
Minutes of the meeting of the Place Services and Economic Growth Policy and Scrutiny Committee, that was held in Committee Room 1, County Hall, Chelmsford on Thursday, 20 October

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

Present:

Members:

Cllr Alan Goggin	Chairman
Cllr Dave Blackwell	Vice-Chairman
Cllr Paul Gadd	
Cllr Paul Honeywood	
Cllr Dan Land	
Cllr Richard Moore	
Cllr James Newport	
Cllr Lee Scordis	
Cllr Mick Skeels	
Cllr Mike Steel	Vice-Chairman
Cllr Marshall Vance	
Cllr Holly Whitbread	

ECC Officers:

Louise Fitton	Head of Culture, Heritage & Green Space
Erica Gilson	Marketing and Business Development Manager
David Forkin	Head of Maintenance and Operations
Justin Long	Senior Democratic Services Officer (clerk to the meeting)
Lisa Siggins	Democratic Services Officer

Cllr Graham Butland, Cabinet Member for Devolution, the Arts, Heritage and Culture

Cllr Mark Durham, Deputy Cabinet Member for Devolution, the Arts, Heritage and Culture

Cllr Lee Scott, Cabinet Member for Highways Maintenance and Sustainable Transport

Welcome and Introduction

Cllr Alan Goggin, the Chairman of the Place Services and Economic Growth Policy and Scrutiny Committee, welcomed those in attendance.

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. Apologies had been received from Cllrs Susan Barker and Simon Crow.

3. No Declarations of interests were made.

The Chairman, Cllr Alan 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 21 July 2022 were approved as a correct record and were signed by the Chairman.

The 'matters arising' appendix was noted.

3. Questions from the Public

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

4. Work Programme

The updated Work Programme was noted.

It was agreed that as a part of the item on Sustainable Transport (November 2022) information should be requested on bus shelters and s106 funding.

5. The Arts, Culture and the Creative Sector

Cllr Graham Butland introduced a presentation which can be found [here](#). It was reported that since 2021, the Council had been reengaging with the sector in recognition of the societal impact of arts and culture in Essex.

Members were invited to ask questions and provide comment. Key points raised during this discussion included:

- It was agreed that a draft of the new cultural strategy would be considered by the Committee at a future meeting.
- There had been around 200 applications for the 2021/22 Arts and Cultural Fund, meeting expectations. An 'expression of interest stage' was being included in 2022/23 process to provide more time and support for applicants.
- It was agreed that further information would be circulated on the map showing successful applications and on the grant recipients (including how much funding each had received).
- It was agreed to consider the idea that the comments of the local member would be sought regarding individual applications in their division for the Arts and Cultural Fund.

- Work was underway to address the disparity in Fund applications between larger town/cities (particularly Colchester) and more rural areas. Colchester and particularly the work of the Mercury Theatre and Firstsite was praised, and it was suggested that the city could act as an exemplar for other areas of the county.
- It was agreed that details of the overall budget for Arts, Culture and the Creative Sector would be circulated to the Committee, and the Cabinet Member confirmed that funding was focused on contributing to the wider social and economic ambitions of the Everyone's Essex strategy.
- It was agreed that parish and town councils (and wider community groups) should be engaged moving forward, and further information would be circulated on how they can currently get involved.
- The support offered to the three NPOs (National Portfolio Organisations) in Colchester (Mercury Theatre, Firstsite and the Essex Cultural Diversity Project) was outlined.
- An Essex Film Office was being established to promote the county to location managers and liaise with Creative UK. The work would include developing databases of locations, cast and crew to include local businesses and suppliers.
- It was agreed that further information would be circulated to members on how copies of the 'Explore Essex' magazine could be obtained.

6. Highways Maintenance Performance Update

Cllr Lee Scott gave a presentation which can be found [here](#). He expressed his gratitude to officers for their outstanding work in often difficult circumstances.

Members were invited to ask questions and provide comment. Key points raised during this discussion included:

- Members praised the member-led pothole scheme and the priority service to tackle emergency repairs.
- It was agreed that further information would be provided on the overall number of outstanding defects and the classification of these defects. It was reported that there were no S1 (emergency) defects in the outstanding list and the vast majority would be S3 and S4 defects.
- Concerns were raised by members about a number of issues including the budget situation and the statement that highway assets were in 'managed decline', the performance of Ringway Jacobs, the overall funding strategy, and the condition of areas such as central Colchester.

- The Cabinet Member confirmed that there were no plans to change the category of defects (S1, S2, S3, S4), that innovation and new technologies (such as LED streetlights) were the key to tackling the funding issue, and he reassured the Committee that if a road or pathway was dangerous then repair work would be undertaken.
- The Cabinet Member said that developers and utility companies should take greater responsibility for any damage that they cause to highways and footways, and he was lobbying for local authorities to be given more power in regard to when and where utility companies carry out (non-emergency) work.
- The Cabinet Member agreed to report back to the Committee on s106 conditions in relation to drainage systems and repair work needed post-construction.
- Details of the KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) in the Ringway Jacobs contract would be covered in the next update to the Committee and the Annual Road Condition Survey (2021-22) would be circulated to members when it is ready.
- It was further agreed that the relevant strategies and guidance from Essex Highways would be circulated to the Committee.

7. Date of Next Meeting

The Committee noted that the next scheduled meeting would take place on Thursday 17 November, 10:30am at County Hall.

It was further noted that meetings would then take place on the following dates:

12 December 2022,

19 January 2023

16 February 2023

16 March 2023

20 April 2023 (all 10.30am start times)

8. Urgent Business

No items were raised.

Chairman