

Minutes of a meeting of Essex County Council held at County Hall, Chelmsford on 10 July 2012

Present

Chairman: Councillor K Twitchen

Vice-Chairman: Councillor N Hume

Councillors:

J F Aldridge	R G Gooding	Mrs M A Miller
B Aspinell	C Griffiths	G Mitchinson
Mrs S Barker	I Grundy	D Morris
L Barton	Mrs E M Hart	A Naylor
R L Bass	A M Hedley	M J Page
J Baugh	Mrs T M A Higgins	J W Pike
K Bentley	Mrs S Hillier	C C Pond
R G Boyce	R C Howard	Mrs I Pummell
G Butland	A J Jackson	Mrs J M Reeves
R Callender	E C Johnson	C G Riley
S Candy	J G Jowers	D C F Robinson
S C Castle	D J Kendall	S Robinson
R P Chambers	M C M Lager	Mrs T L Sargent
P Channer	D Louis	J M Schofield
Mrs T M Chapman	J R Lucas	M Skeels
J A Deakin	G W McEwen	S M Walsh
W J C Dick	M Mackrory	R G Walters
J Dornan	P J Martin	Mrs E A Webster
N D C Edey	S Mayzes	Mrs M J Webster
D Finch	L Mead	B Wood
M Garnett	Mrs V Metcalfe	J A Young

The meeting was preceded by prayers led by Reverend Carol Smith, County Council Chaplain and Vicar of the Church of England Parish Church for Moulsham Lodge with Tile Kiln, in the Diocese of Chelmsford.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors D Abrahall, A Brown, T Durcan, M D Fisher, R A Madden, R A Pearson, J Roberts, Mrs A Turrell and Mrs J H Whitehouse.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. To report the result of the Chelmsford North By-Election held on 28 June 2012

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Stephen Robinson to the Council having been elected to the Chelmsford North Division.

4. Minutes

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 8 May 2012 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman

5. PC Ian Dibell

The Chairman paid tribute to PC Ian Dibell who had been shot and killed whilst intervening in a dispute in Clacton. The Chairman, on behalf of the Council, paid tribute to PC Dibell and sent condolences to his family.

6. Queen's Birthday Honours

The Chairman on behalf of the Council congratulated the twenty-two residents in the County who had been recognised in the Queen's Birthday Honours and in particular:

- Councillor Joe Pike, MBE (for services to local government);
- Councillor Maureen Larkin, JP, BEM (for services to the community in Basildon);
- Mike Adams Chief Executive, Essex Coalition of Disabled People, OBE for services to disabled people and

- Robert Reitmeier, lately Chief Executive, The Children's Society, CBE for services to Children.

7. Leadership Poll

The Chairman congratulated the Chief Executive Joanna Killian and the Leader Councillor Peter Martin who, following a recent poll undertaken by Ipsos MORI and the Municipal Journal, when council chief executives and leaders were asked who they thought were the most impressive in the sector, Joanna Killian was voted 6th in the list of top chief executives and Peter Martin was 5th in the list of top leaders.

8. Progress of the Olympic Torch

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Stephen Castle, Cabinet Member for Education, Lifelong Learning and the 2012 Games, thanked all those who had taken part in the progress of the Olympic torch through Essex. Some 450,000 people had taken part directly in the celebrations or supported the events. He paid particular tribute to the Police, Fire and other emergency services as well as the staff of Essex County Council and the Districts, Boroughs, Unitary Authorities and the City of Chelmsford.

9. Essex House

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Jeremy Lucas, Cabinet Member for Customer Services, Environment and Culture provided an update on the position with regard to the temporary closure of Essex House.

10. Motions

1. Changing from Cabinet to Committee System

Moved by Councillor M Mackrory, seconded by Councillor D Kendall and supported by Councillor Mrs Theresa Higgins.

'This Council welcomes the aim of the Localism Act 2011, to improve freedoms and flexibility for local government, to allow power to be exercised at the lowest practical level, close to the people who are affected by decisions. The Act contains provisions that allow local authorities to change from the Cabinet system, imposed by the Local Government Act 2000, to the Committee system.

This Council, believing that the Committee system is the most democratic and transparent form of governance, enabling all 75 councillors to participate fully in decision making and shaping policy, resolves:

- i] that detailed proposals on changing the Council's governance arrangements to the committee system be prepared;

- ii] that the public, partners and stakeholders be informed;
- iii] that a further report be brought to the October 2012 Council for decision;
- iv] that the substantial savings from the reduced number of, and reduction in Special Responsibility Allowances, be reinvested in front line services.'

Upon being put to the meeting the motion was declared to be lost.

2. Potential misuse of Purchase Cards

Moved by Councillor D Kendall, seconded by Councillor B Aspinell and supported by Councillor M Mackrory

'Council notes the reports in the local press, which highlight the potential misuse of the Purchase Card scheme by some Essex County Council employees.

Council therefore proposes -

- that an independent inquiry be convened as soon as possible to scrutinise the reported £5.1 million spend since the Purchase Card scheme was first introduced back in December 2009. This inquiry will be tasked with investigating a cross section of purchases under £2,000, to ensure that all past transactions have related to Essex County Council business, and have been in strict accordance with the Council's Purchase Card policy;
- that Members are advised of the conclusions of this inquiry and if there are found to be specific instances of misuse, those responsible will be held accountable for their actions and disciplinary action taken.'

Upon being put to the meeting the motion was declared to be lost.

3. The use of Purchase Cards by staff

Moved by Councillor D Finch and seconded by Councillor K Bentley

'This Council praises the work by our dedicated staff especially those who look after the vulnerable children in our corporate care and understands the need for these children to enjoy the same opportunities as any other child in Essex.

This Council was disappointed by the recent press articles that have attacked this work by using inflammatory wording and not explaining the whole truth in each case.

As members are aware, an internal audit was undertaken into P Cards and a substantial assurance rating was given. This was included in the independent external auditors' report on governance issues reported to Cabinet in April this year and to full Council in May – just two months ago.

This Council is appalled at this vicious attack on vulnerable children and the staff who support them by the opposition group.'

Upon being put to the meeting the motion was declared to be carried.

11. The Member Development Charter

Councillor John Aldridge presented a report on Member Development since December 2011 and progress towards the Member Development Charter. He urged members to participate actively. He and the Chairman both paid tribute to Joanna Boaler, the officer who had responsibility for this progress, describing her as an 'exceptional officer'.

The report was received and adopted.

12. Council Issues

The report of Council Issues was received and upon being put to the meeting the recommendations relating to;

Item 1: Joint Standards Committee were agreed and accordingly it was

Resolved:

- (1) That Councillor J W Pike be nominated as Chairman of the Joint Standards Committee.
- (2) That the Council record its thanks and appreciation of the work and contribution of the former independent members of the Joint Standards Committee.

The report was adopted.

13. Report of Cabinet Issues

The report of Cabinet Issues was received and adopted.

14. Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report.

The Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report was received and adopted.

15. Audit Committee Annual Report

Councillor Edey declared a personal interest as his son is a partner in the firm Ernst and Young appointed as external auditors.

The Audit Committee Annual Report was received and adopted.

16. Annual Report of the Essex County Council and Essex Fire Authority Joint Standards Committee

The Essex County Council and Essex Fire Authority Joint Standards Committee Annual Report was received and adopted.

17. Essex Pension Fund Board Annual Report

The Essex Pension Fund Board Annual Report was received and adopted.

18. Questions to the Leader of the Council, Cabinet Members and Committee Chairmen

Members responded to questions as follows:

- (i) Concerning the recent events and trial in Rochdale (Councillor Morris of the Cabinet Member for Children's Services)

The Cabinet Member replied that the recent case in Rochdale, whilst tragic, had no direct bearing upon Essex' children in care, nor any connection to Essex children's homes as those events pre-date the closures. However, we are closely monitoring the situation, always keen to learn lessons to ensure we secure the best possible places to provide care and protection for our children. It is certain that, of the available options, securing foster care is the best possible outcome.

- (ii) The retirement of Susan Carragher , the Director of Libraries and Culture (Councillor Pond of the Cabinet Member for Customer Services, Environment and Culture)

The Cabinet Member endorsed the sentiments of Councillor Pond when he commended Ms Carragher for the work she has done in her role and agreed that her contribution to the development of the service had been outstanding. He wished her well and expressed the view, to universal assent of Council, that she would be missed.

- (iii) Proposals to fill nursery places for three and four year olds in the light of the reported under-spend of the budget (Councillor Higgins of the Cabinet Member for Children's Services)

The Cabinet Member agreed that there had been a low take-up from parents of available nursery places in some areas and there would be promotional work undertaken to rectify this.

- (iv) The 8-week breakdown of a set of traffic lights in Colchester, identified as 'non-urgent repairs'(Councillor Higgins of the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation)

The Cabinet Member expressed concern and surprise that such a breakdown had occurred for such a period of time and classified as 'non-urgent' without his knowledge and he would investigate.

- (v) To congratulate the Sea Scout Cadets of Walton-on-the Naze on their recent award of the Canada Trophy (Councillor Page of the Leader)

The Leader agreed that this was a prestigious award and one of which the Sea-Cadets should be justly proud. Additionally, The Chairman remarked that she had been present on the occasion and had been impressed with their precision marching and wished to note that this was an example of Essex youth at their best.

- (vi) The financial limit imposed on charging for Blue Badges (Councillor Bass of the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care)

The Cabinet Member agreed that the current maximum charge of £10, limited by the Secretary of State, for the administration of the Blue Badge system was inadequate and disproportionate to the actual cost of £587,000 a year, but he stated (notwithstanding the interests of localism) that it was highly unlikely that the Secretary of State would review this decision and he asked members to note that Blue Badges are only awarded to those who meet the criteria in accordance with their statutory rights.

- (vii) Pothole repairs – the new contract leading to an improvement in service (Councillor Riley of the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation)

The Cabinet Member agreed that there appeared to be an improvement in the level of service provided by the contractors Ringway Jacobs and paid tribute to them, the Highways' staff and to the former Cabinet Member for Highways, Councillor Chapman, who had been instrumental in the negotiation of the new contract.

- (viii) The size of water-bottles provided at Full Council (Councillor Pike of the Leader of the Council)

The Leader replied that he had been unaware that there had been any plan to increase the size of water-bottles provided at Full Council to members and would investigate and reply to Councillor Pike direct.

19. Written Questions (Standing Order 16.11.3)

1. By Councillor J Young of the Cabinet Member for Communities and Planning

Would the portfolio holder for planning consult with the Chair of the

Essex Fire Authority to amend planning policies to promote the installation of sprinkler systems? Suffolk County Council and Suffolk Fire Authority have done a great deal to spread good practice in this area which we could learn from.

Reply

Thank you for your question.

Essex County Council has no powers to create planning policy, and therefore it would be a decision for each District, Borough and City Council to formulate and adopt a policy of this nature, should they wish.

However, I will undertake to raise this matter on your behalf at the next meeting of the Essex Planning Officers Association.

2. By Councillor G Butland of the Cabinet Member for Education, Lifelong Learning and the 2012 Games

What plans has he to tackle the issue of low academic achievement in Braintree District? Has his department identified the reasons for the district having the lowest percentage of pupils achieving 5+ A*- C grade GCSEs, during the period 2007-11, of any of the districts in Essex?

Reply

While it is true that Braintree district has had the lowest level of achievement over the past five years for the percentage of pupils achieving 5 A*- C grades at GCSE, there has been a sustained improvement for the district from 52.7% in 2007 to 72.2% in 2011.

Furthermore in the main indicator used for the measurement of school performance (achieving 5A*- C including English and Maths) the district is placed 7th in the County with an increase in performance of 10% over the past five years.

There are a variety of challenges that have been identified in the district and a range of support specific to each school's individual needs has been implemented. A few examples include the County Council supported the closure of two poorly performing secondary schools in Witham, which were replaced by academies under the sponsorship of the Academies Enterprise Trust. This initiative was promoted by the Department for Education and was one of the first examples nationally of a high performing school converting to academy status and sponsoring two new academies to replace two lower performing schools. A sum of £50 million was invested to replace the buildings of the two schools, turned academies and these projects have just been completed.

At Honywood School a new and innovative curriculum has been implemented and at Alec Hunter School a transition curriculum in English and Maths has been developed over the last two years, which sees pupils taught using the same methods at both Primary and Secondary schools. This has significantly reduced the dip in performance between the two phases.

In the coming academic year, our efforts will be evaluated and built upon. The County Council is determined to find a balance of supporting our hardworking teachers and pupils while challenging them to raise their aspirations and reach their potential. But improvement will not come from just this alone and I would also encourage strong involvement from local councillors, school governors and parents all of whom are crucial parts of a thriving school community.

3. By Councillor D Kendall of the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation

Would the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation please clarify the following points regarding the Greater Essex Bus Timetable Book which was recently published by Here to There Publishing Limited:

- (i) What involvement have the Members and officers of Essex County Council had in the publishing of this book in terms of pricing, size, weight, size of print, prior to it going to print?
- (ii) Which Bus User groups across Essex were consulted and asked for their views on this book prior to it being published?
- (iii) When the last Bus Timetable Book was produced by Essex County Council for sale at £1, over 10,000 copies were sold. How many books do the County Council expect to be sold at the new price of £13.50?
- (iv) Will the County Council consider subsidising any future Essex Bus Timetable Books to ensure that the pricing is affordable to the many bus users who have no internet access and who rely on the book for their bus information?

Reply

Thank you for your questions regarding the bus timetable. Please see my responses to your questions below:

- (i) There is a misconception that the new bus timetable that retails at £13.50 is produced by Essex County Council. To clarify, this book is produced by a commercial company called 'Here to There Publishing'. They have taken it upon themselves to gain the information from Traveline and we have no input on how the book is produced. The publishing company released their book at a time when ECC was not producing the bus timetable.
- (ii) We are not able to comment on the actions of 'Here to There Publishing' however we are monitoring the commercial book and gaining feedback from customers, while on a wider note we make our decision on how we will provide this information in the future. We are also currently in the process of assessing ECC's overall publications with an equality impact assessment and ECC's policy of moving printed publication towards digital by default.
- (iii) Unfortunately, as the book is produced by a commercial company we cannot comment on their expected sales. However, I can give you some background on the old timetable book produced by ECC. It was sold through wholesalers to WH Smiths, local newsagents, Libraries and Travel Information Centres. The retail cost of the book was £1 but it actually cost £7.15 to produce (excluding ECC Staff Costs). In fact, due to the retail agreement ECC only received between 60-75p per book in revenue from sale of each book. Unfortunately the sales of the book had dropped considerably between 2009 and 2011. The last run of timetable books produced by ECC was released in June 2011. We produced 8,840 books and sold in the region of 4,700 copies. With sales being so poor the retailers were in the position of requesting less from ECC as stocks of the book were not shifting.
- (iv) Fortunately there are already a wide range of alternative options for customers who do not have access to the internet. These include via telephone, at the roadside, individual service leaflets from Essex County Council and commercial bus operators and other publications such as the public transport map.

However in line with my letter to you on 28 June 2012 regarding the same issue, I am looking into options to

improve the issues with the timetable book for next year's publication.

4. By Councillor J Whitehouse of the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation

How are incidents to Highways logged and how does this relate to the decision as to when repairs are carried out? One of my residents told me last week that £260 of damage had been done to her car by a pothole. When she telephoned Highways to report it, knowing that it had already been reported by another resident, she was told there was no record of the previous complaints.

The officer who spoke to her also said that there is no money to repair the potholes. In the light of the announcement about funding for potholes, will you please ensure that such erroneous information is not given?

Reply

Thank you for your question.

I am sorry to hear of the circumstances you have raised and that a resident feels they have not received the standard of service they would expect in their dealings with the Council. If you are able to provide me with details, I will look into the specifics of the case you mention.

In terms of reporting potholes and other defects these are best reported using the facility on Essex County Council's website, www.essex.gov.uk/high/faultreporting or by telephoning the Contact Essex call centre on 0845 603 7631. Both of these reporting methods result in the pothole or defect being logged onto the database that will enable the progress of the inspection or repair to be tracked. I am pleased to confirm that a new facility, that will enable Members and Customers to track the progress of the potholes and defects they register online, is due to be introduced in the autumn.

5. By Councillor J Whitehouse of the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation

Where does the North Essex Partnership sit in the Essex County Council structure, particularly relating to democratic accountability?

Officers at NEPP are taking a very rigid line with regard to parking permits. Where does the Member discussion about such matters take place? How do Members influence the decisions?

Reply

Thank you for your question.

The North Essex Parking Partnership is one of two Joint Committees that have been delegated powers by the Council's Executive for car parking enforcement and administration. As a result the Joint Committees are responsible for decisions relating to those areas. The existence of the Joint Committees is acknowledged within the Council's Constitution and they are recognised as decision making bodies within their remit.

The membership of the Joint Committees is the Cabinet Member for Highways at the County Council together with an Executive Member (where a Cabinet System is in existence) or appropriate Portfolio Holder (where a Committee system is in existence) of each member authority. The appointed members for NEPP are:

Councillor Derrick Louis (Essex County Council)
Councillor Susan Barker (Uttlesford District Council)
Councillor Jon Clempner (Harlow District Council)
Councillor Pam Sambridge (Tendring District Council)
Councillor Wendy Schmitt (Braintree District Council)
Councillor Gary Waller (Epping Forest District Council)
Councillor Martin Hunt (Colchester Borough Council)

The NEPP meets at least four times a year to discuss aspects of the NEPP, including collection charges for on street parking within permitted parking areas, the administration of residents parking schemes and collection of charges for permits, issuing penalty charge notices and the enforcement of the same, and deciding on how any surplus is reinvested in parking services.

Each member authority is able to send up to two officers to support the Executive Member in attendance, and where appropriate the Joint Committee is able to request advice and guidance from officers with expert knowledge or arrange for expertise from an external source to be obtained. It is also open to the Joint Committee to consult on issues to be addressed within their authorities where necessary.

In terms of Members discussing and influencing decisions there are three ways to do this.

Firstly, on an informal basis, either myself as the Essex County Council representative, or Councillor Barker, who is the current Chairman, are always pleased to listen to any concerns and take them up on your behalf.

Secondly, by attending the meeting where you will be able to take part in the public statements/questions session.

Thirdly, all decisions of the Joint Committee are subject to the County

Council's call in provisions and scrutiny arrangements and are published on the ECC's website in the same way as a Cabinet member decision and provide an opportunity for scrutiny and challenge where necessary."

With regard to the specific issues you have raised, if you are able to provide me with details I will be happy to look into this matter further for you."

6. By Councillor D Kendall of the Leader

Would the Leader of the Council please clarify the following regarding the *'Essex Works'* magazine:

- (i) When was the decision made to discontinue the Essex Works printed magazine and change it to an online e-magazine and who made the decision?
- (ii) What is the cost of printing and distributing an edition of the Essex Works magazine and how many are printed per edition?
- (iii) How much revenue does an edition of the Essex Works magazine generate from selling advertising space?
- (iv) How are the many Essex residents, who do not have internet access, particularly the elderly, expected to receive the latest updates on Council services?
- (v) Why has this issue not been considered first by a Scrutiny Committee prior to a final decision being made?

Reply

- (i) The decision to discontinue the *Essex Works* printed magazine and change it to an online e-magazine was made in summer 2011 and ratified by Cllr Peter Martin. An email was sent to all councillors from Cllr Kevin Bentley informing them of this fact and setting out the rationale behind the move.
- (ii) The previous printed magazine came out six times a year and was delivered to 600,000 homes in Essex, at a cost of about £500,000 a year – about £83,300 per edition. The recent "taster" magazine mailout, sent to the same amount of homes, cost £36,000.

In March 2011, Communities Secretary Eric Pickles

tightened up the publicity rules for councils to guard against campaigning with public funds and protect the local press. There are strict conditions on all publicity generated by local authorities, specifically to stop municipal newspapers or magazines being published more than four times a year. These provisions also extend to web-based editions of publications. Last week, he announced he was considering tightening these rules further.

- (iii) The previous printed magazine carried occasional in-house adverts, such as fostering or ACL, which brought in negligible amounts of revenue. In March and June 2011 (the final two printed magazines) external advertising was introduced to offset costs and this saved approximately £40,000 per issue. However, our advertising partner was unable to make this approach financially viable and the partnership was discontinued. Although incorporating advertising in the e-magazine is not part of current plans, it has not been ruled out for the future.
- (iv) It is our priority to ensure those without internet access can still read the magazine and before undertaking this venture an Equality Impact Assessment was completed. Those without the internet at home can read the magazine in local libraries and we will encourage residents to share printed copies with friends and neighbours without internet access. In extreme cases, we have arrangements to print and post low resolution copies of the magazine for individuals who can access it in no other way. One of the reasons for the recent "taster" magazine mailout was to assess the effectiveness of this approach and evaluate if more needs to be done.

The *EssexWorks* magazine is not a vehicle for communicating key service updates. It provides general information about what the Council is doing and celebrates the wider County of Essex. We have other vehicles for communicating updates to service users and those who might be impacted which are more targeted and take in to account the specific needs of the audience.

Examples:

- Self Directed Support – a step by step guide
- Courses for people with learning disabilities
- Hadleigh Farm London 2012 Olympic Games Mountain Bike Event
- adoption newsletter
- Information, Advice and Guidance (with the National Careers Service)
- Sadlers Farm newsletter (highways update)

- Fact sheets for transition pathways
- Flyer for electrical appliance testing – for over 65s and adults with learning difficulties
- Telecare information

- (v) It is not feasible for every decision to go to a scrutiny committee. However, if a member of the appropriate scrutiny committee - in this case Executive Scrutiny - wished to raise it then he/she would request the chairman of that committee to put it on the agenda. This would then be for the chairman of the scrutiny committee to decide. If the chairman decides not to raise it as an issue then, (if the member wasn't happy) this could be raised at the Scrutiny Board for them to decide.

7. By Councillor G Butland of the Leader

Would the Leader of the Council agree that:

- (i) housing conditions are a significant contributor to the issues that the Community Budgets pilot is seeking to address;
- (ii) local authorities and other public bodies such as, Central Government agencies and the Police, have substantial land banks which could be released for affordable and social housing;
- (iii) too often such bodies, quoting the Local Government Act 1972, seek only to obtain the best consideration possible when disposing of land and rarely use that part of the Act that allows a local authority or other public body to sell land at a consideration which is less than the best which can reasonably be obtained, if it considers the disposal "will help it to secure the promotion or improvement of the economic, social or environmental well-being of its area" provided the consideration foregone does not exceed £2m; and
- (iv) the use of this dispensation should be encouraged across the public sector in Essex and should figure prominently in the final submission to Government?

Reply

- (i) Yes, the community budgets work is looking at 4 main thematic areas (Health and Wellbeing; Families with Complex Needs; Community Safety; and Economic Opportunity) and housing is an important 'enabling' and 'supporting' issue for these areas.

Under the Assets Enabler workstream, it is proposed to develop a Single Estate Strategy for public sector assets in Essex. For

participating authorities this will create a forum under which to review potentially surplus assets and their future uses. For participating Housing Authorities, this would place them in direct contact with other public sector land owners and the future of sites can be set out as options, including for provision of social housing.

(ii) Essex County Council does not hold a landbank of surplus land. The land we hold is predominantly surplus school sites. We work constructively with Local Planning Authorities to enable appropriate development of surplus ECC sites with a mixture of housing.

(iii) 'Best consideration', more commonly known as 'best value', does not mean (as the question notes) simply that the land is sold for the highest value but that it can be used for other purposes such as the development of social housing. There are a number of instances across Essex where councils have disposed of land to housing associations for a nominal figure to facilitate regeneration or the development of social housing; for example Basildon Borough Council transferred its interests in Fryerns and Craylands to Swan Housing for £1. The impact of the Roanne case though does to an extent limit the (s123) clause and full OJEU procurement will be required if the activity is considered to be 'public works'.

In all property transactions, there is a balance when analysing what can be considered as 'best value' and how the disposal of an asset will contribute to the aims and objectives of the Local Authority. As such the provision of social housing is one of a number of considerations, alongside areas such as whether the use of the land will support economic development, or whether it will deliver a capital receipt that can be used to fund activities elsewhere.

ECC is not a housing authority and needs to consider reinvestment into one of its priorities such as highways and social care which have financial pressures of their own. ECC has contributed land to the value of £15m (in 2012 prices) towards the creation of 500 units of social housing in the last 20 years using section 25 consent.

(iv) It should be noted that this dispensation does not apply to all of the public sector and only Local Government.

However, as per the answer to question (i), the assets enabling work stream recognises the importance of physical assets such as buildings and aims to develop a Single Estate Strategy across Essex.

20. Questions to the Essex Police Authority Representative

The report of the Authority's meeting held on 11 June 2012 was received. Councillor Jackson, Chairman of Essex Police Authority, responded to matters

raised and stated that he would pass on congratulations to those officers who had effected the passage of the Olympic torch through Essex.

Further to the earlier statement by the Chairman, Councillor Jackson paid tribute to PC Ian Dibell who was shot and killed in Clacton. PC Dibell had been off duty but had intervened in a dispute and had been killed by a gunman. The gunman had been found dead later by police. Councillor Jackson stated that PC Dibell's actions had been in the highest traditions of the service and our thoughts were with his family at this time. Councillor Jackson's sentiments were echoed by Council.

21. Questions to the Essex Fire Authority Representative

The report of the Authority's meeting held on 18 April 2012 was received. Councillor Hedley, Chairman of Essex Fire Authority, responded to matters raised.

The meeting closed at 13:12.

Chairman
16 October 2012