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# Essex County Council Meeting 11 February 2020

## Answers to Written Questions

### Agenda Item 10

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

'I am concerned about the waiting times of our young children seeking mental health services. There is a national growing trend of young people requiring mental health services and I fear that a backlog is/or could be building up.

Could the Cabinet Member please provide an update so that we may understand the position in Essex.'

#### Reply

Councillor Beavis may be aware of the recent Children's Society report 'Waiting in Line' which was published last week. This paper highlights national issues in relation to wait times for mental health services. As Councillor Beavis alludes in her question, it is not acceptable for those with mental health issues needing to wait for long periods of time for help and in Essex we are doing a great deal to address these concerns.

To be clear, the national waiting time target is 18 weeks. In the financial year up to November 2019, the Essex provider, NELFT, achieved 90.29% of children and young people clinically assessed and starting treatment within 18 weeks. Whilst performance is beneath the target of 95%, this represents an improvement from a low of 85% earlier in the year. Out of the 1,112 children and young people accepted into the service, 108 waited over 18 weeks to be seen. This is less than previous months and we are not currently seeing a growth in backlogs, however we continue to explore ways to reduce this further.

In order to mitigate pressure on the service, Essex commissioners have been investing in the wider children's mental health landscape through services such as; Kooth (online counselling service), Progressions (16-25yrs service for young people with mental health needs entering adulthood) and the Infant mental health service. Whilst these provisions achieve good individual outcomes, as is the case in other areas, statutory provision has yet to see a reduction in demand.

The Leader also announced last year £1m of investment into Mental health in Essex. As part of this funding we have develop a project on children with autism

including training to ensure that skills sets are in place to work with Children and Young People with Autism, backed up with a clinician to run 'surgeries' in each office so staff can talk through their complex cases. We have also developed a Project to embed Trauma Perceptive Practice culture in two schools and their feeder primaries, so that we support schools to access appropriate interventions where needed. I can further update on these later in the year.

In the longer term, local authority and health commissioners across Essex are working on re-modelling children's mental health services and a reduction in waiting times is a priority for us both locally and nationally. NHS England will begin supporting CCG's to trail 4 week waits for CYP mental health services and Essex have begun piloting this with the Progressions service. In addition, the training and roll-out of the Mental Health Support Teams for schools will support early access to lower level intervention which may positively impact the waiting times and help mitigate demand upstream.

## **2. By Councillor Young of the Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change Action**

'What actions has the council put in place to reduce the amount of waste being sent abroad that is detrimental to the environment and how are we going to hold ourselves accountable?'

### **Reply**

Recyclable waste placed at the kerbside is collected by local waste collection authorities (city, district and borough councils) and it is they who make the necessary arrangements for this material to be recycled. Essex County Council has no control over how this recyclable waste is disposed of. It is the duty of the waste collection authorities to conduct due diligence on any recycling companies they use to ensure waste material is disposed of in an appropriate and lawful way.

The vast majority of waste collected by local councils in Essex is managed in the UK, however, a small proportion of separated waste material is exported to reprocessing facilities outside of the UK. Waste materials for reprocessing are a globally marketed commodity and export markets are generally utilised to supplement the lack of viable reprocessing capacity in the UK. The export process is undertaken in accordance with all relevant UK and EU legislation. This requires the materials that are being exported to meet a quality specification, and for exporters, importers and those responsible for reprocessing to all be registered with the appropriate national regulator.

ECC is working hard to promote waste minimisation so that there is less of this type of waste to be disposed of in the first place.

ECC, under the Love Essex brand and working in partnership with city, district and

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borough councils in Essex, launched in January this year a new campaign to reduce this type of waste. 'Love Essex, Not Plastic' encourages Essex residents, educational establishments and businesses to pledge to reduce the amount of single-use plastics they use. The campaign will continue throughout 2020.

**3. By Councillor Harris of the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change Action**

'I am prompted to ask this question over the Colchester Shrub End recycling centre, after residents have raised with me plastic recycling arrangements at Shrub End. I have been told by staff on site to throw plastic recycling into household rubbish containers.

Can the contract at Shrub End be revised to ensure plastic recycling is not thrown in "general waste" bins, but recycled instead?

A lot of plastic ends up being taken in by Colchester residents, and it is a great source of frustration to see Colchester Council doing its bit to reuse, and recycle, when the Essex County recycling centre is not geared up for climate change in this way.'

**Reply**

The Recycling Centres are for large household waste – recycling plastic should be done at the kerbside.

The primary role of the twenty-one Recycling Centres for Household waste (RCHW) operated by Essex County Council is to provide users with a facility to dispose of their bulky household waste.

Although the Shrub End RCHW facility is not intended to duplicate kerbside collection services, we do recognise that some residents of Colchester choose to use this the site for the disposal of general non-bulky waste, rather than use the kerbside service provided by the Borough Council. Essex County Council therefore makes every effort to provide the fullest range of recycling opportunities at the site. However, this has to be balanced against the physical constraints of the site, demand, as influenced by the composition of waste entering the site, and the general market for waste materials collected for recycling.

With respect to plastic, I can confirm that all of the RCHW operated by Essex County Council, including Shrub End, provide facilities for users to deposit plastic bottles for recycling. Users will be asked to separate any plastic waste brought into the site so the bottles can be recycled; other plastic items will be directed into the general waste containers for disposal. The recycling service currently provided via

the RCHW does not extend to plastic film, pots, trays or hard plastic for two key reasons:

- The amount of plastic material coming into the sites is small compared to other materials, however, to make it viable to capture this material on site for recycling would require additional bulk containers for plastic to allow the different types to be segregated. The physical constraints of our sites would therefore require a reduction in the number of containers for core high demand materials, which are not collected from the kerbside, such as white goods, wood, hardcore, bulky items etc. This would lead to increased site closure for servicing and increased on site queuing, adversely impacting the user.
- The UK market for plastic bottles is strong, whereas other plastics are predominately exported for reprocessing. At a time of uncertainty in the market and greater awareness of the impacts of exporting waste abroad for recycling we have, together with our contractor, decided to predominately focus on the UK market for recycling at this moment in time.

Although we keep the range of materials separated for recycling at the RCHW under continual review there are no plans currently to extend the recycling offer at the sites to include other plastic types, and replicate a service already provided by the borough council.

As a Council we remain committed to providing high quality services and would strongly encourage all our residents to minimise the waste they produce and utilise the kerbside collection recycling service provided by their local council in combination with the RCHW service.'

#### **4. By Councillor Aspinell of the Leader of the Council**

'In 2019 I met with both Cllr Barker and Cllr Mohindra, with Cllr McKinlay also being in attendance, to discuss the future of the Shenfield library site. I was told by Cllr Mohindra that ECC does not need to seek planning permission from Brentwood Borough Council (BBC), as they have the right over their own property to give permission, and that they only needed to advise BBC of their intentions as statutory consultees.

I questioned this information at the time but was assured that this was the position. However, after speaking to planning officers and the Chief Executive at Brentwood they assure me that this is certainly not the case, and that ECC would have to submit a planning application to BBC in the normal fashion.

Please could you confirm what the correct position is?'

**Reply**

Both Essex County Council and Brentwood Borough Council are planning authorities. Because this development involves the retention of ECC uses (in this case a new library), we have been advised that regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning (General) Regulations 1992 as amended requires ECC to determine the application. As always, ECC and BBC planning departments will work together and we will conform with Brentwood's Local Plan.

There is a statutory requirement as part of the planning process to consult the public and we strongly value their views to help develop our plans to best meet community need.

**5. By Councillor Pratt of the Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care**

'Can the Cabinet Member please explain what actions were undertaken following the recent liquidation of Dial-a-Care and what implications this has for the wider system?'

**Reply**

Dial-a-Care was a domiciliary provider who supported individuals with a variety of needs, predominately in mid Essex. They were supporting 76 individuals (including self-funders), many of these are based in rural areas. They have been a provider for a number of years and on the whole, we have been happy with the provider.

Adult Social Care were alerted on 20 January 2020 that Dial-a-Care had a cash flow problem and were struggling to pay staff this week. Appropriate action was taken, and a hardship payment was organised.

On 22 January Dial-a-Care contacted us to confirm that the company would go into liquidation at 4pm that day, giving us only a few hours' notice.

A joint team of Social Workers, Contracts Staff, placement team and other support staff was set up to ensure safe transfer of care for people affected. By 6pm on 22 January another provider had been identified and we worked with the new provider to secure the services of Dial-a-Carer staff and ensuring visits were being undertaken that night. All staff worked through until late in the evening calling service users and families to ensure there was a care visit in place or a contact point was available.

The outcome was that all 76 services users were supported and safe in the space of 6 hours. All those involved showed absolute dedication and commitment to ensuring that service users were disrupted as little as possible.

Over the following days, the weekend and into the next week work continued to support the new provider and ensure care was being delivered safely.

This provider failure was purely down to quality issues which were being addressed and not related to the cost of care in the market, however the implications of losing a medium sized provider in the domiciliary market has an impact and we are taking steps to assess providers and their sustainability.

I would like to commend the staff across Adult Social Care and its supporting functions, who displayed at short notice outstanding professionalism and compassion to ensure vulnerable people continued to receive their care.

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

‘With this council rightly putting a lot of emphasis on health and well-being, by encouraging walking and cycling amongst other things. Could the Cabinet Member explain how residents, particularly the more elderly, are expected to participate on very poorly maintained footpaths and incomplete, unsafe cycleways across the county?’

Real improvements, would encourage more use of cycleways and footpaths, increase health and well-being and in turn save significant sums of money for the NHS, social care and other services.

When will he ensure real investment and real improvements in these areas?’

**Reply**

I thank the member for Chelmsford West for her question on the link between health, well-being, and active travel.

Essex Highways has very nearly completed a whole programme of additional footway improvements, the Footway Member-led Programme, where Essex Highways has repaired footway defects at over 300 locations right across the County, with some of these sites having multiple defects at one location. This programme is additional investment that ECC has made in footways in order to encourage cycling and walking right across the County.

In addition, we have decided to make additional £750k capital money available specifically for cycling facilities from 20/21, increasing in future financial years. This demonstrates the support for the wellbeing of our residents and highway users.

Furthermore, ECC has been part of a Department for Transport programme to

develop Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs), initially with Braintree, Chelmsford and Colchester, the plans consider how best to develop walking and routes and infrastructure to encourage active travel. A consultation on a proposed network of routes is being prepared and will commence shortly. LCWIPs will enable ECC to plan for the longer term and develop a pipeline of improvements which can be funded through a mixture of local contributions and developer and government funding.

A draft Walking Strategy was consulted upon in Autumn 2019, in response to which over 800 responses were received. Officers are currently preparing a report to me to enable the adoption of the strategy. It aims to get more people in Essex walking, in particular for shorter trips. If more people were to walk to their local shops, schools or parks, they would not only get the health and wellbeing benefits of being active, it would also help to keep the traffic moving, as approximately 40% of car journeys are around a mile. Officers are working with communities and partners on an Action Plan to deliver the Strategy.

We already have a Cycling Strategy and delivery programme which is encouraging more people to cycle which includes Bike Training for adults and led rides. Officers are currently exploring bike share opportunities with the next generation of Bike Share operators and social enterprises. In Chelmsford we are delivering the Chelmsford Growth Package, the next stage of which will include new cycle infrastructure on Broomfield Road and will provide more choice for how people move around the city.

**7. By Councillor Mackrory of the Cabinet Member for Customer, Corporate, Culture and Communities**

'What is the current position regarding the proposed Community-run Libraries scheme? In particular, how many libraries subject to this proposal are involved in detailed discussions? Are there any other Libraries where there has been no or few genuine expressions of interest? What progress has been made with the investment programme as referred to in the July 2019 Cabinet report and when is the further report to cabinet also referred to expected?'

**Reply**

In November 2019 the Community Run Libraries Team published an information pack to those groups/community organisations that have expressed interest in running a community library. This was followed up by telephone calls and face to face meetings.

In December four engagement events were offered to groups, to come and talk through the content of the pack and discuss their ideas further with the team. Many of these events were also attended by other local voluntary organisations (including Community Volunteering Service and Citizens Advice) and existing library

volunteers, who gave really helpful input based on their own experiences.

The team have stayed in regular contact with all of those organisations who wish to take the lead on a community library and those who are still deciding, and have now met with the majority of these groups in person now to hear their ideas and talk more about how the library service would support them if they chose to proceed with a proposal. It is early days in this work and it is too early to say how many of these early EOIs will turn into detailed proposals. I can say though that most of these discussions relate to smaller libraries in villages, small towns or suburbs

Investment in libraries, promised in the future library services strategy, has already started. We have upgraded the public computers in all 74 libraries to improve customers' experience and ensure the computers are secure and compatible with new software. We are also in the process of upgrading the self-service facilities in libraries.

Energy-saving LED lighting has recently been installed at Billericay, Braintree, Clacton, Chelmsford and Rayleigh libraries to improve the library environment for customers and help tackle climate change. We plan to install LED lighting in over 20 more libraries in the coming year.

We are investing £1.9m in library refurbishments. Refurbishment will include clear signage, modern and flexible furniture, meeting rooms/pods, and other improvements that will make libraries more accessible and inclusive.

The report on refurbishments is currently being drafted by the Libraries Team and will be published in the near future. We expect this programme of work will begin later this year.'

**8. By Councillor Mackrory of the Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care**

'Will the Cabinet Member give the background as to why Essex County Council is owed £11.9m in deferred payments, the second highest in the country, and what safeguards are in place for the future of the scheme given the Prime Minister's pledge that no one should have to sell their home to pay for their care?'

**Reply**

The council is statutorily obliged to offer Deferred Payment Agreements (DPAs) under conditions which are set out in chapter nine of the statutory Care and Support Guidance (CSG) issued by the Department of Health and Social Care. The CSG applies to all councils with social care responsibilities across England.

DPAs are designed to prevent people from being forced to sell their home in their



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lifetime to meet the cost of their care in a residential care home.

A condition of the scheme is that adequate security must be provided by the person requesting the DPA. In most cases this takes the form of a legal charge on the adult's house. This is our default position in Essex, thus ensuring the debt is secured. The level of debt and the value of the asset is monitored to ensure the person concerned can repay their debt when the DPA comes to an end.

The DPA scheme is intended to be run on a cost-neutral basis, with local authorities able to recoup the costs associated with deferring fees by charging interest on them. Local authorities can also recoup the administrative costs associated with DPAs.

It is ultimately the choice of an individual whether or not to enter into a DPA. Councils have an obligation to offer them to those who fulfil the conditions. The size of the DPA position in Essex is proportional to the size of the local authority, relative to others, and the history of offering DPAs before it became a statutory obligation. ECC remain committed to the most appropriate outcome, wherever able supporting people to remain at home. Because of our historical position in offering DPAs before it became a statutory requirement, we are well versed in mechanisms and financial planning and do not believe there is a long-term sustainability issue following the Prime Minister's pledge.

## **9. By Councillor Davies of the Leader of the Council**

'Now that the UK has left the European Union, we will no longer receive billions in EU structural funding which was used to support businesses, employment and agriculture.

The Conservative Government has pledged to set up a Shared Prosperity Fund, in order to replace this funding.

Can the Cabinet Member give an update on the Prosperity Fund and how Essex will benefit?'

### **Reply**

EU funding has been important for developing Essex Infrastructure. Under the current EU 2014-2020 Multiannual Financial Framework, The South East LEP which covers Essex, Kent and East Sussex has been able to fund £74m from the European Regional Development fund to support business growth, £71m from the European Social Fund to promote inclusion and skills and £14m from the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development. At ECC we have also directly participated in EU funded projects including skills for young people, promotion of tourism and climate adaptation for urban areas.

Although the UK has left the EU, EU funding does not immediately stop. The

current EU Multiannual Framework has not yet completed and under the terms of the EU Withdrawal Agreement, the UK will continue to participate in programmes until their closure. UK organisations can continue to bid for new grant funding under the current MFF until the end of 2020 and programmes will continue to receive EU funding across the programme's lifetime. In many cases, funding for programmes will continue after the end of 2020.

The EU itself has not announced its plans for its own replacement Multiannual Framework to begin in 2021. However, the Political Declaration does identify that the EU and UK will negotiate principles for the UK's future participation in EU programmes.

Within the UK, central government proposed the Shared Prosperity Fund in place of EU funding. Cllr Bentley in his role as Chair of the LGA's Brexit taskforce has continued to represent Local Government in discussions on the Shared Prosperity Fund covering the important issues of size of the fund, its distribution by region and vitally local control and decisions on how funds are invested. Central Government has not yet published proposals and we will continue to work with partners through the LGA to identify and consult on how the Fund can best be designed.

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

'When was the last time the County Council's criteria for repairing potholes was formally reviewed with input from members? Will the Cabinet Member for Highways support a full review into the criteria for repairing potholes being undertaken by the relevant scrutiny committee?'

**Reply**

I thank the member for Brentwood South for his question on potholes.

As part of the considerations for contract extension with Ringway Jacobs, the relevant Scrutiny Committee, of which you are a member, undertook a full review and had detailed discussions on the County's criteria for repairing potholes, and the criteria used to assess defects by the Essex Highways safety Inspectors. This review was undertaken very recently, completed in 2019, so is current.

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

'What action is the Council taking to secure Government funding to ensure that research is undertaken into re-opening railway lines and stations across Essex that were closed under the Beeching review?'

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**Reply**

I thank the member for Brentwood South for his question on railways.

I have already asked our officers at Essex County Council (ECC) to contact the Department for Transport (DfT). They have indeed written to the dedicated DfT email contact address and ECC contacts within the DfT rail team seeking additional information and guidance with respect to the fund.

Officers have also undertaken a review of projects thought to be seeking funding and an initial review of closed lines in Essex to consider scope for re-opening.

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

‘What is the Essex Highways policy for cutting back vegetation overhanging the highway (in particular, blocking footways) from adjacent, non-highway land?’

**Reply**

I thank the member for Chelmsford North for his question on vegetation overhanging the highway from privately owned land.

Landowners are responsible for trees and hedges on their land and should ensure that their trees and hedges are not overhanging or causing a problem on the highway. Where overhanging vegetation is a problem Essex Highways would encourage local Parish, City, District, and Borough Councils to inform the landowner, as they will know who that is.

Where a problem is long-standing then Essex Highways is able to write to the landowner if they are known but it is better that it is dealt with at the local level.

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

‘Over the last 12 months how many press releases have been issued by Essex County Council about the Army and Navy roundabout in Chelmsford and also of the threat of a congestion charge/clean air charging zone on the A127 in Basildon?’

**Reply**

I thank the member for Basildon Westley Heights for his question on communications regarding the Army and Navy Roundabout in Chelmsford and the A127 in Basildon.

Given the obvious difference in terms of the immediate impact of the two issues – one an emergency closure of a key junction, followed by a permanent closure and the forming of a task force to decide future options, the other a consultation on the introduction of a speed limit on a congested road to improve air quality over a much longer timescale, the level of communication relating to each has been entirely appropriate and proportionate.

During 2019 and to date in 2020, 24 press releases or statements concerning the Army and Navy roundabout have been issued. This included all communication relating to the emergency closure of the flyover during the summer of 2019, its permanent closure later in the year, and the formation of the Army and Navy taskforce and its subsequent work, as well as associated issues including public transport options.

A further 18 media enquiries have been responded to by Essex County Council over the same time period.

In the past year Essex County Council has issued two press releases/statements, one of them with Basildon Council on the introduction of a 50mph speed limit on the A127 over to improve air quality and the accompanying consultation. We have responded to seven media enquiries to date on the issue.

Basildon Council, over the same time period, has itself published two reports on the press release section of its website, both reporting on committee meetings at the Council which have discussed the A127 and air quality. The latest of these was published on Friday 28 June 2019.

#### **14. By Councillor Smith of the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills**

'Has the Council got any plans to create a new secondary school between now and 2035 within the Divisions of either Westley Heights or the Laindon Park and Fryerns?

If not, where will be the nearest secondary schools that can take the extra pupils that will come as a result of the new Local Plan once approved by the Government for Basildon Borough Council?'

#### **Reply**

For secondary pupil planning purposes, the Borough of Basildon is split into three areas: Basildon, Billericay and Wickford.

Westley Heights and the Laindon Park and Fryerns Divisions make up the Basildon area along with Pitsea.

Overall, there is currently an appropriate number of unfilled places at secondary schools in this area with the forecasts, set out in the Essex School Organisation Service's Ten Year Plan, suggesting there will be sufficient places until the 2023/24 academic year. Essex County Council have been working closely with Basildon Council on their emerging Local Development Plan.

The long-term housing scenario that has been tested suggests that there may be a need for a new school by 2035. Under policy H11 of the emerging Plan, land for a new school has been earmarked for the East of Basildon. Limited expansion of other schools may also be required to establish a suitable balance between more local need and overall capacity. These decisions will need to be made as detail regarding the dwelling mix and timing of particular developments become known.

As always, as well as looking at the closest school to new homes, other factors including parental preference and school performance will be considered.

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

'With budgets being squeezed, do we as a County Council need to re-evaluate how and what materials we use to repair our road surfaces and our potholes? We have had a mild winter with hardly any hard frost and yet potholes which were repaired last year have reappeared and are as deep as they were previously.

It cannot be cost-effective to continue to use the current method that is not fixing problems but just covering the surface for a short period of time.'

**Reply**

I thank the member for Pitsea for her question on materials used in highways.

Essex Highways delivers carriageway repairs using techniques and materials that are widely used across the country by local authorities and utility companies. The service also has a technical working group where new materials, techniques and innovation can be tested and evaluated to ensure that they are appropriate for wider use. As the cabinet member, I continue to encourage our highways team to look for new sustainable materials to use on the county's roads.

Potholes are created by water seeping through the road surface via cracks caused by traffic. As temperatures plummet, the water freezes and expands as ice, which pushes the road surface upwards like a bubble and ruptures the surface.

When the ice melts, it then leaves a void below the surface, which yields in under the stress of vehicles and gradually forms a pothole. Snow and ice are the worst conditions for exacerbating existing road defects, due to the repetition of this freeze-thaw process.

Rainfall and water on our roads also cause potholes to form as cracks in the road allow water to seep into the asphalt and the roadbed layer underneath. Traffic makes this problem worse, as the weight from vehicles forces water downward into the road and this has a similar effect in the formation of a pothole.

Formation of potholes in our roads can also be used to indicate that the overall surface condition is nearing end of design life. In these circumstances we can find that new potholes can appear near or immediately adjacent the older repairs.

While the overall impression is that we have had a mild winter, the 2019/20 winter service season is in fact looking like it will be an average season. So far, 33 countywide equivalent actions have been delivered. The average is around 58 and we are about two thirds of the way through the season.

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

‘What plans are the County Council putting in place to provide the infrastructure for more electric charging points in view of the news today (4 February) that the government has announced the phasing out of petrol and diesel cars by 2035.’

**Reply**

I thank the member for Pitsea for her question on electric charging points.

It should be noted that Government policy is for new petrol and diesel cars to be phased out by 2035 (not that all petrol and diesel vehicles would be removed by this date). This is to enable a largely electric (or other alternative fuel) fleet by 2050 to reflect vehicle lifespans. Essex County Council does not currently have an electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure strategy or plan, as we are developing a strategic approach to low carbon in Essex and are working with industry and other key stakeholders to understand how best to enable new infrastructure. An example of this, is that we are working with Gridserve to develop the first EV Charging Forecourt near Braintree, this will open in Summer 2020 and will provide rapid charging infrastructure which is ready for the anticipated launch of a significant number of new EV models available from manufacturers in 2020/21. In addition we are running a small pilot to install on street charging points in Chelmsford and Colchester which will be completed by May 2020.

Enabling EV charging infrastructure can be complex and at this stage we need further insight into future demand and consumption patterns, including optimising the use of existing capacity and creating additional capacity for energy generation. This of course needs to be fully evidence based in line with industry and public expectations. This will require knowledge resources and will take time to develop.

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That said, we are committed to progressing a comprehensive strategy and action plan in a timely fashion, that will support decarbonisation of transport across the county. We have already engaged with initiatives that will help us refine our thinking and ensure that any charging infrastructure we put in place is fit for purpose and responds to future demand.

We would expect the new Essex climate action commission to also consider Electric Vehicle Infrastructure.