

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PLACE SERVICES & ECONOMIC
GROWTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD AT COUNTY HALL,
CHELMSFORD ON 24 JULY 2014**

Present:

Councillor S Walsh (Chairman)	Councillor D Kendall
Councillor A Bayley	Councillor M Maddocks
Councillor T Cutmore	Councillor J Pike
Councillor A Erskine	Councillor S Robinson
Councillor C Guglielmi	Councillor K Twitchen
Councillor A Hedley	Councillor A Wood
Councillor I Henderson	

Members also in attendance: Councillor J Jowers, Cabinet Member for Libraries, Communities and Planning; Councillor K Bentley, Cabinet Member for Economic Growth and Infrastructure; Cllr R Walters, Cabinet Member for Waste and Recycling; Councillor R Bass, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation; and Councillor K Bobbin.

1. Apologies and Substitution Notices

Apologies were received from Councillor Butland (Councillor Pike substituting), Councillor Metcalfe (Councillor Maddocks substituting) and Councillor Pond.

2. Minutes

The Minutes of the Committee meeting held on 26 June 2014 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

3. Declarations of Interest

No declarations were made.

4. Questions from the Public

There were no questions raised by members of the public.

5. Work Programme

The Committee noted report PSEG/24/24 by the Scrutiny Officer updating Members on the work programme. It was confirmed two seminars were being organised: The first on the Energy Waste Strategy on 25 September and the second on Highways Maintenance on 23 October 2014.

6. Commissioning Strategies

The Committee considered report PSEG/25/14 on the Council's Commissioning Strategies.

By way of background Essex County Council (ECC) has set out a clear Vision for Essex. The focus is on what works best in improving the lives of Essex residents, rather than on which services are delivered and who delivers these services. Seven outcomes in total have been identified to work towards to ensure prosperity and wellbeing for Essex's residents. Each outcome is supported by a set of 'indicators', which are units of data that will be used to assess progress towards these 'outcomes'. By focusing its work on these outcomes highlights the importance that ECC places on working with partners across the public, private and voluntary sectors, and with individuals, families and communities. None of these outcomes can be achieved by any person or organisation working in isolation – only by working with others can ECC secure the progress it seeks.

The outcomes describe what ECC wants to achieve for Essex as a whole, and how it will measure progress. They do not set out the issues it will address and the actions it will take. To support these outcomes and indicators, ECC has developed a set of commissioning strategies – one commissioning strategy per outcome.

The Committee considered the following three commissioning strategies, which were pertinent to its remit and were set out in detail in the accompanying briefing paper attached to report PSEG/25/14:

- People in Essex live in safe communities and are protected from harm
- Sustainable economic growth for Essex communities and businesses
- People in Essex experience a high quality and sustainable environment

At the meeting each strategy was presented separately by the relevant Cabinet Member together with supporting officers, and the Committee sought clarification on a number of points as well as highlighting several issues for the Executive's consideration.

Following the meeting and on behalf of the Committee, three individual letters were sent by the Chairman to the appropriate Cabinet Member confirming broad support for each strategy and drawing attention to the main points it wished to be considered as part of the public consultation that was underway on the Commissioning Strategies. Those letters are attached to these minutes at the Appendix as a public record.

The Committee reflected that the success of the various commissioning strategies may only be assessed in the longer term, and it would have a role to play in scrutinising what outcomes are in fact achieved by inviting the Cabinet Members to a future meeting in order to hold them to account.

Following consideration of the Commissioning Strategies, there was an adjournment for lunch between 1.00 and 1.45 pm.

7. ECC Local Transport Plan (2011-2015): Strategy and Priority Projects for stimulating Economic Growth

The Committee noted report PSEG/26/14 and received a briefing on the topic of the Local Transport Plan and the stimulation of economic growth as agreed as part of its work programme. The briefing had been commissioned to provide Members with an overview of the links between employment and growth and the highways infrastructure,

and would contribute to identifying a scrutiny role in the future development of any proposed activity.

Councillor Bass, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation, provided the Committee with an overview of the topic and invited Members to engage in a question and answer session with him. He was supported by Paul Bird, Director for Commissioning: Transport and Infrastructure; Chris Stevenson, Head of Commissioning Connected Essex Integrated Transport; and Alastair Southgate, Transport Strategy Manager.

During the course of discussion the following issues were touched upon:

- The importance of a strategic approach to highways and transportation
- The latest role of the Local Transport Plan and its relationship with economic growth
- The funding of highways infrastructure
- Managing the highways expectations of residents
- The inter-relationship between Local Plans and planning the strategic highways infrastructure, and need to ensure that positive ongoing collaboration exists with Borough, City and District Councils.
- The funding of highways infrastructure associated with new development.

8. Date of Next Meeting

The Committee noted that its next committee activity day was scheduled for 25 September 2014 and would comprise a site visit to the Courtauld Road Waste Treatment Facility.

There being no urgent business the meeting closed at 2.50pm.

Chairman

Appendix to Minute 6

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Cllr John Jowers
Cabinet Member for Libraries, Communities and Planning
County Hall
CHELMSFORD
CM1 1LX

August 2014

Dear Councillor Jowers

**Place Services and Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee
Commissioning Strategy: People in Essex live in safe communities and are protected from harm**

I am writing to confirm the outcome of the Place Services and Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee's consideration of the above commissioning strategy on 24 July 2014, and to put on record Members' appreciation for the information provided at both the meeting and beforehand via the 'market stall' event.

As you will no doubt agree the session on the above strategy, which you presented with Jane Gardner, provided a useful forum for the Committee to engage with you in discussion on a variety of related issues.

Overall the Committee was broadly supportive of the '*People in Essex live in safe communities and are protected from harm*' commissioning strategy.

Nevertheless during discussion the Committee did focus upon the following matters as being areas of slight concern that it would like to be addressed as part of the consultation phase:

- The importance of working with partners in order to deliver the chosen outcomes being sought, including early intervention through multi agency co-operation and collaboration, and more effective use of combined resources. Information and data sharing was highlighted by the Committee as being significant for more effective partnership working.
- Review the way that figures and headlines are portrayed in documentation so that residents and communities can relate to the information. Attention was

drawn to the crime figures that indicate crime rates have fallen across Essex, and while that might be true in some areas in others the evidence is that crime has actually increased. It is very important to address the varying perception of topics illustrated to engage the whole community by relating to local conditions to ensure that the document represents reality more effectively, and people feel that it is pertinent to their experience and the local community.

- There should be more focus and explanation on understanding the causes behind the chosen indicators, rather than so much of the emphasis being placed upon solutions. People are more likely to be engaged in the commissioning strategy if they can understand its relevancy to their own experience and local as well as strategic context.
- While the strategy refers to multi agency and partnership working, it was pointed out that individual residents and communities also have responsibilities in the delivery of positive outcomes and the broader impact of their own behaviour. This needs to be reflected in the documentation attached to the strategy.

While the Committee was mindful of the consultation taking place on the Council's Commissioning Strategies, the importance of its role will increase in holding the Executive to account for the delivery of the strategies. While that role will evolve in the longer run, please could you take steps to ensure that any significant changes to this strategy that the Committee needs to be made aware of are drawn to the attention of Christine Sharland as the Scrutiny Officer, so that she is able to liaise on how to manage the issue within the Committee's overall work programme.

Yours sincerely,

Councillor Simon Walsh
Chairman,
Place Services and Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee

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Cllr Kevin Bentley
Cabinet Member for Economic Growth and Infrastructure
County Hall
CHELMSFORD
CM1 1LX

August 2014

Dear Councillor Bentley

**Place Services and Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee
Commissioning Strategy: Sustainable economic growth for Essex communities
and businesses**

I am writing to confirm the outcome of the Place Services and Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee's consideration of the above commissioning strategy on 24 July 2014, and to put on record Members' appreciation for the information provided at both the meeting and beforehand via the 'market stall' event.

As you will no doubt agree the session on the above strategy, which you presented with Dominic Collins and Tim Rignall, provided a useful forum for the Committee to engage with you in discussion on a variety of related issues.

Overall the Committee was broadly supportive of the '*Sustainable economic growth for Essex communities and businesses*' commissioning strategy, and it was noted that the aim is to create an environment for employment and economic growth in Essex. .

The Committee discussed the following matters when considering the commissioning strategy and would wish to draw attention to them as part of the consultation phase:

- The importance of effective sign posting for businesses on where to find support and advice. Business Link was highlighted as a past role model that Members felt should be resurrected.
- The importance of improving the links between the skills base of the population and actual types of job available across the county, including the emerging industries.

- The importance of partnership working to deliver economic growth and the necessary infrastructure.

While the Committee was mindful of the consultation taking place on the Council's Commissioning Strategies, the importance of its role will increase in holding the Executive to account for the delivery of the strategies. While that role will develop in the longer run, please could you take steps to ensure that any significant changes to this strategy that the Committee needs to be made aware of are drawn to the attention of Christine Sharland as the Scrutiny Officer, so that she is able to liaise on how to manage the issue within the Committee's overall work programme.

Yours sincerely,

Councillor Simon Walsh
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Cllr Roger Walters
Cabinet Member for Waste and Recycling
County Hall
CHELMSFORD
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August 2014

Dear Councillor Walters

**Place Services and Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee
Commissioning Strategy: People in Essex experience a high quality and sustainable environment**

I am writing to confirm the outcome of the Place Services and Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee's consideration of the above commissioning strategy on 24 July 2014, and to put on record Members' appreciation for the information provided at both the meeting and beforehand via the 'market stall' event.

As you will no doubt agree the session on the above strategy, which you presented with Paul Bird and Peter Kelsbie, provided a useful forum for the Committee to engage with you in discussion on a variety of related issues.

Overall the Committee was broadly supportive of the '*People in Essex experience a high quality and sustainable environment*' commissioning strategy, and noted the points you highlighted around the need to take into account various statutory considerations in the design of indicators and outcomes.

The Committee highlighted the following matters during its consideration of the commissioning strategy and would wish these areas of slight concern to be addressed as part of the consultation phase:

- The importance of changing public behaviour coupled with the difficulties associated with measuring changes in attitude eg around waste and recycling, and energy savings.
- The importance of partnership working to deliver the outcomes. Aside from local authorities, the Committee suggested that the Council could promote information for businesses about waste and energy initiatives across the county eg as part of business seminar framework.

While the Committee was mindful of the consultation taking place on the Council's Commissioning Strategies, the importance of its role will develop in the longer term in holding the Executive to account for the delivery of the strategies. While that role will evolve in the longer run, please could you take steps to ensure that any significant changes to this strategy that the Committee needs to be made aware of are drawn to the attention of Christine Sharland as the Scrutiny Officer, so that she is able to liaise on how to manage the issue within the Committee's overall work programme.

Yours sincerely,

Councillor Simon Walsh
Chairman,
Place Services and Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee