

# Overview and Scrutiny

Annual Report

2023 - 24



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# Introduction

By Scrutiny Board Chairman, Councillor Ray Gooding



I am delighted to be introducing the third Annual Scrutiny Report since becoming Scrutiny Board Chairman in May 2021.

From Birmingham to Nottingham to Thurrock, the last 12 months has been an incredibly challenging one for local government. There are many lessons to be learnt from what has happened at these councils, but high amongst them is the importance of scrutiny.

Effective scrutiny is central to effective governance. Councils need robust and independent scrutiny functions to tackle the myriad of challenges they face. Where this is absent, we have seen the results, and it is notable that the BVI report on Thurrock mentioned scrutiny no less than 158 times.

This is why I take my role – both as Chairman of the People and Families Policy and Scrutiny Committee (PAF) and Chairman of the Scrutiny Board – so seriously, and why I am pleased to report on some of the work we have undertaken over the last 12 months to strengthen scrutiny at Essex.

Member Training has continued to be a key focus with sessions organised on the lessons to be learnt from failing councils, questioning skills, and developing the scrutiny function as well as the individual training and support offered to all scrutiny members. On the latter point, I was delighted to attend the LGA Leadership Essentials: Effective Scrutiny residential in Warwick – this invaluable training has now been offered to all Scrutiny Chairman and Vice-Chairman.

Alongside training, the Scrutiny Board has focused on raising the profile and understanding of scrutiny both inside and outside the Council, coordinating effective joint working between committees, and deciding how best to scrutinise key issues such as the budget and transformation programme.

You can read about some of these developments in this report as well as the specific activity undertaken by the four scrutiny committees. This will give you a flavour of the breadth and depth of the work done on issues including adult social care, recycling, and local health services.

If you have any questions or feedback on the content of this report, I would be delighted to hear from you. I commend this report to Council.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ray Gooding', written in a cursive style.

**Councillor Ray Gooding, Scrutiny Board Chairman**

# What is Scrutiny?

Scrutiny is a core feature of the Council's decision-making process.

At Essex County Council the governance model used to make decisions is that of the Leader and Cabinet, also referred to as the Executive model. Introduced by the Local Government Act (2000), this model is the most used within local government and sees decision-making powers afforded to a small group of the Council's 75 Councillors. These are the Leader and his nine Cabinet colleagues.

The Act requires that Councils using the Executive model also operate a scrutiny function to act as a 'check and balance' to the significant power held by the Cabinet. As such, only Councillors who are not members of the Cabinet can work within the scrutiny function. Their role is to consider the decisions taken, or that are proposed to be taken by the Cabinet and provide constructive advice and comment for Cabinet's consideration. This is characterised as taking the position of a 'critical friend' and the most effective outcomes are achieved when there is mutual trust and understanding between scrutiny and the Cabinet.

Although the existence of the function is set out in legislation, how it operates and how it is structured is largely left to individual councils. This provides for a high degree of flexibility and the ability to consider different topics and issues in the most appropriate way. In Essex, the Scrutiny Board coordinates the work of the four standing scrutiny committees by considering the best use of resources, particularly where topics to be considered may fall within the remit of more than one committee (find out more about the Scrutiny Board on page 5 of this report). The committees are:

- [Corporate Policy and Scrutiny Committee](#)
- [Health Overview and Policy and Scrutiny Committee](#)
- [Place Services and Economic Growth Policy and Scrutiny Committee](#)
- [People and Families Policy and Scrutiny Committee](#)

Meetings of the scrutiny committees are held in public and are livestreamed to [YouTube](#). As well as these meetings, the committees are also able to commission smaller working groups, often called Task and Finish groups, to consider issues that require more in-depth attention. These groups produce reports, which are publicly available, and are submitted to the relevant Cabinet Member for their consideration and response.

There can sometimes be the perception that Scrutiny is somewhat toothless when compared to its Executive cousin. However, where there is a culture of trust and respect between the Scrutiny function and the Executive, the Scrutiny function can build and deploy a great deal of influence, ultimately benefiting both the Council and the residents of Essex.

# Scrutiny Board Q&A

## **What is the Scrutiny Board?**

The Scrutiny Board is a members' group tasked with overseeing and developing the scrutiny function at Essex County Council. It also considers member development specifically pertaining to scrutiny.

## **Who sits on the Board?**

It is made up of the four scrutiny committee chairmen and the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee chairman, with meeting invitations also extended to committee vice-chairmen.

## **Why is it important?**

It is an opportunity for councillors to discuss key issues arising in scrutiny and put in place plans to support scrutiny committee members with their work.

## **Do other councils have similar boards?**

Yes, many other local authorities will have similar arrangements in place either on a formal or informal basis.

## **What have been the key priorities and achievements of the Board over the last 12 months?**

The Board has been focused on effective joint working between the committees. This ensures that issues which cross committee remits are dealt with in the best way; combining resources and the experience and expertise of members whilst avoiding duplication.

Another key focus has been on raising the profile of scrutiny and a regular attendee at meetings has been the Council's Head of Communications. You can read more about communications activity on page 16.

## **What about member training and development?**

The Board is focused on ensuring that training and development opportunities are put in place for scrutiny members. You can read more about training on page 15.

## **What are the plans for the future?**

The work of the Board is constantly evolving to respond to the latest issues facing scrutiny. The board is currently organising a Scrutiny Enquiry Day focused on the Whole Council Transformation programme, after considering a range of best practice approaches, including central government select committees.

## **How can I get involved?**

Whilst meetings are not held in public, issues can be raised with the respective chairmen and vice-chairmen and officers who can then bring the matter to the Board's attention.

# Work of the Scrutiny Committees

Over the following pages you will find an introduction to the work undertaken by the Scrutiny function over the course of the year. The four Scrutiny committee Chairmen have selected some key pieces of work completed by their individual committees also highlighting, where relevant, work that has taken place jointly across two committees where it had been identified that this would make the best use of time and resources.

Alongside regular committee work, more in-depth work will often be undertaken. This is usually through a Task and Finish Group style review which allows a more focused and detailed look at a particular topic than would be possible in a standard committee setting. HOPSC, for example, is currently undertaking such a review with the 'Health Service Section 106 Working Group' due to present its final report in May.

HOPSC have also established a Joint Health Overview Scrutiny Committee (JHOSC) with Southend City Council, specifically in relation to the results of the consultation on community hospital services in mid and south Essex, where cross border services are provided.

This year the PAF Committee has taken an innovative approach within the committee setting with a continuing focus on ASC performance issues. This in-depth work is reviewed on pages 13-14.

## 1. Chairmen's Highlights from each Committee:

- Corporate Policy and Scrutiny Committee (CPSC)
- Health Policy and Scrutiny Committee (HOPSC)
- People and Families Policy and Scrutiny Committee (PAFSC)
- Place Services and Economic Growth Policy and Scrutiny Committee (PSEG)

## 2. Example of In-depth Scrutiny Activity

- Adult Social Care Performance (PAF)

# Health Overview Policy and Scrutiny Committee

This committee reviews and scrutinises matters relating to the planning, provision, and operation of health services in the County of Essex. This includes primary, secondary, tertiary care, and public health, and may involve reviewing the work of commissioners (such as local clinical commissioning groups), providers of health services (such as hospitals) and other organisations in the health sector.

The committee's Chairman and Vice Chairmen are Councillors Jeff Henry, Dave Harris and Clive Souter. Full details of the committee's work and membership can be found on the Council's [website](#).



Essex has one of the most complex health environments in the country. It has been almost two years since the creation of the Integrated Care Systems (ICS), where the three different strategic health footprints do not align with the County Council's borders, and HOPSC has continued to engage with each one to ensure it has oversight of these strategic programmes.

HOPSC's focus over the past 12 months has covered several different services, including a review of the NHS workforce, adult and children's mental health services, and the East of England

Ambulance Service, to name but a few.

HOPSC has also been consulted on several service variations in the last year, including the Community Musculoskeletal and Pain Service and the transfer of community paediatric therapies service in North-East Essex. The committee was also one of the first stakeholders to be briefed on the Essex Obesity Programme, which gave members the opportunity to provide their comments ahead of the programme being released publicly. Having the opportunity to scrutinise at an early stage is something I feel is of key importance.

The committee has also set up a formal Joint Health Overview Scrutiny Committee (JHOSC) with Southend City Council, specifically in relation to the Mid and South Essex ICB (Integrated Care Board) community-based health services consultation. Formal arrangements have been agreed and the first meetings are expected to take place in May and June this year.

HOPSC members have also undertaken several site visits, including Colchester Hospital (twice) to visit the new Essex and Suffolk Orthopedic Centre currently being built, and Southend Hospital where a presentation on the Anchor Programme was given.

Finally, the committee have been pleased to see the number of improvements that have been made by the Mid and South Essex NHS Foundation Trust and the East of England Ambulance Service Trust against their respective CQC reports and looks forward to further progress being made over the coming months.

**Councillor Jeff Henry – Chairman**

# Place Services and Economic Growth Policy and Scrutiny Committee

This committee exercises the scrutiny function on matters relating to environment, economic growth and infrastructure, sustainability, highways and transportation, libraries, planning, communities, waste and recycling and trading standards.

The committee's Chairman and Vice Chairmen are Councillors Alan Goggin, Dave Blackwell and Jane Fleming. Full details of the committee's work and membership can be found on the Council's [website](#).



I am delighted to present this review from the PSEG Committee. Once again, we have scrutinised a range of topics focused on many of the frontline services that matter most to our residents including local buses, community safety and the members' perennial favourite of potholes and road maintenance!

I would like to begin by saying thanks to my two vice-chairmen (Cllrs Jane Fleming and Dave Blackwell) and all members of the Committee. Scrutiny is a challenging role which requires real buy-in from councillors, and I appreciate the effort that members have made over the last 12 months.

I also want to thank all those that have appeared before the Committee – sometimes, as members, we forget that attending a scrutiny meeting can be a nerve-racking experience even for seasoned cabinet members and officers. I have tried to ensure that we get the balance right at PSEG; challenging and holding to account decision-makers while still creating a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere for all.

Scrutiny achieves most when it is acting as a critical friend with its work aligned to the aims of the wider Council. This approach has been demonstrated by PSEG this year. On the introduction of a booking system at our recycling centres, I was pleased that PSEG was able to have its say before and after the trial, was able to input meaningfully into the final decision taken by Cabinet and will review the implementation of the scheme moving forward. This is how scrutiny should be working – engaged at every stage of the policy development process.

I am equally pleased that the Committee has been able to get its collective teeth into some weighty strategies such as the Council's major transport policy, Local Transport Plan (LTP) 4, and the new Waste Strategy for Essex.

As we look forward to the next 12 months, the work of the Committee will cover a wide variety of issues including climate change, the emerging Local Nature Recovery Strategy, and – following suggestions from residents – sports provision and emergency planning.

As ever, if members would like to get in touch on any PSEG issues, then please contact me on [cllr.alan.goggin@essex.gov.uk](mailto:cllr.alan.goggin@essex.gov.uk).

**Councillor Alan Goggin – Chairman**



# Corporate Policy and Scrutiny Committee

This committee reviews the overall strategic direction, policies and priorities of the Cabinet and Council including the budget strategy, financial resources, equality and diversity issues, procurement, and the delivery of Everyone's Essex.

The Committee's Chairman and Vice Chairmen are Councillors Chris Pond, Michael Mackrory and Mike Steptoe. Full details of the committee's work and membership can be found on the Council's [website](#).



The longer-term financial impact of, and response to, Covid and the subsequent pressures on the budget process, continues to be a challenge. However, it is now compounded by significant increasing care complexity and demand in Children's Services, Home to School Transport and the Adult Social Care and Health budgets. In addition, unprecedented (in recent years) levels of inflation and interest rates and continued uncertainty on government funding have provided yet further challenges.

Therefore, it continues to be important that the Committee scrutinises finances on a regular basis to grasp what can be a dynamic fast changing position. Quarterly financial updates incorporate the latest Outturn. These are compared to forecasts and the Council Budget and illustrate both overspends and underspends. The CPSC's role is to extract more detail around priorities and the choices being made and to ensure that there is robust future planning. Our financial scrutiny sometimes means seeking further information on specific entries and/or challenging how a particular commitment or project is to be financed. Members will often query drivers and causes of underspends whether that be in relation to local highways panels, or children's services or anything and everything in-between.

Accountability and transparency of the financial decision-making process is an essential element of robust local government scrutiny. The CPSC has been keen to identify the lessons learnt from struggling councils who have been subject to statutory intervention. Some common problems can be identified from those councils which include inadequate financial management and internal controls and the failure of governance and oversight, scrutiny and 'checks and balances'. This is a warning to the whole sector that financial health can quickly change, and we must keep vigilant and conduct robust scrutiny of decision-makers. Whilst the size of Essex may give us some resilience it could also magnify risks, and some large county authorities have been vulnerable, as we heard in our investigations into other authorities that have had difficulties.

One of the common financial problems identified in struggling councils has been the erosion of reserves. The CPSC will be revisiting provisioning and reserves in detail later in the year to see how they are impacted during further in-year pressures. It will be important to see the cumulative effect of drawdowns during the year.

Lack of oversight over commercial investments has also been a common issue in struggling councils. The CPSC had one session last year on our ECC Council-owned trading companies (and other organisations where the Council has an interest or involvement) and we will be arranging a further one this year to challenge that there is sufficient oversight in place and that the investments are meeting the objectives originally set. At our last review we noted that governance

reviews had been initiated for Essex Cares Ltd and Essex Housing LLP and ECC's Shareholder Board so will expect to see the outcomes of these.

We have looked at the procurement service and noted that increasingly more work was being done on market management and development. Members were pleased to hear that more work was planned to improve communications with SMEs and improve their access to tender opportunities and ultimately drive-up SME spend. Large suppliers are also being encouraged to engage with SME as part of their supply chain.

The CPSC continues to take the lead in oversight of the Everyone's Essex performance framework and scrutinises the progress made and holds the Executive to account. The Chairmen and Vice Chairmen from the other scrutiny committees join the Committee for those sessions and this wider representation has facilitated a broader range of questioning.

During the year the CPSC has discussed the processes around the Local Community Fund (replaced Local Levelling up Fund). Members have been keen to extract learnings from the operation of the previous years' Local Levelling Up Fund scheme. It was pleasing to hear that there was now a rolling approval process for the (new) current scheme and a lead member for the scheme.

Recent survey results for the Member Enquiries Service have been encouraging with 97% of the ECC members who had responded being satisfied with the service. Average turnaround for responses to enquiries was 5.5 days depending on complexity/type of enquiry. A procurement process for a new Member Enquiries system may facilitate some system enhancements.

During the year it had looked possible that Essex might be granted further devolved powers and we had discussions on what powers might be forthcoming, this is now on hold until after the General Election.

Finally, I would like to thank the members of my committee for their commitment, and their collaborative and non-partisan approach to scrutiny which is vitally important in building trust in the political independence of the scrutiny function here at the County Council. I am sure the Committee will seek further to challenge decision-makers going forward on how they continue to respond to economic, environmental, financial, and organisational challenges. I want to thank the committee's staff especially; we are well prepared by them for our task.

**Councillor Chris Pond – Chairman**

# People and Families Policy and Scrutiny Committee

This committee exercises the scrutiny function on matters relating to children and young people, families, education, adult social care, special needs, and safeguarding.

The committee's Chairman and Vice Chairmen are Councillors Ray Gooding, Carlo Guglielmi and Peter May. Full details of the committee's work and membership can be found on the Council's [website](#).



The PAF Committee has a wide remit covering so many of the services that were at the brunt of the pandemic, such as education, services for children and adult social care. Our focus since the pandemic has been to look at new or revised approaches and priorities being developed often to reshape services to respond to increasing demand, changing expectations and new and more complex needs.

It has been a very busy year for PAF. Recent work has included two detailed sessions looking at the demand pressures, capacity, and sufficiency in relation to the local SEND (special educational needs and disabilities) system. Members were keen to identify the extent to which any of the matters raised during the sessions could be addressed locally as opposed to those needing a national lead. The extent of issues raised has led the PAF to decide to establish a Task and Finish Group to look at some aspects in more detail. We know the pressures being faced and will want to work collaboratively with the Cabinet Member and officers during to see if anything can be suggested to help and to also consider if further Government lobbying is necessary.

The PAF meets the Independent Chairmen and the statutory partners of both the Children's and Adults Safeguarding Boards to challenge their strategic priorities and the effectiveness of partnership arrangements. The Boards are not operational bodies and so we have also sought more operational focused updates as well reflecting on learning from serious case reviews. There has been a significant increase on previous years in adult referrals and there is still a significant backlog for Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards assessments. There have been delays in finalising scrutiny arrangements with the Children's Board so this will be a priority for us early in this municipal year.

A referral from Full Council prompted two sessions on the Essex Youth Service. The Committee sought assurances on the uniformity and equity of youth service provision across the county. There had also been a move towards building more community capacity to support youth services. We have also sought further clarification on the arrangements for replacement of Youth Support Groups, continuing and expanding the funded youth work in hospital A&Es, and reaching hard to reach individuals. We would also like to encourage further moves to building closer links between Councillors and young people.

The pandemic and subsequent national transitional arrangements for examinations and measuring educational attainment had meant that, until recently, the PAF had not looked at this in any depth. A significant concern is that attendance levels have still not gone back to

pre-pandemic levels. As with many other social issues, the pandemic has established new 'norms' and attendance levels and increasing home education may be another example. The PAF is keen to see increased regulatory powers for the latter and will support any further lobbying of Government on this. Members have identified those missing education and/or being excluded and encouraging further inclusivity in schools as follow-up issues, together with home education. Key Stage 4 attainment remains a concern and members have sought to discover if there are any unique local factors at play here or a broader national symptom that this cohort may have been particularly impacted by the pandemic lockdowns.

Rising levels of Domestic Abuse have been identified as an unfortunate consequence of the pandemic and the local system has had to respond to the additional demands. The PAF has been updated on improvements made in terms of support for victims and survivors of domestic abuse and discussed the proposed re-commissioning plans for beyond 2025; these include some joint commissioning with Southend and Thurrock, a single point of contact for both perpetrators and victims and further emphasis on early intervention and prevention. The PAF has stressed that the new single point of contact needs to be monitored to ensure that the approach does not discourage victims from using it.

Finally, I would like to thank the members for their continued commitment and interest in the complex and diverse work of the Committee and encourage them to continue their collaborative and non-partisan approach to scrutiny to help further build trust in the PAF's work and outcomes.

**Councillor Ray Gooding – Chairman**

# In-depth Scrutiny Activity

## Review of Adult Social Care

The People and Families Policy and Scrutiny Committee (PAF) has reviewed some of the key preparations being undertaken by the Adult Social Care Directorate (ASC) in preparation for a future Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspection.

*Whilst conducted in full committee, the process of continuing the scrutiny over four consecutive meetings, each focusing on a different theme, had some similarities to and uses some of the approaches of a traditional Task and Finish Group.*

Five sessions were held by the PAF to review metrics and improvement actions for Safeguarding, Unpaid Carers, People Waiting and Operational service efficiency, Lived experience & coproduction, and Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI).

*The PAF invited insight from Healthwatch Essex on some issues, spoke to a Healthwatch Ambassador about her carer duties and included ECC staff representatives in the session on EDI.*

There were clear messages throughout about demographic and demand pressures and challenges around staff recruitment and retention all of which will have impact on being able to maintain focus and deliver on the priority areas.

*The session with the carer was illuminating, highlighting the real day to day challenges being faced and that carers should not feel alone and isolated, the need for respite care and better staff training and awareness of support needs.*

No cohorts should be disadvantaged in accessing services and support as it would impact on health and wellbeing outcomes. In particular, the PAF has requested updates on the work underway to minimise the differential between the life expectancy of somebody with learning disabilities and other parts of the population.

*The PAF had a final discussion on its conclusions and a report was prepared and sent to the Cabinet Member and Lead Officer who have been asked to give a formal response.*

PAF asked officers to investigate further the applicability of the recent introduction of fast-track mental health training modules at Essex University for safeguarding training.

The PAF concluded that further assurance was needed that:

- the reasons for the high number of safeguarding concerns being raised in Essex were fully understood and being sufficiently managed;

- the backlog of safeguarding concerns being triaged was being reduced;
- ASC was on track to reach more unpaid carers;
- Options were being considered for providing respite breaks to carers
- ASC should detail what EDI focus it gives to the residents it serves, as well as its staff, regardless of their protected characteristics.
- Further evidence that co-production was engrained in policy making and all activities and services (and, indeed to what extent that is feasible).
- Numbers waiting needs assessments were reducing and distinguishing initial assessments from re-assessments.

With the support of the Scrutiny Board, the PAF will ensure that all these issues remain at the core of the Committee's work programme during the next year and continue scrutiny's efforts to make a difference to the lives of our residents.

# Training and Development

It has been a busy 12 months for scrutiny training and development. The Scrutiny Board has helped put in place a programme of activity as it seeks to support the development of committee members and the wider scrutiny function.

## **Thurrock**

In January, ECC officers led a session on the Thurrock BVI (Best Value Inspection) report and the lessons for scrutiny at Essex. Scrutiny was mentioned 158 times in the inspector's report, and the session highlighted important takeaways including the need for strong scrutiny recommendations and effective committee pre-meetings.

## **LGiU (Local Government Information Unit)**

Trainers from the LGiU (Local Government Information Unit) led sessions in February and March on 'Effective Scrutiny' and 'Questioning Skills'.

The Effective Scrutiny session asked members to explore what makes good scrutiny, reflect on current practice, and consider how to develop and improve the function and their own contribution.

The Questioning Skills session looked at poor practice and good practice questions and how to avoid some of the common pitfalls such as leading questions, hypothetical questions, and the intriguingly titled 'Terry Wogan' questions (long, rambling questions that go on and on and on...)

## **Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen Training**

All scrutiny chairman and vice-chairman have been encouraged to attend the LGA's Effective Scrutiny: Leadership Essentials course. This is a 2-day programme (either virtual or residential) and covers:

- Leading and managing a scrutiny review
- Ensuring impact of scrutiny recommendations
- Increasing participation by members and the public
- Chairing scrutiny meetings in all their forms

The Scrutiny Board Chairman, Councillor Ray Gooding, attended the residential training in Warwick and reported that he found it hugely beneficial to his role.

Alongside these formal sessions, the Scrutiny Board continues to disseminate best practice including on the use Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOEs) and coherent questioning strategies, and the Board strongly encourages individual committees to organise briefing sessions to deepen the knowledge of members serving on scrutiny.

Looking ahead, feedback on this year's training will be considered and further group training sessions will be identified. Scrutiny committee members are also encouraged to consider what support and training they need, with the Scrutiny Board and officers within Democratic Services providing help and advice as requested.

# Communications

A key focus for the Scrutiny Board over the last 12 months has been to raise the profile of the function (inside and outside the Council) and encourage public engagement. Activities have included:

## Scrutiny Bulletin

This publication is sent to all members and has been revamped over the last year. The quarterly publication now features the latest scrutiny news, profiles of key figures in scrutiny, training guides, and information on what is happening nationally in the sector. The most recent edition can be found [here](#).

## Your Essex

The February edition featured the following item on scrutiny:

### ***Councillors want to hear from you!***

*Scrutiny committees review and examine issues and services in Essex. Your councillors want to know what's important to you. What do you think they should look at next? You can submit your idea, or ask for more information about our scrutiny committees by emailing [democratic.services@essex.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@essex.gov.uk)*

As expected, this received a lively response from residents with ideas submitted on topics such as sports provision and emergency planning; ideas that are now being taken forward by the PSEG committee.

## Press Coverage

Scrutiny continues to see its work feature in the local media with recent stories covered on topics such as supporting carers and highways. Recent coverage has included:

[Essex County Council hears importance of support for carers | Echo \(echo-news.co.uk\)](#)

[Booking system for Essex recycling centres debated - Essex Live](#)

[Essex SEND performance in the spotlight - BBC](#)

The Scrutiny Board works proactively with the Communications Team on this, and at committee meeting members are now encouraged to think about topics that might be suitable for communications activity such as press releases or social media posts.



# How the Public can get Involved

An increasing focus is to get residents involved in the work of scrutiny. There are several ways this can currently happen:

## **Attending a meeting**

Members of the public are welcome to attend any public meeting of a scrutiny committee, which are listed on the [online meeting calendar](#).

All scrutiny committees normally allow 15 minutes for public questions at the beginning of each meeting. If you wish to ask a question on one of the main reports on the agenda, let the Chairman or clerk know by 1pm the day before a meeting is scheduled. Public meetings are usually streamed live on YouTube, with recordings available afterwards, via this link [ECC Democracy - YouTube](#).

## **Giving Evidence**

Scrutiny asks organisations or individuals to give evidence at meetings for the purpose of their investigations. If you will be attending scrutiny to give information to a committee and have any questions or concerns, please get in touch at [democratic.services@essex.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@essex.gov.uk)

## **Suggest a Topic**

If you would like to feed into the scrutiny process, or suggest a topic for scrutiny's attention, you can contact the Scrutiny Team: [democratic.services@essex.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@essex.gov.uk).

Alternatively, you can contact any of the Councillors who are on the relevant committee or task and finish group and ask them to consider representing you or calling you to give evidence. You can find out which local Councillors are on which committee by checking the [website](#).