

Place Services and Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee

10:30	Thursday, 23 July 2015	Committee Room 1, County Hall, Chelmsford, Essex
--------------	-----------------------------------	---

Quorum: 5

Councillor S Walsh
Councillor K Bobbin
Councillor G Butland
Councillor T Cutmore
Councillor A Erskine
Councillor C Guglielmi
Councillor T Hedley
Councillor I Henderson
Councillor D Kendall
Councillor V Metcalfe
Councillor C Pond
Councillor S Robinson
Councillor K Twitchen
Councillor A Wood

Chairman

For information about the meeting please ask for:

Christine Sharland, Scrutiny Officer

Lisa Siggins Committee Officer

Telephone: 033301 34594

Email: lisa.siggins@essex.gov.uk

www.essex.gov.uk/scrutiny



Essex County Council

Essex County Council and Committees Information

All Council and Committee Meetings are held in public unless the business is exempt in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government Act 1972.

Most meetings are held at County Hall, Chelmsford, CM1 1LX. A map and directions to County Hall can be found at the following address on the Council's website:
<http://www.essex.gov.uk/Your-Council/Local-Government-Essex/Pages/Visit-County-Hall.aspx>

There is ramped access to the building for wheelchair users and people with mobility disabilities.

The Council Chamber and Committee Rooms are accessible by lift and are located on the first and second floors of County Hall.

If you have a need for documents in the following formats, large print, Braille, on disk or in alternative languages and easy read please contact the Committee Officer before the meeting takes place. If you have specific access requirements such as access to induction loops, a signer, level access or information in Braille please inform the Committee Officer before the meeting takes place. For any further information contact the Committee Officer.

Induction loop facilities are available in most Meeting Rooms. Specialist head sets are available from Duke Street and E Block Receptions.

The agenda is also available on the Essex County Council website, www.essex.gov.uk From the Home Page, click on 'Your Council', then on 'Meetings and Agendas'. Finally, select the relevant committee from the calendar of meetings.

Please note that an audio recording may be made of the meeting – at the start of the meeting the Chairman will confirm if all or part of the meeting is being recorded.

Part 1

(During consideration of these items the meeting is likely to be open to the press and public)

	Pages
1 Apologies and substitution notices The Committee Officer to report receipt (if any)	
2 Minutes To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 28 May 2015	5 - 10
3 Declarations of Interest To note any declarations of interest to be made by Members in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct	
4 Questions from the Public A period of up to 15 minutes will be allowed for members of the public to ask questions or make representations on any item on the agenda for this meeting. On arrival, and before the start of the meeting, please register with the Committee Officer.	
5 Work Programme 2015/2017 To consider Report PSEG/11/15 proposing the Committee's work programme for 2015/2017	11 - 29
6 Financial Inclusion Scrutiny Review Update To receive report PSEG/12/15 concerning an update from the Leader on matters relating to the recommendations arising from the Committee's original scrutiny review of financial inclusion	30 - 40
7 Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy and Visit to Tovi Eco Park, Basildon To receive report PSEG/13/15 providing an overview of the Committee's recent visit to Tovi Eco Park.	41 - 45
8 Third Party Responsibilities And Flood Management Task And Finish Group – Progress Report To receive Report PSEG/14/15 and an oral update from the Group on this review.	46 - 46

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PLACE SERVICES & ECONOMIC
GROWTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD AT COUNTY HALL,
CHELMSFORD ON 28 MAY 2015**

Present:

Councillor S Walsh (Chairman)	Councillor V Metcalfe
Councillor K Bobbin	Councillor C Pond
Councillor G Butland	Councillor S Robinson
Councillor C Guglielmi	Councillor A Wood
Councillor T Hedley	
Councillor D Kendall	

Members also in attendance: Councillors E Johnson, S Barker, J Knapman, and M Mackrory.

1. Membership

It was noted that at Full Council in May 2015 Councillor Simon Walsh was appointed as Chairman of this Committee. The membership of the Committee has also changed as Councillor Keith Bobbin has replaced Councillor Dave Harris as a member of the Committee. The full Committee membership is set out below:

Councillor S Walsh (Chairman)	Councillor I Henderson
Councillor K Bobbin	Councillor D Kendall
Councillor G Butland	Councillor V Metcalfe
Councillor T Cutmore	Councillor C Pond
Councillor A Erskine	Councillor S Robinson
Councillor C Guglielmi	Councillor K Twitchen
Councillor T Hedley	Councillor A Wood

2. Apologies and Substitution Notices

Apologies were received from Councillors Erskine, Henderson, and Twitchen.

3. Appointment of Vice-Chairman

Councillor A Wood was nominated as a Vice-Chairman and with the agreement of the Committee was duly appointed.

Councillor D Pond was nominated as a Vice-Chairman and with the agreement of the Committee was duly appointed in line with Minute 3/ May 2014.

4. Minutes

The Minutes of the Committee meeting held on 26 March 2015 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

5. Declarations of Interest

With reference to Minute 7 below the following Councillors declared their personal interests as members of Local Highways Panels: Bobbin, Guglielmi, Hedley, Johnson, Kendall, Metcalfe, Pond, Walsh and Wood.

6. Questions from the Public

No members of the public had registered their interest in asking a question on any of the items to be considered at the meeting.

7. Local Highways Panels

The Committee considered report PSEG/08/15 providing an overview of the Council's Local Highways Panels (LHPs) as part of a more detailed scrutiny review moving forward.

In June 2015 (Minute 5 refers) when the Committee agreed its work programme it was envisaged that a review of the Local Highways Panels (LHPs) would be initiated this Spring so that it could draw upon the three years of experience since the LHPs were first established. Also a review would be able to reflect upon changes that were in the process of being made at that time.

The LHP framework was introduced in 2012. Each district has its own individual LHP, and a variety of local practice has arisen. The Committee will provide a means to scrutinise what may or may not have worked well and what changes have been made to address any problems, compare their operation as well as address any criticisms, in order to identify and share good practice.

At the meeting Andy Turner, Head of Project Delivery (Highways) gave a presentation to the Committee based upon his briefing paper included as part of the aforementioned report, and answered Members' questions.

Councillor Eddie Johnson, Cabinet Member for Highways Maintenance and Small Schemes was also in attendance for this item.

Mr Turner gave an overview of his responsibilities as Team Manager and the changes that have been made to the Project Delivery Team that supports the LHPs. He confirmed that a review had been undertaken to identify problems encountered during the early operation of the Panels. The measures taken to overcome those problems include greater transparency through improved management of information and team co-ordination, the introduction of clearer lines of accountability, and staff has also been empowered to take action as appropriate on individual schemes to overcome obstacles.

A flow chart was circulated at the meeting to illustrate how projects will be delivered (Commission, Design, Target Costing, Mobilisation, Construction, and Final Account). One person will now be responsible for a project throughout its life cycle, and all schemes subject to annual review.

When the Panels were set up originally there were underspends in the budget in years 1 and 2 based on the under delivery of schemes, which attracted significant criticism. Following a review, the approach to budget allocation was changed.

There is currently around £9 million allocated for LHP schemes across the county with a number of historic schemes from previous financial years. There is a mixture of schemes that can be designed and delivered on the ground relatively quickly as dictated by the frequency of LHP meetings, and subsequent sign off at the Commissioning Board. Other more complex schemes require a two year cycle (year 1 design and year 2 delivery) to provide real assurance and confidence in delivering a schemes to budget, on time and of an appropriate quality.

The current total allocation of LHP schemes is higher than the budget for 2014/2015. The Panels have been encouraged to allocate fully their total budget for 2014/2015 to create a bank of work capable of beginning a twelve month rolling cycle. It was confirmed that LHPs will incur costs whether a scheme is implemented or not, because there are costs necessarily incurred with the evaluation process. The new restructured team will also manage schemes to be funded from Section 106 monies.

In his summing up Mr Turner drew attention to the improvements being made in the operation of the LHP processes, but reiterated that it was work in progress together with implementing better communication channels. All twelve LHPs operate differently at a local level, with some working more effectively than others. He acknowledged that it would be helpful if a forum could investigate what best practice exists among the LHPs, and how it could be shared across the whole county.

Following the presentation various issues were clarified for the Committee via a question and answer session, which included the following information:

- **LHP Remits**

Members were referred to published guidance called the Essex 'Local Highways Panels Terms of Reference and Members' Guide' for confirmation on those matters considered by the Panels. Street lighting issues are not within the remit of the LHPs, and similarly schemes covered by the Parking Partnerships.

- **Membership**

Concern was expressed that not all County Councillors are members of LHPs for instance in Chelmsford and Colchester, making it more difficult for some to understand what is happening in their divisions. The Chairman suggested that this could be looked at as part of the Committee's own scrutiny review of LHPs going forward.

- **Budget Allocation**

Aside from discussion on the way that LHP funding is allocated and spent, questions were raised about the ability of the LHPs to consider the allocation of their limited funds to schemes costing £0.5 – £1million, and creating a reserve of any underspend from LHP budgets. Councillor Johnson suggested that these might be matters that the Committee could take into account as part of its own scrutiny review.

- **Highway Rangers**

Highway Ranger teams have been put into place across the twelve districts in Essex to undertake small works that are not given to a contractor but may make a huge difference to an area. Confirmation was given that working practices differ in each district and the teams may or may not be used by some LHPs. It is hoped that a consistent system of “best practice” may be adopted in due course.

- **Communication**

Linked to the issue of membership of the LHPs, it was felt that communication about individual LHP activity needed to be improved. In response to a suggestion that information on individual schemes should be published on the ECC website, Mr Turner stressed that while consideration was being given to improving communication it was essential that any information published is clear and accurate.

Although not a matter that is specific to the LHPs, Members took the opportunity to voice their concerns about the County Council’s Member Enquiries service. Councillor Johnson gave an assurance that this matter was being looked at with a view to improving responses on highways matters in terms of timing and clarity.

- **Staffing**

The new Team structure has been implemented over the past 18 months, and it was confirmed that there were no staffing issues such as a lack of technical engineers that were causing delays in scheme design and delivery.

- **External Factors**

In response to questions about the causes of delays it was confirmed that the statutory undertakers and legal factors can affect service delivery. It was confirmed that discussions were taking place with relevant parties to remedy any problems.

On behalf of the Committee the Chairman thanked both Councillor Johnson and Mr Turner for a very helpful overview of the operation of the LHPs that would be used to inform further scrutiny work, and acknowledged that much had been done to improve service delivery.

As stated in the covering committee report a task and finish group would be set up in due course to carry out a more in depth investigation of the individual Panels in order to identify and share good practice.

Councillor Mackrory, who was attending the meeting as an observer on behalf of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee, drew attention to that Committee’s wish that Councillor Young and he join the proposed task and finish group and take part in its investigation.

9. Call In Of Decision FP/081/04/15: Colchester Town Centre Traffic Regulation Orders

The Committee noted report PSEG/09/15 concerning the calling in of decision FP/081/04/15: Colchester Town Centre Traffic Regulation Orders and in particular the making of traffic regulation orders including the introduction and revocation of various waiting and loading restrictions, dedicated disabled parking bays, and no stopping restrictions except for buses in Queen Street, Head Street and High Street, Colchester. The call in was subsequently withdrawn.

At the meeting the Chairman took the opportunity to draw Members' attention to the changes agreed at full Council in May to the Call In arrangements. In addition to the provision that any member of a scrutiny committee may call-in a Cabinet Member decision falling within its remit, 'Where a decision affects the division of a Member significantly differently from the generality of divisions, that Member may, subject to the agreement of the chairman of the relevant committee, call in the decision himself, and the call in shall be regarded nominally as in the name of the relevant chairman.'

10. Work Programme

The Committee noted report PSEG/10/15 by the Scrutiny Officer updating Members on the Work Programme, and planned committee activity.

At the meeting oral updates were provided on the following issues:

- Third Party Responsibilities and Flood Management, and Jobs, Welfare and Skills Task and Finish Groups: Scrutiny reports were being drafted for the two Groups' consideration prior to their submission to Committee.
- Bus Passenger Transport Strategy: Members referred to the Committee's Seminar last December and the setting up of a new Delivery Board. They expressed their concern that no further information had been provided on the purpose and makeup of the Board, and its relationship with the Scrutiny Committee. Consequently it was agreed that the Cabinet Member should be requested to provide a briefing paper setting out the latest situation on the development of the Bus and Passenger Transport Strategy, and the new Delivery Board.
- Local Highways Panels: It was confirmed that this will be considered as a part of the 2015/17 Work Programme with a Task and Finish Group being formed to take the matter forward.
- Pavement Parking: A briefing paper will be commissioned in due course to provide the Committee with up to date information on the topic.
- Visit to Tovi Eco Park (formerly Courtauld Road): The site visit will now take place on 25 June and not 23 July as originally reported. It will comprise a visit to the facility, and a briefing on
 - How the Park functions as part of the Waste Strategy
 - Solid Recovered Fuel (SRF)

- Longer term vision for Recycling Centres for Household Waste
- Formal Committee Meeting on 23 July: The meeting will include consideration of the following matters:
 - Work programme for 2015/2017
 - Third Party Responsibilities and Flood Management Scrutiny Review
 - Jobs, Welfare and Skills Scrutiny Review
 - Financial Inclusion update.
- Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs): A Member suggested that it would be helpful for the Committee to receive a briefing on the LEPs, and the Chairman agreed that this would be looked into with a view to the topic being included in the July agenda.

11. Date of Next Meeting

The Committee noted the next committee activity day was scheduled for Thursday 25 June 2015, and will comprise a visit to Tovi Eco Park (formerly Courtauld Road).

It was further noted that the July meeting could comprise committee activity throughout the day.

There being no urgent business the meeting closed at 11.25 am

Chairman

		AGENDA ITEM 5
		PSEG/11/15
Committee:	Place Services and Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee	
Date:	23 July 2015	
PLACE SERVICES AND ECONOMIC GROWTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2015/2017 (Minute 8/March 2015)		
Enquiries to:	Christine Sharland, Scrutiny Officer 01245 430450 Christine.sharland@essex.gov.uk	

Purpose of report

As reported to Committee in March 2015 (Minute 8) work has been ongoing to develop a manageable work programme leading up to the next County Council elections in 2017, as well as address existing planned committee activity.

In Essex Scrutiny Committees are being encouraged to plan and manage their activities in a way that contributes to the ongoing development of the Council's overview and scrutiny function. A key tenet of making improvements to the way committees conduct their work is to take a more considered approach to topic selection in order to produce work programmes capable of delivering tangible outcomes and adding value to the Council's activities, at the same time as managing the resources available. Ultimately Scrutiny Members want to be in the position of exerting both a proactive and a positive influence upon what the Council does in practice.

This report has been written in two parts: Part 1 - An overview of the work programme and the Committee's experience over the past year; and Part 2 – An analysis of the Work Programme for 2015/ 2017.

Part 1 – Overview on the Work Programme

General Background

There is general consensus among scrutiny practitioners that topics that make up a work programme should be carefully selected and take into account a committee's capacity to deliver that programme by managing the resources available. The role of topic selection and work programming has featured in Members' Scrutiny training,

and good practice is reflected in the Council's own Overview and Scrutiny Handbook that is published on its website. The link is:

<http://cmis.essexcc.gov.uk/essexcmis5/PublicDocuments.aspx>

It is necessary to reiterate that scrutiny activity may take various forms. Not every topic needs to be considered in depth or be submitted to a formal meeting. An important part of gathering information to assist in prioritising topic to be included in a programme selection is to identify:

- How the committee might influence positively and add value to the way things happen in Essex,
- to identify related work as well as the timescales for any known activity and decision making, and
- to ensure that any scrutiny work may occur at the most appropriate point.

Given the resources available experience does suggest the need to restrict the number of in depth reviews being undertaken at any one time i.e. no more than two. This is to ensure there is capacity for wider committee engagement in a broader range of topics from across the Committee's remit, and to tailor how topics are considered by using different formats eg formal meetings, seminars, fact finding visits, and limited round table discussions. Some activities will be planned to inform councillors on subjects that will become the focus of more in depth investigation in the future, or are of significant strategic interest.

While Councillors are keen to be kept informed about what is happening across the services covered by the Committee's remit, the Committee itself does not have the capacity to be the primary source of communication on issues within its remit or to duplicate information provided via other channels.

Overview of the Topic Selection Process for the Committee's Work Programme 2015/ 2017

On behalf of the Committee the Chairman and Scrutiny Officer have been collating information from relevant officers about those issues that are anticipated over the next two years where scrutiny might have a useful role to perform. The time period is critical not least because of the need to complete reviews before the County Council elections in May 2017. It has been emphasised that where consultation and decisions may be projected to take place in 2016/17, then earlier scrutiny engagement is preferred in order to contribute to the shape of the Cabinet's final decisions rather than become involved when it may only comment on action already taken.

The Chairman has also consulted those Cabinet Members whose portfolios have matters that co-incide with the Committee's own remit to identify potential issues for consideration. During the discussions the Chairman has confirmed that Cabinet Members will be invited to attend meetings with the Committee to provide updates on their portfolios, and provide a means for an exchange of questions and answers.

In June the Chairman and Political Groups' representatives on the Committee met to consider a draft report on the topics now under consideration.

As part of the selection process care has been taken to identify more strategic topics across the whole remit rather than necessarily dwelling on popular local topics where there may be alternative channels available to Members to input their views etc. In many cases councillors have a wider range of formal and informal opportunities to input their views for instance via the Member Development programme, briefings organised by the Cabinet, various consultation processes, and Cabinet Member surgeries. It is important that scrutiny resources are not directed to duplicating opportunities that already exist, and care is taken to ensure that there are clear objectives for a scrutiny committee's consideration of any topic.

New lessons learned over the past year 2014/2015

Each year it has proven useful for councillors to reflect on the lessons learned from scrutiny work undertaken during the previous year, and to build upon successes and address problems.

Over the past year the work programme approved last June by the Committee has proven a useful framework for prioritising its activities and managing resources. Although it has been relatively successful overall, there are some aspects of its make up where progress has been slower than may have been anticipated and improvements could be made:

- Task and Finish Groups

While four task and finish groups were envisaged for the period July 2014 until February 2015, in practice there have been two undertaking in depth investigations since September/ October 2014 that are not yet complete. In both cases those councillors involved have confirmed that they have found it to be a worthwhile experience.

Aside from the availability of officer resource, in practice both groups have benefited from the willingness of individual members to participate in all aspects of an investigation and allocate time for the review in addition to scheduled full committee activity. Groups do appear to promote a greater sense of team responsibility than may exist across the larger committee, and provide a forum for a more joined up examination of a topic. Individual scrutineers have developed a much better understanding of the issues under scrutiny, and had direct contact with interested parties rather than learning about a topic third hand.

As witnessed with successful groups in the past the smaller size of the existing groups namely a membership of three in both instances, has been working well. There may be drawbacks associated with the Committee's wider membership in terms of generating individual interest and understanding of the topic under scrutiny. As part of planning a review Groups do have to consider how to ensure that when a scrutiny report is submitted to the Committee for its endorsement that colleagues appreciate why conclusions and recommendations have been reached, which may require the broader membership to set aside time to understand those issues before

a scrutiny report is submitted to a formal meeting for endorsement. While Group members themselves have shown a willingness to engage in additional activity generated by a review, it has proven difficult to establish the overall appetite of the Committee for engaging in work outside of scheduled activity days and formal meetings.

This year there have been delays in the progress of the Groups' investigations and hence their completion. Progress has been hampered to some extent due to such factors as:

- Delays caused by difficulties encountered in arranging meetings where both the Group and contributors are available, and on occasion meetings have had to be cancelled at short notice and then re-arranged at a later date.
 - While the reviews have been planned carefully at the outset, their progress is shaped by the evidence obtained and the need to follow pertinent lines of enquiry that may not have been realised at the outset.
 - Despite careful management the availability of resources does vary as other priorities emerge over the course of a review for both for officers and members. For instance the handling of call ins, and unplanned matters have been referred for the full Committee's attention that drew resources away from ongoing projects, and this year's elections affected work in the spring.
 - External factors influencing the timing of evidence gathering or the start of a review itself.
- General

At the outset the timetable for work planned for 2014/2015 was affected by delays in confirming the memberships of task and finish groups, and the knock on consequences for identifying mutually agreeable dates for meetings to plan reviews. The original intention for Groups to start the planning of reviews in July/ August did not in fact occur until the autumn.

Timing of planned work has also been affected by matters beyond the Committee's control for instance a visit to Courtauld Road in September 2014 had to be cancelled due to the facility becoming unavailable. Fortunately the Highways Service was able to assist at short notice by providing the means for the Committee to consider pothole repairs and highways maintenance on site, which was a topic planned later in the work programme.

In some cases councillors themselves have not taken the opportunities extended to them to input into planning the scrutiny of a topic, for instance by suggesting questions that early on in the process that could inform the key lines of enquiry, general format and arrangements. This does make it more difficult for the Chairman and Scrutiny Officer to tailor arrangements to address perceived issues, and will affect what may or may not be achieved by the Committee in the final analysis.

Potential Solutions

While it may be possible to allocate timescales for the consideration of certain topics, in other cases it may be more realistic to highlight them for priority purposes but leave the final timing of their consideration more flexible. This is pertinent given the intention of projecting the programme over a longer time period.

Nevertheless it is proposed that the preliminary planning of each review or project should be tackled by the Committee as soon as possible so that projects can be prioritised and brought forward if appropriate where resources allow. It would also be beneficial if there is greater clarity about the intended purpose of a review so that it can be shared with interested parties, and used to inform key lines of enquiry etc. It is also an opportunity for individual members to influence what happens by identifying in advance those questions that they would like to inform the planning of reviews within the framework of any agreed terms of reference and key lines of enquiry. Planning meetings will be organised for this purpose as appropriate. Where a pragmatic decision has had to be made to defer a topic in the light of the latest available information, there are repercussions for the programme as a whole and so a pool of topics ready for consideration may make it easier to redeploy resources more efficiently.

By developing a programme based on a broader mixture of formats and forums, it has provided more opportunity to manage the limited resources available and adapt ways of working to enhance Members' consideration of topics and outcomes achieved. Although there has been greater flexibility in approach, the Committee's activities are reported and recorded through its formal agenda and minutes.

As suggested above in the case of those reviews to be conducted by task and finish groups it would be helpful to manage them in a way that the number of groups operating at any given time is limited to no more than two depending upon the resources available. The start of a new project could be triggered by the conclusion of an existing project.

There are a number of topics that have been identified where the Committee might be able to perform a useful scrutiny role, but at this stage it is difficult to identify the most effective format and timing of that input for instance where the Council is awaiting clarification on the Government's intentions. During discussion with officers it is clear that Members' feedback would be welcomed as ideas are being formulated as part of the policy development processes, and this could be achieved through one off workshops. While it is proposed that some preliminary planning of these topics will be conducted, they have been treated as emerging topics to be kept under regular review so that the timing of their inclusion in the programme can be managed taking into account what resources are available and existing priorities.

Given the number and range of topics that have already been identified for possible inclusion in the work programme it is proposed that on those scheduled committee activity days where formal meetings are arranged, then briefings and workshops will be planned as appropriate on the same afternoons to manage the heavy workload and expectations. As in the past all Committee Members are encouraged to plan

ahead and block out the scheduled dates as full days rather than half days in their diaries in order to participate fully in scrutiny activity. A number of topics are already being proposed as a combination of a full day visit and seminar, which has been a feature of the work programme over the past year.

In practice there will not be a formal meeting every month as it would not be possible to resource that level of activity from both a councillor and officer perspective, and at the same time to support more in depth investigations where different formats may give rise to more flexible and efficient means to collate and examine evidence, and in turn better opportunities to shape outcomes. With experience it has become apparent that formal meetings are not always the most effective forum for considering individual topics in any depth. However, it is confirmed that the outcomes of work undertaken using other methods will be reported formally through those meetings and any scrutiny reports will require the endorsement of the full Committee. In the first instance formal meetings have been scheduled on a quarterly basis, with visits, seminars, in depth task and finish group work, etc. being proposed on other scheduled activity days.

Part 2

Analysis of the Work Programme for 2015/2017

Aside from considering ways of enhancing management of the work programme, the Committee is being asked at this meeting to endorse an outline work programme for 2015/2017 i.e. committee activity over the next 18 months or so. It is recognised that unforeseen matters will arise from time to time that will affect Members' ability to achieve the goals being promoted as part of the programme, but the overall framework will provide a means for prioritising topics and managing resources. A number of topics have now been identified for inclusion in the work programme and are summarised below but are not indicative of any particular order of preference.

- **Existing Work Programme Commitments**

There are a number of ongoing projects to be included in the Committee's 'new' programme as work is underway or was scheduled to begin this year, albeit the priority of projects not yet started should be reviewed as part of this year's overall selection process. The list set out below is a mixture of existing proposals, issues that have been identified over the past year, and emerging priorities based on local and national considerations.

In summary the reviews are:

1. Third Party Responsibilities and Flood Management Task and Finish Group:
While this investigation is ongoing, it is planned that a scrutiny report will be submitted to the Committee in the autumn. An update on its progress is set out elsewhere in this agenda.
2. Jobs, Welfare and Skills Task and Finish Group:
Much of the investigation on this topic has taken place and the drafting of a

scrutiny report is in progress. The final report will be submitted to the Committee in the autumn. An update on its progress is set out elsewhere in this agenda.

3. Local Highways Panels:

It was agreed last year that a review be scheduled to begin this spring, and at the last meeting the Committee received a briefing that provided an up to date strategic overview of the LHPs and their operation. Originally it was proposed a task and finish group should undertake any further detailed investigation into the consideration of how the LHPs may have achieved their original objectives and what lessons have been learned by individual panels so that good practice may be shared across Essex. It is necessary for the Committee to confirm if it wishes to proceed with this review in the light of other topics identified for potential inclusion in the programme for 2015/2017. Subject to the Committee's decision a task and finish group could be convened in the autumn following more detailed planning over the summer. *A summary extracted from a draft scoping document is attached at Appendix A.*

4. Recycling Centres for Household Waste (RCHW) Service:

It was agreed last year that a task and finish group be set up with the aim of contributing to the development of a longer term vision for the operation of the RCHW Service in Essex. It had been intended that that review should begin towards the end of last year. However, following the cancellation of the Committee's visit to the Courtauld Road Waste facility in September 2014, and then attention being diverted by other matters including two consultations that had not been planned in the Committee's work programme, a delay in this particular review became inevitable. Furthermore there have been several matters relating to the RCHW Service itself where the delay in the start of the scrutiny may have been beneficial.

It is necessary for the Committee to confirm if it wishes to proceed with this review in the light of other topics identified for potential inclusion in the WP for 2015/2017. Subject to the Committee's decision a task and finish group could be convened in the autumn following more detailed planning by a task and finish group. *A summary extracted from a draft scoping document is attached at Appendix A.*

5. Ringway Jacobs Contract:

A seminar on the theme of the Ringway Jacobs Contract was proposed for inclusion in the work programme last year, but due to other Committee commitments has been delayed. Arrangements are now in the process of being made for the committee activity day on 24 September, and Members input into the planning of that seminar is being sought. As part of organising the seminar a planning meeting has been arranged for the Committee to feed in directly into the making of arrangements.

6. Parking Partnerships:

The Committee received an update on the Parking Partnerships at its meeting in March 2015 (Minute 8). The Cabinet Member for Highways Maintenance and Small Schemes has commissioned a full review of the Partnerships as

required under the formal Joint Committee Agreements, and has indicated that he will be inviting this Committee to comment upon his findings and recommendations before they are published next year. A briefing will be included in the work programme before that consideration takes place.

7. Passenger Transport Strategy:

This topic has been identified in the existing work programme. However, further detailed information is awaited from the Executive on how the Strategy will be taken forward with critical milestones, so that the Committee's input can be planned in more detail.

8. Pavement Parking:

A briefing paper will be commissioned in due course to provide the Committee with up to date information on the topic. Following on from that paper and any information that may arise as part of the consideration of highways issues associated with flooding and enforcement, consideration will be given to a broader review of obstructions on the highway for inclusion in the work programme in the longer term.

9. Communications Protocol:

A proposed review around a Communications Protocol arising from a recommendation from a scrutiny review on Off Site Emergency Planning Requirements around COMAH (Control of Major Accident Hazards) Sites in Essex is outstanding from the existing work programme. The recommendation reads that: '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.'

Given the significant topics being considered as a part of the current selection process, it is proposed that no further action be taken on this particular review. However, it is likely the issue of corporate communications support for the Council's services in raising public awareness will be picked up through other reviews eg the scrutiny report on Third Party Responsibilities and Flood Management.

10. School Crossing Patrols:

While no further scrutiny action is proposed on this topic, a briefing paper will be commissioned in due course to provide the Committee with up to date information on school crossing patrols.

11. Utility Companies and Highways Schemes:

Originally concerns around the impact of delays in utility works upon highway schemes were raised by Councillor Bass, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation, when he contacted the Chairman about problems encountered with utility works being provided as a part of a major road

scheme in Colchester that caused delays in the opening of a new road. During a recent briefing on the Local Highways Panels, the Committee's attention was drawn to similar problems arising with delays on small schemes caused by utility works. It is proposed to incorporate the topic in the Committee's work programme in the longer term, albeit at this stage the timing will remain flexible given proposed investigations into other topics. However, it has been suggested that a visit being planned for the Committee to learn more about highways surface dressing could be combined with a seminar on utility works as Councillors have raised the problems they perceive where highways maintenance repairs have been spoilt by subsequent utility works.

12. Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP): There are separate arrangements being planned for a briefing on the Local Enterprise Partnerships, and it is likely that over the course of the work programme the Committee will consider matters relating to Partnership activity.

- **Emerging Issues**

13. Commissioning Strategies: Environmental Aspirations:

Being mindful that the Committee has not investigated environmental issues in any depth over the past couple of years, it is proposed that its scrutineers could perform an important role by challenging proposals being developed by those officers who are shaping various outcome indicators to take forward the Council's approved Commissioning Strategies on:

- Cost of energy to households
- Access to valuable open spaces
- Level of Pollution
- Perception indicators

As a part of its role the Committee may consider the evidence bases being used and be involved in shaping implementation of a number of the Council's outcome indicators, which will lead to the prioritisation and targeting of resources in this commissioning area. It will be essential to design any scrutiny involvement in a way that can be accommodated within the Committee's overall resources and work programme. It is proposed that as first step a briefing be arranged for the Committee to learn more about the project.

14. Bradwell Nuclear Facility: It is possible that during the period covered by the roll forward of the work programme proposals may emerge around the future of the facility. Therefore it will be highlighted as a potential issue for the Committee's consideration.

15. Strategic Planning: This is a significant topic within the Committee's remit. As a first step it is suggested that a seminar be held to refresh understanding about the current planning framework and thinking in order to assist the Scrutiny Committee in shaping an investigation. However, one particular aspect that the Committee might wish to focus upon could be on the lack of

countywide development framework since the introduction of the latest National Planning Policy Framework, and how the County Council could facilitate the Districts to complete their local plans.

16. Essex Replacement Waste Local Plan: The Cabinet Member has already advised all County Councillors of work that is now underway on the Replacement Plan, and it is proposed that on the committee activity day scheduled in September he will provide a briefing for the Scrutiny Committee.
17. Aviation Policy and Airports Surface Access Study: This year the Committee has visited Stansted Airport and received a briefing on aviation matters affecting Essex. It is proposed that as and when information is published, then consideration will be given as to whether or not there is a scrutiny role for the Committee to perform.
18. Solid Recovered Fuel (SRF): In June the Committee visited the MBT facility at Tovi Eco Park (formerly known as Courtauld Road) at Basildon, and as a part of the briefing councillors were advised about current options for the disposal of the SRF that will be produced from waste disposed of at that facility. As it is likely that in the future the Committee will be invited to comment upon options for the longer term, the SRF topic will be kept under review for inclusion in the work programme at the appropriate time.

While an agreed work programme will assist in managing committee activity, it is recognised that unforeseen matters will arise from time to time that will affect Members' ability to achieve the goals published in the programme. Some likely topics have been identified in the list above under 'Emerging Issues', and will be kept under review for inclusion in the programme. However, other topics are less predictable. Their inclusion or otherwise will need to be judged carefully in terms of the priorities already identified within the work programme, their impact upon finite resources, and the knock impact upon other reviews. This has been a feature of the Committee's own experience this past year, and has influenced the design of the new programme which, although more flexible, will nonetheless require careful management.

It has proven more difficult this year to timetable the Committee's consideration of topics identified for inclusion in its work programme for 2015/2017 due to various uncertainties around the timing of other matters that could affect the value of any scrutiny investigation that takes place. Nevertheless the topics now identified are prioritised for the purpose of allocating the Committee's resources, with two new task and finish groups proposed to begin when existing groups have completed their investigations.

Summary

While many of the issues raised in the first part of this report have been highlighted in the past as good practice, the scrutiny function is still evolving and the Committee's work programme moving forward has been adapted to take account of

further lessons learned this past year. However, it will be important to reflect regularly upon what progress or otherwise the Committee is making and the quality of the outcomes being achieved in order to improve ways of working overall.

The work programme as now proposed provides a framework for 2015/ 2017, but will remain a work in progress. A timetable for the period up to July 2016 is attached at Appendix B to this report. Although there are some topics where there is a clear focus and timeline for the Committee's attention, in other cases there is insufficient information currently available to determine the timing and key lines of enquiry for scrutiny engagement eg await the publication of Government advice, clarity on the format and timing of the Council's own projects.

Ultimately a key measure of the Committee's success or otherwise will depend upon the contribution made by its membership in the review of individual topics from the planning of scrutiny engagement through to the cross examination of contributors and evidence, which will determine what outcomes are achieved in the final account.

Action required by the Committee at this meeting:

Members' agreement is sought to the inclusion of the topics as set out in this report on the Committee's work programme for 2015/17.

Appendix A

**Essex County Council
Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Review Scoping Document - Summary Extract**

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 is to consider if the Local Highways Panels (LHPs) have achieved their original objectives, and what lessons have been learned by individual Panels so that good practice may be shared across the Panels.
Type of Review	Part A: Briefing – full Committee Part B: Investigate local practice among LHPs – Task and Finish Group
Timescales	Originally when this topic was identified for inclusion in the Committee’s work programme it was agreed that it should be programmed for Spring 2015 so that any review could draw upon three years of experience since the LHPs were first established. A briefing was arranged for 28 May, and the setting up of a Task and Finish Group will be considered as part of the topic selection process for the work programme moving forward.

<p>Rationale for the Review</p>	<p>The LHP framework was introduced in 2012 and has evolved with experience. Each district has its own individual LHP, which has resulted in a variety of practice. The Committee will provide a means to review what may or may not have worked well and what changes have been made to address problems, compare their operation, as well as address any criticisms in order to identify good practice.</p> <p>As part of a review the Committee will learn about the management and operational structure behind the LHPs and, in turn, consider the outcomes achieved by the individual panels. It is essential that the planning of any review should be based upon a clear strategic understanding of the work area so that a more holistic approach may be taken in the investigation of the twelve local panels. Consequently the review is proposed to be in two parts as set out in this document.</p>
<p>Key Lines of Enquiry</p>	<p>Strategic Overview <i>(Covered initially as part of briefing to full Committee on 28 May) :</i></p> <p>What were the original objectives behind 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>How is the work of the LHPs managed by the Highways Authority?</p> <p>What lessons have been learned from operational experience and what changes have been made since the LHPs were set up?</p> <p>How has funding been allocated to the LHPs?</p> <p>What is the range of approaches taken by individual districts and lessons have been learned from across the LHPs?</p> <p><i>As part of the second stage of the review it will be necessary for a review to develop a framework of common questions to be addressed to every LHP.</i></p>

**Essex County Council
Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Review Scoping Document - Summary Extract**

Review Topic (Name of review)	Future of the Recycling Centres for Household Waste (RCHW) Service
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.
Timescales	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.</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? ○ 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

	<p style="text-align: center;">developing the future design of the service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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?
--	--

Appendix B

PSEGSC Work Programme for 2015/ 2016 *(as at 14 July 2015)*

Committee Activity Dates	Committee Activity Day/ Focus of Meetings	Ongoing Activity
2015		
July 20	Flood Management & Third Party Responsibilities TFG	Visit and meeting
July 23	<p>Formal meeting: To catch up on any business that needs endorsement followed by other TFG activity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work Programme 2015/2017 • Financial Inclusion – update • Updates from various Task and Finish Groups • Tovi Eco Park Visit <p>Informal meeting for the Committee's planning of items to be included in the work programme, in particular issues arising in September</p> <p>Informal briefing on Local Enterprise Partnerships</p>	<p>July</p> <p>Visit to Tovi Eco Park - Compile report on outcomes of visit</p> <p>Jobs, Welfare and Skills TFG</p> <p>Flood Management & Third Party Responsibilities TFG</p>
August	Combination of seminar/visits/ task and finish groups	August
TBC	Jobs, Welfare and Skills TFG	Work to conclude review
TBC	Flood Management & Third Party Responsibilities TFG	Work to conclude review
<i>TBC</i>	<i>Local Highways Panels Scrutiny Review</i>	<i>To conduct some preliminary planning of review only, start of review itself will be subject</i>

		<i>to resource availability</i>
<i>TBC</i>	<i>RCHW Service Scrutiny Review</i>	<i>To conduct some preliminary planning of review only, start of review itself will be subject to resource availability</i>
September 24	Informal Briefings across full day: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ringway Jacobs Contract • Waste Local Plan • Commissioning Strategies: Environmental Aspirations 	September <i>Preliminary work to take forward investigations of Local Highways Panels TFG, and RCHW Service TFG - dependent on conclusion of work on established TFG activity</i>
TBC	Jobs, Welfare and Skills TFG	Finalise scrutiny report for forwarding to Committee
TBC	Flood Management & Third Party Responsibilities TFG	Finalise scrutiny report for forwarding to Committee
October 22	Formal Meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TFG Scrutiny Reports – seek Committee endorsement • Work Programme Update • Parking Partnerships (and Pavement Parking) - Briefing • Cabinet Member Update - Question and Answer Session: <i>Cllrs Bass and Johnson to be invited</i> Afternoon: Informal meeting for the Committee's planning of items included in the work programme	October Ringway Jacobs Contract – Compile report on outcomes of seminar Waste Local Plan - Compile report on outcomes of seminar Environmental indicators (Commissioning Strategies) – Compile report on outcomes of seminar Publication of Scrutiny Reports: Jobs, Welfare and Skills; and Flood Management & Third Party Responsibilities Launch New TFG projects
November 26	TFG activity – Commence new projects subject to completion of older projects, and release of	November Local Highways Panels TFG

	resources	RCHW Service TFG
TBC	Local Highways Panels TFG	
TBC	RCHW Service TFG	
December 17	Committee Activity Day	December Local Highways Panels TFG RCHW Service TFG
2016		
January 21	<p>Formal Meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work Programme Update • TFG Update • Parking Partnerships – Cabinet Member proposals (tbc) • Cabinet Member Update <p>Afternoon: Informal meeting for the Committee's planning of items included in the work programme</p>	January Local Highways Panels TFG RCHW Service TFG
February 25	Focus on TFG Activity	February Local Highways Panels TFG RCHW Service TFG
March 24	Committee Activity Day	March Local Highways Panels TFG RCHW Service TFG
April 21	<p>Formal Meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work Programme Update • TFG Update • Briefing on Highways Maintenance and Utility Companies by way of preparation for visit and seminar in May 	April Local Highways Panels TFG RCHW Service TFG

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cabinet Member Update <p>Afternoon: Informal meeting for the Committee's planning of items included in the work programme</p>	
May 26	<p>Full Day:</p> <p>Site Visit to view Surface Dressing & Highways Maintenance, followed by seminar around the topic of the Utility Companies</p>	<p>May</p> <p>TFG activity</p>
June	<p>Focus on TFG Activity</p>	<p>June</p> <p>TFG Activity</p> <p>Surface Dressing & Highways Maintenance, and Utility Companies – compile report of visit and seminar</p>
July	<p>Formal Meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work Programme Update • TFG Update • Surface Dressing & Highways Maintenance, and Utility Companies – report • Cabinet Member Update <p>Afternoon: Informal meeting for the Committee's planning of items included in the work programme</p>	<p>July</p> <p>TFG activity</p>

Topics to be incorporated into the Committee's work programme subject to the availability of relevant information and resources, and timing considerations:

- *Strategic Planning*
- *Passenger Transport Strategy*
- *Aviation Policy*
- *Airports Surface Access Study*
- *Solid Recovered Fuel*
- *Bradwell Nuclear Facility*

		AGENDA ITEM 6
		PSEG/12/15
Committee:	Place Services and Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee	
Date:	23 July 2015	
FINANCIAL INCLUSION SCRUTINY REVIEW UPDATE (Minute 8/June 2014)		
Enquiries to:	Christine Sharland, Scrutiny Officer 01245 430450 Christine.sharland@essex.gov.uk	

An in depth investigation on Financial Inclusion was conducted during the second half of 2012 by a Task and Finish Group, and its scrutiny report was agreed by the former Economic Development, Environment and Highways Policy and Scrutiny Committee (EDEHPSC) in January 2013 (Minute 4). A copy of that report is published on the Council's website via the Committee Management Information System.

The Financial Inclusion project was a cross cutting scrutiny review with implications for a number of the Council's functions as well as taking account of services provided by other external organisations. The EDEHPSC forwarded seventeen recommendations to the Cabinet that had budgetary, policy review and development implications. A response from the Cabinet was reported to this Committee in Minute 6/September 2013 when it was agreed that a Task and Finish Group should be reconvened to cross examine the Cabinet's response and what progress has been achieved through Council activity in the promotion of financial inclusion since the report was published.

The Task and Finish Group undertaking the monitoring of the original recommendations comprised four members: Councillors Ian Grundy (lead member), Tony Hedley, David Kendall, and Simon Walsh. It submitted a scrutiny report setting out its findings to the Committee in June 2014 (Minute 8), and a copy of that report is also published on the Council's website via the Committee Management Information System. While the Committee endorsed that report, it also agreed that:

'Based upon its consideration of the Cabinet responses to the original recommendations arising from the original Scrutiny Report, it is recommended that the Leader of the Cabinet be requested to provide a progress report in May 2015 on:

- (a) the effectiveness of the measures that have been proposed and implemented to promote financial inclusion, as referred to in this report, and to illustrate whether or not the Council is realising its financial inclusion objectives, and
- (b) the implementation of new initiatives in the Council's communication channels that can be demonstrated to have improved public access to information that promotes financial inclusion.'

A response from the Leader of the Council was received in May, and is now reproduced at the appendix to this report. It provides a detailed update on activity taken by the Council to promote financial inclusion across Essex.

The review on financial inclusion was an important piece of work undertaken by councillors engaged in scrutiny activity, and the Leader's response draws together the progress that has been made by the Council since the review was undertaken in 2012.

Being mindful of the Committee's broad remit and the need to prioritise resources, it is proposed that no further action be taken in relation to this particular review. However, it is an important topic and it is likely that some of the issues relating to financial inclusion that are referred to in the scrutiny report, will be considered as part of other reviews in the longer term by the Scrutiny Committees. Indeed the Committee's own current investigation on Jobs, Skills and Welfare does touch upon issues around financial inclusion.

Action required by the Committee at this meeting:

The Committee is asked to note the Leader's response in this matter, and to agree that no further action be taken.

Appendix

TO: Place Services and Economic Growth Policy and Scrutiny Committee
22nd May 2015

Dear Chairman,

Monitoring the outcomes of the report on Financial Inclusion

I am pleased to be able to provide the Committee with a response to their recommendation for a progress update on the work undertaken by the Council to promote financial inclusion. As the committee is aware financial wellbeing is a cross-cutting issue that affects people in different ways and therefore requires a range of actions and interventions to promote it.

I have included in the appendix a more detailed update on the individual recommendations from the original report but I would like to take this opportunity to provide a progress update on the effectiveness of the measures that have been implemented to date and our work to improve our communication channels.

Having sustainable employment was highlighted in your report as being one of the most effective ways of promoting financial inclusion and through the work of the Essex Employment and Skills Board we have achieved 8,000 additional apprenticeships in key growth sectors and set up a Skills Advisor Portal to promote training in the workplace.

To help create more jobs and drive business growth ECC, BT and BDUK have jointly invested £24.6m in providing superfast broadband coverage to 65,000 hard-to-reach homes and businesses in Essex. This will increase broadband coverage in the county to more than 87% by summer 2016. A second phase is planned with a further £18.9m of investment to reach an additional 51,000 premises. This will mean that 95% of premises in Essex will have access to superfast broadband by 2020.

Local Authority Partnerships have been set up to support people on benefits, in particular those moving onto Universal Credit (UC). They are helping them with accessing the online claim forms and providing budgeting support. As UC is rolled out further additional support will be provided to vulnerable groups through these partnerships and the Welfare Reform Project Group will monitor the use of the support. This is an excellent example of working collaboratively with both districts and the voluntary sector to achieve better outcomes for our residents.

I am also pleased to say that as a result of the work carried out by the Welfare Reform Project Group, the Essential Living Fund which provides crisis support, has had agreement to continue for a further year.

Your report highlighted the excellent work of the Village Agent project and recommended that this was extended to urban areas. In July 2014 the Community Agent scheme was launched and this is available in both urban and village areas. Since its launch the scheme has supported over 2000 people of which 256 received debt and benefit advice.

It is not enough just to provide help and support to those who are experiencing financial issues, we must ensure that our residents know how to access that help and support. Communication channels are key to this and we have undertaken a major review of ECC's website. As a result of this all financial inclusion content is now grouped together on a single page creating a de facto portal on to the Living Well Website. It is too soon to report on usage of the portal but this will be monitored and customer feedback will be sought to drive further improvement.

The website includes details of local Citizens Advice Bureaux whose funding allocations have been altered to reflect the number of people that may be experiencing financial issues within their area. This was a key recommendation from your report and I am pleased to say that this has been implemented in full. In addition we are working with Chelmsford CAB to develop a funding strategy that will enable them to become more financially self-sustaining.

Furthermore a financial inclusion campaign, designed to raise awareness and encourage contact with organisations who can provide support and carried out via social media will be included within the Community Resilience thread of the Communications Forward Plan later this year.

These interventions demonstrate the commitment ECC has to promoting financial inclusion across all its areas of work.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Committee for their continued focus on financial inclusion and its impacts on the residents of Essex.

Yours sincerely



Cllr David Finch, Leader of the Council

Leader's Progress Report on Financial Inclusion

Recommendation 1

That as part of its equality and diversity framework the County Council take into account financial inclusion both when assessing the potential effects of future policy development and when reviewing the impact of current policies, and the monitoring of financial inclusion issues across the Council be incorporated into the terms of reference for the Equality and Diversity Board.

The Equality and Diversity Board is now been incorporated into the Corporate Governance Board but as recommended in your original report from January 2015 the revised Equalities Impact Assessment now takes into account the socio-economic status of individuals as well as the characteristics protected in law.

Recommendation 2

That the County Council undertake an in depth review of what the Council and other public agencies could do to promote skills and employment not only for young people but more generally for other residents in the context of financial inclusion.

Whilst there has not been a formal review the promotion of skills and employment is an on-going focus of the Essex Employment and Skills Board (ESB).

The ESB have taken the opportunity to feed into the European Social Fund process earlier this year to promote our priorities and proposed solutions for Essex. They include a clear reference to our growth sectors and addressing skills shortages in Essex, including:

- 8,000 additional Apprenticeships in key growth sectors
- Supporting careers choices, through industry / education programmes, training for teachers and tutors and the development of an Essex Careers site
- Higher Level Skills including programmes to support graduates into employment
- Increasing numeracy and literacy
- Improving employer access to training through further development of the Skills Adviser portal. The 'Skills Portal' is now live and ESF will enable it to go to the next stage.

Additionally our ECC 'Evidence Base' database is already helping to inform schools and colleges, their facilities and the courses they offer. Our Education and Industry programme helps to showcase our local industry and helps young people to understand the study choices they need to make to get into growth sectors.

Recommendation 3

That the Welfare Reform Working Group be urged to highlight the impact of the proposed welfare reforms upon policy development or service changes on the issue of financial inclusion, and that there is specific support in place to provide residents with suitable information guidance and IT infrastructure through libraries and other local authority access points.

With regards to Financial Inclusion and Welfare Reform (in particular Universal Credit (UC)), support with budgeting and making claims on line is an aspect of the additional support for vulnerable claimants being provided through Local Authority Partnerships between district/boroughs/city councils, the voluntary sector and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).

This forms part of the additional support for vulnerable people as part of the Universal Support Delivered Locally (formerly the Local Support Services Framework) to accompany and compliment the introduction of UC.

The Welfare Reform Project group has developed good relations with district partners to monitor the implementation of UC and usage of this support.

With regards the Fairer Charging Policy, given the phased implementation of the reforms, to date only terminology changes to the policy have been required. However, a Charging Group task and finish group has been set up as a result of the Care Act, and an officer from the Welfare Reform Project has been involved in these discussions and will continue to advise on impacts for Welfare Reform and charging income to ECC.

Changes are anticipated to the policy but will not be required until the existing group of claimants (specifically disabled claimants) are moved onto UC. Similarly, changes to the leaving care handbook will be implemented as the roll out of UC continues.

In addition to this, one outcome as a result of the work carried out by the Welfare reform group has been that the Essential Living Fund, ECC's response to the Localisation of the Social fund, has had agreement to continue for a further year. The scheme will currently continue to run until April 2016; providing support for those in a crisis situation or resettling into the community. A further decision on 2016/17 will be required at a future date.

Under the current, first phase of the Superfast Essex programme, BDUK, Essex County Council and BT are jointly investing £24.6m to connect some 65,000 harder to reach homes and businesses to superfast broadband, which will increase superfast broadband coverage in the county to more than 87% of all premises by summer 2016.

The programme is now planning a second phase rollout, which will invest a further £18.9m to reach an additional 51,000 premises and aims to enable 95% of all addresses in Essex to access superfast broadband by 2020.

Alongside this infrastructure rollout, Superfast Essex also operates a comprehensive service take-up programme, which – in addition to providing updates and engagement relating to the rollout - is working closely with other ECC functions, in particular Place and Customer, and the Essex business community to ensure that the newly enabled connectivity starts to drive economic growth and wellbeing in the county.

Recommendation 4

That based upon the positive feedback received of the Village Agent project, consideration be given as to how the project could be extended into urban areas eg ‘Urban Agent’ pilot, and to develop an additional focus, at least in part, on promoting financial inclusion

The Village Agent scheme was replaced by Community Agents Essex in July 2014 and is now available in both urban and rural areas across Essex.

Community Agents is not a scheme which specifically targets financial inclusion as its core, however, it recognises that to support people to remain independent, access to appropriate benefits can give people the peace of mind and a conversation about benefits is included in the initial conversation the agent has with the individual.

Between July 2014 and the end of March 2015, the scheme has supported a total of 2017 individuals and the data shows that a total of 256 people have been supported with debt and benefit advice. Over half the people being supported are over the age of 80 and approximately half the referrals are coming from ECC social care.

Recommendation 5

That steps be taken to raise the awareness of all County Councillors and staff of the financial exclusion that exists in Essex in a way that enables them to signpost those individuals in need to the relevant services at the earliest opportunity.

and

Recommendation 6

That, as a primary source of information on the relevant services available across Essex, a prominent financial inclusion portal be developed on the ECC website, providing residents with easily accessible advice and signposting for support.

and

Recommendation 10

That the County Council raise awareness of the StepChange Debt Charity, and consider how it may engage with that Charity's activities alongside targeted CAB preventative work, to extend debt advice to Essex residents

There has been a major review of Essex County Council's website. All of the financial inclusion content is now grouped together on a single page, creating a de facto portal on the Living Well Website.

Within this information are links to other organisations, i.e. Citizens Advice Bureaux and other organisations to signpost users to services to support financial inclusion.

Because of the work done to improve the information available on the ECC website it is not possible to directly compare data from last quarter from March when the new portal went live. The Financial Assessments page, which contained much of the information, received a total of 208 page views from January to March this year.

The new Living Well pages will be monitored to ascertain levels of usage and customer feedback sought on how useful they found the information contained within the portal.

Recommendation 7

That the County Council review how it allocates funding to the twelve Essex Citizens Advice Bureau, which takes greater account of local need rather than being allocated according to population levels, and that clear objectives be established for the provision of that funding.

As a direct result of the recommendation from the Scrutiny Report on Financial Inclusion in 2014 Essex CABx worked with officer's within ECC's Commissioning Delivery function to develop a way that ECC's total grant funding contribution to all CABx in Essex (a sum of £123,000) could be divided between the CABx across the County

The resulting work developed a tool to be used which worked out each districts percentage of the available grant based on:

1. The percentage of the total Essex population;
2. Number of people living in wards with Index of Multiple Deprivation ("IMD") score of 10+ (areas of high deprivation); and
3. Number of CAB clients (in a given period)

Recommendation 8

That the County Council consider how it may provide practical support for the CAB to reach out to potential community champions within the business

sector who may be willing to finance the work of their local CAB, including the option that it provide additional monies to finance the employment of a CAB fund-raiser tasked with reducing CAB reliance on local authority grants.

We are currently supporting one of the Essex CABs to develop a funding strategy to enable them to become financial self-sustaining in the long term. Chelmsford CAB has links with a number of VCS sector organisations and plans to engage with us on several projects later in 2015 to increase the sustainability of these organisations long-term

Essex County Council supports the new Essex Funder Forum which is being driven by the BIG Lottery Fund. The Forum is an opportunity for discussions to take place at a county level about Essex's funding needs and includes Essex Local Authorities (including the Unitaries of Thurrock & Southend) as well as Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs)

By bringing together local, national & statutory funders working in the area, we hope to be able to learn about the work that each funder does in the region (and nationally, where this is applicable). By sharing this intelligence and information in an open & honest way, we seek to develop funder collaborations & partnership funding opportunities.

Recommendation 12

That the County Council provide practical support and expertise in assisting Credit Unions to reach out to potential community champions within the business sector who may be willing to help finance the work of their local Credit Union to reduce reliance on local authority funding.

and

Recommendation 13

That the County Council takes active steps to promote positively on its website and within the literature that it produces, the existence and potential suitability of borrowing and/or depositing monies with credit unions, and that all such information should be readily accessible to all.

The Scrutiny Monitoring report in June 2014 asked further questions about what work was being done with Churches to 'promote' financial inclusion and whether ECC could adopt a stance where it would not advertise 'pay-day Loan' companies on any of our materials.

There are no protocols in respect of the promotion of pay day loan companies within Essex County Council, but as we have no corporate facility for this to happen, these would not be necessary.

Essex churches are active among the 25 locations from which the county's credit union Essex Savers delivers money management services to local communities.

Chelmsford Diocese offer payroll deduction to members of staff who belong to Essex Savers. The Church of England has published useful leaflets and guidance notes and is part of the Churches Against Poverty Network.

Recommendation 14

That the County Council work with borough, city and district councils and housing authorities to encourage them to consider using credit union to deliver social outcomes and to promote the use of credit unions on their website and within their literature, and to both staff and citizens.

All twelve borough, city and district councils have been approached to ask them what their intentions are with regards to funding CAB in the future and whether they would consider entering into a joint agreements with Essex County Council.

Recommendation 15

That the County Council engage with local schools and with other appropriate bodies with expertise in their field to promote the development and use of financial literacy courses for school children, so that training in financial literacy plays a greater role in the school curriculum. A financial incentive could be provided to promote intra-school competition, which could see individual schools and school children work to develop an appropriate financial literacy programme for different school years.

Financial literacy continues to be taught in secondary schools as part of the curriculum. Activity is ongoing working with a recently retired headteacher to design and develop an intra-school completion.

Discussions have been held with the secondary Head teachers about joining the Pisa Schools programme however interest is minimal at this stage due to the other pressures facing schools at the present time. This will continue to be raised on a regular basis.

Recommendation 16

That the County Council offer a range of appropriate budget management and financial literacy course both through its Adult Community Learning and Libraries services.

Programmes are offered free of charge to people who do not have a Level 2 Maths or English qualification and are designed to provide the individual with essential knowledge, skills and understanding that will enable them to operate confidently, effectively and independently in life and work.

In the academic year 2013 -14 (September 2013-August 2014):

- 476 people enrolled with Adult Community Learning on Functional Skills English programmes achieved their qualification
- 736 people enrolled with Adult Community Learning on Functional Skills Maths programmes achieved their qualification

In the academic year 2014-15 (September 2014-August 2015)

- 533 people enrolled on Functional Skills English programmes
- 710 people enrolled on Functional Skills Maths programme

Adult Community Learning delivers Functional Skills ICT within Apprenticeship 16-18 and 19+ programmes. The programme was delivered to 100 learners (2014-15) and includes the development of technological skills and the use of excel spreadsheets to record and manage financial data related to budgeting.

Adult Community Learning continues to work in partnership with a range of organisations, including the voluntary sector, to provide programmes that meet the needs of a diverse population. An example is a budgeting programme currently being developed with Barnardos and the Department of Work and Pensions.

		AGENDA ITEM 7
		PSEG/13/15
Committee:	Place Services and Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee	
Date:	23 July 2015	
JOINT MUNICIPAL WASTE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY, AND VISIT TO TOVI ECO PARK, BASILDON		
Enquiries to:	Christine Sharland, Scrutiny Officer 01245 430450 Christine.sharland@essex.gov.uk	

On 25 June 2015 the Committee's activity day comprised a visit to the new Waste Facility at Tovi Eco Park, Basildon, and a series of briefings to update its membership on matters relating to the Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy for Essex. Councillors Keith Bobbin, Graham Butland, Tony Hedley, David Kendall, Chris Pond, Stephen Robinson, Kay Twitchen, Simon Walsh and Andy Wood attended on the day.

The purpose of the visit was to provide an opportunity for Committee Members to learn about the current position on the disposal and collection of household waste in Essex, and various influences upon the Waste Strategy in the longer term. The facility visited at Tovi Eco Park (also known as Courtauld Road) is a Mechanical Biological Treatment (MBT) facility for residual waste and, although not fully commissioned as yet, it provided an insight into the key role it will perform in Essex.

Peter Kelsbie, Director for Commissioning: Waste and Environment, and Jason Searles, Head of Commissioning Sustainable Essex Integration and Waste were in attendance to brief the Committee.

In summary the briefings covered the following matters:

- **Overview of the Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy (JMWMS) for Essex**

For many years the accepted method for the disposal of residual waste has been into open landfill sites. However, changes in both the UK and EU legislation mean that landfill is no longer a preferred or viable method.

The themes running through the JMWMS include:

- Reduce the amount of waste produced and re-use more;
- High levels of recycling (aspiration of 60% by 2020);
- Favouring composting technologies for source segregated biowaste;
- MBT for residual waste.

Local and national campaigns have supported Essex to become one of the highest performing counties for recycling. Over half of all waste is separated for recycling by households for kerbside collections or via recycling centre activity. However, attention was also drawn to the importance of waste minimisation where the county has a much poorer record in comparison with other areas of the country.

The Committee sought information on what work was taking place to understand waste recycling and minimisation in terms of the actions of Essex residents. While campaigns are successful in the short run in raising public awareness, an underlying problem is how to change people behaviour in the longer term. Furthermore Essex is a large two tier county and the makeup of household waste will be affected by the type of housing, economic growth, and social make up in different parts of its area. There are eleven Waste Collection Authorities that are party to the Waste Strategy (Colchester has not adopted the Essex Strategy), each one operating a different service. In practice this means that the variation in kerbside collections and recycling facilities do make it difficult to run a standard co-ordinated campaign across Essex as a whole to encourage greater resident participation. Research is being undertaken to contribute to a better understanding of behaviour countywide, and in doing so will assist in identifying solutions to encourage greater participation in waste minimisation.

Nonetheless Essex County Council is the fifth largest Waste Disposal Authority in the country and in response to councillors' questions it was confirmed that there are difficulties in managing and co-ordinating the overall system, because of the large number of contracts (around 60) that the Waste Collection Authorities have in place. However, some Districts are moving towards combined contracts for some recyclables in order to achieve economies of scale.

- **Residual Waste**

Centralised treatment of residual waste

The Essex Waste Partnership undertook a major procurement, supported by DEFRA and £100m of PFI funding, to deliver the new residual waste treatment facility at Tovi Eco Park. The facility is capable of removing valuable recyclable materials from household 'black bag' waste and then rendering the remains biologically stable. These remains can be landfilled without fear of generating harmful greenhouse gases, but can be more cheaply and productively used by energy facilities to generate heat and electricity.

Recyclables extracted at the plant will belong to the Contractor, and the Solid Recovered Fuel (SRF) produced from the residual waste will belong to the Essex Waste Partnership. The plant has been designed in a way that enables flexibility in its operation as it is recognised that over its lifespan there will be variation in the recyclables collected as markets change; the composition of the waste processed will also change; and ultimately the technologies used are still evolving.

The Committee was provided with an overview of the treatment facility both by way of a powerpoint presentation, and being on site Members were able to take advantage of viewing opportunities that exist to see some of the processes in operation.

The facility is currently in its commissioning stage, which includes an “acceptance test”. Waste deliveries commenced on 26 November 2014, and commissioning is expected to last up to 18 months duration (with a longstop date of January 2017). During that period there are no guarantees on performance, but there is a reduced commissioning gate-fee. Plant efficiency tuning has required the manufacture and installation of additional kit (at the Operator’s expense). At present the facility is processing all waste from Basildon, Castle Point, Rochford, Brentwood and Chelmsford (about 45% of Essex’s residual waste), and eventually all waste from across Essex and Southend will be delivered to the facility.

Solid Recovered Fuel (SRF)

The following extracts are taken from the Strategy:

- *“Essex authorities will explore the option of producing SRF from the MBT process and recovering energy from it.”*
- *“Markets for SRF are being explored with current energy users, although there is an option for Essex to build its own energy facility if required.”*
- *“The partnership of Essex authorities will promote the most financially advantageous approach to managing the outputs”.*

Strong public support was given for the use of SRF as a fuel in an energy recovery process in preference to disposal to landfill was recorded in the lead up to the adoption of the JMWMS. Work undertaken by the Essex Waste Partnership identified that 88% of public respondents would *“prefer it if part of the material from the MBT process was used to produce a fuel for energy rather than being sent to a landfill site.”*

The treatment facility will generate round 200,000 tonnes per annum of a waste-derived SRF. In the short term, arrangements during the MBT plant commissioning period and initial operation are in place to off-take the material to facilities on the near continent. As part of the Waste Strategy Programme various options for the productive use of the SRF produced are being analysed and an Outline Business Case will be presented to the Cabinet for approval in late summer 2015. Options under consideration include:

- Landfilling the SRF;
- Procuring a contract for the provision of a service for disposal of SRF by way of merchant facilities considering:
 - 5 year, short-term cyclical contracts
 - 10 year, medium term arrangements, with another re-procurement during the MBT’s contract life
 - 25 year contract - to align with the MBT’s contract life
- Procuring a contract for the development of a new, purpose-built facility for the treatment of the SRF.

Ultimately the choice of options/ contracts will be influenced by the consistency of the quality and quantity of the SRF produced at the Plant, which will become clearer over the commissioning period.

At present SRF is still classified as waste and there are costs attached to its disposal, albeit those costs are significantly less than landfilling the material. However, in Europe there is movement towards SRF having zero costs attached in the future.

During discussion various examples of the way that SRF may be used were explained, including its use as a heating source eg in Sweden for the local community, albeit the differences in the infrastructure in the UK may make such use more difficult to achieve.

- **Long Term Treatment of Bio Waste**

In January 2015 the Cabinet approved the award of a contract to Material Change Limited for the long term treatment of bio waste. It is based on a two site solution:

- Anaerobic Digestion (AD) facility – Halstead
- Combined Dry AD facility and In-Vessel Composting (IVC) facility at Courtauld Road, Basildon adjacent to the Tovi Eco Park.

Final due diligence is underway on the contract, and its sign-off is expected in November 2015.

It is intended that a planning application will be submitted for the Courtauld Road facility in early 2016, with its construction starting in July 2016, and its commissioning in December 2016.

Recycling Centres – Creating a Long Term Vision

The contract for the operation of the Essex County Council's recycling centres is eighteen months into an eight year contract. The contract is integrated with the operation of five waste transfer stations and haulage activity. The contract has delivered around £500,000 per annum savings compared to previous arrangements, and risk and accountability have been transferred to the contractor.

It was confirmed that despite emerging service pressures, satisfaction levels and service affinity remain relatively high. However there are challenges facing the service, including:

- Increasing tonnage throughput
- Challenging recycle market conditions
- Recent spike in on-site incidents and accidents
- Increasing pressure from illicit commercial waste inputs
- On site congestion appears to be worsening
- Impact on neighbours
- Deteriorating infrastructure
- Increased user expectations

The Committee already has a proposal in its work programme for a task and finish group to be established to undertake a scrutiny review of the recycling centres for household waste service. As part of that review it would be appropriate to consider how the service and infrastructure should evolve to ensure it can meet:

- Future tonnage throughput
- Increased legislative demands
- User expectations
- Partnership ambition
- A challenging funding environment

Action required by the Committee at this meeting:

The Committee is asked to note this record of its visit to the Tovi Eco Park on 25 June. Consideration of the inclusion of a scrutiny review on the future of the RCHW Service is included in a report on the Committee's work programme elsewhere in this agenda.

		AGENDA ITEM 8
		PSEG/14/15
Committee:	Place Services and Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee	
Date:	23 July 2015	
THIRD PARTY RESPONSIBILITIES AND FLOOD MANAGEMENT TASK AND FINISH GROUP – PROGRESS REPORT (Minute 6/ March 2015)		
Enquiries to:	Christine Sharland, Scrutiny Officer 01245 430450 Christine.sharland@essex.gov.uk	

The Third Party Responsibilities and Flood Management Task and Finish Group is in the final stages of its investigation, but unfortunately has been unable to complete its scrutiny report in time for submission to this meeting.

As there is a Group meeting on 20 July, an oral update will be given to the Committee today.

Action required by the Committee at this meeting:

To note the update to be provided on the progress of this scrutiny investigation.

		AGENDA ITEM 9
		PSEG/15/15
Committee:	Place Services and Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee	
Date:	23 July 2015	
JOBS, WELFARE AND SKILLS TASK AND FINISH GROUP – PROGRESS REPORT (Minute 7/ March 2015)		
Enquiries to:	Christine Sharland, Scrutiny Officer 01245 430450 Christine.sharland@essex.gov.uk	

The Jobs, Welfare and Skills Task and Finish Group has met with a wide range of contributors as part of its investigation of national programmes linked to jobs, welfare and skills, and the drafting of a scrutiny report is now progress that will draw together its Members' conclusions from the wealth of evidence collated.

Following a meeting in June it was agreed that the Group's scrutiny report will be submitted to the Committee in the autumn. In the meantime the Group will provide the Committee with an oral update at this meeting.

Action required by the Committee at this meeting:

To note the update to be provided on the progress of this scrutiny investigation.