

## Minutes of the meeting of the Full Council, held at the Chelmsford Sport and Athletics Centre on Tuesday, 25 May 2021

**Present:** Chairman: Councillor E C Johnson  
Vice-Chairman: Councillor J M Reeves

B Aspinell	I Grundy	M Platt
T Ball	C Guglielmi	R Playle
L Barber	M Hardware	C Pond
S Barker	D Harris	S Robinson
K Bentley	A M Hedley	P Schwier
D Blackwell	I Henderson	L Scordis
L Bowers-Flint	J Henry	L Scott
A Brown	P Honeywood	L Shaw
M Buckley	M Hoy	A Sheldon
G Butland	J G Jowers	C Siddall
C Cannell	S Kane	M Skeels
M Cory	D King	K Smith
S Crow	D Land	C Souter
T Cunningham	S Lissimore	J Spence
J Deakin	D Louis	W Stamp
M Durham	L Mackenzie	M Steel
B Egan	M Mackrory	M Stephenson
J Fleming	B Massey	M Steptoe
M Foley	P May	P Thorogood
P Gadd	A McGurran	M Vance
M Garnett	J McIvor	L Wagland
A Goggin	L McKinlay	C Whitbread
M Goldman	A McQuiggan	H Whitbread
R J Gooding	Dr R Moore	A Wiles

### Broadcasting

The Chairman, Councillor Jowers expressed his thanks to the employees of the Chelmsford Sport and Athletics Centre and Chelmsford City Council for their support in making today's meeting possible. He also reminded those present to maintain social distancing and that the meeting would be recorded and broadcast live over the internet.

## **Prayers**

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

## **Councillor Jowers formally opened the meeting.**

### **1. Election of Chairman**

It having been proposed by Councillor Gooding and seconded by Councillor Souter and there being no other nominations it was

#### **Resolved:**

That Councillor Johnson be elected Chairman of the County Council for the forthcoming Municipal Year.

Councillor Johnson made and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

At the invitation of the newly elected Chairman the Council passed a vote of thanks to the retiring Chairman, Cllr John Jowers and Mrs Sue Jowers.

### **2. Appointment of Vice-Chairman**

It having been proposed by Councillor Barker and seconded by Councillor McKinlay and there being no other nominations it was

#### **Resolved:**

That Councillor Reeves be appointed Vice-Chairman of the County Council for the forthcoming Municipal Year.

Councillor Reeves made and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

### **3. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor Lumley.

### **4. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

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**5. Confirmation of the minutes of the meeting held on 23 February 2021**

**Resolved:**

That the minutes of the ordinary meeting held on 23 February 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

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

**Recent Death**

**Former Councillor Councillor Elwyn Bishop**

The Chairman informed members of the death of former Councillor Elwyn Bishop, who had died on 26 February 2021 at the age of 90.

Members were advised that former Councillor Bishop had represented Braintree East between 1993 and 2001 and Braintree Town between May 2005 and 2009 and had served on the library, heritage and social services committees. He had also been a Braintree District Councillor and been elected Chairman of that Council between 1996 and 1997.

At the request of the Chairman Members stood in silent remembrance.

**Welcome and welcome back**

The Chairman welcomed the 31 new members to the Council and was also pleased to be able to welcome back those members who had been re-elected

To those former members who were not re-elected or did not stand, the Chairman expressed his thanks for their service to the people of Essex. He also wished them and their families good health and happiness and the very best for the future.

**Awards**

**UK Complaint Handling Awards**

The Chairman informed members that the Council two awards in complaint handling and at his invitation Councillor Christopher Whitbread addressed the meeting.

Councillor Whitbread informed members of the success of the Compliance and Complaints Team at the UK Complaint Handling Awards that were held earlier in May. The Council's Compliance and Complaints Team were awarded the Bronze award for Complaint Team of the Year and Robbie Watson-Levey who heads up the Team also won 'Professional of the Year.'

He explained that Essex County Council was the first local authority ever to be finalists at the awards and were in competition with well-known private sector companies.

### **UK Youth EmpowHer Team Award**

The Chairman informed members that the Youth Service had also won an award and at his invitation Councillor McKinlay addressed the meeting.

Councillor McKinlay informed members that the Youth Service, South Essex Team were winners of the UK Youth EmpowHer Team Award that took place on 5 May 2021.

### **Margaret Lee**

The Chairman paid tribute to Margaret Lee, Executive Director for Corporate and Customer Services who would be leaving the Council after 38 years at the end of June.

He asked members to show their appreciation to Margaret who had been the Council's Section 151 Officer during the most turbulent years of financial transformation. She had built the finance team in Essex into one of the strongest and most professional finance functions in local government, with a track record of delivering savings year after year, whilst also protecting front line services for the good of the people of Essex.

She had also been President of the Society of County Treasurers and had led discussions from the finance community with central government departments securing £300m additional resources for County Councils across the country.

She had been the finance lead on the Northamptonshire peer review and assisted the London Borough of Croydon with its recovery programme.

The Chairman thanked her for her deep commitment to Essex and wishing her every happiness for the future.

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

The Chairman invited:

- Councillor Harris to present a petition regarding the road surface of the Shrub End Estate, Colchester and
- Councillor Gooding to present a petition regarding the closure of North Hall Road, Ugley

The Cabinet Member for Highway Maintenance and Sustainable Transport, Councillor Scott responded.

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**8. The Chief Executive's Report following the County Council Elections 2021 including the Return of Members Elected and Proportionality**

The Chief Executive presented a report announcing the results of the County Council Elections held on 6 May 2021, setting out the results of the review of political proportionality, the consequent numbers of seats on committees and the names of the political group leaders and their deputies.

The numbers of members who had indicated their membership of the political groups were:

The Conservative Group:	52
The Non-aligned Group	10
The Liberal Democrat Group:	8
The Labour Group:	5
Others:	0
Total:	75

It having been proposed by Councillor Bentley and seconded by Councillor McKinlay it was

**Resolved:**

That the report be noted and seats on committees and other bodies be allocated to registered political groups in accordance with the table at appendix 2 of the report.

**9. Leader and Cabinet**

It having been moved by Councillor Spence and seconded by Councillor McKinlay and there being no other nominations it was

**Resolved:**

- a) That Councillor Bentley be elected Leader of the Council and
- b) That the appointment of the Cabinet including the Deputy Leader of the Council, the powers delegated to them and the appointment of Deputies be noted.

Councillor Bentley then made a statement. The statement is available on the ECC website via [the audio recording of the meeting.](#)

**10. To note the Political Groups' appointments to committees**

It having been proposed by the Leader, Councillor Bentley and seconded by the Deputy Leader, Councillor McKinlay, it was

**Resolved**

That members be appointed to committees as set out in the report circulated to members prior to the meeting.

**11. Appointments of Chairmen of Committees**

It having been proposed by the Leader, Councillor Bentley and seconded by the Deputy Leader, Councillor McKinlay, it was

**Resolved**

That chairmen of committees be appointed as set out in the report.

**12. Other Appointments and Nominations**

The Chairman asked Members to note that there had been an amendment to the resolution in the Order Paper that had been circulated prior to the meeting.

It having been proposed by the Leader, Councillor Bentley and seconded by the Deputy Leader, Councillor McKinlay, it was

**Resolved**

That:

1. the three County Council nominations to the Health and Wellbeing Board,
2. the County Council's representative on the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel and
3. the County Council's representative on the Essex Pension Fund Advisory Board

be appointed as set out in the report and amended in the Order Paper.

**13. Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report**

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Reeves, formally Chairman of the Scrutiny Board presented the report and it being moved by Councillor Reeves and seconded by Councillor Egan it was

**Resolved**

That the report be noted.

**14. External Auditor's Annual Audit Letter**

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Hedley, Chairman of the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee presented the report and it being moved by Councillor Hedley and seconded by Councillor Platt it was

**Resolved**

That the report be noted.

**15. The Leader's Report of Cabinet Issues**

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Bentley, the Leader of the Council, presented the report and it having been moved by Councillor Bentley and seconded by Councillor McKinlay it was

**Resolved**

- a) to note those decisions that have been taken as urgent key decisions, not on the forward plan (Constitution para 19.17), or non-key decisions exempt from call-in on the grounds of urgency (Constitution para 20.15) as attached as Appendix 1 to the report; and
- b) to receive the minutes of the Cabinet meetings held on 16 February, 16 March, 26 March and 20 April 2021.

**16. Council Issues**

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Bentley, the Leader of the Council, presented the report as amended by the Order Paper and it having been moved by Councillor Bentley and seconded by Councillor McKinlay it was

**Resolved****1. Approved Bodies**

That the list of Approved Bodies in Appendix 3 of Part 26 of the Constitution be amended to remove

- a) the Locality Boards of Braintree, Epping Forest, Maldon, Tendring and Uttlesford,
- b) IGNITE the Enterprise Centre at Braintree and
- c) Hadleigh Country Park Forum.

## 2. Dates of Council

That the anticipated dates of the meetings of Council be noted as Tuesdays on 13 July, 12 October and 7 December 2021 and Thursday 10 February 2022.

## 17. Written Questions

The published answers to the seventeen 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 audio recording of the meeting](#).

The written questions and answers were:

### 1. By Councillor Harris of the Cabinet Member for Education Excellence, Skills and Training

‘Could the portfolio holder update me on the current progress on consultation with residents surrounding Paxman Academy School in my division on the installation of a MUGA within school grounds. Whether they have been engaged with and are supporting the investment in this school’s facilities.’

### Reply

‘The all-weather pitch will be extremely important to the school and local community. As such, Essex County Council is very supportive of the scheme. Residents will be able to participate in an online exhibition to review the latest build proposals, and to have their say before the plans are resubmitted to the County Planning Authority. This will also include comment forms online, which will capture and consider the views of the local community.

This online exhibition/consultation will be available from Tuesday 1 June until Tuesday 15 June, and can be viewed at:

<https://consultations.essex.gov.uk/infrastructure-delivery/consultation-for-paxman-academy> or <https://consultations.essex.gov.uk/>

In addition, ECC, Barnes Construction and the Sigma Trust will be engaging with residents at the school on the evening of the 10 June. Due to the continuing Covid pandemic, we are only able to support this by meeting outside and with the use of facemasks. To ensure we do not exceed any prescribed limits and to ensure appropriate track and chase systems are in place, residents must register interest beforehand with the school.

ECC will consider all comments received. A summary of the consultation responses will accompany the planning application.’



## 2. By Councillor Henderson of the Cabinet Member for Education Excellence, Skills and Training

'The *Children Missing Education Cross-Party Working Group Report*, was agreed and published in January 2020. The report was forwarded to the Secretary of State for Education for consideration on 10 February 2020.

The portfolio holder will note the following concerns included in the report:

"What our data tells us

The number of children and young people across Essex being removed from a school roll in favour of elective home education is increasing. Between June 2018 and June 2019, Essex County Council noted an increase within this cohort of 33.8%."

Can the portfolio holder report:

How many additional children have been removed from school rolls (off-rolled) since the working party report was published and forwarded to the Secretary of State for Education.

How many of those children removed from the school roll in favour of elective home education have been monitored/inspected by the appropriate education department.'

### Reply

'Our records show that, between 1 February 2020 and 14 May 2021, a total of 1688 children and young people have been removed from a school roll to be electively home educated within Essex.

In respect of 851 of the 1688 children and young people (50%) within the scope of this response, no concerns in respect of parental capacity to offer a suitable home education were raised or identified via local authority intelligence checks.

Parents/carers of each of these children were sent a letter by the Education Compliance team to confirm that the local authority has been made aware of their decision to home educate, to share key information regarding the implications of their decision and to signpost parents to the advice and information which is available to home educating parents via the Essex County Council website.

In addition to the afore-mentioned letter, all families who have elected to home educate their child/ren since July 2020, for whom no concerns have been raised/identified, have received telephone contact from the Education Compliance team which has covered the following points:

- The full implications of a decision to home educate – financial and/or otherwise;
- Process that will need to be followed if parents wish for their child to return to a school roll (e.g. once their Covid-related anxiety has eased);
- Online safety considerations that parents are advised to be mindful of whilst home educating their child/children;

- Details of the support available should mental health concerns arise in respect of their child/ren.

The Education Compliance team has contacted 816 of the 1688 children and young people (48%) to arrange an assessment of elective home education provision. These assessments were deemed necessary as a direct result of:

- concerns having been shared by school colleagues or identified via available local authority intelligence; and/or
- local authority records showing that the family have been known to Essex Social Care (either currently/historically).

Assessments have been successfully carried in respect of 439 of the 816 children and young people (53%) identified for such intervention and in cases where parents have chosen not to engage with our contact or have been unable to satisfy the local authority of their ability to provide a suitable home education, steps have been taken to return the children and young people to a school roll.

It is important to note that, of the total 1688 children and young people who have been removed from a school roll in favour of elective home education since the working party report was published, 463 (27%) were only home educated on a temporary basis and are no longer listed as home educated. Some parents will have chosen to return their child to school of their own volition, whilst others will have been instructed to do so following their failure to provide evidence to the local authority of their capacity to offer a suitable home education. In a small number of cases, it was confirmed that the family had moved out of Essex jurisdiction, either having moved abroad or to another local authority area, resulting in their being no role for the Education Compliance team at the time of de-registration.

The Education Compliance team makes full use of available statutory powers in respect of children believed to be missing from education and will not hesitate to instigate School Attendance Order proceedings, under section 437 Education Act 1996, in cases where parents choose not to engage or are unable to evidence their capacity to offer a suitable home education.

The local authority strongly believes that more could be done to safeguard the educational rights of children and young people who are home educated. We have taken a proactive approach in sharing our concerns in respect of the existing DfE guidance to local authorities for elective home education and submitted a comprehensive response to the Education Select Committee's Inquiry into Home Education, in November 2020. In addition, I appreciate the work that was carried out by the Cross-Party working group last year and will be writing to leaders of the opposition to re-establish this group so that we can rekindle this vital work.'

### **3. By Councillor Scordis of the Cabinet Member for Highways Maintenance and Sustainable Transport**

'Can the portfolio holder please confirm whether they will follow through with plans to implement bus franchising across Essex?'

**Reply**

'Thank you for your question. In March the Government published 'Bus Back Better' an ambitious strategy to put buses at the heart of transport and supported by £3bn of funding. We in Essex intend to take full advantage of the funding on offer, building on our success in previous funding rounds such as the recently secured Rural Mobility funding of £2.5m. As part of this, Cabinet will consider in June the optimal way forward for Essex, including whether franchising or an enhanced partnership (the two statutory routes available) is the best way forward in giving our residents a good quality bus service that supports de-carbonisation.'

**4. By Councillor Scordis of the Cabinet Member for Community, Equality, Partnerships and Performance**

'Can the portfolio holder alleviate local concerns in Colchester and confirm that Colchester's local history and records will remain in situ for the foreseeable future?'

**Reply**

'I can assure you that the local studies room at Colchester Library is not closing and never was. The room was temporarily used for storage whilst the library was closed during lockdown. Staff are now gradually moving these items and the room is now available again as of Monday 17 May, providing access to the lending and reference stock, as well as the local newspaper archive microfilms held on site.

Over the past few weeks, the library service has undertaken an audit of the items held in the local studies area at Colchester Library. This has been in line with the local studies stock policy guidelines, drawn up in conjunction with Essex Records Office and the CILLIP Local History Group toolkit.

The library service is in fact planning to exhibit some of the more interesting and unique items in the main part of the library, so we can make it more visible to our customers, increase its use and make it easier to access. We wish to highlight local stock that residents are unaware of and have an attractive display area with rotating displays of items of interest.'

**5. By Councillor Smith of the Cabinet Member for Highways Maintenance and Sustainable Transport**

'The strict rules that new driveway applications must be at least 5 metres in length; has and is filling the inboxes of elected members from constituents that have driveways that are as little as 20cm short of this 5-metre rule.

With more and more vehicles being purchased that are electric and the Government's support for the Nation switching to electric vehicles. A driveway application being as little as 20cm short is deterring motorists from buying an electric vehicle as they have nowhere to charge it.

Members have to plead and pester the Cabinet Member for Highways to gain dispensation to help individual cases. Would the Cabinet Member for Highways

Maintenance and Sustainable agree to establish a member led appeal board? My suggestion would be along the line of a four-member strong appeal board and where the resident concerned can make their case. This would only be for cases that are less than 20cm short of the 5 metre rule and for electric vehicles.'

## Reply

'Thank you for your question and the issue that you have highlighted, and whilst I do appreciate that 20cms or less may not feel like very much for residents, the guidance that we adhere to aims to make pavements safe for all our residents.

As you will be aware, the 5-metre depth of frontage is written in the Essex Parking Standards which were written by the Highways Authority in consultation with all the Local Planning Authorities and were published in February 2009, so have been in place for some time. The standards were based on evidence from around the County where footways were being obstructed by poorly parked cars, creating a pedestrian safety risk which is the reason for specific depths for parking spaces of 5.5 metres (depth in front of a building) x 2.9 metres (width) which provides space to walk around the vehicle/open the boot etc.

The dimensions in question were based upon research into vehicle lengths and the implication of getting this wrong is that footways are obstructed by overhanging vehicles with resultant impacts on walking, pushchair users and residents who use wheelchairs or mobility scooters.

However, in recognition that space is tighter in front of existing buildings, ECC has already reduced the depth to 5 metres to try and balance the needs of car owners and pedestrians. Since this date, the standards have been consistently applied and only in very rare and exceptional circumstances are relaxed on appeal to allow slightly less than the already reduced 5 metres and I am told by officers that very few are overturned on appeal.

I do recognise that this may cause some frustration for residents, particularly those, as you say, who wish to use an electric car and need a driveway to charge their car and so as part of our work in this area we will be recruiting an Electric Vehicle and Electric Charge Point manager who will be creating ECC's EV strategy and we will commit to investigating concerns regarding driveway length as part of this process as car users' needs evolve alongside our ambition to encourage more active travel through walking and cycle use.

I'd also like to take the opportunity in this response to highlight that we have reviewed the application process for vehicle crossings and the process for applying online. As a result of this review, we will be launching a new process from 1st June 2021, which will split the application and costs into an approvals phase (£158) and a construction phase (£150).

These fees cover the cost for the site visit and assessment of the application to determine eligibility against the standards and criteria and the subsequent construction should the application be successful. We will also be updating the

vehicle crossing web pages to try to clarify the process for residents so that they are better informed of the criteria prior to applying to avoid some of the issues you have described.

I hope this response provides you with useful information that you can share with your residents that explains how ECC tries to balance the needs of all of our residents.'

**6. By Councillor Smith of the Cabinet Member for Highways Maintenance and Sustainable Transport**

'Since the launch of the trial for the Spin e-scooters, complaints of pavement riding and minor/youths using these scooters have been constant in Basildon. In March, I nearly hit a child driving the wrong way exiting a roundabout as they drove towards me on the wrong side of the road. Had I drove a car bigger than a Fiesta; I would have injured or killed this child. I did complain at the time and still I see children using the Spin e-scooters.

No one wants to see a tragedy, but the operator needs to get their house in order now, before a serious incident ends this trial and their further possible use in Essex.

Rather than throw the so-called baby out with the bathwater, what is to be done to make sure that only adults with a driving licence can hire these e-scooters to be used only on the highways of Essex? '

**Reply**

'Thank you for your question Councillor Smith as I know you have been very interested in the e-scooter pilot and I agree with you that no one wants to see dangerous or irresponsible scooter use or an accident. In order to hire an e-scooter users need to use the SPIN App which requires that you upload a photo and a driving license and therefore no-one without a valid driving licence should be riding these scooters. Since we started the trial, the operator has added additional secondary license checking measure to ensure that adults with driving licenses cannot sign up and then allow another (younger) user to ride the scooters. In Basildon specifically, where there have been examples of anti-social behaviour, SPIN have deployed more operatives on the ground, closed out areas where anti-social behaviour was happening more frequently and reduced the speed of e-scooters countywide. We are continuing to monitor feedback throughout the pilot and adapt the operation of the scooters including banning repeat offenders to prevent them from hiring scooters. As of 4 May we have had over 100,000 rides in Essex including 600 half-price rides through SPIN Everyday Heroes and SPIN Access programmes, so without wishing to minimise your concerns I am hopeful that the issues you describe are with a minority of riders. I can reassure you that I will be meeting regularly with officers and we will continue to monitor the pilots and make changes if required.'

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**7. By Councillor Lumley of the Cabinet Member for Waste Reduction and Recycling**

‘The Castle Road, Rayleigh recycling centre in Rayleigh town centre is no longer fit for purpose. There are limitations to its location and size. For many residents of Rochford District it is a 50 miles plus round trip to use the site in the centre of Rayleigh which is very bad for our carbon footprint.

The changes implemented a number of years ago, which removed large vehicles from using the site, had a noticeable beneficial impact on queuing levels at the site. The more recent tweaks have made a little difference to the daily frustration for local residents and the heavily congested roads around the town centre although there are still regular confrontations and incidents at congested times between staff and frustrated residents, some quite unpleasant and definitely not acceptable.

Could the Cabinet Member please confirm that he will therefore be reviewing whether further policy steps could be taken to reduce the use of this centre and divert users to other sites better able to manage the throughput.

What plans have been put in place to replace the recycling centre and has consideration been given to finding suitable alternative land for a new recycling centre for delivery of this service in the District of Rochford?’

**Reply**

‘I thank Councillor Lumley for raising this important issue. Although I have just taken over the portfolio, I am aware of the issues surrounding a number of locations, in particular at Castle Road, Rayleigh.

I appreciate that those residents who live in the more rural areas of the District tend to have further to travel, however I can confirm that a review of the County Council’s recycling centre provision is planned this year. This will identify whether there are any opportunities for improvements or relocation of facilities and whether there are any actions that can be taken to deal with demand at peak period.

Councillor Lumley will be aware that the impact of Covid has placed additional pressure on the sites due to a shift in usage patterns. An even more significant impact has been from the operational changes we have had to implement to ensure social distancing, which has slowed throughput of users at the sites. As lockdown measures ease we expect the restrictions to start to have less impact, thereby reducing site pressure.

On the matter of confrontations between staff and public this is unacceptable, and staff should be prepared to call for Police assistance if necessary.’

**8. By Councillor Goldman of the Cabinet Member for Highways Maintenance and Sustainable Transport**

'In the local elections, potholes and pavements were the number one issue that voters raised on the doorstep. They are understandably frustrated when they are told that the defect they have reported isn't likely to get fixed anytime soon. Most residents understand that repairs must be prioritised, but when something has been reported several times, and a subsequent trip and fall results in serious injury, as was the case for an elderly Chelmsford resident who tripped on some very loose paving slabs in Moulsham Street, which have now - somewhat magically - been repaired after they have caused injury, I can completely understand why residents are losing faith in the system.

What hope can the Cabinet Member offer to residents that it will be safe to walk or cycle throughout Chelmsford and indeed the whole of Essex in the near future?'

**Reply**

'Thank you for your question. As those members who attended the initial highways member training session on 17 May will have heard, we must prioritise what is a limited resource which means we apply a risk-based approach to defects reported to us, continually reviewing them for further deterioration, which may change their prioritisation over time. This process will be further explained at the next session on 7 June and I would strongly encourage all members to attend this session as this is an important issue. Active Travel is something that we are firmly prioritising – residents getting out of their cars to be able to walk and cycle for their commute and leisure is very important and something that officers and I want to support.'

**9. By Councillor Deakin of the Cabinet Member for Highways Maintenance and Sustainable Transport**

'In Tile Kiln, Chelmsford, the layout means there are a large number of service roads which residents have to use to access their properties. These are cul-de-sacs and in constant use, therefore, the condition of these roads is appalling and are reported on a very regular basis.

Is there an alternative arrangement for the repair of heavily used service roads, compared to normal roads? Can the Cabinet Member explain why these service roads are in such a state of disrepair and not fixed when repairs are very urgently needed?'

**Reply**

'Thank you for your question. In order that officers from Essex Highways can properly assess the issues that you are describing I would be grateful if you could write to me detailing the areas in question in order that we can investigate this and provide a response.'

**10. By Councillor Mackrory of the Cabinet Member for Education Excellence, Skills and Training**

‘Given the twin demands of financial pressures and the ever increasing numbers of children with complex needs requiring Education Health Care Plans, what assurances can the Cabinet Member give that these children will receive the additional help they need to fulfil their full potential?’

**Reply**

‘There has been no reduction in top up funding for children and young people with SEND and no reduction in the funding for schools or settings. Essex County Council has worked hard to balance the demands of an increasing cohort of children and young people with SEND against a finite financial resource. Wherever possible difficult decisions regarding the pressures on the High Needs Block were taken early and in consultation with schools, settings and, through our engagement on the vision for SEND in Essex, parents and families. We have increased specialist provision through a SEND and alternative provision capital programme and attracted significant additional funding via the free schools’ programme which will see four new special schools open in Essex in the next 18 months. In addition, we have supported the development of provision in mainstream schools for children and young people with autism and social, emotional and mental health needs. Essex restructured its SEND teams to move towards a model of offering whole school support with the intention that we meet need at an earlier point in the journey through education and to reduce the need for a statutory plan. Our careful management of the High Needs Block means that Essex is in a stronger position than many other local authorities. Our focus continues to be on improving outcomes for all children and young people with SEND.’

**11. By Councillor Mackrory of the Leader**

‘Will the Leader give an assurance that future announcements regarding important governance arrangements, such as the appointment of the new cabinet, will be conveyed to Members as a courtesy prior to the press release?’

**Reply**

‘Thank you for your question. I apologise for not notifying you of our intentions in advance of them being released to the public. I absolutely agree that Members need to be informed of these kinds of changes as quickly as possible. I prioritised certainty for our residents and - as things were moving very quickly - realistically it would have only been possible to give you a few hours’ prior notice. That being said, you are right to say that informing you in advance would have been the courteous thing to have done, and I will make sure we give you that courtesy in future.’



## 12. By Councillor King of the Cabinet Member for Community, Equality, Partnerships and Performance

‘Can the Cabinet Member acknowledge the huge challenges and pressures on young people in these times of crisis and the damaging erosion of youth services over many years. Can the Cabinet Member assure members that they will continue to gain fresh investment and new thinking for the service and also commit to provide a fair share of the future revenue costs support of the proposed 'town deal' Colchester Youth Zone. This Youth Zone will bring significant third-party funding and health, wellbeing, ASB reduction and societal benefits to Colchester. As demonstrated by other Youth Zones, they can transform the life chances of our young people.’

### Reply

‘I am incredibly proud of Essex County Council’s Youth Service, which were recognised nationally this year when our targeted Youth Work was highly commended at the National Children and Young People Awards in March.

- In 2019/20 there were 54,957 youth service participants, a 7% increase over the previous year.
- 16,481 youth work sessions were delivered for young people in 2019/20. An 8% increase over the previous year
- 90,240 hours of volunteering were undertaken by participants in 2019/20, an increase of 8% over the previous year.

Despite the challenging circumstances that the COVID pandemic has brought, our Youth Services in Essex have continued to develop and grow, attracting a whole range of external funding to match Essex County Council investments in youth work. We have conducted almost 40,000 one to one welfare checks with young people and delivered over 2,500 online/remote youth sessions with nearly 7000 participants. We started the welfare check ins on the very first day of national lockdown and had trained staff to run zoom sessions with young people in less than 10 days.

Detached Youth Workers have increased the amount they have been working with young people in community settings throughout the pandemic and have supported a huge number of young people with advice guidance, signposting to other services and helping them cope with grief as well as supporting victims of youth violence. The Team have worked through every holiday period and only closed completely for the Christmas and New Year bank holidays.

Young people aged 10-15 from across Essex have also recently been taking part in the EmpowHER project, delivered by Essex Youth Service in partnership with UKYouth and the British Red Cross, which helps young women and girls lead change in their communities, increase their self-esteem and build wellbeing by creating inclusive and meaningful social action opportunities. At the National EmpowHER celebration event on 5 May, we won the National Team award for their projects. Two young people also won individual awards – a courage award and a per support award.

Youth Services operate within a community Capacity Building (CCB) Model and has a Traded Services arm that generates income to deliver Targeted Work. The CCB teams work with Youth Strategy Groups, young people, and community leaders to identify local needs, commission services and activities that meet local priorities. In the last financial year, the YSG commissioned 80 projects to the value of £300,000 that are directly responding to the social and emotional impact of the pandemic on young people.

Young People are indeed facing some significant challenges as we emerge from the devastating impact of the pandemic. Youth Service staff are working directly in Social Care and Leaving and After Care teams, Youth Offending and Economic Growth Services where youth work solutions are enriching the wider offer across the system.

Young People are growing up in a digital world, which is why youth work in Essex has also developed an online offer, including a virtual Youth Centre model that is co designed with Young People.

The significant investment in a Youth Zone will not meet the needs of young people who do not live in the immediate areas around them. Some of the most vulnerable young people who are in need of support wouldn't attend such a Centre, which is why we are focussing our investments and efforts on reaching them. We will of course work with any developed Youth Zone, however our investment is focused on developing the local provision our young people have told us they want. This includes effectively utilising online and detached youth work, working directly in community settings to ensure a local offer is available across Essex.

I am very happy to offer a meeting with you to discuss this in more detail.'

**13. By Councillor King of the Cabinet Member for Highways Maintenance and Sustainable Transport**

'I welcome recent work with the now Leader of the Council, to develop cycle and pedestrian routes across the centre of Colchester, but recognising the very poor condition of most existing and policy (Ltn 1/20) non-compliant cycle routes, can the Cabinet Member commit to condition reviews and a long term upgrade programme to create a true active travel alternative and to develop and implement such, in the same collaborative spirit.'

**Reply**

'Thank you for your question. We will be reviewing all Essex Highways Schemes to make sure that they fulfil the best practice design and guidance issued by DfT so that all our schemes now and in the future are in line with best practice using LTN120 and a scoring tool to undertake this work. It is our ambition to ensure that all new schemes consider safer, healthier and greener travel options even where the schemes are not primarily aimed at active travel to ensure that the need for adherence to best practice guidance is acknowledged. With regards to the condition of existing cycle and pedestrian routes this is something that we will need to look at across the county as part of our ambitions around sustainable travel.'

**14. By Councillor Cory of the Cabinet Member for Highways Maintenance and Sustainable Transport**

‘Having worked previously with Councillor Bentley, in the role of Infrastructure and Highways, he agreed (in one of our Colchester 5-a-side strategic highways meetings) that a positive, enabling strategy towards 20mph zones across Colchester had his support. Can I ask the new Cabinet Member that he takes this forward in a practical sense and commit to a policy supporting the creation of 20mph zones across all appropriate estate roads across communities like Wivenhoe and Greenstead?’

Would the Cabinet Member be willing to carry out a pilot scheme across my Division of Wivenhoe St. Andrew, granting permission for 20mph zones, where there exists a sufficient majority of public support. Would he agree to introducing policy with a presumption in favour of 20mph zones going ahead on local/estate roads being accepted?’

**Reply**

‘Thank you for your question. Officers are in the process of starting a review of ECC's Speed Management policy to ensure that it is fit for purpose and reflects the ambitions relating to sustainable travel (and safer, greener, healthier) in Essex with the review to be completed this year. With regards to estate roads on all new developments the presumption is that these will be 20mph by design. I am happy to pick up the discussions around a pilot scheme as part of the ongoing dialogue between ECC and Colchester Borough Council.’

**15. By Councillor Cory of the Cabinet Member for Highways Maintenance and Sustainable Transport**

‘Would the Cabinet Member agree to review the Highways communications process in relation to roadworks and other disruptive highway works, which cause diversions for the public, but in particular for buses and bus companies. Recent examples in Wivenhoe, one part of my Division, showed that the bus companies had limited up-to-date information on the rolling road closure in Rectory Road, and were unable to give more than 24 hours’ notice of a change of route affecting children and families accessing our nearest secondary school. The Essex Highways dynamic roadwork map is a positive step, but this does not give enough detail and pro-active communication is needed with bus companies and county members in order to update the public accurately. I would be happy to work with the Cabinet Member on this. I welcome an explanation of the communication strategy used by Essex Highways to inform bus and other public transport companies, as well as the public and County Members.’

**Reply**

‘Essex operates a permit scheme through which organisations such as utilities wishing to work in the highways need to request permission to undertake work in the carriageway. Permits must be requested in advance of works, unless works are an emergency. If the work promoter requires a road closure, it is their responsibility to liaise with bus operators in advance of the permit being issued, to ensure that operators are aware of the closure and that a suitable alternative diversion has been agreed (in some cases, diversions are not agreed by operators and alternatives such as shuttle buses/taxis are provided by the works promoter). When a road closure is required, this is provided via a temporary traffic regulation order (processed by the streetworks team). The streetworks team informs members, parishes, emergency services and bus operators of these closures via e-mail. Closure information is also made available through one.network. In the case of emergency works, legislation sets out that a work promoter has to inform ECC of the work within 24 hours – in such cases, we are therefore not able to provide information to the public or to operators in advance, but works promoters are requested to do this locally if at all possible.’

**16. By Councillor McGurran of the Cabinet Member for Highways Maintenance and Sustainable Transport**

‘Whilst I realise the state of roads and pavements in some parts of Essex are in a shocking state clearly the picture across the county is not uniform. Can the Cabinet Member explain why the 3/4 Estate in Vange (also known as the Vange Hill Estate) has been so woefully neglected. I would also like to invite him to visit this estate so he can see the issues himself, I would be happy to escort him.’

**Reply**

‘In response to your question, I would highlight that the capital maintenance annual programme across Essex for both carriageways and footways is developed using the latest held asset condition data in line with an agreed strategy which is available on the Essex Highways website. If you have a complaint about an individual road, please use the online report it tool which is the quickest way to report this and monitor progress. I am more than happy to come out for a visit to the area and if you email me, I will ask my officers to arrange this.’

**17. By Councillor McGurran of the Cabinet Member for Community, Equality, Partnerships and Performance**

‘Sadly, the new Conservative Administration at Basildon Council has made it clear they will not be supporting the very advanced plans for a state-of-the-art Youth Zone in Basildon Town Centre. They made their opposition to this facility, that would have transformed young people’s lives for the better clear repeatedly during the election campaign although they were far less clear on what it was they objected about it – particularly considering the fact the capital costs were already in the budget and the charity Onside were well on the way to raising the business sponsorship.’

In light of this disappointing announcement, what will Essex County Council do to improve badly needed youth services in Basildon. Will the Cabinet Member responsible open a dialogue with their counterparts at Basildon to see if they can reconsider their position on the Youth Zone. I have heard from a young woman from Barking and Dagenham, who was a care leaver speak movingly about how she had received a place at Cambridge University, which she said would never have happened without the Youth Zone in her borough – does the Cabinet Member think the young people of Basildon don't deserve the same opportunities?'

### Reply

'Youth Workers and Targeted Youth Advisors are delivering innovative youth work programmes across the county including:

- Youth Work in Hospitals
- Male and Female mentoring programmes,
- Confidence and self-esteem building
- Youth voice and social action projects
- Mental Health projects
- Employability and Skills

In Basildon, not only do we already have three Youth centres situated in Wickford, Basildon Town Centre and Vange, but Essex has a growing network of community volunteers and organisations who are working together like never before to meet the needs of young people. This network operates across schools, playgrounds, skate parks, open spaces, street corners, youth centres, promenades and hospitals. Taking youth provision into community spaces where young people meet across Basildon and wider Essex is the future of youth work; this is what we believe in and continue to develop and grow.

Despite the challenging circumstances that the COVID pandemic has brought, our Youth Services in Essex have continued to develop and grow, attracting a whole range of external funding to match Essex County Council investments in youth work. We have conducted almost 40,000 one to one welfare checks with young people and delivered over 2,500 online/remote youth sessions with nearly 7000 participants. We have also significantly increased our programme of detached youth work to meet the needs of young people in community settings.

We are also passionate about youth service interventions that help encourage young people to access higher education. We have taken many hundreds of young people to Essex university for weeklong summer residentials that are jam packed with workshops and learning, providing an influential experience that helps raise aspirations and gives young people a taste of university life.

Below is a list of just some of our employability and skills events and initiatives we have run in Basildon specifically:

- Organised a Get Sorted Event to get NEETs into Employment
- Registered NEET Young People so that families can claim Extension to Child Benefit
- Produce regular vacancy/opportunity bulletins aimed at young people and the organisations that support them

- One to one CV sessions
- One to One support with job search/ personal marketing/ letter writing
- Introductions/ referrals to training providers and other support services
- High Quality Careers Guidance with referrals as appropriate
- Relationship building with schools to help prevent NEET at source

Inspiring young people to achieve more is of paramount importance. One of our elected members of the Young Essex Assembly for Basildon was selected as the chair of the UK Youth Select Committee for knife crime. In this role she chaired sessions in parliament and even represented young people at Downing Street, where she met former PM Theresa May and cabinet members to discuss this pressing issue of knife crime. The select committee she led, launched the report in February 2020 with detailed recommendations to the government. You can find the report [here](#).

The significant investment in a Youth Zone will not meet the needs of young people who do not live in the immediate areas around them. Some of the most vulnerable young people who are in need of support wouldn't attend such a Centre, which is why we are focussing our investments and efforts on reaching them. We will of course work with any developed Youth Zone, however our investment is focused on developing the local provision our young people have told us they want. This includes effectively utilising online and detached youth work, working directly in community settings to ensure a local offer is available across Essex.

I am very happy to offer a meeting with you to discuss this in more detail.'

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

A recording of the questions and answers given is available on the ECC website via [the audio recording of the meeting](#).

The questions asked were:

Question asked by	Question to	Subject
Cllr Goldman	Leader	IT for Members
Cllr Pond	Leader	Reopening of railway lines
Cllr McQuiggan	Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health	Plans to thank volunteers who assisted with the response to the Pandemic
Cllr Gadd	Leader	Carbon neutral development in South Woodham Ferrers
Cllr Gadd	Cabinet Member for Highway Maintenance and Sustainable Transport	Cycling infrastructure in Uttlesford
Cllr Durham	Deputy Leader	Support for volunteering
Cllr Robinson	Deputy Leader	Violence against women

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Cllr Henderson	Cabinet Member for Education Excellence, Skills and Training	Funding settlement for schools
Cllr Aspinell	Leader	Locality Boards and briefings for local members

### 19. Closure of Meeting

The Chairman, Councillor Johnson, closed the meeting by thanking members for their patience and perseverance in adhering to the requirements of social distancing. It had been his first meeting as Chairman. And it had been held in difficult circumstances.

He reminded all members to maintain social distancing as they left the premises.

A recording of the Chairman's closing remarks and of the entire meeting is available on the ECC website via [the audio recording of the meeting.](#)

The meeting closed at 13:17

**Chairman**