Exeter to Salisbury railway to East Devon, but the potential of the line was hampered by it being largely single track for almost the whole of the 90 miles between Exeter and Salisbury. Following earlier lobbying by this Council and others, there had been agreement to provide a passing loop and a second platform at Axminster. The Scrutiny Committee was delighted to learn that this would allow an hourly service between Exeter and Waterloo in time for December 2009 timetable changes. However the second passing loop near Broadclyst, which would allow a half hourly service between Exeter and Axminster had not been agreed for early implementation. The Committee recommended that the Council press for early introduction of the second passing loop which would provide a much more frequent rail service and also result in less road traffic, less congestion, less pollution and reduced traffic accidents. The Executive Board approved this recommendation and urged all Members to actively progress this through a range of means.
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Task and Finish Forum set up by Scrutiny Committee

Task and Finish Forum	Date	Remit
ICT Investment Task and Finish Forum	07 Nov 07	To evaluate what investment to date had achieved for the Council and the case for continuing to invest in this area.
Planning Task and Finish Forum	Mar 08	Focus on service received by the customers who apply for planning permission and those affected by the application, working alongside the systems thinking review.

Scrutiny Committee work plan – suggested topics for discussion at future meetings:

- ❑ Public engagement, in particular with young people.
- ❑ Engaging young people in Scrutiny work.
- ❑ Results from the Planning Task and Finish Forum.
- ❑ Review of services, 6 – 12 months after completion of systems thinking review to assess if new procedures and processes are delivering as per expectation.