

Minutes of a meeting of Essex County Council held at County Hall, Chelmsford on 9 July 2013

Present

Chairman: Councillor K Twitchen

Vice-Chairman: Councillor N Hume

Councillors:

J Abbott	D Finch	R Lord
J F Aldridge	M D Fisher	D Louis
W Archibald	R Gadsby	R A Madden
B Aspinell	K Gibbs	M Maddocks
Mrs S Barker	R J Gooding	M McEwen
R L Bass	C Guglielmi	M McGeorge
A Bayley	D Harris	Mrs V Metcalfe
K Bentley	A M Hedley	A Naylor
D Blackwell	G Helm	Lady Newton
K Bobbin	I Henderson	P Oxley
R G Boyce	Mrs T M A Higgins	M J Page
A Brown	R Hirst	J W Pike
M Buckley	P Honeywood	C C Pond
G Butland	R C Howard	S Robinson
J Chandler	M Hoy	C Seagers
P Channer	J Huntman	K Smith
K Clempner	A J Jackson	J Spence
T Cutmore	E C Johnson	Mrs A Turrell
J A Deakin	J G Jowers	R G Walters
T Durcan	D J Kendall	J Whitehouse
M Ellis	N Le Gresley	A Wood
A Erskine	S Lissimore	J A Young
	J Lodge	

The meeting was preceded by prayers led by The Right Reverend John Wraw, Bishop of Bradwell.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors M Danvers, I Grundy, J Knapman, M Mackrory, Mrs J M Reeves and S Walsh.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 14 May 2013

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 14 May 2013 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman

4. Minutes of the special meeting held on 14 May 2013

Resolved:

That the minutes of the special meeting held on 14 May 2013 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman

5. Honorary Aldermen

At the special meeting held on 14 May 2013 Council had created six Honorary Aldermen. In recognition of this, The Chairman presented certificates and badges to Bill Dick, Bonnie Hart, Jeremy Lucas, Peter Martin, Gerard McEwen and Iris Pummell.

6. Queen's Birthday Honours

The Chairman on behalf of the Council congratulated the twenty-four residents in the County who had been recognised in the Queen's Birthday Honours and in particular:

- Councillor John Spence – CBE (Chairman of the South East Local Enterprise Partnership) for services to business in the South East and

- Mrs Rosanna Briggs – MBE (Deputy Head of Service and Deputy County Emergency Planning Officer, Essex County Fire and Rescue Service) for services to Civil Protection.

7. Human Resources Award

The Chairman on behalf of the Council received from Councillor Derrick Louis, the Cabinet Member for Transformation and Corporate Services, the 'Best HR Team (Public and Not-for-Profit Sector)'. This was an award from the 2013 HR Excellence Awards to Essex County Council's Human Resources.

8. Presentation of Petitions

The Chairman formally received a petition to reduce the speed limit in Dry Street, Basildon from 60mph to 30mph, presented by Councillor Kerry Smith.

9. Motions

Motion 1: A12 Ban on Lorries Overtaking

It was moved by Councillor R Bass and seconded by Councillor K Bentley that

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

Upon being put to the meeting the Motion was declared to be carried.

Motion 2: Public Speaking at Meetings

It was moved by Councillor D Harris and seconded by Councillor J Abbott that

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

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

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

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

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

Supporting evidence:

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

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

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

It was moved by Councillor S Robinson and seconded by Councillor D Kendall that the Motion be amended to read as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

Council further agrees that the public and media be permitted to broadcast meetings of Full Council and that consideration be given to webcast meetings of Full Council.’

Prior to the Motion being put to the meeting, Councillor Harris declined to withdraw the Motion at the suggestion of the Leader to allow this matter to be considered by the Corporate Scrutiny Committee and for it to report back to Council.

Upon being put to the meeting the amendment to the Motion was declared to be lost.

Upon being put to the meeting the substantive Motion was declared to be lost.

Motion 3: Supporting Essex Families

It was moved by Councillor M Fisher and seconded by Councillor J Deakin that

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

It was moved by Councillor D Madden and seconded by Councillor P Channer that the Motion be amended to read as follows:

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

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

This Council takes very seriously its responsibilities and believes that multiple occupancy homes where many young people in care are housed after age 16 are not in all cases a good substitute for foster parental care.

Therefore this Council welcomes that the Cabinet Member for Families and Children is considering allowing young people placed with its Foster Parents to stay with them until at least 18 years and later if they are otherwise unable to live independently.

This Council believes that this policy could save money in other parts of the public sector – including Housing Benefit, reduced use of the criminal justice system and maybe even Jobseeker benefits and represents the kind of “joined up” thinking currently being pursued under Whole Essex Community Budgeting.

This Council therefore requests officers continue to investigate both the costs and benefits of this policy and to report back to the People Scrutiny Committee in time to be considered for the 2014-15 Budget.’

Upon being put to the meeting the amendment was declared to be carried and so became the substantive Motion.

Upon being put to the meeting the substantive Motion was declared to be carried.

Motion 4: Closure of the Deanes School

It was moved by Councillor J Huntman and seconded by Councillor A Bayley that

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

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

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

Prior to the Motion being put to the meeting, Councillor Huntman declined to withdraw the Motion at the suggestion of Councillor Butland who announced that the people and Families Scrutiny Committee would be undertaking a review of the proposals relating to the future of the Deanes School.

Upon being put to the meeting the Motion was declared to be lost.

10. Variation in the Order of Business

With the agreement of Council the Chairman varied the order of business so that agenda item 13a oral questions and agenda item 13b written questions (numbers 1 – 3) pertaining to the Deanes School were taken at this time.

11. Questions to the Leader of the Council, Cabinet Members and Committee Chairmen

Members responded to questions as follows:

- (i) Relating to the future of The Deanes School, and the proposed Scrutiny review (Councillor Archibald of the Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning)

The Cabinet Member replied that the Scrutiny Committee would consider the provision of education in the area as a whole and not just that provided in Castle Point.

12. Written questions (Standing Order 16.11.3)

1. By Councillor J Reeves of the Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning

'The Deanes School - Castle Point

Intake numbers – Can other schools accommodate the numbers being suggested; but first and foremost, what are the true figures? There is no mention of mid-term admissions (54 average over the last two years) and what about expulsions as there were 5 from King John this year?'

Reply

In January 2013 when the annual school count took place there were 793 pupils on the school roll. At the end of this school year 217 pupils will leave the Year 11. School preferences for next September are showing that only 74 pupils have been offered places in Year 7. The impact of this is that the school roll in September will be 650.

The predicted numbers as we move forwards are:

Number on roll at The Deanes School							
Year	7	8	9	10	11	Total	Potential Total (inc housing)
2013/14	74	119	117	165	175	650	650
2014/15	94	74	119	117	165	569	569
2015/16	105	94	74	119	117	509	509
2016/17	71	105	94	74	119	463	464
2017/18	126	71	105	94	74	470	474
2018/19	73	126	71	105	94	469	476
2019/20	148	73	126	71	105	523	534
2020/21	32	148	73	126	71	450	466
2021/22	78	49	148	73	126	457	477
2022/23	117	96	49	148	73	448	473
2023/24	89	135	96	49	148	464	489

Most children in Benfleet already attend neighbouring schools such as Appleton and King John, both of which are oversubscribed with applications from a wide area. Indeed a significant number of the pupils currently at The Deanes have previously expressed a preference to attend these schools but were unable to at that time. A

large percentage of pupils at The Deanes are from outside of its immediate catchment area including a number from Southend. Both Appleton and King John are highly successful schools. It is intended that if The Deanes closes investment would be made at these schools to provide an extra one form of entry of 30 pupils at each school which (based on pupil forecasting) would be sufficient to accommodate those local children needing a school place in the future and provide more places for pupils at two of the County's more popular and oversubscribed schools.

Mid-year admissions have been taken into consideration. Although the main annual count on which most statistics are based in schools occurs in January, in Essex a pupil count is taken early in each term of the school year. This enables term by term comparisons to be made. Looking at this information for The Deanes School it is evident that the numbers who join the school mid-year are broadly matched by the numbers who leave. In the last five years there have been two years where there was either no change or only marginal change through the year. In the other three years the increase through the year amounted to an average of no more than 2 or 3 pupils per year group. It is clear that the school manages successfully a potentially difficult mid-year admissions position, of pupils arriving and others leaving, but it is not something which significantly affects the overall calculations in terms of viability of the school.

With regards to exclusions, during 2012/13 there has been one permanent exclusion from Appleton and one from King Johns (NB. this is still within the time frame within which parents can ask for the decision to be reviewed). Looking back over recent years, in 2011/12 there were no permanent exclusions across Appleton, The Deanes or King John; whilst 2010/11 saw two permanent exclusions from Appleton.

2. By Councillor J Reeves of the Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning

'The Deanes School - Castle Point
Glenwood Rebuild – It is being suggested that school governors are looking at Academy or Free School Status. If they take this option, what impact will this have on the urgent need to build the New Glenwood Special School?'

Reply

The Deanes School can apply for Academy status at any stage. The decision on whether a school becomes an academy rests with the Secretary of State for Education.

The Governors of the Deanes School are the proprietors of the

freehold of the land and the building of premises for the Glenwood School therefore requires their agreement. It is hoped that regardless of the outcome of the consultation that the Deanes School Governors would provide this authority so that the Glenwood rebuild project could continue to timescale. If the current consultation was to result in a decision to proceed to close and the governors of The Deanes School were not to provide agreement to use the land for the rebuild of Glenwood, the rebuild of the Glenwood School would likely be postponed until 2016 when the land would revert to Essex County Council ownership.

3. By Councillor R Howard of the Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning

'The Deanes School - Castle Point
Is the land on which Deanes is built, freehold or leasehold and if it is leasehold, when does the lease expire?'

Reply

The site is freehold and this was transferred to the governing body when the school gained Grant Maintained status on the 1st January 1993.

ECC also acquired an adjoining property, 96 Daws Heath Road to assist with access when we were proposing a BSF project at the school, and we hold that property vacant, and not part of the current school.

13. Chairman's Announcement

The Chairman advised Council that there was no further time allocated for the consideration of Motions. Responding to questions on this matter she clarified that the total time allocated for the consideration of Motions would be extended to two hours from the next meeting (15 October 2013) and that Members should expect in future that Full Council may be adjourned for the lunchtime period and resume in the afternoon. She further clarified that all other Motions on today's agenda are considered to have fallen and may be resubmitted for the next meeting of Council if appropriate notification is received.

14. To receive a report on the ECC Vision Statement 2012-2017

The Leader, Councillor D Finch, presented a report of the ECC Vision Statement 2012-2017.

The report was received and upon being put to the meeting the recommendation was agreed and accordingly it was

Resolved:

That the new corporate vision and priorities for Essex contained in the document "Vision for Essex 2013-17" be approved.

15. Council Issues

The report of Council Issues was received.

Item 1: Appeals Against Dismissal by Staff

Upon being put to the meeting the recommendation was agreed and accordingly it was

Resolved:

- (1) That the existing right of appeal to members be replaced with the right of appeal to a senior officer in order to speed up the appeals process and provide greater certainty to employees and managers but with a right of appeal to members retained for those officers who are appointed by members, namely chief and deputy chief officers, to the Chief Officer Panel.
- (2) That the terms of reference of the Chief Officer Committee in paragraph 8.1.5 of the constitution be amended to read:

'8.1.5 Committee to determine the Terms and Conditions of employment of Chief and Deputy Chief Officers

Membership: Five Members of the Council to include the appropriate Cabinet Member.

(i) to be responsible for the appointment and dismissal of Chief/Deputy Chief Officers and appeals against dismissal of such persons, with the power:

- (a) to appoint sub-committees of three Members to deal with particular appointments, dismissals or appeals; and
- (b) to authorise the Chief Executive or her nominee to deal with a particular appointment or dismissal;

(ii) to resolve any issue relating to the terms or conditions of employment of Chief/Deputy Chief Officers not already covered by the Council's Officer Employment Procedure Rules; and

(iii) to decide the level of performance pay to be awarded to the Chief Executive and members of the Corporate Leadership Team.'

- (3) That the Member Appeals Committee be abolished and references to it in the constitution be deleted.

Item 2: List of Approved Bodies

The Leader paid tribute to the work of Councillor Susan Barker and officers who had determined the list and asked Members to inform her if they wished to amend it.

Upon being put to the meeting the List of Approved Bodies was agreed.

16. Cabinet Issues

The report of Cabinet Issues was received and adopted.

17. To receive the Annual Report of the Essex Pension Fund Board

The Annual Report of the Essex Pension Fund Board was received and adopted.

18 Questions to the Leader of the Council, Cabinet Members and Committee Chairmen

Members responded to questions as follows:

- (i) Concerning Motion 7, provision of meals for disadvantaged children, requesting that as the Motion had not been considered that it be referred to the appropriate Scrutiny Committee. (Councillor V Metcalf of the Leader)

The Leader agreed.

- (ii) Concerning a review of the A-Board Policy and an enquiry if Section 6 of the Essex Act 1987 that relates to antisocial parking and obstruction of the highway is enforceable by the new civil enforcement officers of the new parking partnerships. (Councillor C Pond of the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation)

The Cabinet Member agreed to re-examine the policy and was confident that Section 6 of the Essex Act 1987 is so enforceable.

- (iii) Concerning Members' rights to see papers and documents (Councillor J Lodge of the Leader)

The Leader replied that he was not aware that Essex County Council officers routinely withheld documents from Members but if so, this will be investigated, but specifically the Highways draft document is not yet available as it is still in a formative state. The Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation further suggested that if the matter related to a Local Development Plan for Uttlesford perhaps Councillor Lodge should direct his question to Uttlesford District Council.

- (iv) Concerning items referred to Scrutiny, is it not the function of the Scrutiny Committee to determine what it examines? (Councillor G Butland of the Leader)

The Leader agreed and hoped that the work of Scrutiny could be so managed as to satisfy the wishes of the Members of Council as well as undertaking the pre-planned work.

- (v) Concerning Local Highway Panels, ensuring there is sufficient officer resource to avoid underspend in the delivery of vital local highways schemes (Councillor J Abbott of the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation)

The Cabinet Member replied that it had taken some time for the Highways Panels to become established and (as early notification of an approval of a scheme is necessary for proper scheduling of work) this had resulted in a substantial capital underspend in the first year of the Highways Panels. This was carried over into the current financial year so the schemes were not lost. Money allocated to Highways this year is to be spent on highways although there may have to be adjustments between the different types of highways projects within the capital budgets. He further hoped that the recently updated guidelines he had issued to Local Highways Panels will ensure that schemes for submission in the next financial year were decided upon in Jan/Feb 2014 to avoid such delays in future.

- (vi) Concerning the Member Restaurant, does the Leader still believe that spending £40,000 per annum on members' meals is a trivial matter? (Councillor J Abbott of the Leader)

The Leader replied that he did not consider any expenditure 'trivial' but his words as reported in the media were that in the context of the whole of spending at the Council the issue of members' meals is relatively small and of lesser importance compared to some of the really big issues such as Health Integration, Community Budgets and the Comprehensive Spending Review.

- (vii) Concerning bus-stops and bus stands that have been removed or are missing in her Division is the money for their replacement to come from the budget of the Local Highways Panels and did the Cabinet Member agree that people should be encouraged to use public transport? (Councillor T Higgins of the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation)

The Cabinet Member replied that money for this did come from the budget of the Local Highways Panels and she could approach them for the funding for their replacement.

- (viii) Concerning the allocation of opposition places on the Local Highways Panels, could places be apportioned on the Highways Panels in

Brentwood where no opposition groups were represented (Councillor B Aspinell of the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation)

The Cabinet Member replied that he had not made any formal representations but in response to the request he would be pleased to speak to the Panel Chairman on this matter.

- (ix) Concerning Parking Partnerships being encouraged to inform members of significant parking issues in their Divisions before they are discussed at meetings (Councillor J Whitehouse of the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation)

The Cabinet Member replied that he could not impose his will upon the Parking Partnerships but he hoped that the Chairmen of the Parking Partnerships would note what Councillor Whitehouse had said and act accordingly.

- (x) Concerning the view of the Administration on the fate of the Lower Thames Crossing, should tolls be abolished and would it be better for Essex if another Crossing was built? (Councillor K Smith of the Leader)

The Leader replied that this was the subject of consultation between the South East Local Enterprise Partnership and the County Council. The Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation added that he was considering a large number of representations and was preparing a Cabinet Member Action on this matter.

- (xi) Concerning when the 'highways surgeries' in the Districts would commence (Councillor S Barker of the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation)

The Cabinet Member replied that they would be commencing at the end of July 2013 shortly after the opening of the new facility next to the Traffic Control Centre in County Hall

- (xii) Concerning County Councillors being permitted to attend Local Highways Panel meetings as an observer when items relating to their Division were being discussed (Councillor J Deakin of the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation)

The Cabinet Member replied that this matter was at the discretion of the Chairmen of the Local Highways Panels although his personal view was that any elected representative should be permitted to attend even if not to participate.

- (xiii) Concerning agreement that there should be wider advertising of the library services as they are a vital way of engaging with the public (Councillor C Guglielmi of the Cabinet Member for Libraries, Communities and Planning)

The Cabinet Member agreed.

19. Written questions (Standing Order 16.11.3)

(questions 1 – 3 having been considered previously, see Minute 12 above)

4. By Councillor I Henderson of the Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning

'The news that the funding is no longer to be provided to allow Harwich and Clacton's Behaviour Education Support Team (BEST) to continue its valuable and excellent work has caused much concern and will leave many families without the vital support that BEST has provided.

Will the Portfolio Holder please advise these families how this support is to be provided when BEST closes in August and can he please give an assurance that the necessary action is being taken to ensure that this support will be available immediately?'

Reply

The Behaviour Education Support Team (BEST) was originally funded, via the Local Authority, from the National Behaviour Improvement Programme Grant provided by Excellence in Cities (EiC). It was for each local authority to agree how it allocated this funding. In the case of Harwich BEST evolved with other funding mechanisms also contributing to the delivery of the service. In total this programme supported eleven schools in Harwich, Holland on Sea and Walton.

This three-year funding ended in March 2011. Following Department for Education funding reforms, funding for schools is now directly allocated and devolved to individual schools. All of the funding from EiC has been devolved to the schools as part of their budget minus the annual minimum funding guarantee. For 2011/12 the service continued as funding arrangements allowed previous distribution methodology to continue. For 2012/13 the funding forms part of the basic pupil entitlement meaning that it is up to the individual schools to determine how this money is spent. The total funding that has been devolved to the 11 schools is £1,996,837.

Therefore if the schools concerned wish for BEST, or any local service provided by them to continue, it would be for them to negotiate an agreeable pooled budget solution. I hope that schools would continue to cooperate with pooled funding arrangements to deliver those services they value most.

Alongside this Essex County Council has invested in our Family Solutions Team which work with our most vulnerable and troubled

families. They are evolving from four to eight multi-agency teams. Family Solutions work to help families with a range of issues for up to 12 months by helping them identify their own solutions to their problems. Harwich will be covered by the Tendring Team.

5. By David Kendall of the Leader of the Council

'Financial Inclusion

Following many months of work by the Financial Inclusion Task and Finish Group, the members of the former Economic Development, Environment and Highways Policy and Scrutiny Committee put forward a number of recommendations to the Cabinet regarding "Financial Inclusion" earlier this year. Would the Leader of the Council please clarify the following points in relation to each of those recommendations:

- (1) Which specific recommendations have already become the policy of this Council and how are they being taken forward?
- (2) Which specific recommendations are in the pipeline and what is their timeline for implementation?
- (3) Which specific recommendations will not be taken forward by this Council; what are the reasons for the decision to take no action on each one?
- (4) What other action has your administration taken to show that you are taking the issue of "Financial Inclusion" seriously?

Reply

I have consulted Councillor Walsh, as Chairman of the Place Services and Economic Growth Scrutiny (PSEGS) Committee, who has confirmed to me that the Cabinet's response to the recommendations arising from the Scrutiny Report on Financial Inclusion will be considered by that Committee at its meeting in September. A response is being drawn up by the Cabinet to coincide with that meeting, which is in line with the timeline set out in recommendation 17 as proposed by the Task and Finish Group that undertook the original review.

As an important scrutiny initiative based upon in depth investigation, it is for the PSEGS Committee to lead in the monitoring of the Cabinet response. Councillor Walsh concurs with Councillor Kendall, with whom he has worked on this scrutiny project, that answers to the issues he has raised will automatically be pursued for the Committee's detailed consideration in the Autumn. At its meeting there will also be an opportunity for Members to cross examine what progress has been achieved in the promotion of financial inclusion

across Essex over the previous six months.

6. By David Kendall of the Deputy Leader, Cabinet Member for Economic Growth and Infrastructure

"Live Local, Love Local" Voucher Booklet

Would you please answer the following questions regarding the "Live Local, Love Local" voucher booklets:

- (1) How many of these booklets have been produced?
- (2) How much does each book cost to produce?
- (3) How much have these books cost Essex County Council?
- (4) Have these books been distributed to every Borough / District / City Council in Essex?
- (5) If one of my residents wanted to pick up one of these books in Brentwood where could they get one from?

Reply

Thank you for your question.

Please find the answers you have requested regarding the "Live Local, Love Local" voucher booklets below:

1. How many of these booklets have been produced?

33,700 booklets have been produced. Booklets are also available online to download at www.visitessex.com/livelocal

2. How much does each book cost to produce?

56 pence

3. How much have these books cost Essex County Council?

The cost to Visit Essex was £18,939, although ECC also received £2,250 of EU funding. Visit Essex is a membership organisation and receives financial contributions from the tourism industry. The campaign to engage local people to discover their local attractions was agreed by the Visit Essex board and welcomed by the Visit Essex Members (a steering group formed to agree on the best way to deliver the campaign.) and campaign costs are largely covered by the member subscriptions. The vouchers provide £450 of support in kind from attractions/restaurants/hotels supplying the offers. We have received excellent feedback from both residents and businesses taking part in the campaign and the businesses have seen an increase in custom.

4. Have these books been distributed to every Borough / District /

City Council in Essex?

The booklets have been sent to all borough/district/city councils and unitary authorities, along with other promotional material.

5. If one of my residents wanted to pick up one of these books in Brentwood where could they get one from?

The booklets are available from all libraries, most hotels and attractions and nearby tourist information centres. They can also be downloaded from www.visitessex.com/livelocal

7. By Councillor J Whitehouse of the Leader of the Council

Telephone Numbers;

1. What [a] 0345 and other 03xx numbers and [b] 0845 and other 08xx numbers are used by Essex County Council to receive calls from residents and other callers?
2. For which of these numbers is a geographic number [e.g. starting with a geographic code such as 01245 / 01206 / 01992] also advertised with similar prominence?
3. How much service charge income is received for each number? If no income is received directly, how is the service fee taken into account in the contract with the telephone services provider?

Reply

1. What [a] 0345 and other 03xx numbers and [b] 0845 and other 08xx numbers are used by Essex County Council to receive calls from residents and other callers?

School Enquiry Line	0845 603 2200
General Enquiries	0845 743 0430
Adult Social Care & Blue Badge	0845 603 7630
Children & Young People	0845 603 7627
Social Care Protection Line	0845 603 7634 & 0845 603 1212
Common Assessment Framework (CAF)	0845 603 7639
Family Information Service	0800 055 6874
Libraries	0845 603 7628
Adult Community Learning	0845 603 7635
Finance	0845 603 7637
Planning & Environment	0845 603 7624
Registrations	0845 603 7632

Highways	0845 603 7631 0845 603 7620 0845 603 7621 0845 603 7622 0845 603 7623
CRB / Disclosure	0845 603 7633
Waste	0845 603 7625
Trading Standards	0845 603 7626

2. For which of these numbers is a geographic number [e.g. starting with a geographic code such as 01245 / 01206 / 01992] also advertised with similar prominence?

On the council website, the front page has a 'contact us' signpost taking people to the contact us page, where contact numbers are featured.

The general enquiries information gives a 'landline' alternative number (01245 430 430) for those wishing to dial a geographically routed number.

3. How much service charge income is received for each number? If no income is received directly, how is the service fee taken into account in the contract with the telephone services provider?

The contract we have does not include any payment to Essex County Council. We do not earn any income from these calls.

8. By Councillor S Robinson of the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation

'What processes are involved when carrying out "robust risk assessments" when reports of Highway defects are made?'

Reply

Full details of the risk assessments undertaken by Highways Inspectors can be found on page 50 of the 'Essex Highway Maintenance Strategy', which is publically available on our website at the following address: <http://www.essexhighways.org/roads-highways-and-pavements.aspx>

9. By Councillor M Ellis of the Cabinet Member for Waste and Recycling

Could the Cabinet Member for Waste and Recycling provide the purchase cost of the land upon which the Waste Treatment Plant in

Courtauld Road, Basildon stands, as the Land Registry figures, whilst being a legal obligation to provide, seem lacking?

Reply

Thank you for your question.

The County Council has not purchased the freehold of the waste plant land at Courtauld Rd but has entered into a long term lease for the site. The current annual rental under the lease is £1,390,430 per annum.

10. By Councillor N Le Gresley of the Cabinet Member for Waste and Recycling

Could the Cabinet Member for Waste and Recycling provide the registered address and names of the Directors of Integra Developments Limited who were the beneficial owners and joint applicants along with Essex County Council and Basildon Borough Council, for the £100m Waste Treatment plant in Courtauld Road, Basildon?

Reply

Thank you for your question.

Integra Development Ltd are no longer the freehold owners of the waste treatment plant site at Courtauld Road. The title has passed to The Lime Property Fund Limited Partnership (owned by Aviva). At the time the County Council took a long term leasehold interest in the site, the directors of Integra were registered as Pegasus Ltd and Perseus Ltd. The names of the Directors for Pegasus Ltd and Perseus Ltd were not disclosed to ECC, and there was no legal requirement for disclosure of this information. Basildon Borough Council have never been party to any (land use planning) application for any waste treatment plant at Courtauld Road.

20. Oral questions of the representative of the Essex Police and Crime Panel

There were no questions.

21. Oral questions of the representative of the Essex Fire Authority on any matter relevant to the business of that Authority.

The report of the Authority's meeting on 5 June 2013 was noted. There were no questions.

The meeting closed at 13:05

Chairman
15 October 2013