

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP OVERVIEW AND
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE,
HELD ON MONDAY, 21ST MARCH, 2022 AT 7.30 PM
IN THE COMMITTEE ROOM - TOWN HALL, STATION ROAD, CLACTON-ON-SEA,
CO15 1SE**

Present:	Councillors Chittock (Chairman), Baker, Chapman BEM, Clifton, Codling, Davidson and Steady
Also Present:	Councillor Ivan Henderson (Leader of the Labour Group) and Councillor Lynda McWilliams (Portfolio Holder for Partnerships)
In Attendance:	Anastasia Simpson (Assistant Director (Partnerships)), Keith Simmons (Head of Democratic Services and Elections), Hattie Dawson-Dragisic (Performance and Business Support Officer) and Matt Cattermole (Communications Assistant)

[Also in Attendance: Councillor Miles, Anita Patel-Lingam (Statutory Education Compliance Manager, Essex County Council), Michael O'Brien (Head of Specialist Education Services, Essex County Council) [these persons attended via Microsoft Teams]]

45. VICE-CHAIRMAN

Upon being moved by Councillor Clifton and seconded by Councillor Davidson, it was **RESOLVED** that Councillor Steady be elected Vice-Chairman of the Committee for the remainder of this current Municipal Year.

46. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies for absence were submitted by Councillors Miles (substituted by Councillor Baker), Nash (no substitution) and Skeels (no substitution).

47. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on Monday 31 January 2022 be approved as a correct record.

48. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest by Councillors in relation to any item on the agenda for this meeting.

49. QUESTIONS ON NOTICE PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 38

On this occasion no Councillor had submitted notice of a question.

50. A.1 SCRUTINY OF PROPOSED DECISIONS

The Committee was advised of three proposed decisions by Cabinet in the coming period. One of these concerned Freeport East Business Case which would be within the scope of the Committee's enquiry into Freeport East scheduled for the provisional

meeting on 9 May 2022. The Committee **NOTED** the contents of the report and decided not to amend the work programme based on this report.

51. A.2 RECOMMENDATIONS MONITORING REPORT

The Committee was advised of the responses from Cabinet in respect of its recommendations from 27 September 2021 (Minute 12), 10 January 2022 (Minute 33 and 34). The Committee **NOTED** the contents of the report and decided that the issue of Housing and Homelessness should be provisionally added as an item for enquiry in 2022/23.

52. A.3 REVIEW OF THE WORK PROGRAMME

Further to Minutes 33 and 34 above, the committee was advised of its forthcoming enquiry into Freeport and the need to commence a process to identify the enquiries for the Work Programme 2022/23. In respect of undertaking enquiries in 2022/23 the Committee was made aware that proposed dates for this Committee to meet in 2022/23 would be considered at Annual Council and the emphasis would be on enquiries task and finish groups. This was recommended after the CFGS being undertaken in scrutiny review in 2021 workshop.

The Committee was also reminded that it had decided to have two Joint Scrutiny Panel with the Resources and Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Chairmen of this Committee and the Resources and Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee have met recently to agree a process to take these forward.

It was **RESOLVED TO NOTE** the work programme report and that the process for developing the work programme for 2022/23 would commence in the next few weeks.

53. A.4 CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION

The Chairman reminded the Committee that Council had requested an enquiry be undertaken into the safeguarding and education position concerning those of school age attending mainstream schools. In undertaking the enquiry the council had identified those who were to be invited as being representatives of Essex County Council, Local Academy Trust representatives, representatives of Alternative Education Providers and organisations mentoring or support for those not in mainstream education.

A report was submitted to the meeting identified that representatives of Essex County Council had been invited to attend remotely and present to the meeting. The report identified some information concerning those missing from education and also information on those children who were missing from home.

From Essex County Council, Anita Patel-Lingam, Statutory Education Compliance Manager and Michael O'Brien, Head of Specialist Education Services, joined the meeting using MS Teams and presented slides that included detail on the subject of the enquiry.

The Members were advised of the potential impacts, suggested by research, of children missing school:

- Slower progress in learning
- Worse Prospects for future employment
- Poorer mental health and emotional well-being
- Restricted social and emotional development and
- Increased vulnerability to safeguarding issues and criminal exploitation

The Committee was also informed which children that were more at risk of missing education:

- Children at risk of harm/neglect
- Children of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families
- Families of Armed Forces
- Missing Children/runaways
- Children and young people supervised by the Youth Justice System
- Children who cease to attend a school

The Essex County Council officers advised Members of figures within Essex and specifically in Tendring of children who were Electively Home Educated (EHE) and that a rise was being seen nationally. They were shown figures of the following:

- Children Missing from Education (CME) broke down by quadrants
- EHE broke down by quadrants
- A breakdown of school aged CME by district
- A breakdown of school aged EHE by district

Members were informed that currently parents who remove their child from school were not required to tell their Upper Tier Local Authority, they were not required to provide the school a reason for de-registering their child from a school, they did not have to have their EHE plans documented at the time of de-registering their child and they were not required to let an inspector come into their home to observe their EHE system.

The Committee was advised that in the admissions process for schools, the Education Compliance Team of the County Council offered support for parents to navigate the appeals process to reduce the perception of alienation from the process by parents. Where there were schools with statistically unusually high numbers of children being de-registered, the Education Compliance Team would look to work with the school to address any issues leading to those de-registrations.

The meeting was informed that schools across Essex were signed up to support Young carers who otherwise could lose out on mainstream education. It was also the case that a Fair Access Protocol was in place for secondary school age children to facilitate them returning to mainstream schooling if a home schooling experience was not successful following a child being de-registered. With the consent of the Chairman, Councillors Ivan Henderson and Delyth Miles participated in the meeting due to their interest in the subject of enquiry.

During the Committee's discussion the idea of recommending Cabinet to send a letter to the Department for Education to support Essex County Council's lobbying for increased powers for Upper Tier Local Authorities in respect of EHE. The advantage of circulating an email to all Tendring District Council Councillors to provide them with information on

the issue of those missing from education (drafted by Essex County Council) and with details of repeating routes was also discussed.

The Committee thanked the guest speakers from Essex County Council for their work.

It was **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND CABINET** to

(1) Send a letter of support to the Secretary of State for Education for the introduction of the following powers/measure to safeguard the position of those de-registering from mainstream schools and opting for Elective Home Education (EHE);

(a) The details of the proposed Elective Home Education should be documented and submitted to the Upper Tier Local Authority in advance of the child being de-registered.

(b) That a backstop right of access for the Upper Tier Local Authority be provided to the home and to the child where Elective Home Education is provided with a view to confirming the position.

(c) That Academies be urged to provide access on their sites in a locality for those being home schooled to undertake examinations close to home.

(d) That parents of children being home schooled be required to provide regular updates to the Upper Tier Local Authority on the progress of the children being home schooled.

(2) That an email be sent to all Tendring District Councillors, prepared by Essex County Council, to explain the position on those missing from mainstream education and the routes for reporting concerns about those children (which, if recommendation (1) above is also approved) could be accompanied by the letter to the Secretary of State as referred to in that recommendation.

The meeting was declared closed at 9.11 pm

Chairman