



**MINUTES of
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
23 MARCH 2022**

PRESENT

Chairman	Councillor V J Bell
Councillors	M G Bassenger and C P Morley
In attendance	Councillor W Stamp

569. CHAIRMAN'S NOTICES

The Chairman welcomed everyone present and went through some general housekeeping arrangements for the meeting.

570. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Miss A M Beale, M W Helm, B B Heubner, C Mayes and N J Skeens.

571. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 20 January 2022 be approved and confirmed.

572. DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST

Councillor W Stamp advised that although she was not a member of the Committee she would be speaking and therefore disclosed a non-pecuniary interest as a Member of Essex County Council in relation to any item of business relating to the County Council.

573. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No requests had been received.

574. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Committee considered the report of the Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) Working Group providing the basis of the annual report to the Council on the activities of the Committee over the past year.

Members were reminded that in accordance with its Terms of Reference this Committee was required to report to the Council annually and in May 2021 it was

agreed that this should be received at the Statutory Annual meeting of the Council. The report provided detail of the scrutiny items and requests dealt with by the Committee over the last year and provided an update on each.

The Chairman referred to a request from Councillor Miss S White regarding the self-build register. She advised that Councillor Miss White had followed up on this item and it therefore needed to be added back for review. In response to a question, the Programmes, Performance and Governance Manager advised that it should be taken back to the next meeting of the Working Group for a more thorough review and then come back to Committee, in line with agree processes. This was noted.

In response to a question regarding an update on enforcement staff, the Programmes, Performance and Governance Manager advised that she would obtain an update and circulate this to Members outside of the meeting.

The Chairman then put the recommendation set out in the report which was duly agreed.

RESOLVED that the Committee endorses the proposed annual report for 2021 / 22 for submission to the Council.

575. REVIEW OF RECENT SCRUTINY REQUESTS BY MEMBERS

The Committee considered the report of the Overview and Scrutiny Working Group (the Working Group) providing an update following a recent meeting of the Working Group and recommending a course of action on a further Member scrutiny item request. The scrutiny request form was attached as Appendix A to the report, along with Officer preliminary feedback and further discussion that came out of the initial Working Group considerations.

The scrutiny request had been submitted by Councillor W Stamp and related to the Council's Five-Year Housing Land Supply (5YHLS). It was noted that following consideration by the Working Group there were a number of suggestions which it felt required further investigation. The Working Group recommended that this item of scrutiny be added to the workplan according to course of action set out in paragraph 3.2 of the report.

With the permission of the Chairman, Councillor Stamp provided further detail in respect of her scrutiny request, highlighting a number of areas where she felt further investigation and information in relation to the 5YHLS was required. She also read from a letter sent by Braintree District Council to the Secretary of State which urged clarity on the issues of the 5YHLS. When referring to the Council's strategic sites she expressed concern over the speed that planning applications for such sites were being brought forward by developers. These views were supported by the Committee and the amount of public correspondence in relation to planning was commented on.

Following clarification, it was agreed that in addition to the actions detailed in section 3.2 of the report a further action in respect of details of strategic site planning applications coming forward and the predicted time for reaching the housing plan, be added. The Chairman then put the recommendation as set out in the report with the proposed amendment, this was duly seconded and agreed.

In response to a request for details of all the land previously brought forward for consideration as a strategic site and whether it was rejected or not, the Programmes, Performance and Governance Manager advised that this would be best raised as a separate scrutiny item, as a specific request for detail.

RESOLVED that the scrutiny request (Appendix A to the report) be noted and the following course of action be approved:

the following should be explored in greater detail -

- i) A clearer understanding of what has led to the present position, and why this issue was not identified and reported earlier;
- ii) What is proposed to resolve the present difficulty, and,
- iii) What impact this has on the Local Development Plan and the impending Review.
- iv) Details of the strategic site planning applications coming forward and the predicted time for reaching the housing plan.

There being no other items of business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 7.50 pm.

V J BELL
CHAIRMAN