

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PLACE SERVICES & ECONOMIC  
GROWTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD AT COUNTY HALL,  
CHELMSFORD ON 23 JANUARY 2014**

**Present:**

Councillor S Walsh (Chairman)	Councillor A Hedley
Councillor A Bayley	Councillor I Henderson
Councillor M Buckley	Councillor R Hirst
Councillor A Erskine	Councillor D Kendall
Councillor I Grundy	Councillor C Pond
Councillor C Guglielmi	Councillor A Wood

Also in attendance was Councillor A Naylor, Cabinet Member for Public Health and Wellbeing.

**1. Apologies and Substitution Notices**

The Committee Officer reported apologies for absence from Councillors S Robinson and M Maddocks.

**2. Membership**

The Committee noted that there had been two changes in membership since its last meeting. Councillor A Bayley had replaced Councillor J Huntman and Councillor C Guglielmi had replaced Councillor J Spence as Members of the Committee.

**3. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of Interest.

**4. Minutes**

The Minutes of the Committee meeting held on 24 October 2013 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**5. Change in the Order of Business**

The Chairman proposed to take agenda item 5 – Local Highways Panels as the next item of business, followed by agenda item 4 – Recycling centres for Household Waste. The change in the order of business was agreed by the Committee.

**6. Local Highways Panels (Minute 4/October 2013)**

The Committee considered report PSEG/02/14. The Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation, Councillor R Bass and Paul Bird, Director for Commissioning: Transport and Infrastructure, were in attendance for this item.

Councillor Bass had sought the opportunity to address to the Committee to apologise for inadvertently making an incorrect statement to the October meeting about the expected delivery of Local Highway Panel (LHP) schemes, which had implied a more optimistic outturn than had been possible.

He clarified that the underspend was £6million, as set out in the Cabinet papers for its meeting on 21 January 2014 (page 173), rather than the £4.6million as he had previously stated. This clarification did not materially affect the response that he had provided for the Call Ins in October and, in fact, strengthened the reasons behind his original decision for re-profiling the under-spend within the Highways Service.

In response to questions the following points were made:

- It was confirmed that a sensible prioritisation for using the re-profiled budget would be found, not just covering the four centre hubs. An assurance was also given that the LHPs would have the ability to track and ask questions regarding the delivery of schemes.
- The Cabinet Member was confident that the Service Area had the resource and expertise in place to deliver schemes within the £8million capital allocation to the LHPs.

The Committee welcomed the Cabinet Member's clarification on this issue.

## **7. Recycling Centres for Household Waste**

The Committee considered report PSEG/01/14 and received a briefing from Jason Searles, Head of Commissioning Sustainable Essex Integration & Waste, on the development of a service delivery and infrastructure strategy for the Recycling centres for Household Waste (RCHW) Service.

The Committee was advised that a review of the RCHW service was due to commence to ensure that it is best placed to meet current and future needs. This was in the context of:

- The County Council's duty to provide reasonably accessible facilities for residents to dispose of their household waste – currently through 21 sites.
- Experience from the changes that took place 2 years ago, namely a reduction in the number of centres across the county from 23 to 21 as well as some changes in centre opening hours and some operating on a part-time basis.
- The challenges identified in the report including the footprint of current sites, services provided, locations, variable demands and the financial challenge.

The first stage of the review was to understand what service users actually value, and what options and opportunities there may be for delivery in the short, medium and long term. As well as engaging with users of the service, dialogue was also being entered into with the District and Borough partners especially given the on-going developments with kerbside recycling schemes.

The timescales for the review were:

- User Survey. A 12 week survey to collect a wide range of views on the service. The survey would be available in a variety of formats including on-line, and at the RCHW sites and local libraries.
- The views expressed through the survey and gathered from other sources, together with operational data, would be used to develop future service delivery options
- Delivery options would be put together to go to a formal consultation around June/July 2014.
- Decisions resulting from the formal consultation would be taken towards the end of the year.

In response to questions the following points were made:

- There had been a small increase of around 1% in waste collection across the County. However, there had been no increase at the RCHW sites. A slight decrease had been seen at the start of the new RCHW operating contract and this was considered to be due to being more robust approach to turning away trade waste. The increase in waste collected overall was largely due to the increase in the number of households in the County.
- Following the closure of the St Osyth and Ongar sites, it was explained that from the detailed data collected, the residents using the St Osyth site had all migrated to the Clacton site as expected. Residents previously using the Ongar site had largely migrated to the Coxtie Green site and some to Mountnessing. There had been no increase in fly-tipping reported in the surrounding areas.
- The survey was being advertised through press releases, the internet, at RCHW sites and libraries. Work was also being undertaken with the Districts and Boroughs to promote the survey.
- It was confirmed that there was a considerable amount of detailed data available on individual sites dating back 20 years. This included data on changes to the throughput according to changes in District and Borough collection schemes. Currently there was around 60% diversion and 40% to landfill.
- The sites were only licensed to take household waste. Enforcement of trade waste was carried out through auto number plate recognition which could identify frequent visitors at different sites and appropriate action could then be taken. However, two pilot trials had been initiated at the Braintree and Saffron Walden sites for a charging mechanism to accept some trade waste.
- There was already a commitment to the re-design of the Colchester site. With regard to the other sites, the County Council was open minded about what the options might be suitable going forward taking account of the feedback from the user survey.
- There was an income share mechanism within the RCHW Service contract for any recyclable materials with a value attached. However, it was pointed out to Members that there are a lot of materials that did not have a value and in fact had a cost attached to their disposal. It was confirmed that there were transparent audit processes in place to monitor the income and cost sharing at the sites.
- It was confirmed that there are many different options to consider including the way that sites are run. For example in Suffolk there was

some experience of community run sites, albeit some have had to close and provide some lessons.

Some Members expressed their concern that they had not been given the opportunity to consider the user survey beforehand and the questions posed within it prior to the start of the survey period. Nevertheless it was agreed that the Survey would be circulated to the Committee following the meeting. The Committee was also advised that there would be an opportunity for Members to input into the formal consultation process that will focus on the options for the future of the service.

It was **Agreed** that:

- 1. The User Survey would be circulated to the Committee.**
- 2. The Committee would be kept informed on the progress of the review into the RCHW Service.**

*[NB. After the meeting the User Survey was circulated to the Members of the Committee by email]*

## **8. Economic Growth Strategy**

The Committee noted report PSEG/03/13 on the Committee briefing session on the Economic Growth Strategy held in November 2013.

The Committee noted that this area of work was key for the future and would be picked up as part of the discussions on the Committee's Work programme.

## **9. Country Parks**

The Committee noted report PSEG/04/14 and that Members' comments have been fed into consideration of the business case for phase two of the Country Parks Project.

## **10. Part Night Lighting Scrutiny Review**

The Committee noted the update report on the Scrutiny Review of Part Night Lighting (PSEG/05/14). Two further meetings of the Task and Finish Group were scheduled to be held on the rise of the Committee and on Tuesday 28 January 2014.

## **11. Call In – Part Night Street Lighting Colchester**

The Committee noted report PSEG/06/14 on the outcome of the Call In of decision FP/294/08/13 on the implementation of Part Night Lighting in Colchester Borough.

## **12. Call In – Part Night Street Lighting Castle Point and Epping Forest**

The Committee noted report PSEG/07/14 on the outcome of the two decisions called in under reference: KD06 FP/295/08/13 for the implementation of Part Night Lighting in Castle Point and Epping Forest.

### **13. Call In – North Essex Parking Partnership**

The Committee noted report PSEG/08/14 on the outcome of the Call In of decision FP/383/11/13 relating to Minute 25 of the North Essex Parking Partnership Joint Committee meeting held on 31 October entitled 'On-Street Permits and Parking Report'.

### **14. Work Programme and Updates**

The Committee noted report PSEG/09/14 on the Committee's Work Programme.

The Chairman confirmed that a meeting of the Chairman, Vice-Chairmen and Groups Spokesmen of the Committee would be held to discuss the detail of the Work Programme going forward.

Members were invited to express their interest in becoming a member of the Parking Partnerships Task and Finish Group by email to the Chairman.

### **15. Dates of Future Meetings**

The Committee noted report PSEG/10/14 setting out the scheduled dates for future meetings for the period June 2014 – May 2015 as follows:

- Thursday 26 June 2014
- Thursday 24 July 2014
- Thursday 25 September 2014
- Thursday 23 October 2014
- Thursday 27 November 2014
- Thursday 18 December 2014
- Thursday 22 January 2015
- Thursday 26 February 2015
- Thursday 26 March 2015
- Thursday 23 April 2015
- Thursday 28 May 2015

The Committee noted that its next activity day was scheduled for Thursday 27 February 2014.

There being no urgent business the meeting closed at 11.20am.

Chairman

