

Minutes of the meeting of the Full Council, held in the Council Chamber County Hall, Chelmsford, Essex on Tuesday, 12 February 2019

Present:

Chairman: Councillor J G Jowers
Vice-Chairman: Councillor E C Johnson

J Abbott	I Grundy	J Moran
J F Aldridge	C Guglielmi	M Platt
B Aspinell	M Hardware	R Pratt
J Baker	D Harris	J M Reeves
S Barker	A M Hedley	P Reid
J Beavis	I Henderson	S Robinson
K Bentley	J Henry	C Sargeant
M Buckley	S Hillier	W Schmitt
G Butland	A Jackson	L Scordis
J Chandler	D J Kendall	A Sheldon
P Channer	S Lissimore	K Smith
T Cutmore	M Mackrory	C Souter
A Davies	R A Madden	J Spence
J Deakin	M Maddocks	M Steptoe
M Durham	B Massey	A Turrell
B Egan	M McEwen	L Wagland
A Erskine	L McKinlay	S Walsh
D Finch	V Metcalfe	C Weston
R Gadsby	R Mitchell	A Wood
A Goggin	G Mohindra	J A Young
R J Gooding	Dr R Moore	

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.

The Chairman, Councillor Jowers, formally opened the meeting

The Chairman reminded those present that the meeting would be recorded and broadcast live over the internet.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Ball, Blackwell, Brown, Canning, Honeywood, Lumley, May, Pond and Whitbread.

2. Declarations of Interest

The Chairman reminded Members of the advice they had been given by the Monitoring Officer:

(a) concerning those who may have any arrears of Council Tax outstanding for two months or more that they must make a declaration and were not entitled to vote on the Annual Budget but were not prevented from taking part in the discussion; and

(b) on the need for declarations of interest relating to the Budget debate.

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Confirmation of the minutes of the meeting held on 11 December 2018

Resolved:

That the minutes of the ordinary meeting held on 11 December 2018 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4. Chairman's Announcements and Communications

Recent Deaths

Former Councillor Joan Martin

The Chairman announced the death of former Councillor Joan Martin who passed away on Monday 31 December at the age of 96.

She had been an Essex County Councillor from July 1967 to May 1989 and represented the Division of Ongar, serving on numerous committees including the Education, Police and Planning Committees, as well as being the Chairman of both the Social Services Committee and the Basildon and Thurrock Health Authority. She had been awarded an OBE in 1989 in recognition of a lifetime of public service and made an Honorary Alderman of Essex County Council in 2006.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor McEwen added her condolences on behalf of the residents of the Division she had served.

Tracey Spear, Youth Service Manager

The Chairman informed members that one of our officers, Tracey Spear, Youth Service Manager had died following a short illness.

The Chairman noted that it was unusual for the death of an officer in service to be mentioned at a meeting of Council, but she had worked very closely with a number of Members through the Youth Strategy Groups and the Young Essex Assembly, and he had a request from Councillor Ray Gooding, Cabinet Member for Education, that he should say a few words.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Gooding added his condolences and reminded Members of success on both the national and local scale, her recent winning of the Essex 'You Make a Difference Award' and the good humour that Tracey Spear had brought to the role.

Members stood in remembrance.

Awards**Ofsted**

The Chairman noted that the Council's Children's Services had been inspected by Ofsted in November 2018 and had been rated 'outstanding'. The Chairman invited Councillor Madden to speak and he mentioned the inspirational leadership of Helen Lincoln, Executive Director for Children and Families and introduced Sukriti Sen, Director for Local Delivery, Children, Young People and Families who received, on behalf of the whole service, his personal thanks.

Friendship City

The Chairman received, on behalf of the Council, from Councillor Bentley, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure, an Award to Essex, Friendship City for Exchanges and Cooperation with China, from the Chinese Government (CIFCC). He paid particular tribute to Peter Manning, Head of Essex International and his teams both in the UK and in China for their excellent work.

Essex Pension Fund

The Chairman received, on behalf of the Council, from Councillor Barker, Cabinet Member for Customer and Corporate and Chairman of the Essex Pension Fund Strategy Board an award for the "Best use of Private Equity Investment" category at the 2019 at the Alternative Investment Awards organised by the publication Institutional Investor. She paid tribute to the Pensions Team.

New Year's Honours

The Chairman informed members that the New Year's Honours list had included:

- Mr Peter Manning, Head of Essex International, for services to UK/China relations, an OBE (Officer of the Order of the British Empire). At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Bentley, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure spoke a few words of congratulation.
- Mrs Aimee Hinton, Social Worker, Essex County Council, for services to children's social care, a BEM (British Empire Medal)

5. Receipt of petitions and deputations

The Chairman received petitions from:

- Councillor Sargeant concerning pedestrian safety on Frinton Road, Holland on Sea,
- Councillor Sargeant concerning 'Saving Holland Library',
- Councillor Gadsby concerning lorries and speeding in Upshire Road, Waltham Abbey,
- Councillor Reid concerning the proposed closure of Vange and Fryerns Libraries,
- Councillor Robinson concerning Saving Essex Libraries from various locations in Essex,
- Councillor Smith concerning outstanding highways matters; and
- Councillor Aspinell concerning Saving Essex Libraries (at the invitation of The Chairman this was presented later in the meeting)

Additionally, with the permission of the Chairman, Councillor Goggin presented four individual letters from residents concerning the libraries consultation.

6. Organisation Plan and Budget 2019/20

The Council received the Report on the Budget 2019/20 and
Appendix A – Essex Organisation Plan 2019/20
Appendix B – Equality Impact Assessment (Organisation Plan and Budget)
Appendix C – Pay Policy Statement 2019/20

It was moved by the Leader of the Council, Councillor Finch and seconded by the Cabinet Member for Finance, Commercial and Traded Services, Councillor McKinlay that the statement by the Section 151 (S151) Officer on the adequacy of reserves, robustness of the 2019/20 revenue budget and the Capital Strategy be noted and that the recommendations on the Organisation Plan and Budget 2019/20 as set out in the report be approved.

It was moved by Councillor Smith and seconded by Councillor Abbott that the recommended budget be amended as follows:

‘To remove the budget for private health care for senior managers and reallocate that sum of money (£366,000 per annum) into the Libraries Budget, for the purposes of keeping as many Tier Four libraries open as possible.’

It was moved by Councillor Mackrory and seconded by Councillor Robinson that the recommended budget be amended as follows:

‘1.0 Maximise the use of and retain the Essex Library network

- 1.1 Increase the Libraries budget (Customer and Corporate Portfolio) by **£150,000** subject to reducing the **Transformation Reserve** by an equivalent amount in 2019/20 and thereafter added to the Medium-Term Resources Strategy for action to be identified to determine a permanent funding solution. This additional funding to be used to recruit four Audience Development Officers to promote reading and the love of books and literature amongst children, young people and their families to maximise the use of libraries.
- 1.2 To increase the 2019/20 capital programme by **£1m** (to be funded from the Reserve for Future Capital Funding) to explore the opportunities to adapt, convert and extend the Library buildings for greater community use and commercial activity. This could include redevelopment into residential or commercial use with purpose built library accommodation on the ground floor for example. This could generate extra income to support revenue costs and capital receipts.

2.0 Tackling the crisis in Preventative Care

- 2.1 Increase the Public Health budget by **£2.5m** (Health and Adult Social Care portfolio), subject to reducing the **Transformation Reserve** by an equivalent amount and thereafter added to the Medium-Term Resources Strategy for action to be identified to determine a permanent funding solution. This additional funding to go some way to meet the savage cuts to this budget by the government of £4.9m since 2016/17. This will enable more vital work to prevent smoking related illness, obesity, mental health issues with young people including suicide prevention and sexual health conditions thereby reducing the financial cost of costly treatment to the NHS. We will promote the benefits of investing in match-funding this significant additional expenditure with the Clinical Commissioning Groups to provide more mental health counselling support in infant and primary schools to help identify and address mental health issues at an early age

3.0 Supporting Essex's young people

- 3.1 An increase of **£350,000** in the budget provision for Youth Services (Education and Skills portfolio) for the provision of Youth Service projects including, support, mentoring and respite for young carers, school lunchtime clubs/drop in sessions run by youth workers and outreach work, including detached working. The increase is to be funded by a withdrawal from the **Transformation Reserve** in 2019/20 and thereafter added to the Medium-Term Resources Strategy for action to be identified to determine a permanent funding solution, subject to the evaluation of the pilot.
- 3.2 An increase of **£250,000** in the budget provision for Passenger Transport (Education and Skills portfolio) to go towards helping support low income families with 16 - 18-year-old students in full time Further Education with travel costs. The increase to be financed by a withdrawal from the **Transformation Reserve** in 2019/20 and thereafter added to the Medium-Term Resources Strategy for action to be identified to determine a permanent funding solution.

4.0 Investing in our infrastructure and keeping Essex safe

- 4.1 An increase in the 2019/20 capital programme provision for **Local Highways Panels** (Infrastructure portfolio) of **£4m**. This will be allocated to individual panels, to return their total funding to the 2015/16 level (i.e. to £8m).
- 4.2 The additional **£4m** referred to above will be funded by a transfer from the Capital programme provision for Highways Infrastructure.
- 4.3 There are three council areas where bus lane and bus gate enforcement exist that are budgeted to raise **£2.4m** in 2019/20 from fines. (In 2017/18 these were Basildon £108,000, Chelmsford £847,000, Colchester £926,000). It is proposed to reduce the Roads Maintenance capital programme and further increase the Local Highways Panels budget by **£2.4m** for Basildon, Chelmsford and Colchester, pro-rata to the revenue income collected from bus lane and bus gate enforcement fines, to help fund higher cost projects in those areas.
- 4.4 To increase the street lighting budget (Infrastructure portfolio) by **£12,500** to enable 2,500 LED lights to be left on throughout the night (equivalent to a 3% increase in all night lighting in Essex) in areas to be identified by working alongside the Local Police, the Local Member and the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership. This increase to be funded by a withdrawal from the Transformation Reserve in 2019/20 and thereafter added to the Medium-Term Resources Strategy for action to be identified to determine a permanent funding solution.

5.0 Reducing Fly Tipping

- 5.1 An increase of **£250,000** in the budget provision for Waste Disposal (Environment and Waste portfolio) to enable all Civic Amenity Sites once again to accept residents' DIY waste. This increase is to be funded from the **Transformation Reserve** in 2019/20 and thereafter added to the Medium-Term Resources Strategy for action to be identified pending the outcome of a review of the service.
- 5.2 Commission resources to undertake a full assessment and develop a business case for a 'Clean Air Zones' scheme in our large towns and city to tackle air pollution. This could include charging heavily polluting vehicles entering those zones. The costs of the business case development (**£22,000**) to be funded from the Transformation Reserve
- 5.3 Commission resources to undertake a full assessment and develop a business case to investigate the benefits of investing in further solar energy on Essex County Council property including schools and in particular new schools. The assessment to investigate again the viability of a solar energy farm on council owned land. The costs of the business case development (**£22,000**) to be funded from the Transformation Reserve.

6.0 Summary of Proposals and Ongoing Impact

- 6.1 A number of the amendments that are proposed to be funded from reserves in 2019/20 have an ongoing impact on the MTRS from 2020/21 onwards, increasing the gap in future years by the amount shown in the table below

Description	£000
Investment in Public Health	2,500
Investment in the Youth Service	350
Investment in Post 16 Transport Provision	250
Investment in Waste Disposal	250
Investment in the Libraries Service	150
Investment in Street Lighting	13
Ongoing impact after 2019/20	3,513
Development of Clean Air Zones business case	22
Development of Solar Energy business case	22
One off cost in 2019/20	44
Total cost	3,557

It is recognised that this increases the 2020/21 budget gap from £72m to £75m

- 6.2 The impact on reserves in 2019/20 is summarised in the below table

Reserve	2019/20		
	Current estimated	Proposed	Revised estimated
	closing balance	additional usage	closing balance
	£000	£000	£000
Future Capital Funding	13,061	(1,000)	12,061
Transformation	13,493	(3,557)	9,936

- 6.3 The amendments also impact on the 2019/20 capital programme as follows

Description	Current		
	2019/20	Proposed 2019/20	Increase/
	Budget	Budget	(decrease)
	£000	£000	£000
Adaptation/conversion of Libraries premises	-	1,000	1,000
Additional funding for Local Highways Panels	4,600	11,000	6,400
Reduction to Roads Maintenance	36,750	30,350	(6,400)

It was moved by Councillor Henderson and seconded by Councillor Young that the budget be amended as follows:

- 1) 'An additional £500,000 as a one-off investment in the Library service which will be used to invest in the use of digital media with the libraries and book stocks, support the promotion of the Library as community hubs, provide digital training to the community. Subject to increasing the budget for Customer and Corporate portfolio by £500,000 and a necessary withdrawal from the earmarked Transformation Reserve being recommended to the Council.
- 2) An additional £200,000 in each of the next three years to increase the budget for Children with Disabilities. This funding will be used to for a promotion campaign for families who may be eligible for this care including hard to reach families to increase take up of support, increase awareness of the service offer and the increased demand associated with this. A reduction in the Project Management policy line by £200,000 to reflect re prioritisation of resources to Children with Disabilities. Subject to increasing the budget for Children and Families portfolio by £200,000 and reducing the budget for the Leader RSSS portfolio by £200,000 being recommended to the Council.'

Upon being put to the meeting the amendment moved by Councillor Smith and seconded by Councillor Abbott was declared to be **lost**.

Ten Members having stood in their places the amendment moved by Councillor Mackrory and seconded by Councillor Robinson was put to a named vote and was **lost** by 15 votes for, 45 against and 4 abstentions.

Those Members voting for the motion were Councillors:

B Aspinell	I Henderson	C Sargeant
J Baker	D J Kendall	L Scordis
A Davies	M Mackrory	A Turrell
J Deakin	P Reid	A Wood
D Harris	S Robinson	J A Young

Those Members voting against the motion were Councillors:

J F Aldridge	R J Gooding	R Mitchell
S Barker	I Grundy	G Mohindra
J Beavis	C Guglielmi	Dr R Moore
K Bentley	M Hardware	J Moran
M Buckley	A M Hedley	M Platt
G Butland	J Henry	R Pratt
J Chandler	S Hillier	J M Reeves
P Channer	A Jackson	W Schmitt
T Cutmore	S Lissimore	A Sheldon
M Durham	R A Madden	C Souter
B Egan	M Maddocks	J Spence
A Erskine	B Massey	M Steptoe
D Finch	M McEwen	L Wagland
R Gadsby	L McKinlay	S Walsh
A Goggin	V Metcalfe	C Weston

Those abstaining were Councillors Abbott, Johnson, Jowers and Smith.

Upon being put to the meeting the amendment moved by Councillor Henderson and seconded by Councillor Young was put to a named vote and was **lost** by 16 votes for, 45 against and 3 abstentions.

Those Members voting for the motion were Councillors:

J Abbott	I Henderson	L Scordis
B Aspinell	D J Kendall	A Turrell
J Baker	M Mackrory	A Wood
A Davies	P Reid	J A Young

J Deakin	S Robinson
D Harris	C Sargeant

Those Members voting against the motion were Councillors:

J F Aldridge	R J Gooding	R Mitchell
S Barker	I Grundy	G Mohindra
J Beavis	C Guglielmi	Dr R Moore
K Bentley	M Hardware	J Moran
M Buckley	A M Hedley	M Platt
G Butland	J Henry	R Pratt
J Chandler	S Hillier	J M Reeves
P Channer	A Jackson	W Schmitt
T Cutmore	S Lissimore	A Sheldon
M Durham	R A Madden	C Souter
B Egan	M Maddocks	J Spence
A Erskine	B Massey	M Steptoe
D Finch	M McEwen	L Wagland
R Gadsby	L McKinlay	S Walsh
A Goggin	V Metcalfe	C Weston

Those abstaining were Councillors Johnson, Jowers and Smith.

In accordance with Standing Order 16.10.2 (Voting on budget decisions) the Motion was put to a division by name and **carried** by 45 votes for, 15 against and 4 abstentions.

Those voting for the Motion were Councillors:

J F Aldridge	R J Gooding	R Mitchell
S Barker	I Grundy	G Mohindra
J Beavis	C Guglielmi	Dr R Moore
K Bentley	M Hardware	J Moran
M Buckley	A M Hedley	M Platt
G Butland	J Henry	R Pratt
J Chandler	S Hillier	J M Reeves
P Channer	A Jackson	W Schmitt
T Cutmore	S Lissimore	A Sheldon
M Durham	R A Madden	C Souter

B Egan	M Maddocks	J Spence
A Erskine	B Massey	M Steptoe
D Finch	M McEwen	L Wagland
R Gadsby	L McKinlay	S Walsh
A Goggin	V Metcalfe	C Weston

Those voting against the Motion were Councillors:

B Aspinell	I Henderson	L Scordis
J Baker	D J Kendall	K Smith
A Davies	M Mackrory	A Turrell
J Deakin	P Reid	A Wood
D Harris	S Robinson	J A Young

Those abstaining were Councillors Abbott, Johnson, Jowers and Sargeant.

Resolved:

That the statement by the Section 151 (S151) Officer's on the adequacy of reserves, robustness of the 2019/20 revenue budget and the Capital Strategy be noted and:

Revenue and Capital Budget

1. That the Organisation Plan be approved in the form appended to the report.
2. The net cost of services be set at **£939.9million (m)** for 2019/20 - Appendix A (page 28 of the report).
3. The net revenue budget requirement be set at **£878.9m** (net cost of services less general government grants) for 2019/20 – Appendix A (page 28 of the report)
4. The total council tax funding requirement be set at **£671.3m** for 2019/20 – Appendix A (page 28 of the report).
5. That a 1% social care precept be levied and a 2.99% increase to Essex County Council's element of the council tax, therefore the Essex County Council element of the council tax for charge for a Band D property in 2019/20 will be **£1,270.44**. A full list of bands is as follows:

Council Tax Band	2018/19	2019/20
	£	£
Band A	814.50	846.96
Band B	950.25	988.12
Band C	1,086.00	1,129.28
Band D	1,221.75	1,270.44
Band E	1,493.25	1,552.76
Band F	1,764.75	1,835.08
Band G	2,036.25	2,117.40
Band H	2,443.50	2,540.88

6. Full Council approve the council tax for each category of dwelling and the precepts on each of the council tax billing authorities for 2019/20, together with the final tax base, as set out in the table overleaf:

Billing Authority	2019/20 Final Tax Base Band D Equivalent	2019/20 Gross precept £000
Basildon	60,924	77,400
Braintree	52,521	66,725
Brentwood	32,863	41,751
Castle Point	30,787	39,113
Chelmsford	66,672	84,703
Colchester	63,331	80,458
Epping Forest	54,159	68,806
Harlow	26,279	33,386
Maldon	24,536	31,172
Rochford	31,570	40,108
Tendring	47,455	60,289
Uttlesford	37,313	47,404
Total for ECC	528,411	671,315

7. That the proposed total schools budget be set at **£1,113.8m** for 2019/20, which will be funded by the Dedicated Schools Grant, the Pupil Premium Grant and the Universal Free School Meals Grant. The majority of this will be passed through to the maintained schools and academies.
8. That the underlying balance on the General Balance be set at **£55.7m** at as at 1 April 2019 (Appendix A, page 53).
9. That the capital payments guideline be set at **£249m** for 2019/20.

10. That for the purposes of section 52ZB of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 the Council formally determines that the increase in council tax is not such as to trigger a referendum.

Capital Strategy

11. The 2019/20 – 2021/22 Prudential Indicators and limits, together with updated limits for 2018/19 be as set out in **Annexes 3A** and **3B** of the Capital Strategy (Appendix A) be approved.
12. The Treasury Management Strategy for 2019/20 comprising the following, be approved:
 - a. Borrowing strategy, as set out in **Annex 3** of the Capital Strategy (Appendix A, Annex 3, page 64).
 - b. Treasury management investment strategy, as set out in **Annex 3** and **Annex 3D** of the Capital Strategy (Appendix A, Annex 3, page 71).
 - c. Indicative strategy for commercial investment activities, as set out in **Annex 3** of the Capital Strategy (Appendix A, Annex 3, page 75).
- a. The policy for making a prudent level of revenue provision for the repayment of debt (the Minimum Revenue Provision policy as set out in **Annex 3C** of the Capital Strategy (Appendix A, Annex 3, page 85) be approved.

Pay Policy Statement

- b. The Pay Policy Statement for 2019/20 as set out in Appendix C be approved.

13. Adjournment

With the agreement of Council, the Chairman adjourned the meeting for luncheon at 13:10. The meeting reconvened at 14:00.

14. To receive the Leader's report of Cabinet Issues

Councillor Finch, the Leader of the Council, presented a report concerning matters considered at the meetings of Cabinet held on 18 December 2018 and 22 January 2019.

It having been moved by Councillor Finch and seconded by Councillor Bentley it was

Resolved

That the report be received.

15. To receive a report of matters reserved to the Council

Councillor Finch, the Leader of the Council, presented the report of matters reserved to Council.

It having been moved by Councillor Finch and seconded by Councillor Bentley, it was

Resolved

That the Constitution be amended with immediate effect so that:

- (1) All references to the **Executive Director, Economy, Localities and Public Health** are replaced with references to the **Executive Director, Place and Public Health**.
- (2) All references to the **Director, Adult Social Care** are replaced with references to the **Executive Director, Adult Social Care**.
- (3) All references to the **County Planning Manager** are replaced with references to the **Chief Planning Officer**.

16. Written Questions

The published answers to the 17 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 are available on the ECC [website via the online audio recording of the meeting](#). The written questions were:

1. By Councillor Young of the Cabinet Member for Children and Families

‘Will this council urgently reconsider proposals to reduce the number of beds in the Maples Respite Centre from 8 to 4? This proposal is based on a flawed assumption that there is less need for this vital facility, which provides support for parents of children with severe needs as well as a supportive environment for the child. In the last couple of years this council has signposted parents to alternatives, like child-minding, which do not provide this level of support.’

Reply

‘Our priority is to continue to offer a range of high quality, efficient and responsive respite services that supports children and young people to thrive. Rather than making “flawed assumptions”, we have reviewed demand for Maples as part of our wider ongoing review of short breaks and this shows that referrals to this centre have fallen over the years, as the range of short breaks available has grown. For Maples specifically, the number of children using the centre has reduced from 64 in April 2015 to 43 in September 2018, a drop of nearly one third. We have identified that it would be possible to meet the needs of existing service users by operating from one flat within the unit rather than two. This will not affect the number of nights

allocated to families, but we do need to ensure we operate our services as efficiently as possible so that council resources can be used equitably.

We will continue to work with families to meet their assessed needs and create the widest possible choice of respite options. The support offered will be tailored to individuals but may include overnight respite in a registered centre, use of specially trained foster carers and/or more creative use of direct payments to source carers chosen by the family.'

2. By Councillor Sargeant of the Cabinet Member for Customer and Corporate

'The Essex Future Libraries Strategy (Page 7) describes Tier 3 as being "locations where no library service is needed in order to have a comprehensive and efficient network, but where ECC wishes to support the provision of library services run by a community or partner organisation with ECC support."

Please could you detail what activities and functions constitute such "Support" to community organisations, that ECC will be providing to volunteers at the Tier 3 Libraries you intend to set up; but not to the Tier 4 Libraries you intend to close.'

Reply

'The precise support for Tier 3 and 4 libraries will be worked out in negotiation with each community group. Tier 3 support is likely to include some initial one-off and ongoing support from Essex County Council. However, Tier 4 support is only likely to be one-off in nature.

We are not expecting Community Groups to submit detailed bids at this stage, all we need is an in-principle expression of interest for setting up a community library. The ECC Libraries Project Team will then contact the group to support production of a more detailed proposal.

For tier 3 locations, groups will have up to 6 months after the date the strategy goes live to submit their proposals and reach agreement with the council. This 6 month period may be extended to up to 12 months if proposals have been received, but not agreed - or if we believe that deliverable proposals are likely to be forthcoming during that period.'

3. By Councillor Sargeant of the Cabinet Member for Customer and Corporate

'Holland Library is in excess of 2.1 miles walking distance from the nearest Library (Clacton) therefore scoring 30 points on the Location criterion - causing it to have an overall scoring of a Tier 3 rather than that of a Tier 4. It costs just £32,000 a year to operate the 16 hours per week it is open; serving the people of Holland on Sea and the surrounding area. For the remainder of the working week the room is available for the community to hire.

The Libraries Strategy, quite rightly, advocates use of libraries as community hubs. Could you kindly confirm if, for example, a community group hired Holland Library for 20 hours per week whether the hire income generated would be paid to ECC and help financially support the highly valued Library Service or go directly into the landlord Tendring District Council's coffers?'

Reply

'For the proposed Library Needs Assessment, the distance between libraries has been calculated using the post codes of the libraries in google maps. The walking distance from Holland Library CO15 5UR to Clacton Library CO15 1SF is 2 miles.

The libraries consultation is about the library service, not about the library buildings. Specifics regarding library property will be answered after the consultation closes on 20 Feb.

Regarding Holland Library, the lease conditions for the Holland Library building is for 24/7 use and there are covenants on the lease that restrict subletting of the property.'

4. By Councillor Abbott of the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure

'For several years we have been trying to secure 20mph limits in the village of Silver End via the Braintree LHP. The lower speed limits have the support of the parish council and many residents. But at present the scheme requests are held on "red" as not meeting policy, even for the road outside the village primary school. The policy criteria appear to be almost designed to make it very difficult to achieve 20mph limits in existing residential areas. Yet for some new estates, such as at Beaulieu Park, the county council is from the outset implementing 20mph limit zones "to reduce vehicular speeds and improve road safety for residents and pedestrians" where roads have been designed such that "vehicle speeds are 24mph or below".

The speed survey data for the 3 areas requested for 20mph limits in Silver End shows that (Braintree LHP agenda 4th Feb 2019 refers) "all the speeds were below 24mph" and yet for Silver End this is deemed against policy.

Can the Cabinet Member explain this contradictory policy approach and why the council is therefore apparently not striving, on an equal basis, to secure the same improved road safety for residents and pedestrians for all Essex communities where 20mph limits can be applied.'

Reply

'I thank the Member for Witham Northern for his question regarding speed limits in Silver End.

While it may appear that there are inconsistencies, what Councillor Abbott has identified is the varying criteria that apply in different locations. These criteria need to be applied to those locations where a 20mph speed limit is being considered and are too detailed to be explained here in the space allowed, but I would gladly meet with Councillor Abbott to explore the matters he has raised, while checking that no errors have been made in the specific locations he has mentioned, and apprise him of the complexities of such decisions.'

5. By Councillor Wood of the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste

'Can the Cabinet Member please give Members an assurance that with the increase in fly-tipping across the County, he is doing everything he can to ensure the issue is tackled efficiently and effectively. Can the Cabinet Member also advise why fly-tipping in Essex has increased as reported in the local media?'

Reply

'Whilst I am grateful to the media for highlighting the impacts of illegal waste disposal, it is not the case that fly-tipping has increased across the County. The latest DEFRA-reported data on recorded fly-tips nationally show that the number of fly-tips in 2017/18 fell by over 1% in Essex compared to the previous year, mirroring the national picture.

I do, however, recognise that there is significant local disparity, and while the overall situation in Essex improved, the position in six districts worsened. As cleansing activity and associated enforcement is not a County Council function, I am unable to comment on the specific actions that are being taken to combat this issue at a local level. Essex County Council however, will continue to work closely with all relevant bodies and offer assistance to help tackle these issues.'

6. By Councillor Deakin of the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure

'I have been contacted by two local residents who have been affected by flooding into their properties by water drainage off of the highway. It appears that when the road was resurfaced the water ceased to flow in the highway gulley's and started flowing into their properties. Please can the Cabinet Member advise what measures are put into place for resurfacing works carried out by Ringway Jacobs.'

Reply

'I thank the Member for Chelmsford West for her question on policy regarding resurfacing works

Sites are inspected before resurfacing works take place and any preparatory works, such as low vehicle crossings or other defects which need to be repaired, are identified and completed in advance of the main resurfacing works. If there are

reports of residual drainage or other issues after our works, we will revisit the scheme and carry out necessary works as required.'

7. By Councillor Deakin of the Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care

'I have recently been contacted by a resident who is being asked to contribute double her original monthly payment for her care package. She is in great distress, feeling threatened and bullied, as she cannot foresee how she will pay this increased amount.

Can the Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care advise what measures this Council has in place to assist with cases of hardship such as this?'

Reply

'How much a person pays towards the cost of their social care is based on what they can afford. This is worked out using a statutory framework that will ensure people are always left with enough money to live on, this will be their minimum income guarantee (MIG) which is set by the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care Annually.

There are a number of reasons why the amount a person is paying for their care may change, as in the case you have mentioned. If that person or their family member wishes to challenge either the amount that is being charged or the results of the financial assessment they can speak to the financial assessment team and we can look at the charge again or complete a new assessment. If you wish to send me the details – and you have permission to do so – I'll be happy to pass this on to the relevant team.'

8. By Councillor Kendall of the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure

'Can the Cabinet Member confirm if Essex County Council is going to introduce "Clean Air Zones" in Town and City Centres across Essex in a bid to reduce air pollution?'

Reply

'I thank the Member for Brentwood South for his question regarding "Clean Air Zones".'

Air Quality is primarily the responsibility of District, Borough and City Councils who have a duty to monitor air quality levels, and take appropriate action to meet European legislated threshold levels of pollutants in the atmosphere. While the duty lies with these Councils, there is of course a lot that we can do to assist any Air Quality Management Plans which arise out of the monitoring programmes under

way. Pollutants from traffic can be a major contribution to poor air quality, especially where traffic levels are high and congested, and/or where poor air quality is trapped by physical or environmental features in the urban topography. The County Council is frequently a delivery partner already in many air quality management plans, and is contributing in the following ways:

- Traffic management systems to smooth the flow of traffic
- Bypassing areas of congestion with new highways
- Provision of alternative transport modes such as promoting walking, cycling and bus and rail usage
- Reducing the amount of traffic that reaches area of poor air quality such as with Park and Ride schemes
- Investing with bus operators in cleaner engine technology

Such measures are useful in helping to stabilise poor air quality until such time that emissions from engines are forecast to reduce through cleaner engine design which is happening all the time.

Clean Air Zones would take this approach a stage further by introducing restrictions on vehicles either through a charging scheme or by traffic regulation order to restrict and penalise certain classes of vehicle or engine design from entering a designated area – such a scheme is operational in London. These may be considered in Essex, but only where this was the only way of meeting the expected levels of air quality set by European regulations, due to the unintended consequences of such schemes on the wider transport network in terms of access and mobility or displacement of vehicles to other parts of a town or city. Air Quality zones are not the solution for every situation. However, as part of work we are undertaking with Defra and authorities in Essex, we are examining the effectiveness of Air Quality zones, to see whether this solution is needed and will be effective. We will use this experience in our plans moving forward.'

9. By Councillor Kendall of the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste

'Can the Cabinet Member confirm when Essex County Council going to invest in solar energy and build a solar farm on County Council owned land in Essex?'

Reply

'Officers are currently investigating the feasibility of investing in renewable low carbon energy generation and energy storage on ECC owned assets. This includes opportunities to invest in solar farms on County Council owned land.

The Councillor will be aware that any such opportunities will be critically dependent upon obtaining planning consent and securing an affordable connection to the energy distribution grid. However, we are currently undertaking feasibility work on a number of sites and will have the results of that analysis by spring 2019. This is part of our work to deliver the Energy and Low Carbon Action Plan 2017/2021.

We are also currently looking at opportunities to invest in onsite generation, energy storage and energy efficiency measures in our public buildings including County

Hall and at our Park and Ride sites. We have recently been awarded funding through the European Interreg programme to undertake projects at two sites in our public estate to invest in measures that will enable those sites to generate, store and potentially sell energy back to the grid, enabling them to reduce their running costs.

You may also be aware of “Solar Together Essex,” our on-going group purchasing scheme, which offers residents the opportunity to purchase a solar panel system in a safe, knowledgeable and affordable manner. We launched the campaign in July 2018 and more than 2,000 residents have already registered their interest. As a result of this scheme, we hope to see over 1MW of solar generation installed on roof tops in Essex.’

10. By Councillor Mackrory of the Leader of the Council

‘Will the Leader give consideration to the strengthening of the scrutiny function in order to bring added value to the work of the Council? For example, will he consider the Buckinghamshire model where the main scrutiny committee (actually called a select committee) spent a whole week pre-scrutinising the budget with each Cabinet Member having to account for their individual portfolio spend?’

Reply

‘I consider the scrutiny function of the Council robust and able to fulfil the necessary duties required of it. However, the Scrutiny Committee can decide, if it so chooses, to consider the Budget in a different way. I would encourage reflection among committee members as to whether they want to change the way in which scrutiny operates.’

11. By Councillor Mackrory of the Leader of the Council

‘Will the Leader provide an update as to why this Council was unsuccessful in its bid to become a pilot area for Business Rates Retention which resulted in a loss of income of £15m?’

Reply

‘We are disappointed about the news that Essex did not qualify for Business Rates Retention pilot announced at the end of last year. The Ministry of Housing, Communities, and Local Government has not provided feedback to unsuccessful applicants to the pilot scheme, despite our strong desire to understand the process. If we do get the detail, we would be happy to share it.’

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

‘With the recent social media reporting that fly tipping in Essex has increased, will the Cabinet Member now allow all DIY residents with small vans into the Recycling centres to help combat this?’

Reply

‘With regard to the recycling centre changes made in 2016, these were introduced to tackle the illegal use of the sites by businesses and have been successful in dealing with this issue. These changes still allow those wishing to dispose of small amounts of DIY and construction waste, or those using a van to access the service – they are simply directed to our larger facilities.

Of our twenty-one Recycling Centres, ten permit van access and nine are able to accept small quantities of construction and demolition waste. Full details can be found on the ECC website. There is no evidence that the changes implemented at the Recycling Centres have directly impacted fly-tipping levels in Essex and I therefore see no reason to review the Recycling Centre site rules at this moment in time.’

13. By Councillor Robinson of the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure

‘Will the Cabinet Member take steps to ensure that Members can access directly information that they have submitted on highways issues, so that they can track progress and not have to chase officers for updates?’

For example, (1) access a record of requests submitted to Local Highways Panels, which should be acknowledged and allocated reference numbers for this purpose, in the same way as highway maintenance requests, and (2) be able to access a list of highway maintenance requests that they have submitted, with dates of inspections, so as to keep constituents better informed.’

Reply

‘I thank the Member for Chelmsford North for his question on policy regarding highways maintenance requests and local highways panels.

Everybody can access and track issues they have reported using our website. You can even add your email address, in which case you will be sent status updates. We are already considering how we could provide lists of issues in an area, as a future service improvement.

A system to enable online tracking of Local Highways Panel (LHP) schemes is in the process of being developed. The online tracker will show information about the scheme including which stage it is at, and which stages are next. The schemes

database required behind this has been created in the last month, following on from the previous creation for major asset types. Officer training will take place over the next month to familiarise them with the new system and to ensure the database covers the necessary information to be recorded. After these tweaks to the database have been made testing will commence, first with mapping the 19/20 programme for plotting on MapEssex. Further developments will take place over the summer to show this information in the online tracker format and include LHP schemes that are validated but yet to be allocated funding, and then scheme requests.'

14. By Councillor Harris of the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure

'Now that the Paxman Academy in Paxman Avenue in my Division (Shrub End Colchester) is nearly finished, could I ask that praise is given to workers on the build, for good local relations on the estate.

More importantly could I ask that my email request is given positive discrimination for some highways works to be done on roads and paths across Shrub End to ensure the new state-of-the-art school is served by decent roads and transport links.

Furthermore, could the Council ensure the new school trains pupils on good cycle use and a route of cycleways pointed out to all staff and pupils in the school transport plan'

Reply

'I thank the Member for Maypole for his question regarding Paxman Academy and cycling.

Paxman Avenue will be part of the Sigma Academy Trust. Your suggestion that the "new school trains pupils on good cycle use and a route of cycleways is pointed out to all staff and pupils in the school transport plan" is a helpful suggestion. While the Council cannot ensure this happens as the school is an Academy, the lead officer for Education will raise this directly with the Chief Executive Officer of the Sigma Trust.

Maintenance of our highway network is necessarily based on a process of risk assessment and repair of the worst defects first. However, if the Member would like to use their position the local highway panel to champion walking and cycling improvement schemes in this specific location, they have the ability to do so.'

15. By Councillor Harris of the Cabinet Member for Education

'With parking becoming a problem at Colchester Abbey Field doctors' surgery, and with poor transport links by bus to and from South Colchester, could serious

discussion take place with community providers to set up a “dial-a-ride hopper bus” on a circuit to get cars off the roads and ease the car parks congestion in the area.

Would you envisage a service like the Clacton Hopper Bus?’

Reply

‘Community Transport schemes are independent organisations offering excellent local services. They are grant funded by the County Council and also receive support from elsewhere. As you know the Clacton Hopper service is run very successfully by Tendring Community Transport. This is a service that Tendring CT introduced themselves some time ago.

I would therefore recommend that Councillor Harris approach Colchester Community Transport direct and open discussions with them on whether a similar service might be possible.’

16. By Councillor Reid of the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure

‘There is new technology in Northern Ireland which can recognise when a pothole or defect is going to occur. Therefore, the section of the road can be repaired before the pothole or defect manifests itself into a massive deep or dangerous area.

This project has proved a saving of 30% per defect.

This would be extremely beneficial to both cyclists and car users and would be financially a huge saving to our budget.

Would the Cabinet Member for Highways consider this to be a project that Essex County Council could look into for the future of our highway maintenance budget.’

Reply

‘I thank the Member for Pitsea for her question on policy regarding new technology and the future of highways maintenance.

Essex County Council (ECC) in collaboration with Ringway Jacobs are already undertaking research into ground breaking new technology that will push forward Vehicle Informed Asset Management.

The trial is for a fully automated system to collect data from vehicles already travelling the network, process it to identify specific maintenance issues, flag these to relevant staff and update existing Asset Management Systems. The innovative use of this technology will, over time, improve the effectiveness of our maintenance programmes and reduce the amount of revenue money spent on inspecting ECC’s highways network (which is worth £10 billion).

Previous development of this concept has developed working agreements between Jacobs and their commercial partners to utilise data that already exists ensuring anonymity in all cases.

The objectives for this proposal will be to utilise the already existing data while also capturing additional data to provide a richer data set. This data will continue to be received on a continuous basis as vehicles cover more and more of the network to provide the full picture within Essex. ECC will receive a prototype application that has been configured to enable ECC/Essex Highways staff to isolate specific road assets to obtain the necessary information.

ECC's desire is that, as more connected vehicles travel the network, the data sets become richer and will better inform maintenance issues. With the ability to identify issues either prior to or early on, the ability to intervene early (potentially, with icy roads) should lead to a better network and reduced maintenance costs.'

17. By Councillor Henderson of the Cabinet Member for Children and Families

'In the last four years, what are the changes in the assessment criteria on the provision of support for vulnerable children and families?'

Reply

'There have been no changes in the last four years in the assessment criteria on the provision of support for vulnerable children and families. The Effective Support for Children and Families in Essex document, published by the Essex Safeguarding Children's Board, sets out guidance for everyone working with children and young people and their families in Essex.

The Effective Support document supports professionals to find solutions at an early stage. By placing children and their families at the centre we can prevent problems escalating and ensuring the lowest level of appropriate intervention. This guidance provides a way of working together that ensures we use public money and staff resources more effectively to bring about positive change for children and families.

We always strive to work in partnership with children and their families to identify the most appropriate level of support at the lowest level of intervention.

We provide timely advice, information and guidance to families and professionals to ensure need is met at a community-based level when appropriate.

Our investment in the team around the Family Support Officer roles provides a coaching and mentoring service to professionals who are seeking to build an Early Help Plan to create positive change at the earliest opportunity.

The Family Solutions Service which is funded through the 'Troubled Families' programme and Whole Essex Community Budgets, work with families with multiply complex needs on a voluntary basis preventing escalation to a statutory level. The

focus on early intervention ensures that only children with the highest level of need access specialist statutory intervention from Children's Social Care.

There has been no reduction to front line statutory social work teams and we continue to develop our strengths and relationship-based approach to practice across the whole service.

We were recently judged by Ofsted to be Outstanding for our Children Social Care Service, following inspection in November 2018. This followed an inspection of our Youth Offending Service by HMIP in October 2018, which was also graded as Outstanding.

We are currently the only Local Authority in England who have been judged as Outstanding for both our Youth Offending Service and our Children Social Care Service.'

17. Oral Questions of the Leader, Cabinet Member or the chairman of a committee upon any matter relevant to the business of Council

Members asked questions of the Leader of the Council, Cabinet Members or the chairmen of committees. A recording of the questions is available on the ECC [website via the online audio recording of the meeting.](#)

The questions asked were:

From	To Cabinet Member	Topic
Councillor Guglielmi	Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care	Essex Local Delivery Pilot funding.
Councillor Abbott	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure	Highway defect reporting system.
Councillor Abbott	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure	Defects in illuminated bollards
Councillor Harris	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure	Footway in Berechurch Hall Road, Colchester
Councillor Young	Leader	Advisor to the Essex Pension Fund
Councillor Davis	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure	Local Highways Panels
Councillor Buckley	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure	Member nominated pothole repair scheme.
Councillor Scordis	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure	Streetlight repairs

Councillor Aspinell	Cabinet Member for Waste and Environment	Fly tipping
Councillor Aspinell	Cabinet Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure	Mobile phone reception
Councillor Beavis	Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care	Health in all matters
Councillor Robinson	Cabinet Member for Customer and Corporate	Libraries consultation
Councillor Robinson	Cabinet Member for Customer and Corporate	Libraries consultation
Councillor Mackrory	Leader	Budget
Councillor Henderson	Leader	Brexit funding from central government.

18. Oral Questions of the representative of the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel on any matter of that Panel

There were no questions.

**Chairman
14 May 2019**