
Minutes of the meeting of the Place Services and Economic Growth Policy and Scrutiny Committee, held in Committee Room 1 County Hall, Chelmsford, CM1 1QH on Thursday, 28 November 2019

Present:

Councillor I Grundy (Chairman)	Councillor B Massey
Councillor B Aspinell	Councillor R Moore
Councillor T Cutmore	Councillor J Moran
Councillor S Hillier	Councillor C Pond
Councillor P Honeywood	Councillor R Pratt
Councillor D Kendall	Councillor C Weston

1 Membership, Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations of Interest

The report of the Membership, Apologies and Declarations was received, and it was noted that

1. The membership of the Committee was unchanged since the last meeting;
2. Councillor W Schmitt had sent her apologies, Councillor J Moran attended as her substitute. Councillor A Erskine and Councillor Henderson had also sent their apologies.

2 Minutes

With regards to Minute 4 (Review of the Essex Minerals Local Plan (2014)), the Chairman advised Members that the information requested on the issue of fracking, and ECCs position had now been received from Richard Greaves and would be circulated to the Committee.

With regards to Minute 5 (Concessionary Fares and Park and Ride Services) Officers advised Members that the following recommendations were proposed and **Agreed** by the committee:

- Members recommend that the proposed fee be reduced, at least in the first instance. When it is introduced it should be done so gradually, initially at the cost of 50 pence.
- Members felt that the BID partners in Chelmsford and Colchester should be consulted on proposed changes with a view to potentially securing additional funding to continue to operate within the current fares structure.

- Members noted with concern the air quality and environmental implications of proposals. It is recommended that the plans be deferred and taken to the climate change commission when it is established (should this be found to be within the commissions remit).

Thereafter, the minutes of the meeting held on 17 October were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

3 Questions from the public

There were none.

4 Essex Prosperity and Productivity Plan (PPP)

Members received report (**PSEG/19/19**) and a presentation from Cllr Tony Ball, Cabinet Member for Economic Development, and Dawn Redpath, Head of Economic Growth. The presentation was in respect of the draft Essex Prosperity Plan and formed appendix A to the above-mentioned report.

In September 2019, the Place Services Economic Growth Policy and Scrutiny Committee undertook a piece of scrutiny work looking at the South East Local Enterprise Partnership. At this meeting, members requested that they be given advanced sight of the Essex Prosperity and Productivity Plan for further scrutiny.

Following the presentation, members were invited to ask questions and the areas raised included:

- The membership, terms of reference and budget of the Success Essex Board – Ms Redpath confirmed that a list of members and the terms of reference had recently been finalised and could be circulated to the Committee. She advised that there was in fact no formal budget.
- Difficulties experienced by small businesses- Members felt that not enough was being done to assist small businesses
- Difficulties due to transport connectivity in the County- it was suggested that old branch lines be reopened, or new ones opened.
- Skills gaps – Members felt that there was a gap in respect of technical skills. They felt that the success of the skills college at Stansted Airport should be replicated elsewhere in the County.

The Chairman thanked Ms Redpath for her contribution.

5 Essex Green Strategy

Members received report (**PSEG/20/19**) and a presentation from Jayne Rogers, Environment Officer.

The Green Essex Strategy, steered by the Essex Green Infrastructure Partnership, describes the need for green infrastructure in the county and sets a vision and objectives for the delivery of green infrastructure. This strategy provides a plan to guide the future planning and delivery of green infrastructure in Essex in light of the potential growth in development and population. The draft plan (Appendix A to the report) outlines how a carefully planned Green Infrastructure network is crucial for the environment, the health & well-being of Essex residents and will help support a thriving, sustainable economy.

The presentation formed Appendix B to the above-mentioned report.

Following the presentation, members were invited to ask questions and the areas raised included:

- Budget/resources – Ms Rogers advised that the budget was very limited and that she was the only officer working on the project (part time). She advised that other funding options were being looked into including utilising existing project funding and the Green Essex Fund.
- Consultation with planning authorities – Ms Rogers confirmed that all planning authorities with the County would be consulted
- Liaison with highways department regarding permission for coastal paths – Ms Rogers confirmed that this issue had been raised with Cllr Bentley as the relevant Cabinet member and that a meeting had been arranged in this regard.

Members were concerned to note that Ms Rogers was the only officer working on the strategy. Following a discussion, the committee made the following **recommendation**:

- Members noted with concern the level of officer resource made available to support the Green Infrastructure Strategy. It was recommended that the Green Infrastructure team should grow to meet the scale and ambition of the Green Infrastructure Strategy.

The recommendation was proposed by Cllr Pond and seconded by Cllr Cutmore. This was agreed unanimously by the Committee.

The Chairman thanked Ms Rogers for her contribution.

6 Date of next meeting

The Committee noted that the next Committee meeting will be on Wednesday, 18th December 2019.

There being no urgent business the meeting closed at 12.40pm

Chairman