

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PLACE SERVICES & ECONOMIC
GROWTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD AT COUNTY HALL,
CHELMSFORD ON 22 OCTOBER 2015**

Present:

| | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Councillor S Walsh (Chairman) | Councillor D Kendall |
| Councillor K Bobbin | Councillor M Maddocks |
| Councillor G Butland | Councillor V Metcalfe |
| Councillor T Cutmore | Councillor C Pond |
| Councillor C Guglielmi | Councillor S Robinson |
| Councillor I Henderson | Councillor A Wood |

1. Apologies and substitution notices

Apologies were received from Councillors Erskine, Hedley, and Twitchen with Councillor Maddocks attending as a substitute for Councillor Twitchen.

2. Minutes

The Minutes of the Committee meeting held on 23 July 2015 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

With particular reference to Minute 3/ July 2015 on declarations of interest, Councillors Bobbin, Kendall and Metcalfe confirmed that they wished to record that they too were members of Youth Strategy Boards in their relevant districts.

3. Declarations of Interest

With reference to Minute 6/ October 2015 on Third Party Responsibilities and Flood Management Councillor Cutmore declared a personal interest in that he is the Chairman of a Local Flood Forum.

With reference to Minute 7/ October 2015 on the Local Bus Consultation, Councillor Kendall declared a personal interest in in that he is Secretary of the Brentwood Bus and Rail Users Association, and a Trustee of Brentwood Community Transport in his capacity as a Brentwood Borough Councillor.

With reference to Minute 10/ October 2015 on the Future of the South East Local Enterprise Partnership Councillor Butland declared a personal interest in that he is a member of the South East Local Enterprise Board.

4. Questions from the Public

There were no questions raised by members of the public

5. Cabinet Member Portfolio Changes

The Chairman confirmed that at the Full Council earlier in the month changes had been to Cabinet Member portfolio responsibilities, which would affect some issues under consideration by the Committee. For instance Passenger Transport, including the Local Bus Consultation referred to in Minute 7/ October 2015, would now fall within the Transport, Planning and Environment portfolio rather than the former Highways and Transportation portfolio.

6. Third Party Responsibilities And Flood Management Scrutiny Review (Minute 8/July 2015)

The Committee considered report PSEG/16/15, together with presentations that provided an update on issues that will be included in the final scrutiny report to be submitted for its endorsement by a Task and Finish Group in due course.

As there has been a lot of activity taking place around the Council's flood management activities in recent months, it was considered prudent to provide the full Committee with a detailed update and ensure Members understood the conclusions reached by the Group. Given the progress being made around the topic, the briefings also provided the Group with a final opportunity to ensure that the report itself would be fully up to date when published formally.

By way of introduction the Committee viewed a short video on the 'Flooding Strategy' that is published on the County Council's website, followed by briefings from:

1. Lead Local Flood Authority Flood Team
 - Update on content of the draft report and progress made,
 - importance of engaging the public,
 - ECC Flood Management Website.
2. Highways Enforcement Team
 - Update on the Maldon Highways Enforcement Pilot Project, and the implications for enhanced enforcement activity.

The following officers delivered the briefings and provided clarification on issues arising from the scrutiny investigation:

- Graham Thomas - Head of Planning and Environment, Flood Water Management Team (FWMT)
- Lucy Shepherd - Lead Local Flood Authority Manager (FWMT)
- Kathryn Goodyear- SuDS Approval Body Manager (FWMT)

- Emma Brown- Senior Legal Advisor, Highways Authority Enforcement Team (HAET)

While the issues covered in the briefings would be covered within the final scrutiny report, during the discussion that ensued Members sought and received clarification on various matters including:

- Improving public understanding of flood responsibilities and the need to educate in this respect, eg training and advice to small building businesses; liaison with landowners who may be unaware of their responsibilities; and success of negotiation to mitigate the need for formal enforcement action.
- Maintenance responsibilities.
- Whether searches to reveal ownership responsibilities should become mandatory in the conveyancing process.
- Flooding caused by third parties/utility companies.
- Highway Authority's limited powers of enforcement compared to enforcement tools of the Lead Local Flood Authority in Essex County Council.
- Introduction to Highway Authority Enforcement Pilot Project in Maldon, which has been extended until April 2016.
- Enforcement procedures against multiple adjacent owners
- A positive working relationship is evolving between the FWMT and HAET.
- Plans to develop the Council's Flooding website, with more videos being planned.
- FWMT is seeking meetings with Local Planning Authorities to discuss proposals for Service Level Agreements, whereby ECC will provide some of its expertise in development control matters.
- Achievements so far including examples of "before" and "after" ditch clearances.

The Chairman thanked Officers for their valuable contribution to the scrutiny review, and with specific reference to the Maldon Highways Enforcement Pilot Project confirmed that the Committee would wish to be kept informed of its progress beyond April 2016 and any proposals for it to be extended to other areas of the county.

7. Local Bus Consultation

The Committee noted report PSEG/17/15 summarising its briefing held on 24 September on a Local Bus Consultation.

Councillor Kendall reiterated his concerns about the provision of hard copies of the consultation document and means for response, the future of Community Transport and its funding, and Gross to Net Contracts. He confirmed that he had submitted his representations to the consultation.

The Committee **agreed** the following recommendations:

1. It is recommended to the Cabinet Member for Transport, Planning and Environment that:
 - Feedback be sought on bus consultations through targeted focus groups including the Young Essex Assembly,
 - Representation be sought for the new Bus Strategy Forum from the Parish Forum, and Employers/ Training sector i.e. to reflect the needs of people relying on passenger transport to access work and training opportunities across Essex, and
 - that Councillor Simon Walsh, as Committee Chairman, and Councillor David Kendall be appointed as the Scrutiny Committee's representatives on the Bus Commissioning Strategy Board.
2. That the Committee's representatives on the Bus Commissioning Strategy Board be tasked with reporting back to the Committee as and when necessary on the development of the Bus and Passenger Transport Strategy.

8. Performance Reporting To Scrutiny Committees

The Committee considered report PSEG/18/15 concerning performance reporting to scrutiny committees.

The Scrutiny Board has been considering how to make best use of performance information that will be made available to each Scrutiny Committee this autumn. It had agreed some principles on how the Scrutiny Committee Chairmen would wish to see and use performance data namely an annual overview report on the progress made towards delivering ECC's corporate outcomes as measured by the corporate outcome indicators to the Corporate Scrutiny Committee; and a twice-yearly more detailed report on performance against the corporate outcomes indicators and key performance measures will be provided for each Scrutiny Committee.

The Committee **agreed** to:

- Seek an overview of the performance information that is to be provided to the Committee in due course, and
- consider the question and answer approach set out in report PSEG/18/15 now proposed for the scrutiny of the forthcoming performance reports being made available to this Committee.

9. Essex and Southend Replacement Waste Local Plan

The Committee noted report PSEG/19/15 on its briefing about the Essex and Southend Replacement Waste Local Plan held on 24 September 2015.

The Chairman advised that since the briefing, an update from the Cabinet Member had been circulated to all County Councillors providing an update on the consultation undertaken on the Plan.

10. Future of the South East Local Enterprise Partnership

The Committee noted report PSEG/20/15 about action taken on its behalf with regard to proposals on the future of the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP).

Following discussion in July 2015, the Chairman had sent letters on behalf of the Committee to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, and the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills. The letters set out a compelling case for the creation of a Greater Essex Local Enterprise Partnership (GELEP). Both letters had been acknowledged but no formal reply received.

Councillor Butland based on his knowledge as a representative on the SELEP Board advised the Committee that he was aware via a letter sent to Board Members advising that the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government was not prepared at this stage to change the boundaries of the SELEP. Furthermore a new Chairman for the SELEP Board was being sought from the business community.

There was general disappointment that the Chairman had not received a formal reply from the Government to confirm that proposals for a GELEP had been dismissed. Nevertheless as the argument for a GELEP is an important component of the Essex Devolution proposals, Members considered that the matter should still be pursued by the County Council. As arrangements were being made for the Cabinet Member for Economic Growth, Waste and Recycling to attend the Committee's next meeting, the Chairman proposed that Members would have that opportunity to seek further information from him, and raise their concerns with him.

11. Work Programme 2015/2017

The Committee noted report PSEG/21/15 setting out an update on its activities.

At the meeting Councillors Henderson and Kendall raised concerns about the length of time taken to deliver the final scrutiny report on Jobs, Welfare and Skills, and consequently the impact upon the timeliness of the outcomes reached. The situation was partly due to a reduction in the level of policy officer support before the review had been completed even though the Policy Team had initiated the scrutiny review in the first instance.

The Chairman advised Members that he had spoken to the officers in question prior to today's meeting and had been given an assurance that the Jobs, Welfare and Skills review would be considered by the full Committee in November.

With specific reference to scrutiny engagement around the forthcoming executive review of Parking Partnerships, some Members expressed their discontent with the delay of the review until January 2016. The Chairman advised the Committee that he would seek an update from the Cabinet Member concerned.

12 Future Committee Dates

The Committee noted report PSEG/22/15 setting out the following future meeting dates:

- Thursday 23 June 2016
- Thursday 21 July 2016
- Thursday 22 September 2016
- Thursday 20 October 2016
- Thursday 24 November 2016
- Thursday 15 December 2016
- Thursday 19 January 2017
- Thursday 23 February 2017
- Thursday 23 March 2017
- Thursday 20 April 2017

13. Date of Next Meeting

The Committee noted the next committee activity day was scheduled for Thursday, 26 November 2015

There being no urgent business the meeting closed at Noon

Chairman

NB. Throughout the meeting problems were experienced with the microphone system and the Chairman, on the behalf of the Committee, apologised to all those present noting that the meeting had been audio broadcast.