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# Essex County Council

## 12 July 2022

### Order Paper

#### Agenda item 4

#### Public Speakers

The following questions will be asked by a member of the public registered to speak in accordance with Standing Order 16.12.8.

**Question 1:** from **Mr Bill Kyle**, a resident of Boreham, who is to ask a question on the subject of the A12 widening scheme and impact on the village of Boreham. The question is:

‘The outcome of the National Highways proposed A12 Widening Scheme is that the main roads through Boreham Village incur a significant (between 25% and 50%) increase in traffic largely due to the closure of Junction 20a. Is this a fair outcome from such a significant expenditure from the national purse on a local community and what actions are ECC taking to require National Highways to reconsider and eliminate this proposed increase which will devastate our village?’

Councillor Scott, Cabinet Member for Highways Maintenance and Sustainable Transport will respond.

**Question 2:** from **Mr George Jeffery**, a resident of Wickford, who is to ask a question on the subject of the installation of cctv cameras on lampposts in Wickford and other parts of Basildon Borough. The question is:

‘Will the Cabinet Member for Highways support measures to tackle anti social behaviour by permitting the installation of cctv cameras on lampposts at hotspots in particular in Wickford and other parts of Basildon Borough?’

Councillor Scott, Cabinet Member for Highways Maintenance and Sustainable Transport will respond.

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#### Agenda item 8

#### Motions

**Motion 2**     **Free School Meals - proposed revised version of Labour motion**

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**Councillor McGurran is proposing to move his motion as set out below, which includes some minor changes to amend to refer to 'the Government' and an amendment originally to be proposed by the Liberal Democrat Group, which the Labour Group and the Liberal Democrat group have agreed will be moved by Cllr McGurran.**

'This Council notes the council's work in providing support to families in receipt of free school meals during school holidays. This council notes the benefits to children's educational achievement if they are not hungry.

This Council regrets the Government's decision not to extend free school meals. The decision not to extend the scheme - which affects around a million under-privileged children nationally - has been taken when prices are soaring in the shops, at the petrol pump and on energy bills.

This Council notes that most children in Year 3 or above are ineligible for free school meals if their household income is more than £7,400 a year. This Council does not believe this is acceptable and is not prepared to stand by and see our children go hungry when this can be avoided.

This Council notes that, since the policy was introduced seven years ago, the Conservatives have increased funding per pupil from £2.30 to just £2.34 - an increase of 1.3% compared to inflation of 7%. As a result, children in the Essex County Council area have lost the equivalent of £1,171,603 - more than any other area in the country. Had funding increased with inflation, it would currently stand at, at least £2.46 per pupil. This funding cut has left Essex schools covering the extra cost by spending less on textbooks and teachers.

This Council notes that Henry Dimbleby- the Leon founder and the Government's food Tsar - has urged the PM to extend free school meals to all children in households receiving Universal Credit. As a compromise he has suggested raising the income threshold to £20,000.

This Council recognises that an idle promise by the government "to keep free school meal eligibility under review" is not enough when children in this county are going hungry now and recognises in the present situation it is vital to re-instate plans to expand free school meals to all children in UC households.

Therefore the Council calls upon the Leader to write to the Government as a matter of urgency asking him to implement plans to extend free school meals to all of those in families who receive Universal Credit and to increase the funding in line with inflation.'

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The following amendment to Motion two has been received:

**Motion 2     Free School Meals** - Conservative amendment

An amendment to be moved by **Councillor Cunningham** and seconded by **Councillor Sheldon**.

*(The words deleted are shown ~~struck through~~ and additions are shown underlined)*

'This Council notes the ~~council's~~ Essex County Council's work in providing support to families in receipt of free school meals during school holidays. This council also notes the benefits to children's educational ~~achievement if not they are not hungry.~~ attainment when this and other targeted support is provided, including:

- **The Essential Living Fund (ELF)** which is available to individuals and families who are in crises and have exhausted all other options available. This provides essential items such as bedding, furniture, white goods, and general living items representing an investment of over £3.3m in 2021/22 and £2.3m in 2022.23.
- **Holiday Activity Clubs** which are supporting young people and families through Essex County Council's partnership with Active Essex in order to deliver free holiday clubs during the summer holiday, with over 20,000 individuals, young people and their families supported in 2021. This summer, two hundred clubs will take place across the county.
- **Vouchers and other payments scheme** where Essex County Council has invested:
  - £4.2m in the provision of food vouchers
  - £3.2m for financially vulnerable pensioners
  - £482k to unpaid carers, vulnerable adults and targeted family support
  - £60k vouchers to vulnerable adults
  - £800k to expand the government's Holiday Activity and Food Programme which will provide more spaces to working families and a half term offer

However, this Council believes that support should be targeted at those families with the greatest need, as our approach has demonstrated that this is not only far more effective but also represents much better value for money when there are finite resources.

~~This Council regrets the Government's decision not to extend free school meals. The decision not to extend the scheme – which affects around a million under-privileged children nationally – has been taken when prices are soaring in the shops, at the petrol pump and on energy bills.~~

~~This Council notes that most children in Year 3 or above are ineligible for free school meals if their household income is more than £7,400 a year. This Council does not believe this is acceptable and is not prepared to stand by and see our children go hungry when this can be avoided.~~

~~This Council notes that Henry Dimbleby the Leon founder and the Government's food Tsar has urged the PM to extend free school meals to all children in households receiving Universal Credit. As a compromise he has suggested raising the income threshold to £20,000.~~

~~This Council recognises that an idle promise by the government "to keep free school meal eligibility under review" is not enough when children in this county are going hungry now and recognises in the present situation it is vital to reinstate plans to expand free school meals to all children in UC households.~~

~~Therefore the Council calls upon the Leader to write to the Prime Minister as a matter of urgency asking him to implement plans to extend free school meals to all of those in families who receive Universal Credit.'~~

*(The motion, if amended, would then read:)*

'This Council notes Essex County Council's work in providing support to families in receipt of free school meals during school holidays. This council also notes the benefits to children's educational attainment when this and other targeted support is provided, including:

- **The Essential Living Fund (ELF)** which is available to individuals and families who are in crisis and have exhausted all other options available. This provides essential items such as bedding, furniture, white goods, and general living items representing an investment of over £3.3m in 2021/22 and £2.3m in 2022/23.
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- £60k vouchers to vulnerable adults
  - £800k to expand the government's Holiday Activity and Food Programme which will provide more spaces to working families and a half term offer

However, this Council believes that support should be targeted at those families with the greatest need, as our approach has demonstrated that this is not only far more effective but also represents much better value for money when there are finite resources.

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### 3. Motion 3 National Grid's East Anglia Green Project

An amendment to be moved by **Councillor Mackrory** and seconded by **Councillor King**.

*(The words deleted are shown ~~struck through~~ and additions are shown underlined)*

'National Grid's East Anglia green Project, proposes an energy transmission route consisting of the construction of 180 km of 50m tall pylons carrying 400kv cables through the entire central length of our County (as well as through our neighbours, Norfolk and Suffolk), save for a section of undergrounding at Dedham Vale.

This Council has already expressed its ambition to be net zero by 2050 and the plans for renewable wind farms off the East Anglian coast is welcomed. However, This Council has serious concerns, about the nature and short period of consultation, the route, and how carbon heavy the proposed scheme of overhead pylons are which rely on 50 year old technology. Furthermore, this Council believes that:

- There has been insufficient consideration of alternative approaches which would allow for the required infrastructure but without the sheer scale of the damage to the environment, landscape and the difficulties of this project going ahead, all at the same time as multiple large-scale infrastructure projects which have the potential to cause major disruption across the East of England. Alternatives could include restoring funding to support householder and local community generation, and initiatives to reduce demand, such as insulating every home and making all new homes low energy.
- New offshore generated electricity should be transmitted offshore, which is why an offshore grid is needed. This is firmly in the interests of both residents and business, offshore windfarms themselves and wider interests e.g. our Freeports. Such an alternative approach would future proof the network and could avoid all the physical constraints of

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an above or below-ground solution, retain ease of access for ongoing maintenance and provide a more direct point of connection for any current or future off-shore wind farms.

- This pylon infrastructure is neither wanted nor needed considering the viable option of undersea power cables. These cables could transport power to where it is needed, helping future proof energy supplies and boost energy security, without adversely impacting on residents, businesses and communities across Essex.
- This Council and District and other Councils across Essex, has serious concerns about the nature and short period of consultation, the absence of alternatives, options and evidence base as well as the route, and how carbon heavy the proposed scheme of overhead pylons are.

This Council therefore calls upon:

- Both the Government and National Grid to refocus the East Anglia Green Proposals on an offshore solution and engage in discussions with Essex and its neighbouring County Councils to achieve this.
- National Grid to:
  1. Provide this Council with all the information asked for in our response of 16 June by 30 August 2022.
  2. Make publicly available full, open and transparent information on all options, including offshore and undergrounding, to enable evaluation and comparisons to be made by Essex residents, businesses, Councils and other stakeholders. This information to be publicly available for a period of at least 6 months before any Development Control Order (DCO) application is made.
- The Government to support householder and community generation schemes and energy demand reduction.'

*(The motion, if amended, would then read:)*

‘National Grid’s East Anglia green Project, proposes an energy transmission route consisting of the construction of 180 km of 50m tall pylons carrying 400kv cables through the entire central length of our County (as well as through our neighbours, Norfolk and Suffolk), save for a section of undergrounding at Dedham Vale.

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- New offshore generated electricity should be transmitted offshore, which is why an offshore grid is needed. This is firmly in the interests of both residents and business, offshore windfarms themselves and wider interests e.g. our Freeports. Such an alternative approach would future proof the network and could avoid all the physical constraints of an above or below-ground solution, retain ease of access for ongoing maintenance and provide a more direct point of connection for any current or future off-shore wind farms.
- This pylon infrastructure is neither wanted nor needed considering the viable option of undersea power cables. These cables could transport power to where it is needed, helping future proof energy supplies and boost energy security, without adversely impacting on residents, businesses and communities across Essex.
- This Council and District and other Councils across Essex, has serious concerns about the nature and short period of consultation, the absence of alternatives, options and evidence base as well as the route, and how carbon heavy the proposed scheme of overhead pylons are.

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- The Government to support householder and community generation schemes and energy demand reduction.'