

**MINUTES OF THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD ON**

3 December 2024

7.00 - 8.40 pm

PRESENT

Committee Members

Councillor Tony Edwards (Chair)
Councillor Matthew Saggars (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Tony Durcan
Councillor Michael Garnett
Councillor Mark Ingall
Councillor Andrew Johnson (as substitute for Councillor Dr. Emma Ghaffari)
Councillor Kay Morrison
Councillor Russell Perrin

Also Present

Councillor Joel Charles
Paul Austin, Chief Inspector – Essex Police
Leanne Archer, Inspector – Essex Police

Officers

Hannah Marriott, Governance Support Officer
Phil Dart, Strategic Support
Rebecca Farrant, Assistant Director - Corporate Services
Oliver Gillard, Deputy Programme Manager
Jacqui Van Mellaerts, Assistant Director - Finance
Natasha Terrell, Assistant Director - Governance, HR and Legal

40. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Dr. Emma Ghaffari. Councillor Andrew Johnson attended as a substitute for Councillor Dr. Emma Ghaffari.

41. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

42. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 15 October 2024 are agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

43. **MATTERS ARISING**

None.

44. **WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

None.

45. **WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS**

None.

46. **RESPONSES OF THE CABINET TO REPORTS OF THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

None.

47. **CLEAR, HOLD, BUILD**

The Committee received presentations from Chief Inspector Paul Austin from Essex Police and Councillor Joel Charles, Portfolio Holder for Public Protection, on Clear, Hold and Build.

Chief Inspector Paul Austin advised the Committee that Clear, Hold, Build was a National Home Office initiative. He advised that “build” would be the hardest part of the scheme and would require a whole system approach that included community support at the heart. It was noted that the Stow was chosen for the initiative as it was a small area, there had been an uptake in crime recently and the Police were aware of gang activity.

The Committee noted that the Officers Operations Group would be working on a number of actions including; additional CCTV, repair work to street furniture, cleaning activity and security doors. It was agreed that the community needed to take ownership and that the Council would work with Essex Police to encourage the creation of a Resident’s Association.

The Committee noted that the “hold and build” model could be taken to other areas in the town if needed. It was also noted that local businesses needed to be supported to help build confidence.

It was suggested that an update be brought forward to the Scrutiny Committee in a year’s time to assess how well “hold and build” were going.

48. **BUDGET MONITORING AND PERFORMANCE REPORT**

The Committee received the Performance and Finance report for August 2024.

The Committee noted that Councillor Hannah Ellis, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services and Transformation, was unfortunately unable to attend the meeting and sent her apologies.

The Committee noted that the report had already been discussed at Cabinet. The Committee suggested that the timetable for budget monitoring and performance reports needed to be looked at for future meetings.

49. **CLIMATE CHANGE TASK AND FINISH GROUP - UPDATE**

The Committee noted that there was an ongoing issue with the appointment of a Chair for the Task and Finish group. Councillor Tony Edwards advised that he would address matter outside of the meeting.

50. **PLAYHOUSE, ARTS AND CULTURAL QUARTER TASK AND FINISH GROUP - UPDATE**

Councillor Tony Durcan advised that the group met on 14 November 2024. The group looked at the business plan and received evidence from external consultants, Counter Culture. It was noted that the relevant Portfolio Holder had received more detailed information since the meeting.

The Committee noted that the group had amended the Terms of Reference and that these would come back to Committee for approval.

51. **WORK PLAN**

The Committee received a report summarising its work plan for 2024/25.

Councillor Tony Edwards advised that the meeting on 6 February 2024 may be moved to 4 February 2024. This would be discussed with officers and the Committee would be advised accordingly.

Councillor Tony Edwards also advised that there would be an additional meeting either on 25 March 2025 or 1 April 2025.

Finally, Councillor Tony Edwards advised, that to allow time for items to be discussed in sufficient depth, he has requested that eight Scrutiny meetings be scheduled for the 25/26 administrative year.

RESOLVED that the work plan be noted.

52. **REFERENCES FROM OTHER COMMITTEES**

None.

53. **MATTERS OF URGENT BUSINESS**

None.

CHAIR OF THE COMMITTEE