

# Scrutiny Bulletin - Spring 2023

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Dear Members,

I am delighted to welcome you to the new look Scrutiny Bulletin. The Scrutiny Board, the cross-party group that coordinates and develops the scrutiny function at the Council, has decided to refresh the bulletin following your feedback.

It is an exciting time for scrutiny at Essex as we tackle some of the key challenges facing the Council and undertake some really positive work on a range of issues.

I hope that this bulletin will give you a flavour of our work. This edition focuses on issues such as improving mental health services for young people and looks at two recent call-ins considered by our scrutiny committees.

I hope also that the bulletin will give you a glimpse behind the scenes of scrutiny, and a real insight into those engaged in the important work we are undertaking.

I would value your feedback on the bulletin. And, as ever, if there are any scrutiny issues you would like to raise then please get in touch either with me or with officers.

Cllr Ray Gooding  
Chairman of the Scrutiny Board  
and Chairman of the People and  
Families Policy and Scrutiny  
Committee



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## News in Brief

Below is a roundup of some of the key scrutiny stories from the last few months....

### Scrutiny highlights young people's mental health struggles



Full Council recently backed scrutiny recommendations to improve young people's access to mental health services.

The recommendations came from a Task and Finish Group made-up of members from the Health Overview Policy and Scrutiny Committee and the People and Families Policy and Scrutiny Committee.

The recommendations have now been presented to the Essex Health and Wellbeing Board and will be taken forward in the coming months. They include improving the training and retention of staff, introducing a single point of contact in Essex for young people requiring mental health support, and a 'wellbeing hub' in every primary school in Essex.

### **Scrutiny reviews key decisions**

Scrutiny Committees recently considered call-ins on two key decisions: in January the decision to cease the Highway Rangers funding, and then in April changes to respite care in Colchester.

Meetings heard from members and residents about their concerns and reviewed the possible implications of the decisions.

On both occasions, after a thorough debate, in which committee members expressed a range of differing views, it was decided not to refer the decisions for further consideration, and both decisions were implemented.

You can watch a recording of the call-in on respite care by clicking on the video below. The call-in was heard by the People and Families Policy and Scrutiny Committee.



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## **Budget under the Spotlight**

New Year saw the Corporate Policy and Scrutiny Committee consider the 2022/23 budget proposals.

The Committee put the £2bn plans under the spotlight asking challenging questions to officers and the Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Corporate Affairs. Key issues raised by members included the deliverability of planned savings, the impact of staffing vacancies, and the future of Shire Hall.

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## **Meet the Chairmen.....Cllr Alan Goggin**

**Chairman of the Place Services and Economic Growth Policy and Scrutiny Committee**



How did you first become involved in politics?

I first became involved in 2007 when my local Town Council [Brightlingsea] decided to sell a property and gardens that had

been left to the Town in the will of a major benefactor in 1927. I campaigned against the sale and then stood in a subsequent by-election to the Town Council. Following this, I was elected to Tendring District Council and then in 2014 to Essex. To date, I have squeezed 27 years service into 16 actual years!

Which division do you represent?

Brightlingsea is the major town within my division, as well as the villages of Great Bentley, Alresford, St Osyth, Point Clear and Thorrington with a voting population of approximately 14,000. It is part of the coastal community of Tendring District Council.

Tell us about your role as Chairman?

The role of Chairman means working with a cross party group of councillors responsible for scrutinising some very key areas including economic development, highways, waste and recycling, and climate change to name just a few. Key areas which make a real difference to the daily lives of residents and the security of businesses.

The position involves leading members and residents in questioning decisions and spending at the Council. Over the last two years this has resulted in a full work programme and deep

scrutiny that has in some cases clarified Cabinet choices and in others allowed them to be amended.

And your life outside of politics?

I have been fortunate in having a full and successful business life which continues today, and

has allowed me to carry out some really rewarding charity work. I have also been lucky enough to have been married to my wife for 51 years and have great children and even greater grandchildren.



They all share my love of sport which for me has encompassed senior amateur football, water-skiing at World, European, and national championship level and a passion for rugby which still allows me to continue to play today. I have been lucky to be involved with European and Olympic committees which in turn has opened the doors to BBC and Sky Sports programmes and commentating.

All of this while always living in the most dynamic and ambitious county in Great Britain!

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## **Training and Development**

A recent review of the scrutiny function highlighted the importance of member training.

This has led the Scrutiny Board to establish a defined training programme for all members of scrutiny committees intended to develop the professionalism of the function.

So far this year, scrutiny members have undertaken the following online training with external partners including the LGiU:

- Questioning Skills.
- Scrutiny: Understanding and Maximising Your Role.

[Find out more about training on the Members' Portal](#)

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There are lots of online resources available to find out more about scrutiny and the latest national developments.

The CfGS is a social purpose consultancy and national centre of expertise for all things governance and scrutiny.

[Click here to find out more about the CfGS](#)

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## **That's it from us...**

We hope you enjoyed the new look Scrutiny Bulletin.

You can find out more about what our scrutiny committees are doing by visiting the pages below.



For anything else you wanted to tell us about - or feedback on this bulletin - please [get in touch](#) with us.

Thank you for reading and see you in August for our Summer 2023 Update!

[Find out more on our website](#)

Best wishes  
**Scrutiny Team**

Scrutiny Bulletin - Essex County Council