

Motions under Standing Order

16.10.2

1. Changing from Cabinet to Committee System

Moved by Councillor M Mackrory, seconded by Councillor D Kendall and supported by Councillor Mrs Theresa Higgins.

'This Council welcomes the aim of the Localism Act 2011, to improve freedoms and flexibility for local government, to allow power to be exercised at the lowest practical level, close to the people who are affected by decisions. The Act contains provisions that allow local authorities to change from the Cabinet system, imposed by the Local Government Act 2000, to the Committee system.

This Council, believing that the Committee system is the most democratic and transparent form of governance, enabling all 75 councillors to participate fully in decision making and shaping policy, resolves:

- i] that detailed proposals on changing the Council's governance arrangements to the committee system be prepared;
- ii] that the public, partners and stakeholders be informed;
- iii] that a further report be brought to the October 2012 Council for decision;
- iv] that the substantial savings from the reduced number of, and reduction in Special Responsibility Allowances, be reinvested in front line services.'

2. Potential misuse of Purchase Cards.

Moved by Councillor D Kendall, seconded by Councillor B Aspinell and supported by Councillor M Mackrory

'Council notes the reports in the local press, which highlight the potential misuse of the Purchase Card scheme by some Essex County Council employees.

Council therefore proposes -

- that an independent inquiry be convened as soon as possible to scrutinise the reported £5.1 million spend since the Purchase Card scheme was first introduced back in December 2009. This inquiry will

be tasked with investigating a cross section of purchases under £2,000, to ensure that all past transactions have related to Essex County Council business, and have been in strict accordance with the Council's Purchase Card policy;

- that Members are advised of the conclusions of this inquiry and if there are found to be specific instances of misuse, those responsible will be held accountable for their actions and disciplinary action taken.'

3. The use of Purchase Cards by staff

Moved by Councillor D Finch and seconded by Councillor K Bentley

'This Council praises the work by our dedicated staff especially those who look after the vulnerable children in our corporate care and understands the need for these children to enjoy the same opportunities as any other child in Essex.

This Council was disappointed by the recent press articles that have attacked this work by using inflammatory wording and not explaining the whole truth in each case.

As members are aware, an internal audit was undertaken into P Cards and a substantial assurance rating was given. This was included in the independent external auditors report on governance issues reported to Cabinet in April this year and to full Council in May – just two months ago.

This Council is appalled at this vicious attack on vulnerable children and the staff who support them by the opposition group.'