

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE SAFER AND STRONGER COMMUNITIES
POLICY & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD AT COUNTY HALL, CHELMSFORD,
ON 12 February 2010**

Membership

Councillors:-

D. Abrahall	* J. Knapman substitute for L Webster
* K. Bentley	* C. Pond (Vice-Chairman)
* J. Deakin	* M. Skeels
* M. Fisher	* S. Walsh (Chairman)
* M. Garnett	
* R. Howard	

(* present)

The following officers were in attendance throughout the meeting:-

Graham Redgwell Governance Officer
Janet Mills Committee Officer

The meeting commenced at 10.00 am

7. Apologies and Substitutions

The Committee Officer reported apologies and substitution notices as follows:

Apology

Substitution

Councillor D. Abrahall
Councillor L Webster

Councillor J Knapman

8. Declarations of Interest

The following declarations of interest were recorded

Member	Personal Interest as:
Councillor S Walsh	Member of the Police Authority and resided in a Grade 2 Listed Windmill
Councillor M Fisher	Member of the Police Authority
Councillor Pond	Chairman of the Local Historical Society
Councillor K Bentley	Member of the Fire Authority
Councillor J Knapman	Member of the Fire Authority
Councillor R Howard	Vice President of the Royal British Legion
Councillor E Webster	Member of the Fire Authority
Councillor M Skeels	Member of the Fire Authority

9. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

With a note being made that Councillor R Howard was present at the January meeting and with a few minor textural changes the minutes of the meeting held on 15 January 2010 were agreed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

10. Scrutiny Review of Essex Heritage

The Committee received a report (SSC/03/10), setting out the proposed scope of this review and a number of papers giving background information.

Graham Redgwell, Governance Officer outlined the main points of the scoping paper. Members were asked if they would wish to see any additional witnesses or any additional information. In answer to a questions form Members, Graham Redgwell confirmed that owner occupiers of historical buildings had been included in the list of future witnesses and confirmed that parish and town councils were on the list of organisations to be consulted.

The numbers of Grade 1 and Grade 2 listed buildings in Essex was questioned by Members. The Committee was advised that County Historical Advisor would be able to supply this information.

The condition of historical buildings in private ownership was discussed by the Committee. It was acknowledged that some owners might let them fall into disrepair and al permission and then apply for alternative planning permission and sell the site for profit. Members questioned whether there should be a systematic review of the whole planning process.

There was a suggestion that the Essex Records Office should be included in the heritage scrutiny. Further to discussion Members concluded that the Essex Record Office might form part of a scrutiny of library services. It was suggested that the Community Wellbeing and Older Peoples Policy and Scrutiny Committee and this Committee could undertake a joint scrutiny review in the future.

Graham Redgwell outlined to Members the proposal to hold the April Committee meeting in Waltham Abbey. It was proposed that local residents and local historical associations be invited to an open meeting at the Town Hall to share their views with Members about good or bad practice in the area. Members were invited to comment upon this suggestion, which would be an innovative event for an Essex Scrutiny Committee.

After a short discussion regarding the venue it was agreed that the meeting would take place at Town Hall rather than the Abbey. Although both buildings were classed as historical buildings, the Abbey may not have been a suitable venue in which to hold a public meeting.

Members agreed that it would be vital for a representative from English Heritage to be present at its meeting(s).

The scoping document was confirmed .

11. Two Wheeler Road Safety

The Committee received a report (SSC/04/10) setting out the second draft of the final report. Graham Redgwell Governance Officer outlined the main points of the report to Members.

The Committee was invited to review the document, agree its contents and formally agree the report's list of findings and recommendations.

The Committee discussed the report Members suggested a few minor textual changes to the report and requested some additional information to be added at appropriate points. These changes would be included in the final report.

The detrimental effect that off road motorcycles had on the environment and wildlife when ridden on private land was discussed more fully. It was agreed that Members concerns about this matter would receive a higher profile in the final report. It was recognised that the police had little or no power to implement positive law enforcement in these circumstances.

Members recognised the need for young people to encounter a certain 'controlled' amount of danger in order to gain 'life skills'. It was suggested that areas of land should be set aside and, the benefits of having a designated site such as the existing Arena Essex site facility was discussed briefly.

Members reviewed and agreed the findings and recommendations as set out in the second draft of the report.

The Chairman circulated a brief written report giving details of good practice that had been shared at the Road Safety GB Powered Two Wheeler Seminar, which he had attended recently. A pocket sized booklet containing essential rider information, which had been produced by the Derby and Derbyshire Road Safety Partnership and entitled the '*Bikers*' guide to Derbyshire was also circulated. The Committee discussed the booklet which gave diagrammatical maps showing all the crash hot spots along popular biking routes. This was commended by Members and it was suggested that Essex County Council produce a similar booklet.

In answer to questions regarding how the Committee would communicate the scrutiny work it had undertaken, Members were advised that the final report would be sent to key stakeholders that had been requested to take action and to the relevant Cabinet Member. Key ECC officers would also receive a copy of the report. It was agreed that the members of the Casualty Reduction Board should also receive a copy.

Graham Redgwell explained how the ECC scrutiny recommendations data base 'flagged up' what needed to be reviewed by the Committee and when. The request from Members that a work programme report be a standing item on future agendas was noted.

In answer to questions regarding how the work of the Committee could be communicated to a wider audience, Members were advised that the ECC press officer could arrange for wider press and public coverage. The Chairman undertook to liaise with the press office.

The Chairman thanked Members the Governance and the Committee Officer for their participation and contribution to the complex detailed scrutiny.

12. The Community Initiative Fund (CIF)

The Committee received report (SSC/05/10) setting out the responses to recommendations made by the Committee during 2008/09. Graham Redgwell outlined the main points of the report. Members agreed that there were no outstanding issues that needed to come back to be reviewed by the Committee.

13. Dates of Future Meetings 2010/2011

The Committee received and noted a report, (SSC/06/10), from Janet Mills Committee Officer, setting out dates that had been reserved for the future meetings of the Committee for 2010/2011,

There being no further business the meeting closed at 10.50 am

Chairman