
Essex County Council

10 February 2022

Order Paper

Agenda item 4

Public Speakers

The following questions will be asked by a member of the public registered to speak in accordance with Standing Order 16.12.8.

Question: from **Mr Peter Irvine**, Chairman of Little Baddow Parish Council

'Sir,

As the Cabinet Member for Highways are you aware of the full background to this proposal, which has profound negative implications for an iconic location, the village of Little Baddow and a beautiful Conservation Area?

The proposal is to build a new bridge and elevated causeway driving through a Conservation Area in deep countryside, crossing the Chelmer and Blackwater Navigation. That in itself would be a cause for controversy, as is evidenced in part by the petition of over 800 names that has been presented to you.

But what is especially galling is that there has been no effective evidence that we have seen of the need for such damage and harm to the area, or of the need for what would be a very expensive proposal at a time of financial stringency.

There is an existing bridge, built in 1934. The project was initiated against a belief that the existing bridge was unsound. The bridge was assumed by the contractors to have no proper footings, but the Parish Council has provided evidence that – unusually for the time – it was in fact properly founded. Our evidence has not been refuted by any evidence to the contrary offered to us as to its current state.

The Chelmsford Local Plan does not offer any statement as to the need for a radical and suddenly emerging need for a wholly new road structure in this immediate vicinity. It does, however, stress the importance of the valley, a Conservation Area, through which it is proposed to drive it.

If the existing bridge is repaired, the nature of the roads leading to it is such that there will be a natural limit to community rat-running in the area,

whereas with a new, fast road there is likely to be a radical change in driving patterns, with unpredictable implications for the demand placed upon roads at either end – and importantly, additional pressure on Main Road, Boreham, that is likely to become a major congestion point at its access to the Boreham Interchange. Meanwhile the character of the valley will be changed for ever.

Paper Mill Lock is an iconic beauty spot, always well attended by walkers and other visitors but now much more so following the localness of activities driven by Covid. The outlook down the valley is very special, and not to be lightly destroyed by such a major potential construction.

I asked at the outset if you were aware of all that surrounds this proposal. If you, as Cabinet Minister, have already been made aware of all of this and of the intense feelings against the proposal among residents of Little Baddow and nearby Villagers, then I am sorry for rehearsing it. But at Parish Council level we hate to see money spent expensively on replacement where much cheaper repair could work and avoid harm,

And we have not been made aware of ANY argument in favour of the proposal or against repair and strengthening of the existing bridge. A meeting with us in January was proposed by Essex Highways but has now been deferred to an indefinite future date later in the Spring.

Thank you for your time and attention.'

Councillor Scott, Cabinet Member for Highways Maintenance and Sustainable Transport will respond.

Agenda item 10

Independent Remuneration Panel

Further to the report within the published agenda, a number of further interviews have now taken place. The following members are recommended to sit on the Panel in addition to the Chairman, Mr Mark Palmer.

Ms Fiona Bodle

Ms Bodle is the Assistant Director for Strategic Innovation at the Anglia Ruskin Univeristy (ARU), a position she has held since 2014. In this time she has been involved in a significant number of enterprise and innovation projects across the county, supporting the delivery of innovation centre facilities, support to SMEs and creating partnerships to improve societal challenges. Prior to that she spent almost six years as an Ecobomic Growth Commissioner at Essex County Council. Ms Bodle is also a member of the Success Essex Board and works closely with Local Economic Partnerships to help frame strategic economic plan priorities.

Mr Russell Everard

Mr Everard is a former local government senior officer having worked at or with a number of Essex Local Authorities. He worked at Braintree District Council for over 18 years, originally in Human Resources before moving to Enterprise, Culture and Leisure. Since his early retirement from Braintree District Council he worked for an Enterprise Agency supporting business start-ups in and around the Braintree district, held a consultancy role in Economic Development, undertaken regular election work and served on another Independent Remuneration Panel. He is also a member and secretary of Maldon 41 Club (The Association of Ex-Round Tablers' Clubs).

Mr George Yerosimou

Mr Yerosimou is a retired secondary school Headteacher, he spent eight years as Headteacher and was a Deputy Headteacher before that at Epping St John's Secondary School. Since his retirement in 2015, he has kept involved with the education sector, serving as an Essex Schools' Admission Panel and an Independent Review Panel (permanent exclusions) Panel Member, in addition to being a Trustee for the Essex Forest Schools Partnership Trust, serving as chair of a committee and a Chair of Governors at one Essex school and a member of another governing body of another Essex School.