



**MINUTES of
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
19 JUNE 2025**

PRESENT

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| Chairperson | Councillor S J N Morgan |
| Vice-Chairperson | Councillor P L Spenceley |
| Councillors | J R Burrell-Cook, A Fittock, L J Haywood, A M Lay, C P Morley and E L Stephens |

113. CHAIRPERSON'S NOTICES

The Chairperson welcomed everyone to the meeting and went through some general housekeeping arrangements for the meeting.

114. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors V J Bell and N J Swindle.

115. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 6 February 2025 be approved and confirmed.

116. DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST

There were none.

117. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Chairperson advised that in accordance with the Council's Public Speaking Protocol one request to speak had been received from Mr Henry Bass, a local resident, who wished to address the Committee in relation to Agenda Item 8 – Member Scrutiny Item Request – Councillor S J N Morgan. He explained that this item of business related to a Planning Appeal relating to Land at Church Road, Wickham Bishops. At this point the Chairperson advised that he would be changing the agenda order, with Agenda Item 8 being considered following this item of business.

Mr Bass then addressed the Committee, providing background detail regarding the Planning application relating to the Planning Appeal. He highlighted his concerns and reasons why he felt the Committee should scrutinise the item.

118. MEMBER SCRUTINY ITEM REQUEST - COUNCILLOR S J N MORGAN - PLANNING APPEAL INVOLVING LAND AT CHURCH ROAD, WICKHAM BISHOPS

The Committee noted that Councillor S J N Morgan had submitted a scrutiny request on the above matter and that in accordance with the agreed procedure this would be referred to the Committee's Working Group for an initial assessment and report back to the Committee. Councillor Morgan advised that Mr Bass had outlined the main points of his scrutiny request, which centred around how arrangements for providing a response to the Planning Inspectorate's request for a view in the light of modification to the National Planning Policy Framework had resulted in a change to the Planning Department's handling of this appeal. He advised that the matter would be considered by the Working Group the following week.

119. SCRUTINY OF EXTERNAL / OUTSIDE AGENCIES - ANGLIAN WATER

The Chairperson introduced this item of business and referred to Grant Tuffs, Regional Engagement Manager from the Anglian Water (AW) public affairs team. Mr Tuffs advised that the role of him and his team was engage with local authorities, politicians and non-government organisations across the AW region. He was supported by a number of his team who then proceeded to introduce themselves:

- Tiffany Howie – Network Manager for Colchester and Ipswich
- Tessa Saunders – Spatial Planning Manager, covering the Essex region and liaises with Local Planning Authorities on local plans.
- Carly Symes – Maldon Operations Manager
- George Skinner - Environmental Process Scientist for the Essex county.

Mr Tuffs then gave a detailed presentation (attached at **APPENDIX 1** to these Minutes) which provided information regarding AW, its purpose and challenges across the region, including:

- The new 'Just Bin It' campaign;
- How AW would be supporting Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) in sharing future growth aspirations in Local Plans;
- Water recycling centres and capacity;
- Growth within the Maldon District and responding to this;
- How AW responds to planning applications;
- Storm overflows, planning improvements to them and recent spill performance;
- Proposed investment in 2025 – 2030.

Mr Tuffs advised that questions received from Members in advance of the meeting would be responded to in full and sent out following this meeting.

A lengthy discussion ensued and in response to questions raised, the following information was provided:

- AW had worked with Maldon District Council (MDC) to provide information to assist with the Local Plan, this work included assessment of the call for sites, reviewing sites in terms of water recycling and network capacity. Latchingdon was the only 'red' area at the moment, and it was confirmed that other areas such as North Fambridge that fed into Latchingdon would also be affected.

- Members were advised of the current regulations that AW followed in respect of treating water and how there was very minimal chemical treatment. Prior to anything being sent to the land it went through a complex process to remove any calorific value which was burnt as a natural gas and put back into the national grid.
- Reference was made to the Water Recycling Centre at South Woodham Ferrers (SWF), the growth scheme proposed and copper concentrates and in response AW advised that if it was agreed that a growth scheme at SWF was to progress then any copper issues would be addressed. This could potentially impact on future growth that the District may consider and there would be greater certainty on this once the Local Plan had been approved, however AW were working with the Council in respect of this.
- Surface water was a matter for the Local Planning Authority as Lead Local Flood Authority and it was its responsibility to seek suitable Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and the best surface water systems in place from developers. Although AW was unable to comment on surface water it was encouraging all such connections to be sustainable.
- AW gave examples of the work it did with Multi Agency Groups and how working with Lead Local Flood Authorities it had invested some money into ditch clearance in other catchment areas.
- In response to a question regarding using Ultraviolet (UV) filtration, it was explained that storm overflows were not treated however different treatment measures were used throughout the water recycling centre depending on what the environment required. AW were looking into UV filtration or MBR (membrane bioreactor) as a disinfectant measure as both produced a reduction in bacteria, however it was noted that UV was still in the design stage at the present time.
- East Anglia was one of the lowest per capita consumers in the country mainly because of the investment AW had made in leakage reduction and water infrastructure over the years.
- In respect of projects, AW was planning two new reservoirs in Fenland and South Lincolnshire (expected to be in supply around 2036), and a new strategic pipeline from North Lincolnshire to Essex (Great Hawkesley) was due to be finished by 2027. AW was looking into desalination along with other water companies and investing in others. AW had a 25 year rolling plan which it had to keep updated as it was required to produce this for its regulators and this included some desalination in Norfolk and North Lincolnshire. A scheme was proposed for Colchester around advanced water recycling, whereby rather than being discharged into a river the water would be diverted, put into a treatment system and turned into drinking water.
- AW were continuing to look at technologies, innovations and big infrastructures to deliver more water, however it was noted encouraging customers to use less water was a key part of its work.
- AW had just published a shared standard for water efficiency and local plans. This had been developed with Natural England, the Environment Agency and other local water companies. AW had held webinars with Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) and Local Resources East. The standards asked LPAs to have tighter water efficiency standards in their local plans and provide evidence to achieve higher than the optional standard of 110 litres per person per day. In future local plan consultations AW would be encouraging use of these new standards.

- Specific questions were raised regarding Tollesbury and Members were advised that AW had checked the anticipated flows at the Tollesbury site that day and confirmed there was capacity. Permits to discharge were issued by the Environment Agency and any questions regarding this should be directed to them. A small spill reduction scheme was also being delivered in Tollesbury.
- Detailed, technical information regarding treatment in relation to e-coli and fecal coliforms, the effect disinfection had on them and AW's current practice in relation to them was provided to Members.
- AW offered apologies regarding a sewage spill into a Site of Special Scientific Interest in Tollesbury. Members were advised that it had been identified that the pipe was damaged, and AW would be visiting the site the following Monday to carry out a survey and from Wednesday of the same week a date for the repair would be known. It was reported that in this instance the spill was down to human error and measures had been put in place to avoid such occurrences in the future. A clean up of the drainage ditch had been carried out and AW worked with the Environment Agency until ammonia levels were satisfactory. A full review of the alarms coming out of the site along with all site equipment had also been carried out.
- Comments were raised regarding a development site with a newly built sewage pumping system. Members were advised that AW had a Development Service Team which liaised with developers regarding infrastructure needed on site. Developers had to build to a certain specification, following completion a 12 month period to ensure a pumping station was operating correctly followed and only then would AW adopt a pumping station. However, if not up to specification or not operating as expected it would not be adopted as it posed a risk for AW. AW closely worked with developers to ensure they were delivering the right infrastructure.

Members were advised that they were welcome to visit an AW site and view the biological treatment process. Mr Tufts advised that AW would take all comments on board and raise any relevant matters with their customers team, particularly to ensure customers and Ward Members were being made aware of future investments.

The Chairperson thanked the AW Team for their attendance and the information provided.

120. SCRUTINY OF EXTERNAL / OUTSIDE AGENCIES - ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL HIGHWAYS

The Chairperson advised that this item of business had been postponed and he hoped it would be brought back to a future meeting of the Committee.

121. APPOINTMENT OF REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES AND WORKING GROUPS

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Executive to appoint to Outside Bodies and Working Groups of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the ensuing municipal year.

The Chairperson called for nominations to the Outside Bodies and Working Group, detailed in the report and following proposals the following was agreed.

RESOLVED

- (i) That the Committee appoints representatives to the following Outside Bodies, for the ensuing Municipal Year;

| Outside Body | 2025 / 26 Representative(s) |
|--|--|
| Essex County Council (ECC) Health Overview Policy and Scrutiny Committee (District Representative) | Councillor P L Spenceley |
| Project and Improvement Management Framework | Councillors A Fittock and E L Stephens |

- (ii) That all members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be appointed to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Working Group, for the ensuing Municipal Year.

There being no other items of business the Chairperson closed the meeting at 8.56 pm.

S J N MORGAN
CHAIRPERSON