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# ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING 6 December 2016

## Order Paper

### Public Question Time

Prior to the meeting of the Council and following prayers the following question will be asked by a member of the public in accordance with Standing Order 16.12.9.

**Public Speaker:** Dr David Corke – Wimbish Parish Council, Bus Representative

'I realise that requests from villages for better bus services usually have to be refused: they are costly to provide and usage rates often do not justify the expense. I was very disappointed at the dismissive response to the request from Wimbish Parish Council: a proposal that would involve no increase in expenditure (simply a change in the route taken by one bus). We were able to show that this change would result in a large increase in bus usage to the financial benefit of ECC and the bus operator.

The situation is this: two regular Monday-Saturday routes run between Thaxted and Saffron Walden. The main road from Thaxted to Saffron Walden is the B184 via Wimbish. Wimbish is the third largest village (population over 1630) whose main town is Saffron Walden. Great Chesterford (1490), Newport (2350) and Thaxted (2850) all have hourly bus services throughout the day, allowing journeys to and from a mainline station, large towns and centres of employment. Civilian Wimbish has one return journey three days a week allowing two hours in Saffron Walden. Carver Barracks has three return journeys six days a week: but the timetable is so arranged that only one bus allows a return trip to Saffron Walden.

The problem is that both Thaxted to Saffron Walden bus routes are diverted by minor roads to run through the small village of Debden (pop. 780). 192 buses a week run through Debden on these two routes. On average, one person gets on one in three of them (ECC provided usage data). Often these two routes are timetabled to run very close together. Wimbish has 6 buses a week (in Tye Green

& Howlett End and 18 a week for Carver Barracks.

Switching route 6 to run via Wimbish would mean that residents of all three parts of the village will gain a service allowing journeys to mainline trains, centres of employment and allow school students to come home after staying for after school activities. It will also be possible to take a bus to Tesco's and the street markets in Thaxted and Saffron Walden.

My request is this: that a meeting be set-up between key ECC public transport staff, Stephensons (the contractor for both routes involved), the ECC cabinet member for highways and public transport and myself, to examine the Wimbish Parish Council proposals more thoroughly.'

**Summary of Procedure:**

- The person must be present to ask their question.
- The Chairman will invite the person to speak.
- The person may not speak for more than three minutes in order to ask their question or submit a petition.
- There shall be a reply from the Chairman or other nominated Member.
- Save for the Member replying to the question no other Member shall be permitted to respond.
- There is no opportunity for supplementary questions nor for debate.
- Thirty minutes overall is allocated for public questions.

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**Agenda Item 11****1. By Councillor Danvers of the Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning**

‘Could the Portfolio Holder make a statement about the government’s withdrawal of grants for the finance of maintenance of local authority controlled schools and how the authority will address the £4million plus gap in funding that will result in the withdrawal of this government funding. What representations have been made to government about this?’

**2. By Councillor Danvers of the Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning**

‘Would the Portfolio Holder for education please explain the plans and timetable for developing a primary school in New Hall, Harlow.’

**3. By Councillor Deakin of the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport**

‘The new signage on the Chelmer Viaduct was put in place with directions to the Town Centre rather than the City Centre.

Please advise how much this mistake has cost the Essex taxpayers.’

**4. By Councillor Deakin of the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport**

‘When will this Council look to install glow in the dark solar powered cycle lanes, for the benefit of our residents and visitors?’

These cycle lanes are already very popular in Poland and the Netherlands.’

**5. By Councillor Mackrory of the Cabinet Member for Finance, Traded Services, Housing and Planning**

‘Would the Cabinet Member give the Council an interim update on the trading position of Essex Cares (ECL).’

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

‘Please could you tell me what practical and financial help Essex County Council is giving to the City, Borough and District Councils to deal with the increase in fly tipping that is now happening on a daily basis across the County? What steps have been put in place by the County Council to measure the impact that the recently introduced policy on trade waste is having on fly tipping?’

**7. By Councillor Kendall of the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport**

‘Please could you tell me what steps Essex County Council is taking to find the funding for the much needed solid island roundabout at the Devil’s Head crossroads in Warley? How much longer will my residents have to wait before action is taken to make this dangerous junction safer for all that use it?’

**8. By Councillor Smith of the Cabinet Member for Finance, Traded Services, Housing and Planning**

‘With regards to reference FP/648/11/16 of the Forward Plan (“To provide ECC comments on Basildon BC’s Local Plan Consultation on New and Alternative Sites Nov 2016”): Will the Cabinet Member meet with the nine elected members that cover the Borough of Basildon to consider and discuss the County Council’s view/position on the draft Local Plan for the Borough of Basildon?’

**9. By Councillor Smith of the Cabinet Member for Finance, Traded Services, Housing and Planning**

‘As Essex County Council is in full support of the 725 home Westley Green development of Dry Street, what safeguards are in place to protect the historic cottages at the give-way point in Dry Street from the rapidly increasing number of cars and building supply vehicles using this route as a rat run?’

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**10. By Councillor Higgins of the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport**

‘Two bridges in my division have had "temporary" fencing placed on them; the bridge at the junction of Ipswich Road/Cowdray Avenue and the Bridge at East Bridge.

Please can the portfolio holder tell me when these bridges will be repaired?

The first one has had "temporary" fencing for many years. Surely the bridge should be repaired before any works are done to the nearby junction?

The second bridge has had the "temporary" fencing for only a few months. In this case it is unsightly and harms the setting of the bridge and surrounding area.

I note that SELEP has provided money for other road schemes in Colchester. Will the Portfolio Holder be applying to them to get the capital funding required to fix these two bridges?’

**11. By Councillor Aspinell of the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport**

‘In reply to a question at Council by Councillor Pond, Members were informed that we would be provided with a list of how many street lights had been left unrepaired for more than a year. Why have we not been provided with this information and how many street lights are there that are still awaiting repair? In my Division I have one street light that has been left untouched for 3years 3 months, which is not acceptable.’

**12. By Councillor Whitehouse of the Leader of the Council**

‘What resources has the Council expended in relation to the so far inconclusive devolution proposals?’

**13. By Councillor Goggin of the Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning**

‘I must start my question with a declaration that as a current Governor of Market Field School for children with special needs - I have an interest.

With Essex County Council having just completed a multi-million pound rebuild of Market Field, I am aware of the complexity of the finances. I am also aware of the fantastic improvement to the school for the benefit of our pupils, teachers and general community alike.

In terms of value can I ask the portfolio-holder what measures are in place to ensure that as any big or small expenditure takes place that it is monitored to ensure that the works have been completed in a fit and safe manner, in line with original quotations, and representing value for money for our residents and ratepayers?’

**14. Cllr Dave Harris of the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste**

‘What are we doing to insulate workers at waste sites suffering from abuse for following guidelines? How much do current security measures cost, and does the Cabinet Member feel that they adequately support workers?’

**15. By Councillor Henderson of the Leader.**

‘Can the Leader confirm procedure regarding accepting amendments, and assure members that it will be followed in future, ensuring that time is given to debate motions properly?’

**16. By Councillor Clempner of the Cabinet Member for Adults and Children.**

‘What plans has the administration got to increase social care charges, and by how much?’

**17. By Councillor Henderson of the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport.**

‘In regards to the Local Highways Panels, how many projects have passed validation and are awaiting implementation, broken down by District?’

**18. By Councillor Clempner of the Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning.**

‘Given that plans to increase the number of childcare hours to 30p/w, when does the Cabinet Member expect to be able to increase the childcare budget? Providers across the county are struggling and have seen no increase in funding since 2012.’

**19. By Councillor Harris of the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport.**

‘Can the Cabinet Member outline the process by which you triage road maintenance and pothole repair? Why are some areas of the county completed before others?’

**20. By Councillor Young of the Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning.**

‘Can the Cabinet Member outline a breakdown of the budget for home to school transport over the last 5 years, and projected savings for this financial year?’