

ECC / BDC Cllr Peter Schwier report for 20th. November 2021 meeting

Information on the first 100 Days of the new Essex County Council administration.

Please find via the link below the video.

<https://youtu.be/r5wMDK93SCE>

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Everyone's Essex: Our plan for levelling up the county is launched

Commitments on the Economy, Environment, Health and Family which will shape Essex for generations to come have been given the green light by Essex County Council.

Ambitious plans which promise to shape Essex for years to come have been approved by Essex County Council.

[Everyone's Essex](#) is the Council's plan for levelling up the county from now until 2025.

The new Cabinet at Essex County Council has placed levelling up at the heart of its agenda as the county recovers from the pandemic and builds for the future.

[Everyone's Essex](#) sets out twenty commitments which aim to deliver this agenda and improve the lives of the people of Essex.

The plan develops the themes and key pillars of activity the Leader of Essex County Council, Cllr Kevin Bentley, set out during the first 100 days of office: Economy, Environment, Health and Family.

These include addressing unemployment in Essex, which is the highest it's been for 30 years, by building people's skills as well as working closer with Essex businesses to reduce the barriers for disadvantaged groups.

Health inequalities will also be tackled by addressing the conditions that create poor health such as inadequate housing, poverty, economic insecurity, and low skills.

Another goal is halving Essex's greenhouse gas emissions over the next ten years, meaning the County can become carbon neutral by 2050, through speeding up the shift to greener housing, transport and energy.

Cllr Bentley said: "We have come through the most extraordinary eighteen months. We've been tested to the limit but have risen to the challenge. We've seen just what we're capable of achieving if collectively we work together to support one another.

"The next challenges are clear – we must be bold in our ambition to renew parts of the county that have suffered through the pandemic, and ensure that no-one is left behind by being rigorous in our commitment to equality.

"I am determined that in Essex we can build a better future. The task is huge – but we shouldn't be daunted by its scale. We are Essex, and we will build back better."

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Essex set to build back bigger through major infrastructure funding

Major capital projects averaging £300m per annum included as part of the County Council's Autumn Budget Statement

A new railway station for Chelmsford, along with new schools and roads are among infrastructure schemes averaging £300 million a year which will be initiated by the County Council over the next four years.

The announcement was made 12 October by Councillor Chris Whitbread, Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Corporate Affairs as part of the Council's first Autumn Budget Statement.

Cllr Whitbread said: "I am pleased to be presenting our Autumn Budget Statement and how this will facilitate the ambition and drive of the new vision.

"Annually we spend in the region of £1.4bn, and our focus is to make sure that this money has a real positive impact on the lives of Essex residents and the local economy."

Cllr Whitbread acknowledged the challenges posed to the local economy by Coronavirus over the past 18 months adding: "Despite these challenges, I am proud to say that since May 2021, we have been able to deliver over £30m directly through thousands of individual grants to support residents, businesses and community groups – helping them through the crisis. We provided over £10m of support for Essex businesses during the pandemic."

Cllr Whitbread also addressed the uncertainty facing the local authority's finances in the future: "The current inflation rate in the UK is 2.5%. It is expected to rise further - potentially up to 4% in the short term. This volatility impacts our financial planning, as we try to anticipate the effect on our day-to-day spending, from social care to waste disposal."

He added: "The growing and aging population of the UK continues to place considerable pressure on councils and demand for our services. Over the next four years the Essex population over the age of 65 is forecast to increase by over 9%, compared to an increase of 4% of the total population of Essex." The capital projects planned for the next four years include major infrastructure schemes such as the work developing Beaulieu Park Train Station, Chelmsford North East Bypass, the A120-A133 Link Road as well as school expansion and maintenance programmes.

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Essex County Council announces first High Street Business Summit

Free event for businesses will provide advice and knowledge on building back after the Covid-19 pandemic.

Businesses in Essex are invited to a free event aimed at helping High Streets and Town Centres build back better following the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Essex County Council High Street Business Summit will take place at Hylands House, Chelmsford on 24 November from 10am-4pm.

The summit - the first of its kind organised by Essex County Council (ECC) - will feature a range of different speakers, breakout sessions, panel discussions and the chance to network.

Attendees will include industry experts, including retailers, members of the hospitality and leisure sector, private investors and politicians.

The event will provide a key opportunity to express concerns and gain insider knowledge from an expert panel of guest speakers, including members of ECC's Cabinet and senior officers.

Cllr Lesley Wagland, Cabinet Member for Economic Renewal, Infrastructure and Planning at Essex County Council, commented: "The High Street Business Summit will be instrumental in guiding Essex businesses and promoting growth and ambition.

"High streets have been hit the hardest during the pandemic, and we want the summit to be an opportunity for our business communities and partners to come together and gain valuable advice on future growth and deliver on our priorities of renewal, ambition and equality."

[Tickets can be booked online](#). In-person tickets will be in high demand and on a first come, first served basis. If you are unable to attend in person, the online booking form has the option to register for a virtual link.

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New plan outlines approach to transforming bus services in Essex and improving sustainable travel options for residents.

Essex County Council (ECC) has published ambitious plans to overhaul bus travel and introduce a new, high quality and reliable bus network across the county.

The first '[Bus Service Improvement Plan](#)' for Essex is a significant step forwards in transforming local bus travel and offering a broader choice of travel options to residents.

The plan, which contributes to '[Everyone's Essex](#)' - ECC's four-year plan - is also a key part of efforts to tackle climate change, with sustainability sitting at the heart of ECC's approach to safer, greener, healthier travel.

As part of efforts to transform bus travel in Essex, ECC is also developing an 'Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme' with bus operators which residents can [have their say on as part of a new consultation](#) - which ends on 3rd December.

Enhanced Partnerships are a way for local authorities and bus operators to formally work together to deliver better services. The first set of proposals for Essex include committing to providing better information, reviewing the whole of the network to identify improvements and starting to develop simpler and better ticketing.

Cllr Lee Scott, ECC's Cabinet Member for Highways Maintenance and Sustainable Transport, said: "The new bus service improvement plan represents a key milestone in our efforts to move to more innovative and sustainable transport options in Essex.

"Buses are integral to the lives of lots of our residents. They deserve a network that gets them to work, school and training quickly and in a way that's stress free.

"It's also important that we have a bus network that matches our desire to create vibrant urban communities with strong economies, while at the same time providing vital links for rural communities and market towns. Importantly, we need a network that is an attractive alternative to the car. "Our plans are rightly ambitious. It's vital that we are bold with our intentions so that we create a bus network that benefits everyone as well as the environment." This Bus Service Improvement Plan will be updated annually. Further proposals will put in place next year through the Enhanced Partnership.

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As part of the work that Essex County Council (ECC) is doing to help level up the economy following the pandemic, businesses across the county and beyond are being encouraged to attend the ECC High Street Business Summit, which is taking place at Hylands House, Chelmsford, on 24 November from 10am-4pm. This is a key opportunity for businesses to share experience, and gain valuable knowledge from an expert panel of speakers. To book your place at the summit, please visit: <https://lnkd.in/dy5C9uY5> Please note, in person tickets will be in high demand, and on a first booking basis. If you are unable to attend in person, the online booking form has the option to register for a virtual link. [#highstreetsummit](#) [#ambitiousessex](#) [#supportingessexbusiness](#) [#essex](#) [#business](#) [#essexbusiness](#) [#networking](#) [#supportlocal](#) [#retail](#) [#highstreet](#) [#economy](#)

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I just wanted to remind you of these facilities to help you and your residents during the winter months.

As I trust you will appreciate, Essex Highways does not have the resources to treat every road affected, and have to prioritise what roads to grit. We do have the [salt bin map](#) on the Essex Highways website which will tell residents where the nearest bins are, they are welcome to use these to salt the roads and areas they feel are most important.

The Salt Bag Partnership scheme exists so that Parish Councils can decide locally where they would like to place salt bins. This may be a route for you to consider, further information can be found by clicking on the following link: <https://www.essexhighways.org/roads-and-pavements/winter-travel/salt-bag-partnership>

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I am pleased to announce that the new VAS/SID application process is now available online. This policy now enables Parishes to buy signs to install on the network in places where speeding is perceived. The LHP will still install ones where a significant speeding issue occurs if a VAS is the most suitable measure.

In the meantime we have been developing an easier to use webpage and application process which can be accessed in the link below.

<https://www.essexhighways.org/apply-to-install-a-vas-or-sid-illuminated-sign>

Any questions please email the Local.Highwaypanels@essexhighways.org.

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Essex residents who are unemployed, or whose employment and training prospects have been affected by COVID-19 can receive one-to-one support thanks to a new service called 'Evolve'.

'Evolve' provides free and personalised support to residents via an adviser who can help them with employment, training and personal development opportunities. The service is available until the end of March 2022. It is funded by Essex County Council and delivered in partnership with Essex Adult Community Learning and Enable East.

When facing a career change due to the pandemic, it can be difficult to know where to start. The Evolve project offers a team of highly experienced advisers across the county to provide free information and advice in order to help residents navigate their way. Advisers can refer residents to local services, social groups, wellbeing and mental health recovery courses and employment and training opportunities. You can contact the Evolve team by emailing evolve@essex.gov.uk and book an appointment with an adviser over the phone, video call or in person.

To find out more about Evolve, please email evolve@essex.gov.uk

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Essex Highways keeping motorists safe by using drone technology to inspect more than 1,500 bridges and culverts in county.

Bridge inspections by drone saves money, avoids road closures and improves repair programmes.

Camera drones are already being used in industry but, in a major innovation, drones and related tech are now helping Essex Highway engineers to carefully inspect critical structures like bridges and culverts in better, safer, and recordable ways.

Councillor Lee Scott, Essex County Council Cabinet Member for Highways Maintenance and Sustainable Transport, attended a demonstration of the drones in action at the bridge crossing the River Wid, located on A414 Greenbury Way, Chelmsford.

Take a look at an Essex Highways video of the demonstration here: <https://youtu.be/mXfxVFhhjZl>

Councillor Lee Scott said: “Use of advanced drone technology in this way to help us inspect and maintain bridges much more efficiently is a huge benefit to road users in Essex. We have around 1,500 bridges and culverts across the county and if we have to close them, residents, businesses, local services, and other road users all suffer.

“The Council is completely committed to bringing this and other innovations forward quickly to help us manage all our bridges and other structural assets to help us get the maximum value from highways budgets.

“Our strategic partnership with Ringway Jacobs continues to deliver major improvements just like this one, for everyone in Essex.”

Drones can easily get high-definition airborne or waterborne views of hard-to-reach spaces and areas that inspectors cannot reach safely or easily, like the undersides or parapets of bridges over busy roads.

The equipment can also be configured to take imagery in confined spaces, such as culverts under the road and even underwater – for example for the bridge foundations in a river.

This is more efficient but also means that safety risks for inspectors are greatly reduced and significant cost savings are made by using drones in this way, by negating the need for, or cost of manned boats and safety platforms. The data that is produced is also of a far superior quality and will significantly improve our historic record of the structure, enabling changes to be identified more easily over time.

The use of drones does not in any way replace the professional judgement and calculation of a professional structures engineer – drones are rather a more efficient, safer, and sometimes

more effective way of making a visual inspection. Professional decisions are then taken using the visual information gathered in this way.