
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, 24 February 2024

Present:

Members:

Councillor A Goggin	Chairman
Councillor D Blackwell	Vice-Chairman
Councillor J Fleming	Vice-Chairman
Councillor S Barker	Substitute
Councillor S Crow	
Councillor P Honeywood	
Councillor J McIvor	From Item 5
Councillor L Scordis	
Councillor A Sheldon	
Councillor C Siddall	
Councillor M Skeels	
Councillor M Vance	

Officers:

Sam Kennedy	Director: Environment & Climate Action
Jason Searles	Head of Waste Policy and Circular Economy
Katy Chambers	Circular Economy Development Manager
Justin Long	Senior Democratic Services Officer (clerk to the meeting)
Lisa Siggins	Democratic Services Officer

Councillor P Schwier - Cabinet Member for Waste Reduction and Recycling

Welcome and Introduction

Cllr A 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 Cllr Gadd, Cllr Newport and from Cllr A Wiles (Cllr S Barker substitute).

2. Minutes and Matters Arising

The Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 20 December were approved as a correct record and would be signed by the Chairman.

It was reported that an update on LHPs (Local Highway Panels) had been requested and in response officers had said that this would be circulated after the meeting.

3. Questions from the Public

There were no questions from the public.

4. Work Programme and Communications Review

The updated Work Programme was noted.

5. Waste Strategy for Essex

The Cabinet Member introduced the presentation which can be found [here](#). It was reported that the strategy was an overarching framework for the delivery of waste management over the next 30 years.

Officers reported that there had been a strong response to the consultation with broad support for the key principles in the draft strategy. It was, however, noted that the vision of a zero-waste strategy was misunderstood by many respondents and focus group activity had demonstrated that the meaning of anaerobic digestion was also unclear.

Members were invited to ask questions, and during the discussions the following points were raised:

- Decisions on garden waste collections would be made locally (by district), but all residents should be able to access a service (charged or free).
- Officers were exploring options on how best to deal with soft furniture and segregate out materials for recycling (following recent changes in legislation), were working with the private sector on issues such as hardcore and brick disposal, and work was underway on the separation of mattresses at recycling centres whilst in addition one district was trialling the collection of mattresses.
- A collaborative approach was key, and most district-level councils supported the strategy and its core ambitions. Work was ongoing through the Essex Waste Partnership, and officers were confident that every district would adopt the strategy.
- Members raised some concerns about the use of incineration. Officers confirmed that the focus of the strategy was on waste reduction and achieving high levels of recycling; the recommendation on the use of energy-from-waste was in recognition of the limited options available for dealing with residual waste and there was a focus on minimising adverse effects.

- Officers explained the separation between the Waste Strategy (focused on the disposal of waste) and the Waste Local Plan (a planning document looking at the suitability of sites for waste facilities). It was confirmed that the Local Plan would be reviewed following the adoption of the Waste Strategy. Following this explanation, members suggested that a clear communications approach was needed to ensure residents understood the interplay. Officers agreed that current communications information would be shared with members.
- Officers reported the UK was legally committed to being a net-zero country by 2050 (under the Climate Change Act 2008), and the Council was minded of that commitment when developing the strategy. It was agreed that information on carbon emission reporting would be shared with Cllr Siddall.
- Members discussed the options to recycle plastics and it was reported that Buckinghamshire Council had undertaken a trial on the use of recycled plastics in road resurfacing.
- It was noted that action planning would be key, and members questioned how the ambitions and targets outlined would be achieved. It was agreed that communications and incentivising residents were crucial factors, and officers confirmed that work on linking the strategy to tangible action was ongoing.
- Officers reported that there were some (a small minority) of consultation respondents who disagreed with everything in the strategy, but the large majority - where they did disagree - gave an explanation that was often focused on practical issues such as a lack of access to services.

It was agreed that the issue would come back to the Committee with details on the development of the action planning stage (subject to the adoption of the strategy).

6. Date of Next Meeting

The Committee noted that the next scheduled meeting would take place on Thursday 21 March 2024.

It was further noted that a call-in had been received and officers would update members if an additional meeting of the Committee were required.

7. Urgent Business

No items were raised.

8. Urgent Exempt Business

No items were raised.

Chairman