
ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING 8 July 2014 Order Paper

Public Questions

Prior to the meeting of Council, members of the public have the opportunity to ask questions of the Chairman.

The following question will be put to the meeting:

1. By Mrs M Smith, a resident of Tendring.

‘As I understand there is no statutory requirement on highway authorities to provide public lighting however, Essex County Council has a statutory duty under Section 97 of the Highways Act 1980 where it states:

1.) every local highway authority may provide lighting for the purposes of any highway or proposed highway for which they are or will be the highway authority, and may for that purpose -
(a) contract with any persons for the supply of gas, electricity or other means of lighting; and
(b) construct and maintain such lamps, posts and other works as they consider necessary

9.2 The Council has a statutory responsibility to provide a safe and efficient highway network for the benefit and safety of all road users.

Therefore, my belief is that street lighting is provided to:

- ensure the safety of all road users,
- reduce the fear of crime and increase the feeling of security when it is dark,
- support the 24hour economy by promoting economic development and
- support social inclusion by facilitating the use of the road network at night.

As a resident of Tendring my belief is this has not been executed when implementing 'Part night lighting' and I would therefore like to know when it will be and to see written proof where this 'duty' was implemented in the 'Risk Assessment / Consultation'.

Agenda Item

11(a) Written Questions (standing order 16.12.1)

1. By Councillor G Butland of the Leader of the Council

'In his budget speech on 12th February 2013 your predecessor, Cllr Peter Martin, stated that

"We will continue to explore areas where we can save money and protect front-line services and become more efficient. This must also include elected members too.

We are proposing that the independent Boundary Commission undertakes an electoral review of the council to see if we can save money by having fewer members while retaining strong and vibrant local democracy."

What progress has been made on this proposal?'

2. By Councillor D Kendall of the Leader of the Council

'ISO 14000 Environmental Management:

The ISO 14000 family addresses various aspects of environmental management.

Would the Leader please tell me which departments within Essex County Council operate under the ISO 14000 Environmental Management system?'

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

'Many of my residents are very concerned about the poor quality of pothole repairs in my County Division and across Brentwood as a whole. I understand that there is routinely a random audit of 5% of all pothole repairs carried out including the Jet Patcher. If that is the case, would it be possible for Members to be provided with a copy of this audit report each time it is completed so that we can give our residents some assurances over the standard and quality of any work completed in our areas?'

Would you also please provide the following information:

- How often are pothole audits completed?
- Who undertakes the pothole audits?

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- Why has the audit information not been shared with Members?
 - If Members are concerned about the quality of a pothole repair, who should they report it to?

4. By Councillor T Higgins of the Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning

‘What are Cabinet Members doing to ensure our young people with complex needs are having their education and other needs met by Essex Schools?’

How many are being placed out of county because our specialist schools claim they cannot help?’

5. By Councillor M Ellis of the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation

‘Will the Member for Highways and Transportation consider reviewing the agreement/contract between the LHP and the bus companies with regard to the endless requests for upgrades and improvements?’

This requires a large amount of LHP funds that are ideally required elsewhere within the LHP; the bus companies do not contribute to the works but remain profit making organisations.

To remedy this situation will the Cabinet Member also consider approaching the bus companies with a view to sourcing funding?’

6. By Councillor M Mackrory of the Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning

‘Will the Cabinet Member use his best endeavours to persuade those responsible for school buildings to lift their objections to the installation of solar panels on school roofs?’

7. By Councillor S Robinson of the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation

‘Will the Cabinet Member please thank those who inspect highway defects and do give helpful answers, for example, "The pavement defect at X has been assessed and we are carrying out further

investigations. This enquiry will be updated within 20 working days of 26/06/2014"

However, will he please remind ALL staff that - once an assessment has been conducted - their reports must include an indication of action planned and some kind of timescale, or say "no action to be taken".

For example, "Problem X has been inspected and assessed" is not an acceptable answer [e.g. case 2330912] and neither is: "To be repaired" [cases 2333039, 2334824 and six other cases in Trent Road].

If Trent Road, Chelmsford is not going to be resurfaced this year, will it at least be patched?

8. By Councillor S Robinson of the Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning

'Does the Cabinet Member agree that courses paid for by the Adult Community Learning budget (e.g. basic English, Maths and English Spoken as a Second Language [ESOL]) are helpful in finding people employment, and that ESOL courses can help integrate communities?

How is the budget deployed to achieve that objective?'

9. By Councillor R Lord of the Leader of the Council

'Would the Leader of the Council concur, that those members and officers; who knowingly or innocently, benefitted from Lord Hanningfield's generous hospitality, which has now been ruled as inappropriate, now show a degree of empathy with him and make a contribution, no matter how modest, towards those costs?'

10. By Councillor R Lord of the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation

'Could the Cabinet Member for Highways explain the system for prioritising resurfacing work, particularly in some isolated rural areas?

It appears that some perfectly good stretches of road are being

resurfaced whilst others with denser housing, in dire need of repair, admittedly to the untrained eye, are persistently ignored.'

11. By Councillor J Abbott of the Cabinet Member for Waste and Recycling

'The Cabinet Member has stated in writing that there are "no plans" to close any recycling centres in Essex. Can he specifically confirm that due to its strategic importance, the Witham Recycling Centre in Perry Road will remain open at least for the duration of the current ECC administration and will not be subject to any closure options during the forthcoming review?'

12. By Councillor J Abbott of the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation

'Is the Cabinet Member aware that the Department for Transport (DfT) has a national policy which encourages local authorities to consider implementing 20mph speed limits in residential areas "to ensure greater safety for pedestrians and cyclists"? Is he further aware that 11.7 million people already live in areas that are implementing widespread 20mph speed limits and a further 1.8 million people live in local authority areas where there is a commitment to introduce them? When will Essex join the growing list of authorities committed to 20mph limits?'

13. By Councillor D Harris of the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation

'Could the portfolio holder confirm how many KPIs are in place for the Ringway Jacobs contract; how many of those KPIs are directly linked with levels of customer satisfaction and response times to potholes; and finally what is the threshold, which would generate an option not to renew the contract if a certain number of KPIs were not reached?'

14. By Councillor D Harris of the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation

'Would the portfolio holder consider in the interest of greater transparency and accountability of the Ringway Jacobs contract, that members of Place Services and Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee be provided with reports such as quarterly performance reviews from ECCs Strategic Partnership Board with Ringway Jacobs (subject to appropriate governance arrangements), to ensure

adequate strategic overview and direction of the service offered to residents in Essex?’

15. By Councillor J Young of the Leader of the Council

‘In light of the deplorable decision by the Audit Committee (01-Jul-14) to exclude the public from the item on Lord Hanningfield’s expenses, would the Leader of the Council confirm whether he is able to make publicly available documentation relating to the proceedings of the meeting that arrived at a recommendation to take no further action?’

16. By Councillor J Young of the Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning

‘Would the portfolio holder honour his commitment made to the People and Families Scrutiny committee on the 4th February 2014 to work with the community to find a financial resolution to support parents in Wivenhoe access school transport to The Colne their community school? Furthermore, would he accept a meeting with parents from Wivenhoe to work through the issue?’

17. By Councillor I Henderson of the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation

‘Could the portfolio holder confirm the total figure that the Council had to borrow to cover the shortfall in funding for the £6.5m investment in a Central Management System to enable part-night lighting in Essex?’

18. By Councillor K Bobbin of the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation

‘Could the portfolio holder confirm how many petitions Essex County Council have received in total relating to the part-night lighting policy along with the total number of signatures from those petitions and the total number of groups/organisations that also signed? ‘

19. By Councillor K Clempner of the Cabinet Member for Adults Social Care

‘The Disabled Facilities Grant enables disabled and elderly people to have the adaptations they need to make it easier to live at home, reducing the need to access health and social services. Could the portfolio holder provide a statement on what plans do Essex County

Council have to continue this grant beyond the current year, and if it is to be discontinued, what assessment has been made on the impact to individuals and other services?’

20. By Councillor K Clempner of the Cabinet Member for Adults Social Care

‘Essex County Council currently provides Social Care Funding to assist with Supported Housing for those unable to live independently. Could the portfolio holder confirm how many people are supported in this way and what level of funding is currently provided in Harlow, and what plans are there to alter this beyond the current year?’

21. By Councillor M McGeorge of the Cabinet Member for Adults Social Care

‘Could the portfolio holder outline how the Meals on wheels service is currently promoted to potential new service users who might benefit from a nutritious hot meal each day?’