
Essex County Council

15 May 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.

Agenda Item 10 Membership of Committees

- 1 The Place and Economic Growth Policy and Scrutiny Committee proportionality shown in the report to be amended from '10 Con: 1 Lab: 1 LD: 2 NAG' to '10 Con: 1 Lab: 2 LD: 1 NAG'.
- 2 In addition to that already published the following appointments to committees are made by the Group Leaders:
 - The Labour Group substitute on the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee is to be Councillor Lee Scordis.
 - The Liberal Democrat substitute on the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee is to be Councillor Mike Mackrory.

Agenda Item 17 Written Questions

1. **By Councillor Henderson of the Cabinet Member for Culture, Communities and Customer**

'Could the Cabinet Member tell me what the range of fees and space hire charges are for using Essex County Council's Libraries/Community hubs by Voluntary and Charity group users, and whether they receive concessionary rates?'

2. **By Councillor Henderson of the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure**

'The portfolio holder will be aware that I have regularly been raising the issue of the

poor standard of the road surface on the A120 between Horsley Cross and Harwich. He will also be aware that this road surface further deteriorated during the winter to the point where it became very dangerous and was the cause of numerous accidents resulting in damage to vehicles.

Having recently met with Martin Fellows, the Regional Director Operations East Highways England, I have been advised in writing that the Wix by-pass was built during the 1970s using a concrete bay type of construction and is approaching the end of its anticipated life. He further advised that the long-term aim is to renew this section of road and so address the underlying problem, but due to the complexity of the site this scheme will require considerable development and planning to mitigate the impact on road users and the local communities. In his letter he goes on to say that the cost of the scheme is likely to be significant and will require the region to secure funding in the second roads investment strategy period 2020/25.

This being the case, may I ask that the portfolio holder recognises the urgent need to focus on the A120 between Horsley Cross and Harwich and ask him to commit the same level of attention and energy into this section of the A120 as he has to the need for improvements to the A120 between Braintree and the A12, and to seek the necessary funding both to renew and dual both sections of this very important road?'

3. By Councillor Young of the Cabinet Member for Education

'Could the Cabinet Member tell me how many pupils have been excluded or refused entry into Essex Primary/Secondary mainstream education over the last two years, and provide a list of those schools which have refused or excluded Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) pupils and confirm during what months these have occurred.

I would urge the Cabinet Member to call for a review of all Academies across Essex on their present SEND admissions processes and particularly on how these are carried out.'

4. By Councillor Reid of the Cabinet Member for Education

'There are an estimated 45.500 home schooled children in England.

Could the Cabinet Member tell me if we have figures of how many children are home schooled across Essex?

What measures are in place across Essex to ensure that home schooled children are being taught the correct knowledge and skills which are necessary for their future?

Are we doing enough to tackle the minority of out of school settings that seek to undermine British values or put children at risk of harm?’

5. By Councillor Smith of the Cabinet Member for Education

‘In March of this year, Basildon Borough Council finally agreed a Local Plan for the first time since 1998. Subject to the Government and other legal/recent political considerations; will the Cabinet Member consider in depth the need for a new secondary school for the west of Basildon, to meet the considerable population growth?’

6. By Councillor Smith of the Cabinet Member for Highways

‘If all side road lampposts were converted to LED, what would be the likely financial saving to the taxpayer?’

7. By Councillor Davies of the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure

‘With reference to the motion brought to Full Council in December, could the Cabinet Member update council with progress on calling upon the government to help fund the A127 and A13 schemes?’

8. By Councillor Harris of the Cabinet Members for Highways and Education

‘Could the Highways and Education Cabinet Members confirm that joint discussions will take place between them and appropriate officers concerning the new school in Shrub End.

This is to ensure that as the new school in Paxman Avenue is completed the roads leading to the new facility will be brought up to a better standard, and indeed see if some extra cycle ways through Shrub End Estate can be created to ensure attendees can get safely to school.

The new school will be a jewel in the crown of Shrub End, but the current road system in Shrub End is not.’

9. By Councillor Mackrory of the Cabinet Member for Highways

‘Can the Cabinet Member for Highways give an update on the Finchingfield Road Bridge? In particular is it to be replaced or strengthened and what are the timescales?’

10. By Councillor Mackrory of the Cabinet Member for Highways

‘What is the Council's policy regarding parked vehicles advertising services on Highways land?’

11. By Councillor Robinson of the Cabinet Member for Highways

‘After nearly two years of inquiry, I have established that Essex Highways and local councils cannot agree who is responsible for painting white lines on cyclepaths that are not on highways e.g. in parks (where it is important to separate pedestrians and cyclists). Also, following the recent very wet weather, grass verges on many estates have turned to mud. When will the Highways maintenance plan include grass verges and cycleways, and in particular when will white lines be painted in the parks in central Chelmsford?’

12. By Councillor Robinson of the Cabinet Member for Economic Growth

‘Stansted Airport is proposing new taxiways and aircraft stands that would make the airport capable of handling around 50 million passengers per annum, double the current throughout.

Has Essex County Council carried out a full assessment of what changes are required to the local and strategic road, rail and bus network, and an assessment of the environmental impacts including noise impact, to handle an airport the size of Gatwick?’

13. By Councillor Kendall of the Cabinet Member for Highways

‘Many Essex residents who are considering purchasing an electric vehicle have been put off by the lack of infrastructure across the County when it comes to public charging points. For example, there are no charging points in and around Brentwood and in Colchester there aren't any in their town centre. I understand the County Council are looking at this issue and have identified 9 locations in Essex for on street charge points including one in Brentwood but site surveys haven't been undertaken yet. What is the proposed timescale for getting these 9 locations up and running and what other steps are the County Council going to be taking to meet the future demand on this issue from our residents?’

14. By Councillor Kendall of the Cabinet Member for Highways

'The time it is taking for the County Council to clear blocked drains is a concern for many residents across Essex. Please could I have the answers to the following points:

How many reported blocked drains are awaiting clearance as at 30th April 2018?

What is the average waiting time for a blocked drain to be cleared from the date it was first reported?

How many drain clearance machines are currently operating across Essex in 2018?

How many machines were there clearing blocked drain in 2016 and 2017?

What steps are the County Council going to take to try and speed up the drain clearance programme?'

15. By Councillor Turrell of the Cabinet Member for Highways

'Please can the Cabinet Member for Highways confirm what improvements are being made to Paxman Avenue in Shrub End Colchester and the timescale. A new school is being built in this road and we are encouraging children to walk and cycle but the state of the road is a real safety issue. I did email your office and was promised a response but as yet nothing has been received.'

16. By Councillor Turrell of the Cabinet Member for Highways

'More and more traffic islands, lamps, signs and bollards are being damaged and not repaired. Some are not very visible. Are they part of the highways maintenance plans?'

17. By Councillor Reid of the Cabinet Member for Health

'It has been recently reported that Allied Health Care has warned that it could go bust unless a rescue plan can be found.

I understand that they provide Health Care within the Essex County Council.

Can I ask the portfolio holder what steps Essex County Council is taking to ensure the care of our residents.'

18. By Councillor Abbott of the Cabinet Member for Highways

'During the week commencing 16th April, surface dressing works were due to take place on one road between Rivenhall and Silver End and good advance notice was given via e-mail such that I as the local County Member was able to pass on that

information to local parish councils and via social media, etc.

However, it emerged close to the date of the works that much more extensive work was planned, with signs put up on other local roads in the vicinity. These signs, together with information on the Essex Highways Information Map stated that several roads in/out of the village of Silver End would be closed on the same days. This in turn led to concern in the local community about how residents would get children to school, where the services buses would be diverted to, access to a church, etc.

On asking Member Enquiries, who were very helpful, it emerged that the works would only involve one road being closed at a time in/out of the village but even right up to the start of the works we were trying to establish in what order the roads would be closed.

Whilst it is appreciated that such work is necessary to keep the roads in good condition, does the County Council also accept that residents should have good and accurate information about road closures in order to plan as they go about their daily lives. In this case, and not for the first time in this area, the information was inadequate and confusing.

What measures will the Cabinet Member put in place to ensure that road closure information via e-mail to Members, on the Highways Map and in relation to signage on the ground are all consistent with each other and furthermore would he consider a system for specific consultation with County Members when multiple consecutive road closures in one area are to be carried out.'