
Minutes of the meeting of the Place Services and Economic Growth Policy and Scrutiny Committee, held in Committee Room 1 County Hall, Chelmsford, CM1 1QH on Wednesday, 18 December 2019

Present:

Councillor I Grundy (Chairman)	Councillor B Massey
Councillor B Aspinell	Councillor R Moore
Councillor T Cutmore	Councillor C Pond
Councillor I Erskine	Councillor W Schmitt
Councillor S Hillier	Councillor L Scordis
Councillor D Kendall	

1 Membership, Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations of Interest

The report of the Membership, Apologies and Declarations was received, and it was noted that

1. The membership of the Committee was unchanged since the last meeting;
2. Councillor I Henderson had sent his apologies, Councillor L Scordis attended as his substitute. Councillor R Pratt had also sent his apologies.
3. A Code interest was declared by Councillor C Pond, as a member of the chartered institute of librarians.

2 Minutes

With regards to Minute 5 (Essex Green Strategy) the Committee noted that the recommendation which was proposed by Councillor Pond and seconded by Councillor Cutmore was agreed unanimously by the Committee.

Thereafter minutes of the meeting held on 28 November were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

3 Questions from the public

Two members of the public, Sue Matthews and Carol Lissman asked questions in relation to item 4 (Essex Future Libraries Strategy) For a complete account, please follow this [link](#) to the meeting page to listen to the audio recording.

Members requested more details in regards to the planning process involved in the redevelopment of library premises. It was agreed that information about the procedure would be circulated to them.

4 **Essex Future Libraries Strategy**

Members received report (**PSEG/21/19**) from Suzanna Shaw, Director Customer and Technology Operations and a presentation from Cllr Mark Durham, Deputy Cabinet Member for Customer, Communities, Culture and Corporate, Suzanna Shaw, and Juliet Pirez, Head of Libraries. Catherine Barton Data Quality and Compliance Manager and Carolyn Peters Citizen Services Lead were also in attendance.

The Essex Future Library Service Strategy 2019-2024 was approved by Cabinet on 23rd July 2019. A £3 million investment was awarded to improve the library service through: 1. Some library refurbishments; 2. Technology 3. Support and set up of Community run libraries August 2019 Implementation plans were drafted for the 3 keys areas aligned to the Investment and work to deliver commenced. The presentation included an update on:

- Library refurbishments
- Library management system
- Community run libraries

The presentation can be found [here](#).

Following the presentation, members were invited to ask questions and the areas raised included:

- The provision of audio books and E services – it was confirmed that this service continued to be offered and a service known as Borrowbox was also available to library users. With regards to E services, any changes thereto would depend on usage statistics and the costs involved
- Mobile library service – it was confirmed that some older vehicles had been withdrawn but that the service would be reviewed in the new year.
- Community run libraries – members were advised that an advantage of such was the flexibility available to their operation and additional funding options not available to ECC. It was also confirmed that if volunteers were unavailable at any time then ECC would step in to support operation during that time.
- Planning processes -clarification was requested regarding the consultation process and it was agreed that this would be provided to members
- New library management system – it was confirmed that this would be a much-improved system. There would be benchmarking with other Local Authorities and consultation with front line staff.

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Members discussed the proposed new library management system and felt that details of the technical specification used to procure the new software be made available to PSEG members as early as possible. It was recommended that:

'The Place Services and Economic Growth Policy and Scrutiny Committee Requests early sight of the specification for the new library management system in good time before a decision is taken on it's future direction.'

The recommendation was proposed by Cllr Pond and seconded by Cllr Hillier. This was agreed unanimously by the Committee

The Chairman thanked Councillor Durham and the officers for their attendance at the meeting.

5 Date of next meeting

The Committee noted that the next Committee meeting will be on Thursday, 23rd January 2020.

There being no urgent business the meeting closed at 12.48 pm

Chairman