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## Minutes of the meeting of the Full Council, held in the Council Chamber at County Hall, Chelmsford on Tuesday, 7 December 2021

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

T Ball	I Grundy	P Schwier
L Barber	C Guglielmi	L Scordis
S Barker	J Henry	L Scott
K Bentley	D King	L Shaw
M Buckley	S Lissimore	K Smith
G Butland	L Mackenzie	J Spence
T Cunningham	M Mackrory	M Steel
M Durham	B Massey	M Steptoe
B Egan	L McKinlay	M Vance
P Gadd	A McQuiggan	L Wagland
M Goldman	M Platt	C Whitbread
R J Gooding	S Robinson	

### Not present but attending the meeting online (these members did not vote on any item):

D Blackwell	A M Hedley	Dr R Moore
L Bowers-Flint	I Henderson	R Playle
A Brown	P Honeywood	C Pond
M Cory	J G Jowers	A Sheldon
S Crow	S Kane	C Siddall
J Deakin	D Land	M Skeels
M Foley	D Louis	C Souter
M Garnett	J Lumley	M Stephenson
A Goggin	P May	P Thorogood
M Hardware	A McGurran	A Wiles
D Harris	J Mclvor	

### Broadcasting

The Chairman, Councillor Johnson informed those present that the meeting would be recorded and broadcast live over the internet by way of the ECC Democracy

YouTube Channel.

The broadcast may be found as [a video on YouTube](#) or as [an audio recording on the ECC website](#).

## **Prayers**

The meeting was preceded by prayers led by the Reverend Canon Ivor Moody, Vice Dean and Canon Pastor, Chelmsford Cathedral and Workplace Chaplain, Essex County Council.

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

The Chairman informed members that he had agreed to an item of urgent business to be considered after the Chairman's Announcements. The item was to recommend to disapply the six-month rule to prevent the risk of any member losing their seat as a result of attending this meeting via zoom. The urgent business was to be found in the published Order Paper. The Chairman had stated that the special urgency was that it was important to provide reassurance to those members who were attending via the online service that their seat was not put at risk.

### **1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Fleming and Stamp.

### **2. Declarations of Interest**

Informal declarations of interest were made by Councillors Bentley, Cory, Crow, Guglielmi, Harris and Henderson in respect of agenda item 9, 'Establishment of a Joint Committee for the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community' as they were members of either Tendring District Council or Colchester Borough Council.

### **3. Confirmation of the minutes of council meetings held on 12 October 2021**

#### **Resolved:**

That the minutes of the ordinary meeting of council and the minutes of the extraordinary meeting of council both held on 12 October 2021 be approved as correct records and signed by the Chairman.

#### 4. Public Speakers

The Chairman noted that there were two members of the public registered to speak, Mr Kenningham-Brown a resident of Chelmsford and Colchester Councillor Young.

- 1) The Chairman, noting that Mr Kenningham-Brown was unable to attend the meeting, agreed that his question, printed in the Order Paper, be read.

The question he had submitted was:

'Recent research by USwitch (<https://www.uswitch.com/car-insurance/guides/global-commuting-index/>) finds that Chelmsford is one of the worst areas in the country to commute in. Whilst ranking acceptably for environmental issues it was notably poor on travel times and costs. What is council's plan to support Chelmsford's residents? Will the council look at introducing a publicly owned carbon neutral bus network to support transport in and around Essex?'

In response, Councillor Scott, the Cabinet Member for Highways Maintenance and Sustainable Transport, stated that he would be responding in writing to Mr Kenningham-Brown in full but informed members that under both the Bus Service Improvement Plan and the national strategy Bus Back Better he hoped that these issues would be dealt with in the very near future.

- 2) The Chairman invited Colchester Borough Councillor Young to speak and present a petition.

She said:

'Mr Chairman I am here today to present the Cabinet Member responsible for Bus Services a petition raised in the Longridge area of my Borough Council ward of Greenstead to call for better bus services for this community which sits on the edge of the Borough of Colchester. This area is poorly served by public transport yet houses many residents who want to travel by bus. In fact, on the doorstep, lack of bus services is the most frequently mentioned issue. I therefore leave you with this petition and ask you to use your influence to appeal to providers to serve the Longridge community better who want to use their cars less and buses more'

Councillor Scott, Cabinet Member for Highways Maintenance and Sustainable Transport thanked Councillor Young for bringing the matter to his attention and acknowledged the receipt of the petition. He undertook to discuss the matter with officers in the passenger transport team and then would respond directly to Councillor Young.

## **5. Chairman's Announcements and Communications**

### **Deaths**

#### **Councillor Craig Cannell**

The Chairman informed members of the death, at the age of 32, of Councillor Craig Cannell who had been only recently elected. The Chairman noted that he had been enthusiastic individual who had made Essex his home and served residents in Essex, not just on Essex County Council but also Rochford District and Rayleigh Town Councils. The Chairman speculated that he had been destined for a promising career at Transport for London ahead as well as his political career.

Several members paid tribute.

#### **Former Councillor Bill Dick**

The Chairman informed members that former County Councillor Bill Dick had died at the age of 87 years.

The Chairman noted that he had been the member for the Division of Thundersley from 1997-2013, he also served for many years on Castle Point Borough Council. He had had a keen interest in social care, and sat on many committees, including chairing the Community Care/Adult Social Care Policy Development Group.

The Vice-Chairman, Councillor Jill Reeves, paid tribute.

#### **Former Councillor Chris Harper**

The Chairman informed members of the death, on 31 October and at the age of 78, of Former Councillor Christopher Harper who, as a member of the Loughton Residents Association had represented the Division of Loughton St Mary's on Essex County Council as an Independent from 1997 until May 2000.

He had been active on many committees during his term of office, including the Environment and Education Committees, the Highways and Transportation Committee and the Community Safety Board. He had also been a member of Loughton Town Council.

Councillor Chris Pond paid tribute.

#### **Sir David Amess MP**

The Chairman noted the recent events in Southend that had led to the death of Sir David Amess MP. He noted that many Councillors had known him.

He noted that Sir David had always worked tirelessly for the people of Southend and beyond and that will not be forgotten. The Chairman informed members that he had laid a wreath with the Deputy Leader and then attended his funeral representing the County Council.

Several members paid tribute to his memory.

At the invitation of the Chairman, members stood in silent remembrance of all those who had died.

### **Awards**

- The Chairman invited Councillor Durham, the Chairman of Visit Essex to speak. He informed members that Visit Essex (that had won the South East heat of a PR Award earlier this year which was announced at July Council) had now won the National Award.
- The Chairman invited Councillor Egan, the Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Early Years and Councillor Spence, the Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care to both speak. They informed members that Essex County Council had won the Award for Social Work Employer of the year and National Adult Social Worker of the Year Gold Award Essex Social Worker.
- The Chairman invited Councillor McKinlay, the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Community Engagement, Partnerships and Performance to speak. She informed members that Essex County Council had won Outstanding Contribution to Project Management in the not-for-profit sector at the Association of Project Management Awards.
- The Chairman invited Councillor Butland, the Cabinet Member for Devolution, the Arts, Heritage and Culture to speak. He informed members that seven of the County's country parks had secured Green Flag Awards for the very best parks and green spaces.

### **6. Urgent Business: Approval of reason for non-attendance at this meeting**

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Bentley, the Leader of the Council, presented the report which had been circulated to all members and published online before the meeting and, it having been moved by Councillor Bentley and seconded by Councillor McKinlay, it was

### **Resolved**

That for the purposes of section 85(1) of the Local Government Act 1972 the Council approve the following as a reason for a Member's non-attendance of the council meeting on 7 December 2021:

That the Member took part in the meeting via zoom as a result of the public health request for a reduced attendance in the council chamber for that meeting.

## 7. Receipt of petitions and deputations

The Chairman invited Councillor Siddall to present a petition concerning a request for remedial work to the pavement and road in Kestrel Rise, Halstead following a vehicle fire. Councillor Scott, The Cabinet Member for Highways Maintenance and Sustainable Transport responded.

## 8. Executive Statement

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Bentley, The Leader of the Council gave a statement entitled 'Promoting and Safeguarding Essex'.

The Executive Statement may be found in full as [a video on YouTube](#) or as [an audio recording on the ECC website](#).

In summary:

### 1) Covid.

The Leader paid tribute to officers at Essex County Council and at Brentwood Borough Council where an outbreak of the latest variant was discovered. The teams at both councils reacted quickly, together with the NHS to whom he paid tribute. He also thanked the Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care, Councillor John Spence and members of the public.

Now that the outbreak of the variant has spread wider he thanked his colleagues in the Districts who were assisting in finding additional venues for the rollout of the boosters.

If anyone wished to volunteer to assist in any way please look on social media or elsewhere online.

### 2) The Armed Forces Community Covenant and the Civilian Military Partnership Board (CMPB).

The Leader informed members that the Armed Forces Community Covenant was created in 2011 to ensure that all those who had served in the armed forces and who lived in Essex are treated with fairness and respect. The CMPB had an action plan that included:

- Access to Justice Programme: providing reduced fee legal advice to members of the armed forces,
- Veterans Mental Health programme (a Mental Health summit is planned for 2022),

- Communications and Engagement and
- The Defence Employer Recognition Scheme.

Essex County Council currently holds the silver award under the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme and is ambitious to hold the gold award. To that end we will need to:

- learn about our staff, setting up a network of ex-forces personnel
- review our policies on career progression and paid leave for reservist activity and
- publicise the Armed Forces Covenant and work with partners to deliver even more meaningful impact.

The Leader concluded by asking for help from Councillors, partners, and businesses.

### 3) Building Stronger Communities

The Leader reminded members that support of our communities was crucial to us delivering the aims of Everyone's Essex and building stronger communities was a key part of our approach across our priorities

We recently announced £500k to support community led initiatives around the cross-cutting aim of tackling climate change and there would be further examination of how to do something similar for levelling up our communities

### 4) The Arts and Culture

The Leader expressed the view that arts bodies across Essex contribute immensely to Essex County Council's priorities, helping people to reach for the stars, to thrive, and to making Essex a great place.

The Leader wished to support and encourage that, in our smallest cultural organisations just as much as in our major arts bodies and so in January there will be launched the Arts and Cultural Fund to unlock £1m of funding over five years to support Essex's cultural sectors

Grants of between £2,500 and £30,000 will be available to all types of arts organisation, of all sizes, to help to sustain a thriving cultural sector and recognise the excellent work they do in helping us to shape the county and support our residents

The qualification criteria and the way to apply will be announced shortly

## 9. Council 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

That the following amendments to the constitution be made with effect from the close of this meeting:

- (1) Amend paragraph 16.9.4 of the constitution to read:

#### 16.9.4 Seconder's speech and order of speeches

- (i) The following rules apply to determine when the Seconder of a motion may speak when a motion is being debated:
- (a) a Member who has seconded a motion other than the motion to adopt the council's budget or a motion arising from a report, will be permitted to speak at the start of the debate or, if that member declares an intention to do so, at the end of the debate on the motion;
  - (b) a Member who has seconded the motion to adopt the council's budget or a motion arising from a report budget motion, will be permitted to speak at the start of the debate or, if that member declares an intention to do so, at the end of the debate on the motion, immediately before the summing up speech;
- (ii) The order of speeches at the end of the debate is:
- (a) seconders of amendments not moved by a Cabinet Member who have not already spoken, followed by
  - (b) seconders of amendments moved by a Cabinet Member who have not already spoken, followed by
  - (c) the seconder of the substantive motion if they have not already spoken, and
  - (d) on a motion to adopt the Council's budget or a motion arising from a report, the proposer or Leader as provided for elsewhere in the constitution'
- (2) Amend paragraph 16.9.6(iii)(a) to read:
- '(a) The Leader of the Council or, at the discretion of the Leader of the Council, the Cabinet Member with responsibility for

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Finance, when making the budget speech and summing up the debate – no time limit;’

- (3) Amend paragraph 16.9.8 of the constitution to read:

**‘16.9.8 Amendments to motions**

- (i) Amendments may be moved in accordance with this standing order if they are relevant to the motion and propose changes to the motion by either:
- (a) changing the motion so that it refers a matter to a Committee, the Cabinet or a Portfolio Holder for consideration or reconsideration;
  - (b) to leave out words;
  - (c) to leave out words and insert or add others; or
  - (d) to insert or add words;
- but such omission, insertion or addition of words shall not have the effect of introducing a new subject matter into the motion before the Council or negating the motion.
- (ii) No amendment may be moved unless:
- (a) it has been put in writing and handed to the Head of Democracy and Transparency by no later than 12:00 midday on the working day before the meeting in a format to be specified by the Monitoring Officer; or
  - (b) the Chairman agrees that there are exceptional reasons why (i) could not have been complied with.
- (iii) At any time before the conclusion of their speech the mover of a motion may indicate to the Chairman that they accept any amendment which has been moved and, if an amendment is accepted
- a. the motion shall be treated as having been moved as amended by the accepted amendment; and
  - b. the amendment motion shall be considered to have been withdrawn.
- (iv) Subject to (v) below, only one amendment may be moved and discussed at any one time. No further amendment shall be moved until the amendment under discussion has been disposed of.
- (v) The Chairman may permit two or more amendments to be discussed (but not voted on) together if circumstances suggest that this course would facilitate the proper conduct of the Council's business.
- (vi) If an amendment is not carried, further amendments to the original motion may be moved in accordance with this Standing Order.

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- (vii) If an amendment is carried, the motion as amended shall take the place of the original motion and shall become the substantive motion.
- (viii) Where an amendment is carried or accepted and there are one or more further amendments which have not been disposed of which are not compatible with the motion as amended, the Chairman must either:
- (a) give each proposer of an amendment the opportunity to revise their amendment in a way that the Chairman agrees makes it compatible with the principal changes effected by the carried or accepted amendment; or
- (a) decide not to put the amendment to the vote if the Chairman considers the amendment cannot reasonably be made compatible.
- (ix) After an amendment has been carried, the Chairman will, if requested to do so by Members, read out the amended motion before accepting any further amendments for debate, and, if there are none, put the amended motion to the vote.'
- (4) Insert a new paragraph 16.11.1(viii) into the constitution to read:
- '(viii) In addition, at one meeting each year, normally the meeting taking place in the autumn, a second Executive Statement relating to the Council's financial position shall be permitted to be made by the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Finance.'
- (5) Insert a temporary paragraph at the start of paragraph 16.12 of the constitution (to expire at the close of the annual meeting in 2022:
- 'Standing orders 16.12.1 – 16.12.4 are suspended until after the annual meeting of the Council taking place in 2022.'**
- (6) Insert a new paragraph at the end of section 15.3.8 (Delegations to the Director, Legal and Assurance:
- '(xiv) To amend the list of approved bodies at appendix 3 to part 26 of the constitution after consulting the Leader and the Chairman of the Council.
- PROVIDED THAT any use of this delegated power shall be reported to the next Annual Meeting of Council.'
- (7) In the list of joint committees in paragraph 13.3 of the constitution insert at the end:
- 'Association of South Essex Local Authorities Joint Committee'

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- (8) Add the constitution of the Association of South Essex Local Authorities Joint Committee (appendix 1 to this report) at the end of Appendix 4 to the Constitution.
  - (9) Replace paragraph 15.3.3 of the constitution with the text below and renumber remaining parts of 15.3 and agree that as a transitional provision, the authorisations issued by the Executive Director, Place and Public Health continue to have effect until replaced by authorisations issued by holders of the new posts.

**‘15.3.3                      To the Executive Director, Economy, Investment and Public Health**

- (i) To exercise the Council’s functions relating to the economic development of Essex and its residents.
- (ii) To exercise the Council’s powers with respect to regulatory services and licensing and decisions in connection with permits, regulations, permissions or certificates.
- (iii) To exercise the Council’s functions as a local planning authority except for:
  - (a) approval of planning applications where objections are raised by other Local Authorities or where there are more than two individual representations raising planning related objections;
  - (b) approval of planning applications where it has been determined that an environmental impact assessment is required;
  - (c) approval of planning applications where there are objections and the Chairman of the Development and Regulation Committee determines, in consultation with the Chief Planning Officer, that the application should be determined by the Committee; and
  - (d) approval of planning applications which amount to a significant departure from the development Plan.
- (iv) To exercise the Council’s powers with respect to property and facilities management.
- (v) To exercise the Council’s powers with respect to towns and village greens.

**15.3.4 To the Executive Director, Climate, Environment and Customer Services**

- (i) To exercise the Council's functions relating to the promotion of tourism.
- (ii) To exercise the Council's functions relating to highways, transportation and traffic other than determination of applications or proposals for modification of the definitive map and statement of public rights of way.
- (iii) To exercise the Council's functions relating to recycling and the disposal of waste.
- (iv) To exercise the Council's functions relating to improving the environmental performance and wellbeing of Essex including flood management.
- (v) To exercise the Council's functions relating to
  - (a) Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages
  - (b) The Coroner's Service

**15.3.5 To the Director, Well-being, Public Health and Communities**

- (i) To exercise the Council's functions relating to sport and physical activity.
- (ii) To exercise the Council's functions as a trading standards (weights and measures) authority, as a health and safety enforcement authority, as a food authority, all powers to protect animal health and welfare and all regulatory services relating to the protection of consumers and regulation of businesses.
- (iii) To exercise the Council's functions relating to unlawful encampments.
- (iv) To exercise the Council's functions relating to the prevention and reduction of crime and disorder.
- (v) To exercise the Council's powers to take steps to improve the health of the public and exercise powers under public health legislation.

## 10. Establishment of a Joint Committee for the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community

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

### Resolved

1. That the Council participate in a Joint Committee with Tendring District Council and Colchester Borough Council in relation to the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community on the terms appended to the report.
2. That the seats on the committee be allocated to the Conservative Group.
3. That the documents appended to the report are added to appendix 4 to the constitution and that a new paragraph be added at the end of section 13.2 of the Constitution as follows:

‘The Colchester Tendring Borders Joint Committee, whose constitution and terms of reference is at appendix 4 will exercise council functions in accordance with the terms of the delegations granted to it by full Council from time to time.’

## 11. 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

To receive the list of urgent decisions taken as attached as Appendix 1 to the report and the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 15 October attached as Appendix 2.

## 12. Written Questions

The published answers to the 15 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 may be found as [a video on YouTube](#) or as [an audio recording on the ECC website](#).

The written questions and answers were:

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

'There have been an increasing number of incidents involving the cycle ways on Broomfield Road, Chelmsford.

Many instances of cyclists and motor-ability scooters riding these routes in a contra-flow direction to the traffic. This is a danger to motorists manoeuvring to turn, passengers alighting from buses who have to cross the cycle path to reach the pavement, as well as the riders themselves.

Are there any immediate plans to clearly indicate on and around these cycle paths the direction that should be travelled?'

**Reply**

'Thank you for bringing this concern to our attention.

We have provided cycle symbols within the lanes along the length of the cycle lanes which are orientated in the direction of travel.

Unfortunately, therefore the instances you have mentioned are down to user behaviour. We expect cyclists to follow the highway code and use the lanes correctly.

The Project Team will be holding a Technical Review meeting in due course and this item will be added for further consideration.

You may wish to consider contacting the Parish Council and asking them to remind residents how to use them correctly via one of their regular communication methods.'

**2. By Councillor Gadd of the Cabinet Member for Highways Maintenance and Sustainable Transport**

'I have been asked a number of questions regarding ECC's neglect of Protected Verges in Uttlesford. I understand that the same issues apply across Essex, although the problem is particularly acute in Uttlesford, which has more Protected Verges than any other district.

The principal issues are:

1. Protected Verges should be clearly marked with wooden posts, white marker plaques and reflectors but they are not being. More than 50% of the sites in Uttlesford require post and plaque work and 20% are not properly marked, which leads to them being damaged;
2. There are problems with lack of funding from ECC, lack of posts, plaques and reflectors and lack of personnel – since the work is of its nature roadside work, it is not generally safe to use volunteers and some of the work must be done by qualified staff. Uttlesford District Council have replaced some

- plaques themselves, but currently 95 plaques need replacing, and reflectors adding; UDC do not have enough plaques and ECC say they have no more;
3. There are 7 more sites – or extensions to existing sites - in Uttlesford where new rare flora has been found and which should be recognised as special verges. ECC however has a policy of not recognising new sites unless others are de-registered, which means that valuable sites are not receiving the protection they should receive.

I have separately sent you a detailed schedule of the defects in the Uttlesford network. These verges represent rare chalk grassland habitat, and the whole network, in Uttlesford and Essex more widely, should be being properly protected with marker posts, plaques and reflectors, and it is not.

Point 10 of this Council's 20-point plan commits to enhancing the natural environment in Essex; can I ask what you will do to remedy this situation please.'

### **Reply**

'Unfortunately, damage to posts can occur, either through natural deterioration, damage by contractors cutting the verges, damage by vehicles and, in a few cases, posts being removed or knocked over by persons unknown.

We maintain a record of post and plaque issues, as reported by the verge representatives. In March 2019, 86 post and plaque replacements carried out across the county. These are programmed for maintenance in line with our maintenance programme but you may wish to put a formal request into your Local Highways Panel to see if capital funding could be allocated to the replacement of missing posts.

We conduct reviews of all Special Road Verges to ensure they are still of value to the scheme and include as part of this feedback from all verge representatives with several changes made because of this feedback. We must make choices about how we prioritise and manage this service and one of the ways we do this is to add new verges where verges which no longer meet the scheme's purposes are removed.

In August of this year, once the review had been completed, we were notified by the Uttlesford verge representative co-ordinator about four sections of verge that might be eligible for inclusion in the scheme. Three of these have been visited.'

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

'Can the Portfolio Holder provide details of the comparable price of a bus fare for a 5 mile journey within Essex and a 5 mile journey in London.'

### **Reply**

'The fares charged by commercial operators are a matter for them and something that the County Council has no influence over and therefore do not collate.

Similarly, I do not have access to the prices that TfL charge nor the level of subsidy reflected in these prices.

Operating a bus service in a substantially rural county such as Essex is wholly different to doing so in a city like London. Essex is twice the size of greater London but has only 17% of the population. The two are simply not comparable.

I do however recognise that bus fares and the cost to travel are of concern to many residents. It is for this reason that Cabinet approved last month's Concessionary Fares paper which enables those who qualify on grounds of age or disability to travel free at certain times, with the costs of the revenue foregone by the bus operators met by taxpayers. Passengers using the national concessionary fares represent a third of all bus journeys, so they provide a major part of bus operators' income.

The development of an affordable and sustainable bus network is something that we are focused on through our Bus Service Improvement Plan and I will bear this question in mind as this develops.'

**4. By Councillor Henderson of the Cabinet Member for Highways Maintenance and Sustainable Transport**

'Can the Portfolio Holder provide a full list of the comparable prices of bus fares charged for a 5 mile journey within Essex by each individual bus company operating within the County.'

**Reply**

'The fares charged by commercial operators are a matter for them and something that the County Council has no influence over and therefore do not collate. Different operators provide services across different routes, with different levels of patronage and so it would be difficult to provide a like for like comparison.

As highlighted in my previous response the Bus Service Improvement Plan provides us with an opportunity to deliver sustained change in the bus network across Essex and I have provided a link [here](#) should you or other members wish to read it.'

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

'In my division there are footpaths that are impassable in places due to overgrown vegetation, brambles and the like. For instance, the footpath between Colchester Army Garrison and Monkwick Avenue, and Thomas Lord Audley School. It's so bad that lampposts are 5/6ft back into the hedgerow with part of the footpath buried. I have tried many times to get the Council to treat this with 1) Maintenance schedule, or 2) Highway Rangers.

It seems the very meagre resource of The Rangers, and the lack of response on maintenance budgets has resulted in me having to consider making these paths

safe. The bird nesting season will effect ability to undertake any work and I am concerned we have only until March to do some works.

Does the portfolio holder agree that footpaths meet the criteria of “Greener, Safer, Healthier” brand logo, and if so, could extra efforts be found to make these paths safer for mums/children in buggies with brambles in their face?

I would be very happy to accompany a walk through at any time.’

### Reply

‘The Public Right of Way team have investigated and it is believed that the side-growth is the adjoining landowner’s responsibility, which in this case is the Ministry of Defence/Defence Infrastructure Organisation MoD/ DIO). The PROW Team are liaising directly with the MoD/DIO in order that this overgrowth is addressed and I will endeavour to find a further update for you. As you will know, I had to cancel my second visit to your division which we have rescheduled so I would be happy to discuss this with you in more detail when I visit.’

## 6. **By Councillor Scordis of the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Community, Equality, Partnerships and Performance**

‘Having recently read the Library Strategy, can you please advise what plans are in place to target those disadvantaged children who are hard to reach?’

### Reply

‘As you will be aware, from 26 November 2021, residents can now have their say on Essex County Council’s new vision for Libraries, as the [draft Everyone’s Library Service 2022-2026](#) plan was published. If you have not already done so, I would encourage all members to respond and highlight it to residents in their divisions to do the same ahead of the 21 January 2022 closing date.

The draft plan emphasises helping children and adults improve their literacy, encouraging people to enjoy reading for pleasure and increasing the range of online resources available to customers. It also commits to keeping all 74 libraries open with investment in training and the upskilling of library staff.

The Library Service currently does and will, through the new plan, continue to engage and connect with hard to reach disadvantaged children through a variety of means, including:

- We publicise large scale activities (such as the Summer and Winter Reading Challenge) to the Family and Wellbeing Hubs, as well as the Children and Families Leads for Partnership Delivery.
- We coordinate with schools about library events and activities.
- We have also been doing some outreach to try to reach disadvantaged families, for example by attending the Holiday Activity and Food clubs during the summer.

- We reach every family through the Bookstart Baby packs which are given at birth registration appointments, and the Bookstart Treasure packs (via pre-schools).
- Library staff have received Bag book training (Reading packs designed to be used with children who have additional needs), and Basildon Library has already planned to do some Bag Books sessions with their local special school (Pioneer) in the new year.
- We focussed our recent author events in Basildon, Canvey, Clacton and Harwich libraries.
- We are also currently running additional BookTrust Story times in Basildon and Clacton Libraries. These sessions are specifically targeted at disadvantaged families (via their local Family and Wellbeing Service and local pre-schools and nurseries) and this is a partnership we will continue to build on, by promoting and delivering these sessions.
- As part of the Essex Year of Reading 2022 Campaign, we will be working with Children and Family Services and schools to target hard to reach children and communities.
- We will be increasing our outreach programme to reach early years settings, schools, and vulnerable communities who find it difficult to access library services for various different reasons.
- More events and activities are being planned in libraries based in areas of need.
- Through the new plan we will strengthen our outreach with local groups and vulnerable families within communities.
- We are also expanding the mobile library fleet to reach a greater number of destinations including those in traditionally hard to reach areas.'

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

'Does the portfolio holder think the Enhanced Partnership survey, which only provides very generic 'Agree/Disagree' answers, offers bus users a real chance to feedback on our bus services?'

**Reply**

'The consultation on the first Enhanced Partnership for Essex is not intended to be a consultation on the entire Essex bus network; it is very specifically about what should be included in our first Enhanced Partnership – hence the yes or no questions.'

The Department for Transport has set some challenging deadlines the consequences of which would be a significant loss of funding to both ECC and the bus industry if we missed it which is why the survey has been designed this way.

We do expect to bring forward further Enhanced Partnership schemes in future as a result of the area network reviews which are a commitment in this first scheme. That will then provide the opportunity for detailed comments on the bus network and there will be no time constraints so full public consultation will be possible. So, in conclusion, given the constraints of the process I am indeed content that this is a suitable consultation approach.'

**8. By Councillor McGurran of the Cabinet Member for Economic Renewal, Infrastructure and Planning**

'Could the Cabinet Member inform me what efforts are being made by Essex County Council to engage with the Lower Thames Crossing Project to ensure the potential economic benefits actually reach our residents. I am particularly keen that the residents of Pitsea and others in the south of the county are given every opportunity – particularly when it comes to employment, upskilling and apprenticeship opportunities.

Does the Cabinet member share my concerns that everything possible has to be done to ensure these opportunities reach the residents of divisions like my own and particularly those hard to reach groups who are often excluded from such opportunities. I would be grateful given the likely timescale of the project to know what early careers advice measures are being considered to promote these potential opportunities.'

**Reply**

'I agree it is essential that our communities across the county and South Essex in particular benefit from the opportunities that the Lower Thames Crossing will bring, both in terms of jobs during the construction phase and the economic opportunities that the new connection across the Thames will open up. My officers have been working closely with the Lower Thames Team to ensure that the project delivers an many socioeconomic benefits to the residents of Essex as possible. This will include local training, re-skilling, apprenticeships and other opportunities for those starting out in employment and those wishing to re-train. Both Thurrock and Havering councils are also looking to ensure that such opportunities are available, which will maximise the benefits for the whole area north of the River Thames and the wider geographical area, including Pitsea.

The Council plays a strong role in the LTC Benefits Steering Group along with other partners and has helped put together proposals to inform the Economic Development Stakeholder Group (EDSG) working with other affected Authorities, which in turn has led to the recently established LTC Skills Working Group. ECC is also contributing, in consultation with Thurrock and the Association of South Essex Authorities (ASELA), to discussions with National Highways about projects outside of the route which could benefit from Designated Funds being allocated to offset the

environmental, social and economic impact of the proposal to the benefit of residents. Discussions on this matter will progress in 2022.'

**9. By Councillor Grundy of the Cabinet Member for Education Excellence, Lifelong Learning and Employability**

'I recently attended a site meeting for the new Primary School at St Luke's, Runwell and was impressed at the progress being made, including plans for staff recruitment. Please could the Cabinet Member outline the steps being taken in the construction to support our carbon emission programme.'

**Reply**

'The new Primary School and 56 place Early Years Nursery on the St Luke's Park housing development, will provide the required long-term primary school and nursery capacity to meet forecast demand from the development. Without additional provision in this area, there is a significant risk that children moving into the area will not be able to access primary education within the locality of their home and need to travel further to access provision. As this school and nursery is on a new housing development it will benefit from safe, local, cycle and walking routes and therefore reduce the need for travel by car.

The aspiration is for the proposed buildings to achieve an Energy Performance rating of an 'A+', through the use of modelling and onsite generation (PV) to offset energy in use, meeting the overall vision and goal for energy efficient developments and a drive towards a reduction in carbon emissions. The PV panels will be providing 7kWp for the Nursery and 31 kWp for the Primary School. The design basis is to provide a sustainable approach to the design, construction and production of all facilities, in delivering a cost-effective and efficient educational site for optimal learning that includes the following:

- Optimal thermal comfort for building occupiers, maintaining appropriate internal temperatures, maintaining appropriate CO2 concentration levels, providing adequate fresh air and minimising cold draughts.
- Minimising the use of all fossil fuel resources
- Reducing the demand for energy and water during peak periods, minimising waste and CO2 emissions
- Designed and constructed to respond to constraints and opportunities and adapt to future impacts of climate change.
- Effective measuring and monitoring of the performance of the buildings in operation. Automation of building service plant from a BMS system.

Climate Based Daylight Modelling has been used to assess daylight factors. Artificial lighting will comprise of high efficiency LED light fittings, with automatic controls such as daylight dimming, absence or presence detection to ensure energy efficiency. Lighting will be designed in line with CIBSE LG5 Lighting in Education.'

**10. By Councillor Playle of the Cabinet Member for Economic Renewal, Infrastructure and Planning**

'The proposed A12 widening scheme between Junction 19 and 25 is set to have a significant impact on reducing traffic congestion and improving road safety in North East Essex. Parts of the existing A12 between Witham and Marks Tey are set to be stood down and handed over to Essex County Council's control. Can I ask the Cabinet Member to consider undertaking a scoping exercise for the possible future uses of what will be a newly acquired asset for the Council and to investigate the merits of creating an active travel rewilded corridor with opportunities for walking, cycling and buses?'

**Reply**

It is our understanding that National Highways intends to submit an application for development consent for this scheme next summer (2022) and I am pleased to confirm that we are already working internally on the scope for any potential future uses for these de-trunked parts of the carriageway to maximise the benefits to Essex residents, particularly from a climate and sustainability perspective. In addition to the work we are doing internally, we are also working with National Highways on their A12 proposals and we welcome suggestions, such as a new country park, which would help enhance the local environment and mitigate against negative climate change impacts.

**11. By Councillor Barber of the Cabinet Member for Education Excellence, Lifelong Learning and Employability**

'Could the Cabinet Member please confirm, whether the previous administration at Colchester Borough Council's decision to only agree £1m of s.106 funding from the Chesterwell development for education, as opposed to the £14m Essex County Council said was necessary, is a significant factor as to the delay in the opening of the permanent site for Trinity School?'

**Reply**

'The decision by a previous administration at Colchester Borough Council to only stipulate £1M as a S106 contribution towards education, rather than the £14M requested by ECC at the time was not in itself a factor that has delayed the opening of new school buildings for Trinity School. While not delaying the project, it has placed the burden of funding the new school on the taxpayer, rather than the housing developer.

One of the issues related to the S106 agreement that has caused delay to the delivery of the new school buildings, is the condition of the new school site itself. ECC raised significant concerns at the time of signing the S106 agreement that the site would be unsuitable, however the agreement was signed, albeit with obligations placed on the developer to improve the site. These obligations have not been met to our satisfaction, and we are pursuing the developer to meet their obligations as stipulated in the S106 agreement. With these obligations unmet, hundreds of

thousands of pounds of further cost is placed on the taxpayer to mitigate the site issues.'

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

'Network Rail has chosen to close off the railway footbridge that connects Mandeville Way and Durham Road on the grounds of safety works. The works were promised in August then Network Rail rescheduled the works for October and these works were cancelled.

Network Rail has failed to communicate with the local residents.

Will the Cabinet Member for Highways please use his office to apply pressure upon Network Rail to get this well used footbridge back open to the public?'

**Reply**

'If you can provide me with more information with regards to these works including any contact details, I will contact Network Rail, however it may be that I have limited influence over Network Rail and their programme of works.'

**13. By Councillor Smith of the Cabinet Member for Economic Renewal, Infrastructure and Planning**

'Has Cllr Wagland ever taken the chance to visit Basildon town centre with her most relevant team of officers to form an opinion of how her team can support Basildon Borough Council? If so, when was this and what are the after-thoughts of Cllr. Wagland and her team for Economic Renewal?'

If Cllr Wagland has not taken such a visit to Basildon town centre with officer support, when does she intend to do so and will Cllr. Wagland also meet with the members of Basildon Borough Council's Regeneration and Economic Development Committee during this visit?'

**Reply**

'Last week my cabinet colleagues and I were due to meet in Basildon to look at economic developments that are underway, discuss what is planned for the future and consider whether there are any other opportunities that we could pursue. Sadly, that meeting was cancelled due to Covid; however, a new date will be scheduled in the new year, where we will meet with the Chair of Basildon Borough Council's (BBC) Regeneration and Economic Development Committee to discuss our shared priorities and how we can work together to support economic growth and regeneration in the town.

Basildon's economy is one of the largest in the county and it is important that we support continued economic growth and assist residents to access the existing and future employment opportunities in and around the town.

In October we delivered a virtual Jobs Fair which attracted 2,231 viewers and was supported by over 30 businesses and Training Providers. There were more than 1,830 clicks on the virtual vacancy board and the live chat function was well received by job seekers and employers.

The exciting new Evolve project that is targeting unemployed people who have been negatively affected by covid is being promoted at the Eastgate Centre now. Evolve provides free one to one support to residents via an advisor, who can help them with opportunities for employment, training and personal development. The service is available until the end of March next year.

In January we are planning to deliver the Working Families programme which will target families who are just about managing financially. A qualified Careers Adviser will offer information, advice and guidance around opportunities for upskilling and career change.

There is also regular engagement between ECC and BBC officers, including a joint meeting between ECC's Corporate Leadership Team and the Basildon Borough Council Senior Management Team in November, where shared priorities to improve outcomes for local residents was discussed.

Essex County Council is also a member of the Association of South Essex Local Authorities (ASELA) whose members include all district and unitary Councils in Southern Essex. Our aim is to deliver improved prosperity and wellbeing by working together on a collective scale to ensure that we can make the biggest possible impact on the area. The five pioneering programmes that we are jointly working on include,

- Superfast Digital Connectivity
- Thames Freeport
- South Essex Estuary Park
- Infrastructure and housing
- South Essex Technical University

We regularly meet with regeneration and economic development colleagues from all partners of ASELA and I very much look forward to playing my role in developing these relationships as we work to address the specific issues that affect the south of Essex, including Basildon.'

**14. By Councillor Mackrory of the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Community, Equality, Partnerships and Performance**

'Levelling up Essex – Concept to Action

At the October Council a motion regarding the above was passed which called on the Secretary of State for the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to positively engage with ECC as a matter of priority. What contact has been made by the Secretary of State as of 29th November 2021 to that request?'

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**Reply**

'Since October we have been in dialogue with the Secretary of State regarding the Levelling Up White Paper, which is anticipated shortly. He is aware of the work Essex is undertaking and we expect to continue this conversation in more detail following the publication of the paper.

We have also received a very positive response from the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Levelling Up, the Union and Constitution. He was very pleased to see our commitment to levelling up all parts of the County, as set out in the 'Everyone's Essex' Plan.

His response recognised that our officers were already well engaged with his in central government and acknowledged that there was much to build on in Essex, recognising the two upcoming freeports, our commitment to tackling climate change and our request for additional funding to support and enhance our priorities. He welcomed all our ideas and stated that he looks forward to meeting up soon.

We will continue to build this relationship both on the officer side and politically. In January we will begin to launch the next phase of our levelling up plans and I look forward to sharing more information with you then.'

**15. By Councillor Mackrory of the Cabinet Member for Education Excellence, Lifelong Learning and Employability**

'Case of unfair dismissal of Essex Headteacher

In the light of the recent Employment Tribunal case when Judge John Crosfill severely criticised Essex County Council's handling of the headteachers dismissal, what changes in procedure have been put in place to prevent such an occurrence happening again?'

**Reply**

'As the Member will be aware from the judgment there are still reporting restrictions in place. The case is still live and I have been advised that it is not appropriate to give public comment beyond the published statements which have been widely reported. In general, the Council is always looking to improve how it responds, including its own procedures (what it does) and draw learning from any source possible.'

**13. 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 as [a video on YouTube](#) or as [an audio recording on the ECC website](#).

The questions asked were:

<b>Question asked by</b>	<b>Question asked to</b>	<b>Subject</b>
Councillor Chris Pond	Leader	Loughton Library lift
Councillor Mick Skeels	Cabinet Member for Children and Families	Outcome of Ofsted inspection
Councillor Kerry Smith	Leader	Charges at Essex Car Parks by Thurrock Council
Councillor Mike Mackrory	Highways Maintenance and Sustainable Transport	Highways defect at Sandford Road that lacks a dropped kerb

**14. Closure of Meeting**

A recording of the Chairman's closing remarks and of the meeting is available as [a video on YouTube](#) or as [an audio recording on the ECC website](#).

The meeting closed at 11:55am

**Chairman**