
Minutes of the meeting of the Place Services and Economic Growth Policy and Scrutiny Committee, that was held in Committee Room 1, County Hall, Chelmsford on Thursday, 22 June 2023

Present:

Members:

Councillor A Goggin	Chairman
Councillor S Barker	Substitute
Councillor D Blackwell	
Councillor S Crow	
Councillor J Fleming	
Councillor P Gadd	
Councillor J Newport	
Councillor M Platt	Substitute
Councillor M Skeels	
Councillor M Vance	

Officers:

Samantha Kennedy	Director Environment & Climate Action
Helen Morris	Head of Integrated Passenger Transport Unit (IPTU)
Justin Long	Senior Democratic Services Officer (clerk to the meeting)
Emma Hunter	Democratic Services Officer

Cllr Lee Scott, Cabinet Member for Highways Maintenance and Sustainable Transport.
Cllr Peter Schwier, Climate Tsar
Cllr Anthony McQuiggan (in attendance)
Cllr Mike Steptoe (joining remotely to substitute for Cllr Siddall)

Welcome and Introduction

Cllr A Goggin, the Chairman of the Place Services and Economic Growth Policy and Scrutiny Committee, welcomed those in attendance and noted that Cllr J McIvor had joined the Committee.

1. Membership, Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations of Interest

The report on Membership, Apologies and Declarations was received, and it was noted that:

1. The membership of the Place Services and Economic Growth Policy and Scrutiny Committee was as shown in the report.
2. Apologies had been received from Cllr A Wiles with Cllr S Barker substituting for him, Cllr P Honeywood with Cllr M Platt substituting for him, and Cllr C Siddall with C M Steptoe substituting for him (remotely).

2. Appointment of Vice-Chairmen

Nominations were invited for vice-chairmen to serve for the 2023/24 municipal year.

- Councillor Goggin nominated Councillor Blackwell to be a Vice Chairman of the Committee, which was seconded by Councillor Vance.

- Councillor Goggin nominated Councillor Fleming for the second Vice Chairman post, and this was seconded by Councillor Blackwell.

There being no further nominations and by general consent, it was agreed that Councillors Blackwell and Fleming were each elected as vice-chairman of the Committee for the 2023/24 municipal year.

3. Minutes and Matters Arising

The Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 18 May 2023 were approved as a correct record and were signed by the Chairman.

The following points were noted on the Matters Arising report:

- In connection to the Booking System Trial at Recycling Centres, it was confirmed that further information would be sought on baseline data for all sites and what had been the impact of the 13% reduction in waste tonnage during the earlier Rayleigh trial
- It was noted that an item on the performance of LHPs was on the Committee's Work Programme, and it was agreed by some members that this would be scheduled as a priority given the concerns about LHPs raised by

4. Questions from the Public

There were no questions from the public.

5. Work Programme and Communications Review

The updated Work Programme was noted.

It was confirmed that the results of the Booking System Trial at Recycling Centres were scheduled to be considered by the Committee *before* a decision is taken by Cabinet, and this item was expected in late 2023.

6. Climate Action Update

Cllr Peter Schwier introduced the report (PSEG/18/23) and a presentation which can be found [here](#).

Members were invited to ask questions and provide comment. Key points raised during this discussion included:

- Information would be provided on any work with utility services on issues such as the rollout of hydrogen-ready pipes, and information would be sought on any lobbying efforts on e-scooter safety.
- It was reported that from November 2023 (under the Environment Act 2021) all planning permissions granted in England (with some exemptions) will have to deliver at least a 10% biodiversity net gain.
- Whilst ECC would like to see the net gain figure at 20%, it was noted the existing legislation nevertheless provided numerous funding opportunities including when redeveloping land such as closed landfill sites and ECC had two pilot projects already underway.
- It was confirmed that the delivery of the Green Homes Grant was managed by the Greater South East Net Zero Hub, and ECC had lobbied to ensure that the timescales to spend grant funding were realistic. Final spend figures on the Green Grant Scheme would be shared with the Committee.
- It was confirmed that the Climate Advice Packs (for Residents, Businesses and Schools respectively) were 'live' documents and updated regularly at the following link: [What Can I Do? | Essex Climate Commission](#)
- It was confirmed that the Net Zero Review (led by former Energy Minister Chris Skidmore MP) could be accessed at the following link: [Net Zero Review: UK could do more to reap economic benefits of green growth - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- It was confirmed that the 'Carbon App', which had been developed by external contractors (Greenredeem), was live and could be downloaded by following the link in the presentation circulated or by searching on the App Store or Google Play.
- The community outreach work undertaken on Climate Action was praised by members and they wished for this to be continued and where possible extended.
- The process for 'Section 19' flood investigation reports was outlined, and it was confirmed that these reports informed the flood capital programme and wider climate action activity.
- A summary of communications activity (aimed at residents) would be circulated to the Committee.
- ECC was planning for its extended responsibility in regard to SuDS (sustainable drainage systems), as legislated by the Flood and Water Management Act 2010, and significant opportunities existed including to tackle flooding in new developments.
- It was confirmed that officers had worked very closely with district and borough partners to update the Essex Design Guide on issues such as net-zero standards, biodiversity and climate resilience and to ensure policies are put into practice.
- Information would be circulated on fuel poverty grants and the current criteria.

- An advice pack was being developed on food waste (or food assets) targeted at school children.
- It was reported that lobbying to government was continuing on issues such as national planning policy to ensure that central policies were supporting local efforts to achieve net-zero.
- Net-zero viability work had been completed to help district and borough councils to achieve environment standards beyond current building regulations, and this would be circulated to the Committee.
- Re-wilding options were being pursued, and on tree-planting a new Tree Management Strategy had been adopted which emphasised the principle of 'right tree, right place and at the right time of the year'.
- Baseline data (and progress) on reducing emissions for the ECC estate and wider county would be shared with the Committee.
- An email summary of grants would be circulated including on the ECO4 Flex scheme.
- Efforts to engage young people were continuing including working with schools and the Young Essex Assembly. It was reported that a game-based app had been being developed with a company in the Ukraine prior to the 2022 Russian invasion.
- Performance statistics on the Essex Pedal Power project and the Travel Essex journey planner would be shared with the Committee.
- It was agreed that queries on the emerging Cycling Strategy and the potential for a countywide LCWIP would be taken forward with the relevant officers.

7. Bus Consultation

Cllr Lee Scott, Cabinet Members for Sustainable Transport and Highways Maintenance introduced the report (PSEG/19/23) on the upcoming bus consultation.

Members were invited to ask questions and provide comment. Key points raised during this discussion included:

- The Cabinet Member outlined that it was a genuine consultation and he wanted to hear what residents, businesses and members had to say.
- It was reported that there would be a range of engagement methods including working with parish councils, bus user groups, social media, notices on buses (for low use services) and at bus stations.
- It was confirmed that hard copies would be available 'on request', but not distributed before as previous consultations had received a low response rate from physical paper consultations.
- It was confirmed that the subsidy requirement was for no more than £5 per passenger journey and therefore increasing patronage and/or reducing cost was key to the viability of services.
- Officers confirmed there was no plans to change the £5 criteria and there was not a direct link between inflation and this subsidy figure.
- Members were encouraged to use buses, encourage their residents to use buses and to publicise both the consultation and the actual services.

- The success of the DigiGO project was outlined and noted that this formed a part of the current consultation.
- An update was given on the Bus Shelter project where it was noted that districts had signed the collaboration agreement, and this would be followed by legal due diligence and then a tender process. It was anticipated that the new policy should commence by the New Year (2024).
- It was confirmed that the bus consultation would start in July and run for 12 weeks, with the final analysis and decisions expected in January 2024. It was agreed that Members would be notified when the consultation had gone live.
- Members raised concerns about the possible loss of rural bus services in areas such as the Maldon District.
- In response to questions, it was confirmed that bus use was critical to delivering ECC's net zero ambition; however, buses were only a positive contributor when they are used.
- Members stressed that it was crucial for the consultation to explain ECC's role particularly that the Council does not run services and that many commercial operations would be completely outside the scope of the consultation.
- Officers agreed to look at options to include regional maps of bus services in the consultation.
- Officers agreed to explore options to use Greater Anglia premises (e.g platforms and stations) to promote the consultation.
- It was agreed the Committee would respond to the consultation and members should send points to the Chairman or to the Senior Democratic Services Officer. The item would be considered at the September meeting of the Committee.

8. Date of Next Meeting

The Committee noted that the next scheduled meeting would take place on Thursday 20 July, 10:30am at County Hall.

The Chairman took the opportunity to thank the Democratic Services Officer for her invaluable support and diligence.

9. Urgent Business

No items were raised.

Chairman