
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 Thursday, 20 June 2019

Present:

Councillor B Aspinell	Councillor B Massey
Councillor T Cutmore	Councillor R Moore
Councillor A Erskine	Councillor J Moran
Councillor I Henderson	Councillor C Pond
Councillor S Hillier	Councillor R Pratt
Councillor P Honeywood	Councillor W Schmitt
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 Grundy had sent his apologies, Councillor J Moran attended as his substitute. The meeting was chaired by Councillor S Hillier in his capacity as Vice-Chairman.
3. A Code interest was declared by Councillor W Schmitt with regards to Agenda Item 6 (Essex Country Parks), in that she is the Braintree District Council representative on the Great Notley Country Parks. With regards to the same agenda item, Councillor Aspinell declared a code interest in that he was a season ticket holder at Weald Country Park.

2 Minutes

Councillor Massey pointed out that he did attend the meeting, but his name had been omitted. It was confirmed that the minutes would be amended accordingly.

The minutes of the meeting held on 23rd May were thereafter agreed as a correct record and signed on behalf of the Chairman.

3 Questions from the Public

There were none.

4 Future Libraries Strategy – Petitions Update

Members received and noted report (**PSEG/12/19**) from Peter Randall Senior Democratic Services Officer regarding petitions received by Essex County Council that relate to the Future Libraries strategy.

Some Members raised the issue of online petitions and the procedure for dealing with those that were still open. It was agreed that an action would be taken to discuss the ECC petitions policy at the Constitutional Working Group.

Councillor Kendall raised an issue regarding members of the public who had submitted petitions and whether they would be notified of the meeting of the Committee on 19th July where the Future Libraries strategy will be discussed. It was agreed that the Chairman would take a view on this in due time.

Some Members raised the issue of the recent meeting on the Task and Finish Group where the future libraries strategy was discussed.

5 Apprenticeships in Essex

Members received a presentation from on ACL apprenticeships in Essex, from Dominic Collins, Director of Economic Growth and Localities and Amanda Rawlings, Business Development Manager, ACL. Cllr Ray Gooding, Cabinet Member for Education & Skills was also in attendance for this item.

The presentation included the following:

- An overview of what an apprenticeship is
- The apprenticeship reforms – including the introduction of the apprenticeship levy
- The opportunities for apprenticeships and the challenges involved
- ACL current position
- Apprenticeships at ECC
- ACL aspirations for 2019/2020

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

- Whether historical figures could be provided to the Committee- Dominic Collins explained that the figures available relate solely to ACL apprenticeships
- How the recent restructure affected the ACL- it was explained that this related to Organisation Develop and People which was separate from the reorganisation which affected ACL. Mr Collins gave a detailed explanation in this regard which included the consultation involved therewith.

- Members felt that an overview of the remit of Economic Growth, including a wider look at skills and investment, would be useful at a later meeting of this Committee.
- How the apprenticeship levy works in practice – Amanda Rawlings explained that there is provision for employers to gift 25% of theirs to other organisation but this does not tend to happen very often due to lack of understanding of the process
- Apprenticeships for those over 50- it was confirmed that there is provision for the over 50 particularly in the care sector. It was also confirmed that many over 50 retrain to update their knowledge

On behalf of the Committee, the Chairman thanked all those involved in the presentation.

6 Essex Country Parks

Members received a presentation on Country Parks from Dominic Collins, Director of Economic Growth and Localities and Dee O'Rourke, Head of Culture and Green Spaces. Cllr Mark Platt, Deputy Cabinet Member for Waste and the Environment was also present for this item.

The presentation included the following:

- Country parks overview
- Business plan outcomes
- Country parks mission statement
- Major developments – including new team structure, staff appointments, capital investment and new programmes and activity
- Events programme
- Marketing, communications and fundraising
- Top three sites for future development

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

- Public transport links to the country parks in the County- members felt that such links were either poor or non-existent and asked for this to be investigated. Members requested a written paper from the country parks team to outline the current access issues for a later PSEG meeting.
- Car parking and the provision of electric charging points– it was confirmed that only those which are on -site fall under the remit of ECC and that the latter would be investigated.
- Expanding and improving catering opportunities – it was confirmed that some invested has already taken place in this regard in the form of food vans and that this area is currently under review
- Health and well being benefits- it was confirmed that ECC work with a wide range of organisations to promote such
- Events for older residents – it was confirmed that this is an events team who will look into various commercial options.

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Date of Next Meeting

The Committee noted that the next Committee meeting will be on Thursday, 18th July 2019 at 10.30am in the Council Chamber.

There being no urgent business the meeting closed at 12.35 pm

Chairman