

**MINUTES**  
of the  
**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

held on 18 July 2023 at 7pm

Present:

Councillor J. Jeapes (Chair)  
Councillor A. Thompson (Vice-Chair)

Councillors, V. Canning, H. Clark, A. Davidson, C. Davidson, S. Davis, S. Dobson, K. Franks, I. Grundy, and S. Young

Also in attendance:

Councillors I. Fuller, and R. Lee

**1. Apologies for Absence and Substitutions**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs P. Davey, J. Deakin, M. Steel, and M. Taylor. Cllr C. Davidson substituted for Cllr J. Deakin; Cllr I. Grundy substituted for Cllr M. Steel, and; Cllr J. Sosin substituted for P. Davey.

**2. Chairs Announcements**

The Chair made no announcements in the meeting.

**3. Minutes**

The Chair announced certain changes to be made regarding the minutes. It was mentioned that an action sheet was to be included on the front detailing actions completed from the last minutes and to recap on outstanding business. This was AGREED by Members of the Committee.

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 February 2023 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**4. Declaration of Interests**

All Members were reminded to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary interests or other registerable interests where appropriate in any items of business on the meeting's agenda. Any declarations are recorded in the relevant minute below.

**5. Public Question Time**

No questions were asked or statements made.

## 6. Decisions Called-In

The Committee noted that no decisions taken by the Cabinet had been called in.

## 7. Annual Report from the Chelmsford Policy Board

Councillor Fuller, as the previous Chair of the Chelmsford Policy Board 2022/23, introduced the annual report of the Chelmsford Policy Board to members. The annual report contained the function and purpose of the Chelmsford Policy Board as well as a summary of the issues and developments covered in 2022/23. The Board was advised that masterplans took the majority of the time as well as public questions in meetings, an example was the Great Leighs Masterplan appearing in two meetings. Significant developments in the future were also raised such as the various solar farms and the Norwich to Tilbury pylons.

Regarding a query about the proposal for the Norwich to Tilbury pylons by the National Grid, Cllr Fuller confirmed that the Chelmsford Policy Board would be making further representations.

RESOLVED that;

1. The annual report from the Chelmsford Policy Board be noted.

*(7.04pm to 7.11pm)*

## 8. Report from Cultural Strategy Task and Finish Group

Councillor Lee, a previous member of the Cultural Strategy Task & Finish Group, presented the report. The Vice-Chair declared an interest on this item but it was noted that the item did not directly relate to his Disclosable Pecuniary Interest.

It was reported a development of a new Cultural Strategy which was led by Chelmsford Culture was underway and had created an exciting vision for Chelmsford. Chelmsford City Council had been a key stakeholder in the development, delivery, and evaluation, a new Task & Finish group on Cultural Strategy had been formed in 2022. One of the key points for the Cultural Strategy Task & Finish Group was not to reinvent the wheel and to ensure trust in experts. Members were informed of the Terms of Reference of the Task & Finish Group and that the strategy would encompass the whole of Chelmsford as much as possible. The strategy was noted to focus on the city centre and the Task & Finish Group ensured to raise the priorities to also include other wards. Members were also noted of the other stakeholders such as Anglia Ruskin University and Dominvs and they provide financial input in the strategy.

Members were informed that whilst excellent progress had been made, it was also noted that this was just the beginning of the realisation of the cultural ambition and journey in Chelmsford. It was noted that a detailed action plan and roadmap for the City Council was still to be developed. It was therefore recommended to Members that the Task & Finish Group should continue. Members noted the importance and benefits of culture especially during COVID as the public had taken to walking or

using the waterways. Culture should be seen as a reason to live and Members were asked to agree to the recommendations.

After the report, members discussed and raised various issues on the Cultural Strategy Task & Finish Group. It was advised that;

- Even though the objectives of the attached Terms of Reference was completed, further work needed to be completed including a districtwide consultation.
- It was suggested that one of the objectives of the continuation of the Task & Finish Group was to embed the cultural strategy.
- The involvement of councillors had proved to be invaluable in ensuring public engagement and ensuring that voices of marginalised communities could be heard.
- It was suggested that officers should schedule meetings outside Overview and Scrutiny to finalise a new Terms of Reference.
- Villages and towns should be included in the strategy.
- A further report on Cultural Strategy would be presented to the next Overview & Scrutiny meeting to clarify the context as well as clarifying the next steps for the Task & Finish Group.

RESOLVED that;

1. The report be noted;
2. Officers to schedule further meetings regarding a new Terms of Reference and continuation of the Cultural Strategy Task & Finish Group.
3. A presentation from Chelmsford City Cultural Services Manager and Culture Chelmsford regarding the context of Cultural Strategy to be presented at the next Overview & Scrutiny meeting.

*(7.11pm to 7.24pm)*

## 9. Report of Decisions Taken Under Delegation to the Chief Executive

The Committee received a report summarising the decisions taken under delegation to the Chief Executive. Cllr C. Davidson and Cllr S. Dobson both declared their interest as they were consulted as previous Cabinet Member for Fairer Chelmsford and as Mayor respectively in the 2022/23. Declarations were noted in the meeting.

RESOLVED that;

1. The report to be noted.

*(7.24pm to 7.26pm)*

## 10. Annual Report on the Overview & Scrutiny Function 2022/23

The Committee received the annual report on the Overview & Scrutiny Function 2022/23. Cllr C. Davidson declared his interest as the previous Cabinet Member for Fairer Chelmsford and was scrutinised by the previous Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

Members were reminded that as per Code 6 of the Local Corporate Governance the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had to produce an annual report. The annual report would then need to be taken in consideration by the Full Council. The report covered the following matters: statutory provisions, terms of reference, membership of the last committee, publication of information, work undertaken in 2022/23, future work for 2023/24, "call-in" of Cabinet decisions, and training and development. Members were asked to recommend to Council for approval of the annual report for subsequent publication.

In response to a query regarding why no introduction was in the annual report, it was noted that this was because the previous Chair of the Committee did not stand in the elections. The current Chair would be able to do the introduction in the future annual reports.

RESOLVED that;

1. The annual report to be noted;
2. The annual report to be taken to Full Council for approval for its subsequent publication.

*(7.26pm to 7.33pm)*

## 11. Work Programme

The Committee received a work programme for the year 2023/24. It was suggested that Members can make suggestions on the work programme within the remit of Overview and Scrutiny. Officers would be able to present the reports and the subjects could also be something interesting to Members that could be further explored. The suggestions would then be forwarded to the Chair, Vice Chair, and officers to be considered in the work programme. Any ideas should be notified before the next meeting so that they would be considered in the work programme.

Members then discussed possible reports that could be included in the work programme. Planning enforcement was a possible report to be explored by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee. Youth engagement was also suggested and it was noted that this had been a subject of the Task and Finish Group before. The Director for Public Places advised the Committee that the Essex Police Deputy Chief Constable was keen to attend a meeting to present the Essex Violence and Vulnerability Unit at the February 2024 meeting in conjunction with updates from Safer Chelmsford and Essex Police. Another suggestion from the Committee was for Essex County Traveller Unit to be invited to present at a meeting.

RESOLVED that;

1. Officers consider the suggestions put forward by Members and amend the work programme as necessary.

*(7.33pm to 7.40pm)*

## 12. Urgent Business

There were no matters of urgent business.

The Chair advised members of the change of date for the next meeting which would likely be in October 2023. Specific dates would be explored to ensure that the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council would be available to present their Cabinet portfolios.

The meeting closed at 7.43pm.