

Minutes of a meeting of Essex County Council held at County Hall, Chelmsford on 14 July 2015

Present

Chairman: Councillor N Hume

Vice-Chairman: Councillor J F Aldridge

Councillors:

J Abbott	D Finch	D Louis
B Aspinell	M D Fisher	M Mackrory
S Barker	R Gadsby	R A Madden
R L Bass	K Gibbs	M Maddocks
A Bayley	A Goggin	M McEwen
K Bentley	R J Gooding	V Metcalfe
D Blackwell	I Grundy	A Naylor
K Bobbin	C Guglielmi	Lady Newton
R G Boyce	D Harris	P Oxley
A Brown	A M Hedley	M J Page
M Buckley	I Henderson	C Pond
G Butland	T M A Higgins	J M Reeves
S Canning	R Hirst	S Robinson
J Chandler	P Honeywood	C Seagers
P Channer	R C Howard	K Smith
K Clempner	M Hoy	J Spence
T Cutmore	J Huntman	A Turrell
M Danvers	A Jackson	K Twitchen
J Deakin	J G Jowers	S Walsh
T Durcan	D J Kendall	R G Walters
M Ellis	N Le Gresley	J Whitehouse
A Erskine	J Lodge	J A Young

Prior to the meeting:**Prayers**

The meeting was preceded by prayers led by The Reverend Canon Carol Smith, Vicar of Moulsham St John's & Moulsham St Luke's, Chelmsford; Chaplain to Chairman of the Council & Workplace Chaplain, Essex County Hall.

Public Questions

The Chairman welcomed two members of the public who had registered to speak.

- a) Ralph Morgan Vice-Chairman of Basildon Hackney Carriage Proprietors and Drivers Association and also representing the Papworth Trust, a disabled centre in Clayhill Road asked:

'For months now we have had to endure the continuous flooding under the railway bridge at the junction of Clayhill Road and Southernhay. This sometimes gets to depths of 5-6 inches and when it stops raining it can take 18 hours to subside. You can understand that it restricts access to the town centre for many disabled residents, guide dogs won't walk through, people in electric wheelchairs or manual, mobility scooters, people with autism who attend the Papworth Centre have to have planned routes, and when this floods these people get disorientated because of the water, even pedestrians have to wait until the traffic stops just so they can get through, or get soaked. When some drivers go through they have no respect for the pedestrians who consequently get soaked.

After many phone calls and emails to Highways with little or no response, I had to contact our MP Mr Stephen Metcalfe who came to the site and luckily it had rained the night before, so he could see the aftermath of the problem. I also got our local County Councillor Mr Kerry Smith involved.

On June 30th I was present on site when Anglian Water put the CCTV down the sewer, and it was clear. I witnessed this, and they suggest the problem is with the County Council.

On Saturday 4th of July at Midnight we had a prolonged thunderstorm and the depth of the water was 1ft, this made it impossible to work.

All the local residents are asking 'when will this be resolved?' and they do not wish to hear the County Council blaming Anglian Water and vice-versa. They need this problem resolved ASAP.'

The Chairman called upon Councillor Bass, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation to respond.

The Cabinet Member thanked Mr Morgan for his question. He stated that:

'flooding was an issue that affected many areas of Essex and one that did require a multi-agency approach as it is not always immediately clear which Authority has responsibility for fixing the problem. In this case the Council has worked very closely with Anglian Water to understand what the issues are that

are contributing to the flooding. As a result of these investigations the Council attempted to clear the gullies and the associated pipework in this location earlier this year. The matter was then referred to Anglian Water as it was considered that the problem was in their pipework into which the highways drains discharged.

Anglian Water attended the site on 30 June 2015, jetted their system and carried out a camera survey. This revealed that their pipework was clear of obstruction and running free as the questioner has stated. The next step will be for Essex Highways to re-attend the site to investigate further where the blockage is. This is being programmed with the intention of starting work in the next two weeks. It is not a matter of us 'passing the buck' as the Council and Anglian Water are working very closely in collaboration. However, I do appreciate that it is very frustrating for the whole community when these flooding events occur frequently at the same location. In summary, we are doing our best to sort this problem out and with Stephen Metcalfe MP and Councillor Kerry Smith 'on the case' I doubt that we will be able to delay much longer.'

The Chairman advised Council that he had been informed that Mrs Renee Joyce, Chair of Governors at Tany's Dell Community Primary School & Nursery had submitted a question but had been delayed in traffic. He had agreed that her question be put on her behalf by Mr Burton.

- b) Mr Burton read the question as submitted by Mrs Renee Joyce, Chair of Governors at Tany's Dell Community Primary School & Nursery:

'I would like to ask the Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning if he would be willing to meet with a delegation from the Governing Body of Tany's Dell Community Primary School, Harlow as you may not be aware that in 2012, despite some reservations, we agreed to a request from Essex County Council to expand to a two-form entry, year on year, to accommodate the rising birth rate in Harlow.

At that time, we were assured by a senior officer that we would be supported financially to ensure that existing systems were maintained in order to keep children safe and happy in school and to preserve our caring, family ethos.

By September 2015, we will have 120 extra children on roll, with another 90 still to come.

Last autumn, we approached the same senior officer, to discuss a matched contribution towards the cost of expanding the dining hall. He visited, discussed the plans and we were assured that he would support this bid and it was submitted in good time. When emails and phone messages remained unanswered, and nothing further was heard, finally the school was informed by another officer that all capital funding had been allocated for the present financial year and that work at our school was not considered a priority.'

The Chairman called upon Councillor Gooding, Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning to respond.

The Cabinet Member thanked Mrs Joyce for her question and Mr Burton for reading it on her behalf. He stated that:

'I would firstly like to thank the school for agreeing to expand back in 2012. It is part of a much needed increase in pupil places that has helped to alleviate some of the pressures in Harlow. I know that at the time there were some issues around the size of the school hall and the dining areas and it clearly would have been preferable to have delivered an expansion of those facilities at the time that the school itself was expanded. The issue, as it often is, was around the availability of funding and discussions have taken place between the school and officers of the Council until quite recently. There is, of course, revenue funding that is made available that is commensurate with the number of children. However, I do accept the issue around the size of the school hall and the difficulties with delivering those parts of the school curriculum that go with that. So, I would be more than happy to meet with the school and, perhaps, outside of this meeting we could make arrangements to ensure that takes place and I will ensure that officers at County also attend. There is a clear need to balance the demands upon our capital programme but this is a matter I am happy to discuss.'

A third member of the public, Mr Tattum, had registered to speak but was not present in the Chamber in order to ask his question.

The Chairman formally opened the meeting.

The Chairman advised members that in the interest of improving accessibility to the Council's public meetings, this meeting would be recorded and broadcast live over the internet. The recording would then remain available to listeners via the Council's website. He urged Members to be aware of the need to identify themselves each time they spoke for the purpose of the recording and to use the microphones with care.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors W Archibald, E C Johnson, J Knapman, S Lissimore, M McGeorge, J W Pike and A Wood.

2. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Whitehouse declared a personal and non-pecuniary interest in question 16 of Agenda Item 12 as a member of the local District and Town Councils and resident of St John's Road in Epping.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 12 May 2015

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 12 May 2015 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4. Chairman's Announcements

Recent Death

The Chairman informed members of the death of Mrs Joan Smith M.B.E, known to many Members as Councillor Joan Lyon, and sent condolences to her family.

She was first elected as a County Councillor in 1981 representing the Division of Witham Northern until 2000 and served in many capacities including as a member of the Education, Environmental and Highways Committees. She was the Chairman of the Heritage and Culture Committee and had a major role in the opening of the visitor centre at Cressing Temple.

As well as being a member of many other Council committees she was also appointed in 1995 as Chairman of Braintree District Council.

Members stood in remembrance.

Queen's Birthday Honours

The Chairman congratulated the 17 residents in the County recognised in the Queen's Birthday Honours and in particular:

- Essex County Councillor Bob Boyce – MBE (for services to Local Government) and
- Maldon District Councillor Frank Delderfield – MBE (for services to the communities in Great Totham and Maldon).

Presentation of awards

Try a Train Day

The Chairman invited Councillor Higgins to present an award for the 'Try a Train Initiative'.

Councillor Higgins informed members that the Options for Independent Living (OIL) Rail sub-group and Essex County Council were 'Highly Commended' in the 'Improved Mobility' category of the 'Accessible Britain Challenge Award' in March for the 'Try a Train Initiative.'

This year, over 150 students with learning disabilities from seven Essex Schools and their carers spent a day on the railway on Thursday, 4 June. The long-running and successful 'Try a Train' days run by the County Council's Travel Training team help local students gain more independence and open up opportunities that would be hard to access otherwise.

Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation Partnership Award

The Chairman invited Councillor Bass to present the award.

Councillor Bass informed members that in June the County Council and Ringway Jacobs partnership 'Essex Highways' won a coveted national award; the 'Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation Awards' in the 'Effective Partnerships' category, beating many larger organisations to the coveted annual honour.

At the award ceremony, the judging panel had said: 'The Essex County Council and Ringway Jacobs partnership was the clear winner from an extremely strong field of entries. A model of effective partnership-working built on shared objectives and problem solving. A shining example of what can be achieved through true collaboration.'

Rocketry Awards

The Chairman congratulated five students from the James Hornsby School, Basildon, who had travelled on Thursday 18 June to the International 'Build a Rocket' final at the Paris Airshow, having built and refined their rockets, through both the regional and national finals of the competition and competed against national winners from France and the USA. The school did fantastically well and finished as runners-up.

The students were VIPs at the Paris Airshow, met the French President, Francois Hollande, as well as representatives from NASA and were interviewed on French TV. They were presented with a trophy and have now been invited to the House of Commons in July as well as to various other prestigious events.

The students were present in the Chamber and the Chairman invited them to step forward to receive a certificate to mark their achievement. The students were: Joe Cox, Hannah Platts, Tyler Sharp, David Thai and Hollie Wollaston.

Members applauded to show their appreciation.

5. Executive Statement

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Finch, delivered an Executive Statement on the subject of Devolution entitled 'Towards a Greater Essex devolution deal' and included an update from the Leaders and Chief Executives devolution conference, reflections on what the Summer Budget means for English devolution, and what devolution means for Essex.

6. Motions

1. Footway Improvements

It was moved by Councillor Pond and seconded by Councillor Lodge that:

'This Council notes with approval the progress that has been made in recent years with maintaining carriageways, especially on PR 1 and 2 roads.

Council now looks to the two Cabinet Members to secure an equivalent improvement with footways, many of which, throughout the county, have become seriously degraded.

The allocation of extra funds for footway repairs has been welcome, and Council believes what is now needed is a timed programme of footway improvements, district by district, over a five-year period, and engaging with local county councillors and parishes, to ensure the worst problems are identified and rectified as soon as possible.'

It was moved by Councillor Bass and seconded by Councillor Howard that the Motion be amended to read as follows:

'This Council notes with approval the significant progress that has been made in recent years with maintaining carriageways, especially on PR 1 and 2 roads, as a consequence of the Conservative Administration's pursuit of the correct maintenance strategy and its effective management of the Authority's finances.

Council acknowledges plans to secure an equivalent improvement with footways, many of which, throughout the County, have become seriously degraded.

The allocation of extra funds for footway repairs is welcome, and Council believes what is now needed is a timed programme of footway improvements, across the County, over a five-year period, and continuing to engage with local county councillors, districts and parishes, ensuring, as with the carriageways, that the worst problems on the most important and heavily used footways are dealt with as a priority.'

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 Motion was declared to be carried.

2. Local Enterprise Partnerships

It was moved by Councillor Butland and seconded by Councillor Lady Newton that:

‘This Council fully supports the Government’s plans for devolution of powers to elected local authorities and calls on Ministers to help support Essex businesses and Councils deliver further prosperity to residents by expeditiously agreeing to the formation of a Greater Essex Local Enterprise Partnership (GELEP).

This will support more local and much quicker decision making, than the current South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP), on schemes and projects which will help further to increase jobs, skills, wealth and growth in the Greater Essex economy.

The creation of a GELEP could also be co-terminus with plans for devolution in Essex and help return powers to local people.’

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

3. Call for 20 MPH default Speed Limit on Residential Roads

It was moved by Councillor Mackrory and seconded by Councillor Deakin that:

‘This Council notes that:

- speed limits on Britain’s residential roads are 60% higher than in Europe;
- more than half of all road accident casualties occur on roads with 30mph limits;
- reducing speed limits on residential roads has been found to reduce both the incidence of accidents and the numbers of fatalities and serious injuries that result; and
- new Department for Transport guidelines make it easier for local authorities to adopt a 20 mph default speed limit on residential roads.

This Council therefore resolves:

- (a) to endorse the need to reduce injury accidents;
- (b) to welcome and encourage proposals for 20 mph zones from City/Borough/District/Parish Councils and community groups in Essex; and
- (c) to include consideration of requests within the remit of Local Highways Panels.’

It was moved by Councillor Bass and seconded by Councillor Howard that the Motion be amended to read as follows:

‘This Council notes that:

- speed limits on Britain’s residential roads are up to 60% higher than in some European countries;
- about half of all road accident casualties in Essex occur on roads with 30mph limits;

- reducing speed limits on residential roads has been found to reduce both the incidence of accidents and the numbers of fatalities and serious injuries that result; and
- new Department for Transport guidelines on 20 mph limits and 20 mph zones are consistent with current ECC policies.

This Council therefore resolves:

- (a) to endorse the need to reduce injury accidents particularly KSIs;
- (b) to welcome and encourage proposals for 20 mph limits and 20 mph zones from City/Borough/District/Parish Councils and community groups in Essex; and
- (c) to continue, subject to current ECC policies, to include consideration of requests within the remit of Local Highways Panels.'

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 Motion was declared to be carried.

4. Living Wage

It was moved by Councillor Danvers seconded by Councillor Harris that:

'This Council believes that paying the living wage not only benefits employees but also employers and the wider economy. Council further believes that the living wage has the support of all three main political parties in raising those on low pay up to a decent standard of living.

Council therefore agrees:

- a) to ensure that Essex County Council and Essex Cares employees are paid at least the living wage as soon as practicable and that any financial implications resulting from this are considered as part of the Medium Term Resource Planning process;
- b) to explore ways through the appropriate scrutiny process of using its influence as a major local employer and provider of services to encourage other local employers to pay the living wage in Essex.'

It was moved by Councillor Finch and seconded by Councillor Spence that the Motion be amended to read as follows:

'This Council believes that paying the National Living Wage announced in the budget on 8 July not only benefits employees but helps to reduce reliance on welfare benefits.

Council therefore:

- a) supports Essex County Council employees being paid the National Living Wage from 1 April 2016 and agrees that the cost of implementation be made from savings elsewhere in the Council's Budget unless funded by Central Government.
- b) agrees that the appropriate scrutiny process assess the impact on Essex County Council's supply chain of paying the National Living Wage and the consequential impact on the Council's budget for future years; noting that in the budget there was a 1% reduction in Corporation Tax to support the funding of this in private sector organisations.'

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 Motion was declared to be carried.

7. Adjournment

With the agreement of Council the Chairman adjourned the meeting for luncheon at 13:03pm.

The meeting reconvened at 14:00pm.

8. New Statutory Procedure for Dismissing Statutory Officers

Councillor Finch, the Leader of the Council, presented a report to make changes to the Constitution to implement a new process for the dismissal of statutory officers (the Head of the Paid Service, the Section 151 Officer and the Monitoring Officer).

Resolved:

That the Constitution be amended as set out in the Annex to the report.

9. Essex Pension Fund Board Annual Report

Councillor Bass, Chairman of the Essex Pension Fund Board, presented the sixth Annual Report of the Essex Pension Fund Board, covering the period from 1 April 2014 until 31 March 2015.

The report was received and adopted.

10. Cabinet Issues

Councillor Finch, the Leader of the Council, presented a report concerning matters considered by Cabinet since the last Council meeting.

Cabinet Members responded to questions as follows:

- (i) Councillor Kendall asked the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation regarding 'Getting Around in Essex' that, as in the consultation document it states that in 2012 there had been 45 million journeys by bus in Essex, did the Cabinet Member share his concern that there had been only 1,421 responses to the bus consultation and what lessons can be learnt from the consultation process and how could it be improved.

The Cabinet Member agreed that it would have been preferable if there had been more responses. However, it was not a one-off consultation but a continuing dialogue and it was his intention that there would be full engagement through local forums, bus forums and creating a Countywide Bus Strategy Commissioning Board in order to pursue a number of issues with the operators.

- (ii) Councillor Henderson asked the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation if he would agree to keep a close eye on Bus Legislation currently on its way through the House of Commons that could bring benefits to Local Authorities.

The Cabinet Member agreed to do so and added that in addition to monitoring closely any changes in bus legislation he invited Councillor Henderson to play an active part in monitoring by agreeing to become a member of the Countywide Bus Strategy Commissioning Board.

- (iii) Councillor Henderson asked Councillor Finch, the Leader of the Council, regarding the Meals Service if there was any form of assessment being undertaken of those currently receiving the service and if so can Council be informed who is carrying out that assessment and what are the criteria.
- (iv) Councillor Henderson asked the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Adults and Children that an assurance be given that minimum standards would be maintained in the delivery of the Meals on Wheels Service and it would not be jeopardised if there were insufficient volunteers or local groups willing to deliver the service.

The Leader of the Council stated that he has given a commitment that those people who need the Service would continue to receive it.

The Cabinet Member for Adults and Children in the context of the closure of the Colchester depot, noted that the consultation process was under way not to determine if Meals on Wheels was still required but to re-shape the service and improve the quality of the service provided. Each recipient of the service had already received or would be receiving a visit. He requested that all members engage with this consultation. There are 15 months to ensure that the service is improved.

- (v) Councillor Young, noting that the Leader and the Cabinet Member for Adults and Children had given an assurance that no vulnerable person would go without a meal, asked him what was the purpose of the assessment? Was it a rationing exercise? She expressed the view that Meals on Wheels was low-level, effective intervention that should be encouraged.

The Cabinet Member explained that the exercise was not a rationing exercise but to determine how the users would like their meals delivered in the north of the County.

- (vi) Councillor Young regarding the Equalities Policy Statement and Equalities Strategy requested that the Member Reference Group be a cross-party body and urged members to complete their Equality and Diversity online training. She also asked the Leader of the Council to comment on the use of the Equality Impact Assessments for decisions.

The Leader of the Council replied that the Member Reference Group was already a cross-party body. He also urged all members to complete their online training and gave an assurance that he will enforce and monitor the completion of the Equality Impact Assessments relating to decisions. He invited Councillor Young to join him in the monitoring.

- (vii) Councillor Bayley concerning 'Getting About in Essex' asked the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation if he could intervene in order to get the Number 26 bus reinstated. In 2013 this bus route was suspended due to bad weather but has never returned to service.

The Cabinet Member replied that the policy of this Council is to try to maximise the commercial operation of all routes in the County of Essex and where that doesn't work the County can intervene and support the service if it fulfils certain criteria. He couldn't comment on an individual service but for any bus route to be reinstated it would need to meet those criteria.

- (viii) Councillor Whitehouse asked the Cabinet Member for Adults and Children if, as the contract for Meals on Wheels had not been operating for very long and had failed to deliver the service as promised, had any lessons been learnt?

The Cabinet Member replied that the current contract had been extended whilst recognising that since 2012 less people are choosing to have Meals on Wheels. In consequence prices had not been increased but, as stated earlier, consultation is being undertaken on the delivery and procurement of the service for the future.

The report of Cabinet Issues was received and adopted.

11. Council Issues

Councillor Finch, the Leader of the Council, presented the report of matters reserved to Council noting the changes to the membership of committees, Group Leadership and Deputies to Cabinet Members.

He asked members to note that there was a further amendment following Councillor Metcalfe's resignation as Deputy to the Cabinet Member for Finance.

In response to a question from Councillor Henderson the Leader of the Council confirmed that there was no increase to the overall cost of the Special Responsibility Allowances.

The Report of Council issues was received and adopted.

12. Written questions to the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Members

The published answers to the 20 written questions submitted in accordance with Standing Order 16.12.1 were noted.

The following supplementary questions were asked as a result of having received a written reply:

- (4) Councillor Kendall asked Councillor Madden, the Cabinet Member for Adults and Children, if he would be willing to help facilitate and attend a meeting with the North East London Foundation Trust in Brentwood so that the residents in the Borough who have an interest in mental health issues can ask questions and raise concerns with the new provider?

The Cabinet Member replied that he would.

- (5) Councillor Kendall asked Councillor Gooding, the Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning, if the annual report on School Destination data was a new development.

The Cabinet Member replied that it was a new development intended to maintain high standards.

- (6) Councillor Robinson asked Councillor Finch, the Leader of the Council, if the changes to which he referred in his answer, from managing people to managing contracts, would be borne in mind.

The Leader replied that as the Council changed to a commissioning organisation it would continue to be very mindful of costs and to be vigilant whilst ensuring that staff are paid correctly to recruit and retain staff of sufficient calibre.

- (7) Councillor Le Gresley asked Councillor Bass, the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation, if the policy to which he referred in his answer was a new policy or, if it were an established policy, he wished to

apologise for not being previously aware of it. In either event he asked, if the Cabinet Member would send a note to members of the Local Highways Panels and relevant officers so they are fully aware of the policy.

The Cabinet Member replied that he believed the Local Highways Panels were fully aware of the policy and his answer to both the written question and the supplementary would reinforce that awareness.

- (9) Councillor Ellis asked Councillor Bentley, the Cabinet Member for Economic Growth, Infrastructure, Waste and Recycling, if he would confirm that he would not recognise the motion passed by Basildon Borough Council.

The Cabinet Member replied that he recognised the motion that had been passed by Basildon Borough Council but did not agree with it.

- (10) Councillor Aspinell asked Councillor Spence, the Cabinet Member for Finance, if he could have sight of the entrepreneurial new initiatives that this administration are putting in place to raise revenue from the Council's assets

The Cabinet Member replied that there were some matters in hand regarding this and he would seek to provide Councillor Aspinell with a briefing.

- (11) Councillor Higgins asked Councillor Bass, the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation, if he could provide any timeframe for the repair of East Bridge and could she have an assurance that it would be quicker than repairs to another bridge in her Division the temporary barriers on which were installed nearly 20 years ago.

The Cabinet Member, on behalf of Councillor Johnson, the Cabinet Member for Highways Maintenance and Small Schemes Delivery, replied that there was a requirement to consult with the Borough Council and then design the solution and as the Local County Member Councillor Higgins would also be advised. He couldn't speculate on the timeframe as it was dependent upon the technical appraisal.

- (13) Councillor Aspinell thanked Councillor Madden, the Cabinet Member for Adults and Children, for his reply but requested that, rather than provide a general reply, the Cabinet Member address the specific case mentioned in the question. Why had the assessors determined that this individual should not be entitled to a blue badge? He also wished to know if the assessors had based their decision on medical grounds and if so had those grounds been shared with the individual and had he been informed that he had a right of appeal.

The Cabinet Member replied that he was aware of the case and had been in correspondence with Councillor Aspinell. The Department of Transport guidelines changed in 2012. Although comments from the medical

profession are very much taken into account, it is the role of the independent assessor to determine if there was an entitlement to a blue badge. He added that any appeal against such a decision could be made within six months of the decision date.

- (14) Councillor Abbott asked Councillor Bass, the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation, if he wished to elaborate on the written reply specifically in relation to paragraph 2 where there is reference to improvements in communication with the bus operators. He wondered if he could be specific about what those improvements might be and specifically comment on the communications relating to the road signage on Church Road Rivenhall on 29 and 30 July where it remains unknown what bus will be providing the service.

The Cabinet Member, replying on behalf of Councillor Johnson, the Cabinet Member for Highways Maintenance and Small Schemes Delivery, replied that he had nothing to add to the written reply except to assure him that the Council is in the process of continuous improvement.

- (15) Councillor Abbott asked Councillor Bass, the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation, if, relating to the crossings to which reference was made in the question, and the written reply that defined the extent of the defect before repainting would take place, could he have an assurance that those that meet that criteria will be fully repainted in time for the next school term in September.

The Cabinet Member, replying on behalf of Councillor Johnson, the Cabinet Member for Highways Maintenance and Small Schemes Delivery, replied that he was confident officers would ensure it would be done.

- (17) Councillor Henderson asked Councillor Brown, the Cabinet Member for Communities and Healthy Living, if she did not agree that a £3.6million cut would have a major impact on the Public Health Budget as he was sure that many organisations which provide services would be very concerned and could he have her assurance that the National Health Visitor Service, that is about to be transferred to the Council's control in October bringing a £10.9million budget with it, would not have its budget cut

The Cabinet Member replied that the Council was working very hard with partners to keep all transferred services intact. Health visitors are a very important part of the service and there is no intention that the service should be curtailed.

- (18) Councillor Young asked Councillor Bentley, the Cabinet Member for Economic Growth, Infrastructure, Waste and Recycling, if he agreed that his answer revealed that the Council did not know if apprentices were leaving to take up full-time jobs and would he commit to undertaking a

review in order to assess how the apprenticeship scheme is working in Essex.

The Cabinet Member replied that to undertake such a review would be very difficult as it would require the introduction of a method of keeping track of people once they have left the apprenticeship scheme. If it were possible it would require considerable resources, money and time to complete. Essex has one of the lowest unemployment figures in the country and is one of the lowest areas for persons not in education, employment or training. Essex also has one of the greatest success rates for apprenticeships. The Council is investing in other areas to achieve the greatest good to improve skills and training in areas where there is the greatest need.

- (19) Councillor Young asked Councillor Gooding, the Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning, if, notwithstanding the written answer where it is stated she had a suite of documents provided, she had received all of the required documents. The Scrutiny Committee when it considered the matter of home to school transport in 2014 heard an officer speak of 'extensive modelling'. This modelling had not been provided and she didn't feel that she had received the full business case for the decision. She asked that the Cabinet Member re-examine the extent of the documentation provided.

The Cabinet Member replied that he believed Councillor Young had received everything she had requested including detailed documents and correspondence, but he would re-examine the matter and if there were any more relevant documents he would make them available.

- (20) Councillor Danvers, whilst thanking Councillor Gooding, the Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning, for agreeing earlier to meet with the representatives of Tany's Dell School asked if, having made a decision to expand a school and given financial promises, should not those promises be kept. Failure to do so might, in the future, make any discussions with other schools about possible expansions more difficult.

The Cabinet Member asked members to note the need to balance the capital investment in order to enable schools to take additional pupils with the broader remit of what was required. However he acknowledged the point made by Councillor Danvers whilst discussions took place to ensure that necessary work was undertaken to facilitate expansion of schools where required.

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

1. Councillor Harris asked Councillor Gooding, the Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning, if, when the expansion or development of all schools was being agreed, the other Cabinet Members worked together in

order to consider such matters as highways, footpaths and cycle-ways. This was particularly relevant, for example, when taking decisions in regard to the redevelopment of the Alderman Blaxhill site. An opportunity existed to talk to Colchester Borough Council about this issue.

The Cabinet Member replied that he hoped there was always such collaborative working between the relevant Councils and the Cabinet Members.

2. Councillor Pond asked Councillor Bass, the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation, if he was aware that as from 13 September Buckhurst Hill and Loughton would be served by additional overnight trains on Fridays and Saturdays and this might necessitate the consideration of additional lighting time at the stations. Would he look again at the reply given by the street lighting service to Loughton Town Council's request that this would meet the exception criteria.

The Cabinet Member replied that he had been made aware and he would certainly examine the need for any changes to the lighting arrangements by way of the established criteria for exemptions.

3. Councillor Pond asked Councillor Bass, the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation, if he was aware that the numbers of uses of Stratford Station has risen to 92 million per annum many of whom are residents of Essex. The accommodation on the platform for Essex-bound trains is rudimentary and would the Cabinet Member please raise the matter with whatever consultative body may be appropriate?

The Cabinet Member replied that he had not been made aware of the numbers involved but he did agree that the facilities on the Essex-bound platform are inadequate. He agreed to raise it at the appropriate opportunity.

4. Councillor Young asked Councillor Bass, the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation, to clarify the budgetary provision for footway and highway maintenance and whether it was capital or revenue?

The Cabinet Member replied that approximately £9.5million was available in the capital budget for improvements and had been focussed initially on main centres of population, Harlow, Basildon, Chelmsford and Colchester and was now working to upgrade the facilities in the Market Towns of Essex and residential areas where the footpaths were most used. It was not appropriate to use revenue budgets for these works.

5. Councillor Howard asked Councillor Finch, the Leader of the Council, and Councillor Gooding, the Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning, if they would agree that the formal opening of Hadleigh Park by the Secretary of State and the Olympic cyclist Victoria Pendleton was a most enjoyable and memorable event? Would they also say that Essex County Council together with Active Essex and the Salvation Army have invested in one of the best mountain bike facilities in a valuable green space.

The Leader of the Council agreed that the opening was a well-run, stimulating and significant occasion that amply demonstrated the beauty of the area and the wonderful facilities. It was a very worthwhile initiative to encourage and improve the health of the community.

The Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning endorsed the Leader's comments.

6. Councillor Higgins asked Councillor Hirst, the Cabinet Member for Customer Services, Planning and the Environment, concerning the continued use of 0845 numbers and the cost to residents contacting the Council, what is the timetable for their phased withdrawal?

The Cabinet Member replied that since 1 July there has been significant progress to inform users and redirect callers to alternative methods of access and many people now use the internet. Work to replace the 0845 numbers continues.

7. Councillor Aspinell asked Councillor Gooding, the Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning, if he had arranged a meeting with the St James' School in order to discuss footpath matters.

The Cabinet Member replied that he would look into it.

8. Councillor Aspinell asked Councillor Bass, the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation, if he was aware that despite £8million being spent on the High Street in Brentwood the paving slabs remained unstable and were 'sliding down the road'. He wondered when the job was going to be finished properly.

The Cabinet Member replied that he would pass on this question to Councillor Johnson although he regretted that there would be no recourse against a contractor as the work had been undertaken some eight years previously. He added that such problems often occurred because HGVs mounted the pavement which is, of course, unacceptable.

9. Councillor Deakin asked Councillor Bass, the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation, if, in the light of the recent road traffic accident in Rainsford Road, Chelmsford, the provision of refuges was still on track to be provided by September 2015.

The Cabinet Member acknowledged the request. He would pass the information on to Councillor Johnson, the Cabinet Member for Highways Maintenance and Small Schemes Delivery.

10. Councillor Deakin asked Councillor Bass, the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation, if he would also pass on to the Cabinet Member for Highways Maintenance and Small Schemes Delivery her concerns about the broken and loose pavements in Duke Street, Chelmsford and ask him to investigate and arrange a repair.

The Cabinet Member agreed to pass the matter on to the Cabinet Member for Highways Maintenance and Small Schemes Delivery.

11. Councillor Abbott asked Councillor Gooding, the Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning, what assessments were undertaken prior to the decision to amend the school transport policy and when the assessments were undertaken was consideration taken of the differences between urban and rural areas?

The Cabinet Member replied that the new policy meant that transport was only freely available to the nearest school and catchments were no longer relevant. In consequence, there is no difference between rural or urban areas.

12. Councillor Robinson asked Councillor Bass, the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation, regarding Section 106 Agreements, if a scheme is part-funded by an Agreement does the scheme still have to go to the LHP for approval?

The Cabinet Member confirmed that it did.

13. Councillor Henderson asked Councillor Finch, the Leader of the Council, if he was considering devolving powers to make decisions on street lighting to District Councils?

The Leader of the Council replied that he had no fixed ideas about how devolution might work and had been in correspondence with the Leader of Harlow Council.

14. Questions of the representative of the Essex Police and Crime Panel

1. Councillor Mackrory asked Councillor Jowers, the representative of the Essex Police and Crime Panel, the extent to which the Police and Crime Panel has been involved in the sell-off of the police headquarters and does he expect consultation.

Councillor Jowers responded that there had been discussions in order to make £48million of savings. Options are being looked at. Yes there would be consultation and everything was being looked at.

2. Councillor Aspinell asked Councillor Jowers to explain what enforcement took place with regard to:
- Travellers,
 - Road Traffic and
 - Speed Limits.

Councillor Jowers explained that:

- Travellers are best managed through the Essex Countywide Traveller Unit (ECTU). The police are enthusiastic members of the ECTU

committee. The problem is that Essex has insufficient official sites. Travellers also tend to congregate in Districts that are not members of the ECTU.

- Pavement Parking is not actually an offense unless the vehicle is causing an obstruction. But this is an operational matter and not for the Police and Crime Panel.
- Although speed enforcement was a matter for the police, directing resources to this matter would inevitably impact upon the police's ability to investigate other matters, including knife-crime and child protection.

3. Councillor Fisher asked Councillor Jowers for his view of the proposal that there should be a sharing of premises with the Fire Authority.

Councillor Jowers agreed that there may be legislation forthcoming to bring together all the blue-light services but his view was that there needed to be caution about this approach as they comprise completely different groups of staff. The Police and Crime Commissioner is looking at all options regarding the use of assets.

15. To note the report of the Essex Fire Authority's meeting on 11 June 2015 and to ask questions of the Authority's representative

There were no questions of Councillor Hedley, the Authority's representative on the Essex Fire Authority, but he thanked Councillor Aspinell for the kind words he had said about the Essex Fire Service.

He then asked members to note that the Integrated Risk Management Plan was the main subject of the report and it considered the future of the Essex Fire and Rescue Service.

The Service is currently at the beginning of a 12-month public consultation. A number of presentations have been arranged with Local Authorities. He urged Members to read the document and become involved as the consultation will shape the options for change and the decisions to be taken on the future of the Fire Service.

Changes can be made to improve the service without too much pain and it is imperative that the public understand the need for these changes and are reassured that they will be as safe as they are today in the hands of a first class Fire Service.

The report of the Fire Authority's meetings held on June 2015 was received.

The meeting closed at 15:23.

Chairman
13 October 2015