

MINUTES OF THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON

8 April 2025

7.00 - 8.36 pm

PRESENT

Committee Members

Councillor Matthew Saggars (Vice-Chair, in the Chair)
Councillor Tony Durcan
Councillor Michael Garnett
Councillor Dr. Emma Ghaffari
Councillor James Griggs (as substitute for Councillor Tony Edwards)
Councillor Andrew Johnson (as substitute for Councillor Russell Perrin)
Councillor Kay Morrison
Councillor Stacy Seales (as substitute Councillor Sue Livings)

Also Present

Councillor David Carter
Councillor Linda Clark
Councillor Alastair Gunn
Councillor Nicky Purse
Councillor Dan Swords

Officers

Cara Stevens, Assistant Director, Housing Operations (People)
Rory Davies, Playhouse Director
Chris Irwin, Principal Solicitor
Amanda Lucas, Graphic Designer
Bob Purton, Principal Building Surveyor
Adam Rees, Senior Governance Support Officer
Natasha Terrell, Assistant Director - HR and Organisational Development
Maisy Treacher, Trainee Assistant CILEx/Solicitor/Barrister (Development Post)
Tanusha Waters, Assistant Director - Planning and Garden Town

80. WEBCAST INTRODUCTION

The Chair said the meeting was being webcast live and would be available for repeated viewing after the meeting has ended. By continuing to attend the meeting, you were consenting to being filmed and to appearing in the webcast.

81. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Tony Edwards, Mark Ingall, Sue Livings and Russell Perrin.

Councillor James Griggs was in attendance as substitute for Councillor Tony Edwards, Councillor Andrew Johnson was in attendance as a substitute for Councillor Russell Perrin, and Councillor Stacy Seales was in attendance as a substitute for Councillor Sue Livings.

82. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

83. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 4 March 2025 are agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

84. **MATTERS ARISING**

Councillor Tony Durcan confirmed that the Playhouse, Arts and Cultural Quarter Task and Finish Group meeting scheduled for 26 March 2025 had been cancelled.

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

None.

86. **WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS**

None.

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

RESOLVED that the following responses be noted.

- a) Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy
- b) Climate Change Strategy

The Committee agreed to consider the Playhouse, Arts and Cultural Quarter Task and Finish Group – Final Report as the next item.

88. **PLAYHOUSE, ARTS AND CULTURAL QUARTER TASK AND FINISH GROUP - FINAL REPORT**

The Committee received six recommendations from the task and finish group.

A number of Committee members said they felt unable to support the recommendations without a formal report. Upon being put to the vote the recommendations were not carried.

It was noted that the Cabinet could still see the recommendations and act on them as it felt appropriate.

RESOLVED that the recommendations were noted.

89. **HOUSING DISREPAIR - PRESENTATION**

The Committee received a presentation on housing disrepair. A copy of the presentation is appended to the minutes.

The Leader said he would consider how relevant organisations (such as the Citizens Advice Bureau) could be briefed on the changes to legislation. He also said that the council would look at communication to all tenants, not just those with social tenancies.

The Committee requested that an update be brought forward in six months' time. It noted that its work plan already included Awaab's Law.

RESOLVED that:

A The presentation be noted.

B An update be brought to the Committee in six months' time.

90. **DFT E-SCOOTER TRIAL IN HARLOW**

The Committee received a Cabinet report, following the Cabinet's approval in principle for an e-scooter trial to be carried out in Harlow.

Councillor Alastair Gunn, as Portfolio Holder, said he would take any concerns raised at Cabinet and at this meeting, to the Essex County Council led working group for the trial.

The Committee asked for a timeline of the trial so it could determine if it wanted to consider aspects of the trial, such as safety of the trial further under its future working plan. It was noted that Councillor Gunn stated that ward Councillor comments would be welcomed on any areas affected within their respective wards.

RESOLVED that the report was noted.

91. **WORK PLAN**

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

A suggestion was made to consider community gardens as a future work plan item.

It was agreed that the outcomes of the previous allotments review would be circulated, along with previous year's work plan to assist in determining future work plan items. This followed the submission of a review form on allotments to this meeting.

The Chair asked the Committee to submit review submission forms for future consideration.

RESOLVED that the work plan be noted.

92. **REFERENCES FROM OTHER COMMITTEES**

None.

93. **MATTERS OF URGENT BUSINESS**

None.

CHAIR OF THE COMMITTEE