

Report to Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Date of meeting: 28 February 2017



Subject: Scrutiny of External Organisations – Local Highway Services and Infrastructure

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Recommendations/Decisions Required:

That the Committee consider arrangements for the external scrutiny of local highway services and infrastructure.

1. (Director of Governance) The Committee has previously requested that Essex County Council be invited to attend a future meeting, to respond to the concerns of members in respect of aspects of local highway services and infrastructure.
2. Although it was hoped that appropriate members and officers of the County Council would be able to attend this meeting, this has unfortunately not proved to be possible.
3. The Policy and Strategy Advisor to Councillor E. Johnson (Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport) has advised that if the Committee has specific questions that it wishes to raise with Councillor Johnson or relevant officers, the following alternative options could be considered:
 - if members wish to submit detailed questions, the County Council will ensure the provision of a comprehensive written response to such matters;
 - a delegation from the Committee could attend County Hall on a Tuesday during February or March 2017 (from 12.00 midday to 1.00pm) to raise appropriate matters with the Cabinet Member;
 - in the medium term, as a process of education and engagement with districts and parishes, Essex Highways are about to start the roll-out of a programme of engagement to discuss issues, where members have an opportunity to understand the service and ask questions (it is suggested that Epping Forest could be one of the earlier districts to receive a visit in the schedule).
4. Essex County Council has been advised that the Council will not be in a position to respond to these proposed alternative approaches to its external scrutiny, until they have been considered by the Committee.
5. The scrutiny of a number of overarching themes and specific issues of local highway services were identified by the Committee at its meeting on 19 July 2016.
6. The Committee is requested to consider how it wishes to take this external scrutiny matter forward.

Resource Implications:

The recommendations of this report seek to enable scrutiny activity to meet the work programme requirements of the Committee effectively.

Legal and Governance Implications:

The Council's constitution sets out rules for the management of its overview and scrutiny responsibilities. Although external organisations are not generally required by legislation to attend before the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, it is hoped that most would be willing to engage constructively with the Council's scrutiny activity when invited to do so.

Safer, Cleaner, Greener Implications:

There are no implications arising from the recommendations of this report in respect of the Council's commitment to the Climate Local Agreement, the corporate Safer, Cleaner, Greener initiative, or any crime and disorder issues within the district.

Consultation Undertaken:

This report seeks the identification of a way forward in respect of external scrutiny activity by the Committee. No further consultation is considered necessary.

Background Papers:

None

Impact Assessments:***Risk Management***

The Council's constitution sets out rules for the management of its overview and scrutiny responsibilities.

Equality:

There are no equality implications arising from the recommendations of this report.