
ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING

14 December 2010

Order Paper

Agenda Item

Council Photograph

An official photograph of the Council is to be taken early on in the meeting (to be announced by the Chairman). Members are asked to note that by remaining in the Council Chamber while the photograph is taken, they are in effect giving consent for their image to be made publicly available (for example on the Council's website and for use in Council staff induction training)

8. To receive a report of Cabinet Issues

11b) Questions (Council Procedure Rule 10)

1. By Councillor G Butland of the Cabinet Member for Heritage, Culture and the Arts

"Would the Cabinet member please supply the following information in respect of the static library sites across the county?

How many static library sites are there in Essex?

- (i) How many static library sites are there in Essex?
- (ii) How many of these sites are owned by the County Council and what is the latest estimate of the total capital value of these sites?
- (iii) How many of these sites are leased and what is the total annual rental of these sites?
- (iv) What is the total annual cost of the non-domestic rates on all the library sites in the County?
- (v) What is the total cost of utilities (gas, electric and water) for all of the library sites?

- (vi) What criteria are used to assess the cost effectiveness of each library, and what benchmarks are applied?
- (vii) Has consideration been given to placing the library service into a trust and, if so, what is the potential saving in costs?"

2. By Councillor D Kendall of the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation

"Many Essex residents were very concerned to read recent press reports highlighting the possibility of a new road linking the M2 with the M11 from a new Lower Thames Crossing. Whilst this proposal has since been dismissed by Essex County officers, when will members and residents get clarification as to Essex County Council's preferred route for any new road?

Also could the Cabinet Member confirm that councillors at all levels of local government in Essex whose areas would be directly affected by the building of this new road will be fully consulted before any final decision is made?"

3. By Councillor D Kendall of the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste

"The joint Essex County Council and Southend Borough Council Waste Development Document October 2010 highlights the need to identify additional landfill void space for inert waste (3.7 million m3 to 5 million m3) and says it will be required by 2015/16. It also says there is an ongoing need to identify additional non-hazardous landfill void space (0.79 to 4.9million m3). When will members be told where these new sites are going to be located?"

4. By Councillor B Aspinell of the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation

"Recent works to the traffic signals at the Green Dragon / Tabors Corner junction in Shenfield have been completed at a cost of £30,000; this has provided just 2 extra seconds of crossing time. Arising from a recent meeting of the Highways Locality Panel at Brentwood Borough Council, West Essex Highways officers confirmed that the crossing patrol officer [Lollipop Man] had been instructed by County that he was no longer allowed to go into the road with his sign, and was to remain on the pavement, his sole purpose being to push the button to control the pedestrian phase. He has had his 'Stop' sign taken away and - since September 2010 - he is now only on site during the morning sessions.

Are the County officers now saying that it is safer in the afternoon, and therefore assisted crossing is not required other than in the morning? If so, by what criteria have they come to that conclusion?

It was also inferred by your officers that he would shortly be relocated to a needier site.

Can you clarify this situation, as it has taken years of campaigning by local residents, concerned parents and the Headmaster and staff of the local school [St Mary's] to persuade the County that a Lollipop Man was required, and those same people now believe it would be a travesty to have him removed? This is a position I totally support.

Can you investigate the instructions given to the crossing patrol officer [to stay on the pavement]? If it is too dangerous for him to step into the road, what about the parents / guardians and the children?"

5. By Councillor L Barton of the Cabinet Member for Education and the 2012 Games

"Can the Cabinet Member give some assurances that when the Alderman Blaxill School reopens as an educational establishment he will be looking to reinstate the enhanced Dyslexia Unit at that site? There will be sufficient space and there is a clear desire from parents and teachers alike for such a provision to remain in Colchester."

6. By Councillor Mrs T M A Higgins of the Cabinet Member for Children's Services

"Deaf and Hard of Hearing children have understandable communication problems.

Will ECC be ensuring that despite the Comprehensive Spending Review, the level of service at present given to support these children will be maintained? This is particularly important so that they achieve GSCE results comparable with those of their hearing peers."

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

"The Post Office in Panfield Lane, Bocking (in my division) was one of the first to be re-opened with funding from Essex County Council. I am grateful for the benefits this has brought to local people and I am pleased to say that it appears to be one of the most successful. Footfall now exceeds that prior to closure.

I have been asked on several occasions by the Postmistress at Panfield Lane as to what will happen when funding ends. Clearly there can be no further funding from the Council due to the terms of the agreement and also due to the present economic situation. Sub post offices can only ultimately be profitable however if they are able to offer a wide range of services and the Post Office management seem unwilling to allow this regarding their own products. I believe some Councils have been able to offer access to Council services and allow payment of bills etc. through sub post offices, allegedly saving council taxpayers' money. I would be very grateful if the Leader could advise on whether there are innovative solutions available to help the Panfield Lane branch remain open beyond the termination of ECC funding by helping the Post Office side of the business move into profit.

This would also help the viability of the shop (under the same ownership) in which it operates. This may of course involve re-opening negotiations with the Post Office management and would have implications for at least some of the other ECC supported branches."