
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, 18 May 2023

Present:

Members:

Councillor A Goggin	Chairman
Councillor J Fleming	
Councillor P Gadd	
Councillor J Newport	
Councillor L Scordis	
Councillor C Siddall	
Councillor M Skeels	
Councillor M Vance	
Councillor M Platt	Substitute

Officers:

Tracey Vickers	Head of Sustainable Transport
David Forkin	Head of Maintenance and Operations (Essex Highways)
Ken Kentria	Head of External Construction (Essex Highways)
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 Mike Steel

Welcome and Introduction

Cllr A Goggin, the Chairman of the Place Services and Economic Growth Policy and Scrutiny Committee, welcomed those in attendance.

1. Membership, Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations of Interest

Cllr A Goggin noted that the membership had changed following Annual Council. He thanked those leaving the Committee (Cllrs D Land, R Moore, M Steel and H Whitbread), praised Cllr M Steel for his work as Vice-Chairman, and welcomed those joining the Committee (Cllrs B Massey, A Sheldon, C Siddall and A Wiles).

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 M Platt substituting for him.

2. Minutes and Matters Arising

The Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 20 April 2023 were approved as a correct record and were signed by the Chairman.

The following points were noted on the Matters Arising report:

- Information had been circulated on the overall budget for LHPs including in response to the questions raised by the Committee.
- The updated annual road condition survey would be circulated to the Committee.

3. Questions from the Public

There were no questions from the public.

4. Work Programme and Communications Review

The updated Work Programme was noted.

5. Draft Electric Vehicle and Charing Strategy

Cllrs Lee Scott and Peter Schwier introduced the report (PSEG/14/23) and a presentation which can be found [here](#).

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

- Members suggested that the Council should adopt a flexible approach given rapidly evolving technology and the reported continued popularity of hybrid vehicles.
- It was reported that various solutions were available to ensure the availability of charging points and to avoid 'space-hogging' with education being a key component.
- It was confirmed that the maintenance of charges would not be the responsibility of ECC, and it would be up to the operator to ensure charging points were working.
- Officers reported that a working group had been established with district councils, and ECC was taking the lead as the highway authority.

- It was noted that parking would be an issue (particularly in certain areas such as roads consisting of Victorian terraces) and the Council was working closely with the Essex Parking Partnership.
- It was reported that cost was dictated by funding bids with the ORCs (On-Street Residential Chargepoint Scheme) stipulating no more than £7,500 for a standard residential charging point (slow charging, overnight) except in cases where there was not a sufficient power supply. It was noted that rapid charging points would be more expensive.
- Members asked officers to review the blanket policy against cable charging across pavements. Officers reported that they were planning a range of pilot projects and amended guidance to offer alternatives.
- Members asked officers to work with district councils to look at the planning permission policies for installing dropped kerbs (to aid EV charging).
- It was confirmed that lamppost charging would not be part of the current funding bids for ECC as generally they were in the wrong place (not kerbside).
- It was estimated that 6,000 public off-street charging points would be needed across Essex, and officers agreed to provide further information on the analysis and evidence to support that figure.
- The timeline for the ORCS and LEVIs (Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure) bids was outlined, and it was confirmed that liaison with Highways was ongoing.
- It was agreed that the Committee would review the EV and Charging Strategy six-months after adoption and, at the same time, consider an update on the employee fleet transition to EVs.

6. Member-led Pothole Scheme

Cllr Lee Scott introduced the report (PSEG/15/23) and summarised the final responses to the recommendations of the LHP Task and Finish Group.

Key points raised during this discussion included:

- The Cabinet Member outlined that an additional £17.7million in total was being put into highways maintenance (including additional funding from the DfT).
- It was confirmed that the Member-led Pothole Scheme would be in the same format as last year and not go through LHPs. In general, members expressed support for the scheme and this approach.
- Clarification was sought on the footway scheme being put through LHPs, and it was agreed that further information would be shared with the Committee.

- Officers explained the delay in completing repairs submitted under the members' scheme but confirmed all should be completed in the coming weeks.
- The Cabinet Member reported that 12 additional pothole repair teams were being recruited (8 already had been recruited) and these typically comprised 3-4 members of staff.
- In response to concerns that messaging on the member's scheme was not strong, it was reported that there would be improved communications including on social media.
- It was agreed that a report would be brought back to the Committee in around 6 months (circa November 2023) on the new Member-led scheme.

7. Highways Performance

The report (PSEG/16/23) was noted. Members were invited to ask questions and provide comment. Key points raised during this discussion included:

- Officers agreed to establish whether it was possible to provide comparative statistics for the number of outstanding defects from previous years.

The Cabinet Member put on record his thanks to officers and the work they undertake across his portfolio.

8. Date of Next Meeting

The Committee noted that the next scheduled meeting would take place on Thursday 22 June, 10:30am at County Hall.

9. Urgent Business

No items were raised.

Chairman