

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PLACE SERVICES & ECONOMIC
GROWTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD AT COUNTY HALL,
CHELMSFORD ON 26 NOVEMBER 2015**

Present:

Councillor S Walsh (Chairman)	Councillor D Kendall
Councillor K Bobbin	Councillor C Pond
Councillor C Guglielmi	Councillor S Robinson
Councillor A Hedley	Councillor K Twitchen
Councillor I Henderson	Councillor A Wood

1. Apologies and substitution notices

Apologies were received from Councillors Butland, Cutmore, Erskine and Metcalfe.

2. Minutes

The Minutes of the Committee meeting held on 22 October 2015 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

3. Declarations of Interest

With reference to Minute 6 Councillors Guglielmi and Hedley declared a personal interest in that they deputise on occasion for the Leader in their respective Districts on Devolution matters.

With reference to Minute 7 and 8 Councillor Twitchen reminded the Committee that she is a deputy to Cabinet Member for Transport, Planning, and Environment, and so when the Committee may scrutinise an issue falling within that portfolio she would not take part in the consideration of that issue and would withdraw from the meeting.

With reference to Minute 7 Councillor Kendall declared a personal interest in that he is Secretary of the Brentwood Bus and Rail Users Association, and a Trustee of Brentwood Community Transport in his capacity as a Brentwood Borough Councillor.

4. Questions from the Public

There were no questions raised by members of the public.

5. Jobs Welfare and Skills Scrutiny Review (Minute 9/July2015)

The Committee considered report PSEG/23/15 and a PowerPoint presentation from Craig Elliott Senior Policy & Strategy Advisor, which provided an update on this review. The presentation highlighted the key findings to date on this in depth review carried out by the Task and Finish Group ('the Group'). A copy of the PowerPoint presentation has been published on the Council's website.

During the course of the presentation Members asked various questions, which were answered by Mr Elliott and the Group.

Information considered at the meeting will be incorporated in the final scrutiny report, which will be produced by the Task and Finish Group in the New Year.

While Councillor Kevin Bentley, Cabinet Member for Economic Growth, Waste and Recycling attended as an observer, the Chairman invited him to contribute to the meeting. He believed that the Group had thoroughly investigated the topic and looked forward to receiving the final report. Based on the content of the presentation Councillor Bentley welcomed the opportunity the report promised to provide in highlighting to interested parties what is occurring in practice on the ground in Essex.

The Chairman expressed his thanks on behalf of the Committee to Officers for their ongoing support to the review.

6. Devolution In Greater Essex

The Committee considered report PSEG/24/15 and a briefing from the Leader and Nicola Beach, Chief Executive Braintree District Council on the current position for Devolution for Greater Essex.

The Committee was advised that fifteen local authorities in the Greater Essex area (Essex, Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock) are working in partnership and are actively involved in the process. ECC is not leading the process but are active participants in it.

Members were given the opportunity to raise questions on the process which were answered by the Leader and Ms Beach. Attention was drawn to a recently circulated newsletter produced by Essex Communications concerning devolution issues, which was commended for its clarity.

In view of the discussion on the Jobs, Welfare and Skills review, the Committee took the opportunity to reinforce the importance of employment and skills as part of Devolution for Greater Essex.

There was consensus concerning the need for all councillors across Essex Local Authorities and parish councils to be kept informed of proposals and work streams. Emphasis was placed on the fact that the process would involve a lot more detailed work.

The Committee was advised that a meeting was scheduled for early December between the Chief Executives of the Essex Local Authorities to agree an outline for a formal bid to be made to Government.

The Chairman thanked the Leader and Ms Beach for an informative briefing and confirmed that it is likely that future Devolution matters will be referred to Corporate Scrutiny Committee.

7. Local Bus Consultation (Minute 7/October 2015)

The Committee considered report PSEG/25/15 setting out the Cabinet Member's response to the Committee's recommendations arising from its briefing on the Local Bus Consultation. The Committee further noted that a report will be submitted in due course confirming how representatives will report back to the Committee itself.

Councillor Chris Pond advised the Committee that following the Cabinet meeting on 19 November 2015 he had called in the decision on 'Getting Around In Essex – Procurement of New Local Bus Network' (Minute 4). In his notice of call in he cited in particular the decision to withdraw the subsidy payment to Transport for London (TFL) with effect from 1 April 2016, and gave six reasons for his action. In line with the procedure for handling the call in of a decision, an informal meeting was held on 19 November.

On the basis of a formal letter he had received from Councillor Hirst on 24 November, Councillor Pond confirmed that given that Cabinet has made its decision, and in the light of the statement of ECC intent should TFL withdraw or curtail them, he had withdrawn the call-in.

A formal report confirming the position will be presented to the next Committee meeting.

8. Third Party Responsibilities and Flood Management Scrutiny Review (Minute 6/October 2015)

The Committee considered report PSEG/26/15 seeking the formal endorsement of the Scrutiny Report 'Third Party Responsibilities and Flood Enforcement in Essex', and agreed the following recommendations:

1. That the Cabinet Members for Transport, Planning and Environment; Infrastructure; and Highways Delivery be advised that the Committee commends the LLFA and HA for the positive way that they are taking forward the County Council's flood management role, and in particular the framework of preventative measures being developed as featured in this scrutiny report.
2. That the Cabinet Members for Transport, Planning and Environment; Infrastructure; and Highways Delivery be requested to provide progress reports to the Committee on the following matters in June 2016 so that the outcomes of the particular pieces of work identified can be reviewed:

- (1) The Committee supports those projects such as the LLFA 'Where does water go?' that is assisting in the mapping of watercourses and the development of highways asset databases that will contribute to the creation of comprehensive records for more effective flood management across Essex in the future. An update is requested on the production of the databases that are being developed to enhance flood management.
 - (2) Given the benefits that could accrue from the co-ordination of LLFA and HA activity, the Committee welcomes the steps taken so far to formalise flood enforcement activity. Nevertheless an update is sought on what outcomes may accrue as a result of the Teams working more closely together and the formal Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).
 - (3) Given the implications for enhanced enforcement activity, the early success of the Maldon Highway Enforcement Pilot Project is welcomed by the Committee. Consequently when that Project is reviewed in early 2016 the Committee would wish to receive an update on any proposals that may be considered by the Cabinet Member for extending the project to other parts of the county, and its impact upon local flood alleviation.
3. That, in view of the links between flood management and planning that the review has highlighted, the Cabinet Member for Transport, Planning and Environment be recommended to engage LPAs in the matter of:
- raising the profile of surface water drainage in strategic planning and development control in the way that flood management and preventative measures are implemented across Essex; and
 - establishing the principle of seeking Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) to address local flooding issues as appropriate eg ensure it is added to the strategic list for contributions.

The Cabinet Member is requested to provide the Committee with a response in April 2016.

4. That the Cabinet be requested to provide the Committee with a briefing paper in Spring 2016 that explains how the County Council itself co-ordinates its own activities in order to identify and address overall infrastructure needs in Essex including flood risk management and preventative measures associated with new development. The Committee will provide a scoping document setting out the key questions that it will ask the Cabinet to address.
5. That the Task and Finish Group conduct a short supplementary scrutiny review of the IT and Communications support provided for the delivery of frontline flood management services using the website and social media, with the aim of reporting to the Committee early in the New Year.

Following the meeting the final report would be published on the Council's website and the recommendations forwarded to the Cabinet Members.

9. Work Programme 2015/2017 (Minute 11/October 2015)

The Committee noted report PSEG/27/15 setting out an update on its activities.

10. Date of Next Meeting

The Committee noted the next committee activity day was scheduled for Thursday, 21 January 2016. It was further noted that there would not be a Committee activity day on 17 December 2015.

There being no urgent business the meeting closed at 11.54 am

Chairman