
Essex County Council

13 February 2018

Order Paper

Prayers

The meeting will be preceded by Prayers led by The Reverend Canon Ivor Moody, Vice Dean and Canon Pastor, Chelmsford Cathedral and Workplace Chaplain, Essex County Council.

Public Question Time

Prior to the meeting of the Council the following questions will be asked by members of the public in accordance with Standing Order 16.12.9.

Question 1: Mr Brian Moran concerning cycling in Essex. He asks:

'I recently chanced across an application from Essex County Council to the world cycling governing body, the UCI, to become a Regional Area of Cycling. It is dated spring 2017 and it is an interesting read. You should all have received a copy of the application, however, below is a sample of the text.

The assessment of each application is based on two key pillars:

1. Hosting UCI events
2. Investing in Cycling for All, based on the following 8 criteria:
 - a. Clear, long-term cycling strategy
 - b. Dedicated funding for the promotion of cycling in the city or region
 - c. Better infrastructure for bikes
 - d. Increase in cycle usage
 - e. Promotion of road safety
 - f. Organisation of mass participation and closed road events
 - g. Provision of child cycle training
 - h. Measurement and monitoring of progress

This application has committed the County Council to:

- A step change in the provision of ensuring a consistent level of revenue and capital funding to support the delivery of this strategy
- Increasing the level of funding in Essex from its current level of £2.50 per head of population to £10 per head of population by 2025.
- Increasing the utilisation and prioritisation of other funding sources such as developer contributions and central Government grants/allocations.

- Developing a clear and cohesive methodology for the allocation of cycle funding across Essex Districts.

It says: “This will ensure that new proposals are not frustrated by a lack of funding and designers and promoters are set free to develop measures that will lead to a consistent growth in cycling numbers, frequency and safety”.

The application is full of ‘Aspirations, Plans, Drive the strategy forward, Targeted, Step change’ but it does not contain the word ‘Action’ or mention the sponsorship that Cllr Grundy talked about at the last meeting of the Full Council.

It commits the county to many things, including:

- Hosting UCI events
- Organisation of mass participation and closed road events
- Better infrastructure for bikes
- Child cycle training

The application asks which mass participation and closed road events will be regularly organised within your region, including amateur racing or family cycling events, to give everyone the opportunity to cycle in a safe environment?

Other than at Hadleigh Park Essex County Council has hosted, but not initiated or financed any high-profile events. The Olympics was the Mayor of London/Department for Media and Culture. The Tour de France was Yorkshire/TFL initiative. The Tour of Britain was Tendring D.C. None of these are ‘regular’ there have been no closed road events, no bike festivals, no car-free days.

Where is the stated funding coming from? Is it on paper? Is it a wish list? Is it real money? Has anyone been commissioned to seek sponsorship?

The County Council has applied. How will it be financed and when will it be delivered?

I appreciate that as confrontational as this may appear, I really want to work with you to make this work for the benefit of everyone in our county.’

Question 2: Mr Ian Fuller asks a question regarding the closure of White Hart Lane, the impact it is having on residents in Springfield and why the planned improvements to the Sainsbury’s roundabout are not being done at the same time.

Summary of Procedure:

- The person must be present to ask their question.
- The Chairman will invite the person to speak.

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- 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.

Agenda Item 10 – Written Questions asked by Members

1. By Councillor Harris of the Cabinet Member for Highways

‘Having seen over months the repeated infill of pot holes in Queen Elizabeth Way Colchester, with repeat visits, could the Cabinet Member confirm what are the arrangements for checking the quality of work by contractors, the type of work, and whether the work was appropriate by contractors. What are processes for percentages of work completed and are there KPIs kept of such quality checks.’

2. By Councillor Sargeant of the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste

‘On 27 October 2014, a report (FP/861/11/14) from the Executive Director for Corporate and Customer Services was presented to the Cabinet Members for: Transformation and Corporate & Traded Services (Cllr. D. Lewis) and Library, Communities and Planning (Cllr. R. Hirst).

Three recommendations were agreed:

1. That all residents should be discouraged from releasing sky lanterns due to the damage that they cause the environment.
2. That the outdoor release of lanterns will be prohibited from all ECC property. In relation to sites where a third party already has a lease or a licence in place, ECC will write to them to encourage the adoption of this policy.
3. That all new leases and licences granted by ECC and any new renewals of existing leases and licences will include a clause prohibiting the use of sky lanterns on ECC premises.

Please could a similar report and recommendations be prepared asap for the prohibition of mass balloon release from ECC land and premises; as this creates a risk to wildlife and livestock from debris falling to land or washed up onto our beaches (through ingestion, entanglement and entrapment).’

3. By Councillor Reid of the Cabinet Member for Resources

‘I received an email from a constituent concerning a dispute between Fujitsu and their employees’ Trade Union. I understand that Essex County Council currently

uses Fujitsu for some of its IT services.

After a promising settlement and failing to deliver it back in August last year, the dispute is still on-going and the company is now dismissing and targeting union representatives.

Could the Cabinet Member please ensure that we make representation to Fujitsu deploring their treatment of employees?’

4. By Councillor Mackrory of the Cabinet Member for Resources

‘In the light of the investigations into MITIE’s finances, the profit warning for Capita and the collapse of Carillion, what strengthening of the processes for awarding contracts with outsourcing contracts are under consideration? Furthermore, what checks are being undertaken to check the robustness of companies with whom ECC already has contracts.’

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

‘I understand that the recent increases to the charging policy for services to the disabled will be subject to review. Can the Cabinet Member give an assurance that where weekly charges for disabled related expenditure has increased from zero to £100 a week, serious consideration will be given to how that has impacted on the lifestyle of disabled people and the consequences that could have on other areas of the public sector?’

6. By Councillor Baker of the Leader or the Council

‘My questions are further to the response I received at the last Full Council meeting in December 2017 relating to Essex County Council and Brexit.

1. Could the Leader of the Council or Councillor Bentley update members on the latest situation with regard to Brexit and its implications for Essex following the recent visit of Monsieur Michel Barnier, the European Chief Negotiator for the United Kingdom Exiting the European Union; and

2. Would he reconsider setting up a cross-party working group, comprising members and senior officers of ECC, in preparation for the UK exiting the EU in order to mitigate the risks and capture the opportunities for UK and EU citizens, businesses and major organisations, in particular hospitals, universities, sea ports and airports, across Essex?

I would respectfully refer the Leader of the Council and members of the Cabinet to previous written questions I have asked in relation to Brexit at the October and December 2017 meetings of the Full Council.’

7. By Councillor Turrell of the Cabinet Member for Highways

‘When will Maldon Rd in Colchester be resurfaced as it is in a very bad state.’

8. By Councillor Robinson of the Cabinet Member for Highways

‘Will the Cabinet Member please commit to adding dates to all Highways reports on the "Track It" system and will he please clarify the procedure for the local County Member to escalate issues when the Member feels that a serious issue has been ignored by Essex Highways.’

9. By Councillor Henry of the Leader of the Council

‘Can the Leader give Council an update on the progress of the Independent Property Review Commission, set up after July Council?’

10. By Councillor Aspinell of the Cabinet Member for Highways

‘Air pollution, especially on congested roads, is a growing concern for the public. Will the Cabinet Member consider (a) planting more trees in urban areas to help address this and (b) ensure that the public are made aware of pollution 'hotspots', in a similar manner to weather and traffic reports.’

11. By Councillor Baker of the Cabinet Member for Education

‘What funding is currently available for educational classical music initiatives in Essex and what is the proposed budget for the coming year/s.’

12. By Councillor Deakin of the Cabinet Member for Culture, Communities and Customer

‘What provision is being made for Library facilities in rural communities; especially schools if/when the Library bus is reduced or stopped.’

13. By Councillor Robinson of the Cabinet Member for Housing, Property and Planning

‘Is it not a huge waste of public money to spend hundreds of thousands of pounds a year on security, utilities and business rates for council properties that are left empty for many years? Would it not be better if community and voluntary groups or local councils could be enabled to use these properties? How many Essex CC properties are currently empty?’

14. By Councillor Kendall of the Cabinet Member for Education

‘Please could the Cabinet Member tell me what progress has been made by the

County Council on delivering the Bus Franchise Scheme motion that was agreed unanimously by members at a Full Council meeting last year?’

15. By Councillor Kendall of the Leader of the Council

‘Please could you tell me how much the County Council have spent on Consultants and Agency Staff over each of the last four financial years including the current financial year up to the end of January 2018?’

16. By Councillor Deakin of the Cabinet Member for Highways

‘With increasing numbers of campaigns to get people to cycle rather than drive, many are put off cycling because they feel unsafe. One of the things that makes cyclists feel safer on our roads is good visible road markings, e.g. for cycle lanes and advanced stop lines. In many parts of the County these have faded so much as to be almost invisible. How much has been spent in the last two years on this re-marking? Is there any increase in the budget for this? When will our road users see improvements?’

17. By Councillor Abbott of the Cabinet Member for Highways

‘At the time of writing there are over 40 streetlights showing on the ECC on-line map as not working in the 2 (adjacent) villages of Rivenhall and Silver End. In recent months the number has been even higher than that. Some of these lights have been out for many months and I have received multiple complaints from local residents.

Would the Cabinet Member agree that local people pay their council tax in the expectation that as per ECC policy, these lights should all be on when most needed in the morning and early evenings periods of travelling to/from school, work, etc and that this is particularly the case during the winter months ?

Can the Cabinet Member explain why, despite these street lights having been reported, so many are still not working?’

18. By Councillor Abbott of the Cabinet Member for Highways

‘Despite having secured the agreement of ECC that work needs to be done to correct various highway defects in the division I represent, the list of outstanding work gets ever longer resulting in residents making complaints and parish councils asking why agreed work that I have reported back to them is still not done. Some cases go back several years. They include work required for safety reasons in Collingwood Road Witham (footway and pedestrian island), Terling (at the ford), Motts Lane Witham (drainage improvements), Hollies Road Bradwell (surface water issuing from the road and freezing), etc.

Can the Cabinet Member give assurances that when work is agreed with a local Member, that it is not being "lost in the system" ? (as I have to repeatedly chase these outstanding items).

Can the Cabinet Member explain why ECC often declines to give local Members any target date for such work or even a target period?'

19. By Councillor Davies of the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste

'Given that the Basildon Tovi Eco Plant has not performed as initially expected, and Cabinet on the 21 February 2017 met to discuss events should the MBT plant become partially or wholly unavailable, would the Cabinet Member please update Council on how much of the £103M waste reserve has been earmarked for possible contingency plans for the site?'

20. By Councillor Young of the Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care

'Following the flawed ECC consultation in 2016 asking about reducing the allowances for Disability Related Expenses, when many disabled residents, and their representative organisations, were not consulted;

and following the savage cuts to these allowances which have left many disabled persons in non-residential care now desperately short of money;

and in view of the current £102,000 budget underspend gained because of the erroneous budget forecast made for the new charging policy for non-residential adult social care, which underspend is seemingly funded by the disabled;

Will the Council now honour Councillor Finch's professed desire to protect the most vulnerable in Essex by reversing some of the decisions disallowing Disability Related Expenses, and treat the disabled more sympathetically?'

21. By Councillor Harris of the Cabinet Member for Culture, Communities and Customer

'Will the Cabinet Member confirm if there is a download form option on the ECC website for a Disabled Blue Badge, and if so, could it be shared with County members'.