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## Minutes of the meeting of the Full Council, held in the Council Chamber County Hall, Chelmsford, Essex on Tuesday, 11 December 2018

**Present:**

Chairman: Councillor J G Jowers  
 Vice-Chairman: Councillor E C Johnson

J Abbott	A Goggin	G Mohindra
J F Aldridge	R J Gooding	Dr R Moore
B Aspinell	I Grundy	J Moran
J Baker	C Guglielmi	M Platt
T Ball	D Harris	C Pond
S Barker	A M Hedley	R Pratt
J Beavis	I Henderson	J M Reeves
K Bentley	J Henry	P Reid
D Blackwell	S Hillier	S Robinson
A Brown	P Honeywood	C Sargeant
M Buckley	A Jackson	W Schmitt
G Butland	D J Kendall	L Scordis
S Canning	S Lissimore	A Sheldon
J Chandler	D Louis	K Smith
P Channer	J Lumley	C Souter
T Cutmore	M Mackrory	J Spence
A Davies	R A Madden	M Steptoe
M Durham	M Maddocks	A Turrell
B Egan	B Massey	S Walsh
A Erskine	P May	C Weston
D Finch	L McKinlay	C Whitbread
R Gadsby	V Metcalfe	A Wood
M Garnett	R Mitchell	J A Young

**Prayers**

The meeting was preceded by prayers led by The Right Reverend Hugh Allan o.praem, the Abbot of Beeleigh and Chaplain to the Chairman of Essex County Council.

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## Public Questions

**Public Question 1.** The Chairman welcomed the pupils of Holland Haven School and particularly Alfie Revell, a year 6 pupil who spoke concerning a request for a zebra crossing. He said:

‘Good Morning. My name is Alfie Revell. Thank you for allowing me to speak today.

My school friends and I have travelled from our school in Holland on Sea to the Council today to demand a Zebra Crossing for our school. Our Headteacher, Mrs Bardetti, is here too. Our school is located on Primrose Road and Frinton Road. Frinton Road is a very busy and dangerous road to cross because it is the main road between Clacton and Frinton. Most children are driven to school as crossing Frinton Road is too dangerous without a crossing being available. The vast majority of cars on Frinton Road drive at a fast speed. There is also a bend located just before the grounds of our school and it is difficult to see traffic coming.

Our school is expanding and will eventually have approximately 420 pupils. It has cost the Local Authority 1.4 million pounds to do this expansion so should some money be used to build a Zebra crossing so that we can be safe coming to our expanding school? Due to the expansion there will be a lot more traffic. Parking will be an issue if we have to be driven to school and of course there is more possibility of pupils being involved in accidents.

On the 12<sup>th</sup> October, Sam’s brother (Sam is in the group) was hit by a car on Frinton Road just by the school. He is 8 years old and he was hit by a car as he tried to cross the road. He was thrown into the air before hitting the ground and bumping his head on the grass verge. He was rushed to Colchester Hospital and spent a night away from his family – and he missed school.

He was not maimed or killed but the next innocent child or adult in this situation may not be so fortunate. Many pupils want to walk to school but we also want to be safe. We have petitioned you. We have written letters to you. What else do we need to do to get our Zebra crossing?’

Councillor Gooding, the Cabinet Member for Education thanked Alfie and Mrs Bardetti for coming to talk to us today, to represent the school, the children and parents/guardians. He added that he was impressed with the background information he had so clearly given. He stated:

‘It was very disturbing to hear of the accident at the crossing site and we are all relieved to hear Sam’s brother was not seriously injured, although I am sure it was a frightening experience for him and the whole family.

I would like to address the issues you have raised today, you mention drivers speed near the schools and the problem with visibility of oncoming traffic. As parents and drivers we have to all take responsibility for the safety of our children and should respect the speed limits and ensure our children arrive in school safe. I would like you to take back a message to your school, parents and the community on the

dangers of careless driving, and perhaps our representatives from the press here today can help us emphasise the need to watch their speed.

As you know, we used to provide a patrol for the site in 2015 but she retired and as the number of people using the crossing reduced the patrol was stopped, we have to provide patrols at the most busy sites and the decisions are made based on the numbers of children crossing the sites on their way to and from school and the number of vehicles using the road at that same time.

We have listened to you today, and Cllr Colin Sargeant has represented you well in the request for our support.

With the help of Colin, your school, and your parents we are going to provide a temporary patrol crossing and we will monitor it for six months, as from January 2019, in the hope that more families walk to school, we can then look at something more permanent.

Partnership working has always been the aim of the Council, supporting and working with the nominated volunteers in this format is a new way of working for us and we hope it will make a difference to you all.

I would also like to add that as part of the school expansion project we are extending the existing staff car park to create an additional 6 staff car parking spaces and providing 4 additional cycle stores creating 40 additional cycle spaces, to complement the school's drive to encourage pupils to cycle to school. All measures required as part of the planning process to encourage a change in mode of travel to school, and also keep staff parking off the roads.

After the completion of the expansion in September 2019 and if there is confidence that the additional pupils and parents' habits have changed and there is sufficient footfall using the Frinton Road gate, at that point a further PV2 should be requested or further request made through the Tendring Local Highways Panel.'

Councillor Bentley, the Cabinet Member for Infrastructure added that a further assessment of need will be made.

**Public Question 2.** The Chairman welcomed Mr Bairi, a resident of Basildon, who spoke concerning a request for a dropped kerb. He asked:

'Grass verges in front of the homes of residents who have small children are turning into seriously ugly mud puddles and parking spaces in the area are already very limited. In such cases why can't you give permissions to build dropped kerbs to residents who already have driveways on their properties?'

Councillor Bentley, the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure replied:

He stated that he was aware of the situation as described by Mr Bairi and recognise the issues that he had raised. He added that it was important to find a balance

between what Mr Bairi wanted and the safety of all road users. He explained that all vehicles crossing the footpath and verges need to be able to access a minimum of five metres on which to park in order to prevent them obstructing the footway and being a hazard to pedestrians. There is also a minimum distance between dropped kerbs and a maximum number of dropped kerbs on any road. But, whilst recognising these difficulties he undertook to speak to highways officers and the local parking partnership to see what could be done to assist Mr Bairi.

**Public Question 3.** The Chairman welcomed Mr Andy Abbott who spoke concerning library use. He asked:

'Do you have figures for full usage of libraries, how many people are going in perhaps to read the papers, rather than figures that just cover book withdrawal?'

Councillor Barker, the Cabinet Member for Customer and Corporate replied:

'The number of visits to libraries, which includes those people attending libraries for reasons other than taking a book out, have fallen by 33% since 2007.'

In the Future Library Service Strategy Consultation, library usage is just one of 5 key factors included in the needs assessment and includes not just book loans, but also computer and wifi usage. Other factors such as location, deprivation and social isolation, give some weighting to the social function of libraries.'

**Public Question 4:** The Chairman welcomed Hayley Redpath (aged 7) who spoke concerning Prettygate Library. She asked:

'My name is Hayley Redpath and I am a pupil at Prettygate Junior School.

I recently learned from my parents that Prettygate Library might be closing and this made me feel sad because the library is educational and I go there a lot because I love to read. They have a great collection of children's books.

My younger sister goes to the toy library there all the time and my Mummy also helps out at the toy library.

We would all be very sad if the library closed. There are no other libraries in walking distance that we can easily get to and would have to get a bus to visit the library in town.

I have spoken to my friends and other pupils at school and they are also upset that the library may be closing. They all love to read too.

I have written a letter saying why I do not want the library to close. I spent some time during my lunch breaks at school asking other children to also write letters and I have brought them with me to present to you today.

I would ask the council to please reconsider closing Prettygate library.

Thank you.'

Hayley Redpath then handed to the Chairman letters from pupils from Prettygate Primary School, which were passed to the Cabinet Member.

Councillor Barker, the Cabinet Member for Customer and Corporate replied:

'Hayley speaking today is the perfect example of democracy in action. I love seeing passionate young people taking an interest in their local community and sharing their views.

No decisions about the Future Library Strategy will be made until the public consultation has ended and all responses have been analysed. The strategy may be amended in light of the consultation results before being presented to Cabinet next summer for a decision.

Thank you for bringing letters with you today from other children at your school - it is also very important that you and they, with the help of their parents, respond to the consultation survey online to ensure all your views are captured.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind all those in attendance that the consultation opened on Thursday 29 November and runs for 12 weeks until Wednesday 20 February 2019.

The consultation survey also includes a specific section for organisations and community groups to complete. If they wish to put forward an idea to set up a community library in their local area, we would ask that they indicate this on the survey and complete the expression of interest form that accompanies it.'

**Public Question 5.** The Chairman welcomed Ms Angela Thomson who spoke concerning the Libraries Consultation. She asked:

'How many of the 74 libraries run by Essex Libraries are stand-alone premises, how many ECC own outright, how many are leased & how many paid staff & volunteers i.e. both the actual no. of posts & the actual no. of people, will be made redundant under proposals set out in the Consultation on Essex Future Library Services 2019-24.'

Councillor Barker, the Cabinet Member for Customer and Corporate replied:

'This is a draft five-year strategy about the library service, not the buildings. A separate piece of work will be done on the tenure and other details of our properties, before any final decisions are made on the strategy.

We won't know the impacts on employees or volunteers until after we have consulted and explored options for all the tiers, to best meet the needs of the future service and our ambition. Employees will be supported to work in different ways and we will endeavour to minimise any job losses by looking for suitable alternative

roles for any employee whose library is closing. We are hoping that existing volunteers will stay involved and new ones will come forward.'

**Public Question 6.** The Chairman welcomed Mr Steven Neville who spoke concerning the Libraries Consultation. He asked:

'In terms of the consultation on the future of library services would the Cabinet Member be most helpful and indicate what sort of things she will be looking for from the responses that would persuade her to consider keeping tier 4 libraries, ie those mooted for closure, open?'

Councillor Barker, the Cabinet Member for Customer and Corporate replied:

'The needs assessment which is out for consultation has concluded that tier 4 libraries are generally lightly used and are not necessary in order to provide a comprehensive and efficient service and we are therefore also consulting on proposals to close them. We are interested in knowing anything you want to tell us about our proposals. For that reason it wouldn't be appropriate or helpful to say that we are looking for anything in particular.

I encourage people to respond to the consultation survey if they think we have got the needs assessment wrong or if you feel there is other evidence we should take into account.

We are also open to receiving bids from established or new community groups or from other organisations or agencies.

The consultation survey includes a specific section for organisations to complete to ensure their views are captured. If they wish to put forward an idea to set up a community library or to work with us in other ways, we would ask that they indicate this on the survey and complete the expression of interest form that accompanies it.'

### **The Chairman, Councillor Jowers, formally opened the meeting**

The Chairman reminded those present that the meeting would be recorded and broadcast live over the internet.

#### **1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Deakin, Hardware, McEwen and Wagland.

**2. Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Pond declared a Code Interest in relation to Motion 1 as an Honorary Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Librarians and Information Practitioners.

**3. Confirmation of the minutes of the meeting held on 9 October 2018**

**Resolved:**

That the minutes of the ordinary meeting held on 9 October 2018 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**4. Chairman's Announcements and Communications**

**Recent Deaths**

**Former Councillor Dr John Coombes**

The Chairman informed members of the death of former Councillor Dr John Coombes who passed away on Sunday 28 October at the age of 76.

The Chairman noted that he had been an Essex County Councillor from May 1981 to May 1985 and represented the Division of Old Heath, serving on both the Education and the Fire and Public Protection Committee as well as being a member of the Bradwell Nuclear Power Station Liaison Committee.

He had lectured in French at Essex University for many years until his retirement to Luxembourg where he had lived with his wife Veronique and their children. His funeral had been held on Monday 5 November.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Harris paid tribute to former Councillor Coombes.

**Former Councillor Beverley Barton**

The Chairman announced the death of former Councillor Beverley Barton who passed away on Tuesday 13 November at the age of 74.

The Chairman noted that she had been an Essex County Councillor from July 1986 to March 1998 and represented the Division of Grays, Thurrock. She had served on numerous committees including the Policy and Resources Committee, Social Services, Community Health and Highways and Transportation Committee.

She had been elected to be Chairman of the County Council in 1993 and became Deputy Lieutenant for Essex in July 1994.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Young paid tribute to former Councillor Barton.

### **Grace Millane**

The Chairman acknowledged the tragic death of the British backpacker, Grace Millane, an Essex resident, who had been murdered whilst backpacking in New Zealand.

Members stood in remembrance.

### **Awards**

#### **Kingsmoor Flood Alleviation Scheme**

The Chairman invited Councillor Walsh, Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste to speak concerning an award to the Kingsmoor Flood Alleviation Scheme in Harlow.

Councillor Walsh presented the award to The Chairman of the Council.

#### **National Association of Local Councils Star Council Awards**

The Chairman invited Councillor Sue Lissimore, Cabinet Member for Culture and Communities to speak concerning the National Association of Local Councils Star Council Awards which, she explained, were the only awards in England to recognise the contribution local councils make to their communities.

She announced that out of 120 nominations for County Association Project of the Year, the Essex Association of Local Councils was one of only two runners up for the award. The nomination recognised how the Local Service Fund, administered by EALC on behalf of Essex County Council (ECC), sought to make a contribution to local life in Essex.

#### **National Social Worker of the Year Awards**

The Chairman invited Councillor Madden, Cabinet Member for Children and Families, to speak concerning an award to ECC as the 'Best Social Work Employer of the Year.'

He said that he had been pleased to attend the awards with officers from both Adult Social Care and Children's Social Care and asked members to note that Owen Chizimba, Team Manager in the Children and Young People with Disabilities Service won silver in the Children's Social Workers category.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Spence, Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care added his congratulations to the service that had won the award for being such a good employer and he added his congratulations to Helen Lincoln, Executive Director for Children & Families

and Nick Presmeg, Director Adult Social Care and their teams that had contributed to the achievement.

Councillor Madden presented the award to the Chairman who received it on behalf of the Council.

### **The University of Essex**

The Chairman asked members to note that the University of Essex was named 'University of the Year' by the Times Higher Education Supplement. He explained that the award recognised the university's bold initiatives, their work to recruit students based on their potential rather than their past achievements, their commitments to their staff, the quality of their relationship with their Students' Union and the strength of their national, regional and global partnerships.

The Chairman added that he was sure that members would agree that those who live and work and learn in Essex should be proud of the University of Essex.

## **5. Receipt of petitions and deputations**

The Chairman received petitions from:

- Councillor Abbott to the Cabinet Member for Customer and Corporate regarding the proposed closure of Silver End library and
- Councillor Egan to the Cabinet Member for Infrastructure regarding a request for traffic calming in Thundersley.

## **6. Executive Statement**

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Finch made a statement entitled 'Essex at the forefront of delivering exceptional services for residents.' The statement was subsequently made [available on the Council's website](#).

## **7. Motions**

### **No Confidence in the Leader and Cabinet Member for Customer and Corporate**

It was moved by Councillor Sargeant and seconded by Councillor Abbott that:

'This Council has no confidence in the ability of the Leader and Cabinet Member for Customer and Corporate to deliver in the future a comprehensive and effective public library service for Essex, which is the County Council's statutory duty.'

During the debate Cllr Bentley moved that the question now be put but the Chairman declined to put the motion to the vote, his view being that the matter had not been sufficiently debated.

Ten Members having stood in their places the motion was put to a named vote and was **lost** by 19 votes for, 50 against and 2 abstentions.

Those Members voting for the motion were Councillors:

J Abbott	I Henderson	S Robinson
B Aspinell	D J Kendall	C Sargeant
J Baker	M Mackrory	L Scordis
D Blackwell	P May	K Smith
A Davies	C Pond	A Turrell
D Harris	P Reid	A Wood
		J A Young

Those Members voting against the motion were Councillors:

J F Aldridge	M Garnett	V Metcalfe
T Ball	A Goggin	R Mitchell
S Barker	R J Gooding	G Mohindra
J Beavis	I Grundy	Dr R Moore
K Bentley	C Guglielmi	J Moran
A Brown	A M Hedley	M Platt
M Buckley	J Henry	R Pratt
G Butland	S Hillier	J M Reeves
S Canning	P Honeywood	W Schmitt
J Chandler	A Jackson	A Sheldon
P Channer	S Lissimore	C Souter
T Cutmore	D Louis	C Souter
M Durham	J Lumley	M Steptoe
B Egan	R A Madden	S Walsh
A Erskine	M Maddocks	C Weston
D Finch	B Massey	C Whitbread
R Gadsby	L McKinlay	

Councillors E C Johnson and J G Jowers abstained.

### **Responding to drug gangs, knife crime and county lines in Essex**

It was moved by Councillor Beavis and seconded by Councillor Madden that:

‘This Council recognises the impact of drug gangs, knife crime and county lines as a local, regional and national issue.

This Council commends the work of multi-agency statutory and voluntary partners in Essex, Southend and Thurrock in relation to these issues, particularly given the judgement of “Outstanding” by Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Probation, following a recent inspection.

This Council is pleased to see this work is being recognised by the Home Office in awarding the sum of £640k to the Police, Crime and Fire Commissioner’s Office to further expand this multi-agency work.

This Council therefore:

- Calls upon all political parties to work together to drive down the impact of drug gangs, knife crime and county lines on the residents of Essex.
- Requests that the People and Families Policy and Scrutiny Committee has oversight of and contributes to the multi-agency strategy and its development.’

The motion, having been put to the meeting, was **carried**.

### **Essex Police Force**

It was moved by Councillor Mackrory and seconded by Councillor Wood that:

‘This Council acknowledges and commends the hard work of the Essex Police Force in the most challenging of times.

This Council notes:

- That the previous Essex Police and Crime Commissioner cut 800 uniformed officers from the workforce.
- That the present Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner has recruited an additional 150 uniformed officers thereby leaving a shortfall of 650 officers.
- That the UK’s Senior National Coordinator for Counter-Terrorism highlighted that neighbourhood policing was now at risk and that withdrawing police on the ground could mean losing the relationships and trust within communities.
- That violent and drug related crime in Essex is at record levels.
- That Essex Police face significant and on-going financial pressures.
- That Essex Police receives the second lowest funding per resident of any police force in the country.
- That the vital and valuable police service across Essex needs additional resources to cope with increasing pressures.

The Council recognises that the safety of its residents is paramount and therefore resolves:

That the Chief Executive writes to the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex, copied to the County's Members of Parliament and Minister of State for Policing and the Fire Service, requesting that:

- Essex Police are funded properly by the Home Office in order to carry out their duties effectively.
- That additional resources are provided to Neighbourhood Policing Teams in order to strengthen the working relationships between the Force and local communities in the county.
- That there should be no cuts to frontline policing in Essex.'

It was moved by Councillor Maddocks and seconded by Councillor Moran that the motion be amended to read as follows:

'This Council acknowledges and commends the hard work of the Essex Police Force in the most challenging of times.

This Council notes that the present Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner has:

- Recruited an additional 150 Police Officers and has committed increasing this further.
- Has invested in neighbourhood policing and prevention and has undertaken to protect front line police numbers.
- Has also invested heavily in improved efficiency, with much better core systems and revolutionary remote devices; external assessment shows that productivity has strongly increased.

This Council further notes that:

- Essex Police face significant and on-going financial pressures.
- Essex Police receives the second lowest funding per resident of any police force in the country.
- The vital and valuable police service across Essex needs additional resources to cope with increasing pressures including: internet crime, terrorism, domestic and sexual abuse, mental health issues and county lines.

The Council recognises that the safety of its residents is paramount and therefore resolves:

That the Leader writes to the Minister of State for Policing and the Fire Service, copied to the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex, and the County's Members of Parliament requesting that Essex Police are

funded properly by the Home Office in order to carry out their duties effectively.'

It was moved by Councillor Henderson and seconded by Councillor Scordis that the motion be amended to read as follows:

'This Council acknowledges and commends the hard work of the Essex Police Force in the most challenging of times.

This Council notes:

- That the previous Essex Police and Crime Commissioner cut 800 uniformed officers from the workforce.
- That the present Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner has recruited an additional 150 uniformed officers thereby leaving a shortfall of 650 officers.
- That the UK's Senior National Coordinator for Counter-Terrorism highlighted that neighbourhood policing was now at risk and that withdrawing police on the ground could mean losing the relationships and trust within communities.
- That violent and drug related crime in Essex is at record levels.
- That Essex Police face significant and on-going financial pressures.
- That Essex Police receives the second lowest funding per resident of any police force in the country.
- That the vital and valuable police service across Essex needs additional resources to cope with increasing pressures.

The Council recognises that the safety of its residents and Police Officers is paramount and therefore resolves:

That the Chief Executive writes to the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex, copied to the County's Members of Parliament and Minister of State for Policing and the Fire Service, requesting that:

- Essex Police are funded properly by the Home Office in order to carry out their duties effectively and safely.
- That additional resources are provided to Neighbourhood Policing Teams in order to strengthen the working relationships between the Force and local communities in the county.
- That there should be no cuts to frontline policing in Essex.'

The amendment moved by Councillor Henderson was put to the meeting and **lost**.

The amendment moved by Councillor Maddocks and seconded by Councillor Moran was put to the meeting and was **carried** and became the substantive motion.

The amended motion, having been put to the meeting, was **carried**.

**8. Adjournment**

With the agreement of Council, the Chairman adjourned the meeting for luncheon at 13:00. The meeting reconvened at 13:45.

**9. To receive the Leader's report of Cabinet Issues**

Councillor Finch, the Leader of the Council, presented a report concerning matters considered at the meetings of Cabinet held on 16 October and 22 November 2018.

It having been moved by Councillor Finch and seconded by Councillor Bentley it was

**Resolved**

That the report be received.

**10. To receive a report of matters reserved to the Council**

Councillor Finch, the Leader of the Council, presented the report of matters reserved to Council.

It having been moved by Councillor Finch and seconded by Councillor Bentley, it was

**Resolved****1. Changes to Membership of Committees**

That Council notes the following changes made by officers under delegated powers in accordance with notification given by the Leader of the Conservative Group:

- Councillor Mark Durham replaces Dr Richard Moore as a member of the Development and Regulation Committee.
- Councillor Ron Pratt is appointed as a member of the People and Families Policy and Scrutiny Committee.
- Councillor June Lumley is appointed as a member of the Health Overview Policy and Scrutiny Committee.

**2. Membership of the Investment Steering Committee**

That the Council appoints a member of the Council to the vacant seat on the Investment Steering Committee allocated to, but not filled by, the Non-Aligned Group.

Consequently, it having been moved by Councillor Finch and seconded by Councillor Barker it was further

### **Resolved**

That Councillor Maddocks be appointed to the Investment Steering Committee

## **11. Written Questions**

The published answers to the 22 written questions submitted in accordance with Standing Order 16.12.1 were noted.

Members sought points of clarification from the relevant Cabinet Members, details of which are available on the ECC [website via the online audio recording of the meeting](#). The written questions were:

### **1. By Councillor Smith of the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills**

‘According to ROSPA (Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents), during 2016 a total of 1,981 children were directly involved in an accident while riding a bicycle.

Within the Highway Code, there is Rule 59 which states; “You should wear a cycle helmet which conforms to current regulations, is the correct size and securely fastened.”

With these two points in mind, will the Cabinet Member write to all schools within the County to ask them to make it mandatory for all pupils cycling to and from school, to use an approved cycle-helmet?’

### **Reply**

‘As an avid cyclist myself and cycling champion for ECC I cannot emphasize enough the importance of wearing a helmet when riding a bicycle. Indeed, having fractured my skull when crashing in a race in Yorkshire long before the modern and effective cycle helmets were devised, I understand the dangers from personal experience.

Although I appreciate what Cllr Smith is trying to achieve, I’m not sure writing to schools will have much impact. The responsibility is that of the parents to ensure that their child has all the relevant safety gear before they set off in the morning to school. Schools can share information with parents, but it is down to parents to make decisions about the safety of their children.

Regarding the stats, yes there were 1,981 children nationally aged between 0-15 who were either killed or seriously or slightly injured in 2016, however this has nearly halved in the past 10 years (3,765 in 2006). I may also add that nationally the number of cycling related deaths in children 0-15 has also reduced from 31 in 2006 to just 2 in 2017. These stats seem to suggest that children are better equipped at dealing with road situations than in previous years, perhaps in part due to a good standard of training.

In Essex for example, every school is given the opportunity to have cycle training, through the Bikeability scheme which allows children to gain practical skills and better understanding of how to cycle on today's roads. This training includes bike maintenance and how to ride safely. Bikeability gives everyone the skills and confidence for all kinds of cycling.

For more information and/or to book Bikeability lessons in your school or local area contact [saferessexroads@essexhighways.org](mailto:saferessexroads@essexhighways.org)

**2. By Councillor Hillier of the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste**

'Would the Cabinet Member please give an indication as to when the community and education facilities at the Basildon Tovi Eco Park will be made available for community use?'

**Reply**

'The community and education facilities will form part of the visitor centre at the Basildon plant. The contract dictates that the visitor centre will be open from the services commencement date, or when the plant becomes fully operational, after the acceptance tests have been passed.

The plant is currently in its commissioning phase, which enables the plant to be fully tested. Due to ongoing performance issues and the legal proceedings relating to these, we are unable to predict when the plant will become fully operational.'

**3. By Councillor Smith of the Cabinet Member for Finance, Commercial and Traded Services**

'Will the present administration consider ending the use of products that contain palm oil at the earliest possible opportunity?'

This question requests that the administration creates a task and finish group to investigate the hidden use of palm oil-based products within goods purchased by Essex County Council and use this

knowledge to create a report for the attention of the administration on how to reduce and end the use of this unethical item at the earliest opportunity.

It is also critical for Essex County Council to send the message out to suppliers that palm oil-based products are not welcome anymore and that they have also had their day.

The principles and ethics of the people of Essex must be held paramount.'

### **Reply**

'We welcome the focus on eliminating palm oil use and, as a public sector body, we take our sustainable procurement responsibilities very seriously. We recognise that the use of Palm Oil is most prevalent within food and some cleaning/toiletry products and, with this in mind, we will investigate further the implications of adopting a no Palm Oil usage policy with our strategic suppliers.'

#### **4. By Councillor Robinson of the Cabinet Member for Customer and Corporate**

'What suggestions have been made by Library staff that could contribute to the required savings or increase income?'

### **Reply**

'The Future Library Service Strategy Consultation is not about delivering savings - it is about creating a more relevant and convenient service.

A number of ideas have already been developed and implemented, including library space hire, a new creator space at Basildon library and hosting paid-for events.'

#### **5. By Councillor Robinson of the Cabinet Member for Customer and Corporate**

'It has been said that the Libraries review isn't about saving money. So, is a saving assumed in next year's budget or not? If the projected £2 million saving could be identified in other ways, will the closures still be pursued?'

### **Reply**

'The draft library services strategy is about making the service relevant to the way people live now and fit for the future. It is responding to the dramatic slump in use of libraries over the last 10 years, as we've found new ways online to inform and entertain ourselves.

It is irresponsible to spend taxpayers' money on keeping poorly used buildings open when we could spend it on improving the library services that people do use, whilst still maintaining a network of well-located libraries throughout Essex.

Next year's budget has not been set and no saving is assumed, as the strategy will not be adopted until summer 2019.

Future provision of library services will be based on evidence of need.'

#### **6. By Councillor Abbott of the Cabinet Member for Infrastructure**

'In their joint letter of 30th November 2018 to the Local Plan Inspector (Part 1 of Plan) the North Essex Authorities (NEAs) state that they are working closely with Essex County Council on route options and funding for the A12 that can specifically support the delivery of the Colchester/Braintree Borders Garden Community (West Tey New Town of at least 24,000 houses).

The Inspector in finding the joint Part 1 Plan Unsound in June 2018 said that the A120 routing and funding was also "essential" to support the Garden Communities, of which West Tey is by far the largest.

Given that ECC and the NEAs say they are committed to the delivery of West Tey, why did ECC take an apparently unilateral and different approach in deciding to prefer Route D for the A120, which does not serve West Tey directly and so appears contrary to the recommendations of the Local Plan Inspector?'

#### **Reply**

'I thank the member for Witham Northern for his question on the preferred route for the A120.

The A120 is not fit for purpose now let alone in the future. It is a strategic trunk road linking a port and an airport, and it is quite unique in this respect. Along the way it also connects important settlements such as Braintree and Colchester.

In this case, the best solution is the most effective and beneficial route option for a strategic trunk road.

Throughout the consultation, it was specified that any one of the routes must be capable of accommodating traffic from growth in Local Plans.

Option D emerged as the best option, and it is this route we have advocated to government.

That the Inspector has said that the A120 is important for Garden Communities is a bonus in many ways, especially in making the case to government for funding. If confirmed, the infrastructure proposals specific to the Garden Communities would be capable of being designed in a way that complements improvements for the A120 and indeed the A12.'

## **7. By Councillor Abbott of the Cabinet Member for Infrastructure**

'In the area of Witham and nearby villages in the division I represent, 3 housing developers in particular are fixing both plastic and metal backed directional and advertising signs to public streetlight columns, directional signs, parking signs, weight restriction signs, zebra crossing beacon columns, etc, etc - all on highway land.

It is understood that a certain number of such signs can be agreed with ECC for directional purposes and I also understand that this is an issue in many areas of the county, but the extent of the developer signage in the Witham area far exceeds the permitted numbers and is growing.

I have been in correspondence with ECC officers about this issue, including where developer signs have led to safety issues, such as being fixed over footways low enough to cause injury to pedestrians. Officers have been helpful in requiring the removal of a number of developer signs, but it is not long before more go up.

What is the council's policy on this issue and what sanctions might be applied to developers who persistently flout agreements in using highway fixtures for their own advertising purposes?'

### **Reply**

'I thank the member for Witham Northern for his question on policy regarding advertising at housing developments.

Essex Highways Development Management are proactively trying to manage the problems by liaising with offending developers. However, with the increasing need for housing in Essex and thus the increasing level of house building to match this need, policing/enforcement and management of any scheme is going to incur significant resource costs.

Essex Highways is currently drafting a Highways Practice Note which will clarify what will be permitted under the legislation and when signs must be removed. Investigations will be undertaken to again look at the viability of operating a scheme in order to finance removal if required.'

**8. By Councillor Davies of the Leader of the Council**

'The Fourth of January 2019 marks the 70th anniversary of Basildon New Town and Basildon will be celebrating throughout 2019. How will Essex County Council take this opportunity to be involved in this historic occasion and contribute to the celebrations?'

**Reply**

'Essex County Council are delighted that Basildon is set to mark this important 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a year of celebratory activity across 2019, including the recruitment of a new post to facilitate the programme of events.

ECC look forward to supporting Basildon Borough Council to help them access a variety of funding opportunities around people, places, arts, and culture over the coming year. Working closely with partner authorities is an approach that is very important to ECC, and we will do just that with Basildon Borough Council to ensure their celebrations are a success.'

**9. By Councillor Scordis of the Cabinet Member for Customer and Corporate**

'Regarding the methodology used to grade libraries, can the portfolio holder explain why the research for Prettygate library has not included the deprivation levels for Shrub End, a neighbouring ward that is a seven-minute walk from Prettygate library, which suffers from high levels of deprivation and high levels of poor literacy rates?'

**Reply**

'In the Future Library Service Strategy Consultation, library usage is just one of 5 key factors included in the needs assessment and includes not just book loans, but also computer and wifi usage. Other factors such as location, deprivation and social isolation, give some weighting to the social function of libraries.

The needs assessment for all libraries evaluated deprivation based on the Index of Multiple Deprivation figure for the lower-layer super output area each library is situated in.

If the member thinks there are other factors that should be taken into account in the needs assessment, they should respond to the consultation at [www.essex.gov.uk/libraries-consultation](http://www.essex.gov.uk/libraries-consultation)

**10. By Councillor Scordis of the Cabinet Member for Customer and Corporate**

‘Can the portfolio holder please confirm how much will be saved, per taxpayer in Essex, on the proposed savings from closing 25 libraries?’

**Reply**

‘The draft library services strategy is about making the service relevant to the way people live now and fit for the future. It is responding to the dramatic slump in use of libraries over the last 10 years, as we’ve found new ways online to inform and entertain ourselves.

Savings are not the main driver and specifics will not be known until after we have considered the results of the consultation. The indicative estimated savings of closing the 25 libraries identified in tier 4 are up to £974,000 a year, but these are subject to further verification, and do not include additional one off or ongoing costs of supporting community libraries or any capital costs or benefits.

Next year’s budget has not been set and no saving is assumed, as the strategy will not be adopted until summer 2019.

Future provision of library services will be based on evidence of need.’

**11. By Councillor Reid of the Cabinet Member for Customer and Corporate**

‘The consultation period for the library closures started on 29 November 2018 and ends on 20 February 2019 can the Cabinet Member give us assurance that the consultation will be taken seriously, and that people’s views will be taken into consideration and we can be confident that it is not already a done deal.’

**Reply**

‘The consultation is being taken incredibly seriously. No decisions have been taken and none will be taken until after we have received and considered all the results from the consultation. We have put forward proposals, based on evidence of need for library services across the county. Now we want to hear what Essex residents and library users think of those proposals. I encourage everybody to

complete the survey at [www.essex.gov.uk/libraries-consultation](http://www.essex.gov.uk/libraries-consultation), as this is the best way to ensure that their views are considered.'

**12. By Councillor Reid of the Cabinet Member for Children and Families**

'A recent report from Shelter states that young people who have no permanent home has doubled in the last 5 years. The report states that one in eleven children have no permanent home. This seriously affects their mental health, their schooling and their wellbeing. Can the Cabinet Member let us know what the figure is for young people in Essex who find themselves in this position and what is being done to eradicate this problem which should not be happening in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.'

**Reply**

'Recent government figures show that 2,408 children are currently in Temporary Accommodation within Essex (2,813 including Thurrock and Southend on Sea). The district and borough councils have a duty under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 to provide action to prevent homelessness and assist people threatened with or actually homeless. The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 that came in to force earlier in the year strengthened the districts' duty to prevent homelessness.

Essex County Council are working closely with our district and borough colleagues to assist in both the reduction in the number of families becoming homeless and where homelessness has not been able to be prevented to provide good quality accommodation for these families. Essex Trailblazers a LGC Awards shortlisted service that is a collaboration between Essex Council, the 12 district & borough councils and the 2 unitary councils has worked with 545 households in the last 18 months preventing 389 families from becoming homeless. Essex County Council and the districts & boroughs are also developing a number of innovative pieces of work via the Essex Vision homelessness workstream to tackle homelessness in all its forms and provide a better future for the families going through it.

I'd be happy to share with you more information about these projects.'

**13. By Councillor Kendall of the Cabinet Member for Infrastructure**

'Following on from the recent top 20 potholes initiative, will the Cabinet Member for Infrastructure now offer members a similar service for their top 20 footpath defects as we all have some serious defects across our Divisions?'

**Reply**

‘I thank the member for Brentwood South for his question on the future of the top 20 potholes initiative.

Following the positive response by members to the top 20 potholes initiative, we will explore options going forward and a further initiative covering footpath defects could be an option.

However, in terms of processes and procedures for footpaths, the work involved in preparing jobs for repairs would be very different. We would need to obtain utility apparatus information in advance as most of the services are in footways. Currently, we have an exemption when repairing potholes under 100mm as there is minimal excavation and the utility apparatus tends to be deeper underground or below the road construction layers given the weight of traffic on the roads.

Furthermore, the treatment types would be different to that used in carriageways. Footways have a more varied type of construction and can include slabbed areas, concrete or bitumen. There also tends to be other underlying issues (like trees) that have caused the damage, and these would require attention too.

Therefore, the costs involved in a footway initiative would be quite different, as would the cost ratio per defect.’

**14. By Councillor Kendall of the Cabinet Member for Children and Families**

‘How many Essex families have applied for an "Education & Health Care Plan" (EHCP) over the last four years and how many of these families have been successful with their application? What support is the County Council providing families who are not able to get a plan?’

**Reply**

[in response to the question] ‘How many Essex families have applied for an "Education & Health Care Plan" (EHCP) over the last four years and how many of these families have been successful with their application?’:

<b>Requests for an assessment for an EHCP</b>			
a) 2015	b) 2016	c) 2017	d) 2018
1266	1735	1780	1982

<b>Requests for an assessment for an EHCP direct from families</b>			
a) 2015	b) 2016	c) 2017	d) 2018

388	451	519	628
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<b>Number of EHCPs finalised</b>			
a) 2015	b) 2016	c) 2017	d) 2018
579	882	946	1029

<b>Number of EHCPs agreed – from requests from families</b>			
a) 2015	b) 2016	c) 2017	d) 2018
217	225	227	268

[in response to the question] ‘What support is the County Council providing families who are not able to get a plan?’

‘The majority of children’s needs can be met at mainstream SEN Support level. There are just below 30,000 children in Essex who’s needs are being met at SEN Support and just under 8,000 children who have an EHCP in Essex.

At the end of the multi-agency assessment, a decision is made whether a child requires a statutory plan to meet their needs or whether their needs can continue to be met at SEN Support. Each family is offered a meeting to discuss the outcome of the assessment and if a statutory plan is not considered necessary, guidance is given on how to incorporate the information gathered into the child’s One Plan. The SENCO has a copy of the advice and information gathered to inform their ongoing support of the child.

SEND Information, Advice and Support Service also offers support and information to families with and without an EHCP. All information about SEND, at all levels is available on the Essex Local Offer website – [www.essexlocaloffer.org.uk](http://www.essexlocaloffer.org.uk)

**15. By Councillor Aspinell of the Cabinet Member for Finance, Commercial and Traded Services**

‘Following a statement by yourself at a recent Brentwood Borough Council meeting that SELEP monies are match funded by the County, could you explain the process of seeking that funding and the level of match funding in percentage terms we would be committed to?’

**Reply**

‘Essex County Council (ECC) has worked with district, borough, city partners, Essex FE colleges and the SELEP over many years to secure considerable sums for investment in economic growth projects across the county. Through this endeavour ECC and partners have secured over £104m of SELEP’s Local Growth Fund to be spent across 25 skills, highways and economic development projects in Essex.

ECC has committed circa £67m of its own capital to support the delivery of these projects. Decisions on what proportion of total project costs have been met by ECC have been taken on a business case by case basis, as per the needs of each individual project.

The specific process for seeking funding is set out on the SELEP website here: [https://www.southeastlep.com/about\\_us/how-we-award-funding/](https://www.southeastlep.com/about_us/how-we-award-funding/).’

**16. By Councillor Aspinell of the Cabinet Member for Infrastructure**

‘Can you provide the breakdown costs of the provision of bus shelters provided to us by the Ringway Jacobs team on our Local Highways Panels. I have sought an explanation of these ludicrously high costs, i.e., £10,000 - £15,000 for a three-sided wooden shed from your predecessors - Cllr Bass, Cllr Lewis, Cllr Johnson and have yet to be provided with any explanation. This is a significant commitment from our LHP budget and it would be useful for all members to understand the justification of such high costs.’

**Reply**

‘I thank the member for Brentwood North for his question on costs of bus shelters.

I include below a breakdown of costs. It is important to note that there are additional costs for other items that are required to ensure that when it is installed, that it is a functioning shelter which is fit for purpose. There is an inclusion in the budget that allows for risk, and then any underspend is recovered by the local highways panel.

Furthermore, most sites require additional civils works such as building a concrete pad for a new shelter or raising the kerbs and footway for mobility impaired users.

Also, some sites require larger wooden shelters where there is high demand, so this adds to the cost.’

Metal Shelter	Wooden Shelter
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Shelter supply/delivery/installation	£4,700	£7,300
Bus stop flag	£65	£65
Pole	£155	£155
Timetable frame	£75	£75
Installation of flag/pole/ancillary items	£200	£200
Bus cage markings	£150	£150
Site survey to update ECC database	£50	£50
Staff time	£1,500	£1,500
<b>sub total</b>	<b>£6,895</b>	<b>£9,495</b>
Contractual O/H and Pro rata	£2,069	£2,849
Profit (fixed 2.5%)	£224	£309
<b>Total cost</b>	<b>£9,188</b>	<b>£12,652</b>

#### 17. By Councillor Turrell of the Cabinet Member for Infrastructure

'In my Division many public footpaths have been incorporated into the new build estates. This often means that a public footpath is part of a highways footpath system.

The policy for maintenance of public footpaths is not as good as for Highways footpaths, even though many of the public footpaths now have tarmac.

This situation has led to many more trips causing serious injury on the Public Footpaths in my Division.

As we build more housing in Essex and incorporate public footpaths into housing estates this issue is going to grow.

Can the Cabinet Member for Infrastructure look to change the policy on Public Footpaths to the same standard as Highways footpaths?'

#### Reply

'I thank the member for Mile End and Highwoods for her question on policy for Public Footpaths.

It is important to note that Public Rights of Way are usually rural in nature and the great majority of them are not surfaced. Although they

should be level and firm it is expected and accepted that the nature of Public Rights of Way is that they are often not uniform, and it would not be possible to have a perfectly flat surface wherever there is an undulating surface.

Where Public Rights of Way are being subsumed into new urban development, depending on the setting of the path in the development layout, it is usual to get the developer to make up the path to an adoptable standard through planning agreements. The path may then be subsequently removed from the Definitive Map and maintained as part of the adopted highway network. Other Footpaths in already established urban areas may have historically been maintained by District Councils, not by the highway authority.

I agree that we need to look at this issue and so I have asked for a guidance note to be written. However, it is important to highlight it will be difficult for bridleways as, by removing the status and conversion to cycleways, horse-riders will be unable to use them. If you have any further thoughts on this particular issue, then please let me know.'

#### **18. By Councillor Mackrory of the Cabinet Member for Infrastructure**

'Can the Cabinet Member provide the following:

- What are the terms of reference for the Task Force investigating solutions for the Army and Navy interchange
- How many times has the group met and what progress has been made?'

#### **Reply**

'I thank the member for Springfield for his question on the Army and Navy Task Force.

The group has agreed that its terms of reference is to focus on a long-term solution of the junction of the Army and Navy Roundabout which leads to improved traffic in the area in the future. It will include information on traffic flow around the city so that any improvements made to the junction do not have a large negative effect on the rest of the city.

The group met on the 15 October 2018 and 10 December 2018. The first meeting focussed on aims of the task force, and the second meeting focussed on initial scoping work carried out by Jacobs, who are providing expert engineering input.'

#### **19. By Councillor Mackrory of the Cabinet Member for Infrastructure**

‘Can the Cabinet Member provide an update on the progress with the proposed station at Beaulieu Park, as residents who purchased their homes two years ago on the understanding that the station was coming soon are concerned about the lack of progress.’

### **Reply**

‘I thank the member for Springfield for his question on the progress of proposed station at Beaulieu Park.

The rail network will be improved by Beaulieu Park station, and this is essential for the whole of Chelmsford, not just the housing development.

We are working with Network Rail, Countryside, Greater Anglia and Chelmsford City Council in a collaborative way with all parties determined to advance a strong business case for this project. We have the support of all County and Local members in the area and with MPs on the Greater Anglia Taskforce led by the Rt. Hon Priti Patel and the local MP, Vicky Ford.

We have embarked upon a Governance for Railway Investment Projects programme to finalise the design option. This will see three platforms built around an interchange which will accommodate first class access for people arriving on foot, by bike, by bus and by car.

The next milestone for the project is a costed preferred option which will be produced by March 2020.

Following this there are some statutory planning phases to go through before work commences in 2023.’

### **20. By Councillor Young of the Cabinet Member for Customer and Corporate**

‘Does the Cabinet Member for libraries agree that the strategy for Essex Libraries has so far been an unmitigated disaster and that the way to work with partners is not to price them out of existence and drive them away from using these facilities?’

### **Reply**

‘Not at all. Our proposals have sparked a great deal of public interest and the people of Essex are responding to the survey, which is what we want.

We have good relations with many partners and are keen to work with them and others to make the most effective use of all public spaces and deliver excellent services.

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The consultation is a chance for not just our partners, but for all the residents of Essex, to help shape the county's Future Library Service and ensure it considers their needs.'

**21. By Councillor Harris of the Cabinet Member for Customer and Corporate**

'Does the Cabinet Member for libraries acknowledge the value of Libraries in their own right as vital community facilities irrespective of how many times a library card is used and that free access to books for children and adults in facilities rooted in our communities is vital for learning and well-being?'

**Reply**

'I am incredibly proud of the public library service in Essex and both the staff and volunteers who deliver it. Library services play a unique role in our society by providing access to educational resources and digital technologies.

Our strategy proposes to continue to provide free access to books for children and adults in facilities still rooted in our communities. However, these libraries may not be in the current library buildings and could be delivered in other locations that better reflect modern community needs. Many people may find it more convenient to take their toddler to a Rhymetime in their village hall, to pick up books from a local shop or community centre or to use a library run by a community group co-located with other services.'

**22. By Councillor Henderson of the Cabinet Member for Customer and Corporate**

'Does the Cabinet Member for libraries agree that qualified librarians should be valued and appreciated for their skills and expertise?'

**Reply**

'Yes. I am incredibly proud of both our permanent library staff and volunteers. Many of our staff are not qualified librarians, but they are equally valued for their high quality work.'

This strategy enables staff to not be based purely in libraries, but to undertake more outreach in the community to encourage a greater number of residents to make use of the library service. We are building a library service for the future and best utilising our staff is a key element of this.'

## 12. Oral Questions of the Leader, Cabinet Member or the chairman of a committee upon any matter relevant to the business of Council

Members asked questions of the Leader of the Council, Cabinet Members or the chairmen of committees. A recording of the questions is available [on the Council's website](#).

The questions asked were:

Question from	To	Topic
Councillor Butland	The Cabinet Member for Customer and Corporate	Request to visit other library authorities
Councillor Robinson	The Cabinet Member for Infrastructure	Enforcement of restrictions on Army and Navy
Councillor Turrell	The Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste	Request for an update on Tovi Eco Park.
Councillor Harris	The Leader of the Council	Concerns about Essex Pay.
Councillor Beavis	The Cabinet Member for Adults and Health	Transfer of contracts from Allied Healthcare.
Councillor Reid	The Cabinet Member for Infrastructure	Recent fatal accident on A13.
Councillor Scordis	The Cabinet Member for Education and Skills	Signage at new bus stops in Colchester High Street.
Councillor Buckley	The Cabinet Member for Customer and Corporate	Relocation of Wickford Library.
Councillor Pond	The Cabinet Member for Infrastructure	Chelmsford Park and Ride.
Councillor Abbott	The Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste	Waste strategy.
Councillor Pratt	The Cabinet Member for Customer and Corporate	Southminster Library.
Councillor Young	The Cabinet Member for Customer and Corporate	Grant of lease of part of Greenstead Library to Signpost Employment Advisors.

Councillor Moran	The Cabinet Member for Customer and Corporate	Community Hub at Saffron Walden.
Councillor Henderson	The Leader of the Council	Brexit.
Councillor Goggin	The Cabinet Member for Children and Families	Corporate Parenting Event for Members.
Councillor Mackrory	The Cabinet Member for Infrastructure	Hill Road in Springfield.
Councillor Brown	The Cabinet Member for Adults and Health	Use of winter pressures funding.
Councillor Mackrory	The Cabinet Member for Infrastructure	Proposed pedestrian crossing in Springfield.
Councillor Aspinell	The Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources	Local Highway Panel funding.
Councillor Aspinell	The Cabinet Member for Infrastructure	Temporary speed limit on A12 near Mountnessing.

**13. Oral Questions of the representative of the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel on any matter of that Panel**

There were no questions.

**Chairman**