
ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING 14 February 2017

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 question will be asked by a member of the public in accordance with Standing Order 16.12.9.

Public Speaker: Mr Mark Ingall – a resident of Harlow

'I was recently asked by residents of The Fortunes, Harlow to look at the condition of their road. It is a narrow road, such that when cars are parked along one side of the street, there is just space for a car to pass by. About four years ago, residents reported a number of potholes alongside the kerb, outside numbers 111, 112 and 113. The potholes were inspected, a painted line was drawn around them and having been deemed as "not meeting criteria for repair" they were left un-mended. In the intervening years, the potholes grew. Residents tell me they have reported the problem at least seven times, probably more and on two of these occasions the potholes were assessed again, a new, larger and differently coloured line painted around their perimeter and having again been deemed as "not meeting criteria for repair", they were again left un-mended.

Despite promises that the potholes would be monitored as part of routine inspections, the potholes have now joined up to make a crater, 5 metres long, about 10cm deep and 53 cm across outside numbers 111 and 112 with two more potholes one measuring 46cm long, 53cm wide and 2cm deep outside 112 and 183cm long 53cm wide and 10 cm deep outside 113. Drivers, fed up with tyre, wheel and suspension damage, will not risk their vehicles by driving through it. Some try and squeeze through the narrow gap between the pothole and the parked cars, and three cars have been scraped and a wing mirror knocked off as

a result. Other cars drive along this section of road with one wheel up on the pavement, straddling the kerbside pothole, but endangering pedestrians.

How bad does a road need to get, how much damage to vehicles has to be done, how much danger should pedestrians be in before a repair does meet your criteria for repair?’

Summary of Procedure:

- The person must be present to ask their question.
- The Chairman will invite the person to speak.
- The person may not speak for more than three minutes in order to ask their question or submit a petition.
- There shall be a reply from the Chairman or other nominated Member.
- Save for the Member replying to the question no other Member shall be permitted to respond.
- There is no opportunity for supplementary questions nor for debate.
- Thirty minutes overall is allocated for public questions.

Photograph

Prior to the meeting of the Council the Chairman has arranged for a photograph to be taken of Members in the Chamber.

Agenda item 6 The Budget 2017/2018

The procedure for debating and voting on the Budget is attached.
Any amendments need to be with the Chairman by 9:00am on the day of the meeting.

Agenda Item 10 Written Questions

1. By Councillor Danvers of the Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning

‘Given the comments at the Cabinet meeting about so-called fair funding for schools proposed by the Government, will the Cabinet Member publish a table of those schools that will gain and those that will lose because of the proposals?’

Specifically will he publish in his answer the level of funding of the primary schools controlled by Essex in Harlow North Division?’

2. By Councillor Wood of the Cabinet Member for Health

‘Will the Cabinet Member make a statement on his assessment of how the Sustainability & Transformation Plans (STPs) covering Essex meet the criteria the Council approved at its meeting on 6 December 2016?’

3. By Councillor Danvers of the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport

‘Will the Cabinet Member please re-examine the case for a pedestrian crossing from the back entrance of Sainsbury’s in Harlow across Fourth Avenue to the town centre post office car park?’

4. By Councillor Deakin of the Leader of the Council

‘Would the Leader please provide an update on the current condition of Shire Hall and when can it be expected to come back into use?’

5. By Councillor Mackrory of the Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning

‘You will be aware of the representations made by the Essex Secondary Heads to Essex MPs regarding cuts to school funding. This refers to year on year reductions in budget and not the changes to funding formula, the impact of which is yet to be seen. Schools have had to absorb increases in National Insurance, pensions, fuel costs and inflation. Now staffing levels are being cut and the curriculum restricted.

As the economic prosperity of Essex is very dependent on a highly educated workforce, will the Cabinet Member make similar representations to Government so that our school children will not be disadvantaged in the years to come by inadequate budgets to our schools?’

6. By Councillor Mackrory of the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste

‘Given the recent disclosure that asbestos particles are present in the Tovi building at Basildon can the Cabinet Member give assurances on the following:

- Was the Health and Safety Executive alerted immediately this became apparent?
- What measures were in place to protect workers at the Waste Transfer Stations and the adjacent residential areas where they exist?
- What guarantees can he give that the policy of refusing DIY waste and small builders waste at recycling centres has not led to irresponsible people disposing of such waste in the domestic stream?

7. By Councillor Kendall of the Cabinet Member for Finance, Housing and Planning

'How much has Essex County Council spent on hiring consultants and interim staff over the last four financial years? Please could I have a separate breakdown for each for each year?'

8. By Councillor Kendall of the Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning

'What measures does Essex County Council have in place to ensure that every secondary school in the County is offering an excellent careers advice service to their pupils?'

How is the quality of the careers advice on offer in Essex being measured against the advice being given to pupils in other County's like Kent and Hertfordshire?'

9. By Councillor Durcan of the Cabinet Member for Health

'Could the Cabinet Member provide an update on what discussion if any have taken place with partners in Hertfordshire and West Essex around the proposed STP that includes West Essex.'

Would he give assurance that all County Councillors in the West Essex corridor will be invited or kept updated on any progress on the STP going forward?'

10. By Councillor Durcan of the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste

‘Many months ago there was a discussion about the relocation of the recycling centre in Harlow to another larger and more suitable site.

Would it be possible for the Portfolio Holder to provide local County Councillors with an update and could this include sites that are under consideration and the likely time scales for any proposed transfer?’

11. By Councillor Young of the Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning

‘Could the Cabinet Member advise us on the number of classes in Essex that exceed 30 pupils?’

12. By Councillor Young of the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste

‘Pellet fuels are heating fuels made from compressed biomass; it is a renewable energy and can be much cheaper than fossil fuels. In some cases you can even replace existing fuels without changing technology, for example using biogas in an existing boiler. This type of fuel would significantly reduce CO2 emissions from around 5.3 tonnes to 0.8 tonnes a year and would also save the Council money on landfill tax.

Suffolk County Council’s Wood Fuel Programme now produces a total heat output of 3.2 megawatts saving around 420 tonnes of CO2 each year and has created around 40 jobs in the local biomass industry.

Would the portfolio holder explore the use of this in this County and consider implementing something similar?’

13. By Councillor Clempner of the Cabinet Member for Finance, Housing and Planning

‘The Essex Records Office is the one part of the County Council that enjoys an international reputation for excellence. There is no prospect of the ERO supporting itself financially or of breaking even, so its prospective closure

(about which one of the archivists spoke to me some time ago) will be inevitable.

Could the portfolio holder let us know who took the decision to reduce the opening hours of the Essex Record Office, what cuts have been made, and when exactly this decision was made?’

14. By Councillor Harris of the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport.

‘Would the Portfolio Holder agree to look at a resurface of roads round the Old Alderman Blaxill School on Paxman Avenue in my Division to ensure the proposed new school starts off as a ‘fit for purpose’ facility?’

15. By Councillor Harris of the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport

‘Would the portfolio holder advise me as to whether the potholes in my Division will be repaired?’

16. By Councillor Henderson of the Cabinet Member for Finance, Housing and Planning

‘Would the portfolio holder give me a breakdown of charges for residents living in the Rosebank Park independent living scheme in Harwich?’

17. By Councillor Aspinell of the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport

‘Regarding numerous e-mails and communications by other means that have been made to the Highways department regarding street lighting columns, pedestrian refuges and zebra crossing defaults over the last six months, there is a half mile stretch of A128, a priority one route, that has twelve unlit lamp columns, keep left signs and a zebra crossing beacon and spot light which remain unrepaired.

Can I have your assurance that this will be attended too as a priority if not sooner?’

18. By Councillor Aspinell of the Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning

‘Regarding School Crossing Patrols, we are having problems with recruiting people for this position across the County would it be prudent to revisit the amount of recompense paid to the operatives?’

19. By Councillor Clempner of the Cabinet Member for Finance, Housing and Planning

‘I welcome the funding that Essex County Council has received to tackle homelessness. As individual local authority bids were unsuccessful due to the Essex-wide funding, how will Essex County Council ensure that this funding is targeted to those areas with the most pressing need?’

20. By Councillor Abbott of the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport

‘Where an ECC owned roadside public footway is partly or wholly obstructed by vegetation growing from ECC highway land, is there a legal obligation on ECC itself to ensure that the obstruction is removed?’

21. By Councillor Abbott of the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport

‘What criteria are used in assessing the extent to which an ECC owned roadside public footway is obstructed by vegetation such that action is required to remedy that obstruction? Would criteria include (a) wheelchair access? (b) access for parents with young children? (c) whether the obstruction is likely to force someone to walk in the road?’

22. By Councillor Lodge of the Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning

‘Essex policy is to provide school transport only to the nearest school even if the student is not permitted to go there. When previously challenged, the reasons given for this were that Essex consulted and that the policy has now been made clear to parents. These excuses do not answer the fundamental question, which is how does the Cabinet member justify refusing to provide school transport to the only school to which a student can go?’