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# Essex County Council

## 11 December 2018

### Order Paper

#### **Prayers**

The meeting will be 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.

#### **Public Question Time**

Prior to the meeting of the Council the following questions will be asked by members of the public in accordance with Standing Order 16.12.9.

**Question 1:** from Alfie Revell (year 6) regarding a request for a zebra crossing outside Holland Haven School. He asks:

‘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 12th 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?’

**Question 2:** Mr Vinay Bairi concerning requests for dropped kerbs in Basildon. He asks:

‘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?’

**Question 3:** Mr Andy Abbott concerning library use. He asks:

‘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?’

**Question 4:** Hayley Redpath (aged 7) concerning Prettygate Library. She asks:

‘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.’

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**Question 5:** Ms Angela Thomson concerning the Libraries Consultation. She asks:

'I would like to ask 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.'

**Question 6:** Mr Steven Neville concerning the Libraries Consultation. He asks:

'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?'

## **Agenda Item 10**

## **Written Questions**

### **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?'

### **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?'

### **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.'

**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?'

**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?'

**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?'

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**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?'

**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?'

**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?'

**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?'

**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 gives 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.’

**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.’

**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?’

**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?’

**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?’

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**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.’

**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?’

**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?’

**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.’

**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?’

**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?’

**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?’