
Essex County Council

9 July 2019

Order Paper

Agenda Item 9 Motions

When the agenda was published Motion 3 'Social Mobility and Social Justice' was to be moved by Councillor McKinlay and seconded by Councillor Spence. This has now been amended. The motion is to be moved by Councillor McKinlay and seconded by Councillor Whitbread.

Agenda Item 12 Written Questions asked by Members of the Council

1. By Councillor Beavis of the Cabinet Member for Economic Development

'I am impressed and value the Member Buddy Support Officer to advise County Councillors on Highway updates in their Divisions. Would the Cabinet Member consider a similar approach to give advice to County Councillors on development, community infrastructure, Garden Communities and Section 106 in their Divisions?'

2. By Councillor Beavis of the Leader of the Council

'How many Local Highways Panels in Essex have taken up the offer of additional match-funding offered by the Leader of Essex County Council?

Which Panels are they?

How is the Leader continuing to work with those Panels that did not take up the offer? Small schemes improve local communities and in some cases save lives.'

3. By Councillor Sargeant of the Cabinet Member for Customer, Communities, Culture and Corporate

'Holland Library cost only £27,933 to run in 2018/19. It issued 16,526 items and has 18,686 visitors – plus the thousands not picked up by the immature counting system. The budget for 2019/20 is £36,085. It has been identified for closure in the Library Strategy.

If the Council is trying to save money why has it wasted so much by installing WeWatt kiosks for charging electrical gadgets in Witham, Chelmsford and Harlow

libraries?

A recent Freedom of Information Request has revealed that the alternatives to WeWatt, and others' experience of WeWatt considered during the procurement by the Customer Services Director, under the scheme of financial delegation, to support the former Community Hubs Project are unknown. I am told that 'The Council does not hold this information'. Also unknown are usage figures for these kiosks or any method of assessment of their value for money. What is known is that the three kiosks cost £26,206.56.

Does the Cabinet Member share my extreme disappointment at the apparent disregard for the public purse, lack of financial management and record keeping of usage for these WeWatt kiosks and does the Cabinet Member also share my concern that money is being spent in this way in times of limited financial resources and much valued community services are threatened with closure?

4. By Councillor Pond of the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure

'In respect of each of the three park and ride operations in the county, would the Cabinet Member please state:

- The number of passenger journeys on each service for every year since 2011-12;
- The annual amount for each year since 2011-12 by which expenditure exceeded income;
- The cumulative loss funded over that period by the taxpayers of Loughton on the basis of its population as a proportion of that of Essex,

and in relation to Essex National Concessionary Travel Scheme (ENCTS) travel on these services:

- The basis of calculation of the figure of the £447,000 cost of the ENCTS travel stated in the recent consultation;
- as to whether this represents the extra income that would be obtained if every ENCTS journey paid the full adult fare or the ENCTS reimbursement paid over by ECC,

and in respect of the Colchester P&R operation, what were the results of the 6-month survey promised of the extended hours at the end of February 2019, in the format of number of journeys made for each day?'

5. By Councillor Henderson of the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills.

‘What was the total number of Council subsidised bus services supporting routes in 2010 and how many is it to date
(a) across the whole county and
(b) within the Tendring District.’

6. By Councillor Henderson of the Cabinet Member for Children and Families.

‘What was the total number of those employed on full time contracts working within the social services department designated to support families and children in 2010 and what is that number now?’

7. By Councillor Scordis of the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure

‘In response to my last question about cycling, why is no cycling provision being provided in large capital works schemes, including Ipswich Road and St Botolph’s, despite you claiming we are a pro-cycling council?’

8. By Councillor Scordis of the Cabinet Member for Customer, Communities, Culture and Corporate

‘Considering that the County Council has highlighted isolation and mental health wellbeing in the Essex Health and Wellbeing Strategy, how is closing libraries across Essex in line with this strategy?’

9. By Councillor Davies of the Leader of the Council

‘Free TV licences for over 75s are going to be scrapped by 2020 apart from where one person in the household receives pension credit benefit. Would the Leader consider a campaign with partners, local authorities and DWP to alert residents of their entitlement to pension credit? This could involve using ECC buildings including offices and libraries with a poster/general information promotion.’

10. By Councillor Abbott of the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure

‘In early June, rural roadside verges in Rivenhall Parish were cut, which I believe was on behalf of ECC. Areas of wildflowers were cut down including red campion and poppies. Whilst some of this cutting was at junctions, where it is accepted sight lines are important, most was not.

Can Cabinet Members please outline what the current policy is for rural verge cutting (and the use of chemicals around signs) and why it takes place in some areas so early in the season.

Does ECC support the work of Plantlife, which since 2013 has been urging authorities that a "cut less, cut later" approach could significantly improve the biodiversity of verges and potentially save money too.

As part of the devolution agenda, would ECC consider involving all parish councils in a scheme in which they could nominate verges to be managed as priority biodiversity verges which would include both a "cut less, cut later" approach and specific projects to seed verges with appropriate native wildflowers.’

11. By Councillor Abbott of the Cabinet Member for Customer, Communities, Culture and Corporate

‘The libraries consultation states that Tier 4 libraries are not required for a legally compliant service and that without being run by volunteers they will be closed. In written and verbal communications with me, the Cabinet Member has reconfirmed this in respect of the Tier 4 village libraries such as at Silver End in the division I represent.

Yet ECC repeatedly states that "no decisions have yet been made" on the future of libraries. If "no decisions" have yet been made, what other options exist for Tier 4 village libraries where there is no volunteer group to run the library? Or is the "no decisions" statement simply a technical comment on the fact that we are not quite yet at the point in time when Tier 4 closures are confirmed?’

12. By Councillor Smith of the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure

'If a congestion charge is forced onto any section of the A127, will the highway contractor (Ringway Jacobs) be paid to install and operate the A127 congestion charge?'

13. By Councillor Smith of the Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Housing

'For the 2018/19 financial year (broken down by each individual Borough / City / District), how much do each of these lower tier local authorities hand over to Essex County Council in council tax and business rates?'

14. By Councillor Kendall of the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure

'With the National Grid forecasting that the number of plug in electric cars and vans could reach 9 million by 2030, what action is Essex County Council taking to ensure that there are more public access charging points installed across the County to meet the demand and how many charging points are the County Council proposing to install on County Council owned land over the next five years?'

15. By Councillor Kendall of the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

'If the County Council really is serious about trying to tackle climate change and air pollution by encouraging more residents to leave their cars at home and try other forms of transport, then why are budgets to ECC funded local bus services being cut?'

16. By Councillor Deakin of the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure

'There have been bouts of heavy rainfall in recent weeks, causing a lot of flooding here in Chelmsford.

The PR1 road leading up to the Army and Navy roundabout - Van Dieman's Road flooded meaning pedestrians couldn't use the pelican crossing.

There are many heavily used underpasses which regularly flood, forcing pedestrians and cyclists off the underpass and onto ground level to cross some very busy roads. Here are just some examples:

- Under Parkway leading from Central Park to Victoria Road South, used by school children and commuters going to the station and those working close by, including our own staff.
- Under Waterhouse Lane which links West and Admirals Park with Central Park, used as a main route to schools by many children (with and without their parents), as well as commuters.
- Under Princes Road which links Longstomps Avenue with Vicarage Road and is the direct route for children attending the Moulsham Infant, Junior and High Schools, as well as shoppers at Tesco.

An occasional clean-out of the drains or waiting until enough people complain before any action is taken is no longer satisfactory. Investment in maintaining these vital arteries to our city is now needed. I am sure Members from across Essex can also cite instances of regular flooding in their areas too.

Will the Cabinet Member assure us this will not be ignored any longer, that action will be taken before we have another winter and yet more flooding?’

17. By Councillor Deakin of the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure

‘There is a narrow walkway linking Kings Road to Rainsford Road in Chelmsford which has woefully poor lighting and needs upgrading.

This pathway is extensively used by adults and school children as it gives quick access from the Boarded Barns and Melbourne housing estates to Admirals Park. It reduces the walk to school, into the city centre and Writtle.

As the evenings will be drawing in, many residents don't feel particularly safe using the walkway because it is so poorly lit.

Will the Cabinet Member please upgrade the lighting on this pathway to something more appropriate, which allows its users to feel safer?’

18. By Councillor Mackrory of the Cabinet Member for Customer, Communities, Culture and Corporate

‘Can the Cabinet Member give an update on what this Council's plans are for the future of the Essex Record Office?’

19. By Councillor Mackrory of the Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care

‘Given that the Adult Social Care green paper has been postponed six times what representations has this Council made to government to bring the publication forward in order that there be certainty of funding for the provision of care to our ever-growing elderly population.’