
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 Thursday, 22 July 2021

[A YouTube recording of the meeting is to be found online.](#)

Present:

Members:

Councillor A Goggin Chairman
Councillor P Honeywood
Councillor D Land
Councillor R Moore
Councillor L Scordis
Councillor L Shaw
Councillor M Skeels
Councillor M Steel
Councillor M Vance
Councillor H Whitbread

ECC Officers:

Sam Kennedy Director Environment and Climate Action
Emma Tombs Democratic Services Manager
Justin Long Senior Democratic Services Officer (clerk to the meeting)
Lisa Siggins Democratic Services Officer
Michael Hayes Democratic Services Assistant

Councillor P Schwier was also present.

1. Welcome and Introduction

Councillor Goggin, the Chairman of the Place Services and Economic Growth Policy and Scrutiny Committee, welcomed those in attendance especially those members new to the Council who may be in the Council Chamber for the first time. 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.

2. 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, Crow and Stephenson.

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.

Subsequently, at agenda item 6, Councillor Whitbread declared that she was a newly appointed member of the Essex Climate Action Commission (ECAC). Councillor Whitbread remained present throughout the presentation of this item and participated fully in the debate.

3. Appointment of Vice-Chairman

It having been moved by Councillor Goggin and seconded by Councillor Honeywood, and there being no other nominations it was

Resolved:

That Councillor Shaw be appointed as Vice-Chairman of the Committee.

4. Minutes and Matters Arising

The minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 25 February 2021 were approved as a correct record and would be signed by the Chairman.

5. Questions from the Public

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

6. Climate Change

Councillor Schwier outlined his role as Climate Change Tsar. He noted that a key focus was to ensure that climate change implications were considered in everything done by the Council.

The committee then received a presentation from Sam Kennedy, Director, Environment and Climate Action, Essex County Council. The presentation included information on the recommendations from the Essex Climate Action Commission (ECAC), the environmental priorities in the proposed Organisation Strategy, and the delivery programme that was already underway. The full presentation can be found [here](#).

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

Key points raised during this discussion included:

- Homes currently being built that were not net-zero/future-proofed would require investment in the future to bring them up to the required standard (noting the ECAC recommendations for new and existing homes).
- The Council was working with planning authorities, through the Essex Planning Authorities Association and developers to encourage them to bring forward some of the higher building standards ahead of 2025.
- Part of the grant offer from the Essex Forest Initiative was to support the maintenance of newly planted trees and the Council was working closely with partners to ensure that trees were planted in the best locations: 'right tree, right place'.
- Information would be provided to members on 'warm tarmac' and its environmental benefit.
- Council emissions from its own estate (e.g., County Hall) were reported annually with a policy in place to move the estate to net-zero by 2030. Refurbishment schemes have taken place and more information on the current scheme of work would be provided to members.
- The Government's 'Bus Back Better' strategy was seen by officers as an opportunity to increase investment in the bus network.
- The Council was increasing its efforts to engage businesses. It had setup a 'business newsletter' and was working the various Chambers of Commerce and branches of the Federation of Small Businesses. A £1.3m grant scheme for SMEs to invest in renewable energy, energy efficiency and electric vehicles was available.
- An electric vehicle charging strategy was being developed, and officers would report back to members on the idea of an app for residents to see local electric-vehicle charging points.
- Information would be supplied to members on the county-wide approach on drop-kerb applications for off-road parking spaces (with resultant access to an electric vehicle charging point).
- Information would be provided to members on the percentage of residents who cannot access a charging point from their house i.e., they have no off-road parking.
- Information would be provided to members on how demand was being managed on the public transport network in the west of the county (e.g London Underground stations in the Epping Forest District).
- In the absence of a mandated net-zero development requirement, planning authorities in the area were being encouraged to look at the Uttlesford District Council model and the steer it had provided to developers.

- The Council was working with neighbouring authorities, partner organisations, as well as borough, district and parish councils that had declared a Climate Emergency to coordinate activity and share best practice. Further information would be circulated to members on the Climate Challenge Active Fund.
- Initiatives were being investigated nationally to consider the environmental and financial cost of electric car batteries.
- Available information would be provided to members on the climate change impact on Essex Highways e.g., maintenance costs resulting from the increased risk of flooding and subsidence.
- The idea of a cycle-hire scheme would be reported to officers working on the Active Travel Strategy.

7. Work Programme

The report was noted. A further update would be presented to the Committee for consideration at its 23 September 2021 meeting.

8. Date of Next Meeting

The committee noted that the next scheduled meeting would be held on Thursday 23 September 2021 at 10.30am at County Hall.

The format of meetings was discussed, and it was noted that whilst formal meetings of the Committee would need to be held in-person, informal and pre-meetings would continue to be held virtually.

It was noted that the Committee had in the past requested information on the financial cost of holding in-person meetings. It was agreed that any information on this would be circulated.

9. Urgent Business

No items were raised.

Chairman