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22 July 2026

APOLOGIES: Committee Services
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CHIEF EXECUTIVE
Doug Wilkinson

Dear Councillor

You are summoned to attend the meeting of the;

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

on **THURSDAY 30 JULY 2026** at **7.30 pm**

in the **Council Chamber, Maldon District Council Offices, Princes Road, Maldon.**

Please Note: All meetings will continue to be live streamed on the Council's YouTube channel for those wishing to observe remotely. Public participants wishing to speak remotely at a meeting can continue to do so via Microsoft Teams.

To register your request to speak / attend in person please complete a Public Access form (to be submitted by 12noon on the working day before the Committee meeting). All requests will be considered on a first-come, first-served basis.

A copy of the agenda is attached.

Yours faithfully

Chief Executive

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP:

CHAIRPERSON	Councillor A S Fluker
VICE-CHAIRPERSON	Councillor L J Haywood
COUNCILLORS	J R Burrell-Cook M F L Durham A M Lay C P Morley R H Siddall N D Spenceley E L Stephens N J Swindle

AGENDA
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

THURSDAY 30 JULY 2026

1. **Chairperson's Notices**

2. **Apologies for Absence**

3. **Minutes of the last meeting** (Pages 5 - 8)

   To confirm the Minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 4 December 2025 (copy enclosed).

4. **Disclosure of Interest**

   To disclose the existence and nature of any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests, Other Registrable interests and Non-Registrable Interests relating to items of business on the agenda having regard to paragraph 9 and Appendix B of the Code of Conduct for Members.

   (Members are reminded that they are also required to disclose any such interests as soon as they become aware should the need arise throughout the meeting).

5. **Public Participation**

   To receive the views of members of the public of which prior notification in writing has been received (no later than noon on the Tuesday prior to the day of the meeting).

   Should you wish to submit a question please completed the online form at www.maldon.gov.uk/publicparticipation.

6. **Appointment of Representatives to Outside Bodies and Working Groups** (Pages 9 - 10)

   To consider the report of the Chief Executive, (copy enclosed).

7. **Development Management Peer Review Action Plan** (Pages 11 - 14)

   To consider the report of the Senior Leadership Team (copy enclosed).

8. **Member Scrutiny Item Requests**

   To receive and note that the following Member scrutiny request has been received and in line with the agreed procedure will be referred to Committee's Working Group at its next meeting for initial assessment and report back to the Committee:

   Councillor E L Stephens................A review of standard letters from Maldon District Council to residents.

9. **Any other items of business that the Chairperson of the Committee decides are urgent**

For further information please see the Council's website.

NOTICES

Recording of Meeting
Please note that the Council will be recording and publishing on the Council's website any part of this meeting held in open session.

Fire
We do not have any fire alarm testing scheduled for this meeting. In the event of a fire, a siren will sound. Please use either of the two marked fire escape routes. Once out of the building please proceed to the designated muster point located on the grass verge by the police station entrance. Please gather there and await further instruction. If you feel you may need assistance to evacuate the building, please make a member of Maldon District Council staff aware.

Health and Safety
Please be advised of the different levels of flooring within the Council Chamber.

Closed-Circuit Televisions (CCTV)
Meetings held in the Council Chamber are being monitored and recorded by CCTV.

Lift
Please be aware, there is not currently lift access to the Council Chamber.

For further information please see the Council's website.

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MINUTES of
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
4 DECEMBER 2025

PRESENT

Vice-Chairperson (in the chair)	Councillor P L Spenceley
Councillors	V J Bell, J R Burrell-Cook, A Fittock, L J Haywood, A M Lay, C P Morley, E L Stephens and N J Swindle

373. CHAIRPERSON'S NOTICES

The Chairperson welcomed everyone to the meeting and went through some general housekeeping arrangements for the meeting.

374. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor S J N Morgan.

375. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 4 September 2025 be approved and confirmed.

376. DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST

There were none.

377. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No requests had been received.

378. MEMBER SCRUTINY REQUEST - LEISURE CONTRACT: COMMUNICATIONS AND MESSAGING (REQUEST BY COUNCILLOR A M LAY)

The Committee considered the report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Working Group (the Working Group) advising Members of its initial assessment of a scrutiny request relating to the Leisure Contract submitted by Councillor A M Lay.

The request submitted by Councillor Lay was detailed in a proforma attached at Appendix A to the report. Members were advised that this focused on the communications and messaging following the decision by the Council on 14 November 2024 to award a new leisure contract to its preferred bidder, Places Leisure. The report provided detailed information regarding the process taken along with communications made by the Council and Places Leisure following the decision taken.

It was noted that the Working Group had made an initial assessment of the scrutiny request and concluded that this Committee should be recommended to include its conclusions (as set out in section 4 of the report) as part of the proposed Leisure Contract Post-Implementation Review (PIR) which is the subject of a separate report on this agenda.

The Chairperson put the recommendations set out in the report and these were duly seconded.

Councillor Lay advised he was pleased that these matters would be adopted as part of the PIR in relation to the Leisure Contract. He explained the importance of communication and in particular the impact and messaging that had gone out to residents in relation to the Leisure Contract.

In response to a question the Commercial Manager advised Members of the impact of the redevelopment of the sports hall at Blackwater Leisure Centre on users and the work undertaken by Officers to contact all affected parties and the ongoing work to offer support. It was confirmed that the Council was working with the Plume School regarding possible use of their facilities by affected local groups.

During the discussion that followed Members commented on the impact the changes had on local groups using the Leisure Centre, scrutiny of the procurement process and communications. The Chairperson agreed that there were several lessons to be learnt and then put the recommendation as set out in the report. This was duly seconded and agreed

RESOLVED that having received the report on the Working Group's initial assessment, the conclusions of the Working Group be included as part of the proposed Leisure Contract Post-Implementation Review.

379. MEMBER SCRUTINY REQUEST - LEISURE CONTRACT: POST IMPLEMENTATION REVIEW (REQUEST BY COUNCILLOR E L STEPHENS)

The Committee considered the report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Working Group (the Working Group) providing its initial assessment of a scrutiny request from Councillor E L Stephens regarding the Leisure Contract Post-Implementation Review (PIR).

A scrutiny request had been received from Councillor Stephens (as set out in Appendix A to the report) focusing on the need for a PIR of the Leisure Contract and the report set out the initial assessment undertaken by the Working Group. It was noted that this request had been considered alongside the separate scrutiny request from Councillor A M Lay regarding communications and messaging associated with the Leisure Contract. As agreed by the Committee in the previous item of business, the Working Group's conclusions from Councillor Lay's scrutiny request would be included within this PIR review.

The Working Group had concluded that the Committee should be recommended to add this item to its scrutiny workplan to allow a further detailed review in the form of a PIR of the Leisure Contract.

In response to a question, it was confirmed that the bullet point in the recommendation regarding 'defining the scope' related to the entirety of the Leisure Contract.

The Chairperson put the recommendation as set out in the report and this was duly seconded.

It was questioned whether inclusion of risk management relating both to the Council and residents / users of the facilities and in particular lessons learnt to ensure any future projects would benefit could be added to the bullet points in the recommendation. In response, the Corporate Governance Project Officer suggested that the recommendation did not need revision so far as the principles of the proposed review were concerned but that the points raised along with similar points of this nature would be noted and included.

The Commercial Manager agreed with the point raised regarding risk management and advised that when defining the scope, the procurement specification and financial risk and service delivery could be included. This work would be done in collaboration with Members so if there was anything that needed to be included it could be done as part of the process.

The Chairperson referred to the Council's Play Strategy which she hoped might benefit from and be informed by the proposed review. She commented that it may be useful to hold some of the Working Group meetings on this review in person. The Chairperson then put the recommendation to the Committee and this was duly agreed.

RESOLVED that the scrutiny request raised by Councillor E L Stephens relating to the Leisure Contract Post-Implementation Review be added to the Committee's scrutiny workplan to enable further scrutiny to be undertaken in the form of a Post Implementation / Performance Review involving all relevant stakeholders to cover the following points:

- defining the scope;
- selecting the Procurement contractor;
- decision on whether to go ahead, or re-run the procurement;
- communications.

380. MEMBER SCRUTINY REQUEST - LOCAL PLAN POLICY H2 HOUSING MIX

The Committee were reminded of the scrutiny request submitted by Councillor A Fittock (attached as Appendix A to the agenda). The Overview and Scrutiny Committee Working Group (the Working Group) had held a special workshop session on 13 November 2025 as part of its initial assessment of this request. A summary of the conclusions were set out in Appendix B to the agenda.

The Corporate Governance Project Officer provided the Committee with a brief outline of the scrutiny request, along with the conclusions and initial assessment from the Working Group, set out in Appendix B. He advised that in light of the publication of an updated Local Housing Needs Assessment accompanied by Technical Guidance, the Working Group was content to await the implications of this and had proposed that the request be reviewed in six months.

The Chairperson moved the recommendation set out on the agenda and this was duly seconded.

In response to comments regarding the housing mix, including the type of properties, the Director of Place, Planning and Growth advised that although the Working Group would be reviewing the housing mix in six months as agreed, this would also form part of annual monitoring. He highlighted that the key point was regarding market housing and those who did not qualify for affordable homes but struggled to access homes in the market.

The Chairperson put the recommendation and this was duly agreed.

RESOLVED that the Member Scrutiny request regarding the Local Plan Policy H2 Housing Mix should not be added to the scrutiny workplan but that the Committee reviews implementation of the new approach in six months based on the monitoring year to the end of next March and having regard to the housing mix within the permissions granted.

381. MEMBER SCRUTINY REQUEST - PLANNING SERVICES PERFORMANCE

The Committee was reminded that a scrutiny request from Councillor V J Bell regarding Planning Services Performance had been submitted and the related proforma was attached to the agenda. This had been reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Working Group (the Working Group) in September 2025. However, since the matter had not first been raised with Officers of the Council or the relevant Committee the request was contrary to this Committee's operating protocol in terms of being actioned. The Committee was therefore requested to take no further action in respect of this request.

The Chairperson moved the recommendation set out on the agenda and this was duly seconded. In seconding the proposal, Councillor Bell advised she was happy to take no further action at this time.

The Director of Place, Planning and Growth reassured Members that he was in discussions with an independent company regarding undertaking a peer review of the service in 2026.

The Chairperson then put the recommendation which was duly agreed.

RESOLVED that no further action be taken in respect of the scrutiny request from Councillor V J Bell regarding Planning Services Performance.

There being no other items of business the Chairperson closed the meeting at 8.15 pm.

P L SPENCELEY
CHAIRPERSON

REPORT of
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

to
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
30 JULY 2026

APPOINTMENT OF REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES AND WORKING GROUPS

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is for new appointments to be made for the municipal year, to May 2027.

2. RECOMMENDATION

(i) That the Committee appoints representatives to the Outside Bodies as listed in section 3.1.1 below, for the ensuing Municipal Year;

(ii) That the Committee appoints representatives to the Working Group as listed in section 3.2.1 below, for the ensuing Municipal Year.

(iii) That the Committee appoints Process Improvement Champions as detailed in section 3.3.1 of the report.

3. SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES

3.1 **Outside Bodies**

3.1.1 Members are asked to nominate a representative to serve on the following Liaison Committee, for the municipal year, to May 2027.

Outside Body	2025 / 26 Representative	To be Appointed
Essex County Council (ECC) Health Overview Policy and Scrutiny Committee (District Representative)	Councillor P L Spenceley	One Member of the Committee

3.1.2 The Health Overview and Policy Scrutiny Committee is Essex County Council's statutory health scrutiny committee. Its primary function is to review and scrutinise matters relating to the planning, provision and operation of health services across Essex. For members information the meetings of the Essex Health Overview and Policy and Scrutiny committee meet during the day and are held at Essex County Council Offices in Chelmsford. There are currently 7 meetings scheduled for this municipal year. A substitute can be sent where the appointed member is unable to attend.

3.1.3 The member appointed would sit as a non-voting member on the Essex Health Overview and Policy and Scrutiny committee. Details of meetings of this committee, and previous meeting minutes can be found on the ECC website at EssexCmis5 > Committees > Health Overview Policy and Scrutiny Committee.

3.2 **Working Groups**

3.2.1 Members are asked to nominate representatives to serve on the following Working Groups, aligned to the Committee, for the ensuing municipal year.

Working Group	2025 / 26 Representative
Overview and Scrutiny Committee Working Group	All Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

3.3 **Members Representatives**

3.3.1 Members are asked to nominate two Process Improvement Champions. These roles were previously known as Project and Improvement Champions. The two members work with two nominated members from the Performance, Governance and Audit Committee to provide member views on improvement projects.

Representative	2025/26 Representatives	To be Appointed
Process Improvement Champions	Councillor A Fittock and E L Stephens	Two representatives of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Background Papers: None.

Enquiries to: Emma Holmes Director of Legal and Governance (Monitoring Officer).

REPORT of
THE DIRECTOR OF LEGAL & GOVERNANCE

to
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
30 July 2026

REFERENCE FROM SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM – DM Peer Review Action Plan

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to receive and consider a request on a matter referred to the Committee by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT).

2. RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee:

2.1 **considers** the referral from SLT in the light of the information set out in this report, and

2.1.1 **adds** the Development Management Service Action Plan is to the current workplan and for the working group to feedback to Officers its comments a summary of which will be bought back to the next meeting of this committee.

3. SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES

3.1 The Council appointed the Planning Officer’s Society Enterprises (POSe) to carry out a Peer Review of the Development Management (DM) Service in May 2026.

3.2 The Peer Review was informed through interviews with Officers and Members of the Council as well as a review of national published data.

3.3 The Peer Review made 37 recommendations which were categorised into three areas:

- Urgent Improvements: that can be delivered relatively easily and have a high impact,
- Universal Improvements: comprehensively fixing the service so that it is fit for purpose, and
- Structural Improvements: those changes that relate to or are best addressed through Local Government Reorganisation.

3.4 The Peer Review was undertaken by two experienced planners. The review is their perception of the issues facing the DM service at a snapshot in time. The 37 recommendations are a very helpful way to start the shaping of an Actions Plan. Their recommendations probably fall within three categories:

- Recommendations we fully agree with,
- Recommendations we may support in principle, but have a better solution, and
- Recommendations we may disagree with.

3.5 Following the completion of the Peer Review an Action Plan is being produced to implement the recommendations of the report.

3.6 The Peer Review contains personal data and information from which individual members of staff could be identified. In accordance with the Council's obligations under data protection legislation and to protect the privacy of those individuals, the full report has not been circulated with this agenda report.

3.7 A full copy of the Peer Review, together with the associated Action Plan, will be provided to the Overview and Scrutiny Working Group for detailed consideration.

3.8 The Action Plan is scheduled to be discussed at the Working Group meeting on 4 August 2026, following which any recommendations arising will be reported back to this Committee

3.9 It must be recognised that creating an exemplary service will not be entirely dependent on completing each of the improvements or actions set out in the Action Plan. Aspects of the Action Plan can be grouped together as projects and in some cases, there will be overlaps.

3.10 The legal changes to the size and decision making of Planning Committees set out in the Town and Country Planning (Discharge of Local Planning Authority Functions) (England) Regulations 2026 will require a review of the format and function of the Planning Committees. As part of this work the recommendations of the Peer Review will be incorporated into the new Planning Committee structure and operation. These changes will be placed before the Council in October 2026.

3.11 Some actions are being taken including the reintroduction of the Duty Planner service at the Council Offices to householders on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday morning’s between 10am and 1pm. The service will start 1 August 2026. This will be monitored to establish if this meets the needs of customers.

3.12 Whilst work on each of the actions will commence, it must be recognised that these changes also represent a cultural change to working practices to transform it into more of a customer focused enabling service. The actions will be the building blocks for cultural change but these changes cannot happen overnight.

4. CONCLUSION

4.1 A review of the draft Action Plan will provide additional scrutiny to ensure that all matters are addressed to take positive action to improve the Council’s DM Service and customer experience.

5. IMPACT ON PRIORITIES AS SET OUT IN THE CORPORATE PLAN 2023 - 2027

5.1 **Provide good quality services.**

5.1.1 Thorough scrutiny processes support improved performance and efficiency which in turn will contribute to the quality of services provided, and functions undertaken by the Council.

6. IMPLICATIONS

(i) **Impact on Customers** – The successful implementation of the Action Plan will .

(ii) **Impact on Equalities** – Equalities are considered as part of the reporting on review work undertaken by Officers.

(iii) **Impact on Risk (including fraud implications)** – Scrutiny reviews enable potential Corporate Risks to the organisation and their mitigation to be identified.

(iv) **Impact on Resources (financial)** – Scrutiny reviews offer the potential for an assessment of financial impact to the organisation. The Council agreed a budget of £25,000 in its February 2026 budget to complete this review. The cost of the Peer Development Review has cost £17,100.

(v) **Impact on Resources (human)** – Scrutiny reviews offer the potential for an assessment of any resource impact to the organisation.

Background Papers:

Enquiries to:

Mark Jaggard – Director of Place Planning & Growth.

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