

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PLACE SERVICES & ECONOMIC
GROWTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD AT COUNTY HALL,
CHELMSFORD ON 26 JUNE 2014**

Present:

Councillor S Walsh (Chairman)	Councillor I Henderson
Councillor B Aspinell	Councillor M Maddocks
Councillor G Butland	Councillor V Metcalfe
Councillor T Cutmore	Councillor C Pond
Councillor A Erskine	Councillor A Wood
Councillor A Hedley	

Members also in attendance: Councillor R Bass, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation

The Chairman drew attention to the fact that Sophie Campion, who had acted as a support Officer to the Committee for some time, had now moved into a new role within the Council. He wished to place on record his appreciation of the good work she had performed on behalf of the Committee, and wished her well in her new role.

1. Apologies and Substitution Notices

Apologies were received from Councillor Twitchen (Councillor Maddocks substituting), Councillor Kendall (Councillor Aspinell substituting) and Councillor Guglielmi.

2. Minutes

The Minutes of the Committee meeting held on 29 May 2014 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman subject to an amendment to Minute 3 that referred incorrectly to the Independent Group when in fact it should read the Non-Aligned Group.

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 considered report PSEG/19/14 setting out a work programme for the forthcoming year, and proposing a way forward for committee activity.

Given the need for the Committee to manage its resources, investigation had been undertaken to select a variety of 'scrutiny' topics from across its remit for inclusion in a work programme that is capable of yielding outcomes that influence positively the

Council's activities and decisions made, and is viable in terms of its delivery notwithstanding fact that unforeseen matters such as call in of decisions would divert resource away from planned work and reviews.

The report was comprised:

1. A Summary of the way that topic selection had taken place, and the various considerations taken into account as well as a variety of ways of working.
2. Appendix A - a timetable for Committee activity.
3. Appendix B - a compilation of abbreviated draft scoping documents containing information on each topic considered. However, not all the topics could be accommodated within the programme for the next year so that informed choices had to be made taking account of the resources available.

In summary the Committee agreed the setting up of three task and finish groups to undertake an in depth scrutiny review on:

- Flood Management and Third Party Responsibilities
- Jobs, Welfare and Skills, and
- Communications Protocol issue arising from the original COMAH Scrutiny Report

Later in the Autumn of 2014 a project would be initiated, subject to the availability of resources, to review the Recycling Centres for Household Waste Service; and in the Spring 2015 a review of Local Highways Panels.

Seminars would be arranged for the Committee to consider:

- Local Transport Plan Strategy and Priority Projects for stimulating Economic Growth
- Energy Waste Strategy
- Highways Maintenance
- Ringway Jacobs Contract

At the meeting the Chairman indicated that several other topics had been identified recently that would be investigated for potential inclusion in a future work programme, namely the funding of school crossing patrols, quality bus contracts, and community transport.

The Committee **agreed:**

- 1. The provisional work programme attached at Appendix A to report PSEG/19/14, and for action to be initiated to implement that programme, and**
- 2. the approach to the implementation of the work programme as set out in report PSEG/19/14, and the good practice guidance set out in the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Handbook.**

The Chairman thanked Christine Sharland, the Committee's Scrutiny Officer, for her part in compiling the comprehensive annual work programme.

6. Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation

Councillor Bass, the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation, had been invited to the meeting to update the Committee on his portfolio and to answer Member's questions.

During the session references were made to the following matters:

- Additional funding for repairing pothole and other highway defects such as drain covers, kerbs and pavements, which had been formally announced that week.
- The Council's role in planning infrastructure that will be required to support the housing and economic growth envisaged across the county in the next 20 years.
- The standard of highway repairs performed by Statutory Undertakers.
- The ongoing problems associated with the A12 including a number of recent vehicle accidents, and drivers charged with traffic offences.
- Rail and Freight shipping
- Part Night Lighting
- A Board Management (ie advertising boards erected on the highway)

7. Part Night Lighting Scrutiny Review

The Committee considered report PSEG/20/14 concerning the final scrutiny report of the Task and Finish Group that it had established to consider Part Night Lighting.

Councillor Pond, the Group's Lead Member, commended the scrutiny report to the Committee and sought its endorsement of that report together with its conclusions and recommendations. He also thanked his colleagues on the Group for their engagement in the review.

The Committee **agreed that:**

The Part Night Lighting Scrutiny Report be endorsed and the following recommendations be forwarded to the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation:

Recommendation 1

That the lessons learned from the feedback on the way that the roll out of PNL across Essex was communicated to the public and local councils be taken into consideration to improve the way that projects are launched in the future.

Recommendation 2

That any potential changes to metered energy supply be kept under constant review, and implemented when it becomes permissible and when clear savings would result.

Recommendation 3

That a formal procedure be adopted for the consideration of requests for the variation of PNL scheme at specific locations.

Recommendation 4

That the exception criteria be amended so that the provisions are more transparent, and reflect variations that may have become permissible by virtue of variations allowed during the course of the recent roll out of PNL across Essex.

Recommendation 5

That the costs and benefits of LED lighting should be kept under constant review, and particularly its application in new lighting installed as a part of any new development.

Recommendation 6

That the County Council implement a mechanism by 31 December 2014 whereby it provides a means for others to be recharged where there is a local wish for more variations to PNL that did not co-incide with exception criteria including a recharge for the extra cost of energy, and agency arrangements.

Recommendation 7

That a protocol for limited area switch on at the request of the Emergency Services be developed urgently and no later than 31 December 2014, and a separate one for wide-area emergencies such as floods and high winds. Furthermore it is requested that those protocols be submitted to the Committee for its consideration.

Recommendation 8

That the Cabinet Members for Waste and Recycling, and Highways and Transportation take positive action to launch a major publicity campaign to persuade local councils, public service providers and private firms to

review their current levels of street and premises lighting in order to encourage them to support the County Council in reducing the carbon footprint and cost of lighting overall.

Recommendation 9

That in respect of the all the above recommendations the Cabinet Members, as identified, be requested to provide an indication when action will be implemented and details of the action proposed at an early stage, or alternatively a clear indication why a recommendation will not be acceded to. A full Cabinet Member response to the Scrutiny Report would be sought for the Committee in Autumn 2014.

8. Financial Inclusion – Monitoring of Scrutiny Report

The Committee considered report PSEG/21/14 concerning the scrutiny report of the Task and Finish Group that had been reconvened to review the Cabinet's response to the original scrutiny report (2013) on Financial Inclusion, and the progress made by the Council to implement related initiatives.

The Committee endorsed the Scrutiny Report attached to report PSEG/21/14 and agreed the following recommendations:

That the Leader of the Cabinet be requested to provide a progress report in May 2015 on:

- (a) the effectiveness of the measures that have been proposed and implemented to promote financial inclusion, as referred to in the scrutiny report, and to illustrate whether or not the Council is realising its financial inclusion objectives, and**
- (b) implementation of new initiatives in the Council's communication channels that can be demonstrated to have improved public access to information that promotes financial inclusion.**

9. Developing a Better Public Transport Network for Essex

The Committee considered report PSEG/22/14 and received a powerpoint presentation based on the theme of developing a better public transport network for Essex.

Richard Gravatt, Passenger Transport Strategy Manager; Chris Stevenson, Head of Commissioning Connected Essex Integrated Transport; and Helen Morris, Head of Commissioning Infrastructure were in attendance for this item.

The briefing was commissioned to raise Members' awareness of the legal basis for the provision of bus services in England, and the role and responsibilities of the County Council with regard of the provision of passenger transport services. The background

provided would assist the Committee in the consideration of public transport related issues that may be included in the work programme in the longer term. A scoping document for this briefing was attached to report PSEG/19/14.

10. Commissioning Strategies

The Committee noted report PSEG/23/14 confirming arrangements in July 2014 for its consideration of the Council's Commissioning Strategies.

11. Date of Next Meeting

The Committee noted that its next formal meeting was scheduled for 24 July 2014.

There being no urgent business the meeting closed at 12.32 pm.

Chairman