

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE MID ESSEX AREA FORUM HELD AT
CENTRAL BAPTIST CHURCH CHELMSFORD, ON THURSDAY 3 MARCH 2011
AT 2PM**

Membership

* *Present*

Essex County Council (20)

* J W Pike (Chairman)	N Hume
* J Aldridge	M Hutchon
R L Bass	* M C M Lager
J Baugh	D J Louis
G Butland	P J Martin
* R G Boyce (Vice-Chairman)	M Mackrory
* P Channer	* Mrs M Miller
* J Deakin	* 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 PCT
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 Hunnabe, Chelmsford Borough Council, Prof L Schnurr, Maldon District Council LSP, Trevor Miller, Member Chelmsford Borough Council, Phil Davies, Althorne PC, Janet Cloke, Maldon 50+ Forum, Tony Shrimpton, Maldon Town Council, Steve Savage, Maldon Town Council, Tony Plumridge, Angela Thomson, Broomfield PC, Harry Chacy, Danbury PC, Faye McBucle, Essex Chronicle, Cllr R P Ramage, Braintree District Council, Thomas Kelly, member of the public, Graham Bushby, Hatfield Peveral Parish Council, Jon Simmons, ECC Customer Services, Peter Bralen, ECC, Ian Bradbury, Great Waltham P.C., Margaret Otter, member of the public, Mike Harris, Chelmsford B.C., Lois Speller, Lib Dems, Lucy Payne, CBC,

Officers Attending in Support

Samantha Ball	-	Committee Assistant
Graham Hughes	-	Committee Officer
John Zammit	-	Mid Area Co-ordinator

1. Welcome and Introduction of Members and Officers

The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed those in attendance.

2. Apologies

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

**Essex County Councillors
Councillors****Parish/Borough/District**

Councillor Rodney Bass DC)	Councillor Chris Siddall (Braintree DC)
Councillor Nigel Edey	Councillor Pooley (Chelmsford BC)
Councillor David Finch	
Councillor Margaret Hutchon	
Councillor Mike Mackory	
Councillor Peter Martin	
Councillor Roger Walters	

Other Organisations

Police Superintendent Michelle Dunne.

3. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Michael Lager declared an interest in Item 7 as he was also a member of Witham Town Council who recently had made representations on the Health Inequalities Scrutiny being undertaken by a Task and Finish Group of the Mid Area Forum. No other declarations of interest were recorded.

4. Minutes

(a) The draft minutes for the meetings of the Mid Area Forum held on 11 November 2010 and 11 January 2011 were approved as submitted and signed by the Chairman subject to the insertion of 'discharge' after "...existing dredging..." in item 7(d)(iv) in the minutes for 11 January 2011.

(b) Matters Arising:

The Committee received a Matters Arising report (AFM/04/11) prepared by the Committee Officer and this was **Noted**.

5. Public Questions

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

- (i) A letter of complaint about the handling by the Highways Department of a safety concern in Althorne had been sent to the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation. In particular there was concern about the condition of a particular stretch of the B1010 along Fambridge Road and adjacent ditch which had been the site of a series of highways incidents. Jon Simmons, ECC Highways advised that he was aware of the issue and would investigate further (**Councillor Philip Davies, Althorne Parish Council**);
- (ii) A Highways and Transportation Update paper, advising on a recent restructure of the service and new telephone contact numbers had been circulated at the meeting. Concern was expressed that the new contact numbers were chargeable 0845 numbers. (**Steve Savage, Maldon Town Council**);
- (iii) Reference was made to litter being left on the verges alongside the old A12 slip road approaching Chelmsford and, also, specifically on greensward areas in Maldon. Members of the Forum queried the procedure to keep such areas clear of litter and suggested greater planting of trees and/or signs. Unfortunately the Highways service did not have funding available at present to address this problem. Jon Simmons noted the concerns raised at the meeting (**Councillor Ron Ramage/Tony Shrimpton, Maldon Town Council**);
- (iv) It was understood that in future radiography services in Essex would be concentrated at Colchester and Southend hospitals. Objections to this proposed move had been discussed at a recent Chelmsford Borough Council Full Council meeting. Members of the Forum were asked also to voice their objections to this relocation of services direct with the Essex based Primary Care Trusts. (**Chelmsford Borough Councillor Maureen Moulds**);

- (v) New GP consortiums were being established in some areas quicker than others. The Essex Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee had discussed this issue and would be monitoring developments. **(Chelmsford Borough Councillor Maureen Moulds);**
- (vi) A local resident in the Moulsham area of Chelmsford commented on the existing 20mph speed restriction in some parts of the area and suggested that it should be extended to a wider area. Jon Simmons would investigate further;
- (vii) A building had been struck in a traffic incident in Stock. Temporary traffic lights had been installed as part of a diversion of traffic, and the temporary relocation of bus stops. Jon Simmons would investigate further and advise the resident direct on anticipated length of time for the diversion. **(Mrs Otter, member of the public)**

6. Turncole Wind Farm – Dengie Peninsula

(a) Introduction

Jon Knight and Matthew Horn from the Renewable Energy Systems Group (RES) presented proposals for a wind farm in the Dengie Peninsula. The core activity for RES was the development, design, construction, financing and operation of wind farms worldwide, both onshore and offshore. The proposed Turncole wind farm in the Dengie Peninsula would comprise seven standard size turbines, crane hard standings, water course culverts, site tracks, substation, construction compound and met masks, and would contribute 12.6 MW towards the UK2020 renewable energy target.

(b) Site selection

RES used an in-house GIS (geographical information systems) model for finding suitable wind farms in the UK. The GIS used the following criteria for site assessment:

800m minimum separation from the nearest habitation;

Wind speed

Site area greater than 2km squared;

Average gradients of up to 1 in 10;

Good site access;

Reasonable distance to grid connection;

Located outside Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, National Parks etc, and discretionary consideration of Site of Special Scientific Interest.

A major constraint to wind farm development in Essex and Maldon was the availability of unconstrained space. To keep within applicable noise limits and to protect visual amenity, wind turbines had to be located at suitable distances from inhabited properties. 14 sites had been identified and assessed for suitability. However, after evaluation, the site at Turncole Farm was deemed the most appropriate and ranked well above the other 13 sites. The results of

the GIS had shown that, within the district, there were very few unconstrained areas that could have accommodated a wind farm.

Further studies were then undertaken to assess further possible constraints such as housing, noise, ecology, ornithology, hydrology, cultural heritage, electromagnetic interference, wind speed assessment and landscape impact assessment.

(c) Delivery route for construction materials

It was possible to deliver materials for construction of wind farms either by road, rail or water. The use of the Crouch estuary to deliver turbine components had been investigated but due to a number of factors was considered unsuitable. The use of the rail network was only suitable for aggregate. However, this would increase heavy traffic around train stations with potential disruption to other rail and road users. Additionally there would be no reduction in vehicles on the road. The road network was deemed to be the most suitable for construction traffic and was investigated further.

RES felt that the estimated number of road journeys for the 12 month construction period could be accommodated without difficulty on the existing road network. A study had been undertaken to identify potential routes for both the standard and abnormal load vehicles and three routes were tested with a 'dry run' using a full size lorry. Through public consultation, RES concluded that one of these routes, through Southminster, was an issue of concern and was dropped leading to two variations of the delivery route – one a standard traffic route and one for abnormal loads.

The RES representatives concluded their presentation by outlining the local public consultation that had been undertaken and the local, national and wider benefits of wind energy. In particular local civil and electrical contracting work generated during construction, a local community fund to be created to distribute monies to energy efficiency schemes at the heart of the local community, that the wind farm would produce sufficient electrical energy to satisfy the average requirements of over 7,600 homes and that, annually, by displacing fossil-fuel generation, the project would prevent 15,360 tonnes of CO2 from entering the atmosphere.

(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 afterwards:

- (i) Members were unconvinced that there had been a cost effective survey for transport options for the movement of turbines etc and suggested that there should be further developed study for alternatives. It was confirmed that rail operators were consulted on transportation issues and that sails and blades being transported on trains did not fit under some of the rail bridges on the local line (**Heybridge Parish Councillor Lew Schnurr**).

- (ii) Concern was expressed that the proposed route would still be going through Althorne and the narrow roads in the area were highlighted. The dry run worked out the parameters of a route and to analyse problems. RES would work with the Highways authority to develop a traffic management plan and to upgrade roads and repair any damage if necessary (**Philip Davies, Althorne Parish Council, Janet Cloke**);
- (iii) Members were disappointed that transportation by water had been dismissed and suggested that greater consideration should have been given to sharing barges with other local operators. It was suggested that windfarms should be about using natural resources such as transportation by sea. (**Thomas Kelly, member of the public**);
- (iv) There had been an assessment of risk for moving components by water and moving them onto land over the existing sea defences. It had been considered a dangerous activity and that there were a very limited number of locations where such movement could take place. RES had concluded that the local road network was sufficient for a temporary construction project (**Philip Davies, Althorne Parish Council**);
- (v) Members suggested that aggregate could be brought into Burnham or Southminster but this would then create additional road traffic, noise and disruption through those towns;
- (vi) Members questioned why greater use could not be made of offshore facilities. The UK 2020 Renewable Energy Target required a large contribution from wind generation and this would need to be met by both offshore and onshore facilities. The Crown Estate tender process had released certain offshore sites and these were now being developed for wind farms (**County Councillor Michael Lager**);
- (vii) Wind farm installations were based upon them being available for 85-90% of the time with the turbines able to operate at wind speeds between 4m/s and 25m/s (equating to approximately 9mph to 56 mph) (**County Councillor Michael Lager**);
- (viii) Electricity generated would be sold to the national grid with the grid connection via an underground line and an on-site sub-station. The OFGEM website referred to £12/year cost to each consumer of having renewables forming part of the power supply from the national grid (**County Councillor Michael Lager**);
- (ix) RES return on investment was confidential (**County Councillor Michael Lager**);
- (x) It was suggested that the local community were against the wind farm development. RES representatives referred to the 50/50 balanced split in opinion between those in favour and against shown in exit surveys from public consultation exhibitions (**Councillor Bob Boyce**);

- (xi) The planning application for the Middlewick development (which would have utilised a railway connection without road traffic needing to go through Southminster) had been refused by Maldon District Council Members on grounds of visual intrusion and noise concerns despite Officer recommendation to grant approval. It was suggested that RES may face similar opposition (**Chelmsford Borough Councillor Hunnable**);
- (xii) Lifespan of the wind farm would be 25 years with a further year either side for construction and dismantling respectively.

The Chairman thanked the representatives from RES for their presentation and hoped that the constructive feedback received at the meeting would be further considered by RES.

7. Mid Area Forum: Health Inequalities Scrutiny

(a) Introduction

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 ('the Group'). The background to the formation of the Group, the process followed for the scrutiny, emerging issues and the final findings and recommendations were outlined.

Councillor Bob Boyce, who chaired the Group specifically thanked Jane Richards, from Mid Essex PCT, who had attended all the meetings of the Group and who provided a substantial amount of statistical evidence for the Group during its scrutiny.

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) and were not solely localised findings.

(b) Issues in Witham

Councillor Lager acknowledged the thorough work done by the Group and that they had clearly observed and addressed their terms of reference regarding health outcomes across the Mid Essex area. The Group had focussed on accessibility to health services and transport issues, and this was where some additional concerns were now being raised. In particular, concerns were expressed over the limited health services available in Witham and that most people attending local clinics still needed referral to Broomfield Hospital as the clinics were unable to treat minor injuries. In addition, the number of GPs serving the Witham area was felt to be insufficient and with inadequate facilities.

The issues identified in Witham had been discussed with Priti Patel, Member of Parliament for Witham, who was to raise these concerns with both the Chief Executive of Mid Essex Primary Care Trust and representatives from the emerging local GP consortia.

The Deputy Town Clerk for Witham Town Council added that there was increasing pressure for local residential development in Witham and suggested that there needed to be more joint working with neighbouring authorities on strategic planning matters, particularly including provision of health facilities.

(c) Broomfield Hospital

It had been long term health policy to centralise as many services as possible on the Broomfield site for both clinical and cost effective reasons but it was not to the benefit of residents living long distances away, some of whom would have preferred a more localised community hospital. Future funding streams for any new community hospital were uncertain at present. With the increasing concentration of certain services at Broomfield Hospital, it had evolved and developed into a much larger estate. Public transport only delivered passengers to the main reception site whereas many passengers, who may be infirm and not particularly mobile, would then need to visit other parts of the hospital estate located quite considerable distances from the reception area. Whilst it was reported that the hospital were already addressing the issue of inadequate wheelchairs being available upon arrival at the hospital (which had been highlighted in the scrutiny report), there also were ongoing discussions with the hospital and local MP to look at the viability of running an internal shuttle bus to operate across the site.

It was also suggested that there was an inequity of ability to pay for car parking charges at Broomfield hospital with visitors charged in advance before knowing exactly how long they would be at the site, and that the charges should be levied upon leaving calculated on how long one was actually on site.

(d) Conclusion

Thereafter, it was concluded that the Forum supported the findings and recommendations arising from the scrutiny and agreed to refer the final report to the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee for formal consideration. However, in view of additional comments made at the meeting, it was suggested and agreed that the minutes on the discussion should also be forwarded with the report to highlight the further issues raised.

8. **Community Initiatives Fund**

The Forum received a report (AFM/06/11) on the outcomes from the judging panels in Mid Essex for the sixth round of the Community Initiatives Fund (CIF) covering 2010/11. In this latest round £990,000 had been available for grants across the County (or £82,500 for each district). It was unclear at this

time whether unallocated monies in the Maldon district would be ring-fenced. The CIF would be continuing the following year and members of the Forum were asked to look out for future publicity campaigns inviting grant applications.

9. Urgent Business

The Chairman advised the Forum that the meeting had been the last one planned for the Forum, due to budgetary and financial constraints. The Chairman was involved in discussions to determine the future need for a similar localised meeting structure. On behalf of the Forum Councillor Lager thanked the Chairman in the manner in which he had chaired the Forum meetings.

There being no further business the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 3.42 pm.

Chairman
3 March 2011