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## **Minutes of the meeting of the Place Services and Economic Growth Policy and Scrutiny Committee, that was held in the Council Chamber, County Hall, Chelmsford on Thursday, 25 November 2021**

[A YouTube recording of the meeting is to be found online.](#)

### **Present:**

#### **Members:**

Councillor A Goggin	Chairman
Councillor D Blackwell	Vice-Chairman
Councillor P Honeywood	
Councillor D Land	
Councillor R Moore	
Councillor L Shaw	Vice-Chairman
Councillor M Skeels	
Councillor M Steel	(to Item 6)
Councillor M Stephenson	
Councillor M Vance	
Councillor H Whitbread	
Councillor M Mackrory	

#### **ECC Officers:**

Clare Perkins	Business Intelligence Partner
Helen Morris	Head of Integrated Transport Unit
Richard Greaves	Chief Planning Officer (County Planning and Major Development)
Phil Dash	Principal Planning Officer
Justin Long	Senior Democratic Services Officer (clerk to the meeting)
Lisa Siggins	Democratic Services Officer
Jasmine-Harley Carswell	Democratic Services Officer

Also in attendance were:

Councillor G Butland, Cabinet Member for Devolution, the Arts, Heritage and Culture  
Councillor M Durham, Deputy to the Cabinet Member for Devolution, the Arts, Heritage and Culture  
Councillor L Wagland, Cabinet Member for Economic Renewal, Infrastructure and Planning  
Councillor L Scott, Cabinet Member for Highways Maintenance and Sustainable Transport

### **Welcome and Introduction**

Councillor Goggin, the Chairman of the Place Services and Economic Growth Policy and Scrutiny Committee, welcomed those in attendance. He noted that the meeting was taking place under the rules of social distancing, and that if anyone moved from their seat, they should wear a facemask.

## 1. Membership, Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations of Interest

The report on Membership, Apologies and Declarations was received, and it was noted that:

1. The membership of the Place Services and Economic Growth Policy and Scrutiny Committee was as shown in the report.
2. Councillor Mackrory was substituting for Councillor Crow.
3. No Declarations of interests were made.

The Chairman, Councillor Goggin, reminded members that any interests must be declared during the meeting if the need to do so arose.

## 2. Minutes and Matters Arising

The Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 28 October 2021 were approved as a correct record and were signed by the Chairman.

## 3. Questions from the Public

It was noted that no questions had been received from the public.

## 4. Cabinet Member Update – Councillor Butland

Councillor Butland, Cabinet Member for Devolution, the Arts, Heritage and Culture and the Business Intelligence Partner gave a presentation on the portfolio and how the performance measures in *Everyone's Essex – Our Plan for Levelling Up the County: 2021-2025* would be achieved. They were joined by Councillor Durham, Deputy to the Cabinet Member for Devolution, the Arts, Heritage and Culture.

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

It was noted that the plan was to bring two papers to the Committee in January 2021 on Visit Essex and on the Green Infrastructure Strategy, Essex Forest Initiative and Country Parks

Following the presentation, members were invited to ask questions and provide comment.

Key points raised during this discussion included:

- The focus was on re-engaging with the Arts, Heritage and Culture and understanding the current challenges and opportunities.

- Information would be provided to Councillor Blackwell on the start times for the Essex Forest Initiative on Canvey Island.
- Members questioned what 'levelling-up' meant in the portfolio, and it was confirmed that it should be considered in the wider community context with outreach work a key priority.
- The importance of smaller museums and 'hidden gems' was highlighted with further work being considered to promote them.
- Accessibility (including public transport provision) to the Arts, Heritage and Culture was a key challenge in many areas of the county.
- Councillor Shaw would be provided with information on the relevant discussions between Essex County Council and Rochford District Council.
- In light of the closure of the Chelmsford Tourism Information Centre in 2003, it was reported that a central tourism point, delivered through partnership working, could be considered in the future.

## 5. Essex Enhanced Bus Partnership

The Head of the Integrated Passenger Transport Unit gave a presentation on the Essex Enhanced Partnership. The presentation can be found [here](#).

Councillor Scott, Cabinet for Highways, Maintenance and Sustainable Transport, paid tribute to the work of the team and outlined that they were committed to providing the best service to residents, working closely with bus operators, and the process would be one of evolution rather than revolution.

Following the presentation, members were invited to ask questions and provide comment.

Key points raised during this discussion included:

- The viability of bus services in rural areas and the risks around the future of these with the ending of Central Government 'recovering funding' in March 2022.
- Passenger numbers had not returned to pre-pandemic levels.
- The absence or poor condition of bus shelters was a key issue for residents and there were plans to re-establish the scheme working with parish councils.
- The importance of making digital platforms accessible to all.
- The Council was working with bus operators to make fleets more environmentally sustainable; however, the biggest 'carbon-gain' in transport

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terms in the county was encouraging a modal shift from cars to buses (whatever their fuel source).

- Members supported a proposal that a member of the Place Services and Economic Growth Policy and Scrutiny Committee should sit on the proposed Essex Bus Strategy Board (EBSB).

## **6. Review of the Essex Minerals Local Plan 2014**

The Cabinet Member Cabinet Member for Economic Renewal, Infrastructure and Planning introduced the item and praised the hard work of all the team involved in the Minerals Local Plan.

The Chief Planning Officer gave a presentation on the Review of the Essex Minerals Local Plan. The presentation can be found [here](#).

Following the presentation, members were invited to ask questions and provide comment.

Key points raised during this discussion included:

- Transportation to and from the sites was a key concern for residents. To address any issues, the Chief Planning Officer outlined the importance of the site selection process, encouraging sustainable transport links, and routing agreements.
- The wider issue of HGVs and the role that policy and technology could play in ensuring that they take the most appropriate routes.
- The importance of restoration policy including the aim of creating new habitats, enhanced biodiversity, and public access.
- Clarification on the national requirement for a landbank of a minimum seven years, and the proposed allocation of 8.67mt of sand and gravel supply in Essex.
- The importance of working with residents including the practice of mineral operators holding liaison meetings with local communities to address any concerns.
- Progress on the Minerals Local Plan Review would be brought back to the Committee, and members were invited to consider how they would like to see scrutiny work undertaken in this area.

## **7. Work Programme**

The report was noted. A further update would be presented to the Committee for consideration at its next meeting.

**8. Date of Next Meeting**

The committee noted that the meeting scheduled for Friday 10 December would be cancelled, and replaced by a meeting on Monday 10 January, 2pm at County Hall.

**9. Urgent Business**

No items were raised.

**Chairman**