

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE MID ESSEX AREA FORUM HELD AT
CENTRAL BAPTIST CHURCH CHELMSFORD, ON TUESDAY 11 JANUARY 2011
AT 2PM**

Membership

* *Present*

Essex County Council (20)

J W Pike (Chairman)	*	N Hume (Items 6-9 only)
J Aldridge		M Hutchon
R L Bass	*	M C M Lager (In the Chair)
J Baugh		D J Louis
G Butland		P J Martin
R G Boyce (Vice-Chairman)		M Mackrory
P Channer	*	Mrs M Miller
* J Deakin (Items 1-6 only)		T C Smith-Hughes
* N Edey		R Walters
D M Finch		
Rt Hon Lord Hanningfield		

Partner Organisations

Braintree District Council (2)

Cllr G Butland	-
Chris Fleetham	-

Chelmsford Borough Council (2)

Councillor M Moulds	-	(Leader's Nominee)
Averil Price	-	Director of Safer Communities (Chief Executive's Nominee)

Maldon District Council (2)

Mrs A N Warr	-	Councillor
Fiona Marshall	-	Chief Executive

Local Councils (3)

* Tony Hayward	-	E.A.L.C (Braintree)
Cllr Cole	-	E.A.L.C (Chelmsford)
Mrs R M Pink		E.A.L.C (Maldon)

Hospitals & Primary Care Trust (2)

Sheila Bremner	-	Mid Essex Hospitals Services NHS Trust
Malcolm Stamp	-	Mid Essex Hospitals Services NHS Trust

Essex Police (2)

Chief Superintendent
Michelle Dunn

Essex Fire Service (1)

Matt Hughes	-	Chelmsford Community Command
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Councils for Voluntary Service (3)

Judy Cuddeford	-	Chelmsford CVS
Lorraine Jarvis	-	Maldon and District CVS

Paul Murphy

- Maldon and District CVS

Also Present

(in order of signing the attendance book – and as there described)

John W Harrison, Heybridge resident, Tony Shrimpton, Maldon Town Council, Trevor Miller, Member Chelmsford Borough Council, Steve Savage, Maldon Town Council, Tony Shrimpton, Maldon Town Council, Peter Radford, Chelmsford Commuters and Rail Travellers (CART), Jon Simmons, Mid Area Office ECC, Roger North, CART, Graham Bushby, Hatfield Peveral Parish Council, Janet Cloke, Althorne Ladies Club & Maldon 50+ Forum, Ursula Benjafield, Althorne Parish Transport Rep/Dengie Hundred Bus Users' Group, Margaret Otter, member of the public, Andrew Luce, Food on Friday Torch Group, Andrew Sosin, Chelmsford Borough Council, Chris Siddall, Braintree District Council, Phil Davies, Althorne PC, John Hunnable, Chelmsford Borough Council, Ken Edwards, Member of the Public, Stuart Jennings, Maldon District Council, Jane Richards, NHS Mid Essex, County Councillor Ray Howard, Chair South Essex Area Forum, Alastair Southgate, ECC.

Officers Attending in Support

Louise Albright	- Committee Assistant
Graham Hughes	- Committee Officer
John Zammit	- Mid Area Co-ordinator

1. Welcome and Introduction of Members and Officers

As apologies for absence had been received from County Councillors Joe Pike (Chairman of the Forum) and Bob Boyce (Vice Chairman of the Forum), the Committee Officer invited nominations for Chairman of the meeting. Councillor Michael Lager was proposed by Councillor Nigel Edey and seconded by Councillor Maureen Miller. No other nominations were received and it was agreed that the meeting be Chaired by Councillor Lager.

Councillor Lager took the chair and welcomed those in attendance to the meeting. It was noted that the meeting was not quorate and accordingly no decisions could be made by the meeting. [The meeting was quorate solely for Item 6 as indicated in the Attendance record at the start of these minutes].

2. Apologies

The Committee Officer noted that apologies had been received as follows:

Essex County Councillors Councillors

Councillor John Aldridge
PC)
Councillor Rodney Bass
DC)
Councillor John Baugh
Councillor Bob Boyce
Councillor Penny Channer

Parish/Borough/District

Councillor Lew Schnurr (Heybridge
Councillor Sandra Howell (Braintree

Councillor David Finch
Councillor Margaret Hutchon
Councillor Derrick Louis
Councillor Mike Mackory
Councillor Joe Pike
Councillor Tom Smith-Hughes
Councillor Roger Walters

Other Organisations

Police Superintendent Michelle Dunne, Interim Chief Executive at Mid Essex Hospitals Trust Malcolm Stamp, and the representative from Chelmsford Voluntary Services,

3. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were recorded.

4. Minutes

- (a) Despite being inquorate the meeting reviewed the minutes of the Forum held on 16 September 2010 and recommended them for approval to the next quorate meeting of the Forum subject to:

Item 5(i) – second line ‘surface’ to replace ‘service’.

Item 7 – two sub sections labelled (d) – the first to be labelled (c).

Appendix 1 – update on Minute 5(v) – it was noted that this applied to longer periods in the day and not just at lunchtime although no change to the minutes was required.

Appendix 2 – third entry – Jon Simmons from ECC Highways to respond directly to John Harrison (member of the public) to clarify the timescale.

- (b) Matters Arising:

Minute 6 – as Michelle Dunne was not present at the meeting two updates arising would be deferred until a later meeting.

Minute 7(d)(iii) the estimated cost of the consultation process was £20,000;

Minute 12 – Forward Look – Transformation item – reference to opportunities offered had been added to the next issue of the plan.

5. Public Questions

The following issues were raised, by those persons indicated in brackets, during a public question time:

- (i) Further concerns about the revised switching off times for street lighting in Maldon were referred to Jon Simmons, ECC Highways to forward to Keith Tovee, Principal Engineer – Street lighting to respond to Tony Shrimpton, Maldon Town Council;
- (ii) A record of Members recent attendance at the Forum to be presented at the next meeting. (Ken Edwards);
- (iii) ECC Highways Department were aware of an accident black spot at Market Hill, Maldon. Jon Simmons of ECC Highways would follow-up with and update the questioner after the meeting. (Steve Savage)
- (iv) Community salt bins in Maldon seemed to have been successful and had made the local pavements safer in icy weather although training had been required prior to being authorised to use them. However, there were no instructions on the amount of salt for spreading to use per metre and some residents had found gravel more effective than salt. Jon Simmons from ECC Highways would follow-up and report back direct to the questioners (Tony Shrimpton and Steve Savage)

[At the start of the following item County Councillor Norman Hume arrived and the meeting became quorate for a short period, prior to County Councillor Jude Deakin leaving at the end of the item, and the meeting becoming inquorate again.]

6. Local Transport Plan: Stakeholder Consultation

(a) Introduction

Alastair Southgate, Transport Strategy Manager, outlined the current stakeholder consultation on the Essex Local Transport Plan (LTP), giving an update on the previous consultation, the policy background, an update on progress and area implementation plans.

Every local authority was required to produce a local transport plan for its area. The LTP set out a 15 year transport strategy including objectives which would help achieve sustainable economic growth and how transport services would be provided.

(b) Problems and issues already identified

Problems and issues that the LTP should address had been identified from several sources, including an earlier public consultation during autumn/winter 2009/10. These issues included congestion on urban and interurban roads between main towns, improved train and bus services, encouraging flexible working and further provision of cycle routes and facilities to encourage greater use of low carbon forms of travel. However, funding was recognised as a significant challenge.

(c) Outcomes identified

Various changes to government policy that would impact on future infrastructure planning were highlighted with greater emphasis, in future, on local priorities. The future Government approach would be for a smarter use of assets and targeted action to tackle specific network stress points.

(d) Central Essex

The part of the LTP covering central Essex had been titled 'The Heart of Essex' with its area implementation plan covering four districts: Chelmsford, Braintree, Brentwood and Maldon. The Heart of Essex plan had identified the following local issues to be addressed:

- (i) Key routes into Chelmsford suffered from poor journey time reliability. The railway station operated at capacity and the cycling network was incomplete and not well promoted.
- (ii) Pockets of Braintree town were in need of regeneration and the branch line offered limited frequency of train services.
- (iii) Brentwood suffered from local congestion, with an air quality issue at Wilson's Corner.
- (iv) All local centres had limited cycle and bus networks.
- (v) Connectivity between Maldon and the strategic network was important for the town.
- (vi) Crossrail would increase the importance of Shenfield railway station.
- (vii) Interurban routes such as the A12 were congested.

(e) Priorities identified for the Heart of Essex

The following priorities had been identified:

- (i) Supporting housing and employment growth in Chelmsford
- (ii) Improving the attractiveness of streets and public spaces within the centre of Chelmsford;
- (ii) Improving the reliability and punctuality of bus services in Chelmsford;
- (iv) Extending and upgrading the Chelmsford cycle network and promoting its use;
- (v) Improved links to serve the local centres, bus and rail stations, hospitals and retail centres;

- (vi) Improving journey time reliability on key routes into Chelmsford and on road linking to the A12, A120 and A130;
- (vii) Improving journeys for commuters travelling to London from Chelmsford and Braintree.
- (f) Question and answer session

Thereafter, those present raised the following issues with those raising questions and/or involved in the discussion indicated in brackets afterwards:

- (i) The previous consultation had included reference to new railways infrastructure developments but had been omitted this time and it was suggested that these potential rail developments should be included. In particular the following were highlighted: specific reference to a direct rail line from Chelmsford to Kings Cross, the development of a North East Chelmsford station, and extension of Crossrail to Chelmsford. (Councillor John Hunnab, Chelmsford Borough Councillor, Peter Radford, Chelmsford Commuters and Rail Travellers). Cabinet Member Norman Hume confirmed that ECC recognised the importance of railways as part of a strategic transport infrastructure and that ECC were in regular contact with rail operators to discuss significant issues;
- (ii) LTP stakeholder consultation had opened on 13 December 2010 for nine weeks through to 11 February 2011. Comments received during the current consultation would be incorporated into an updated draft Strategy which would go through an internal ECC approval process before being enacted in April 2011. (County Councillor Michael Lager);
- (iii) Metrics would be included in the finalised LTP to gauge success and effectiveness of the proposals (Ken Edwards);
- (iv) The limited bus and train service frequency for rural areas was raised (Janet Cloke, Ursula Benjafield, Althorne Parish Transport Rep/Dengie Hundred Bus Users' Group). ECC were looking at alternative solutions that could help maintain reasonable level of services. Whilst some transport operators were independent commercial companies, it was highlighted that some operators were supported by ECC and that ECC could leverage some policy influence over them (Philip Davies). In addition, reference was made to possible influence local authorities could have over other commercial companies to subsidise certain transport provision when granting s106 planning consents and a specific example was given (John Harrison, Steve Savage, Maldon Town Council);
- (v) There had been flooding problems with the cycle path route near the Army and Navy roundabout in Chelmsford. It was suggested that the new Highways Agency viaduct in the area could provide an alternative route. (Chelmsford Borough Councillor Trevor Miller);

The Forum was thanked for its contributions to the consultation process and were encouraged to formally respond via the ECC website. Alastair Southgate was thanked for his presentation.

7. Essex Minerals Development Document Preferred Approach

(a) Introduction

An overview of the Minerals Preferred Approach consultation document (AFM/02/11) was presented to the meeting by Lesley Stenhouse, Minerals and Waste Planning Manager. The consultation was looking at the overall core strategy and the sites that would help achieve it.

(b) Priorities and primary mineral supply requirements

Priorities for future mineral supply were to reduce the quantity of material used and waste generated (emphasised through procurement practices and increased co-ordination with other public sector agencies) and to maximise the use of recycled and secondary processing material, and to supply the remainder from primary aggregate extraction.

There were three primary mineral supply requirements:

- (i) Land Won Sand and Gravel apportionment of 4.31mtpa and maintaining a seven year land bank;
- (ii) To maintain a land bank of at least 10 years reserves of silica sand;
- (iii) To ensure a stock of reserves of brick clay was maintained for 25 years production.

(c) Identification of sites

The presentation outlined that Sand and Gravel was the main mineral issue, and

included a map of existing sites which would continue over to 2026 and it was highlighted that only three of these sites would remain by that date. The sites were predominantly in the centre and north east of the county. An additional 42.225mt of new sand and gravel would be required for the plan period to 2026

(after taking into account existing planning permissions). A map of the suggested

Sites, received in response to a call for sites, was highlighted identifying sand and gravel sites, silica sand sites (used for filtration work) or potential transshipment sites. The sites nominated in 2005 (in response to a call for sites at the time) had been heavily skewed towards the north east and east of

the county and a subsequent call had been made to encourage a wider dispersal

of potential sites. The 43 suggested sand and gravel sites had potential to supply 120mt, or three times the identified requirement.

The Strategy to identify sites to serve Essex was set out which would meet the 42.225mt requirement. Key factors were to optimise the location of facilities, taking into account the need to optimise the location to meet the growth locations of Essex; factor in existing mineral infrastructure (rail depots and wharves), redress the supply balance (sites in centre & east and demand across whole county inc west), transportation to optimise the road network and reduce mineral miles and carbon use.

Site Selection Methodology was outlined including the selection criteria and scoring system with weighting given to promote sites in the west of the county. The appendices to the main report detailed all the sites that had been assessed.

The current MDD Preferred Approach Document (and the current Preferred Sites identified) was not the final version and any comments received during the consultation period would influence the content of the draft Submission version due out in December 2011.

(d) Question and answer session

Thereafter, those present raised the following issues with those raising questions and/or involved in the discussion indicated in brackets:

- (i) It was confirmed that ECC held regular discussions with the two surrounding unitary authorities as to source sites within the greater Essex area although each local authority was actually required to formulate a plan for its own minerals supply (Ken Edwards);
- (ii) It was confirmed that whilst a potential site may have been rejected at Stage 1 of the site selection criteria (sometimes for highways access for instance which could then be rectified at a later date), it was considered to be cost effective to have evaluated them at that time as it was possible that the site could qualify in future and much of the assessment work would then already have been completed (Chris Siddall, Braintree District Council);
- (iii) It was suggested that there should be robust policies preventing change of use for agricultural reservoir sites (Chris Siddall, Braintree District Council);
- (iv) There was discussion on coastal mineral extraction, acknowledging existing dredging at Tilbury, and whether new coastal sites would be proposed (Steve Savage, Maldon Town Council).

Thereafter Lesley Stenhouse was thanked for her presentation.

In connection with responding to public consultations, the Forum then discussed the user friendliness of completing surveys and questionnaires on the ECC website for all consultations, questioning the need to log-in, that the particular survey/questionnaire being sought was not always easy to find, and whether it was possible to just complete and submit a general comment rather than complete the whole survey/questionnaire. Whilst the design of this particular section of ECCs website was in a standard format, in line with that used by other local authorities, it was **Agreed** that this would be reviewed and a report be made to the next Forum.

8. Mid Area Forum: Health Inequalities Scrutiny

The Forum received the final report (AFM/03/11) on the review of Health Inequalities in Mid Essex, undertaken by a Task and Finish Group, which was presented by John Zammit, Mid Essex Area Co-ordinator. The background to the formation of the Group, the process followed for the scrutiny, emerging issues and the final findings and recommendations were outlined.

Concern was raised that the report suggested that the Group had only looked at issues affecting three conurbations: Braintree, Chelmsford and Maldon and that Witham had not been included in the review. It was noted that the conclusions from the scrutiny were evidence based and that some of them applied across the whole mid Essex area (such as improved and consistent provision of phlebotomy and audiology services). Subsequent discussion at the meeting confirmed the Group's findings on the inconsistent provision of phlebotomy and audiology services, that consultations by the Primary Care Trust on proposed changes to services had been inadequate and that there was also inadequate dissemination of information on phlebotomy and audiology clinics available in the area.

Concern was expressed at proposed revisions to maternity services at Braintree and it was noted that this had already been reviewed by, and commented on, by Braintree District Council and the Essex Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The Forum supported the findings and recommendations arising from the scrutiny and, acknowledging that the meeting was inquorate, would recommend the report for approval to the next meeting of the Forum.

It was noted that a Stakeholder Group to look at the outline business case for a new Maldon Hospital had been re-formed, with its membership to include elected members from the Maldon area.

9. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Forum would be held on Thursday 3 March 2011 (to be held at 2pm at Chelmsford Baptist Church):

There being no further business the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 4.05 pm.

Chairman
3 March 2011