
Minutes of the meeting of the Place Services and Economic Growth Policy and Scrutiny Committee, that was held in the Council Chamber, County Hall, Chelmsford on Monday, 10 January 2022

[A YouTube recording of the meeting is to be found online.](#) *(due to a technical error this recording commences from Item 6)*

Present:

Members:

Councillor A Goggin	Chairman
Councillor D Land	
Councillor L Shaw	Vice-Chairman
Councillor M Skeels	
Councillor M Steel	
Councillor M Vance	
Councillor H Whitbread	
Councillor C Guglielmi	
Councillor M Mackrory	

Officers:

Lisa Bone	Tourism and Place Marketing Manager, Visit Essex
Peter Manning	Head of International Trade
John Meehan	Head of Climate Adaptation and Mitigation
Justin Long	Senior Democratic Services Officer (clerk to the meeting)
Gemma Bint	Democratic Services Officer
Emma Tombs	Democratic Services Manager

Also in attendance were:

Councillor G Butland, Cabinet Member for Devolution, the Arts, Heritage and Culture
Councillor M Durham, Deputy to the Cabinet Member for Devolution, the Arts, Heritage and Culture

Welcome and Introduction

Councillor Goggin, the Chairman of the Place Services and Economic Growth Policy and Scrutiny Committee, welcomed those in attendance. He noted that the meeting was taking place under the rules of social distancing, and that if anyone moved from their seat, they should wear a facemask.

Altered Order

In the interests of the efficient conduct of the business, items were considered in a different order from that set out in the agenda. These Minutes represent the order in which they were considered.

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 Councillors Blackwell, Honeywood and Stephenson. Councillor Guglielmi was substituting for Councillor Vance and Councillor Mackrory was filling the vacancy on the Committee.
3. No Declarations of interests were made.

The Chairman, Councillor 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 25 November 2021 were approved as a correct record and were signed by the Chairman.

3. Questions from the Public

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

4. Work Programme

The report and updated Work Programme were noted.

Following discussion, it was agreed that the Committee would request a quarterly update on Highways Maintenance to include information on available budget, defects repaired, and the criteria for the prioritisation of repairs.

A further update on the Work Programme would be presented to the Committee for consideration at its next meeting.

5. Green Infrastructure Strategy and Essex Forest Initiative

The Head of Climate Adaptation and Mitigation gave a presentation on the Green Infrastructure Strategy and Essex Forest Initiative. The presentation can be found [here](#).

Councillor Butland paid tribute to the work and the expertise of the teams involved in the various initiatives.

Following the presentation, members were invited to ask questions and provide comment.

Key points raised during this discussion included:

- The structure and funding of the Green Infrastructure Team;
- The development of the Essex Local Nature Partnership and the ambition for natural green infrastructure (natural and semi-natural habitat) to cover 30% of the county by 2040 (currently it covers about 14% of Essex);
- Concerns were raised about the dumping of waste in rivers and it was noted that any incidents should be reported to the Environment Agency;
- Members were pleased to see a focus on town centre regeneration and natural flood management.

6. Visit Essex - how the visitor economy has responded to the pandemic

The Tourism and Place Marketing Manager gave a presentation on the work of Visit Essex and how the visitor economy had responded to the pandemic. The presentation can be found [here](#).

Following the presentation, members were invited to ask questions and provide comment.

Key points raised during this discussion included:

- The diversity of the county and its attractions as well as its proximity to London were key to promoting Essex and attracting visitors;
- Partnership working was ongoing including with the City of London;
- Visit Essex was working with bus and rail companies to encourage sustainable transport options and ensure attractions were accessible;
- Essex had no single 'standout' attraction (e.g., an Eden Project), but instead its contrast of attractions was key with many visitors seeking immersive 'experiences' alongside traditional sightseeing;
- A more holistic approach to promote the image of Essex was being pursued joining together work on inward investment, visitor attractions, and coordinating the activities of businesses and local authorities.

Councillor Durham praised the work of the Visit Essex Team, particularly in the light of budget cuts in recent years.

7. Date of Next Meeting

The committee noted that the next meeting of the Committee would take place on Thursday 20 January at County Hall.

8. Urgent Business

No items were raised.

Chairman