

COUNCIL MEETING – 15 July 2026

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

1. **Public Question from Mrs P**

In light of the alleged knife-related incident reported on 7 May 2026, involving a 15-year-old male reportedly from South Woodham Ferrers, I would like to ask the following:

Local residents have informed us that this individual has allegedly been regularly present around the Channels Estate area and, according to multiple residents, may have been staying within social housing locally. Residents have also alleged that they have experienced ongoing anti-social behaviour for a number of months, including intimidation, abuse and spitting incidents, with some claiming to have video evidence of this behaviour.

Whilst Essex Police publicly stated that the individual was a boy from South Woodham Ferrers, residents within the Channels Estate have raised concerns that repeated reports and complaints over a period of time appear to have gone unresolved.

My questions to the Council are:

1. What actions is Chelmsford City Council currently taking, alongside partner agencies, to tackle and reduce knife crime and serious youth anti-social behaviour across Chelmsford?
2. What support, safeguarding or intervention measures are available to residents of the Channels Estate who report repeated intimidation, abuse or threatening behaviour from youths within their community?
3. Where residents believe ongoing complaints about anti-social behaviour have not been effectively addressed, what advice would the Council give to those residents, and what escalation routes are available to them?
4. Can the Council clarify how it works alongside housing providers, Essex Police and youth services when allegations involve individuals reportedly residing temporarily within local social housing areas?

I appreciate that this matter involves a young person and alleged incidents, and I am not seeking to prejudice any ongoing investigation. However, residents are understandably concerned about community safety and would welcome reassurance regarding what practical action is being taken.

2. **Public Question from Mrs O**

I fully support diversity and believe there is an important place for events such as Essex Pride in Chelmsford. However, many residents feel the event has changed considerably over the years.

Historically, Pride appeared to focus on celebrating equality, inclusion and the LGBTQ+ community. At this year's event, however, some attendees observed participants dressed in fetish-related attire, including two individuals who appeared to be engaged in what is commonly referred to as "pup play" while chained together. Many parents have expressed concern that displays of this nature took place at a public event attended by families and children.

Could the Council please explain:

1. What discussions, if any, take place with Essex Pride organisers regarding the suitability of adult-themed costumes, role-play or fetish-related displays at a public event where children are expected to be present?
2. Does the Council have any safeguarding or content expectations for events it supports or facilitates in public spaces?
3. Given the significant challenges facing young people in Chelmsford, including knife crime, youth violence and the loss of youth services, how does the Council balance its resources and priorities between supporting public events and investing in initiatives that directly improve outcomes for children and young people?

This question is not intended to oppose Pride or diversity. Rather, it seeks clarification on how the Council ensures publicly supported events remain appropriate for audiences of all ages, while also addressing the issues that many residents consider to be among the most pressing challenges facing our city.