

ECC Report

Essex County Council consultation on 2023/24 Budget

Essex County Council has launched a consultation inviting all county residents and businesses how to spend its 2023/24 budget. The consultation is now open, closing on Monday 28 November. You can take part in the consultation here:

<https://survey.euro.confermit.com/wix/7/p350931054797.aspx?ebrm=1&l=9>

Next year the County Council plans to spend over £2bn, more than half of which will be spent on adult and children's social care alone. This includes funding for essential services such as social care, investment in the county's roads, infrastructure, libraries, school buildings and future growth. While £2bn is a significant amount, like other local authorities across the country, the Council will need to make difficult decisions about where to invest and where to make savings. You can help shape how we respond to the current uncertainty and to the pressures we face. It's Everyone's Essex, we are very keen to hear from you. Against this difficult fiscal backdrop, Essex County Council is in the process of setting its own budget and is inviting businesses and residents to give their feedback on how public money should be spent in the coming financial year.

This is due to overlapping factors, including the significant impacts of inflation at a 40-year high, an unprecedented increase in the cost of living, the lasting effects of the Covid-19 pandemic and increasing numbers of Essex residents needing different council services. How much funding ECC will receive from the Government and what ministers might decide regarding limits on council tax increases is also unclear. The financial outlook for Essex is uncertain and forecasting for coming and future years, continues to be extremely challenging.

The County Council has a track record of strong financial management, having achieved £258m in savings over the past five years.

Last year the County Council announced 'Everyone's Essex' an ongoing plan for levelling up the county. It contains 20 commitments to help Essex recover from the pandemic and to face the challenges of the future.

ECC needs to mitigate these pressures now, but also continue to plan for the future. We want Essex to be the best local authority in the country – as judged by the residents, the businesses, and the communities we support and serve.

To achieve this, we need to be honest and open.

We need the honesty to admit that we don't have all the answers when it comes to tackling complex problems. And we need to be open to new ideas and approaches – ensuring the services we provide and the investments we make are developed with our communities."

The growing UK financial crisis is impacting every household and business budget and Essex County Council is no exception. The cost of materials and services in highways and social care alone have soared.

20 is Plenty Campaign

I have formally sent a question to the Highways Cabinet member as follows:

A pressure group called "20's Plenty" is being promoted to Parish Councils by EALC.

Their campaign objectives are to:

- Agree and adopt a Parish Council to pass a motion to support the campaign for 20mph where people live, work and play based on the attached template at :

https://www.20splenty.org/parish_council_motion to call on ECC to implement 20mph in their parish

- Communicate benefits of 20mph to parishioners: o You can use the template article for Parish Magazines, see
 - Write to Transport Authority (ECC) - address to ▪ Lead Member for Highways Maintenance and Sustainable Transport at Essex County Council (Cllr Lee Scott) supporting 20mph
- The call for 20mph is the speed limit across whole communities - not linked to road status in “roads hierarchy”, PR1, PR2 etc

It goes on to say that this is road signs only, low cost installation, and that no civil engineering required; and there is no need to delay the process or introduce the cost of additional data collection: adequate data is available from existing programmes elsewhere

This is a very assertive campaign and they claim to have already presented to 120 councillors from over 40 Essex Parish Councils, with more webinars planned for November.

I expect County Cllrs and Cllr Lee Scott to be flooded with requests to support the campaign. It would help if there was an advance view of ECC Highways to such expected requests.

Specifically, I would like to ask the following questions:

1. Does ECC Highways support the 20mph campaign and in principle accept the merits of 20mph in all urban and rural areas where cars and pedestrians mix?
2. I understand that ECC are currently updating the Functional Route Hierarchy Review followed by a revision of the Essex Speed Management Strategy, which may inform Highways view on 20mph in all urban and rural areas. When will these documents be completed and available for view by members and the public?
3. Following these document reviews being published, will there be a clear statement on ECC Highways view on 20mph in all urban and rural areas?
4. In the meantime, how will Cllr Scott respond to the motions from Parish Councils and letters from the public on the subject.
5. Will Cllr Scott advise how Members should respond when asked the same?

I have received the following response from Cllr Scott:

Thank you for writing to me regarding the pressure group “20’s Plenty”. I have had direct correspondence from them myself, and am aware of the correspondence that has been sent to Parish and District colleagues. I am able to confirm that I will consider all of the information that has been sent, and can also confirm that there is a very large piece of work underway at the moment, part of which will look at a Speed Management strategy throughout Essex. This piece of work is extensive, and so it is too soon for me to be able to predict when this will be complete, or the results of this. Once further information is available it will be shared.

Essex Highways Survey

You should have received an invitation to fill in the survey on ECC Highway’s services.

Last September we invited all Parish & Town Councils, and individual District, City and Borough Councillors and County Members within Essex County Council’s area, plus a range of other private and public organisations, to offer their view on the priorities and satisfaction levels associated with the specific services provided by Essex Highways. The responses you provide feed in to our planning cycle and help us to consider how we can best use our limited resources to meet current and future demands.



Thank you to all those who responded, your views are extremely important to us.

We would now like to invite you or your organisation to complete this year's survey. It is open from Tuesday 11th October 2022 to Wednesday 4th January 2023.

To access the survey please click on the following link [Essex Highways User Survey](#) or scan the QR Code below with a Smartphone

The deadline for this survey to be returned is Wednesday 4th January 2023.

If you have any further questions about the survey process or the questionnaire itself then please contact us via email to: EssexHighways.UserSurveys@essexhighways.org

East Anglia GREEN – from Norwich to Tilbury - UPDATE

On 4th Nov 2022, our North/West Parish Group (2 Cllrs from each of my 10 Parish Councils + 2 from Ingatestone and Margaretting) met with:

- **Rosie Pearson**, spokesperson for action group Essex Suffolk Norfolk Pylons. Their basic message is that there is a cheaper off-shore option. However, NG have unfavourably compared on-shore with their proposed off-shore, whereas NG themselves had an earlier cheaper off-shore proposal (2020 NATIONAL GRID ESO) more akin. Rosie is meeting with Dept for Energy and Industrial Strategy on Monday 7th Nov 22.
- **Kemi Badenoch**, MP for Saffron Walden (inc Broomfield and Writtle) to gain her support to the off-shore alternative to likewise lobby Dept for Energy and Industrial Strategy

I have put Rosie and Kemi in touch with each other.

Member Led Pothole Scheme

My first batch of 18 potholes entered into the member Led Scheme are either repaired or scheduled. I am now in the process of entering the next 18. Of the next batch of 18, I have entered 16. It seems that there aren't any left! If you do know of any, I need location (what.3.words if possible and address), description and photo. I don't want to waste this opportunity. With budget pressures, it may not arise again.

City Council Report

Blossom Way Car Parking:

I have written to CHP (18th Oct) in relation to the commercial vehicle restriction:

- Technically speaking, the lease prohibits commercial vehicles. However, a parent uses a "commercial" vehicle for domestic use and has a number of difficulties when parked in CGR.GWPC are fairly relaxed about this and would CHP have any issues
- There was also a complaint that 2 of the scout leaders, when parking in the scout places at scouting times, use their commercial vehicle (one is an electrician) – mainly because that is the only vehicle they have and are transporting scout equipment.

I asked if CHP were okay with GWPC accommodating such usage, and if they were not, to let me know. I have not heard back any objection.

I understand that the owner of the commercial vehicle (for domestic use) did write to CHP and ask if it was okay and got a negative answer!