
ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING 10 May 2016 Order Paper

Public Question Time

Prior to the meeting of the Council and following prayers the following questions will be asked by members of the public in accordance with Standing Order 16.12.10.

Ms Rufaro Dakwa, resident of Colchester

'My question is to do with the Children's Centre consultation held recently by Essex County Council.

I have observed that the Integrated Pre-Birth – 19 Health, Wellbeing and Family Support offer presented in the Consultation document is near identical to a service delivery model that is being offered by the organisation 4Children at Carousel Children's Centre in Braintree (CM7 3QZ).

The very high correlation between the two models leads me to believe that this similarity is not a coincidence, especially as the Carousel Children's Centre service delivery model predates the Early Years Review that is said to have informed the proposed Integrated Pre-Birth – 19 Health, Wellbeing and Family Support offer.

May I please have an explanation as to why the Carousel Children's Centre 'prototype', if we can call it that, was not mentioned or in any way presented to the public during the Children's Centre consultation as an in-practice example of the proposed offer?'

Summary of Procedure:

- The person must be present to ask their question.
- The Chairman will invite the person to speak.
- The person may not speak for more than three minutes in order to ask their question or submit a petition.
- There shall be a reply from the Chairman or other nominated Member.
- Save for the Member replying to the question no other Member shall be permitted to respond.
- There is no opportunity for supplementary questions nor for debate.
- Thirty minutes overall is allocated for public questions.

Agenda Item 23(a)

1. By Councillor Blackwell of the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport Delivery

‘Why was there no emergency cover for the storm at Easter and do you think it right that residents should have to cut up a large oak tree which came down and blocked the main road on Canvey Island because no one from highways could help.’

2. By Councillor Kendall of the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport Delivery

‘Would the Cabinet Member please confirm what other options, apart from VAS (Vehicle Activated Signs), are now realistically open to Members to try and reduce the speeds of vehicles in their divisions?’

In the past we have been able to use speed cameras, speed humps and speed cushions to try and reduce speeds, but the criteria for introducing these measures now make it almost impossible to get them installed. The 20mph zones have had some success, but they are reliant on police enforcement to make them effective.’

3. By Councillor Kendall of the Cabinet Member for Corporate, Communities and Customers

‘Brentwood Library is only open five and a half days a week, which is unacceptable for a town the size of Brentwood, and for one where many of the working population commute to London and only have access to the library at weekends. Brentwood residents have just been hit with a hefty Council Tax increase, but do not believe they are getting the quality of services they are paying for. Would it be possible to pilot a six-day opening of Brentwood Library to measure the demand for the extended service with a view to extending the opening times if the pilot proves successful?’

4. By Councillor Higgins of the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport Delivery

‘Why does the Emergency Number for Highways go through to the Essex Call Centre?’

I had cause to ring the Emergency Number during working hours; the call diverted to the Essex Call Centre. I was put on hold and then told to ring back later, as the number was busy. This is meant to be an Emergency Number.’

5. By Councillor Robinson of the Leader of the Council

‘The former St.Peter’s/Rainsford High school site in north Chelmsford was entered by travellers just before the Bank Holiday weekend. Please can I have an update? Is the security on the site appropriate to prevent a recurrence? Given that the school closed nearly five years ago, could this have been avoided if the council had resolved the future of the site more quickly?’

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

‘Could I congratulate the Portfolio Holder for his statements about government policy to extend academy status to all Essex schools in the next six years? Could he elaborate on these views?’

7. By Councillor Danvers of the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport Delivery

‘Is the Portfolio Holder aware of the derision members have expressed on social media about the recent press release issued about potholes in Essex? Would he explain how he intends to answer such bad publicity on behalf of the Authority which is bringing Essex County Council into such contempt by members of the public?’

8. By Councillor Clempner of the Cabinet Member for Adults and Children

‘In order to claim a legitimate mandate for transformation, the children’s centre consultation process must have proved that it has effectively engaged with those most vulnerable and in need of services. Can the Cabinet Member provide a geographic breakdown of responses, outlining areas of low response, with details on how this

is being combatted?’

9. By Councillor Young of the Cabinet Member for Adults and Children

‘Research carried out by the Council reveals that Essex parents, already suffering the brunt of austerity, are feeling more vulnerable and isolated than ever before. Our own early years review indicated that they overwhelmingly agreed that children’s centres are in the right place and appreciated the opportunity to be listened to. Why are we now ignoring them?’

We should be strengthening communities of support, not stripping them back. The removal of physical centres will only further exclude struggling families from services at a time when reliance is on the rise. Can the Cabinet Member explain how a reduced, integrated service can adequately meet the needs of families across the county when the complexity of privation is on the rise?’

10. By Councillor Harris of the Cabinet Member for Adults and Children

‘If the preferred model for future children’s centre plans is the one currently being operated in mid-Essex, why hasn’t this been specifically consulted upon?’

11. By Councillor Henderson of the Cabinet Member for Adults and Children

‘Many deeply impoverished areas will suffer disproportionately as a result of changes to the children’s centre programme. Jaywick for example, where fuel and child poverty are already among the highest in the County, will see a significant reduction in services. How can we aim to meet the needs of the poorest communities whilst simultaneously reducing funding to vital services?’

12. By Councillor Young of the Cabinet Member for Adults and Children

‘Current plans to further privatise ECC’s meals on wheels service will have a significant impact on thousands of struggling elderly residents across the county. On top of providing care in the form a hot,

prepared meal one of the most vital lifelines the service offers is a daily 'safe and well check'. What measures, if any, are being put into place to maintain this service, and to ensure that the safety of residents is not compromised in the interest of making savings?

13. By Councillor Durcan of the Leader of the Council

'Could the Leader provide any update on his view of the ongoing debate between Norfolk/Suffolk/Cambridgeshire around the devolution decision and were does this leave Essex?

What is the future plan to ensure Essex is viewed as a powerhouse in the Eastern Region?'

14. By Councillor Henderson of the Cabinet Member for Adults and Children

'I'd like to request a full breakdown of the 'essential living fund' budget, with details on how much money there is allocated, annual expenditure, the number of applications made each year, the number accepted and a detailed outline of the criteria for application, including any changes made in recent years.'

15. By Councillor Clempner of the Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning

'Can I request a detailed breakdown of current demand and supply of early-years childcare spaces, broken down by geographic area?'

16. By Councillor Bobbin of the Cabinet Member for Health

'This week we learnt that, for the first time since the 19th century, the gap in life expectancy between the rich and poor is widening. What measures has the council taken in recent years to combat health inequality?'

17. By Councillor Harris of the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport Delivery

'What contract management procedures are in place to ensure that highways maintenance contractors are held to an acceptable

standard of quality when dealing with potholes and road repairs?’

18. By Councillor Ellis of the Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning

Will the Cabinet Member please provide an update and any progress undertaken thus far regarding the Parking around Schools Motion passed at full council on the 13/10/2015

19. By Councillor Abbott of the Leader of the Council

‘An advert has appeared offering Silver End library for rent. As the local Member I have not been consulted about this and myself and the local community are not aware of a stated alternative provision. Can the Leader please explain the situation?’

20. By Councillor Abbott of the Cabinet Member for Adults and Children

‘Why is Witham being treated disproportionately harshly when it comes to the review of Children's Centres?’

Both of the Witham Children's Centres are proposed to be closed in the recent consultation; with re-provision in Witham library at a lower level of service that for other smaller towns in the area.’

21. By Councillor Maddocks of the Leader of the Council

‘In November 2015, this Council approved a motion calling on the Government to fully fund the support to refugees for the full five year period.

Could the Leader update Council on what activity is taking place with local partners to resettle Syrian refugees to Essex and update on the latest funding position?’