

Motions under Standing Order

16.11.2

1. A12 Ban on Lorries Overtaking

Moved by Councillor R Bass and seconded by Councillor K Bentley.

‘This Council, mindful of the nuisance, danger and congestion caused by lorries attempting to overtake one another and regularly blocking two lanes of the A12 for extended periods on a rolling basis, calls upon the Secretary of State for Transport to direct the Highways Agency, as a matter of urgency, to pilot a scheme whereby HGVs are restricted to the nearside lane on both carriageways of the A12 Trunk Road between Marks Tey and Boreham interchanges during the hours of 6.00am to 10.00pm daily. It also requests support from Essex MPs for this proposal.’

2. Public Speaking at Meetings

Moved by Councillor D Harris and seconded by Councillor J Abbott.

Supported by Councillors W Archibald, B Aspinell, K Bobbin, K Clempner, M Danvers, J Deakin, T Durcan, M Fisher, I Henderson, T Higgins, M Hoy, D Kendall, M Mackrory, M McGeorge, S Robinson, A Turrell, J Whitehouse, and J Young.

‘This Council agrees that at all County Council meetings (with the exception of the Annual meeting) a process of “Have your say” is introduced.

The constitution and standing orders (as appropriate) will be amended to allow anyone resident in Essex to speak for up to 3 minutes (on a timed basis) on any subject pertaining to Council related business.

There will be *up to* 30 minutes for this process at the start of meetings. In exceptional circumstances the Chairman of the meeting can exercise discretion to extend the time allowed.

Confidential and restricted access business will be unaffected wherein the public cannot be present. Those wishing to speak will be required to register to do so prior to the meeting.

The process will be managed on a “first come first served” basis, and if the 30 minutes time limit leaves speakers without speaking slots, then those individuals will be encouraged to submit their question or statement in writing to the monitoring officer, and subsequently the Leader of Council will reply in writing.

Supporting evidence:

Many other democratic organisations within Essex carry out similar processes, including local authorities. Residents and Councillors alike involved with those bodies feel this process is a good way of ensuring residents have a voice.

Neighbouring Suffolk County Council, which covers an area larger than ECC and is generally more rural, has a question time or public statement session at most of its meetings including Full Council, Cabinet and Scrutiny.

Essex County Council is urged to adopt this process and protocol so that residents can be heard in person at meetings of this authority where important decisions and discussions are taking place.'

3. Supporting Essex Families

Moved by Councillor M Fisher and seconded by Councillor J Deakin.
Supported by Councillor B Aspinell.

This Council believes that supportive parents are essential for the wellbeing of young people and that this applies just as much when this Council and its contractors are the parents.

This Council notes with concern the recent Oxfordshire case of men "grooming" very young girls and in particular that 5 out of the 6 girls who gave evidence were in the care of that County Council.

This Council takes very seriously its responsibilities to the young people in its care.

This Council believes that most parents would not force their own children to leave home if they were not ready, and that the multiple occupancy homes where many young people in care are housed after age 16 are not a good substitute for foster parental care. The young people often have no occupation and suffer from lack of support and guidance.

Therefore this Council resolves to consider allowing young people placed with its Foster Parents to stay with them until at least 18 years and later if they are otherwise unable to live independently.

This Council notes that this is permitted under guidance from Central Government but that many local authorities do not offer this because of the cost to the authority.

However, this Council believes that this policy could save money in other parts of the public sector – including Housing Benefit not paid out, reduced use of the criminal justice system and maybe Jobseeker benefits not paid out.

This Council notes that this is exactly the kind of "joined up" thinking required under Whole Essex Community Budgeting.

This Council therefore requests officers to investigate both the costs and the potential public sector savings of this policy and to report back to Members in time to be considered for the 2014-15 Budget.

4. Closure of the Deanes School

Moved by Councillor J Huntman and seconded by Councillor A Bayley.
Supported by Councillor K Gibbs.

Council believes the Administration should reconsider plans to close The Deanes School in Benfleet and proceed with its original scheme to improve the school's premises and rebuild and relocate Glenwood Special School on the same site.

The school has been rated as good by Ofsted and is situated in an area designated for new housing. Closure would reduce parents' choice of school for their children, lead to larger class sizes locally and mean the loss of an excellent opportunity to integrate mainstream and special school provision.

Council appreciates the need for financial savings but does not believe that the closure of a good school in an area where more places are likely to be required in future is a sensible way forward. It calls for reassurance for local residents that their strong opposition to the proposed closure will be taken into account.

5. Highway Maintenance

Moved by Councillor J Young and seconded by Councillor K Bobbin.
Supported by Councillors M McGeorge and D Harris.

This Council expresses deep concern about the state of the road surfaces in Essex which deteriorated further during the last recent extended bad weather, noting that some roads only received temporary repairs often of poor quality.

The new Vision for Essex adopted at Cabinet gives a commitment to develop and maintain infrastructure and this means our roads must be improved.

We call upon the Administration to review the contract with Ringway Jacobs, to ensure that a new qualifying criteria for action is adopted which reflects the quality of roads that Essex people deserve.

6. Changing from Cabinet to the Committee System

Moved by Councillor D Kendall and seconded by Councillor T Higgins.
Supported by Councillor J Whitehouse.

The recent County Council Election results show there is a much wider range of political views amongst the residents of Essex than there has ever been before, and this is reflected in the fact that there are now six political groups at County Hall.

In recognising this change in the political landscape, this Council is keen to embrace and utilise all the talents and ideas that Members have to offer, cross party, as it faces up to the serious financial challenges ahead and explores new ways of working that make decision making more transparent, open and democratic.

This Council welcomes the aim of the Localism Act 2011 to allow power to be exercised at the lowest practical level, close to the people who are affected by the decisions. The Act contains provisions that allow local authorities to change from the Cabinet system, imposed by the Local Government Act 2000, to the Committee system. This Council, believing that the Committee system is the most democratic and transparent form of governance, enabling all 75 Councillors to participate fully in decision making and shaping policy resolves:

1. That detailed proposals on changing the Council's governance arrangements to the Committee system be prepared.
2. That the public, partners and stakeholders be informed.
3. That a further report be brought to the October 2013 Council for decision.
4. That the substantial savings gained from making these changes be reinvested back into front line services.

7. Provision of meals for Disadvantaged Children

Moved by Councillor K Smith and seconded by Councillor G Helm.
Supported by Councillor K Gibbs.

Council requests that the administration undertake a feasibility study to utilise school kitchens, in key areas, to provide meals during the school holiday period for those disadvantaged pupils who, during a time of austerity, are normally in receipt of free school meals.