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## **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, 21 September 2023**

### **Present:**

#### **Members:**

Councillor A Goggin	Chairman
Councillor D Blackwell	Vice-Chairman
Councillor S Crow	
Councillor J Fleming	Vice-Chairman
Councillor P Honeywood	
Councillor J Newport	
Councillor L Scordis	
Councillor A Sheldon	
Councillor C Siddall	
Councillor M Skeels	
Councillor M Vance	

#### **Officers:**

Steve Evison	Director, Sustainable Growth
Tristan Smith	Head of Sector Development, Business & Innovation
Nadia McLeod	Senior Strategy Advisor
Justin Long	Senior Democratic Services Officer (clerk to the meeting)
Jasmine Langley	Democratic Services Officer

Councillor T Cunningham, Cabinet Member for Planning a Growing Economy

### **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 P Gadd, Cllr J McIvor, and Cllr A Wiles.

### **2. Minutes and Matters Arising**

Subject to amendments to record that Cllr A Sheldon was in attendance and to reword Minute 3, the Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 22 June 2023 were approved as a correct record and were signed by the Chairman.

The Matters Arising report was noted.

### 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. Planning a Growing Economy

Cllr T Cunningham introduced the report (PSEG/21/23) and a presentation which can be found [here](#).

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

- The Sustainable Growth team supported activity in several portfolios and consisted of 120 staff (excluding Adult Community Learning) working across areas including statutory planning functions and economic growth.
- Funding came from various streams with most of the recent work on inward investment (as referenced in the presentation) having been funded through 'reserve' funding.
- It was not for ECC (Essex County Council) to determine what was a 'good job', but work was focused on supporting existing businesses to grow, attracting inward investment, increasing the diversity and resilience of economic activity in Essex, and helping residents to meet the rising cost of living.
- The importance of 'green growth' opportunities was emphasised including supporting sectors such as offshore renewable energy and retrofitting. Information was given on the [Green Entrepreneurs Programme](#).
- Key challenges for the local economy included inflation, the cost of living and the limitation of employment land in Essex.
- Further detail and case study examples would be shared on where ECC had supported local businesses to create jobs, safeguard jobs and secure investment.
- Work was continuing through the implementation of the [Digital strategy for Essex](#) to ensure that, by 2025, every property in Essex could access a 4G mobile signal as well as superfast fixed broadband. Key challenges included planning, business uptake of products once the infrastructure was in place and securing wider public sector investment.
- It was noted that there were 'pockets' in industrial areas that did not have access to superfast speeds, but work was continuing with landowners to encourage uptake and support better mobile coverage.

- ECC was working closely with the district level councils to attract external funding with projects reflecting government criteria and deadlines. Significant investment had been secured through the Future High Streets Fund, Towns Fund and Levelling-Up Fund.
- Work was continuing to stimulate business confidence through investment in areas such as Tendring and the Sunspot centre in Jaywick, and there was a general focus on driving footfall back into town and city centres.
- The [Essex Sector Development Strategy](#) had identified five key sectors for growth: sustainable construction (including retrofit work), clean energy, life sciences, digital technology, and advanced manufacturing and engineering. These sectors were chosen as they were areas where there was existing strength in Essex, and they had an ability to grow and create jobs in the future.

**6. Withdrawn Call-in: FP/175/06/23 Changes to the composition of the Local Highway Panels (LHPs)**

The report was noted. The Chairman reported that an additional call-in request had been received regarding the Council's response to the consultation on Basildon's Draft Local Plan. This had not met the criteria for a call-in; however, the Chairman had said to the member concerned that they could request the issue be added to the Committee's Work Programme.

**7. Petition received on Garden Waste**

The report was noted.

**8. Bus Network Consultation**

The report was noted, and it was agreed that members would submit any comments for the Committee's response to the Chairman and/or Senior Democratic Services.

**9. Date of Next Meeting**

The Committee noted that the next scheduled meeting would take place on Thursday 19 October, 10:30am at County Hall.

**10. Urgent Business**

No items were raised.

**11. Urgent Exempt Business**

No items were raised.

**Chairman**