



Essex County Council

## Summons

To all Members of Essex County Council

You are hereby summoned to attend the meeting of the County Council to be held as shown below to deal with the business set out in the Agenda.

10:00	Tuesday, 13 October 2020	,
-------	-----------------------------	---

Gavin Jones  
Chief Executive

---

**Officer Support to the Council:**

Andy Gribben, Senior Democratic Services Officer

**Telephone:** 03330134565

**Email:** [Democratic.services@essex.gov.uk](mailto:Democratic.services@essex.gov.uk)

**Prayers** The meeting will be preceded by Prayers led The Right Reverend Hugh Allan O. Praem, the Titular Abbot of Beeleigh and Chaplain to the Chairman of Essex County Council.

### Pages

- |   |   |        |
|---|---|--------|
| 1 | <b>Apologies for Absence</b>  |        |
| 2 | <b>Declarations of interest</b><br>To note any declarations of interest to be made by Members in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct |        |
| 3 | <b>Confirmation of the minutes of the meeting held on 14 July 2020</b>  | 4 - 43 |
| 4 | <b>Public Questions</b>   |        |
| 5 | <b>Chairman's Announcements and Communications</b>  |        |
| 6 | <b>Receipt of Petitions</b>   |        |
| 7 | <b>Executive Statement</b>  |        |

8	<b>Motions</b>	<b>44 - 45</b>
9	<b>Essex Pension Fund Strategy Board Annual Report 2019-20</b>	<b>46 - 54</b>
10	<b>Annual Scrutiny Report 2019-2020</b>	<b>55 - 69</b>
11	<b>Report of the Task and Finish Group on Drug Gangs, Knife Crime and County Lines, established by the People and Families Policy and Scrutiny Committee</b>	<b>70 - 108</b>
12	<b>The Leader's Report of Cabinet Issues</b>	<b>109 - 123</b>
13	<b>Council Issues</b>	<b>124 - 124</b>
14	<b>Clarification of answers provided in response to written questions asked by Members of the Council</b>	
15	<b>Oral questions to the Leader, Cabinet Member, a chairman of a committee or the representative of the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel</b>	

### **Essex County Council and Committees Information**

All Council and Committee Meetings are held in public unless the business is exempt in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government Act 1972. If there is exempted business, it will be clearly marked as an Exempt Item on the agenda and members of the public and any representatives of the media will be asked to leave the meeting room for that item.

The agenda is available on the [Essex County Council website](#) and by then following the links from [Running the Council](#) or you can go directly to the [Meetings Calendar](#) to see what is happening this month.

In accordance with the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020, this meeting will be held via online video conferencing.

Members of the public will be able to view and listen to any items on the agenda unless the Committee has resolved to exclude the press and public from the meeting as a result of the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

#### **How to take part in/watch the meeting:**

**Participants:** (Officers and Members) will have received a personal email with their login details for the meeting. Contact the Democratic Services Officer if you have not received your login.

#### **Members of the public:**

**Public Questions:**

A period of up to 30 minutes will be allowed for members of the public to ask questions or make representations on any matter of Council business. Speakers must be registered with the officer in support of the meeting at least one week in advance of the meeting. For full details please email

[Democratic.services@essex.gov.uk](mailto:Democratic.services@essex.gov.uk)

**Online:**

You will need the Zoom app which is available from your app store or from [www.zoom.us](http://www.zoom.us). The details you need to join the meeting will be published as a Meeting Document, on the Meeting Details page of the Council's website (scroll to the bottom of the page) at least two days prior to the meeting date. The document will be called "Public Access Details".

**By phone**

Telephone from the United Kingdom: 0203 481 5237 or 0203 481 5240 or 0208 080 6591 or 0208 080 6592 or +44 330 088 5830

You will be asked for a Webinar ID and Password, these will be published as a Meeting Document, on the Meeting Details page of the Council's website (scroll to the bottom of the page) at least two days prior to the meeting date. The document will be called "Public Access Details".

**Accessing Documents**

With sufficient notice, documents can be made available in alternative formats, for further information about this or about the meeting in general please contact the named officer on the agenda pack or email [democratic.services@essex.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@essex.gov.uk)

**Audio recording of meetings**

Please note that in the interests of improving access to the Council's meetings, a sound recording is made of the public parts of many of the Council's Committees. The Chairman will make an announcement at the start of the meeting if it is being recorded.

If you are unable to join the virtual meeting and wish to see if the recording is available, you can find out by checking the [Calendar of Meetings](#) any time after the meeting starts. Any audio available can be accessed via the 'On air now!' box in the centre of the page, or the links immediately below it.

Should you wish to record the meeting, please contact the officer shown on the agenda front page.

---

## Minutes of the meeting of the Full Council, held remotely on Tuesday, 14 July 2020

**Present:** Chairman: Councillor J G Jowers  
Vice-Chairman: Councillor E C Johnson

J Abbott	A Goggin	Dr R Moore
J F Aldridge	R J Gooding	J Moran
B Aspinell	I Grundy	M Platt
J Baker	C Guglielmi	C Pond
T Ball	D Harris	R Pratt
S Barker	A M Hedley	J M Reeves
J Beavis	I Henderson	P Reid
K Bentley	S Hillier	S Robinson
D Blackwell	P Honeywood	W Schmitt
A Brown	A Jackson	L Scordis
M Buckley	D J Kendall	A Sheldon
G Butland	S Lissimore	K Smith
S Canning	D Louis	C Souter
J Chandler	J Lumley	J Spence
P Channer	M Mackrory	M Stephenson
A Davies	R A Madden	M Steptoe
J Deakin	M Maddocks	A Turrell
M Durham	B Massey	L Wagland
B Egan	P May	S Walsh
A Erskine	M McEwen	C Weston
D Finch	L McKinlay	C Whitbread
R Gadsby	V Metcalfe	A Wood
M Garnett	R Mitchell	J A Young

### Prayers

The meeting was preceded by Prayers led by Councillor Spence, Lay Canon in the Church of England. The prayers were followed by a minute's silence in remembrance of Councillor Terry Cutmore, employees of Essex County Council and partner organisations, and all the people of the County of Essex who have lost their lives during the current pandemic and also the sad loss of Mr Dave Hill CBE, former Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Education.

**The Chairman, Councillor Jowers, formally opened the meeting**

The Chairman welcomed members to the meeting, which was the first virtual meeting of the County Council.

The Chairman reminded members that although attendance at the meeting was 'remote' they should remain engaged in the meeting and refrain from responding to emails and texts during the meeting.

Members were also reminded to keep their microphone on mute for the duration of the meeting unless they wish to speak, and they should remember to address all remarks through the Chairman.

The Chairman confirmed that he had received a list of members wishing to speak on agenda items in advance and that he would call everyone on that list, however if others wish to speak or to raise a point of order or personal explanation the 'raise hand' function was to be used. He then gave other more advice concerning the management of the remote meeting.

**1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Hardware, Henry and Mohindra.

**2. Declarations of Interest**

- Councillor Channer mentioned that she was a Director of Essex Cares Ltd which was mentioned in the Covid-19 response report but that she had been advised that she did not have a disclosable pecuniary interest in the report which was being received.
- Councillor Young mentioned that she was a Non-Executive Director Anglian Community Enterprise Community Interest Company which was mentioned in the Covid-19 response report but that she had been advised that she did not have a disclosable pecuniary interest in the report which was being received.
- Councillor Louis mentioned that he was a Director of Provide Community Interest Company which was mentioned in the Covid-19 response report but that he had been advised that he did not have a disclosable pecuniary interest in the report which was being received.

**3. Confirmation of the minutes of the meeting held on 11 February 2020****Resolved:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 11 February 2020 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman subject to an amendment to item

7, Organisation Plan and Budget 2020/21, that had omitted to note that the amendments to the motion which had been moved by Councillor Henderson and Councillor Mackrory had both been put to the vote and lost.

#### 4. Public Questions

The Chairman welcomed Cllr Andrew Ansell, a resident of Basildon and a member of Basildon Borough Council, to ask a question concerning waste incineration in Pitsea. He asked:

‘The proposal to deliver two new waste incinerators in Pitsea will damage the health of local residents. Do the lives of people in Pitsea matter?’

Councillor Walsh, the Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change Action replied:

‘Thank you very much for your question. Before going into detail, I want to say that of course the lives of Pitsea residents matter. Above everything else we want to do everything we can to ensure the people of Essex live long, happy, healthy lives.’

‘Essex County Council acts as the Waste Planning Authority, among other things that means that anyone who wants to build an incinerator in the County must first apply to us. This is a responsibility given to us by Government, as part of that responsibility there are some things we can and cannot do when deciding whether to approve those applications. At this point in time Clearaway have not submitted an application to us for the incinerators you mention. If or when Clearaway do submit an application, I can assure you that the impacts on the health of residents and the environment are two of the things that Essex County Council as the Waste Planning Authority will consider. Before an application can be approved, we must be assured that the site is suitable. If that assurance is not given, then the application will be rejected.’

The Chairman welcomed Mr Ian Fuller, a resident of Springfield, to ask a question concerning the demolition of the Generals Lane Bridge at Boreham and the Radial Distributer Road. He asked:

‘I am sure that councillors would agree that delay to promised road improvements is very frustrating to residents, particularly when they could have been avoided. In North Springfield we have had to wait for years to have the improvements to Colchester Road completed and we are still waiting for the promised improvements to the Lawn Lane roundabout and the Rectory Lane junction. Now we are facing delays to the new roads around Beaulieu.’

‘Countryside Properties received planning permission in 2014 to build up to 3,600 homes in what is now the Beaulieu development in North East Chelmsford. As part of the s.106 agreement a radial distributor road (RDR) is

to be built to connect Essex Regiment Way to the Boreham interchange. The agreement states that this has to be completed by the 1000th occupation. The completion of the RDR is essential to move traffic away from White Hart Lane and other roads in an increasingly congested North Springfield. It is also needed for Chelmsford's NE bypass which has its southern end at a roundabout on the RDR. It was disappointing news to hear that the bypass would not be a dual carriageway to the Boreham interchange, but matters will be aggravated further if the completion of the RDR is delayed. To complete the RDR the existing Generals Lane bridge over the railway near to the interchange has to be demolished. This will necessitate the closure of the railway so, practically speaking, the demolition can take place only during the Christmas – New Year period.'

'Since this is a critical part of the process, forming a bottleneck for the whole development you might have thought that plans would have been in place well in advance to advise Network Rail of the need to close the railway as there are so few opportunities to do the work.'

'It was my understanding that the demolition was to take place this year over the Christmas – New Year period. But now it seems that the work cannot go ahead because an agreement with Network Rail was not sorted out in time. This surely cannot have anything to do with the current crisis as this is purely an administrative process and there has been plenty of time for this essential matter to have been concluded well before this year's lockdown. The delay of at least one year is going to have a significant negative impact on the residents of North Springfield and beyond as well as the ongoing housing development in North East Chelmsford.'

'Can the Cabinet Member for Infrastructure explain why the agreement to allow for the demolition of the Generals Lane bridge at Boreham during the 2020 Christmas week was not signed off when it should have been which has resulted in a significant delay which means that the Radial Distributor Road will now not be open until September 2022 at the earliest?'

Councillor Bentley, Deputy Leader, Cabinet Member for Infrastructure replied:

'Thank you for taking the time to ask your question about the provision of this important infrastructure in North East Chelmsford.'

'You are quite correct that the new Radial Distributor Road, connecting the Boreham Interchange and Essex Regiment Way, is a vital component of the long-term plan to amend the route of traffic in this area of Chelmsford which will provide relief for existing congestion.'

'Whilst my officers are responsible for working with Countryside Properties to agree the specification of the road and provide the appropriate permissions for the majority of its implementation, the demolition of Generals Lane bridge is a matter for Network Rail.'

'It is down to Network Rail to allow, plan, and undertake the work and this has to be booked months and years in advance. Unfortunately, in this instance I understand that there have been delays in the process – as you have mentioned.'

'I just want to be clear: that is not to do with Essex County Council. However, whilst it is not specifically within the remit of the county council, I am very happy to - and will - contact senior officers at Network Rail in an effort to accelerate the timescales for these permissions.'

## **5. Chairman's Announcements and Communications**

### **Deaths**

The Chairman express sorrow at the sad loss of those who have lost their lives during the recent period, including Cllr Terry Cutmore, employees of the Council, those working in partner organisations and 1,380 (as at 1 July) residents of Essex.

#### **Councillor Terry Cutmore:**

The Chairman announced that Councillor Terry Cutmore had died early in the pandemic, had represented the Division of Rochford North since his election in 2013. He had been Chairman of the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee and a member of the Corporate Parenting Panel.

The Chairman noted that Councillor Cutmore had been dedicated to his local community of Rochford, where he had served as Leader of Rochford District Council from 2004 to 2019 and latterly as Vice-Chairman of that Council. He had represented the Ward of Hockley and Ashingdon.

The Chairman remarked that Councillor Cutmore was extremely well-liked and respected at County Hall and would be missed greatly by everyone who knew him. He also noted that the Council had received a huge number of messages of condolence and these have been put into a book and would be sent to his wife.

The Chairman also expressed his sorrow at the loss of Mr Dave Hill CBE, formerly one of the Council's Executive Directors who had also held the statutory roles of Director of Children's Services and Director of Adult Services

At the invitation of the Chairman members paid tribute to the memories of Councillor Cutmore and Mr Hill.

### **The meeting of Council**



Further to his opening remarks the Chairman asked members to note that this was an Ordinary meeting of the Council and noted that the Annual meeting did not have to be held this year because of changes to legislation in light of the pandemic, but it was to be hoped that the Annual meeting of Council would take place in the autumn.

He thanked all members, particularly the leaders of our political groups who, by their understanding and co-operation, had made the administration of the meeting possible.

### **Audit, Governance and Standards Committee**

The Chairman was pleased to announce that at the meeting of the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee on 6 July 2020, Cllr Anthony Hedley was made Chairman and Cllr Mark Platt became Vice-Chairman of the Committee.

## **6. Receipt of petitions and deputations**

The Chairman received three petitions:

- Councillor Scordis concerning a covenant applying to the site of the former bus station in Colchester;
- Councillor Pond concerning cycling; and
- Councillor Smith concerning incineration of waste in Basildon.

## **7. To receive a report of matters reserved to the Council**

Councillor Finch, the Leader of the Council, presented the report of matters reserved to Council.

It having been moved by Councillor Finch and seconded by Councillor Bentley, it was

### **1. Coronavirus Outbreak - Inability to attend meetings**

#### **Resolved**

That under section 85(1) of the Local Government Act 1972 the Council approve the following as reasons for non-attendance at meetings until the next annual meeting of the County Council:

- a. Being unable to attend a meeting as a result of illness;
- b. Being unable to attend a meeting as a result of failure of an internet connection or electronic device failing to operate correctly;
- c. Cancellation or non-convening of meetings;

- d. Any other reason which is reasonably connected with the outbreak of coronavirus in the United Kingdom.

## **2. Coronavirus Outbreak: Virtual Meetings**

### **Resolved**

That, to accommodate virtual meetings, the following amendments to the constitution be approved and that they be implemented with immediate effect

- a. That paragraph 16.9.7 be amended to make it clear that members will normally stand but allow flexibility to disapply this. The paragraph then to read:

#### **‘16.9.7 Only one Member to speak at time**

Only one Member may speak at a time. Members wishing to speak shall indicate to the Chairman. Members may only speak when called upon to do so by the Chairman or if they wish to raise a point of order or personal explanation or to propose a motion of a type which may be moved during a debate. While a member is speaking, they shall stand unless the Chairman directs or agrees otherwise.’

- b. That paragraph 16.10.1 be amended to permit the Chairman to exercise discretion. The paragraph then to read:

#### **‘16.10.1 General provisions about voting**

(1) On a division (except as otherwise provided in these Standing Orders) the voting shall be by show of hands or in such manner as the Chairman may direct.

(2) Before a vote is taken, any Member may request a division by name. Upon receiving such a request, the Chairman shall allow members an opportunity to indicate their support for this request by standing in their place or in such other manner as the Chairman may direct. If ten members support the request, the Chief Executive shall call on each Member of the Council to individually vote for, against or abstain on the motion. The votes shall be recorded, and the Chairman shall declare the result.

(3) Where there has been a division by name, the names of Members voting for and against the proposition or abstaining shall be recorded in the minutes.

(4) At the request of any Member there shall be recorded in the minutes of the proceedings of the meeting whether that Member voted for or against the question or whether that Member abstained from

voting. Any such request must be made immediately after a vote is taken.'

### **3. Electronic Seal**

#### **Resolved**

That paragraph 12.5 of the constitution be amended as set out below:

#### **'12.5 Common Seal of the Council**

The Monitoring Officer may from time to time adopt such means of sealing as from time to time considered appropriate after consulting the Chairman. This may include allowing electronic sealing in accordance with section 7A(1) of the Electronic Communications Act 2000. Affixing of an electronic seal approved in this way shall be of the same legal effect as affixing the Common Seal of the Council.

The Common Seal will be kept in a safe place in the custody of the Chairman of the Council.

A decision of the Council, or of any part of it, will be sufficient authority for sealing any document necessary to give effect to the decision.

The Common Seal will be affixed to documents which in the opinion of the Monitoring Officer or the Director, Legal and Assurance should be sealed.

The affixing of the Common Seal will be attested by or affixed and attested by the Monitoring Officer or the Director, Legal and Assurance or some other person authorised by either of them, or by the Chairman or in his absence the Vice-Chairman or in his absence a past Chairman of the Council.'

### **4. Oral questions**

#### **Resolved**

That paragraph 16.12.6 be amended to read:

#### **'16.12.6 Other oral questions**

A Member may ask any oral question of:

- (i) the Chairman
- (ii) the Leader
- (iii) a Member of the Cabinet
- (iv) the Chairman of any Committee or Sub-Committee or

- (v) the Member appointed by Essex County Council as its representative on the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel,

on any matter in relation to which the Council has powers or duties or which affects Essex, but which is not capable of being dealt with under paragraph 16.12.5.

The time allotted at each meeting for the putting and answering of questions under this paragraph shall not exceed 20 minutes, without the leave of the Chairman of the Council.'

and paragraph **1.9 Interpretation** of the constitution be amended to read:

'Within this Constitution, except where the context otherwise requires:

- the masculine includes the feminine and vice versa, and
- any reference to 'Essex' shall be the Administrative County of Essex.'

## **5. Review of Delegations Relating to Senior Management Employment Matters**

### **Resolved**

- (1) To replace paragraph 8.1.3 of the constitution with the following:

#### **'8.1.3 Senior Management Employment Committee**

Membership: Five Members of the Council to include the appropriate Cabinet Member.

- (i) Subject to (iv) below, to be responsible for the appointment and dismissal of Chief/Deputy Chief Officers and appeals against dismissal of such persons with the power:
- (a) to appoint sub-committees of three Members to deal with particular appointments, dismissals or appeals; and
  - (b) to authorise the Chief Executive or his nominee to deal with a particular appointment or dismissal;
- (ii) To make decisions relating to the terms or conditions of employment of Chief/Deputy Chief Officers not already covered by the Council's Officer Employment Procedure Rules; and
- (iii) To decide the level of performance pay to be awarded to the Chief Executive and members of the Corporate Leadership Team and any proposal to make any payment to any such person above the assessed 'rate for the job' for any such role.

- (iv) The Committee is not authorised to dismiss the Head of the Paid Service, the Monitoring Officer or the Section 151 Officer.

### **Senior Management Employment Sub-Committee – Terms of Reference**

Membership: Three Members of the Council to include the appropriate Cabinet Member.

1. To exercise any of the Committee's powers with respect to any particular Deputy Chief Officer (but not changes affecting more than one such post).
- (2) To add new sub-paragraphs (k)-(n) to paragraph 15.1.4 of the constitution (limits on delegations to officers):
  - (k) Nothing in this Scheme of Delegation allows any officer to make the decision to appoint or dismiss a chief officer or deputy chief officer other than:
    - (i) to make a temporary or interim appointment of a deputy chief officer for up to one year (with any decision to re-appoint or extend a temporary post beyond a year being referred to the Senior Management Employment Committee);
    - (ii) to dismiss a person appointed under (i) or
    - (iii) to make decisions relating to a Head of Service reporting to a Director.
  - (l) Any proposal for an officer to make a temporary or interim appointment of a deputy chief officer in accordance with (k) must be notified to the Leader and the decision referred to the Senior Management Employment Committee if the Leader so requires.
  - (m) Nothing in this Scheme of Delegation allows any officer to make any decision about the pay or any other remuneration of a chief officer or deputy chief officer other than one falling under (k), other than to adjust their pay to the assessed 'rate for the job' for their pay grade.
  - (n) Nothing in this Scheme of Delegation allows any officer to alter any aspect of pay grades A or B.

## **6. Membership of the Health and Wellbeing Board**

### **Resolved**

That the constitution of the Board as shown in paragraph 8.1.8 of the Constitution be amended to read:

**‘Quorum**

The quorum for the Health and Wellbeing Board will be one quarter of the voting membership and will include:

- at least one Essex County Council Elected Member
- at least one Clinical Commissioning Group Representative
- Essex County Council *either* Director of Adult Social Care, Director of Children’s Services or Director for Public Health.

**Membership**

<b>Voting Members</b>	
<b>Statutory Members</b>	<b>How Nominated or Appointed</b>
3 County Councillors*	As nominated by the Leader of the County Council
Essex County Council Director of Adult Social Care (DASS)	By appointment to post
Essex County Council Director of Children’s Services (DCS)	By appointment to post
Essex County Council Director of Public Health (DPH)	By appointment to post
Representative of Health Watch Essex	Appointed by Health Watch Essex
Representative of North East Essex CCG	Appointed by North East Essex CCG
Representative of Mid Essex CCG	Appointed by Mid Essex CCG
Representative of West Essex CCG	Appointed by West Essex CCG
Representative of Basildon and Brentwood CCG	Appointed by Basildon and Brentwood CCG
Representative of Castle Point and Rochford CCG	Appointed by Castle Point and Rochford CCG
<b>Other Members</b>	<b>How Nominated or Appointed</b>
Chief Executive of Essex County Council	By appointment to post
Independent Chair, Suffolk and North-East Essex STP/ICS	Appointed by the Board on the nomination of the STP/ICS
Independent Chair, Hertfordshire and West Essex STP/ICS	Appointed by the Board on the nomination of the STP/ICS
Independent Chair, Mid and South Essex STP/ICS	Appointed by the Board on the nomination of the STP/ICS
4 Borough/City/District Council Representatives	Appointed by the Board on the nomination of the Borough/City/District Council Leaders and Chief Executives Group
3 Voluntary Sector representatives	Appointed by the Board on the nomination of Borough/City/District Council Leaders and Chief Executives Group
Representative of NHS Commissioning Board (NHS England)	Nominated by Regional Director, NHS England

3 Representatives of Essex Acute Hospital Trusts	Appointed by the Board on the nomination of the Trusts
2 Representatives from Essex mental health and non-acute providers	Appointed by the Board on the nomination of the Trusts
1 Representative from Mid and South Essex Clinical Commissioning Groups in common	Appointed by the Board on the nomination of Mid and South Essex Clinical Commissioning Groups Joint Committee in Common
<b>Non-Voting Members</b>	
Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner	By election to post
Independent Chair of the Essex Safeguarding Children's and Adults Boards	By appointment to posts

## 7. Membership of the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee

### Resolved

That the membership of the committee as shown in paragraph 8.1.2 of the constitution be amended to read:

#### **'8.1.2 Audit, Governance and Standards Committee**

Membership: Ten Members of the Council and one non-voting co-opted Member.

The co-opted Member shall be appointed the committee for a term of not exceeding four years and shall be selected by the Committee following public advertisement. At the expiry of the term of appointment the vacancy shall be advertised and a further selection process undertaken. The sitting member shall be eligible for reappointment.'

## 8. Outside Bodies

### Resolved

1. That the list of Approved Bodies in Appendix 3 of Part 26 of the Constitution be amended to include the newly formed Mid and South Essex NHS Foundation Trust and remove the Basildon and Thurrock University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and the Southend University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust.
2. The numbering of the alphabetical list of Approved Bodies as shown in Appendix 3 of part 26 of the Constitution to be amended to take account of the changes.

## **9. Dates of Future Meetings**

### **Resolved**

That meetings of the Council will be held on Tuesdays at 10am on 13 October and 8 December 2020 and 16 February, 11 May, 13 July, 12 October and 7 December 2021

## **8. Essex County Council's response to COVID-19**

Councillor Finch, the Leader of the Council, presented a report concerning the Council's response to COVID-19; to explain the Council's current position and to give some details of the implications.

Councillor Finch paid tribute to Councillor Terry Cutmore and members of staff who had lost their lives or loved ones to the pandemic. He also paid tribute to former Executive Director Mr Dave Hill who had recently passed away.

He then expressed his gratitude to community leaders, Members of the council and the leaders of the opposition parties, particularly Councillor Mackrory but also Councillors Henderson and Pond for their co-operation and understanding that had enabled urgent decisions to be taken promptly. He also paid tribute to the Council's staff who had been working flexibly and selflessly in difficult circumstances to provide care to residents and to keep council services running at a time of unprecedented pressure.

Councillor Finch then announced the establishment of the Nightingale Social Care Bursary and Nursing Apprenticeship Scheme that aims to support over 200 people from across Essex to achieve social care qualifications, or to support existing care workers to achieve further qualifications.

At the invitation of the Chairman, each of the Cabinet Members were invited to explain to Members what action had been taken within their portfolios. Council was addressed by:

- Councillor Bentley, Deputy Leader, Cabinet Member for Infrastructure,
- Councillor Spence, Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care,
- Councillor Gooding, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills
- Councillor Whitbread, Cabinet Member for Finance,
- Councillor McKinlay, Cabinet Member for Children and Families,
- Councillor Barker, Cabinet Member for Customer, Communities, Culture and Corporate,
- Councillor Walsh. Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change Action,
- Councillor Ball, Cabinet Member for Economic Development and
- Councillor Madden, Cabinet Member for Performance, Business Planning and Partnerships.



There was then a debate and questions from Members, details of which are available on the ECC website [via the online audio recording of the meeting](#), and it having been moved by Councillor Finch and seconded by Councillor Bentley it was

**Resolved**

That the report be noted.

**9. Adjournment**

With the agreement of Council, the Chairman adjourned the meeting at 12:14. The meeting reconvened at 12:20.

**10. To receive the Leader's report of Cabinet Issues**

Councillor Finch, the Leader of the Council, presented a report concerning

- (1) A list of those urgent key decisions that have been taken, with the agreement of the Chairman of the Corporate Policy and Scrutiny Committee, as urgent key decisions without prior notice. (Constitution para 19.17);
- (2) a list of other urgent decisions which the Chairman of the Corporate Policy and Scrutiny Committee has agreed to exempt from call in (Constitution para 20.15; and
- (3) the minutes of the Cabinet meetings held on 25 February 2020, 17 March 2020 and 26 May 2020.

It having been moved by Councillor Finch and seconded by Councillor Bentley it was

**Resolved**

To receive the lists of urgent decisions taken and the minutes of the Cabinet meetings held on 25 February 2020, 17 March 2020 and 26 May 2020.

**11. Written Questions**

The published answers to the 29 written questions submitted in accordance with Standing Order 16.12.1 were noted.

Members sought points of clarification from the relevant Cabinet Members, details of which are available on the ECC website [via the online audio recording of the meeting](#). The written questions were:

**1. By Councillor Beavis of the Leader of the Council**

‘Does the Leader have a process to fully understand the extent of the ongoing job losses in Essex due to the Corona Virus and what plans does he have in place to support employers and employees during and following the Pandemic.

I am concerned particularly with the aviation and hospitality sectors in Essex.’

**Reply**

‘Thank you for your question to which the short answer is “yes”. Councillor Ball, Cabinet Member for Economic Growth and Councillor Whitbread, Cabinet Member for Finance have met frequently with officers from the Finance and Technology, Communications, Economic Development and Planning Teams to share information and develop our support and recovery plans. Officers from ECC have worked with colleagues in councils across Essex to identify what the economic impact of Corona Virus could be on jobs in Essex.

As you will be aware, as a Braintree Councillor, ECC is working closely with Councillor Butland and other Leaders from across Essex to identify how we can best support businesses and jobs. This work has also been supported by officers from the Strategy and Data and Analytics Teams reviewing local and national data to identify the key sectors and localities which will be affected by the pandemic – both in terms of job losses and those sectors and locations which may be more resilient and could provide opportunities for growth.

There is no denying that the impact on jobs in Essex to date is significant. The data that we reviewed at the end of May showed that there were 40,000 newly unemployed workers and 216,000 furloughed workers in greater Essex which is approximately 29% of all employed residents and I know Councillor Ball and the Economic Growth Team are developing a robust plan for what we can do in the short, medium and long-term to create jobs and support the economy to recover in Essex, and they have already shared the early stages of their plans with Councillors at a recent Member Development Session.

The government acted swiftly and decisively to support the economy and businesses. The furlough scheme has protected tens of thousands of jobs in the county, while the grants and rates relief schemes for businesses has protected many businesses with cashflow through the crisis. We also saw the government supporting businesses to reopen through money to make our high streets safer. And with the Chancellor’s announcements on 8 July including VAT cuts for hospitality and retail, the restaurant £10 off scheme,

the creation of hundreds of thousands of jobs for young people and the very welcome £1,000 for companies who retain furloughed staff.

These initiatives make for the most comprehensive package of support for business this country has ever seen and means that our county's major employers are in a much stronger position than they otherwise would be. We are well placed now to work with government to help carry on their good work and ensure Essex businesses thrive.

With regards to the aviation industry specifically, ECC is an active member of the Strategic Aviation Special Interest Group (SASIG) which is the forum within the Local Government Association (LGA) for all local authorities to discuss strategic aviation policies, major aviation issues and advancing sustainable aviation policy on behalf of local communities. Work was already underway prior to easyJet's announcement to undertake a research project at local authority level first as a first as a response to the emergency, then to assist in the initial recovery stage, to support the industry to restore local jobs and supply chains as it re-establishes pre crisis levels of activity over what may be a 3-5-year period. Recent analysis by ECC officers suggests that we can anticipate seeing 2019 demand levels in 2023 in the aviation industry.

To support local tourism businesses - which prior to the COVID-19 pandemic was worth £3.4 billion to the county's economy - Visit Essex is urging people to explore, experience and enjoy Essex by staying local and supporting the many attractions and businesses which are starting to reopen through their recently launched Great Adventures, Close to Home campaign, which will run for ten weeks, and provide inspiration and information on what is open as well as the best times of day and safest way for people to visit.

The campaign will include Visit England's "We're Good to Go" industry standard, giving visitors confidence that businesses are adhering to Government and public health guidance. The Chair of Visit England launched the campaign at Audley End which will help visitors to understand what to expect prior to visiting.

Visit Essex are encouraging venues/attractions to use Visit England's booking platform particularly those who do not currently have a booking system to enable visitors to book specific time slots and thereby manage numbers and social distancing. There is normally a 2.5% commission on sales through this platform however at the moment this will be returned to venues so they do not lose income.

Visit Essex are supporting the campaign by asking attractions in Essex to sign up to the "Great Adventures, Close to Home" Campaign so that we can direct visitors to those venues who are open for business, adhering to best practice guidance and are in areas where we want people to visit. Visit Essex have worked with their membership and with city, district, borough and the unitary authorities to identify with them the areas of the county that they would prefer that visitors avoid and is instead focused on promoting

attractions and areas for those who want to avoid crowded areas in order to stay safe.

Key messaging is don't follow the crowd, respect and protect the environment. Visit Essex are also in contact with those areas of the county which tend to be very busy, particularly during good weather e.g. Southend to understand where there are issues. In Southend for example there are seven beaches and in busy areas there is still social distancing despite photos in the press implying that crowds are too large.

In the longer term, Visit Essex are working with their Chair Councillor Durham using knowledge built from the two online conferences they have hosted during lockdown. Visit Essex have also involved The Right Hon Priti Patel MP's office and the Tourism Minister Nigel Huddleston MP to identify the support that the tourism economy needs in Essex and will build this into the economic recovery plan being developed by the Council. They are also working with Kent and East Sussex County Councils to try to source funding from SELEP to support tourism across the South East.'

**2. By Councillor Beavis of the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure**

'The Essex Health profile demonstrates a peak in the number of the deaths due to speeding vehicles on rural roads, particularly in the north of the Braintree District.

Can the Cabinet Member assure me that every opportunity is being taken to work with Essex Police to reduce speed on rural roads in the north of the Braintree District?

Could a fresh approach be taken to promote the significance of Speed Watch, carried out by volunteers, to reduce speed on rural roads?'

**Reply**

'I'd like to thank Councillor Beavis for her question.

The data used for the Essex Health profile, does not allow valid comparisons to be made between local values and the England average. This is because between late 2015 and early 2016 around half of the Police forces in England, including Essex, adopted a new collision recording system called CRASH. The CRASH system prompts the officer to input every separate injury, so provides a truer reflection of severity. The consequence of this is that the proportion of casualties recorded as serious is much higher in Police forces that use the CRASH system than those that don't. This is further compounded by the fact that CRASH is used by different Police forces in different ways, so the CRASH-effect is not consistent across the country.

Killed and Seriously Injured (KSI) rates for the England average will therefore be artificially lower than those for Essex, due to the number of Police forces not using the more accurate CRASH system used in Essex to record collisions. Essex Highways data shows that 24% of collisions in Braintree are speed related compared to an Essex average of 25%. Essex Police, as part of the Safer Essex Roads Partnership undertook speed enforcement in Braintree on Saturday 6 June, travelling 1,427 miles and capturing 193 speed offences. They visited several prominent villages and engaged with residents.

Of the 100 spot-speed safety camera sites in Essex, two are located in Braintree District. These 2% of sites account for 1.1% of offences, totalling 339 offences for the 16-month period. Of the 24 average speed systems in Essex, six are in Braintree District – these are all on the A12 near Kelvedon. These account for 3% of the average-speed offences in Essex.

The Partnership operates mobile “Trucam” devices across the county. These are deployed based on a strategy that combines being intelligence/data-led, with public demand and the principle of unpredictable visibility. There are 3 locations in Braintree used for Trucam, this is 2.6% of the 115 total Trucam sites in Essex. These generated 331 offences, amounting to 2.2% of the total Trucam offences for Essex.

There are 24 Community Speed Watch (CSW) Sites in Braintree, comprising 7.8% of all sites in Essex and delivering 5.3% of letters sent. This amounts to 1,500 letters sent between January 2019 and April 2020. We are unable to operate CSW at present due to Covid restrictions but the Safer Essex Road Partnership will review this on 1 September 2020. A review of the service has been completed and is being reviewed to determine how this important community element of speed management can be supported in the future. The back-office support required is substantial and must be prioritised within the SERP’s strategy for casualty reduction leading to Vision Zero.’

**3. By Councillor Reid of the Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care and the Cabinet Member for Customer, Communities, Culture and Corporate**

‘The pandemic has highlighted how many lonely and isolated people we have in Essex, this ranges from the elderly to the young. There will be many who have been shielding or isolating through this time who will find it extremely difficult to open the front door and go outside, there will be many more who have no one close to them who understands their isolation and fear.

What measures are we putting in place as the lockdown eases and for the future to help and encourage our residents to feel part of our community again? With libraries, community centres and our youth facilities closed we must ensure that these places all have the help needed to re-open again for the mental health and wellbeing of Essex residents.’

**Reply**

‘We have invested in the Essex Wellbeing Service - this provides support with daily living tasks but also additional support from Care Navigation Plus organisations including those who support people with Social Isolation and Loneliness including Community Agents, Befrienders and our Kindness Coaches – all of these services assist in supporting people to feel an increased sense of connection and belonging. Mental Health Support, Family Support, support from the Citizens advice around debt management and benefits advice.

We recruited a huge number of volunteers to support people across Essex through Essex Coronavirus Action – these volunteers are registered with the Essex Wellbeing Service and many have indicated that they would wish to continue volunteering. Volunteer tasks initially included daily living tasks, however, the scope of these roles have grown and diversified to include befriending and buddies to encourage people to return to normal life where it is safe to do so.’

**4. By Councillor Henderson of the Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change Action**

‘There are many residents within my Harwich Division who are angry and concerned that the Dovercourt Waste and Recycling Centre remains closed when others within Essex are open.

Will the Portfolio Holder please confirm that this is a temporary measure and the date that it is anticipated to reopen, and please include where the staff who usually work there are presently working? Has the closure caused additional fly-tipping in the area, and is ECC making a financial contribution to TDC in regard to this and if so, how much, and is there any consideration to provide a temporary caged vehicle facility for waste disposal on adjacent or alternative TDC owned land?’

**Reply**

‘The temporary closure of the Essex recycling centre network, and the subsequent gradual mobilisation, was a necessary response to the COVID-19 situation and the need to protect public health. I can confirm that as we enter a new phase in dealing with this virus and social distancing requirements change, we have been able to open the remaining six recycling centres in Essex, including the site located in Dovercourt. From the 10 July, all 21 recycling centres provided by Essex have been available for public use.

Our focus during this period of closure has been to get services up and running as quickly and as safely as possible. Although the use of caged vehicles was considered, this was not progressed as it would not have been

able to replace the recycling centre provision or meet local demand in a safe manner.

During the period when not all sites were operating, the staff who would have ordinarily work at Dovercourt were redeployed to meet the additional staffing need at other sites in the north of Essex. Now the Dovercourt site is reopen, staff are allocated back to their normal base site.

Although fly-tipping incidences have been observed in the Dovercourt and Harwich areas during the period of recycling centre closure, this has not been noticeably higher than the usual rate. We continue to work closely with Tendring District Council to support their work in tackling the illegal disposal of waste and identifying those responsible.

In operating these services, the protection of public health remains our key priority. It is therefore imperative that users of these services continue to follow site rules and observe all social distancing measures. We also request that residents make full use of their kerbside waste services before considering making journeys to these facilities.'

**5. By Councillor Harris of the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure**

'Some existing footpaths/cycle ways are very narrow, and do not allow social distancing, due to past design (Beside Monkwick Junior School) and due to inability to maintain widths over the years from vegetation growing into path/cycle way limits. (Berechurch Hall Road to Gurdon Road)

With the Government indication to support cycling, which has laudable aims to get people out of buses and cars, is there any way that the maintenance of existing cycle ways be improved, widened and made more user friendly.

Some cycle ways have lost 2ft of path in my division due to overgrown vegetation, and if the priority can be turned toward these routes, this would, I am sure you would agree, get more people cycling and using the urban cycle way routes from South Colchester to Central Colchester.'

**Reply**

'I would like to thank Councillor Harris for his question. Increased Government funding for highways has allowed us to earmark £200k to begin maintenance and fixing defects. This will help to improve the condition, appearance and attractiveness of cycleways. Tranche two of the Emergency Active Travel Fund may similarly allow some scope for the measures Cllr Harris seeks.

Regarding any local overgrown cycleways, the Member is encouraged to report these via the Local Highways Panel so that the Highways Rangers based in Colchester can attend to these matters.'

**6. By Councillor Harris of the Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change Action**

‘The staff at Shrub End recycling centre should be thanked for all the work they have done in trying to maintain opening times to access the tip, under difficult social distancing circumstances.

Would the Portfolio Holder consider changes to the entrance to Shrub End recycle centre, that would benefit workers, my constituents in Shrub end (Gladiator Way, Temple Road, off Cunobelin Way who are disadvantaged by queues outside their housing estate) and benefit users who want to recycle items in the new Covid way of working.

Would a change to the design of Cunobelin Way, with an extra lane for Shrub End tip be supported by the Portfolio Holder to aid good management of the centre, by improving queues and not disadvantaging my local constituents.’

**Reply**

‘I wish to endorse the view of Councillor Harris and extend my personal appreciation to all staff across our recycling centre network for the hard work and commitment they have shown in providing a service during this difficult time, whilst also keeping our residents safe.

I am aware that the initial demand at the Shrub End Colchester site led to some local traffic congestion and disruption for local residents. Within the first few days a number of operational changes were made to alleviate the impact of queuing traffic on local properties. These measures included the deployment of accredited highway officers at the site, the redesign of the site operation to increase unloading and queuing capacity, and changes to site access from the highway. I am sure Cllr Harris will agree that these steps have significantly reduced the local impact of the site compared to when it first reopened.

Under normal site operations, when social distancing is not a requirement, queuing along Cunobelin Way has not been raised as a particular issue. I am therefore unable to commit my support to a permanent change of the nature indicated at this moment in time. I will, however, ask officers to explore with highways colleagues what further appropriate measures could be taken to manage highways queuing by vehicles using the site.’

**7. By Councillor Reid of the Cabinet Member for Children and Families**

‘It has been widely reported that school closures will trigger a mental health crisis for children in the UK. Many of these children will need ‘urgent support’ when lock-down eases.



What measures are we putting in place to deal with this crisis? Children cannot wait six months to one year to receive help from a child psychologist or other departments necessary.

We know the Government has given extra money to councils, can the Cabinet Member guarantee that some of this funding will be put towards combating the impact this virus has had on these children.'

### **Reply**

'As lockdown measures begin to ease, we do expect to see increases in referrals in relation to mental health, but the system is ready and is planned and prepared for this.

We don't expect to see an influx of tier 3 complex need cases, which is provided by the EWMHS service. Much of the needs of those referrals will not require specialist clinical psychological interventions. Most of these children will require low level brief solution focused therapies within community-based services at tier 2, which support children with additional needs and provides early help.

To help tackle issues early we have in place the Family Innovation Fund (FiF), and now FiF-Xtra, which has been funded through a £120k investment from the Children's Sustainability Fund. These services will support many who become vulnerable as a result of COVID-19 at tier 2 and prevent the need for children to require a tier 3 referral.

In addition to this the CCGs have commissioned similar early help support with additional funding made available to them and the Essex Child and Family Wellbeing Service is also working to support those who become vulnerable with emotional health needs.

Government funding has been made available directly to the voluntary and community sector to support children and young people with emotional health needs and we have had, and continue to plan, campaigns to ensure that children, young people and families' know where to access this support should they need it.

We are working together across the Essex system and in local areas across health, education and social care to ensure that vulnerable children and young people's and families' mental health needs are met as children and young people prepare to return to school.'

### **8. By Councillor Davies of the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure**

'The government is now encouraging people to walk and cycle more however I am led to believe that Public Rights of Way are only maintained once a year

with trimming and cutting. Could this be upgraded to a more regular trim in order to keep these walks pleasant for the general public?’

### **Reply**

‘I’d like to thank Councillor Davies for his question. As Members will be aware, Public Rights of Way are predominantly rural routes through the countryside. They are all a type of highway and came about through historic usage as routes for farm workers to get to their places of work, for people walking to church or to schools and as tracks to drive livestock to markets. These days they are mostly used for leisure purposes.

They pass through privately owned land, which is often working farmland so the Essex Highways work closely with the landowners to keep the routes accessible.

You will appreciate there are limited revenue funds to trim and cut public rights of way, over and above the annual work we do to cut the natural seasonal upgrowth on our PROW network, which is undertaken between April and October. However, the Council supports a very successful Community Scheme to cut vegetation which I would encourage you to promote locally:

- Parish councils are able to enter into a service level agreement with us to maintain the vegetation on their priority routes. We support the parishes through a grant payment.
- Community groups can volunteer through the Parish Paths Partnership scheme to clear seasonal upgrowth. See our website and Volunteering page for more information.
- Over 75 farmers and landowners also cut paths on their land or land within their control under the headland management scheme.
- To see which parishes are cutting under a service level agreement or who is volunteering under the Parish Paths Partnership scheme please see our website.

I encourage all Members to use the website which holds lots of useful information to share with constituents.’

## **9. By Councillor Abbott of the Cabinet Member for Economic Development**

‘In his Judgment of 18 June 2020, the Honourable Mr Justice Pepperall found that the Basildon MBT plant had "serious design errors" including that the "biohalls were seriously undersized and incapable of processing the guaranteed tonnage of waste".

Whilst the Judgment was in favour of Essex County Council in terms of the dispute with the operators, and in terms of ECC acting as the waste authority, what implications does the Judgment have for ECC as the planning authority that gave planning permission for a plant now found to have serious design and capacity problems and which was promoted by ECC as a plant being

developed to take all of the municipal waste arisings from the ECC area of Essex?’

### **Reply**

‘As you will be aware, whilst the High Court found in ECC’s favour, the litigation surrounding this case has not concluded. I hope however that the information below is helpful.

As you state, the judgment centred on the design of the plant which caused issues around plant performance and processing.

When it came to granting planning permission – this was the responsibility of ECC in its role as the Waste Planning Authority (WPA). In reviewing the planning application, the WPA relied on information submitted by Urbaser Balfour Beatty (UBB), the owners, in support of the planning application. This did not include the internal design of the plant or the processes used to process waste as approval of the internal operations of the site are not part of the WPA’s function.

When the information was provided in support of the planning application, the WPA had no reason at that time to believe the design of the building was defective.

The WPA made a fair and correct assessment of UBB’s application in coming to its conclusion basing its conclusion on the information submitted. Planning permission would have been granted (or refused) in the same way regardless of the identity of the applicant.’

### **10. By Councillor Abbott of the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure**

‘The focus of recovery planning in terms of safer access has to date been understandably in the first place for town centres in Essex, as shops and other outlets re-open. For the medium to longer term, what plans are there for safer and more sustainable modes to be developed in our rural areas, such as Braintree District where approx. 50% of residents do not live in the towns?’

Would ECC support measures such as dedicated cycling routes which could link the larger villages to the towns and railway stations, and which could unlock significant modal shift as well as helping to maintain distancing?’

### **Reply**

‘I’d like to thank Councillor Abbott for his question. In a word “yes” and our proposals in Chelmsford to link Great Waltham to Broomfield and thence to

Chelmsford TC are a good example of this as was also the case in the Wivenhoe to Essex University and Colchester route. Government funding is crucial here and although we have an opportunity for the second tranche of EFTA funding this will be aimed at attracting larger numbers of cyclists in our larger towns. The main opportunity will be later we hope when the Government launches the main part of its cycling and walking strategy.'

**11. By Councillor Scordis of the Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care**

'What action has been taken by our public health team to prepare for local lockdowns in Essex and coping with a possible second outbreak of COVID-19?'

**Reply**

'Our Director of Public Health would remind us that the best way to prevent further outbreaks in Essex is to remember that the disease is still with us. The science around social distancing is clear; wherever possible, the two-metre guidance should be followed. At two metres, in ordinary conversation, there is virtually no possibility of transmission; exposure to an infected person at one metre or less is much more likely to lead to transmission and / or the need to self-isolate for two weeks.

The work of ECC and partners to quickly identify a new outbreak emerging has enabled the creation of a Local Outbreak Plan which is independently recognised to be among the best in the country. The Health Protection Board is in operation, and its work will be overseen by the Local Outbreak Engagement Board, whose membership includes the leader of ECC and leaders / representatives of other councils from across the county. Where appropriate, these Boards will liaise with central authorities to ensure necessary, immediate action is taken.

All of this work must be undertaken while recognising the wider impacts of Covid. We need to ensure that the economy progresses to minimise the economic and social impact across our population.'

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

'Sadly, the predictions of Professor Marmot's review "Fair Society, Healthy Lives" prepared 10 years ago warning that policies of public austerity after the 2008 financial crash would lead to a chasm in life expectancy between rich and poor has become true. The more deprived the area the lower the life expectancy due to the wider determinants of health. Austerity according to Marmot is a killer. The most deprived ward of Greenstead sits within my County Council Division, within that ward I have four Local Super Output Areas, the highest amount of any Colchester Borough ward. The

circumstances of my division are not alone, in Tendring, Canvey Island, Harlow and Basildon we find a similar story where life expectancy between the richest and poorest areas of both men and women has widened.

My question to the Cabinet Member responsible for public health is this:

Can you make a commitment to steer this authorities' policies towards addressing the growing inequity in life expectancy between rich and poor by restricting cuts and targeting resources to those areas that have the worse socio-economic conditions?'

### **Reply**

'This council is firmly committed to addressing the long-term wider determinants of health. The link between deprivation/poor socio-economic conditions, and issues such as outcomes around career achievements and life expectancy are well known.

As evidence for this, the Leader of Tendring District Council and I hosted a workshop to look at the challenges being faced in Clacton. The workshop was attended by numerous government and other agency representatives, along with Professor Michael Marmot. He recognised the scale of the challenge and was impressed by the collaboration and commitment demonstrated by those present. There are and will continue to be numerous interventions. The Local Delivery Pilot, being operated with funds from Sports England, has deliberately been focused on districts with the greatest levels of deprivation. ECC is committed to being an Anchor Institution, and we are working with all public sector organisations to obtain comprehensive commitment to these principles. We have begun lobbying for the relocation of a govt department to Tendring – this could potentially be housed in the east Colchester / Tendring development.

Ultimately the way to reduce deprivation is to increase economic prosperity and ensure that the effects of that are felt in all parts of the community. We can, of course, only do so much; national and local partners have major roles to play.'

### **13. By Councillor Young of the Cabinet Member for Customer, Corporate, Culture and Communities**

'We know that people have found the isolation of the Coronavirus pandemic detrimental to their mental health and wellbeing, we also know how much our libraries are valued as local centres where people can come together to access books, information and computer access. We therefore need all our libraries to be reopened.

Can the portfolio holder confirm that all Essex Libraries will be reopened and when that will be? Can they also confirm that the reopening will not be dependent on whether or not there are volunteers to staff them?'

**Reply**

'We will be reopening all Essex libraries using a phased approach. It has been vital to plan to re-open sites in stages in order to ensure that we could carry out appropriate risk assessments and put procedures in place to ensure our customers and employees remain safe. A summary of the re-opening dates is listed below:

- Tranche 1 – 16 Libraries - from 6 July
- Tranche 2 – 44 Libraries – from 13 July
- Tranche 3a – 6 Libraries – from 20 July
- Tranche 3b – 8 Libraries – during August with confirmed dates to follow

The service offered at Essex Libraries will look different to normal in order to support new safety measures and social distancing guidelines.

Residents will be able to return and borrow books, as well as have some limited time to browse the shelves.

In line with government guidance, the number of customers allowed in a library at any one time will also need to be reduced to help people stay safe.

To help colleagues work safely, customers will be asked to use the self-service machines to issue and return their items and to pay any charges.

Public computers, printing facilities and additional services such as recycling bags will be temporarily unavailable, but these services will be reviewed frequently so that they can be offered again as soon as it is safe to do so.

The reopening of these libraries is not contingent on volunteers staffing them.'

**14. By Councillor Davies of the Cabinet Member for Customer, Corporate, Culture and Communities**

'Many local Laindon residents including pensioners rely upon a post office. Since the demolition of Laindon Centre, it has been agreed to place a Post Office in Laindon Library. This is an eagerly awaited, much needed service amongst residents.

Please could you provide an up to date progress report and reassure the public that a post office will be in place once the library opens in July?'

**Reply**

'We have been in recent discussions regarding the Post Office moving to Laindon Library. The Post Office have placed this move on hold due to the

recent pandemic. However, we are still aiming to have a Post Office in Laindon Library and will continue to hold regular dialogue with them to help make this a reality.'

#### **15. By Councillor Buckley of the Cabinet Member for Finance**

'Given that the quarter day has now passed and apparently less than 20% of rents due on retail properties were paid on time and taking into account the significant number of retailers and investors such as Intu seeking CVA's or other insolvency actions, can the Cabinet Member confirm:

1. What percentage of ECC's anticipated rent has been received in the current quarter?
2. What are the forecast income figures for the full year compared with the original projections made by the Council's advisers?
3. Given the reduction of income what is the estimated reduction in capital values?
4. What mitigation measures are being taken to minimise the medium and long-term impact on capital and income?'

#### **Reply**

'Since the outbreak of the pandemic, ECC has been working with many of its tenants to assist them with their cashflow issues while at the same time not giving any rent holidays or reductions. This is in line with Government advice and issued best practice. Such concessions have usually taken the form of switching quarterly rents to monthly rents or allowing a reduced rent for one quarter which is then repaid in the following quarters. There are currently no avenues available to landlords for formal debt recovery action until the 30 September (or later if amended by the Government).

With this in mind, the responses to the specific questions are:

1. As of the 29 June, 44% of the rents due per the lease terms had been received for the June quarter rent. Last quarter, 85% of all rents, both quarterly and monthly, were received by the end of the quarter and some further receipts are expected. The figure for this quarter will improve over the quarter due to tenants who have switched to monthly rents paying on the first of each month. There are also some tenants deferring some, or all, of their rent for this quarter to later quarters.
2. ECC has 16 tenants in its portfolio. To date, one tenant has started a Company Voluntary Arrangement (CVA) and one tenant has announced a pre-pack administration arrangement, that sells the company to new owners.
3. The forecast income for the financial year is currently £1.7m. This remains ahead of the income included in the budget of £1.54m.
4. The portfolio is valued annually for the statutory accounts. As of March 2020, the portfolio was valued at £29.1m, a reduction of £2m. This year's valuation was impacted by:

- Strong anti-retail sentiment in the market, although out of town shopping centres like Keighley are generally performing better than high street retailers
- Brexit uncertainty continuing
- COVID-19 impact and economic uncertainty
- Leases being one year closer to expiry

However, it is important to note that a market valuation at a moment in time does not impact the owner of any property unless the owner wants to sell it. Valuations of any property move upwards and downwards dependent on many market factors. ECC did not purchase the site for capital growth purposes and do not have any current plans to sell the investment.

5. When the commercial property investment fund was set up, it was agreed that an amount would be put into a provision annually to provide prudent mitigation for such unexpected events as we are currently experiencing. As of March 2020, the provision stood at £650,000 with a further £325,000 budgeted to be added in the current financial year.

ECC's agents also are working continuously on identifying potentially interested future tenants, although this is currently a difficult task.

Despite the current economic conditions, new lease discussions are being held with tenants as they fall due and are nearing conclusion. Extending the average unexpired lease terms at sites will benefit the capital valuations in future.'

**16. By Councillor Scordis of the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure:**

'Essex County Council bid for £1.9 million for its walking and cycling programme and only received 50% of this funding, due to weaknesses in our application and proposals.

Can the portfolio holder confirm what weaknesses were highlighted by the government in our bid?'

**Reply**

'I'd like to thank Councillor Scordis for his question. Our bid was not weak: a simple bid was requested aimed initially at achieving social distancing and we put forward a good bid which we were led to believe would be a block allocation as set out in the original announcement, rather than a competitive process with lots of detailed plans being required.

We understand that subsequent to this simple application, the evaluation of bids was subjected to a sifting process which appears to have top sliced



some allocations for “rebalancing” policy reasons. We have been informed that our bid was “not as attractive as others” which I feel is missing the commitment I have made in my “safer, greener, healthier” initiative.

We have a further opportunity in tranche two. Councillor Scordis can rest assured however on the allocation of funds to Colchester with the town receiving over 35% of the funds now available.’

#### **17. By Councillor Aspinell of the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills**

‘Why does the Cabinet Member repeatedly present ridiculous designs and plans for modular schools to the Planning Committee for permission to erect? These plans were questioned quite vigorously by all members at the last Development and Regulation (D&R) Committee and I am reliably informed that that has been the case whenever similar designs have been put forward.

This clearly goes against County’s own policies regarding reduction in carbon emissions and green renewable energy initiatives, and as a retired firefighter, the thought of placing children in a flat roofed, wood clad box fills me with dread.’

#### **Reply**

‘When designing new school buildings ECC follows national guidance in relation to the size of all the elements required in a school; providing sufficient space for the number of pupils, the correct placing and relationship between classrooms, halls, kitchens, office and staff accommodation and playing fields. The Department for Education (DfE) publish a number of generic, efficient designs that provide a template to be used for delivering effective school buildings. These designs are relevant to whatever form of construction is utilised: either modern methods of construction, modular or traditional. The member may be interested to view the “template” designs on the government’s own web pages, as they provide a context as to what is nationally recognised as efficient design.

ECC, in its education document “meeting the demand for school places in Essex” has demonstrated the need to provide 20,000 new school places by 2029. The latest data published by the DfE again shows ECC is delivering the largest school expansion programme in the country, to ensure all children can access a school place.

The funding for these places will be met by s106 contributions from housing developers and ECC “basic need” grant from the DfE. These sources of funding need to finance our school building programme. Any cost of building schools above these funding streams has to be met by Essex taxpayers. My intention is that the impact of our school building programme on Essex taxpayers is as low as possible and I am constantly challenging officers to ensure the designs are efficient and the costs are as low as possible, without

reducing the quality of the education environment. Even with this focus on value for money, ECCs new school buildings are regularly nominated for and win awards, which is a credit to the work undertaken by ECC officers who ensure that we provide the best school buildings possible.

ECC utilises the DfEs own performance specification in relation to the quality of school buildings that are promoted by ECC. This performance specification applies equally to permanent and temporary school buildings and is applied to whatever form of construction is appropriate for the needs of each project. This performance specification is of course, completely compliant with the requirements of building control in all cases. ECC are vigilant to ensure that all our school buildings meet the quality standards, as this requirement ensures our new buildings provide schools with high quality learning environments that support better learning outcomes for all pupils. Of particular note are the importance ECC places on lighting, thermal performance, ventilation and acoustics, all of which are specified to a high standard and have a significant positive impact on the learning of school children.

I am glad that you have mentioned the need for carbon reduction in our building programme. Our performance specification for school buildings has an emphasis on achieving passive efficiencies in school building and operation, to minimise energy requirement from the start.

All projects that have been commissioned since the start of this year, have included a requirement for enhanced initiatives towards meeting ECCs ambition of a zero-carbon authority. We have commenced this journey by requiring all new school projects to include photovoltaic energy creation on the roof. I am pleased to be able to report that on the 8 July, ECC D&R members approved the planning application for the rebuilding of Harlowbury School on a new site. this design has extensive photovoltaic on the roof of the building, which incidentally is flat. I anticipate that we will be able to bring forward further initiatives to demonstrate our commitment to carbon reduction in future school projects.

Members may also be aware that currently the DfE are building an entire new secondary school in Harlow from modular components constructed in a factory and delivered to site on the back of lorries. The DfE are committed to delivering as many free schools as possible using Modern forms of construction (modular), and ECC are expecting further schools that will be delivered in Essex by the DfE to be modular.'

**18. By Councillor Mackrory of the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure**

'The successful introduction of 20mph speed limits in our urban centres to facilitate safer walking and cycling is welcomed. Will the cabinet member therefore review the current policy for 20mph speed limits in residential areas

so that there is a presumption in favour of their introduction which will enable safer walking and cycling in those areas too?

### **Reply**

'I'd like to thank Councillor Mackrory for his question. Permanent 20mph zones will require substantial changes to the environment if they are to be self-enforcing, but such changes will support more sustainable modes, including electric bikes and scooters and will support 'Vision Zero', the Council's desire to have no deaths or serious injuries on Essex roads by 2040.

The Cabinet Member has asked for a review of all the current Speed Policies this financial year to ensure they reflect current best practice.'

### **19. By Councillor Mackrory of the Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care**

'Can the Cabinet Member supply the following for the period 20 March to 30 June:

- How many people were transferred from hospital to Care Homes in Essex
- How many of those people had been tested COVID-19 positive on discharge
- How many of people in Essex Care Homes died of COVID-19
- What is the number of deaths in Essex during this period as compared to the five-year average i.e. the excess deaths?'

### **Reply**

'It is not possible to provide a full / accurate figure of how many people were transferred from hospital to Care Homes in Essex at this time. The issue is more complex than may at first appear as Essex hospitals discharge out of the county, non-Essex hospitals discharge into the county and Essex County Council is not informed of private funders who come through the system. In addition, there have been emergency discharge processes during Covid that mean discharges have been funded by a national NHS COVID-19 budget and we may not have been made aware of all discharges.

We do not hold information concerning the numbers of people had been tested COVID-19 positive on discharge from hospital. As mentioned above, Essex County Council would not be informed where the person is a private self-funder. In addition, the national guidance and requirements on testing (and the scale of testing) has evolved and expanded throughout the crisis and there was not, at the outset, a requirement for people to be tested in hospital settings unless they were symptomatic, meaning that the data would be incomplete.

The number who are known to have died of COVID-19 in Essex Care Homes is 229, either because they have been tested and / or on the death certificate.

The number of excess deaths in Essex over this period is 1,229. This is 32% above the five-year average for this period. For the last seven weeks of this period, from the week ending 15 May up to the 30 June, there were 1,707 deaths in total, with net zero excess deaths. This evidences the speed and thoroughness of the actions undertaken by ECC and partners.'

**20. By Councillor Kendall of the Cabinet Member for Children and Families**

'What action is Essex County Council taking to address the serious problem of domestic violence? What funding is the County Council providing this financial year and going forward for investment in early intervention, prevention programmes and community-based support to tackle this issue?'

**Reply**

'We supported Essex Police's Domestic Abuse (DA) Campaign that was issued in April, as well as launching our own online DA e-learning and developing bite-size online domestic abuse learning workshops. We have issued a video aimed at providing professionals with useful information about the resources across the sector and signposting into domestic abuse services.

Essex Multi Agency Risk Assessment Team (MARAT) continues to meet daily to consider cases identified as 'high risk' using the Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Harassment and 'honour'-based violence (DASH) risk model and develops a coordinated safety plan to protect each victim. These meetings have been held as conference calls since March 2020 and agency engagement and commitment to safeguard domestic abuse victims has continued uninterrupted with the new processes put in place proving to be effective and efficient.

Essex County Council invests £1.6m per annum in domestic abuse community services and with a further £500k contribution from the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex we have seen a substantial investment in commissioned services with the aim to keep victims safe. There is one central helpline via which victims can access free support, advice and guidance as well as access to specialist community-based services. Those community services provide specialist help and support for victims in their homes, or, when necessary, within refuge accommodation.

ECC works within the Southend, Essex and Thurrock Strategic Partnership Board with a range of stakeholders concerned including police, health and probation. Essex is also one of the few local authority areas that commissions services to work with perpetrators and aiming to stop the cycle of domestic abuse. There are a range of other initiatives that have been put in place with the aim of intervening early, including the Essex wide Risk Avert

Programme, the Goodman and Sisters in Strength programmes. These programme support young people who have been exposed to abuse and support them to understand and form healthy relationships.'

**21. By Councillor Kendall of the Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change Action**

'What detailed plans does Essex County Council have in place to create more green jobs across Essex?'

**Reply**

'We fully recognise both the importance of creating new jobs in Essex and the increasing emphasis on green technologies and the associated employment for residents of Essex.

For our Economic Development Team, the green sector is a key area of focus - they are currently exploring the opportunities in this area and also what the skills pathways are, which need to be developed to enable residents of Essex to fill newly created green jobs in the region.

Following the government's recent announcement of the £40m Green Recovery Challenge Fund, which aims to support the creation of thousands of new jobs to kick-start the nation's green recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, we are keenly following the publication of further guidance to see how we might be able to utilise this new funding.

The new Essex Climate Action Commission will also consider the importance of creating green jobs as part of each of the agreed core workstreams.

In addition, Councillor Ball I know has spent time (prior to lockdown) visiting several construction firms in Essex who are using sustainable working practices, which involved hydrogen fuel powered generators (these are already used by our Highways Team), as well as timber and recycled steel framed homes.'

**22. By Councillor Turrell of the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure**

'I have found out that Essex, along with other Highways Authorities. has not had its full allocation of the Active Travel Funding from the Government. Is Essex actively chasing the £1 million they are short?'

**Reply**

'I'd like to thank Councillor Turrell for her question. Further to the response to Councillor Scordis on this same issue (question 16): our focus is on developing a successful bid to Tranche Two of the fund which has an

indicative allocation of over £7m, subject to eligibility criteria. The council has worked closely with Colchester Borough Council to develop a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan for Colchester and therefore we should be well placed for future funding opportunities.'

**23. By Councillor Wood of the Cabinet Member for Finance**

'Could the portfolio holder please advise the council with COVID-19 affecting the country and the fact that we have been in lockdown, how has this affected the shopping units we have in Leeds and elsewhere, with regard to the Council's investments.'

**Reply**

'Since the outbreak of the pandemic, ECC has been working with many of its tenants to assist them with their cashflow issues while at the same time not giving any rent holidays or reductions. This is in line with Government advice and issued best practice. Such concessions have usually taken the form of switching quarterly rents to monthly rents or allowing a reduced rent for one quarter which is then repaid in the following quarters. There are currently no avenues available to landlords for formal debt recovery action until the 30 September (or later if amended by the Government).

As of the 29 June, 44% of the rents due per the lease terms had been received for the June quarter rent. Last quarter, 85% of all rents, both quarterly and monthly, were received by the end of the quarter and some further receipts are expected. The figure for this quarter will improve over the quarter due to tenants who have switched to monthly rents paying on the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month. There are also some tenants deferring some, or all, of their rent for this quarter to later quarters.

Trading is difficult, particularly in the retail sector. Two retail tenants (out of eleven) have started procedures to restructure their businesses, which will have a negative impact on this year's rental income. However, the budget of £1.54m of income is still currently expected to be delivered.'

**24. By Councillor Wood of the Leader of the Council**

'Will the Leader end this Council's relationship with China immediately in the light of the appalling abuse of human rights perpetrated by the security forces on the people of Hong Kong, now compounded by the passing of the new security law which is a clear and serious violation of the Sino-British joint declaration which protects the freedoms of Hong Kong citizens until 2047.'

**Reply**

'This is a question of Foreign Policy. By law, local authorities do not have foreign policies and we must work within the policies of national government.'

The Council works to support Essex businesses and find them opportunities. We work within, and will continue to work within, whatever parameters are set by national government.'

**25. By Councillor Deakin of the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills**

'With the potential increased home to school transport costs if social distancing is still in place in September, what are the financial implications for this council?

In addition, if parents aren't able to return to work full time by September, there will be added bus pass applications which the child then remains entitled to until the end of school, even when the parents have returned to work. Has this council looked at the potential forward cost that could arise from COVID-19 if this is the case? What is the anticipated financial impact?'

**Reply**

'The Department for Education issued guidance on the re-opening of schools, including home to school transport on 2 July 2020.

Full social distancing requirements will not be required on dedicated home to school transport services. Most children who are entitled to taxpayer funded home to school transport travel on these services. We are not therefore expecting any additional cost for these services as a result of social distancing. Some entitled children travel on commercial services and we will work with operators to ensure their journey to school is supported. Social distancing measures in some form are, however, likely to continue to be in place for commercial services. Many children use these services for their journey to school and capacity will clearly be reduced.

We will be supporting those children that can, to walk and cycle as alternatives; or to use our Park and Ride services for Colchester and Chelmsford. For those children that need to use the bus, we will be working with operators to identify how we ensure they are able to do so. At this stage it is too early to make an assessment of potential cost, although we have raised the issue of funding any additional costs with central Government.'

**26. By Councillor Buckley of the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure**

'The Cabinet Member is aware of the long-standing wish of myself and Councillor Ball for the closure of Wickford High Street on Saturdays to accommodate the expansion of the market.

Given that Basildon Council has temporarily closed the market for an indefinite period 'to accommodate social distancing', will the Cabinet Member set out a robust timetable for the relevant order to be made in order that plans

can be made to ensure the continuation of over 120 years of market trading in Wickford?’

### **Reply**

‘I’d like to thank Councillor Buckley for his question. I am indeed aware of his long-standing wish for the High Street to be closed on Saturdays to facilitate a market. We have met and discussed the topic and I have indicated my support to do just that, once we have overcome the difficulties inherent in closing a High Street.

I can promise Councillor Buckley a robust timetable as soon as I am able, as he alludes to this has been somewhat impacted by the social distancing measures introduced. I can confirm that an engineer has now been to Wickford and is working hard to finalise the designs, and in the meantime, we are actively pursuing the funding required. Once that’s done, subject to successfully agreeing diversion arrangements with bus operators, a closure could be implemented later this year.’

### **27. By Councillor Robinson of the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills**

‘In order to help Essex reduce its carbon emissions, and for hard-pressed school budgets to save money, will the Cabinet Member for Education propose that all new school buildings should have renewable energy (such as solar panels and ground source heat pumps) included in their design?’

Will he encourage existing schools to follow that example and indeed help them to via the ECC bulk-buying scheme for solar panels?’

### **Reply**

‘We have already commissioned several school projects of net-zero specification and new projects coming forward all include solar as a minimum, so we are already doing what Councillor Robinson is requesting. In parallel we’re now developing a carbon neutral school solution for Essex, with the aim being to demonstrate how we can affordably commission all our new school buildings as carbon neutral.

In regard to existing schools’ sites, we are working with Mitie Energy and Mitie Lighting on Energy and Waste Audits and LED Lighting surveys. These audits and surveys will be presented to the schools with the aim of undertaking invest-to-save projects that would resulting savings for the schools as well as reductions in carbon emissions. It is expected that these projects would be financed by either interest-free loans from Salix Financing, School internal budgets and European Regional Development Fund grants or a combination of all three.

We have undertaken a total of 6 energy and waste audits and two lighting upgrade and solar PV surveys. An additional six schools have signified



interest in undertaking lighting upgrade and solar photovoltaic surveys. We are working with the Essex Schools team in aligning the programme of capital improvement works to schools. Whilst this improvement relates to new build schools and extensions, we are seeking to achieve efficiencies by applying the same expertise and delivery management resources towards improving the energy efficiency in existing school buildings.'

**28. By Councillor Smith of the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure**

'A further accident and this time a tragic incident took place on Staneway on Saturday 4 July 2020. This location shares a boundary with Orsett Ward of Thurrock close to the beauty spot of Westley Heights, the highest point in Essex which is used by scores of people every day.

Last year, I made a request to the Basildon Local Highways Panel to reduce the speed limit on Staneway/High Road from 50 to 40 MPH which was rejected as it didn't meet the criteria and therefore was given a red RAG rating.

Will the Cabinet Member please meet with me and the elected members for the Wards of Langdon Hills and Orsett Ward onsite to discuss safety measures such as reducing the speed limit on Staneway/High Road from 50 MPH to 40 MPH?'

**Reply**

'I'd like to thank Councillor Smith for his question. My condolences are with the man's family and friends following his tragic death while riding a motorcycle on Staneway on 4 July 2020. As you know, until the police-led investigation into the incident is complete, we should not speculate as to any causes. Depending on what the police find, our road safety engineers will be involved and if appropriate recommend any safety improvements to be made.

Once the collision investigation report is finalised, or sooner if the Basildon Highway Panel so decides, it might be appropriate to revisit their previous surveys and decisions on matters regarding the speed limit on this stretch of the road. I will await any representations made by the Panel as that is where Councillors with local knowledge take an informed view with expert advice from officers.'

**29. By Councillor Smith of the Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change Action**

'As Essex County Council has now chosen to embrace the cult of "man-made climate change", how does an incinerator in Basildon burning up to £150,000 tonnes of rubbish a year in Basildon fit in with this newly found concern? Will

the Cabinet Member stand by the people of Basildon and whole heartedly object to this proposed incinerator?’

### **Reply**

‘I must first disagree entirely with the comments on climate change you have made in your opening statement, which are ill-founded.

As you will be aware from information sent to Basildon Council in June 2019, a planning application is being prepared by Clearaway Recycling Ltd for two energy plants to be installed on land south of Archers field each of which will be capable of processing up to 75,000 tonnes of pre-prepared Refuse Derived Fuel (RDF) and other non-hazardous residual materials each year to produce electricity for the National Grid, something which is becoming increasingly important as the UK moves towards electrification of vehicles.

As an experienced local and County Councillor, you will be aware that my role as the Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Action is entirely separate from the work of the Waste Planning Authority (WPA), which operates independently of the council.

Any concerns the local community may have about the burning of waste materials would need to be addressed by the applicant, especially given the site is adjacent to the clean air zone identified by Essex County Council and Basildon Council.

At Essex County Council we take the threat of Climate Change very seriously, and we prioritise action over words. As well as the formation of the Essex Climate Action Commission, we have already undertaken a raft of work in this area. By working with staff, partners, businesses, residents and communities, we are aiming to lead on reducing emissions, energy usage and waste across Essex, while also increasing the amount of green infrastructure we have.’

## **12. Oral Questions of the Leader, Cabinet Member or the chairman of a committee.**

Members asked questions of the Leader of the Council, Cabinet Members or the chairmen of committees.

A recording of the questions is available on the ECC website [via the online audio recording of the meeting.](#)

The questions asked were:

<b>From:</b>	<b>To the:</b>	<b>Concerning:</b>
Cllr Abbott	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure	Budget for public rights of way creation
Cllr Reid	Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care	Number of COVID 19 tests carried out in Essex
Cllr Reid	Cabinet Member for Economic Development	Measures to kickstart economy after COVID-19
Cllr Wagland	Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change Action	Litigation relating to Tovi Eco Park, Basildon
Cllr Harris	Cabinet Member for Education and Skills	Promotion of youth clubs during lockdown
Cllr Butland	Leader of the Council	Future relationship with China
Cllr Henderson	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure	Local Highways Panels
Cllr Henderson	Cabinet Member for Children and Families	Deprivation in Tendring
Cllr Durham	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure	Superfast broadband
Cllr Pond	Cabinet Member for Education and skills	Home to school transport and social distancing
Cllr Davies	Cabinet Member for Education and skills	Youth services – advice on social distancing
Cllr Scordis	Cabinet Member for Customer, Culture Communities and Corporate	Book delivery services by libraries
Cllr Garnett	Leader of the Council	Relationship with China

**Chairman**

# Motions

Members have given notice that they intend to move the following motions in accordance with paragraph 16.8.2 of the Constitution:

The Courts have made it clear that the Public Sector Equality Duty applies to the Council when it is considering these motions, even if they are motions without legal effect. There is not a general requirement for an equality impact assessment but regard should be had to the equality duty when drafting and considering motions.

The equality duty requires Council to have due regard to the need to:

- (a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act. In summary, the Act makes it unlawful to discriminate etc on the grounds of a protected characteristic.
- (b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- (c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, gender, and sexual orientation. The Act states that 'marriage and civil partnership' is not a relevant protected characteristic for (b) or (c) although it is relevant for (a).

## 1 Local Government Reform

Moved by Councillor Young and seconded by Councillor Davies:

'As the government seeks to reform Local Government, this council believes any reorganisation to local government should:

- give the people of Essex more power and control of decisions,
- be vested locally, with more devolution of powers to local communities,
- value representative democracy and reject any dilution of this power, and
- be done with the people and not to the people.

Furthermore, we recognise the part local councils have played and will continue to play to support and keep Essex residents safe during this pandemic.

Therefore, any reorganisation of local democratic structures should only be progressed when:

1. this pandemic is behind us,
2. adequate time and attention has been given to determining where vital services such as Adult Social Care and Children's Services should be administered,
3. agreement is achieved between a majority of district authorities in Essex on a preferred model, and
4. when the new model can be seen to protect the unique identity of place, respecting the traditions and characteristics of each community.'

## **2 Active Travel in Essex**

Moved by Councillor Wagland and seconded by Councillor Buckley:

‘This Council is committed to a carbon neutral target by 2050. Measures taken by this Administration so far demonstrate this determination. The successful launch and work of the Climate Change Commission and the work to increase more use of sustainable forms of transport such as walking and cycling. We recognise that more must be done across the entire County but applaud the work undertaken thus far.

This Council calls on all County Councillors to play their part in greatly reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions through encouragement of our constituents and leading by example.’

## **3 Traineeship and Apprenticeship Schemes**

Moved by Councillor Gooding and seconded by Councillor Ball:

‘This Council recognises the effects that Coronavirus COVID-19 has had on businesses and jobs and particularly the vast number of Essex SMEs that are adversely affected by this awful virus.

This Council supports firms and employees which are the backbone of our economy by ensuring it is at the vanguard of the new Kickstart and New Traineeship and Apprenticeship schemes launched by the Government.

This Council notes that it is a major employer in the county and will use these schemes to create the opportunity for people in Essex to access employment and in doing so will invest over £300k as evidence of its commitment.

This Council will also encourage all employers, public and private, to use these schemes for the benefit of Essex and be at the forefront of the economic recovery from this virus.’

## **4 Memorial to Coronavirus Victims**

Moved by Councillor Mackrory and seconded by Councillor Kendall:

‘This Council believes that there should be a permanent memorial to all those residents of Greater Essex, currently approaching 1,800, who have tragically lost their lives through the Coronavirus pandemic. Such a memorial will ensure that those who have died from the virus will never be forgotten.

Council therefore resolves that the Chairman of the County Council convene a panel of members comprising himself, the Leader, the relevant Cabinet Member and the three Opposition Group Leaders to propose a suggestion for a suitable memorial for consideration and decision by The Leader.’

## **Essex Pension Fund Strategy Board Annual Report 2019-20.**

Report by the Chairman of the Essex Pension Fund Board, Councillor Susan Barker

Enquiries to Jody Evans, Interim Director for the Essex Pension Fund

[jody.evans@essex.gov.uk](mailto:jody.evans@essex.gov.uk)

### **1. Purpose of the Report**

To present the Essex Pension Fund Strategy Board's Annual Report to Essex County Council.

### **2. Recommendations**

To note the attached report.

# **Essex Pension Fund**

# **Annual Report 2019/20**

**September 2020**

## 1. Introduction

This is the eleventh Annual Report of the Essex Pension Fund Board(s), covering the period from 1 April 2019 until 31 March 2020.

## 2. Roles and Functions

### Essex Pension Fund Strategy Board

The Essex Pension Fund Strategy Board (PSB) was established by Essex County Council in May 2008 to ensure that the Pension Scheme complied with the best practice principles for governance as required by the amended Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) Regulations 1997.

The PSB's Terms of Reference was reviewed by Essex Pension Fund Officers during 2019 in consultation with the Independent Governance and Administration Adviser (IGAA). The revised Terms of Reference was subsequently approved by Essex County Council (ECC) at the October 2019 Full Council meeting and can be found within the [ECC Constitution](#).

The PSB met four times during the period covered by this report: on 3 July 2019, 11 September 2019, 18 December 2019 and 4 March 2020.

### Membership

During the period covered by this report the PSB had 11 members. They represented ECC, the other local authorities in Essex (including Unitary Councils), Scheme Members and Other Employing Bodies (i.e. those which are not already specifically represented on the PSB).

The membership of the PSB as at 31 March 2020 was as follows:

#### Essex County Council (7)

Councillor Susan Barker	Chairman
Councillor Mark Platt	Vice Chairman
Councillor Alan Goggin	
Councillor Anthony Hedley	
Councillor Malcolm Maddocks	
Councillor Lee Scordis	
Councillor Clive Souter	

#### District/City/Borough Councils in Essex (1)

Councillor Colin Riley	Castle Point Borough Council
------------------------	------------------------------

#### Unitary Councils in Essex (1)

Councillor Matt Dent	Southend-on-Sea Borough Council
----------------------	---------------------------------

#### Scheme Members (nominated by UNISON) (1)

Mrs Sandra Child
------------------

#### Other Employing Bodies (1)

Mrs Jenny Moore	Billericay School
-----------------	-------------------



Attendance at PSB meetings during 2019/20 was 89%.

#### Investment Steering Committee

The Essex Pension Fund Investment Steering Committee (ISC) is a sub-Committee of the PSB and its Membership is drawn from the PSB made up of 7 ECC voting Members, 1 Employer representative (non-voting member) and 1 Scheme Member representative (non-voting member).

The ISC reviews the Essex Pension Fund's ("the Fund") management of investments including, but not limited to, the approval of the Investment Strategy Statement. The ISC's Terms of Reference, revised during 2019, can also be found within the [ECC Constitution](#).

Attendance at ISC meetings during 2019/20 was 86%.

#### **Essex Pension Fund Advisory Board**

The Essex Pension Fund Advisory Board (PAB) has been established as the Local Pension Board for Essex in accordance with section 5 of the Public Service Pension Act 2013 and Part 3 of the LGPS Regulations 2013.

The remit of the PAB includes assisting the Administering Authority as Scheme Manager:

- to secure compliance with the LGPS regulations and any other legislation relating to governance and administration of the LGPS;
- to secure compliance with requirements imposed in relation to the LGPS by the Pensions Regulator (tPR).

The PAB's Terms of Reference, revised during 2019, can be found within the [ECC Constitution](#).

#### Membership

During the period covered by this report the PAB had 9 Members. They represented Employer and Scheme Member Representatives and an Independent Chairman.

The membership of the PAB as at 31 March 2020 was as follows:

#### Independent Chairman (1)

Nicola Mark

Head of Norfolk Pension Fund

#### Scheme Member Representatives (4)

Andrew Coburn

Pensioner, Ex County Council, UNISON (Vice Chairman)

Vacant Position (until 24 September 2019)

-

Paul Hewitt (until 24 September 2019)

Deferred Member, Southend Borough Council/Harlow District Council

Debs Hurst

Active Member, Chelmsford College

James Sheehy (from 25 September 2019)

Active Member, Witham Town Council

Stuart Roberts (from 25 September 2019)

Active Member, Shenfield High Academy

#### Employer Representatives (4)

James Durrant

Councillor Terry Cutmore

Councillor Shane Hebb

Councillor Simon Walsh

Essex Fire Authority

Rochford District Council

Thurrock Borough Council

Essex County Council

Attendance at PAB meetings during 2019/20 was 78%.

### **3. Dimensions of the Fund**

Based on the draft accounts, as at 31 March 2020 the value of the Fund's assets was £6.6bn. This is a noticeable decline resulting from stock market's reaction to the Covid-19 crisis.

The total value of pensions paid during 2019/20 was £212m, together with other benefits totalling £48m. The average payment made each year is c£5k.

The total number of beneficiaries are as follows:

	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>
<b>Contributors</b>	52,524	57,498
<b>Deferred Members</b>	73,827	69,857
<b>Pensioners</b>	42,405	44,682
<b>Total</b>	<b>168,756</b>	<b>172,037</b>

(Deferred Members are former employees who have chosen not to transfer their pension rights.)

The PSB exercises on behalf of the Council the management of the Pension Fund whose membership comes from over 700 separate Employing Bodies, including:

- Essex County Council;
- Scheduled Bodies, which are local authorities and similar bodies who are automatically entitled to be members of the Fund; and
- Admitted Bodies, which are other organisations that participate in the Fund under an admission agreement between the Fund and the relevant organisation. Admitted Bodies include voluntary, charitable and similar bodies or private contractors undertaking a local authority function following outsourcing to the private sector.

### **4. Work of the PSB and the ISC**

The following key issues were considered by the PSB/ISC between 1 April 2019 and 31 March 2020:

#### Governance

During 2019, the Fund conducted a full review of the PSB, ISC and PAB Terms of Reference. This was an extensive piece of work drawing in advice from the Fund's IGAA and ECC's Monitoring Officer and concluded with a revised Governance Policy and Compliance Statement being approved at the PSB's 4 March meeting.

This piece of work set the foundation for the PAB Membership review which saw the extension of the Independent Chairman for a further two years, the appointment, following an extensive interview process of two new Scheme Member Representatives and the re-appointment of the Essex Fire Authority Employer Representative.

In addition, a review of the PAB meeting arrangements was carried out. The review concluded that effective from 1 April 2020 PAB meetings would align with the PSB by following their morning meeting, thus increasing the number of meetings to four.

A review of the Fund's governance arrangements effectiveness is due to be undertaken by the Fund's IGAA at the end of 2020/21.

Fund Officers in conjunction with the PSB undertook an extensive review of the Fund's objectives and risks in 2018/19, resulting in the Fund completing a new style 2020/21 – 2022/23 three-year Business Plan. This sets out the Key Priorities and Strategic Business as Usual for the next three years across the five key areas of: Governance, Funding, Investments, Administration and Communications. This piece of work has set the direction for the Fund for the next three years and was approved by the PSB at their 4 March 2020 meeting. The Business Plan has also been published on the Fund's website ([essexpensionfund.co.uk](https://essexpensionfund.co.uk)).

In addition, the Fund, assisted by the PAB, have reviewed compliance against the recommendations made in the Scheme Advisory Board's (SAB) Good Governance Project and have reported the assessment to the PSB during the course of the year. The PSB noted the Fund was in a good position going forward.

#### Funding

This year saw the outcome of the Actuarial Triennial Valuation that was undertaken as at 31 March 2019. It was noted that the funding level had improved to 97% (89% funding level at 31 March 2016). This was consistent with the interim reviews that were conducted in 2017 and 2018 where the funding levels increased from 89% to 93% and 94% respectively. The PSB, whilst welcoming this outcome was mindful that the Fund over recent times had experienced investment performance above the actuarial assumption and of its Funding objectives, in particular setting stable contributions. As such it was agreed that a 5% asset shock be included within the actuarial calculations, thus allowing a buffer should the Fund experience future adverse market conditions.

In addition, the Fund's Funding Strategy Statement which took on board several new aspects was issued out for consultation to Members of the PSB and the participating Employers which concluded on 2 March 2020. At their March 2020 meeting, the PSB approved the Funding Strategy Statement which was subsequently published alongside the Actuarial Valuation report by the statutory deadline of 31 March 2020.

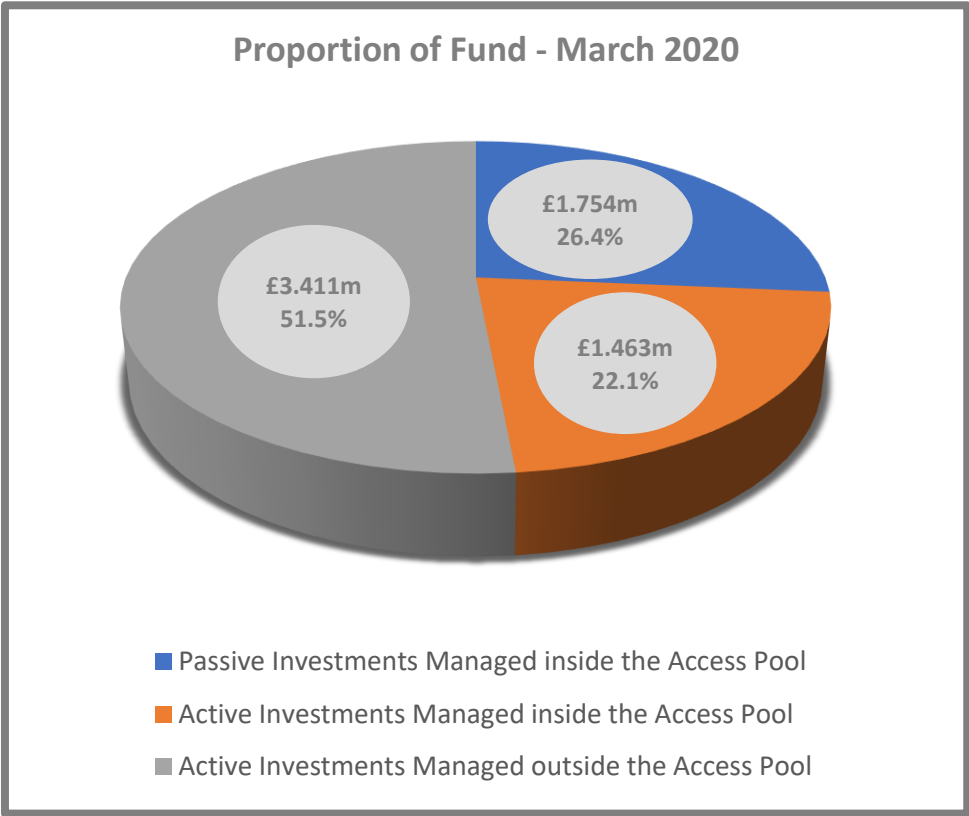
The Fund has also been preparing for the impact of the Government changes to regulations resulting from the McCloud judgement, the unpausing of Cost Cap, the £95k Cap and Goodwin. These will impact on the Fund's Employer, Administration and Communications teams over the coming years.

#### Asset Pooling

Alongside the ten other Funds within the ACCESS Pool, Essex continues to progress the pooling of its investment management arrangements.

2019/20 saw the implementation of the ACCESS Support Unit (ASU), hosted by ECC, and funded by the eleven ACCESS Funds to oversee the pooling of investments and the management of the ACCESS Pool Operator, Link Fund Solutions (Link). As at 31 March 2020, Link had launched 15 ACCESS sub funds.

By the end of 2019/20 the Fund had around half of the asset portfolio under ACCESS pooled governance. Fee savings realised in 2019/20 was in the region of £2m. The chart below summarises Essex's pooling progress as at 31 March 2020.



Investment Strategy and Responsible Investment

The ISC continued to make significant progress in its migration away from equities to alternative assets. In order to reach its target strategic allocation of 45% the ISC agreed and implemented a new 4% allocation to Partners Group to manage a global property mandate along with additional allocations to the Fund's infrastructure and timber managers: IFM Investors; JP Morgan; and Stafford Timberland.

The ISC focus for the year was around the review of the Investment Strategy Statement, in particular the consideration of Economic, Social and Governance (ESG) factors in order to develop a Responsible Investment (RI) Policy.

The ISC convened a workshop in October 2019 specifically on ESG to enable a more in-depth discussion around ESG factors. At its November 2019 meeting an update was provided on the outcome of the RI Workshop, which led the Committee to articulate and agree a set of RI beliefs. Members, in line with their belief to work collaboratively with other pension funds, also agreed to join the Local Authority Pension Fund Forum (LAPFF).

The RI beliefs now form an RI Policy which was agreed at the February 2020 ISC meeting, enabling it to be shared with the Fund's Investment Managers for their feedback and comment.

The full Investment Strategy Statement with the inclusion of the RI Policy will be subject to a full stakeholder consultation in the Summer and subsequently published during 2020/21.

Other areas considered were:



## 6. Member Training

There is a firm commitment to training and development, with a view to ensuring that Members are able to fulfil their roles effectively.

Details of Members' attendance at the Fund's Board(s) meetings and training events (internal and external) are monitored throughout the year.

Member training is predominately delivered within the Board(s) meetings, or in 1 to1 face to face meetings. Within the 3 Year Business Plan it is highlighted that training for Board(s) will be reviewed during 2020/21 and individual training needs analysis will form part of the new arrangements.

## 7. Awards

During the year, the Fund was shortlisted for three LAPF Investments Awards and was successful in winning the Scheme Governance Award.

The Fund was also shortlisted for three Pension Age Awards, winning the Best Risk Management Exercise Award.



Cllr Susan Barker  
Chairman of the PSB and of the ISC  
Vice Chairman of ACCESS Joint Committee  
Essex County Council

## **Annual Scrutiny Report 2019/2020**

Report by the Scrutiny Board Chairman, Councillor Jill Reeves

---

Enquiries to Joanna Boaler, Head of Democracy and Transparency and Statutory Scrutiny Officer on 03330 134578

### **1. Purpose of the Report**

To present the annual report of Overview and Scrutiny to Essex County Council.

### **2. Recommendation**

To note the attached report.





# **Overview and Scrutiny**

Scrutiny Activity  
2019/20



# Introduction

By Scrutiny Board Chairman, Councillor Jill Reeves



I am pleased to present this report on scrutiny activity at Essex County Council over the past year. We have followed the same approach as last year, presenting a summary of work undertaken and various outcomes, whilst highlighting key issues from each committee and areas where scrutiny has made an impact.

Each of the scrutiny committees have had a busy year working with a broad range of issues affecting the Council, its services and local people. As a result, our scrutiny committees must rise to the challenge and address more cross-cutting issues as well as to react to events and to a changing environment. This requires greater planning and depth of understanding than ever before. In 2019, the Statutory Scrutiny Guidance was updated for the first time since 2006. This provided a useful opportunity to reflect and I was pleased that our working arrangements already substantially aligned with best practice.

There are significant issues and cost pressures facing Essex County Council and it is the role of scrutiny to work to hold the Executive to account on behalf of the residents we represent. It is important to remember that scrutiny can be a valuable extra resource in giving issues prominence and transparency whilst also helping to address these corporate challenges through delivering policy change and encouraging further partnership working. It is essential therefore that scrutiny continues to be involved early in the development of policy and has the opportunity to help shape it.

I am proud of scrutiny's achievements over the past twelve months and I would like to thank officers, partners and Members for their commitment, support and contribution to the success of the scrutiny process in 2019-20. I am sure that the same dedication will be shown to scrutinise the work of the Council and external partners during the year ahead



**Councillor Jill Reeves**  
**Scrutiny Board Chairman**

# Contents

## The Scrutiny Committees

Corporate Policy and Scrutiny Committee	Page 4
---	--------

Health Overview Policy and Scrutiny Committee	Page 5
---	--------

People and Families Policy and Scrutiny Committee	Page 6
---	--------

Place Services and Economic Growth Policy and Scrutiny Committee	Page 7
--	--------

## Essex County Council's Strategic Aims

Transform the council to achieve more with less	Page 8
---	--------

Enable inclusive economic growth	Page 9
----------------------------------	--------

Help create great places to grow up, live and work	Page 10-11
--	------------

Help people get the best start and age well	Page 11-13
---	------------

How the Public can get Involved	Page 14
---------------------------------	---------

# Corporate Policy and Scrutiny Committee

This Committee reviews the overall strategic direction, policies and priorities of the Cabinet and Council including the budget strategy, financial resources, equality and diversity issues, procurement and the Council's transformation programme.

Full details of the Committee's work can be found on the Council's website - [Please click here](#)



Chairing the Corporate Policy and Scrutiny Committee will always present unique challenges. As the primary source of scrutiny to the council's management and internal processes we are solely placed to hold the executive to account on how ECCs workforce is led, the corporate transformations that we go through and, perhaps most importantly, the council's annual budget programme. This year was no different, and I'm proud of the knowledge and experience that my committee brought to the table as we approached our 'business as usual' responsibilities in new and innovative ways.

Alongside this, we've also been able to manage our work programme to allow us to look at much more, carrying out deep dive sessions on issues such as ECCs procurement processes, our property portfolio and commercial investment strategy and the council's response to Brexit. In all of these areas we received fantastic guidance and evidence from officers and I'd like to thank them for supporting our role as scrutineers. We have some of the most talented and passionate public servants working here at ECC, and it's always a pleasure to work with them to deliver the best services we can to Essex residents.

As always, the commitment and dedication of my committee is mirrored in the quality of work we've been able to undertake and the outcomes and assurances we've secured. My heartfelt thanks go to all of them for another engaging and insightful year of scrutiny. I look forward to new challenges and opportunities in the year ahead. - *Councillor Mike Mackrory – Chairman*

## Membership

Councillor Michael Mackory (Chairman)	Councillor Valerie Metcalfe (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor James Abbott	Councillor John Moran
Councillor Malcolm Buckley	Councillor Ron Pratt
Councillor Graham Butland	Councillor Andrew Sheldon
Councillor Mike Garnett	Councillor Mike Steptoe
Councillor Michael Hardware	Councillor Anne Turrell
Councillor Malcolm Maddocks	Councillor Julie Young (Vice-Chairman)

# Health Overview

## Policy and Scrutiny Committee

This Committee reviews and scrutinises matters relating to the planning, provision and operation of health services in the County of Essex. This includes primary, secondary, tertiary care, and public health, and may involve reviewing the work of commissioners (such as local clinical commissioning groups), providers of health services (such as hospitals) and other organisations in the health sector

Full details of the Committee's work can be found on the Council's website - [Please click here](#)



Essex has one of the most complex health environments in the country. In recent years it has been split across three different strategic health footprints that do not align with our county council borders. These health footprints were originally called Sustainability and Transformation Partnerships (now moving towards being Integrated Care Partnerships) and they plan to reconfigure and find more efficient and effective delivery of health services to relieve demand pressures, particularly on the acute hospitals. The footprints have been operating at different speeds meaning that the HOPSC has the ongoing challenge of continuing to have strategic oversight over these different paced programmes.

I am particularly pleased that we have worked with health scrutiny members from other authorities, where we have been able to, sometimes formally in a Joint Committee and at other times less formally through joint site visits and this is something I hope will continue. I particularly appreciate the work of the Joint Committee we currently have operating with Suffolk health scrutiny committee which is looking at local service reconfiguration proposals for Suffolk and North East Essex. I am grateful to Councillor Brown for her leadership of that. In the last year that Joint Committee has worked hard to challenge the local service proposals, how public engagement is undertaken and that the proposed changes are sustainable.

The Joint Committee has detailed work on hospital transport planned for the coming months. With the increasing focus on these strategic footprints within the health service, the HOPSC has sought to continue to highlight any fragmentation of service consistency across the county and encourage pan Essex approaches where possible.

I would like to thank all my HOPSC members for their commitment over the last year and especially those that have volunteered to also serve on Joint Committees and who participate in additional activities such as extra briefings and site visits to broaden their knowledge and expertise.

*Councillor Jill Reeves – Chairman*

### Membership

Councillor Jill Reeves (Chairman)	Councillor June Lumley	<b>District Councillors</b>
Councillor Anne Brown	Councillor Bob Massey	Councillor Tony Edwards
Councillor Jenny Chandler	Councillor Maggie McEwen	Councillor Andrew
Councillor Beverly Egan (Vice Chairman)	Councillor John Moran	Councillor Michael Helm
Councillor Ricki Gadsby	Councillor Mark Stephenson	
Councillor Dave Harris	Councillor Andy Wood (Vice Chairman)	

# People and Families

## Policy and Scrutiny Committee

This Committee exercises the scrutiny function on matters relating to children and young people, families, education, adult social care, special needs and safeguarding.

Full details of the Committee's work can be found on the Council's website - [Please click here](#)



The committee has developed an ambitious work programme balancing the very different aspects of a challenging and wide remit. This report highlights some of the wide-ranging work undertaken by the Committee.

I am proud that issues with respite care raised by the public were considered by decision-makers in line with a key principle of good scrutiny defined by the Centre for Public Scrutiny. Public engagement is important as we challenge decision-makers, particularly engagement from more vulnerable members of the community. Scrutiny needs to demonstrate that it adds value and this was a good example of making a difference. Engagement with the public voice is also key in our work with Healthwatch Essex, for instance considering anecdotal case studies from service users alongside information from commissioners and providers to better inform our scrutiny work.

With an ageing population and rising demand for adult social care, the Committee is spending more time on this area, for instance in considering a draft proposal to refocus the Day Opportunities service for older people and adults with disabilities. Importantly, this was ahead of the Cabinet decision and I would encourage decision-makers to grasp the opportunity to embrace scrutiny involvement in policy development at an early stage.

Last year, I reported that we were commencing a review of the multi-agency response to drug gangs, knife crime and county lines. This has taken place and the report should be published in May. The Group's recommendations encourage greater accountability and co-ordination of services, greater focus on early prevention, clearer communications and further partnership working. PAF may continue to have oversight of the multi-agency response to this worrying issue.

Finally, I would like to thank the members of my committee for their commitment to their work. I am pleased that the Committee is challenging and influencing decision-makers and increasing its profile both internally and externally. - *Councillor Jenny Chandler – Chairwoman*

### Membership

Councillor Jenny Chandler (Chairman)	Councillor June Lumley	Councillor Clive Souter
Councillor Graham Butland	Councillor John Baker (Vice Chairman)	Councillor Carole Weston
Councillor Jude Deakin	Councillor Peter May	Education Rep Richard Carson
Councillor Beverley Egan	Councillor Maggie McEwen	Education Rep Lee Cromwell
Councillor Carlo Guglielmi	Councillor Ron Pratt	Education Rep Marian Lizzell
Councillor Jeff Henry	Councillor Patricia Reid	

# Place Services and Economic Growth Policy and Scrutiny Committee

This Committee exercises the scrutiny function on matters relating to environment, economic growth and infrastructure, sustainability, highways and transportation, libraries, planning communities, waste and recycling and trading standards. Full details of the Committee's work over the period can be found on the Council's website - [Please click here](#)



It's been another interesting year for the Committee. This report outlines some of our key challenges and successes and I'm glad that colleagues and members of the public will have the opportunity to see a broad overview of the work that we do as scrutineers.

As always, the broad remit of this committee consistently presents challenges in establishing our priorities for scrutiny, but it also opens up opportunities to explore a wide range of the interesting and vital services that we deliver for Essex Residents. This year we've explored operational issues such as how our highways and country parks are maintained and how our elderly and vulnerable residents access public transport. We've explored the work of partner organisations such as the SELEP and how this impacts on the skills, prosperity and productivity of the Essex workforce. We've also increasingly ensured that the environment is at the heart of our work programme, looking at the Essex Green Strategy and how we can work better with district and borough partners to push forward with a cohesive green agenda.

I'm particularly pleased of how we've sensitively navigated a number of difficult and high profile issues, providing effective scrutiny under pressure. The Essex Future Libraries Strategy, for example, called for a considerable change to 'business as usual' scrutiny. While enabling unprecedented public engagement, members of the committee were able to carry out a significant programme of challenge - working constructively with the cabinet member and officers to secure significant assurances and changes to the eventual decision. Taking the work of scrutiny out of County Hall and into our communities is something that I've always been particularly passionate about. That's why I'm also really glad that we've been able to undertake a number of site visits this year to enable our work as a committee. These have included fact finding trips to community run libraries and, more recently, a visit to the DP Open World London Gateway site in Stanford Le Hope. On all occasions, these visits have informed our work and facilitated further topics for the committee to look at in greater detail. I'm looking forward to continuing this trend in the new year.

Effective scrutiny requires us, as local representatives, to move beyond simple challenge, working in concert with officers, Cabinet Members and strategic partners as a critical friend. As always, I'm proud of how members of my committee have drawn upon their experience and local knowledge to provide genuine insight - working constructively and positively as ambassadors for their local communities to add value to the areas we've looked at. With more interesting topics on the horizon, I look forward to another year!

*Councillor Ian Grundy - Chairman*

## Membership

Councillor Grundy (Chairman)	Councillor Hillier (Vice-Chairman)	Councillor Pond (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Barry Aspinell	Councillor Paul Honeywood	Councillor Ron Pratt
Councillor Terry Cutmore	Councillor David Kendall	Councillor Wendy Schmitt
Councillor Andrew Erskine	Councillor Bob Massey	Councillor Carole Weston
Councillor Ivan Henderson	Councillor Richard Moore	



# Transform the Council to Achieve More with Less

## **Brexit planning - September**

In September 2019, Members of the Corporate Policy and Scrutiny Committee received an update on ECCs readiness for various potential Brexit outcomes and sought assurances on early preparation and contingency plans. Discussions focused on resourcing, procurement, highways and transportation, changes to EU grant funding and future international cooperation around issues such as data sharing, interruptions to usual supply chains and entitlements for residents. Members also discussed the likelihood of disruption to the effective running of Essex ports and the contingency measures in place to ensure access to goods in the event of a 'no deal' outcome.

### ***Members:***



*Provided challenge to Brexit preparations and received assurances that ECC was working effectively with partners, residents and other local authorities to ensure a smooth transition.*

## **Budget**

Members of CPSC trialed a new scrutiny programme to provide critical challenge to the annual budget process. On top of the usual quarterly outturn reports, members of the committee also received additional training and development, enabling them to provide effective financial oversight. This year, members also began scrutiny of the annual budget in September 2019, allowing greater scope to influence the process and properly measure impact.

### ***Members:***



*Have again contributed to ECCs system of checks and balances, receiving assurances that the council's finances are futureproof and that we are offering value for money to Essex residents. The approval of a new programme of oversight ensured that CPSC members formed an integral part of the budget process.*

# Enable Inclusive Economic Growth

## Procurement

In February 2020, CPSC members invited officers to discuss ECC's procurement framework. As part of the discussion members reviewed and discussed the internal audit process that takes place with smaller contracts and the timeliness of benchmarking exercises ahead of contract extension deadlines. Members also made a number of recommendations around how to properly ensure social value is effectively built into future procurement exercises.

### **Members:**



*Contributed to future discussions around the social value of procurement exercises at ECC and received assurances that contracting and contract monitoring are carried out effectively. Members also were able to ensure that CPSC will be factored into upcoming conversations around major individual contract renewals and re-procurement exercises.*

## SELEP

In September 2019, PSEG members invited The Chief Executive of SELEP, alongside Cllr Tony Ball, Cabinet Member for Economic Development, to discuss the work of the Local Enterprise Partnership before the scrutiny committee. Members challenged the panel on the SELEP's investment strategy, corporate structure, accountability mechanisms and future growth proposals. Moving forward, it was agreed that greater local authority scrutiny was needed with particular focus on skills and jobs growth and transport infrastructure investment.

### **Members:**



*Agreed a forward work programme for future SELEP scrutiny. This included early sight of the developing skills and productivity plan for input from PSEG members and a visit to the DP World site London Gateway container port in Stanford le hope to see the practical impact of SELEP investment.*



# Help Create Great Places to Grow Up, Live and Work

## Essex Housing Strategy

In January 2020, PSEG received on the Essex Housing Strategy ahead of the launch of the public consultation in February. The strategy outlined the broad housing challenges in Essex, as well ECCs role in supporting districts to deliver their planned housing developments. Members discussed the strategy with witnesses and received assurances around include Planning, infrastructure delivery to support housing growth, suitable housing for vulnerable residents and strategic coordination on crosscutting issues e.g. homelessness prevention, improving health and wellbeing, and integration support for resettled refugees.

### **Members:**



*Were able to add value to the consultation document and provided insight to influence the strategy itself. Members also received assurances around supported housing for vulnerable adults and key workers across the county.*

## Green Essex Strategy

In November 2019, **PSEG** members received an update on the Essex Green Infrastructure Strategy, with officers outlining a high-level vision for the future planning and delivery of green infrastructure in Essex. The strategy outlined how significant investment was planned to restore and develop green spaces across the county and market opportunities to enjoy outdoor activities to Essex residents and visiting tourists. Members discussed the strategy with officers, providing insight and considered how best to support the delivery of proposals.

### **The Committee:**



*Endorsed the strategy, commending officers for their work and made a formal recommendation calling on the cabinet member to increase resource to the green infrastructure team to match the scale and ambition of proposals.*

## SEND services - Care Quality Commission and Ofsted Inspection

The Care Quality Commission and Ofsted raised a number of issues as a result of an inspection of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) services in Essex. **PAFPSC** spoke to representatives from the County Council's Children and Families, Education and SEND services and the National Health Service to understand the full context and the challenges being faced by partners.

### **Members:**



*Challenged how all the agencies were responding to the issues raised in the inspection report and encouraged a collegiate 'system' response. Members sought assurances about improving the consistency of services across Essex, improving communications and processes and overcoming any different priorities of partners; and will continue to challenge the progress of improvement actions being taken.*

## **Future Libraries Strategy**

Members of the Place Services and Economic Growth Policy and Scrutiny Committee provided 'critical friend' challenge to the proposed Future Libraries Strategy. This was a high-profile piece of work, with scrutiny taking place alongside the consultation and decision-making process. The cabinet member attended scrutiny on five occasions to respond to PSEG members. This included a Task and Finish deep dive session and report, reflecting concerns around community run libraries, partnership working and the future direction of the libraries service in Essex.

### ***Members:***



*Following a call-in process the decision was implemented in August 2019. The decision had been substantially amended to reflect the concerns raised by scrutiny members and the Committee were able to successfully secure a number of assurances regarding the future of less attended libraries.*

---

# **Help People Get the Best Start and Age Well**

## **Respite Care**

**PAFPSC** acted upon concerns highlighted by the receipt of a petition on the provision of respite care at Lavender House and Maples. It spoke to petitioners, Cabinet Members and Senior Officers and widened the issue to look at the provision and administration of respite care in Essex more generally to provide context to the petitioner's concerns.

### ***The Committee:***



*Provided an opportunity for people to raise their concerns with the Cabinet Member and senior officers in a robust and challenging environment. Members identified actions that needed to be taken including improving the robustness and transparency of the assessment and appeals process for respite care, improving communications with families and carers and providing the opportunity for family and carers to help influence future options for respite care. The intention is to continue to monitor progress being made and to receive regular updates.*

## **Day Opportunities**

**PAFPSC** contributed to the refocussing of a range of services known as 'day opportunities' for adults with disabilities and older people which currently enable them to take part in activities outside their home, as well as enabling a break for family carers. The proposed refocussing of the future service model should increase the number of adults who could be supported into paid employment.

### **Members:**



*Sought assurances that the current varied levels of support for this vulnerable group would continue and highlighted some areas for further development. It was stressed that officers must work with both small and large local employers and was suggested that an accreditation scheme to encourage participation be introduced. Members sought justification for placing the proposed contract with Essex Cares Limited, a wholly owned subsidiary of the County Council, as opposed to an independent private company. The Committee will continue to monitor the changes being made, particularly how it is aligning with the Council's Meaningful Lives Matter programme.*

### **Partnership working and the relationship with acute hospitals**

The **HOPSC** has sought to further improve stakeholder and partner relationships, joint working and trust as part of the drive to further integration of services. A schedule of hospital site visits is underway to focus on understanding the scale and nature of the challenges being faced at each hospital site and where possible these visits will be joint ones with the health scrutiny committees from neighbouring areas.

### **Members:**



*Increased their understanding of challenges facing Princess Alexandra Hospital in seeking a hospital rebuild programme and the need for refurbishment at Southend Hospital and how some services in future may be delivered differently in partnership with community and other providers. Members were supportive of the changes planned to relieve pressure on elective care, such as the new orthopaedic centre at Braintree Hospital and encouraged the move to more 'system solutions' being found to support hospitals facing particular demand pressures.*

### **Seasonal planning**

To encourage more focus on admission avoidance initiatives, the **HOPSC** has expanded bi-annual operational level discussions on A&E pressures and seasonal planning with both the Ambulance Service and acute hospital trusts in Essex to now include social care.

### **Members:**



*Sought assurances that the system could continue to respond to increasing demand and acuity beyond the levels for which had been planned and that partners could evidence closer system working; and encouraged more consistent use of HALOs across all the hospital sites. The Committee recommended that the ambulance service reviewed its engagement with districts to ensure that the services it linked to (such as those for falls) were coordinated with those offered by districts*

## **Responding to significant reconfigurations**

Significant reconfiguration of acute services is underway as part of planning the long-term health needs of local communities. These changes are being proposed and co-ordinated by either Sustainability and Transformation Partnerships or Integrated Care Systems in one of three 'footprints' crossing the county. Whilst retaining a strategic oversight over all the plans, in some instances, the **HOPSC** has also worked in joint health scrutiny committees with neighbouring authorities to look at the detail of proposals.

### ***The Committee:***



*Have increased transparency and accountability of the STP proposals and enhanced the opportunity for public engagement. Members have supported the principle in Mid and South Essex of stabilising patients with certain complex conditions at local hospital first and then being moved to a specialist clinical centre if necessary and supported the early implementation of some of these changes (e.g. for cardiology care); and have challenged the planning for inter-hospital patient transfers and non-emergency family and friend transport and encouraged the sharing of learning across different STP/ICS footprints.*

# How the Public can get Involved

## Attending a meeting

Members of the public are welcome to attend any public meeting of a scrutiny committee or 'task and finish' group. Public meetings are listed on the [online meeting calendar](#).

All scrutiny committees normally allow 15 minutes for public questions at the beginning of each meeting. If you wish to ask a question, let the Chairman or clerk know in plenty of time before the meeting starts. Public meetings are usually audio recorded and streamed live on the internet. The recording can be found embedded within the web page for each individual meeting, accessed via the link above.

Scrutiny regularly asks organisations or individuals to give evidence at meetings for the purpose of their investigations. If you will be attending scrutiny to give information to a committee, you can find information and guidance about what to expect in the [Scrutiny Handbook](#).

If you would like to feed into the scrutiny process, or suggest a topic for scrutiny's attention, you can get in touch with the Scrutiny Team at [democratic.services@essex.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@essex.gov.uk).

Alternatively, you can contact any of the Councillors who are on the relevant committee or task and finish group and ask them to consider representing you or calling you to give evidence. You can find out which local Councillors are on which Committee by checking the [website](#).

**This document has been produced by Essex County Council's Democracy and Transparency service. Contact us by email at [democratic.services@essex.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@essex.gov.uk).**

## **Report of the Task and Finish Group on Drug Gangs, Knife Crime and County Lines, established by the People and Families Policy and Scrutiny Committee.**

Report by Lead Member of the Task and Finish Group, Councillor Carlo Guglielmi  
Enquiries to Graham Hughes, Senior Democratic Services Officer,  
[graham.hughes@essex.gov.uk](mailto:graham.hughes@essex.gov.uk)

---

### **1. Purpose of the Report**

The issue of drug gangs, knife crime and County Lines was discussed at Full Council on 12 December 2018 and the following motion passed:

*'This Council recognises the impact of drug gangs, knife crime and county lines as a local, regional and national issue.*

*This Council commends the work of multi-agency statutory and voluntary partners in Essex, Southend and Thurrock in relation to these issues, particularly given the judgement of "Outstanding" by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation, following a recent inspection.*

*This Council is pleased to see this work is being recognised by the Home Office in awarding the sum of £640k to the Police, Crime and Fire Commissioner's Office to further expand this multi-agency work.*

*This Council therefore:*

- *Calls upon all political parties to work together to drive down the impact of drug gangs, knife crime and county lines on the residents of Essex.*
- *Requests that the People and Families Policy and Scrutiny Committee has oversight of and contributes to the multi-agency strategy and its development.'*

The Committee resolved to establish a Task and Finish Group to look at the issue in more detail. Working closely with Tanya Gillett, Head of Youth Offending, the Group held twelve evidence sessions over five main evidence days between August – December 2019. Discussions were held with a variety of witnesses including a National Crime Agency Co-ordinator for County Lines, Essex Police, the Deputy Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner, representatives from community and voluntary groups, County Council Cabinet Members and County Council Officers.

The conclusions of the Task and Finish Group are presented to Council.

### **2. Recommendation**

To note the attached report.

# Drug gangs, knife crime and county lines

A report by a Task and Finish Group  
established by the People and Families  
Policy and Scrutiny Committee

September 2020

# Contents

Foreword - Lead Member, Councillor Carlo Guglielmi	3
Executive Summary	4
Recommendations	5
Findings and Evidence	8
Context	8
The Violence and Vulnerability Framework in Essex	10
Increasing prevention and intervention	11
Adding value to existing and planned activities	19
Gaps in current and planned activities	20
Cross-border and partnership working	23
Improving visibility and awareness of partnership activity	25
Conclusions	26
Glossary	29
Annexes	
1. Background, Terms of Reference and Membership	32
2. Library of background reports and publications	34
3. Contributors	35
4. Written evidence	36
5. Limitations of the review	37



## Foreword

This report responds to a request from Full Council that there is oversight of the development of multi-agency working to confront the issue of drug gangs, knife crime and County Lines in Essex.

Task and Finish Group Members have recognised that their main task was to ensure that the County Council was getting value for money for its financial contribution to the multi-agency working and that this funding was making a difference in the lives of those young people caught in the awful trap of County Lines. However, it became apparent right at the offset that this social scourge on our communities also has had a significant effect on our public services.

We most certainly hope that the findings within this report will be picked up and given serious consideration by the relevant bodies outside Essex County Council, otherwise it would be a truly short-sighted response to the work that has been carried out. We will be distributing a copy of it to all Essex MPs, and to those relevant Counties who are plagued by the same issues.

Our Recommendations are directed to local agencies and government and includes suggesting that future contributions by Essex County Council to the local multi-agency working be made conditional and encouraging London Boroughs to forge stronger partnership working with all the Essex Districts, Boroughs, and City Council to combat County Lines.

The report highlights the short shelf life, and the irregular way of funding granted by government - this needs to be urgently reviewed so that a coherent strategy to combat County Lines can be supported and sustained. While it is difficult to compare directly with Glasgow, it is noted that they seem to have had access to more sustainable longer-term funding.

As our work was undertaken before the Covid-19 Pandemic, it does not comment or speculate on its impact on County Lines activity as it is too early to do so.

Finally, I wish to thank my fellow Task and Finish Group members for their commitment and due diligent approach and professionalism during this review.

I commend this report to you.

COUNCILLOR CARLO GUGLIELMI

Lead Member

Task and Finish Group - Drug Gangs, Knife Crime and County Lines

September 2020

# Executive Summary

This review was prompted by a request by Essex County Council's Full Council for the People and Families Policy and Scrutiny Committee to have oversight of the multi-agency response in Essex to the challenge of drug gangs, knife crime and County Lines and contribute to the multi-agency strategy and its development. The background, establishment of this review and its Terms of Reference are detailed in Annex 1 to this report.

The Task and Finish Group has sought to focus on the effectiveness of multi-agency funding and joint working. It's primary source of evidence has been through face to face discussions with a variety of stakeholders as listed in Annex 3. This evidence has been supplemented by some presentational and written material which is listed in Annex 4.

The conclusions of the Task and Finish Group are at the end of the report starting on page 26. These conclusions comment on partnership working, leadership, funding, the role of education and raising awareness, and communication and transparency.

As a result, the Task and Finish Group has made eight recommendations:

- seeking to minimise school exclusions;
- further promoting a directory of youth services;
- that the Health Overview Policy and Scrutiny Committee consider the impact of the public health approach to drug gangs, knife crime and County Lines as part of its regular scrutiny of public health activity;
- increasing local input to permitted development rights;
- improving accountability and governance around multi-agency funding;
- seeking greater diversity of leadership in the local multi-agency governance structures;
- seeking a greater role of district councils in promoting community awareness; and
- suggesting a different focus for future public communication strategies.

These are all listed together overleaf for ease of reference but also appear individually within the main part of this report.

# Recommendations

The Group has made eight recommendations and requests that these should be carefully considered for implementation.

## Increasing prevention and intervention

Recommendation 1 (page 14) – that further consideration be given to:

- (i) identifying the gaps in educational provision for young people on the periphery of exclusion;
- (ii) finding further alternative options to support schools dealing with behavioural problems instead of exclusion and, where a young person has been excluded, that there is resource allocated to facilitate a safe return to formal education;
- (iii) encouraging schools to minimise the number of young people being excluded and to sign-up to the Inclusion Policy if they have not already done so;
- (iv) requiring schools to clearly demonstrate which steps they took before escalating the intervention to an exclusion;
- (v) support a process whereby schools continue to be held accountable for the educational attainment and welfare of permanently excluded pupils;
- (vi) resources being made available to schools to facilitate the safe return to school following an exclusion.
- (vii) having clearer oversight of the off-rolling process at schools and encouraging clearer and comprehensive guidance being available to parents and carers contemplating off-rolling.
- (viii) reviewing the current provision of the Pupil Referral Unit and look to expand this closer to a full-time syllabus.

Recommendation 2 (page 17):

That a more visible comprehensive directory of locally available youth services and support groups should be available including those initiatives commissioned and funded by the Office of the Police Fire and Crime Commissioner (through the Violence and Vulnerability Unit).

Recommendation 3 (page 18):

That the Health Overview Policy and Scrutiny Committee consider reviewing the impact of the public health approach to drug gangs, knife crime and county lines as part of its regular scrutiny of public health activity in Essex.

Recommendation 4 (page 18):

- (i) The Group supports the work being done with London Boroughs to investigate developing a broader informative notification process and sharing interim support costs;
- (ii) That the County Council should continue to work with Essex District Councils to develop a process for the County Council to have a greater input and influence on consideration of applications for permitted development rights and that relevant officers ensuring ongoing links with the work of the Violence and Vulnerability Unit. [Note: This will ensure that cases like the Terminus House in Harlow should never happen again].
- (iii) That national lobbying be considered for government to review the permitted development rights process.

## Adding Value to existing and planned activities

Recommendation 5 (page 20):

That further local funding granted to the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex by local partners (such as the County Council) should be provided on a conditional basis making clear that:

- (i) it should be spent on community initiatives focussed in the County of Essex;
- (ii) there should be the expectation that much of it should link to the priorities around county lines identified by the Community and Safety Partnerships; and
- (iii) a clear assessment framework be established to review the effectiveness and outcomes achieved from the allocated funding.

## Cross border and partnership working

### Recommendation 6 (page 23):

That there should be a regular review of the leadership of key strategic groups as part of maintaining overall diversity of leadership within the governance structure.

### Recommendation 7 (page 24):

Essex District Councils have local connections and influence and should be given a greater role in promoting community awareness of county lines and building resilience in the community.

## Improving visibility and awareness of partnership activity

### Recommendation 8 (page 26):

The Violence and Vulnerability Unit should drive and lead a local communications strategy that should focus on how drug taking is socially unacceptable and highlight the personal abuse and harm that is seen and exercised through the supply line.

# Findings and evidence

## Context

County Lines is a term used for organised drug dealing networks usually controlled from urban areas which distribute illegal drugs across a county using runners, who are often young and vulnerable, which is co-ordinated by utilising dedicated untraceable mobile phones. County Lines is based around supplying drugs that drive dependence and addiction.

The criminal gangs operating in England are complex and ruthless organisations, which use sophisticated techniques to groom children and chilling levels of violence to keep them compliant

Source: Children's Commissioner – Keeping Kids Safe – February 2019

It is estimated that there are 2200-2300 working County Lines in England and Wales (source National Crime Agency Co-ordinator for County Lines) with around 135 lines coming into Essex at the time of this review (source: Essex Police - 2019). Whilst it is thought that County Lines operations are essentially exports from large cities (London in the case of Essex), there is also some evidence that there are some County Lines operations coming into Essex across borders other than from London (e.g. Suffolk). Essex's location makes it a prime target for County Lines, being close to London and having good transport links.

In addition, it is estimated that there are just over 40 mapped gangs in Essex with the majority of them home-grown. These tend to have a common and successful local business plan and purpose and often get supplies from elsewhere other than through County Lines operations. There is some suggestion that different tactics and approach may be needed to confront these particular gangs.

However, agencies are specifically seeing a robust 'franchise model' in operation where County Lines come into an area and take over already successful local drug supply operations.

Essex is no different to other areas in seeing significant criminal exploitation of young people. There is also an indication that there is increasing in-county exploitation (exporting to elsewhere in Essex). Essex County Council representatives reported there was evidence that ever younger children were being exploited.

27,000 children in England identify as a gang member but there are children who are groomed and exploited by gangs who would not identify as gang members:

- 313,000 know a gang member

- 60,000 are gang members or siblings of gang members
- 34,000 know a gang member and have been a victim of violence

Source: British Crime Data held by the Office of National Statistics

Comparisons with other areas still suggest that Essex is a relatively safe area in which to live. Overall fewer young people are actually using drugs so there is a need to keep a perspective. Most violent crime against individuals is being conducted within a mile and a half of their home and predominantly the violence is not being imported into their area – only the drugs. Despite this there are still a substantial number of serious offences being recorded with arrests for trafficking drugs having increased by 30% in recent years although this may also be partly due to increased police activity and vigilance. At the same time, a visible local police presence should have some deterrent effect on most forms of street crime.

Essex has the highest number of violent incidents linked to county lines across the East of England. Serious violence in Essex is increasing at a lower rate in Essex than the rest of the country but it is still rising, and its high profile can have a detrimental impact on local communities. Serious violence offences are concentrated, with clusters around urban areas, and town centres. The following areas have all shown significantly higher volumes of serious violence – Basildon, Chelmsford, Clacton, Colchester, Grays and Tilbury, Harlow and Southend.

In the year to September 2019: In Essex 2271 individuals had been affected by serious violence including 920 suspects and 1390 victims.

Source: Essex Police

Whilst some of the drug related serious violence can be shocking and traumatic, a considered perspective is still needed on such an emotive issue to get proper context and avoid creating a moral panic. The availability of illegal drugs supplied through local operations is not a new phenomenon but it is now being more efficiently run through a dynamic evolving business model which enforces its operations in a robust and violent manner with few moral boundaries.

The rate of serious violence offences is significantly higher for 16-21 year-olds than any other age grouping

Source: HM Government – Serious Violence Strategy – April 2018

This Task and Finish Group review has spoken to a number of key contributors to ascertain how the local system is responding to challenges and the extent and effectiveness of multi-agency working. It has not focussed on the causes of knife crime as there is already significant research available on that.

## The Violence and Vulnerability Framework in Essex

The Government's response to the increase in serious violence in the last few years has been to establish a Serious Violence Strategy in April 2018. The strategy identified the risk of county lines gangs as a key driver of the increase and places a new focus on early intervention alongside robust law enforcement. Various funding initiatives have arisen from that.

The Violence and Vulnerability Unit (VVU) has been established as a multi-disciplinary partnership team led by the Police Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex and includes Essex Police, the Youth Offending Service and other agencies and is set up to deliver on the objectives set out in the Violence and Vulnerability Framework. The VVU undertakes joint operations and interventions and encourages further sharing of data and intelligence across all those agencies where appropriate.

The VVU is also expected to highlight where cross-border and partnership working would be beneficial. It is recognised that this is a complex governance structure with all partner agencies looking at the issue and they need to avoid duplication of work as there are so many different strands of work.

During 2019/20 the work programme of the VVU was utilising a partnerships fund of approximately £2.2 million, made up of £350,000 from the Home Office Early Intervention Youth Fund, £1.16m from Home Office funding to establish local Violence Reduction Units, £500,000 contributed by Essex County Council and a contribution of £200,000 from the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner. With partners providing funding, the whole local system needs to have confidence in the governance and financial management of the work being undertaken and so the Group has also considered this aspect during its review and comments elsewhere in this report. This funding has continued into 2020/21 but future funding beyond that is uncertain. It is unclear whether Thurrock or Southend have made any financial contribution to this fund.

Separately, Essex Police have been awarded 'surge' funding from the Home Office to help directly with targeting county lines activities being run by drug gangs operating in Essex. Police surge funding is primarily operational and street focussed and often involves short term enforcement activity. In December 2019 a further £1.1m of government funding was announced.

The VVU has five broad strategic objectives and we have structured the rest of the report under those headings for ease of reference (although not necessarily in the same order as stated by the VVU) and to make linkages clearer and more transparent.



## Increasing prevention and intervention

### The voice of young offenders

The Group were very interested in a research and evaluation project conducted by the Essex Youth Offending Service during the summer of 2019. The project looked at the lived experiences of young people and families and carers exposed to County Lines, gangs and criminal exploitation in Essex. Front-line practitioners were used as researchers so there was a better understanding of the views being stated by young offenders' on how well the wider system worked for them. At the same time the project also gained different perspectives of the same relationships (i.e. family, social worker, young person) and a common message was that the signs of vulnerability and exploitation were there to be seen and that the Essex system should have seen them earlier.

People who can be groomed into it are looking for a bit of family, a bit of love and just want to belong to someone or something. That's how it tends to start

Police Officer - Youth Offending Service – 2019 Summer Project

Some of the most common triggers exposing young people to be criminally exploited to be identified in the project were a sense of isolation or exclusion from school, family and friends. This can be exacerbated by bullying and underachieving academically which can be attributable to unmet learning needs. Schools are in prime position to identify early signs of vulnerability and exploitation. Yet one of the common issues raised during the project about what young people wanted to see done differently was that greater effort should be made to keep young people engaged in school which might mean a more non-academic focus for some but to identify what interests them and who they engage with.

Between 2006/7 and 2012/13 the number of permanent exclusions in England reduced by nearly half, but it has risen by 40% over the past three years.

Source: House of Commons Education Committee (2018) Forgotten Children: Alternate Provision and the Scandal of Ever-Increasing Exclusions, Fifth Report of Session 2017-19

The Timpson review of school exclusion has also stressed the protective role of schools and the opportunity for young people to build trusted relationships in them. With the exception of home, the school environment is probably the only environment where a young person can benefit from safeguarding, health and wellbeing and learning.

Therefore, early intervention can be a key step in reducing the recruitment of vulnerable children. Such intervention must start in schools which can offer a protective environment through building support mechanisms, relatable role models and awareness amongst teaching and non-teaching staff. The investment increasing awareness and support should complement direct enforcement operations against gangs which is critical to establishing an overall system that helps prevent young people from being exploited.

## Early Help

Members heard that many schools have struggled to adapt and respond to the challenge of the County Lines gang model (as opposed to the traditional gang model) and that further work is ongoing to fully understand where vulnerability is originating in and around the school environment. So much of a robust response will depend on the leadership and transparency of each school which does seem to vary considerably across the county. There needs to be greater clarity on the message to schools on how to confront the challenges – for example most schools have a zero-tolerance policy towards the carrying of knives and possession of drugs but that leads to more permanent exclusions which may then make those excluded more vulnerable to exploitation. However, at the moment, schools are limited in their available responses to disruptive and violent pupils.

## Risk Avert

There is evidence that the Risk Avert behavioural programme encouraging personal resilience is changing personal behaviours. Until recently this has been focussed at secondary schools with around two thirds of them taking it up although schools often raise the issue of their capacity to deliver the programme. The ECC School Improvement Team do not specifically visit schools on the issue of take-up and this could be reviewed. A primary schools version launched in 2019. At the moment, there was only anecdotal evidence that the programme had cut the numbers of exclusions and referrals to multi-agency safeguarding hubs. It was also reported at the time of the Group's evidence session in late 2019 that the Youth Service had not yet fully engaged with the programme.

## Peer support

Some members of the Group have seen local schools piloting forms of peer support, mainly in terms of mental health and wellbeing, led by older pupils. However, in the

instances cited the initiative did not extend to whistleblowing opportunities in respect of drug use and drug dealing.

The dynamic county lines business model in schools is only being challenged through Educational programmes when perhaps more is needed.

## Exclusions

Being excluded from school can materially change a child's 'direction of life' and members heard a number of witnesses stressing that the basis for exclusions needed more attention to ascertain if thresholds for exclusion were too low and discretionary.

They [gangs] tend to target marginalised children with multiple interlinked vulnerabilities both at individual level – such as mental health or special educational needs – and at family level – such as abuse and neglect.

Source: Children's Commissioner 2019 – Keeping Kids Safe.

Exclusions are an important component of effective behaviour management in a school but they should be a last resort in a long-line of disciplinary measures. The Group has heard that outcomes for these children can be poor. The Timpson Review, in particular, concluded that exclusions affected academic outcomes and that those excluded achieved poorer academic outcomes on average compared to their peers in mainstream education. In addition, it is widely acknowledged that those excluded can become more vulnerable to exploitation.

Between 2006/7 and 2012/13 the number of permanent exclusions in England reduced by nearly half, but it has risen by 40% over the past three years.

Source: House of Commons Education Committee (2018) Forgotten Children: Alternate Provision and the Scandal of Ever-Increasing Exclusions, Fifth Report of Session 2017-19

Everything should be done to prevent a young person from being excluded from school and exclusions should only be a last resort. Schools should be required to clearly demonstrate which steps they took before escalating the intervention to excluding the pupil. With this in mind, the Group were pleased to note the programme underway to encourage schools to sign up to an Inclusion Statement.

...while it is incorrect to suggest that exclusion of any kind causes crime, or that preventing the use of exclusion would, by itself, prevent crime, it should be recognised that school exclusion is one indicator of a higher risk of exposure to, and involvement in, crime.”

Source: Gov.UK (2019) – Timpson Review of School Exclusion, online.

Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) do not provide a full-time timetable. Therefore, pupils can have more spare time on their hands and possibly be more vulnerable to exploitation. Placing all excluded pupils together in one place also could create a further risk of exploitation. With that in mind, the Group were particularly pleased to hear that the PRU model for primary school pupils is being reviewed to try to reduce the mixing of vulnerable primary school pupils with secondary age pupils. However, further thought needs to be given to how the PRU model can avoid being a ‘breeding ground’ for further exploitation.

There has been a significant capital programme investment in the Pupil Referral Unit estate and future communications around this should be carefully drafted to avoid giving an impression that extra capacity is being created solely to encourage an expansion in the number of exclusions.

The Group has been interested in the links between PRUs and the community and voluntary sector. Vulnerable Pupil Referral panels already look at individual circumstances and the YOS has data suggesting a significant improvement in those cases where there have been bespoke personal packages put in place.

Recommendation 1 – That further consideration be given to:

- (i) Identifying the gaps in educational provision for young people on the periphery of exclusion;
- (ii) Finding further alternative options to support schools dealing with behavioural problems instead of exclusion and, where a young person has been excluded, that there is resource allocated to facilitate a safe return to formal education;
- (iii) Encouraging schools to minimise the number of young people being excluded and to sign-up to the Inclusion Policy if they have not already done so;
- (iv) Requiring schools to clearly demonstrate which steps they took before escalating the intervention to an exclusion;
- (v) Support a process whereby schools continue to be held accountable for the educational attainment and welfare of permanently excluded pupils;

- (vi) Resources being made available to schools to facilitate the safe return to school following an exclusion.
- (vii) Having clearer oversight of the off-rolling process at schools and encouraging clearer and comprehensive guidance being available to parents and carers contemplating off-rolling.
- (viii) Reviewing the current provision of the Pupil Referral Unit and look to expand this closer to a full-time syllabus.

There was suggestion from voluntary and community group witnesses that some disruptive young people could have their teaching hours reduced by the school but still remain on the school roll so that the school could still receive funding for them. The Group have viewed this as anecdotal evidence and cannot verify if this is a widespread practice or not but any reduction in teaching hours should be discouraged.

## Pastoral support

Voluntary and community group witnesses have highlighted to the Group their concerns that schools may be reducing their levels of pastoral support (albeit evidence was anecdotal and area specific and so may not be able to be extrapolated across the county). However, this is a possible consequence if schools feel they are under budgetary pressures in being asked to provide other additional oversight and support services. Whilst the voluntary sector can provide opportunities for socialisation and developing peer group support networks this perhaps is not as linked-in with formal education facilities as it could be.

## Home schooled children

There is a further challenge for home-schooled children (who may or may not have been excluded as a precursor to being home-schooled) as often they are not in any regular contact with school peer groups and will not necessarily have access to educational and emotional support programmes available if they were enrolled at a mainstream school. This is compounded by the County Council having no oversight of the delivery of the curriculum and teaching standards in the home. The Group are aware of and endorse the conclusions of the cross-party group led by Councillor Gooding, Cabinet Member – Education and Skills, looking at these challenges and the planned lobbying approach.

Whilst not receiving specific evidence on the matter, there is also some suggestion that drug and gang issues are not just reserved just to the state education sector and that private school pupils can also be vulnerable to exploitation and may not access or benefit from mainstream educational and support programmes. In these

circumstances, the existence and ongoing support of services such as the Safe In Essex early intervention service delivered by the Children's Society is essential as an option before any formal referral to Family Solutions.

## Training

There seems to be an acknowledgement that there may need to be more thought about how ECC works with schools to both help further improve their education offer and, where necessary, to challenge them. This enablement and challenge should be multi-agency with police, and other agencies forming a collegiate approach to assisting schools. The ECC Education department can serve as a conduit between these agencies, stakeholders and partners and should be further encouraged to build upon existing relationships.

## Parenting support

Parenting support services are vitally important as part of enabling a strong early intervention and prevention approach. These can be universal available across early years services, social workers and youth offending service amongst others as well as some specific early help that is delivered through the Essex Child and Family Wellbeing Service. The Group supports the regulatory framework enforced through OFSTED on the schools safeguarding policies.

## Youth services

There has been significant media coverage of reduced funding in local government and, in particular, reductions in the number of youth clubs. Members have heard from ECC that despite those reductions it was felt that the overall effectiveness of youth delivery had improved in Essex with more delivered away from school settings and in the community instead. Members felt that that assertion probably needs to be further challenged as access to community run groups could be more limited, be subject to more discretionary eligibility criteria, and have concerns about long-term funding and sustainability. In any case, it is clear that the issues currently being confronted cannot be solely, or probably neither significantly, attributable to that change in youth services. Young people are being targeted by a ruthless business model which will continue to target young people (and entice them with promises of greatly exaggerated earnings) irrespective until demand and supply of illegal drugs can be significantly reduced.

The Group also notes the reduction in front-line police numbers in recent years and that this would have had some effect on the capacity of police to engage in their local communities and build positive relationships with young people in schools and on the

streets. This has been particularly evident in wider resource planning and restructuring leading to a reduction in the number of community support officers and school outreach officers. It was reported that the Commander in Chelmsford had started to put some officers back into a liaison role with local schools. Recent Government announcements now indicate further funding to the Police and it is hoped that a significant portion of it can go to increase community and neighbourhood policing.

#### Recommendation 2:

That a more visible comprehensive directory of locally available youth services and support groups should be available including those initiatives commissioned and funded by the Office of the Police Fire and Crime Commissioner (through the Violence and Vulnerability Unit).

### Public Health

There is an important role for Public Health to promote prevention and early intervention as relying on retribution and punishment through the justice system will not be sufficient to eliminate the drug gang culture and operations. A Public Health approach has to be multi-agency to fully understand the issue through evidence and respond to it through carefully designed interventions. The objectives are to reduce re-offending and improve health and social functioning but achieving this is getting more complicated due to the complexity of the system and presenting issues.

In Essex an integrated health and justice service has been developed to better serve the needs of the individual and develop more meaningful community interventions. The Group were encouraged to hear that there were future plans to more effectively identify complex presenting issues and develop a wider range of referral routes and provision for offenders and those vulnerable to committing crime. The Full Circle service now provides some brokered support to offenders fulfilling a probation order and only 7% who enter Full Circle then re-offend in the next 12 months. The Horizons project works intensively with a small number of the most difficult individuals to integrate them into the community and provide ongoing support. Those with gangs related offences will have targeted provision. It is noted that both the Full Circle and Horizons Projects are services for adults.

Members have noted the public health approach in Scotland which it is thought contributed to reducing violent crime. However, at a local Essex level there needs to be more evidence of the impact of such an approach on day to day practice.

### Recommendation 3:

That the Health Overview Policy and Scrutiny Committee consider reviewing the impact of the public health approach to drug gangs, knife crime and county lines as part of its regular scrutiny of public health activity in Essex.

## Local Planning Framework

Members heard concerns raised by a number of witnesses about the apparent increasing use of permitted development rights to change previous commercial and industrial property to residential use and the concentration of these new developments in specific areas of the county. Planning permission was no longer required for such change of use and this could be used by local authorities to relocate people - often from the London Borough areas. The YOS has seen such an increase in the number of people transferring from London Borough areas and members have challenged whether there need to more robust discussions with these 'exporting' councils. It is acknowledged that there is some ongoing work with the London Boroughs to discuss a broader more informative notification being made to the importing authority (beyond just the s208 notification that making a placement) and a possible agreement with them to pay some interim support costs. The Police confirmed that there was some evidence of a rise in unsocial behaviour but did highlight also that some of the noticeable levels of migration into Harlow, for example, actually was from Thurrock. With BAME and other vulnerable groups often disproportionately represented at these re-purposed sites, the Group feels that the County Council should be empowered to have greater control over permitted development rights and resulting residential accommodation that is created.

### Recommendation 4:

- (i) The Group supports the work being done with London Boroughs to investigate developing a broader informative notification process and sharing interim support costs;
- (ii) That the County Council should continue to work with Essex District Councils to develop a process for it to have a greater influence on consideration of applications for permitted development rights and that relevant officers ensure ongoing links with the work of the Violence and Vulnerability Unit.
- (iii) That national lobbying be considered for government to review the permitted development rights process.



## Adding Value to existing and planned activities

### The nature of funding

Members heard from multiple witnesses that the short-term nature of the Home Office grant funding to the local Violence and Vulnerability Strategy and Framework did not allow 'capability-building' within communities nor provide sustainability. It means that many funding structures are still focussed on short-term interventions so it is difficult for local organisations to plan a programme or project that could make a permanent change and improvement. In some cases, there also could be gaps in delivery due to funding insecurity. Voluntary and community representatives emphasised the importance and need of stable, sustainable and long-term funding to provide certainty for planning purposes. Yet they felt that funding was often provided as part of a 'knee jerk' reaction. All of this can undermine the broader public health approach that everyone believes is essential.

### The use of funding

As a key part of their review, members sought clarification on the decision-making process and accountability for how partnership funding was being allocated and spent. In particular, the Vulnerability and Violence Unit Board, which had representation from various partner agencies and chaired by the PFC Commissioner, needed to be clear and accountable for decisions being made and evaluating impact.

The Group wanted to see evidence of, and test, the success of interventions being funded through partnership monies but were not reassured at this time that there was a proper process in place for this that was being co-ordinated and monitored by the PFCC. This needs to be developed over time otherwise there is a risk that focus switches back to enforcement, the impact of which is easier to measure.

The first tranche of VVF funding was used to commission external consultants to report on (and evaluate) interventions that had already showed some evidence of working. The PFCC admitted that on reflection the report had not gone as far and they would have wanted it to as they already knew they wanted to continue to invest in some existing projects and test new ways of working. The report had cost £30,000 and members were concerned that, at the time of challenging the PFCC about how money was being spent, that this report was one of the more prominent activities being highlighted by the PFCC.

The Group are disappointed that the late provision of the work programme prevented the Group from being able to spend more time discussing at the work programme in more detail.

It is fair to say that funding from partners (such as Essex County Council) was initially provided without any conditions and without the hindsight of knowing about the award of national funding as well. It seems that this has perhaps led to the perception that less accountability to local partners was needed on the use of funds.

There has been some reluctance in providing the Group with information on this in an easily digestible and transparent manner. Perhaps the legal and regulatory framework for formal accountability and scrutiny of PFCC (through the Police, Fire and Crime Panel) has not helped the Group pursue its work with the PFCC and diluted its potential influence. The Group has been frustrated by this and the significant delay in being provided with any form of financial breakdown, or an analysis of outcomes, after requesting it and feels that the scrutiny function should form part of the governance process for this information.

#### Recommendation 5:

That further local funding granted to the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex by local partners (such as Essex County Council) should be provided on a conditional basis making clear that:

- (i) It should be spent on community initiatives focussed in the County of Essex;
- (ii) There should be the expectation that much of it should link to the priorities around county lines identified by the Community and Safety Partnerships; and
- (iii) A clear assessment framework be established to review the effectiveness and outcomes achieved from the allocated funding.

## Gaps in current and planned activities

### Police and neighbourhood policing

Using government 'surge' funding Essex Police had spent £1.7m for focussed street-led activity at the time of the review. As a result, there had been a 255% increase in the use of stop and search activity in the year to August 2019. This broadly correlated with the increase in arrests. Whilst the funding had enabled more investigations there was also some work looking at education settings and, in particular, PRUs but this needs to be pursued sensitively with schools (see section on Exclusions and PRUs).

The Group heard from a number of witnesses in the community that they were not seeing the most effective engagement with neighbourhood policing but with anecdotal evidence that Neighbourhood Watch meetings often focus on enforcement rather than one to one engagement. The Group believes there is a challenge here for the Police (through the VVU) to further resource community policing and ensure greater consistency as part of the overall system response.

## National considerations

The Group heard from the National Crime Agency Co-ordinator and other witnesses that they would like to encourage more focus on prosecutions for modern slavery (as more prohibitive) rather than possession of Class A drugs. There have also been some pilot projects where custody officers had also had lines of questioning to use to try and identify coercion and vulnerability.

Perhaps performance indicators for the Police are too quantitative and could impact on the ability and opportunity to assess those apprehended as if they are victims. It was suggested during discussions that there could be a greater focus on safeguarding and vulnerability when young people were brought into custody. Such a focus could reduce further exploitation and re-offending. The Group were pleased to hear that a County lines code had been created for inputting on the national police database which flashes up for repeat offences and possible vulnerability but all partner agencies need to be able to access such indicators. There could also be an opportunity for neighbourhood policing teams to take a greater role.

Whilst there may have been more funding for police there had been a reduction in funding for the criminal justice system in recent years leading to an increase in waiting times. A change in bail laws also means that a young person can be arrested and then not immediately charged and, instead, released pending further investigation. However, in doing this, by the time the young person did eventually appear at court they may have committed multiple further offences in the meantime. ECC was working with the Youth Offending Teams in Southend and Thurrock to intervene earlier and have support in place for that period before the case comes before court.

The Group have discussed the wide range of Essex Youth Offending Service (YOS) provided interventions including pre and post Court support. The YOS has two key priorities – increase the use of Restorative Interventions and improve access to good quality education and training for young people in contact with the service. The YOS has the benefit of enhanced provision for young people at risk of custody or who are assessed as posing a high risk of harm. The Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programme (ISSP) can be a condition of bail or be an alternative intervention to custody and seeks to engage young people through daily activities designed to enable them to move away from serious offending . It is based on a bespoke plan for each individual which could include attending relevant courses, undertaking community work or some one-to-one sessions. The YOS adopts an evidence informed approach to its work and as current evidence suggests that re-offending rates for those who have participated in restorative justice interventions is much lower this is ‘woven’ through all interventions including ISS.

Due to the intensity of the programme (7 days a week), ISS is only available to a small number of people at any one time and it is difficult to quantify the money that ISS is saving the overall local system. The Group are very aware not to rush to conclusions on the upside of any ‘released under investigation’/released on bail

options as there can still be safeguarding issues and the individual released without mobile phone, or money could still be particularly vulnerable and at risk.

## Data collection

Despite a strong commitment to multi-agency collaboration in the VVU to tackle the issue, discussions during the review suggest there seems to be room for further significant improvement in stronger data recording, analysis and processes for the sharing of information. The Essex Centre for Data Analytics is tasked with developing a strategic picture of gang activity and a dynamic tool to share intelligence across partner agencies that would inform decisions. A set of dashboards has been developed to look at vulnerable locations and placements of cohorts of individuals at risk to be produced as near 'real-time' as possible. The Group supports this piece of work as critical to effective multi-agency working arrangements and co-operation.

Efficient intelligence sharing is critical to promote agile responses to confront a drug business model that is dynamic and quick to change. The Essex Data platform has been commissioned by partners to share intelligence so as to get an accurate multi-agency view of county lines activity. This is expected to provide a further opportunity for disruption and enforcement and assist prevention and early interventions. It combines data from adult and children social care services, drug and alcohol, Treatment services, education, Essex Police Athena system, Youth Offending Service records and includes Experian Mosaic market research and lifestyle data which provides a detailed view of communities in respect of housing, employment, health and social trends. At the time of the review, the work had identified approximately 16,000 households within Essex that met one or more defined vulnerability risk criteria (approximately 4% of total households in the county). Of those 16,000 households, the presence of serious and drug related violence, or at risk of being identified at risk from county lines recruitment, equated to 0.4% or approximately 2,500 households.

There also remains issues around consent and differing interpretation of current legislation on data protection which impacts on the effectiveness of the local system to respond as effectively as it could to concerns. For example, the Group has heard about difficulty in disclosing information without parental consent. Ultimately, clearer direction on interpreting the legislation will need to come from the Home Office, Ministry of Justice and other national agencies working closely together to give one clear message.

There still remains limitations of sharing information cross-border (i.e. Metropolitan Police sharing with Essex Police) and this type of cross border co-operation may need further encouragement nationally.

## Cross border and partnership working

The Group have stressed throughout that encouraging strong partner relationships was fundamental to its review.

### Governance structure

The Group has heard that Violence and Vulnerability activity in Essex works within a governance framework. Strategic groups (Round Table and Executive Group) determine the contents of the work programme and are responsible for overseeing delivery as well as setting the strategic direction for partnership activity. There was some assurance that Essex County Council had adequate political and officer representation on the strategic groups. Reporting to the strategic groups on the progress of activities within the work programme is the Violence and Vulnerability Operations Board chaired by a police representative and including various ECC officers as members.

During the course of the Group's review, the Chairmanship of Safer Essex was changed from being a local government representative (the Chief Executive of Tendring District Council) to a police representative. This seemed to further re-enforce the Group's view that there seems to be a concentration of PFCC leadership within the current local governance arrangements. The chairmanship of a Strategic Domestic Abuse Group changed to Essex Police and various other strategic groups within the VVU governance structure were also chaired by the Police and/or the Commissioner. Whilst the Police and PFCC are vital local partners, the local system may benefit from more diverse leadership with different partners heading up different strands of work and different components of the governance structure. Such greater diversity may help in further promoting particular focus in different work streams – e.g. a higher profile and greater focus for prevention and early intervention work rather than more reactive responses. In addition, it may be the opportunity to further align leadership with statutory responsibilities.

Recommendation 6: That there should be a regular review of the leadership of key strategic groups as part of maintaining overall diversity of leadership within the governance structure.

The Group have been advised that the work programme for Violence and Vulnerability Unit has been developed to respond to the priorities identified for the county and to work to co-ordinate and develop a more joined-up approach. However, whilst the establishment of the VVF has been important in setting a welcome precedent of partnership working in the local system, the Group has not been

entirely convinced that partner agencies are working together well enough to avoid some duplication of work and further effort is probably needed to minimise this duplication. In particular, partners need to continue to move towards respecting the expertise within the system and recognising who is best placed to lead on issues and specific approaches.

The County Lines model is dynamic, multi-pronged and evolves. System partners struggle to be as flexible and respond and adapt as quickly as that. However, the system partners can still respond in a significant and effective way using their own strengths with, for example, a consistent and robust educational programme to heighten awareness and early detection and to further build personal resilience. Communities will play a large part in this and system partners perhaps need to do more in promoting their community work and to recognise who in the wider local system is best able to deliver such community work.

#### Recommendation 7:

Essex District Councils have local connections and influence and should be given a greater role in promoting community awareness of county lines and building resilience in the community.

### Community safety arrangements in each district

Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) are operating in each district area and their activities vary from area to area although the group were advised that there was overall cohesion through the shared Violence and Vulnerability Framework. The Partnerships were set up to be a conduit between statutory and voluntary organisations, to minimise duplication of work and provide a collective local approach to community safety (and not just drug gangs and county lines risk). The CSPs report back to the PFCC and Safer Essex. The latter, in particular, should be ensuring the sharing of good practice and consistency across the Community Safety Partnerships.

The Group were keen to see that the role and objectives of each hub were clearly communicated and that there is a performance/evaluation framework put in place to ensure consistency of approach and activity. The Group have questioned the outputs expected from the Hubs. The hubs set their own priorities each year although they should deliver against the Police and Crime Plan priorities. The Group has questioned to what extent do the hubs identify vulnerability and whether there were enough strategic links between the hubs and other strategic forums to help that and citing bodies such as the Children's Partnerships Boards and the wellbeing hubs (such as the one at Great Bentley focussing on mental health) as examples.

There has been some acknowledgement that the profile and visibility of the Partnership and hubs may not be as high with other less strategic partners as it should be but the ongoing development of the hubs is an opportunity to further 'draw-out' partners who do not directly participate in the Partnerships.

## School Inspection Regime

Whilst there can be an appetite to promote collaborative work there can be legislative and structural barriers that inhibit this. School engagement is a critical part of a prevention and early intervention approach, yet the County Council's influence and oversight powers arguably have been reduced as a result of the academisation process. Part of the OFSTED inspection framework is now around gangs' awareness and it is likely that any mandated change to approach towards academies will only come through formal OFSTED recommendations. There also remains a need for enhanced powers to have greater oversight over home schooling (see elsewhere for further comment). Similarly, a greater alignment of resources both at a local and national level would maximise effectiveness so that those partners and government departments best placed to lead and direct on specific issues do so without duplication from others.

A consistent strategic approach is needed. Part of the cross-agency approach should be to further strengthen young people's emotional wellbeing and mental health and fully linking Education up with the service delivered by the North East London Foundation Trust and family hubs (under the Essex Child and Wellbeing Service) is critically important. The Group welcome the ECC whole school workforce programme that has been developed to respond to children with challenging behaviour with empathy and encouraging staff to seek to understand underlying causes.

## Improving visibility and awareness of partnership activity

The Youth Offending Service has developed training modules to highlight awareness of vulnerability and building resilience. There is an opportunity for this to be delivered as part of social work training, teaching, policing and wider community settings as a revenue generator for re-investment back into local YOS projects. The impact and outcome of successful training could be that stakeholders are empowered to make more informed and more appropriate referrals and further strengthen preventative interventions.

Drug gangs, County Lines and Knife crimes are a national and county wide problem and a county wide solution will be needed to confront the specific issues in Essex.

The media can often stoke a significant negative storyline creating moral panics that we are all 'under attack'. There is a significant threat but there is also a need to focus attention on what can be done – such as reducing the demand for these drugs. The Group believes that alongside a national campaign should be a local one driven and led by the VVU that gives a message that drug taking is socially unacceptable and unfashionable and to highlight the consequences further down the supply line.

#### Recommendation 8:

The Violence and Vulnerability Unit should drive and lead a local communications strategy that should focus on how drug taking is socially unacceptable and highlight the personal abuse and harm that is seen and exercised through the supply line.

## Conclusions

This Task and Finish Group review has spoken to a number of key contributors to ascertain how the local system is responding to challenges and the extent and effectiveness of multi-agency working in confronting drug gangs, knife crime and County Lines in Essex. The review has included trying to ascertain how partnership monies have been allocated and used within the Violence and Vulnerability Framework activities.

### Partnership working

It is probably not surprising that, as with any complex partnership working, there is always room for improvement, and this is particularly the case here where the system has the additional challenge of confronting a County Lines operation that is a focussed, dynamic, evolving and ruthless business model. It is fair to say that system partners struggle to be sufficiently flexible to adapt and respond to that. However, the Group have noted that the development of the local Violence and Vulnerability Framework has necessitated joint working between agencies where perhaps they have not done so much in the past and this is a significant positive development.

### Leadership

There is a significant challenge for the local system to become more proactive in its planning and response. The Group has recommended a greater diversity in leadership of different component parts within the local governance structure and this should facilitate being able to give greater prominence to different approaches and contributions to the overall system response, including education, public health and the role of voluntary and community groups.



However, impact of prevention and early intervention initiatives are not seen straightaway and outcomes cannot be evidenced immediately. It is still too early to evaluate the success of a public health approach in Essex. May be a stronger message needs to be made through all the governance structures that the cost of doing prevention and early intervention programmes should be cheaper than custody and the cost of increased risk of re-offending. With pressure to demonstrate outcomes, careful balance needs to be maintained whereby the emphasis does not shift too far to increased police presence, stop and search and knife crime prevention orders which could be detrimental to young people's trust in the police and yet for which a degree of impact can be more easily evidenced.

## Funding

Overall, the Group have been frustrated by the level of engagement and provision of information from the PFCC and have tried to explain this through the prism of the current legal and regulatory framework for the PFCC. The County Council has contributed financially to the activities of the local Violence and Vulnerability Framework and yet the Group has struggled to gain the assurance that there is enough accountability and transparency in the governance structure relating to the allocation and use of partnership funding. Early in the review, it became clear to the Group that any future funding should be conditional on a number of ongoing obligations being met and this has been a key recommendation of the Group. It was specifically highlighted to the Leader of the County Council at an early stage in the review and well ahead of the drafting of this report.

The Group has also seen that the short-term funding basis for the VVF (both national and local partners) does not help the development of a coherent long-term strategy to confront County Lines. This short-termism needs to be urgently reviewed to ensure sustainability and certainty in planning.

## Role of education and raising awareness

It has become very clear that educational settings will make a substantial contribution to the local system response in confronting the county lines operations and promoting a more prevention and early intervention-based approach. There is significant evidence that excluding pupils from attendance at schools just further exposes them to the risk of exploitation. The Group view the promotion and enablement of inclusivity in educational settings as a critically important contribution to building community resilience and have recommended actions to facilitate this.

Education settings can play an important part in raising awareness and developing skills and approaches which help contribute to building overall community resilience. It is important however, that this also captures raising parental and carer awareness to the early signs. It was eye-opening to hear some of the personal testimonies in the YOS's Summer Project of young people involved in County Lines highlighting that often the early warning signs were just not seen by parents, schools or other

responsible individuals. This highlights that more work needs to be done to raise such awareness.

However, raising awareness goes beyond just the formal education settings and we would expect further collaboration between agencies to heighten awareness with training programmes targeted at a wider audience which could begin with staff at these agencies. The Group has noted that the YOS has been developing a training programme which could be a valuable contribution to such a programme. In due course, we would expect to see some impact analysis on levels of awareness built into the VVF performance assessment.

However, communities can also play a large part in heightening awareness and system partners perhaps need to recognise who in the wider local system is best able to deliver this and, in particular, the Group has recommended that district councils should be given a greater role in promoting community awareness of County Lines and building resilience in the community.

## Communication and transparency

Media coverage tends to focus on the violence at the end of the supply line. There also seems to be a challenge in overcoming a societal view that some drug taking may be acceptable. In a way, this may have been supported by mixed or absent messaging about how drug taking is socially unacceptable and that significant personal abuse and harm is exercised by gangs throughout the supply line. The VVF has a strategic objective to improve the visibility and awareness of partnership activity and the Group has concluded that a clearer communications strategy should be developed to address this.

## Pandemic

The Covid-19 pandemic and resulting lockdown occurred after the conclusion of this review and so there is no specific mention of it in the main report. Whilst there may be some anecdotal evidence, it is far too early to speculate with any authority on its impact on County Lines and gangs' activity. However, an indirect effect may be that national focus is becoming redirected to concern about mental health and personal physical health as a result of prolonged lockdown and social restrictions. It is important that the focus on County Lines and gangs' activity is not diluted as a result and that the issue remains near the top of both national and local policy agendas. Statutory agencies already struggle to react quickly enough to the dynamic evolution of the County Lines model without further diluting their focus.

## Glossary

BAME	Widely used abbreviation for Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (used to refer to members of non-white communities in the UK).
Children's Commissioner	The Children's Commissioner has powers to highlight the views of children and young people and influence policymakers to make changes. The Commissioner is independent of Government and Parliament. A link to website for the Children's Commissioner is here - <a href="#">Children's Commissioner</a>
The Children's Society	A charity providing a range of free and confidential services to children, young people, adults and families. It works in partnership with statutory and other agencies to deliver joined-up services and interventions. A link to the website of the Children's Society is here - <a href="#">Childrens-society-east</a>
County Lines	County Lines is a term used for organised drug dealing networks usually controlled from urban areas which distribute drugs across a county (and county borders) using runners, who are often young and vulnerable, and which is co-ordinated by utilising untraceable mobile phones.
Essex Child and Family Wellbeing Service	Virgin Care and Barnardo's provide a range of child and family health services in Essex which includes Health Visitors, Parenting Support, School Nursing, and Family Health. A link to the website of this service is here - <a href="#">Essex Family Wellbeing</a>
Essex Council for Voluntary Youth Services	An independent voice of the voluntary youth sector in Essex which aims to support, network and resource the voluntary youth sector whilst building links with statutory services that wish to engage with the sector. A link to the website of this service is here - <a href="#">www.ecvys.org.uk</a>
Essex District Councils	In addition to all the District Councils in Essex, this term also includes the Borough Councils in Essex and Chelmsford City Council
Essex Youth Offending Service (YOS)	The Essex Youth Offending Service supervises young people subject to interventions ordered by Magistrates and Crown Courts and cautions issued by Essex Police. Essex YOS also oversees the youth justice system in Essex county. Essex YOS works to prevent offending and reoffending and to ensure that custody is safe, secure, and addresses the causes of their offending behaviour. A link to the website of this service is here - <a href="#">essex-youth-offending-service</a>
Essex Youth Service/The Youth Service	Runs youth services for young people in Essex. A link to the website of this service is here - <a href="#">Essex youth service</a>
Family Innovation Fund	This is a fund developed by Essex County Council and its partners to help voluntary and community groups to establish early help services such as coaching, peer

	support, counselling and mediation, and managing aggressive behaviour. A link to more information is here - <a href="#">Essex Family Innovation Fund</a>
Family Solutions	Family Solutions is aimed at helping families with a range of issues on a voluntary basis. They work with families for up to 12 months by helping them identify their own solutions to their problems. A link to this service is here - <a href="#">Essex Family Solutions</a>
Full Circle	A single integrated service to co-ordinate support for people across prison, courts, probation and police custody settings and encompassing services for older people, people with learning disabilities, substance misuse and mental health problems. A link to more information on this service is here - <a href="#">Full Circle</a>
The Home Office	The Home Office is the lead national government department for immigration and passports, drugs policy, crime, fire, counter-terrorism and police. A link to the Home Office website is here - <a href="#">The Home Office</a>
Home Office Early Intervention Youth Fund	The Government launched its <a href="#">serious violence strategy</a> in April 2018. Within the strategy was a fund available to Police and Crime Commissioners to bid (as lead bidders) with local community safety partnerships for funding to support targeted early interventions and prevention activity for young people.
Local Education Authority (LEA)	Has oversight of all schools in their area including the distribution and monitoring of funding for some schools, in partnership with the Schools Forum. They also co-ordinate the admissions process. In Essex the LEA is Essex County Council.
National Crime Agency	An operationally independent non-ministerial government department leading the UK's fight to cut serious and organised crime. A link to the website of the National Crime Agency is here - <a href="#">National-crime-agency</a>
National County Lines Coordination Centre	Launched in September 2018. A new multi-agency team to develop a national intelligence picture of the complexity and scale of county lines and promote engagement across government.
People and Families Policy and Scrutiny Committee (PAF)	An Essex County Council Scrutiny Committee, comprising elected Councillors, that reviews and scrutinises the planning and provision of local services. PAF looks at education, social care and children and families' services.
OFSTED	The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills. It is a non-ministerial Government department. It inspects and regulates services that care for and educate children and young people. More information on OFSTED is available using this link - <a href="#">OFSTED</a>
Police Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC)	This is an elected post. The Commissioner sets the priorities for Essex Police and Essex County Fire & Rescue Service, sets the budgets and tax precepts, and holds the Constable and Chief Fire Officer to account for their

	services' performance. A link to the website of the PFCC is here - <a href="#">PFCC</a>
Police Fire and Crime Panel	The Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner will be scrutinised by the Police, Fire and Crime Panel. Their role is to support the effective exercise of the functions of the PFCC. A link for further information is here - <a href="#">PFC Panel</a>
Pupil Referral Unit (PRU)	Pupil Referral Unit - An alternative education provision for children who are not able to attend school. This could be because they have a short- or long-term illness, have been excluded, or are a new starter waiting for a mainstream school place.
Public Health	The team within County Councils and unitary councils' which commission preventative health services such as health checks, weight management programmes, and other healthy lifestyle programmes.
Safe in Essex	The Children's Society and Kids Inspire provision of either one to one or group support for young people aged 8-19 with risky behaviours, who are previously unknown to statutory services and who have not previously received any specialist interventions. A link to further information is here - <a href="#">Safe-in-Essex</a>
Safer Essex	Is the local statutory Community Safety Partnership (CSP) in each district council area. The purpose of the Partnership is to provide a strategic and co-operative approach to addressing local crime and disorder between agencies and the communities within the area.
Timpson Review	This made 30 recommendations to ensure exclusions are used appropriately and that Government commits to new school accountability. A link to the review is here - <a href="#">The Timpson Review</a>
Violence Reduction Units/Violence and Vulnerability Unit	Government funding was awarded in 2018 to set up specialist local teams to tackle violent crime in their area. The Violence Reduction Units bring together different organisations, including the police, local government, health, community leaders and other key partners to tackle violent crime by understanding its root causes and come up with a co-ordinated response.
Violence and Vulnerability Framework (VVF)	A framework to encourage a coordinated approach amongst organisations who are working to reduce the threat of violence across Essex. Its aims include improving the visibility, awareness and effectiveness of partnership activity and identifying opportunities to add value to existing and planned activities.

## Annex 1 - Background, Terms of Reference and Membership

### Motion to Full Council

The issues of drug gangs, knife crime and county lines were discussed at Full Council on 12 December 2018 and the following motion passed:

This Council recognises the impact of drug gangs, knife crime and county lines as a local, regional and national issue.

This Council commends the work of multi-agency statutory and voluntary partners in Essex, Southend and Thurrock in relation to these issues, particularly given the judgement of “Outstanding” by Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Probation, following a recent inspection.

This Council is pleased to see this work is being recognised by the Home Office in awarding the sum of £640k to the Police, Crime and Fire Commissioner’s Office to further expand this multi-agency work.

This Council therefore:

- Calls upon all political parties to work together to drive down the impact of drug gangs, knife crime and county lines on the residents of Essex.
- Requests that the People and Families Policy and Scrutiny Committee has oversight of and contributes to the multi-agency strategy and its development.

### Full Committee discussion

The People and Families Policy and Scrutiny Committee had initial discussions with representatives of Essex Police and the Police Fire Crime Commissioners Office at its February and April 2019 meetings respectively and a link to the meeting papers for both those meetings is here:

[PAF 14 February 2019 meeting papers](#)

[PAF 11 April 2019 papers](#)

Thereafter, the Committee subsequently resolved to establish a Task and Finish Group to conduct a detailed review. The initial current scoping agreed by the Committee was as follows:

## Terms of Reference

To consider the adequacy of current agency work to reduce the destructive impacts of gang culture in Essex. To have oversight of, and contribute to, the multi-agency strategy and its development.

## Key Lines of Enquiry

- (i) To gain assurance that challenges being faced have been clearly defined and recognised by all agencies;
- (ii) To gain assurance that the role and responsibilities of all agencies is clear;
- (iii) To gain assurance that, to the extent necessary, there is an organised and robust system wide (and partnership) working in challenging and reducing the destructive impacts of gang culture;
- (iv) To understand ECCs specific role and its contribution as a key contributor to and driver of actions being taken.

## Membership

Volunteers were sought from beyond the membership of the People and Families Policy and Scrutiny Committee to serve on the Task and Finish Group and final membership was agreed as below:

Councillor Carlo Guglielmi (Lead Member)  
Councillor Jenny Chandler  
Councillor Mark Durham  
Councillor Anthony Hedley  
Councillor Peter May  
Councillor John Moran  
Councillor Pat Reid

## Annex 2 - Library of background reports and publications

Prior to and during the course of the scrutiny, a virtual library of supporting documents and reports, news articles, was established and maintained.

1. Article - MPs call for police in schools to cut youth violence – BBC.co.uk – July 2019;
2. Counting-Lives-disrupting-child-criminal-exploitation-Parliamentary Briefing-The Childrens Society - July 2019;
3. Counting-Lives-report-summary – The Childrens Society - July 2019;
4. Grooming-gangs-and-victim-support- debate-briefing-14th-May 2019 -The Childrens Society;
5. Home Affairs Select Committee - Serious Youth Violence - 31 July 2019;
6. Home Affairs Select Committee - Serious Youth Violence - summary of report – 31 July 2019;
7. Causes of knife crime and serious violence – London Assembly briefing;
8. Article - National County Lines Coordination Centre to crack down on drug gangs – bbc.co.uk - 21 September 2018
9. Press article - stop exclusions and close pupil referral units – Evening Standard – 20 June 2019;
10. Serious-Youth-Violence-briefing- The Childrens Society- March-2019;
11. Youth Select Committee- Knife Crime Inquiry – The Childrens Society Submission - June 2019;
12. Youth Services Funding- 24<sup>th</sup> July 2019 – The Childrens Society-and-Barnardos;



## Annex 3 - Contributors

Evidence gathering took place between August and November 2019. Members would like to extend their gratitude to those who contributed to the review. These were:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title and organisation</b>
Pastor James Bell	Tile Kiln Evangelical Church (Chelmsford)
Rachel Brett	CEO, Essex Council for Voluntary Youth Services (ECVYS)
Ian Davidson	Chief Executive of Tendring District Council, ex-Chairman of Safer Essex and representative of the Essex Community Safety Partnerships.
Duncan Evans	National Crime Agency Co-ordinator for County Lines (representing the NPCC National Police Chiefs Council)
Leanne Fuller	Service Manager, Safe-In Essex, Children's Society [and also manages the Children at risk of Exploitation Team]
Jane Gardner	Deputy Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex
Tanya Gillett (twice)	Head of Youth Offending, Youth Offending Service
Councillor Ray Gooding	Cabinet Member – Education and Skills, Essex County Council, Essex County Council
Tracey Harman	West LPA Commander, Chief Superintendent 2220, West Local Policing Area, Essex Police
Ben Hughes,	Head of Wellbeing and Public Health, Essex County Council
Clare Kershaw	Director – Education, Essex County Council
Councillor Dick Madden	Cabinet Member – Performance, Business Planning and Partnerships, Essex County Council
Councillor Louise McKinlay	Cabinet Member – Children and Families, Essex County Council
Michael O'Brien	Head of Specialist Education Services, Essex County Council
James Pearson	Team Manager Youth Offending Service/Team Manager ISSP, Essex County Council
Jane Ryan (twice)	Acting Team Manager, ISS Team and Gangs Prevention Service, Youth Offending Service

Altogether the Group held 12 evidence sessions (some with more than one witness in attendance) over five main evidence days. Most evidence was oral although some written material was also considered. Advance questions were provided in many instances to help structure the discussions.

Tanya Gillett, Head of Youth Offending, has been a key subject matter support to the Group and the Group would like to express their gratitude to her for her advice and guidance. In two instances (sessions with Jane Ryan) Tanya withdrew from her advisory role and attended as a witness.

## Annex 4 - Written evidence

Power Point presentation from James Pearson, Team Manager Youth Offending Service/Team Manager ISSP, Essex County Council;

Power Point presentation from Ben Hughes, Head of Wellbeing and Public Health, Essex County Council;

Power Point presentation from Duncan Evans, National Crime Agency Co-ordinator for County lines;

Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex's Work Programme;

Written answers from Councillors Gooding and McKinlay to pre-set advance questions.

Lived Experiences of County Lines, gangs and criminal exploitation in Essex – Essex Youth Offending research and evaluation project 2019 – Essex Youth Offending Team

The following events were attended by some members of the Task and Finish Group to support the review

Essex Council for Voluntary Youth Services Conference 2019 – Youth Violence and Knife Crime in Essex – 12 October 2019 – Anglia Ruskin University, Chelmsford

The National Combating gangs, Violence and Weapon Crime Conference – 3 December 2019 – London Government Events.

## Annex 5 - Limitations of the review

The Group is content that it has received a range of views and collected evidence from a number of key witnesses to help it have oversight of multi-agency arrangements both already in place and also being planned to confront issues around drug gangs, knife crime and county lines and the overall co-ordination of services. This has enabled it to come to some reasonable evidence-backed conclusions. However, the Group also acknowledge that, due to time and resource constraints, they have only just 'dipped below the surface' on some of the associated issues identified.

There were further investigations that could have been made and other witnesses with whom the Group could have consulted. For example, the Group could have visited local schools to see at first hand the perception and level of awareness of vulnerability to drugs, gang culture and bullying and coercion. However, the Group acknowledges that such an exercise would still have had limitations as it would have relied on a small sample size of all schools in Essex, and in a relatively concentrated geographical area, when trying to draw broader conclusions.

The Group have not spoken directly with parents, children or young people. Instead, through discussions with representatives from the Youth Offending Service and representatives from the voluntary sector, the Group believes it has received a reasonable representative evidence base of their views and experience.

The Group did not look in any detail at the direct causal links that may exist between certain health and environmental issues and vulnerability to drug and gang activity although there is significant evidence to indicate such links.

This information is issued by:  
**Essex County Council**  
**Democracy and Democracy**

**Contact us:**  
cmis.essex.gov.uk  
03330 139 825

Democracy and Transparency  
E2, Zone 4  
Essex County Council  
County Hall,  
Chelmsford  
Essex, CM1 1QH

Sign up to Keep Me Posted email updates: **[essex.gov.uk/keepmeposted](https://essex.gov.uk/keepmeposted)**

 **Essex\_CC**  
 **[facebook.com/essexcountycouncil](https://facebook.com/essexcountycouncil)**

The information contained in this document can be translated, and/or made available in alternative formats, on request.

Published September 2020.

# The Leader's Report of Cabinet Issues

This report asks Council

- a) To receive the minutes of the Cabinet meetings held on 21 July and 15 September 2020 and attached to the report as appendices 2-3; and
- b) to note that since the last meeting of the Council there has been one decision that has been taken as key decision of special urgency which was not on the forward plan (Constitution para 19.18) as set out at appendix 1.

## Recommendations

To receive the minutes of the Cabinet meetings held on 21 July and 15 September 2020 and notification that an urgent decision has been taken.

### Key decision taken with no prior notice

The following decision was taken without any prior notice by agreement of the Chairman of the Corporate Policy and Scrutiny Committee. As such it is required by law to be reported to the Council.

DATE PUBLISHED	CABINET MEMBER	TITLE OF DECISION	REFERENCE NUMBER
7 August 2020	Leader	Cessation of Temporary Traffic Management Measures – Brentwood Town Centre Covid-19 Response.	FP/782/08/20

## Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet meeting that was held remotely on Tuesday 21 July 2020

---

### Present:

Councillor	Cabinet Member Responsibility
Councillor D Finch	Leader of the Council (Chairman)
Councillor T Ball	Economic Development
Councillor S Barker	Customer, Communities, Culture and Corporate
Councillor K Bentley	Deputy Leader and Infrastructure
Councillor R Gooding	Education and Skills
Councillor D Madden	Performance, Business Planning and Partnerships
Councillor J Spence	Health and Adult Social Care
Councillor S Walsh	Environment and Climate Change Action
Councillor C Whitbread	Finance

Councillors Mackrory, Pond, Henderson, Grundy, Turrell, Weston, Wood, Mitchell, Hedley and Steptoe were also present.

### 1. **Membership, Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations of Interest.**

The report of Membership, Apologies and Declarations was received and the following were noted:

1. There were no changes to membership since the last meeting of Cabinet.
2. Apologies for absence were received from Cllr L McKinlay (Cabinet Member for Children and Families) and Mr Gavin Jones, Chief Executive.
3. There were no declarations of interest.

### 2. **Minutes: 26 May 2020**

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 May 2020 were agreed as a correct record and would be signed by the Chairman.

### 3. **Questions from the public**

There were no questions from members of the public.

### 4. **2020/21 Financial Overview as at the First Quarter Stage (FP/693/05/20)**

The Cabinet received a report setting out the forecast financial position of Essex County Council's (ECC) revenue and capital budgets as at the first quarter stage of the 2020/21 financial year. The report advised that there was a forecast over spend of £12.3m (1.2%) against a net revenue budget of

£1bn. The over spend was directly driven by the additional costs and lost income or savings, resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Cabinet Member for Finance provided answers to questions raised by Councillors Henderson and Mackrory in respect of the funding gap resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, and the establishment of a multi-disciplinary team in Tendring. Further written replies would be provided to Councillor Henderson with regards to where monies would be allocated from the £1.4m welfare fund, and to Councillor Mackrory regarding ongoing funding arrangements for the multi-disciplinary team in Tendring and the position in respect of dormant accounts.

Written responses would also be provided to Councillors Pond and Henderson by the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills in conjunction with the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills in connection with possible subsidies for school transport on commercial bus routes.

The Cabinet Member for Infrastructure would provide a written response to Councillor Mackrory in respect of the budgetary relationship between Parking Partnerships and Local Highways Panels. A written response would also be provided to Councillor Mackrory by the Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change Action in respect of the rephasing of flood prevention works.

#### **Resolved:**

1. To draw down funds from reserves as follows:
  - i. **£5m** from the Reserve for Future Capital Funding to the Deputy Leader and Infrastructure portfolio to cover revenue expenditure on rectifying carriageway defects, environmental works and safety measures (section 5.9.ii). Whilst the Council has received grant funding towards this expenditure, the grant can only be applied to finance capital expenditure.
  - ii. **£2.6m** from the Emergency Reserve to the Health and Adult Social Care portfolio relating to the loss of Residential income as a result of the impact of COVID-19 (section 5.8.iii).
  - iii. **£828,000** from the Private Finance Initiatives (PFI) Equalisation Reserves to the Education and Skills portfolio in relation to Debden School PFI (£501,000) and Clacton Secondary schools' PFI (£497,000) (section 5.5.ii).
  - iv. **£320,000** from the Adults Digital Programme Reserve to the Health and Adult Social Care portfolio to fund projects such as bed finder, electronic home care and shared care records (section 5.8.iii).
  - v. **£186,000** from the Transformation Reserve to the Education and Skills portfolio to cover costs incurred on the Demand Responsive Transport project (section 5.5.ii)



vi. **£175,000** from the Transformation Reserve to the Children and Families portfolio to support Divisional Based Intervention Team staffing (section 5.1.iii).

vii. **£156,000** from the Community Initiatives Fund Reserve to the Customer, Communities, Culture and Corporate portfolio to cover expenditure that was incurred in Quarter 1 (section 5.2.ii).

viii. **£247,000** from the Transformation Reserve to the Children Families portfolio to introduce a Multi-Disciplinary team in Tendring (section 5.1.iii).

2. To appropriate funds to reserves as follows:

i. **£15.5m** to the Emergency Reserve and **£1.2m** to the General Balance from Health and Adult Social Care portfolio due to lower demand levels than originally anticipated for COVID-19 funding approved in relation to hospital discharge beds, staffing and special equipment. (section 5.8.iii)

ii. **£843,000** to the Private Finance Initiatives (PFI) Equalisation Reserves from Infrastructure portfolio in relation to A130 PFI due to lower in year predicted costs (section 5.9.ii).

iii. **£234,000** to the Private Finance Initiatives (PFI) Equalisation Reserves from Education and Skills portfolio in relation to Building schools for the future and Woodlands PFI (section 5.5.ii).

3. To approve the following adjustments:

i. Retrospectively approve the draw down of **£650,000** from the Insurance Reserve to the Finance portfolio as part of the 2019/20 Provisional Outturn. A late insurance provision was charged against the Insurance Cost Recovery Account (ICRA) at Outturn due to a new claim being identified.

ii. Vire **£113,000** from the Economic Development portfolio to the Finance RSSS portfolio following the Place and Public Health management restructure (sections 5.3.ii & 5.14.ii)

iii. Vire **£29,000** from the Children and Families portfolio to the Customer, Communities, Culture and Corporate RSS portfolio relating to support arrangements for a Technical Services contract (sections 5.1.iii & 5.13.ii)

iv. To amend the capital budget as shown in Appendices C (i) and C (ii) which allows for capital slippage of **£24.1m**, capital budget additions of **£15.4m**, capital budget reductions of **£15.3m** and advanced works of **£5.5m** (see section 7.2).

4. Note that a Capital Receipts Strategy is being developed to enable a broader use of capital receipts in-line with the flexibility currently permitted by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government; this strategy will be brought to Cabinet and then to Full Council for approval. If approved, the Council will then potentially be able to return £5m to the Reserve for Future Capital Funding (see section 2.1.i).
5. **Optimisation of Essex Housing – creation of Limited Liability Partnerships (LLP) (FP/692/05/20)**

Cabinet received a report seeking approval to establish a LLP Structure for part of Essex Housing as well as establishing new governance and operational processes.

The Leader responded to a question from Councillor Pond in respect of the loan arrangements for the LLP. The Cabinet Member for Economic Development also responded to questions from Councillors Pond, Henderson and Mackrory in relation to responsibility for planning applications, communication with Borough and District Councils, the involvement of the scrutiny function, rent levels and the accountability of the LLP.

**Resolved:**

1. Agree to:
  - the establishment of a limited liability partnership, Essex Housing Development LLP; and
  - delegate to the Leader, in consultation with the Cabinet Members for Economic Development and Finance, the Section 151 Officer and the Monitoring Officer authority to establish a further LLP to own, rent and manage housing.
2. Agree that ECC becomes a member and designated member of the LLPs outlined at 2.1, with a 99% interest.
3. Agree on behalf of the Council and as the 100% shareholder of Seax Trading Limited that Seax Trading Limited becomes a member and designated member of each LLP outlined at 2.1, with a 1% interest.
4. Agree that the management board of the LLPs outlined at 2.1 will be established as set out in 4.2.6 and 4.2.7 of the report.
5. Agree that ECC will enter into service level agreements with the LLPs set out in 2.1 for the provision of services by ECC to the LLP so that the LLP can purchase staff services in order to offer its services.
6. Agree that the Director, Performance, Investment and Delivery may:

- agree the terms of the constitution of each LLP which will be set out in the LLP Agreements between Essex County Council, Seax Trading Limited and each individual LLP; and
- adopt and implement each LLP's delivery plan

after consulting the Section 151 Officer and the Monitoring Officer.

7. Agree, on behalf of the Council, the Essex Housing Five Year Business Plan at Appendix A.
8. Agree the Essex Housing Annual Delivery Plan 2020/21 contained in the Confidential Appendix.

6. **Decisions taken by or in consultation with Cabinet Members (FP/704/05/20)**

The report of decisions taken by or in consultation with Cabinet Members since the last meeting of the Cabinet was noted. The report included details of decisions exempted from call in in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

7. **Date of Next Meeting**

It was noted that the next meeting of the Cabinet would take place on Tuesday 15 September 2020 at 10.00am. It was expected that the meeting would be held online.

8. **Urgent Business**

There was no urgent business.

**Exclusion of the Press and Public**

**Resolved:**

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the remaining item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as specified in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 – information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person).

9. **Optimisation of Essex Housing – creation of Limited Liability Partnerships (LLP) – Confidential Appendix (FP/692/05/20)**  
(Press and public excluded)

The Cabinet considered the Confidential Appendix to report FP/692/05/20 which contained information exempt from publication referred to in that report and in decisions taken earlier in the meeting (minute 5 above refers).

10. **Urgent Exempt Business**

There was no urgent exempt business.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 10.32am.

## Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet meeting that was held remotely on Tuesday 15 September 2020

---

### Present:

Councillor	Cabinet Member Responsibility
Councillor T Ball	Economic Development
Councillor S Barker	Customer, Communities, Culture and Corporate
Councillor K Bentley	Deputy Leader and Infrastructure (Chairman)
Councillor R Gooding	Education and Skills
Councillor D Madden	Performance, Business Planning and Partnerships
Councillor L McKinley	Children and Families
Councillor J Spence	Health and Adult Social Care
Councillor C Whitbread	Finance

Councillors Mackrory, Henderson, Turrell, Mitchell and Steptoe were also present.

### 1. **Membership, Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations of Interest.**

The report of Membership, Apologies and Declarations was received and the following were noted:

1. There were no changes to membership since the last meeting of Cabinet.
2. Apologies for absence were received from Cllr D Finch (Leader of the Council), Cllr S Walsh (Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change Action) and Cllr C Pond.
3. There were no declarations of interest.

### 2. **Minutes: 21 July 2020**

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 July 2020 were agreed as a correct record and would be signed by the Chairman.

### 3. **Questions from the public**

There were no questions from members of the public.

### 4. **Reopening of Framework for procurement of individual packages of support for children and young adults with special educational needs or a disability (FP/775/07/20)**

The Cabinet received a report seeking authority to draw down £13.2m from the high needs block of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) and to reopen the Individual Packages of Educational Support (IPES) framework that was previously let by open procurement in 2018.

The Cabinet Member for Education and Skills responded to questions from Councillors Henderson and Mackrory relating to the importance of quality of service provision being equally as important as cost and the potential impact of Covid-19. A written reply would also be provided to both Councillors in respect of the capacity at Pupil Referral Units.

**Resolved:**

1. That the draw-down of an additional £13,200,000 from the high needs block within the Dedicated Schools Grant budget be approved.
2. That the Framework for individuals of packages of support to allow new providers to join and existing providers to refresh their existing pricing schedule and bid for additional lots that were currently in place be reopened.
3. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for Skills and Education in consultation with the Director for Education to award contracts to any additional providers who joined the Framework following a successful procurement process.

**5. Extension of contracts for local bus services (FP/688/04/20)**

Cabinet received a report relating to contracts for 80 local bus services subsidised by ECC. One of these contracts was due to expire in March 2021 with the remaining 79 contracts due to expire in July 2021. The report asked the Cabinet Member for a decision to extend these 80 local bus contracts at the current rate until July 2022.

The Cabinet Member for Education and Skills responded to questions from Councillors Mackrory and Henderson relating to the importance of aligning with the priorities of the Essex Climate Action Commission, and the timing of ongoing consultation given the impact of possible local government reorganisation.

**Resolved:**

1. That, subject to agreement with the operator, that the Council will extend the 80 contracts set out in Appendix A until July 2022 with the current operator at current prices, at an annual cost of £7,475,201.85.
2. That, where extension of services cannot be agreed with an operator, to go out to the market to procure a contract for the services for the period to July 2022 on terms and conditions to be agreed by the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills.

**6. Procurement of Programme Management for property-related capital works (FP/684/04/20)**

Cabinet received a report advising that ECC had a contract with Mitie Ltd (Mitie) under which Facilities Management and Property Management services were provided. Part way through the contract, it was decided to buy additional services from Mitie relating to the provision of a Programme Management Office (PMO) to manage capital works to property. The agreement relating to the provision of these services was due to expire on 30 September 2020. In 2018 all other Mitie services were extended until 30 September 2026. The report asked Cabinet that Mitie Limited should provide the PMO until 30 September 2026. The report was a follow-on paper from the previous extension report that Cabinet approved in December 2018 in relation to the extension of the overarching main facilities / property management contract with Mitie.

The Cabinet Member for Customer, Communities, Culture and Corporate responded to a question from Councillor Mackrory regarding the quality of service provision that may be expected under the extended contract.

**Resolved:**

1. That the PMO element of the Mitie Contract for PMO services be extended from 1 October 2020 until 30 September 2026.
  2. That the current fee agreement with Mitie Limited for PMO services be extended from 1 October 2020 until 31 March 2021 on the current rates.
  3. To tender into a new fee agreement with Mitie Limited for PMO services commencing 1 April 2021 until 30 September 2026 on the revised rates set out in the confidential appendix.
7. **Council's Corporate IT Systems Programme - exit and implementation (FP/709/05/20)**

Cabinet received a report seeking funding for the ongoing programme costs to implement the first phase of Essex County Council's (ECC) new Oracle Fusion Cloud system which would be the IT system used as ECC's main financial and employee record.

**Resolved:**

1. To approve the drawdown from the Technology Solutions Reserve of £7.918m to fund the outstanding programme resource costs to implement the first phase of Oracle Fusion Cloud (Tranche 1) and the exit from the Fujitsu contract to be funded from reserves as follows:
  - £533,000 in 2020/21
  - £7.385m in 2021/22

2. To note that following planned due diligence, the full life estimated costs of the programme had increased by £450,000 to £13.59m including contingency of £500,000. The contingency was to be ringfenced within the Technology Solutions Reserve as required across 2020/21 and 2021/22 as was set out in section 4.1. Drawdown of the contingency from the reserve would be subject to separate governance.
  3. To note that there was an ongoing estimated additional cost of £679,000 per year from 2022/23 as a result of moving to Oracle Fusion Cloud. This related to the future support model required to manage Oracle Fusion Cloud and the costs for third-party subcontracts being replaced. Proposals to mitigate these costs were in development and unquantified, however, it was anticipated that these will offset the additional costs identified.
8. **Section 75 Agreement for the Provision of Adult Mental Health Services (FP/777/07/20)**

Cabinet received a report advising that the current Section 75 Partnership Agreement with the Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust (EPUT) for the provision of adult mental health services would come to an end on 30 September 2020. The report sought approval to enter into a new Section 75 Partnership Agreement with EPUT for a two year period, with the possibility of extending it for a further six months.

The Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care responded to questions from Councillors Henderson and Mackrory regarding measures to ensure there was no increase in waiting times and how any additional demand would be met. The Cabinet Member would refer a request from Councillor Henderson for a further report in respect of waiting times for both adults and young people to officers for response.

**Resolved:**

1. To enter into a new Section 75 Partnership Agreement with EPUT from 1 October 2020 for a period of two years with the right for the council to extend for a further six months.
  2. That the Executive Director for Adult Social Care be authorised to approve the terms of the proposed new Section 75 Agreement.
9. **Procurement of a Framework for Live at Home (LAH) Domiciliary Support (FP/778/08/20)**

Cabinet received a report requesting approval of a new Live at Home framework for the provision of long-term domiciliary care and support services, to commence in February 2021.

**Resolved:**



1. To invite tenders to establish a new Live at Home framework for the provision of Domiciliary Care Services across Essex, for a period of 4 years on the basis set out in paragraphs 4.2-4.8 and section 5 of the report.
  2. Subject to any change required by paragraph 2.3, the pricing matrices for the first 12 months would be based on the pricing matrices set out in Appendix C with an annual price review thereafter.
  3. To uplift the minimum hourly rate for standard domiciliary services delivered via the Live at Home Framework and spot purchasing arrangements from £16.56 to £18.04 for all new and existing packages, with the exception of 24 hour / live in care and night sleeping services, with effect from 4 April 2021.
  4. That tenders would be evaluated using the following ratios for price and quality of 60:40 with some of the quality evaluation questions focusing on social value e.g. employment of local workforce.
  5. That the Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care would:
    - (i) authorise the amended pricing matrices for each year of the framework period and any increases required to the rates paid for spot placements to correlate with the minimum price points on the matrices for the framework;
    - (ii) agree whether or not to open the Framework to New Entrants and undertake a full refresh of the Framework at the end of Year 2 of the framework period in the districts where (on average over the preceding 12 month period) in excess of 30% of the packages offered through the framework are being placed with providers outside of the Live at Home Framework (indicating the need for additional framework capacity); and
    - (iii) award the contracts to the successful providers upon completion of the procurement process and any refresh processes undertaken at the end of Year 2 of the framework period, including any changes to districts which have not been opened to New Entrants.
  6. That the Executive Director for Adult Social Care, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care, be authorised to extend the current framework agreement by a period of up to 6 months and to review the interim price arrangements, should the Covid-19 pandemic impact on the market's ability to respond to the tender or delay the procurement process.
10. **Transforming Community Care (FP/776/07/20)**

Cabinet received a report in relation to improving the effectiveness of community care services and improving outcomes for frail elderly Essex

residents to help them to live as independently as possible and to help them recover from illness or setbacks. The report asked the Cabinet to agree to award a contract to Newton Europe Limited, to provide consultancy services to support ECC in the design and implementation of the Transforming Community Care Programme.

The Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care responded to a question from Councillor Turrell regarding the controls that were in place to ensure effective delivery under the contract.

**Resolved:**

1. To award a contract to Newton Europe, via the Bloom Consultancy Solutions framework, for up to 2 years at a value of up to £9m to support ECC in its Design and Implementation Phase of the Transforming Community Care Programme and to support health partners in the wider programme scope, subject to agreement of terms and conditions by the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the s151 officer.
2. That the contract awarded to Newton Europe shall permit work to be undertaken for Essex CCGs and NHS Trusts operating in Essex.
3. That the Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care may agree the terms on which any work for NHS bodies was undertaken.
4. That £2.3m was drawn down from the Transformation Reserve in 2021/22 in order to fund the element of the programme implementation cost to ECC falling in that financial year.

**11. Decisions taken by or in consultation with Cabinet Members (FP/757/07/20)**

The report of decisions taken by or in consultation with Cabinet Members since the last meeting of the Cabinet was noted. The report included details of decisions exempted from call in in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

**12. Dates of Future Meetings**

It was noted that the next meeting of the Cabinet would take place on Tuesday 20 October 2020 at 10.00am. The meeting was expected to be held online.

The following future meetings, to take place at 10am were also noted:

**2020** - 24 November and 15 December

**2021** - 19 January, 23 February, 16 March, 20 April, 25 May, 22 June, 20 July, 21 September, 19 October, 23 November and 21 December

**13. Urgent Business**

There was no urgent business.

### **Exclusion of the Press and Public**

#### **Resolved:**

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the remaining item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as specified in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 – information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person).

14. **Confidential Appendix: Procurement of Programme Management for property-related capital works (FP/684/04/20)**  
(Press and public excluded)

The Cabinet considered the Confidential Appendix to report FP/684/04/20 which contained information exempt from publication referred to in that report and in decisions taken earlier in the meeting (minute 6 above refers).

15. **Confidential appendix: Council's Corporate IT Systems Programme - exit and implementation (FP/709/05/20)**  
(Press and public excluded)

The Cabinet considered the Confidential Appendix to report FP/709/05/20 which contained information exempt from publication referred to in that report and in decisions taken earlier in the meeting (minute 7 above refers).

16. **Urgent Exempt Business**

There was no urgent exempt business.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 10.44am.

## **Agenda item 13**

### **Council Issues**

#### **Dates of Future Meetings of the Council**

The dates of the forthcoming meetings, to be held on Tuesdays at 10:00am, have been agreed by Council.

However, it has been noted by the Chairman that the date for the approval of the annual budget in 2021 now coincides with half-term for many Essex schools (a week that is normally avoided to permit full attendance) and the date for the Annual Meeting in 2021 is very close to the date of scheduled elections. Therefore, it is proposed to amend those two dates.

#### **Recommendations:**

1. That the next date of Council remains at 8 December 2020.
2. That the date of the budget-setting Council meeting that was to be on 16 February 2021 be rescheduled to 23 February 2021.
3. That the date of the Annual Meeting of Council that was to be on 11 May 2021 be rescheduled to 18 May 2021.
4. That the remaining meetings of Council remain at 13 July, 12 October and 7 December 2021.