

Minutes of the meeting of the Full Council, held in the Council Chamber at County Hall, Chelmsford on Tuesday, 17 October 2023.

Present: Chairman: Cllr Jillian Reeves
Vice-Chairman: Cllr Ray Gooding

Cllr Susan Barker	Cllr Jeff Henry	Cllr Ross Playle
Cllr Kevin Bentley	Cllr Paul Honeywood	Cllr Pat Reid
Cllr Dave Blackwell	Cllr Michael Hoy	Cllr Stephen Robinson
Cllr Lynette Bowers-Flint	Cllr Eddie Johnson	Cllr Peter Schwier
Cllr Malcom Buckley	Cllr John Jowers	Cllr Lee Scordis
Cllr Graham Butland	Cllr Sam Kane	Cllr Lee Scott
Cllr Simon Crow	Cllr David King	Cllr Laureen Shaw
Cllr Jude Deakin	Cllr Dan Land	Cllr Andrew Sheldon
Cllr Mark Durham	Cllr Sue Lissimore	Cllr Chris Siddall
Cllr Beverley Egan	Cllr Derrick Louis	Cllr Mick Skeels
Cllr Jane Fleming	Cllr June Lumley	Cllr Kerry Smith
Cllr Paul Gadd	Cllr Luke Mackenzie	Cllr Clive Souter
Cllr Mike Garnett	Cllr Mike Mackrory	Cllr John Spence
Cllr Alan Goggin	Cllr Bob Massey	Cllr Wendy Stamp
Cllr Marie Goldman	Cllr Peter May	Cllr Mike Steel
Cllr Ian Grundy	Cllr Aidan McGurran	Cllr Mark Stephenson
Cllr Carlo Guglielmi	Cllr Jaymey McIvor	Cllr Mike Steptoe
Cllr Michael Hardware	Cllr Louise McKinlay	Cllr Paul Thorogood
Cllr Dave Harris	Cllr Anthony McQuiggan	Cllr Marshall Vance
Cllr Anthony Hedley	Cllr Dr Richard Moore	Cllr Chris Whitbread
Cllr Ivan Henderson	Cllr James Newport	Cllr Holly Whitbread
	Cllr Mark Platt	

Not present but attended the meeting online (these members did not vote on any items):

Cllr Tony Ball Cllr Tom Cunningham

Chairman's Welcome and Introduction

The Chairman informed those present that the meeting would be broadcast live over the internet by way of the ECC Democracy YouTube Channel.

The opening remarks, together with the broadcast of the entire meeting may be found on the [ECC Democracy YouTube Channel](#).

Prayers

The meeting was preceded by prayers led by Reverend Zena Smith, Minister of the Benfleet Methodist Church.

Councillor Jillian Reeves formally opened the meeting.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Cllr Barry Aspinell, Cllr Lewis Barber, Cllr Mark Cory, Cllr Martin Foley, Cllr Chris Pond, Cllr Lesley Wagland and Cllr Andrew Wiles.

2. Declarations of Interest

Members were reminded by the Chairman of the need to declare any interests and to do so immediately or at the start of the consideration of any relevant item of business.

Cllr Ivan Henderson declared an other registrable interest under minute 8 Motions - Motion 3 The Positive Impact of Growing the Essex Economy, due to being a Director of Freeport East Limited.

3. Confirmation of the minutes of the meeting of Council held on 11 July 2023

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 11 July 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4. Public Speakers

There were none.

5. Chairman's Announcements and Communications

Deaths

Former County Councillor Lillian Greenfield

The Chairman informed members of the death of former County Councillor Lillian Greenfield.

Lillian was first elected to Essex County Council in 1969 serving the residents of Billericay North until 1997. Lillian served on many committees

during her time at Essex including Health, Education, Highways and Social Services.

The Chairman paid tribute to Lillian and at the Chairman's invitation, members stood in silent remembrance.

Ofsted Inspection of Children's Services

The Chairman informed members that Essex's Children's Services had been rated Outstanding following a recent Ofsted inspection. Inspectors found high standards were in place across the county. They highlighted the innovative, high-quality help and support available. They also praised employees and how children's needs were at the heart of decision making. Leaders were praised for being "outward looking and forward thinking". At the invitation of the Chairman Cllr Beverley Egan, Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Early Years, spoke about the Ofsted inspection.

Awards

The Chairman announced that seven Essex Country Parks had secured Green Flag status for their high standards. The Green Flag awards recognised well managed parks throughout the country. Parks received them for being well maintained, having excellent visitor facilities and meeting the needs of communities. At the invitation of the Chairman Cllr Mark Durham, Cabinet Member for The Arts, Heritage and Culture spoke on this award.

The Chairman informed members that at the CIPR (Chartered Institute of Public Relations) Pride awards (Anglia, Thames & Chiltern), the PR campaign for the Essex Year of Reading won Best Public Sector Campaign (GOLD), Best Arts Culture and Sport Campaign (GOLD) and Best Education Campaign (SILVER). At the invitation of the Chairman, Cllr Tony Ball, Cabinet Member for Education Excellence, Life Long Learning and Employability spoke on these awards.

The Chairman announced that Active Essex's, Essex Pedal Power, had been highly commended at the National Transport Awards. At the invitation of the Chairman, Cllr Laureen Shaw, Deputy to the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Sustainable Transport spoke on this award in the absence of the Cabinet Member.

Honours

The Chairman informed members that 24 Essex residents had received an honour in the King's Birthday Honours for 2023. The residents received them for a variety of services to the community, voluntary services, policing, education, young people, heritage and defence. The Chairman offered congratulations to all the recipients.

6. Petitions

The Chairman invited Cllr Jude Deakin to present a petition relating to road speed in Galleywood Road. Cllr Laureen Shaw, Deputy to the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Sustainable Transport, responded to receive the petition in the absence of the Cabinet Member.

The Chairman then invited Cllr Dave Harris to present a petition relating to 20mph and yellow lines outside of a school. Cllr Laureen Shaw, Deputy to the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Sustainable Transport, responded to receive the petition in the absence of the Cabinet Member.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Cllr Dave Harris presented a second petition relating to road resurfacing. Cllr Laureen Shaw, Deputy to the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Sustainable Transport, responded to receive the petition in the absence of the Cabinet Member.

7. Executive Statements

At the invitation of the Chairman, Cllr Kevin Bentley, Leader of the Council gave a statement on Devolution and Cabinet Changes, Cllr Tony Ball, Cabinet Member for Education Excellence, Life Long Learning and Employability gave a statement on RAAC and The Chancellor of Essex, gave the Autumn Statement.

The Executive Statement is published on the ECC website and the broadcast of the meeting may be found on the [ECC Democracy YouTube Channel](#).

8. Motions

1. Waste and Recycling

Moved by Cllr Kerry Smith and seconded by Cllr Paul Gadd.

‘Council notes, along with its predecessor some thirty years ago that incineration of waste can be deleterious to human health and that it, plus widespread employment of "energy from waste" installations, can also be bad for the environment, and should be avoided.

Council should seek to work with second tier councils radically to improve recycling rates through making the process as intuitive and easy as possible for residents.

Scrutiny should urgently investigate means of removing methane emissions from landfill sites.

Council calls on the Leader to make representations to the Government to end over-packaging of products and to introduce a bottle deposit scheme.

Council declares that any planning application made relating to waste will be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.'

Having been put to the meeting the motion was **lost**.

The following Member requested that their vote be recorded in the minutes:

Cllr Michael Hoy – voted for the motion

2. Tackling the Concrete Crisis in Schools and Hospitals

Moved by Cllr Mike Mackrory and seconded by Cllr James Newport.

'Council notes that:

- i) At the end of August 2023, just days before the new school term was due to begin, the Government announced that more than 150 schools in England, including 60 schools in Essex, needed to address urgently the presence of unstable concrete known as RAAC in their buildings.
- ii) Affected schools, colleges and nurseries were told that they cannot use affected buildings unless safety measures are in place.
- iii) That dealing with the Concrete Crisis will put local authorities and other public sector bodies – already facing severe budgetary pressures – under even more pressure.
- iv) Since a school roof collapsed in 2018 the Government have failed to heed the warnings of organisations such as the Local Government Association that this is a serious problem which needed addressing.
- v) Successive years of Government underfunding in schools has resulted in 24,000 school buildings beyond their estimated initial design life and 700,000 pupils learning in schools which require major rebuilding or refurbishment.

Council believes that:

- vi) It is a national scandal that some children were being taught in crumbling classrooms and some patients are being treated in hospitals with roofs at risk of collapse.
- vii) This Government's commitment to eradicate RAAC from the NHS estate by 2035 is not soon enough.

Council further notes with concern that:

- viii) It has been reported that when Prime Minister Rishi Sunak was Chancellor of the Exchequer, he rejected requests from Department of Education officials for an extra £900 million a year for school funding in the 2021 Spending Review.

- ix) In the same spending review, he slashed taxes for the banks, choosing big finance over children's safety. The cost of the NHS repairs backlog is more than £10bn, up by a tenth on the previous year.

Council therefore calls on the Government to:

1. Provide urgent clarity over where RAAC has been found in schools, hospitals and other public buildings like courts, police stations, leisure centres, libraries, and public housing in Essex.
2. Urgently set up a national risk register of all public buildings.
3. Publish all advice presented to Rishi Sunak when he was Chancellor of the Exchequer on RAAC in schools and hospitals. Set out additional funding from the Treasury to replace RAAC in affected public buildings without having to sacrifice other essential repairs, and to mitigate the disruption caused to pupils, patients, and other public service users.
4. Launch a Ministerial Taskforce to draw up a road map to ensure replacement work is carried out urgently.'

It was moved by Cllr Mark Durham and seconded by Cllr Andrew Sheldon that the motion be amended to read:

'This Council notes that.

- i) At the end of August 2023, just days before the new school term was due to begin, the Department for Education announced that 60 schools in Essex needed to address urgently the presence of RAAC in their buildings.
- ii) ECC is committed to returning our children and young people to full time face to face learning as soon as possible and has committed its own resources to assist schools to achieve this.
- iii) This is in addition to schools who have used their own resources.

This Council expresses its thanks and gratitude to:

- Officers across all departments of ECC for their excellent response and hard work to the RAAC issue.
- Teachers and their staff, for their response and hard work in what was and is a stressful time for them, children and parents.
- Essex MPs, other Local Authorities, partners and the business community during this time.

This Council welcomes the Government's commitment to fund all "reasonable costs" incurred related to RAAC and calls on it to deliver on this commitment without undue delay.'

The amendment moved by Cllr Mark Durham and seconded by Cllr Andrew Sheldon was put to the meeting and was **carried** and became the substantive motion.

Having been put to the meeting the motion was **carried**.

3. The Positive Impact of Growing the Essex Economy

Moved by Cllr Alan Goggin and seconded by Cllr Carlo Guglielmi

‘There is a strong evidence base that shows employment is good for physical and mental health and well-being.

This Council therefore welcomes:

- The news that the UK’s economy has grown faster than both France and Germany since the pre-covid period and this is also reflected in positive economic indicators for Essex.
- The growth in Gross Value Added (GVA) of the Essex economy by £2.3billion since 2010 and acknowledges the potential for further opportunity via our targeted Levelling Up programme and a Greater Essex devolution deal.

Building on this positive success to date, the Council is committed to targeting support for economic growth, recognising that there will always be more that can be done to deliver the tools and opportunities for people to move into well-paid employment, which is the best pathway to a good life. This Council therefore calls upon the Government to:

- Be bold and forward looking in discussions regarding the levers for sustainable economic growth across Essex.
- Work with ECC to develop and promote the recently announced, Advanced British Standard, which will bring together A-levels and T-levels.’

Having been put to the meeting the motion was **carried**.

9. Council Issues

At the invitation of the Chairman, Cllr Kevin Bentley presented the report. The Chairman put the recommendations to the meeting as two separate votes. The dates of forthcoming Council meetings and review of the Constitution were put to the vote first. It having been moved by Cllr Kevin Bentley and seconded by Cllr Louise McKinlay it was

Resolved:

1. Dates of forthcoming Council meetings

- (1) That the dates of Council meetings scheduled for Tuesday 12 December 2023 and Tuesday 13 February 2024 remain unchanged.
- (2) That future Council meetings be scheduled on Tuesday 14 May 2024, Tuesday 9 July 2024, Tuesday 15 October 2024, Tuesday 10 December 2024 and Thursday 13 February 2025.

2. Review of the Constitution

Adopt the revised constitution in the form circulated to members and placed on the Council website with the exception of part 25 (protocol for member and officer relations) which remains unchanged and that the revised constitution takes effect on Wednesday 18 October 2023.

The Chairman then put the recommendations relating to a change to the Pay Policy Statement to the vote. It having been moved by Cllr Kevin Bentley and seconded by Cllr Louise McKinlay it was

Resolved:

That the Pay Policy Statement for 2023/24 be amended with immediate effect as follows:

Replace:

'The pay of Chief Officers does not currently include a performance related element. Any change to this would result in a change to the pay policy statement'

with:

'The pay of Chief Officers does not routinely include a performance related element, but, exceptionally, one off payments may be authorised by the Senior Management Employment Committee, every such payment being the subject of individual authorisation by the Committee.'

10. Cabinet Issues

At the invitation of the Chairman, Cllr Kevin Bentley presented the report and it having been moved by Cllr Kevin Bentley and seconded by Cllr Louise McKinlay it was

Resolved:

To receive the list of urgent decisions taken and the minutes of the Cabinet meetings held on 18 July and 12 September 2023.

11. Oral Questions of the Leader, Cabinet Member, chairman of a committee or the representative of the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel.

The oral questions and answers as part of the broadcast of the meeting may be found on the [ECC Democracy YouTube Channel](#).

The questions asked were:

Question asked by:	Question asked to:	Subject of the question
Cllr Dave Harris	Cabinet Member for The Arts, Heritage and Culture	Vacancies in the youth service
Cllr Dave Harris	Cabinet Member for Education Excellence, Life Long Learning and Employability	Risks to school crossing patrollers
Cllr Malcolm Buckley	Leader of the Council	Delays to external audit of local authorities
Cllr Mike Mackrory	Cabinet Member for Planning for a Growing Economy	Changes to rules on Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects.
Cllr Mike Mackrory	Deputy to the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Sustainable Transport	20mph zones.
Cllr Pat Reid	Deputy to the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Sustainable Transport	Delays to streetlight repairs.
Cllr Aidan McGurran	Leader of the Council	Investment to highways
Cllr Ivan Henderson	Deputy to the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Sustainable Transport	Delays to streetlight repairs in Harwich
Cllr Ivan Henderson	Deputy to the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Sustainable Transport	Footways obstructed by vegetation
Cllr Paul Thorogood	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Levelling up and the Economy	Local grant funds
Cllr Paul Thorogood	Climate Czar and Cabinet Member for the Environment, Waste Reduction and Recycling.	Disposal of waste to incineration.
Cllr Lee Scordis	Deputy to the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Sustainable Transport	Cutting back vegetation on public rights of way.
Cllr Wendy Stamp	Deputy to the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Sustainable Transport	Cleaning of highway drains in Maldon

Question asked by:	Question asked to:	Subject of the question
Cllr Stephen Robinson	Deputy to the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Sustainable Transport	Overgrown hedges

12. Closure of Meeting

The meeting closed at 1:32pm.

A recording of the meeting is available as [a video on YouTube](#).

Chairman