
Minutes of the meeting of the Full Council, held in the Council Chamber County Hall, Chelmsford, Essex on Tuesday, 11 October 2016

Present:

Chairman: Councillor J F Aldridge

Vice-Chairman: Councillor J G Jowers

Councillors:

J Abbott	D Finch	M Mackrory
B Aspinell	M D Fisher	R A Madden
S Barker	R Gadsby	M McEwen
R L Bass	A Goggin	M McGeorge
A Bayley	R J Gooding	V Metcalfe
K Bentley	I Grundy	Lady Newton
D Blackwell	C Guglielmi	M J Page
K Bobbin	D Harris	C Pond
R G Boyce	A M Hedley	J M Reeves
A Brown	I Henderson	S Robinson
M Buckley	T M A Higgins	C Sargeant
S Canning	R Hirst	C Seagers
J Chandler	P Honeywood	K Smith
P Channer	R C Howard	J Spence
K Clempner	M Hoy	A Turrell
T Cutmore	N Hume	K Twitchen
M Danvers	A Jackson	S Walsh
J Deakin	E C Johnson	R G Walters
T Durcan	N Le Gresley	J Whitehouse
M Ellis	S Lissimore	A Wood
A Erskine	J Lodge	J A Young
F Ferguson		

Prayers

The meeting was preceded by prayers led by The Right Reverend Hugh Allan,

O.Praem. BA; Prior of Chelmsford and Parish Priest of Our Lady Immaculate and Chaplain to the Chairman of Essex County Council.

Public Questions

The Chairman welcomed Mrs Anne Davis, Tendring District Councillor, who had registered to speak.

Mrs Davis addressed Council and then asked:

'Will the Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning consider building a new grammar school for the Tendring District (and elsewhere in the County) in line with Theresa May's intentions for the future of education?'

Councillor Gooding thanked Mrs Davis for her question. He responded that Mrs Davis had very eloquently stated the case for the introduction of grammar schools but he noted that should the Council be minded to build any grammar school there would need to be a change in primary legislation. Consequently, the Council could not make such a decision.

The Chairman formally opened the meeting

The Chairman reminded those present that the meeting would be recorded and broadcast live over the internet.

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors G Butland, J Huntman, D J Kendall, J Knapman, D Louis, M Maddocks, A Naylor and J W Pike.

2 Declarations of Interest

- Councillor Aldridge declared a Code interest in relation to item 8, Motions, as a Foundation Governor of Chelmsford Grammar School.
- Councillor Bass declared a Code interest in relation to item 8, Motions, as a Foundation Governor of a Grammar School although having no role in admissions.
- Councillor Gooding declared a Code interest in relation to item 8, Motions, as a Governor of Bancroft's School.
- Councillor Erskine declared a Code interest in relation to item 8, Motions, as his wife was a Pharmacy Manager for Boots the Chemist.

3 Confirmation of the minutes of the meeting held on 12 July 2016

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 12 July 2016 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4 The Chief Executive's Report on Political Proportionality

The Chief Executive informed Council that Councillor David Finch, the Leader of the Conservative Group, had given notice that Councillor Andy Erskine had joined the Conservative Group on the Council. Cllr Erskine had been previously a member of the Non-aligned Group. This triggered a review of the political balance of the Council's committees and other bodies.

The recommendations were moved by Councillor Finch and seconded by Councillor Bentley and it was

Resolved:

1. That the revised political balance of the Council be noted.
2. That the seat allocations to political groups be changed so that the seat allocations on the Audit Committee be as follows:

Conservative 5
Liberal Democrat 1
Non-aligned 1

5 Chairman's Announcements and Communications**Recent Deaths****Councillor Harold (Jack) King**

The Chairman informed members that former Councillor Jack King died on 13 July at the age of 93. Mr King had been first elected to Essex County Council in 1989 to represent the Division of Canvey Island East. He had served on the Police Authority and the Fire & Public Protection and Local Flood Defence Committees until 1993.

The Chairman noted that he had been a well-known figure on Canvey Island, benefactor of Canvey Island Football Club and fundraiser for the Strokebusters Appeal.

Councillor Richard Boyd

The Chairman informed members that former Councillor Richard Boyd died on 3 October at the age of 71. Mr Boyd was already a Rochford District Councillor when first elected to Essex County Council in 1981 to represent the Division of Rayleigh North. He had served on numerous committees, including as Chairman of the Commercial Services Board, the Enterprise Committee and the Essex Police Authority amongst many others.

The Chairman noted that he had also been the Leader of the Essex County Council Liberal Democrat Group from 1993 to 1997.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Mackrory, Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group, spoke in tribute to former Councillor Boyd who had been appointed a Deputy Lieutenant of Essex in 1998.

Members stood in remembrance.

Award

The Chairman congratulated the Council's Prosper Project Team on winning the prestigious 'Changing Culture to improve Patient Safety' award at the National Patient Safety Awards. The Chairman informed Members that the work of the Prosper Project Team was significant in the care of patients and puts the prevention agenda in the forefront of the way those in care are treated.

The Prosper Project Team were present in the Council Chamber and, at the invitation of the Chairman, were congratulated by Councillor Madden, the Cabinet Member for Adults and Children, from whom on behalf of the Council, the Chairman also received the award.

6 Receipt of petitions and deputations

The Chairman received petitions concerning:

- Highways maintenance, from Councillor Robinson on behalf of the residents of Fourth Avenue, Chelmsford, and
- Road safety on the B1027, from Councillor Goggin on behalf of local residents of Flag Hill.

Both petitions were for the attention of Councillor Johnson, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport.

7 Executive Statement

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Finch, delivered an Executive Statement on 'Shaping Our Council for the Future' including references to:

- The vision and ambitions for the residents of Essex,
- Organisational design,
- A tribute to Councillor Bass (leaving the Cabinet) and
- Cabinet changes.

8 Motions

The Chairman ruled that the two Motions 'Grammar Schools' and 'Schools that

work for everyone' should be taken as one debate.

Grammar Schools

It was moved by Councillor Ferguson and seconded by Councillor Bayley that:

'This Council welcomes the news that the Government will create more Grammar Schools, one of the key policies of the UK Independence Party. It therefore resolves to fully support the introduction of new Grammar Schools in our County insisting they should be sited in areas which give the best chance of real social mobility.'

Schools that work for everyone

It was moved by Councillor Gooding and seconded by Councillor Spence that

'This Council:

- Welcomes the Government's Green Paper, 'Schools that work for everyone' and the intent that it contains to increase social mobility and ensure that everyone can aspire to the best for their children. These measures include the proposed expansion of existing grammar schools; the potential creation of new grammar schools and the sharing of expertise and good practice between all of the education sectors including independent schools and universities.
- Commits to consulting with local communities, head teachers and all Academies, Maintained, Independent and Grammar schools throughout the County.

In doing that, the Council:

- Recognises the achievement of Essex's existing Secondary and Grammar Schools.
- Reaffirms its commitment to achieving universal excellence in Essex education inter alia by all schools being good and outstanding and all children achieving their full potential.
- Applauds the outstanding head teachers we have in Essex and the role they have played in raising the number of good and outstanding schools in the county by almost 50% over the last four years.
- Acknowledges the part played by good facilities and applauds the Council's creation and planned expenditure on new school places to meet the growing demands together with the £85 million to be spent on special school places for the benefit of our most challenged children.'

It was moved by Councillor Gooding and seconded by Councillor Spence that the Motion moved by Councillor Ferguson and seconded by Councillor Bayley be amended to read as follows:

'This Council welcomes the news that the Government will create more Grammar Schools, subject to the conditions set out by the Prime Minister. It therefore resolves to fully support the introduction of new Grammar Schools in our County insisting they should be sited in areas which give the best chance of real social mobility and only introduced following full consultation throughout the County.'

The amendment moved by Councillor Gooding and seconded by Councillor Spence having been put to the meeting was declared to be carried and became the substantive Motion.

The substantive Motion having been put to the meeting was declared to be carried.

It was moved by Councillor Robinson and seconded by Councillor Whitehouse that the Motion moved by Councillor Gooding and seconded by Councillor Spence be amended to read as follows:

'This Council:

- Notes the Government's Green Paper, 'Schools that work for everyone' and the intent that it contains to increase social mobility and ensure that everyone can aspire to the best for their children. However this is unlikely to be achieved by the proposed expansion of existing grammar schools; the potential creation of new grammar schools and the sharing of expertise and good practice between all of the education sectors including independent schools and universities.
- Commits to consulting with local communities, head teachers and all Academies, Maintained, Independent and Grammar schools throughout the County.

In doing that, the Council:

- Recognises the achievement of Essex's existing Secondary and Grammar schools.
- Reaffirms its commitment to achieving universal excellence in Essex education inter alia by all schools being good and outstanding and all children achieving their full potential.
- Applauds the outstanding head teachers we have in Essex and the role they have played in raising the number of good and outstanding schools in the county by almost 50% over the last four years.
- Acknowledges the part played by good facilities and applauds the Council's creation and planned expenditure on new school places to meet the growing demands together with the £85 million to be spent on special school places.'

It was moved by Councillor Danvers and seconded by Councillor Bobbin that the Motion moved by Councillor Gooding and seconded by Councillor Spence be amended to read as follows:

'This Council:

- Notes the Government's Green Paper, 'Schools that work for everyone' and commits to present any emerging proposals to the relevant ECC scrutiny committee, before consulting with local communities, head teachers and all Academies, Maintained, Independent and Grammar schools throughout the County, utilising the wealth of experience to fully consider the impact of plans on young people across Essex.

In doing that, the Council:

- Recognises the achievement of Essex's existing schools and education staff.
- Reaffirms its commitment to achieving universal excellence in Essex education inter alia by all schools being good and outstanding and all children achieving their full potential.
- Applauds the outstanding head teachers we have in Essex and the role they have played in raising the number of good and outstanding schools in the county by almost 50% over the last four years.
- Acknowledges the part played by good facilities and applauds the Council's creation and planned expenditure on new school places to meet the growing demands together with the £85 million to be spent on special school places for the benefit of our most challenged children.'

The amendment moved by Councillor Robinson and seconded by Councillor Whitehouse having been put to the meeting was declared to be lost.

The amendment moved by Councillor Danvers and seconded by Councillor Bobbin having been put to the meeting was declared to be lost.

The original Motion having been put to the meeting was declared to be carried.

Essex Pharmacies under Threat

It was moved by Councillor Mackrory and seconded by Councillor Whitehouse that:

'This Council notes that as many as 3,000 community pharmacies are at risk after the Department of Health announced it was cutting their funding by £170 million. Of that 3,000, some 40% are located in the UK's top fifth most deprived neighbourhoods. However less than 5% of those at risk are in the country's most affluent postcodes.

Essex County Council therefore believes that the Government's plans threaten patient access to pharmacies and pharmacy services in Essex and more particularly in our most deprived areas. Our local pharmacies are at risk of closure or being forced to cut services such as free delivery of prescription drugs, family planning advice and advice on medicines. This will put more pressure on GPs, hospitals, impact social services and is at odds with the local Clinical Commissioning Groups' desire to increase the use of pharmacists to ease pressure on the already over stretched Accident and Emergency Services, and GPs, when

booking appointments is already very difficult.

We therefore call on the Government to abandon these cuts and maintain a fully-funded community pharmacy service and request the Leader of the Council to write to the Secretary of State for Health, NHS England and the Clinical Commissioning Groups in Essex expressing this view.'

Prior to the Motion being put, ten Members demanded a division by name by standing in their places.

The Motion having been put to the meeting it was declared to be lost by 21 votes for, 39 against and 5 abstentions.

Those voting for the Motion were Councillors:

J Abbott	T Durcan	M Mackrory
B Aspinell	M Fisher	M McGeorge
D Blackwell	D Harris	S Robinson
K Bobbin	I Henderson	C Sargeant
K Clempner	T Higgins	A Turrell
M Danvers	M Hoy	J Whitehouse
J Deakin	J Lodge	J Young

Those voting against the Motion were Councillors:

J F Aldridge	A Goggin	R A Madden
S Barker	R J Gooding	M McEwen
R L Bass	I Grundy	V Metcalfe
K Bentley	C Guglielmi	Lady Newton
A Brown	A M Hedley	M J Page
M Buckley	R Hirst	J M Reeves
S Canning	P Honeywood	C Seagers
J Chandler	R C Howard	K Smith
P Channer	N Hume	J Spence
T Cutmore	A Jackson	K Twitchen
A Erskine	E C Johnson	S Walsh
D Finch	J G Jowers	R G Walters
R Gadsby	S Lissimore	A Wood

Those abstaining were Councillors:

A Bayley	F Ferguson	C Pond
M Ellis	N Le Gresley	

Loneliness and Isolation

It was moved by Councillor Henderson and seconded by Councillor Young that:

‘This Council notes, with serious concern, research which estimates that over 80,000 people across Essex are likely to suffer from feelings of loneliness and isolation. This authority must consider its responsibility to vulnerable residents, not allowing its Increasing Independence Agenda to be a catalyst for rising numbers of residents suffering from isolation. It is crucial that ECC be forward thinking, laying the groundwork now to ensure that rising pressures on adult social care, mental health services and family support networks don’t leave more and more of our residents left behind, and on their own.

This Council therefore resolves to ensure that tackling isolation will always be a key consideration when forming policy and commissioning services.

Necessary steps will be taken to:

- Ensure policy makers here at ECC always keep inclusion and community resilience at the heart of what they do, understanding fully the implications of their decisions before they make them.
- Ensure that recognition of isolation and loneliness features heavily in public consultations (where relevant), with training and support made available where necessary.
- Review and adapt the Equality Impact Assessment framework to place greater emphasis on isolation and loneliness, taking into account all nine of the protected characteristics.’

It was moved by Councillor Brown and seconded by Councillor Madden that the Motion be amended to read as follows:

‘This authority must continue to consider its responsibility to vulnerable residents, in particular residents suffering from isolation. It is crucial that ECC maintains its forward thinking, laying the groundwork now to manage rising pressures on adult social care, mental health services and family support networks.

This Council therefore resolves to ensure that tackling isolation will always be a key consideration when forming policy and commissioning services.

This Council will:

- Ensure policy makers here at ECC always keep inclusion and community resilience at the heart of what they do, understanding fully the implications of their decisions before they make them.
- Note the excellent work undertaken by the Strengthening Communities Board along with other public sector bodies including the CCGs, Fire and Police services and many voluntary sector partners.
- Ensure that recognition of isolation and loneliness features in public

consultations (where relevant), with training and support made available where necessary.

- Continue to review and adapt the Equality Impact Assessment framework to place greater emphasis on isolation and loneliness, taking into account all nine of the protected characteristics.'

Councillor Henderson with the agreement of Councillor Young and of the Council accepted the amendment and so it became the substantive Motion.

The substantive Motion having been put to the meeting was declared to be carried.

Support for our Armed Forces

It was moved by Councillor Brown and seconded by Councillor Lissimore that:

'In December 2015, this Council expressed its support for and admiration of Her Majesty's Armed forces, many of whom are based in Essex.

This Council therefore notes with great concern, that many of those service personnel are suffering greatly as a result of vexatious claims relating to Iraq Historic Allegations Team and that this has come at a tremendous cost to them, their families and indeed the public purse.

This Council also notes with great concern that the Leader of the Labour Party has recently declined to condemn this practice and also notes that as a result has received severe criticism even from many in his own party.

This Council therefore calls on the Government and Opposition Parties alike to take or support all possible measures to ensure service personnel are no longer subject to these outrageous and vexatious claims.'

It was moved by Councillor Harris and seconded by Councillor Henderson that the Motion be amended to read as follows:

'In December 2015, this Council expressed its support for and admiration of Her Majesty's Armed forces, many of whom are based in Essex.

This Council therefore notes with great concern, that many of those service personnel are suffering greatly as a result of false and unsubstantiated claims relating to Iraq Historic Allegations Team and that this has come at a tremendous cost to them, their families and indeed the public purse.

Equally, this Council notes that it is only right that our armed forces are held to the highest standards and, while rare, where there are significant and legitimate claims of criminal behaviour, these should be investigated.

This Council therefore calls on the Government and Opposition Parties alike to take or support all possible measures to resource the Iraq Historic Allegations Team, allowing them greater ability to stamp out any spurious claims, and to focus on the few credible ones.'

The amendment having been put to the meeting was declared to be lost.

Prior to the Motion being put, ten Members demanded a division by name by standing in their places.

The Motion having been put to the meeting was declared to be carried by 54 votes for, none against and 11 abstentions.

Those voting for the Motion were Councillors:

J F Aldridge	M Fisher	R A Madden
B Aspinell	R Gadsby	M McEwen
S Barker	A Goggin	V Metcalfe
R L Bass	R J Gooding	Lady Newton
A Bayley	I Grundy	M J Page
K Bentley	C Guglielmi	C Pond
D Blackwell	A M Hedley	J M Reeves
R G Boyce	T Higgins	S Robinson
A Brown	R Hirst	C Sargeant
M Buckley	P Honeywood	C Seagers
S Canning	R C Howard	K Smith
J Chandler	N Hume	J Spence
T Cutmore	A Jackson	A Turrell
J Deakin	E C Johnson	K Twitchen
M Ellis	J G Jowers	S Walsh
A Erskine	N Le Gresley	R G Walters
F Ferguson	S Lissimore	J Whitehouse
D Finch	M Mackrory	A Wood

Those abstaining were Councillors:

J Abbott	T Durcan	J Lodge
K Bobbin	D Harris	M McGeorge
K Clempner	I Henderson	J Young
M Danvers	M Hoy	

No Councillors voted against the Motion.

Adjournment

With the agreement of Council the Chairman adjourned the meeting for luncheon at

13:00.

The meeting reconvened at 14:00.

9 Multi-year Settlement & Efficiency Plan

The Leader, Councillor David Finch, presented the report that set out an efficiency plan to submit to the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) in order to accept the offer of the multi-year finance settlement.

Resolved:

1. That the Council accept the offer of the Multi-Year Settlement from DCLG.
2. That the Council accept the flexible use of capital receipts policy implemented by DCLG.
3. That the report be submitted to DCLG as the Council's efficiency plan.

10 To receive the Leader's report of Cabinet Issues

Councillor Finch, the Leader of the Council, presented a report concerning matters considered by Cabinet since the last Council meeting.

Cabinet Members responded to questions as follows:

Procurement of an Independent Provider Development Framework

Councillor Henderson asked Councillor Madden, the Cabinet Member for Adults and Children, that all possible care be taken with this policy for independent living as the research into this matter concludes that if implemented incorrectly there can be serious consequences, including death, for the elderly. All possible support needs to be available in communities in order to reduce risk to vulnerable people.

The Cabinet Member replied that great care would be taken.

Future Direction of the Quality Improvement Service – Early Years and Childcare

Councillor Young asked Councillor Gooding, the Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning, if he recalled that questions were raised at Corporate Scrutiny Committee about Early Years funding as the providers had not received an increase in the hourly rate since 2012/13. This report states that the Council's funding for school improvement will cease as from 2018 but she would like some clarity about whether or not that money was going to be made available for schools to pay for the quality improvement and how much would they be receiving?

The Cabinet Member replied that the report was about re-commissioning of the service to ensure the quality of Early Years provision. The other matters to which

Councillor Young had referred were not part of the report. The funding would be coming through other processes.

Councillor Mackrory asked Councillor Gooding, the Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning, if he did not share his concerns that, in the report, it speaks of funding to Local Authorities for School Improvement ceasing from 2018. School to school support is mentioned but schools themselves are already facing stretched budgets and increased costs and so he wondered where the funding was going to come from?

The Cabinet Member replied that school to school support was the way forward and the education white paper made it clear that funding would be through the fair funding process. He acknowledged that a lot of detail still needed to be resolved.

11 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 was noted that there had been a correction as shown in the Order Paper. He moved the recommendations and they were seconded by Councillor Bass.

1. Changes to the Constitution following consultation with the Member Reference Group

Resolved:

1. That with effect from the close of the meeting, Part 16 of the Constitution be replaced with the text at Appendix 1 of the report.
2. That notwithstanding the new rules on allocation of motions, the current rules for the allocation of motions shall continue to apply to the December 2016 meeting.

2. Remits of Overview and Scrutiny Committees

Resolved:

That paragraphs 9.5.1 - 9.5.3 of the Constitution be amended as set out in Appendix 2 to the report.

3. Policy Framework

Resolved:

That the policies listed at paragraph 6.1.1 of the Constitution as the policy framework be amended to read:

'Any document forming part of the Development Plan
The Council's Principal Strategy and Vision

Local Transport Plan
Youth Justice Plan.'

4. Petitions Policy

Resolved:

That Council adopt the draft petitions policy at Appendix 3 of the report and amend paragraphs 9.4 and 20.13 of the Constitution as set out in Appendix 4 of the report.

5. Changes to Membership of Committees

Resolved:

That Council note the following change made in accordance with the notification given by the Conservative Group Leader:

- Councillor Andy Erskine to replace Councillor John Aldridge as a member of the Development and Regulation Committee.

Questions (Standing Order 16.11)

12 Written Questions

a

The published answers to the 21 written questions submitted in accordance with Standing Order 16.12.1 were noted.

The following supplementary questions were asked as a result of having received a written reply:

(4) Councillor Danvers asked Councillor Finch, the Leader of the Council, if he was content that there are no plans to reduce the numbers of zero hours contracts?

The Leader replied that he was content that zero hours contracts were mutually beneficial to the Council and the individual concerned.

(10) Councillor Abbott sought clarification from Councillor Johnson, the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, as to what route might Parish Councils take in order to discuss the means of getting the work done?

The Cabinet Member replied that Parish Councils should contact him directly.

(17) Councillor Henderson asked Councillor Butland, the Cabinet Member for Health, if he could comment on two cases that had come to his attention, one of which involved a 12-year old who had waited 30 weeks for attention and the other had waited 37 weeks.

In the absence of the Cabinet Member for Health, Councillor Madden, the Cabinet Member for Adults and Children, replied that he would be happy to look at these two studies to which Councillor Henderson had referred and requested that he provide him with the details.

(18) Councillor Bobbin asked Councillor Johnson, the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, why, contrary to what the Cabinet Member had indicated in his written reply, he had not been sent the results of the consultation to allow private hire vehicles to use bus lanes.

The Cabinet Member replied that the results of the consultation had been published but the consultation did not concern Basildon. He urged Councillor Bobbin to speak to the Local Highways Panel if he wished a similar scheme to be considered in his Division.

(19) Councillor Bobbin asked Councillor Gooding, the Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning, why the funding for escorts of vulnerable children had been stopped and did he have no concerns about children being sent to school on their own?

The Cabinet Member replied that it is the taxi drivers themselves who often require the support of an escort in the face of challenging behaviours from children. However, in those circumstances additional measures are taken and he would be happy to discuss the matter with Councillor Bobbin outside of the meeting.

(20) Councillor Robinson asked Councillor Gooding, the Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning, if he did not agree that high quality education ought to be funded at a high level.

The Cabinet Member replied that additional support was available where relevant and there was a Panel to grant additional funding where needed.

(21) Councillor Robinson asked Councillor Johnson, the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, when he would expect the proposals to be published.

The Cabinet Member replied that he was unable to say at present.

12 Questions of the Leader, Cabinet Member or the chairman of a committee upon any matter relevant to the business of Council

1 Councillor Goggin asked Councillor Madden, the Cabinet Member for Adults and Children, if he could provide an update on the latest position of the Meals on Wheels service.

The Cabinet Member replied that the new contract for the North of the County had been entered into a year ago. In the last three months 1,040 people had been contacted to discuss receiving hot meals. Last weekend no calls for assistance were received as the service migrated and all the evidence suggested that the

transition had been a success.

2 Councillor Chandler asked Councillor Johnson, the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, if he could comment on the continuing congestion at the Army and Navy Flyover in Chelmsford.

The Cabinet Member apologised for the congestion and informed Council that the traffic flows continue to be monitored and adjusted. He appreciated the patience of road users.

3 Councillor Hoy asked Councillor Gooding, the Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning, if he did not agree that it would be useful for the Hullbridge Youth Centre to be used to its full potential and not just for one or two hours each day because of restrictions in the lettings policy?

The Cabinet Member replied that he was currently looking at the usage at that location and would be happy to speak to Councillor Hoy about any suggestions he may have.

4 Councillor Turrell (on behalf of Councillor Kendall) asked Councillor Brown, the Cabinet Member for Corporate, Communities and Customers, what would be the financial benefits to Essex County Council of moving the Brentwood Library from its current location and relocating it into Brentwood Town Hall? When were Brentwood residents going to be consulted on this issue?

The Cabinet Member replied that the issue was being examined but no decision had been made. The intention was not to undertake any action that might disrupt the service at Brentwood Library which is one of the most successful in the County.

5 Councillor Lissimore asked Councillor Brown, the Cabinet Member for Corporate, Communities and Customers, why the sculpture 'Crucifixion of Mankind' had been removed from Colchester Library.

The Cabinet Member replied that the sculpture was in storage following customer feedback. The Council was looking for a new home for it, possibly at the Firstsite Gallery in Colchester.

6 Councillor Abbott asked Councillor Johnson, the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, if he was content that pedestrians were being forced to walk in the road to avoid overgrown vegetation not dealt with under the terms of the policy for clearing. Would one solution be to allocate the budgets to Parishes and Districts to manage?

The Cabinet Member replied that he was not happy that pedestrians needed to walk in the road. He explained that the County paid for one-and-a-half cuts each year and that parishes could, if they wished, pay for more.

7 Councillor Gadsby asked Councillor Walsh, the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste, if he could provide an update on his decision to tackle the illegal disposal of business waste at recycling centres.

The Cabinet Member replied that following a call-in of the decision he had agreed that there should be a review of the impact of the decision after three months. He had been advised that fly-tipping was unlikely to increase but if there was evidence of an increase then the Council would provide funds to deal with it. Additionally, he was planning to work with the Police, Trading Standards and other agencies to significantly curtail the incidents of large-scale fly-tipping in the County.

8 Councillor Harris asked Councillor Gooding, the Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning, if he agreed that Thomas Lord Audley School was doing extremely well and would he write to encourage them to continue the good work.

The Cabinet Member replied that he would do so.

9 Councillor Pond asked Councillor Johnson, the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, if he was aware that there had been a petition submitted to Transport for London of over 2500 signatures requesting that bus route 167 be preserved and would he restate the commitment that the Council will ensure that it will be supported should the current operators pull out.

The Cabinet Member replied that the Council was currently awaiting the result of the consultation. He will be seeking a way forward so that a service may be provided within the available budget.

10 Councillor Whitehouse asked Councillor Johnson, the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, if he considered that the Essex Permits Scheme for Roadworks was a success?

The Cabinet Member replied that the utility companies who seek to dig up the roads now had to pay for it (unless it was an emergency) and he believed, although it was too soon to arrive at definite conclusions, that the scheme was a success.

11 Councillor Guglielmi asked Councillor Gooding, the Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning, concerning the Young Essex Assembly if he could provide an update, perhaps giving an assurance that there were sufficient young people standing for election.

The Cabinet Member replied that there had been a mixed uptake and it was necessary to reach out to more young people. He urged Members to promote the elections in their Divisions.

12 Councillor Aspinell asked Councillor Johnson, the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, if he was aware that the terms of reference for the Local Highways Panels had been misinterpreted. He understood that the Panel meetings in his Division were being held in private on the instructions of the Cabinet Member and were no longer open to the public. He asked if this was correct and what security issues arose to deny the public access to a public meeting.

The Cabinet Member replied that the Terms of Reference had not changed.

Highways Panels were not required by law to be held in public. For clarity, the advice he had given to Panels was that a Panel may decide for themselves if they wished to hold meetings in public, but they were not required to do so.

13 Councillor Deakin asked Councillor Gooding, the Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning, if the Council was engaging in Local Democracy Week this year?

The Cabinet Member replied that he would look into it.

**12 Questions of the representative of the Essex Police and Crime Panel on any
c matter of that Panel**

There were no questions.

**12 Questions of the representative of the Essex Fire Authority regarding the
d Report to the Constituent Authorities of the meeting on 7 September 2016**

Councillor Young asked Councillor Hedley, the Representative of the Essex Fire Authority, for an update on the recruitment of retained firefighters. She also enquired if there was a 'Plan B' should the recruitment drive fail?

The Representative replied that he and his colleague Councillor Guglielmi were looking at the length and terms of contracts to try and ensure they were as flexible as possible. It was anticipated that the fire service would be able to recruit sufficient retained fire-fighters, no fire-stations would be closed and no-one would be made redundant. The residents of Essex would continue to receive an excellent service.

Chairman