

ECC Annual report Southminster Division by Cllr Wendy Stamp 21st April 2023.

Hopefully your Councillors and residents have been kept up to date throughout the year on the decisions being made as well as being considered in the future with my regular updates via your excellent Clerks.

I don't want to bore you with repeating anything so I will give you a brief report.

Starting with the positive and not highways this year, I must thank the clerks who have worked hard in supporting me this last year, especially by suggesting important community projects for the £5K locality fund allocation.

Sadly, due to a "mix up" not all my allocation was spent, despite having projects still wishing to be funded. I can only apologise but ask that when the next allowance is released you apply early as I won't allow this to happen again. I will not be holding any applications over to the next year – as no one knows how long this funding option will be available.

All Parish and Town Councils have received their funding now. I am sure the residents are enjoying what you applied for whether it be hedging, signage or building repairs.

Last year's terms of spending part of the allowance changed. The total allowance of £10k only allowed us to provide £5K on local projects and the remaining £5K on joint Maldon District projects, totalling £15K (three divisional ward councillors). I wish to thank my fellow Councillors Fleming and Durham, because I am over the moon to say the Southminster division received the lions share.

The projects awarded for funding within the Maldon District Division in the Southminster division are as follows: -

- Denige wide -£3500, SEND Music provision - new instruments, music man etc.
- St. Marys School – Burnham on Crouch, £325 breakfast and teatime clubs for children on free school meals. - to purchase dolls house, toy cars/garage, art & craft supplies, board games.
- St. Cedds – Bradwell £2200 to purchase six tablet computers (kept on site) for disadvantaged children for lunchtime and after school computing clubs.
- Southminster C of E School - £3728, this school has a growing number of SEND, PPG and vulnerable pupils. The lunch time club will benefit from the purchase of 10 chrome books and a contribution towards a Doodle Maths programme. It will also benefit after school clubs.

This totals the funding received for our division of £9523.00 EXCELLENT!

Thank you to everyone who helped put the proposals together and for ECC approving them – I am sure the equipment will help our richly deserved children and families immensely.

Budget Headlines.

I sent a copy of the agreed budget figures previously but a quick recap total annual increase £49.05 equivalent to 49p per week. It is made up of £27.99 adult social care, £9.08 infrastructure projects and £11.98 service increase due to inflationary pressures.

Since being elected Cllr Fleming and I, have constantly been raising residents' concerns regarding the lack of infrastructure and future capital projects planned for the Maldon District including the Southminster division. Following a number of other District Councillors also raising concerns, Cllr Pond and I moved a motion to Council regarding infrastructure obligations and delivery. Cllrs Wagland and Sheldon proposed an amendment which we gratefully received. Sadly, not all elected members supported the spirit of the motion. Cllr Mark Durham and Cllr Stephen Robinson was disingenuous in my opinion. Recording of meeting 11 October 2022.

The approved motion read:

'This Council considers that there is a continuous need to ensure that the county's infrastructure, which is under constant pressure from new development, keeps pace with this development in a way that balances the need to promote economic growth and provides housing for residents, whilst also recognising the vital role of the Greenbelt in protecting their quality of life and the environment.

The Council therefore:

- 1) Instructs officers to be diligent in seeking to secure as many infrastructure improvements as possible via the planning system and in particular via infrastructure levies and planning obligation agreements.
- 2) Calls upon local planning authorities to assist the County Council by ensuring as much is delivered as possible.
- 3) Calls upon Government to support ECC in enabling the country's infrastructure to keep pace with new development as set out above.'

It is important that we all focus on ensuring delivery and soon.

Expansion of St Marys in Burnham has been completed as has the additional places at Ormiston Rivers Academy. Funding and additional places for SEND children has been given and delivered through section 106 agreements to Althorne pre-school but still no early learning pre school or additional nursery development in Burnham on Crouch – yet.

LIBRARIES

The Essex year of reading delivered the following outcomes: -

- A library card for every child (150,000 cards delivered)
- A large range of author visits including Michael Rosen (1000 children attended Michael Rosen event).

- Parent ambassadors (supporting parental engagement for schools and communities) in conjunction with ACL – 2 Ambassadors, 60 volunteers, 600 parents onto courses.
- Dementia/memory cafes alongside library children's events (under the leadership of adult services).
- A literature corner in 74 libraries.
- Year of reading app including stories, teaching materials and signposts to other sources.
- Intergenerational poetry publication.
- Keeping it REAL/phonological awareness in early years.
- Using the libraries for warm spaces – committed to keeping the libraries open. Over 50,000 new members to the service and a new library in Harlow – we can but hope we will receive funding in the Dengie.

Everyones Essex.

Cllr Bentley has a clear strategy, it is an intergenerational change, focusing on net zero, levelling up and devolution. He is aspiring to building a pathway to a better future. Whilst I absolutely agree with this aspiration and strategy, I am finding this is not inclusive of ALL resident's needs.

Sadly, we are all aware, despite raising genuine problems ranging from lack of local school places to local passenger transport for SEND children Essex County Council is unwilling to compromise even with special circumstances, the only option left is the appeal process.

Cllr Chris Whitbread, the "Chancellor" said they couldn't cater for the minority only the majority – hmm how is that levelling up on all levels – it is not in my opinion. Sadly, I feel the Southminster division has not been on the radar of ECC. Importantly when it comes to addressing rural challenges and lack of adequate services and investment. Substantial increase in traffic movements resulting in serious damage to the road network, reduced bus transport services, poor connectivity for walking and cycling, timely infrastructure delivery, planned digital investment to promote vital growth for local economy and tourism. Focus on the delivery of a local SEND school hence reducing the need for 75-minute travel times. It is important that we all, collectively continue working for change and deliver the projects that has been in the pipeline for years. Cabinet Members, Cllrs Scott, Ball and Egan have visited our division and several team meetings regarding lack of SEND provision and highway issues – not only potholes but flooding especially in Latchingdon and Creeksea.

Devolution is at the early stages, but I personally think it will rocket at a pace over the next few years depending on if Councils want to join.

The five arguments from Cllr Bentley are Economic – strengthening the community, powers around skills, transport, business support and housing would be devolved. The proceeds of economic growth would not all go back to the treasury but shared -

it will be worth more than £1 billion over 30 years (not much when you work it out) coming into the county. We would be responsible for economic and social well-being of our communities. Efficiency would help over stretched councils; collaboration is viewed as less burden to the taxpayers – you will have your own views and you should voice them when it comes to public consultation. The final point is the competition argument – more and more funding streams are being devolved to directly to Mayors and Combined Authorities. His full Council executive statement can be found here [Document.ashx \(essex.gov.uk\)](https://www.essex.gov.uk/document/ashx).

Essex Education Task Force

'Everyone's Essex' aims to make Essex a good place for children and families to grow. The money originally granted to the Task Force by Essex CC has supported outcomes for vulnerable children, education outcomes, levelling up outcomes for families, and family resilience and stability. And we have so far invested **£1.5 million** in the **Essex Year of Reading** which has brought the fun and fundamentals of reading to all corners of the county: schools, libraries, adult education, memory cafes.

The very good news now is that the Task Force has been awarded - from the 'Everyone's Essex' reserves - a further **£1.5 million**.

Remarkably, this will mean that by the end of 2025, we shall have allocated a total of **£3.5 million** on improving outcomes for children and young people. The new grant makes explicit the continuation of the Task Force's work with the Year of Reading, young people's wellbeing and the launch of an exciting **Year of Numbers** recently announced in front of the Queen Consort. This is an innovative model that has been designed to complement, enhance, and build on the momentum from the *Multiply* work.

It is worth noting here that the Essex 2030 vision has five key aims:

- enjoy life into old age
- provide an equal foundation for every child
- strengthen communities through participation
- connect us to each other and the world
- share prosperity with everyone.

So many of the Year of Reading projects have contributed positively to these aims.

Safety Advisory Group (SAG).

I am a member of this excellent group working and striving to deliver positive change. I have happy to have positively contributed due to having first-hand experience of challenging situations. I have helped by raising early suggestions and advice. This is headed up by Cllr Louise McKinley Deputy Leader and is a cross party group.

This is the latest initiative that has been launched..

Bystander Intervention initiative launches in Essex

Safety Advisory Group initiative aims to address sexual harassment in the county

As part of Essex County Council's (ECC) commitment to making the county safer for residents, a new initiative has launched that aims to address sexual harassment and inappropriate behaviour towards women and girls.

ECC's Safety Advisory Group's (SAG) 'Bystander Intervention' initiative launches today, Monday 13 March, on National Bystander Awareness day. The initiative aims to provide residents with information and guidance on what they could do if they saw inappropriate or threatening behaviour and gives advice on how they could address it in a safe way.

The online module has a particular focus on women's safety and sexual harassment.

Research conducted by the SAG in late 2021 found that 81% of women who responded were not confident that passers-by would help them if someone was acting inappropriately towards them. The same research showed that 60% of male respondents and 70% of women respondents didn't feel confident that they would be able to safely intervene if they saw someone behaving inappropriately towards a woman.

The module will help participants learn more what sexual harassment looks like, the myths and stereotypes that continue to enable and facilitate sexual harassment in our communities, and the importance of people not colluding with these myths or minimising unacceptable behaviour.

It will also give guidance on what actions they could take to safely intervene or to refer or signpost victims to suitable support services.

Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Communities, Cllr Louise McKinlay said: "Everyone in Essex has the right to live their life free of fear and free of harassment.

"Whilst much work is being done with us by schools, the police and communities across the county to eradicate sexual harassment, we know many women in the county still feel afraid when out at night, and this is not acceptable.

"Our new Bystander Intervention initiative is an opportunity for anyone in the county to learn about what they could do and how they could help when witnessing sexual harassment or inappropriate behaviour. It is about equipping residents with the information and guidance to help them feel more confident to help in these situations.

"This initiative signals a real turning point in our efforts to make the county safer, particularly for women."

Roger Hirst, Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex said "No woman should feel unsafe in their community, but the sad truth is that many do. It is up to all of us

to improve how women and girls are treated.

"This initiative by Essex County Council is a positive way to build awareness of what sexual harassment is and the actions that lead to women not feeling safe. By understanding the causes we can each contribute to improving women's safety."

The Bystander Intervention Information module is open to anyone in the county and only takes 45 minutes, visit www.essex.gov.uk/bystander

to sign up.

Adult Social Care and Health.

Everyone Matters – replaced with Meaningful Lives Matter plan for more inclusive Essex

Its aim is to enable people with disabilities to live the best life they can. Cabinet Member Cllr Spence is one of the best if not the best councillor for the subject knowledge and a genuine well-respected person.

Papers and surveys on this link :-

<https://cmis.essex.gov.uk/essexcmis5/CalendarofMeetings/tabid/73/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/410/Meeting/5073/Committee/36/SelectedTab/Documents/Default.aspx>

Cabinet decisions

[Document.ashx \(essex.gov.uk\)](#)

Highways

I am loathed to even talk about potholes except that flooding will no doubt supersede the number of complaints reported to ECC in the near future.

The 38 priority pothole scheme was appreciated but with an area of this division it needs to be substantially more. I am pressing for the "temporary repairs" to be permanent. It should be rolled out again this year.

Cllr Scott has the most challenging portfolio and often tells us the following facts:

Network 4000 miles of footways,

Over 5000 miles of roads,

4000 miles of public rights of way,

1500 highway structures,

128,000 street lighting columns.

I know you all will have received the standard response from County "Please be assured that all publicly maintained roads throughout Essex are inspected in their entirety on a routine basis. The frequency of these inspections is dependent on the

classification of the road in question, for example, local roads are inspected annually, and priority routes are inspected more frequently on a monthly or quarterly basis due to the important function they perform within the highway network. Station Road is inspected on a quarterly basis.

The Highway Inspectors will also perform separate inspections of particular issues in response to reports made by members of the public.

During these inspections the Highway Inspectors risk assesses issues which are then prioritised for repair based on their severity and risk to public safety. The timescale for the repair depends on the risk assessment and which type of road the pothole is on. To view the different response times Essex Highways must adhere to, please visit the 'Potholes' page of the Essex County Council website:

<https://www.essexhighways.org/potholes>

If there is a particular pothole you are concerned about, you can report this to Essex Highways via their dedicated online Report it Tool:

<https://www.essexhighways.org/tell-us>. You will be given a unique reference number which you can use to track the progress of the inspection and the action taken.”

Highways a handy quick guide:-

Useful links

Essex website [Essex Highways | Essex County Council](#)

Report an issue you have seen [Tell us - Essex County Council \(essexhighways.org\)](#)

Track an issue you reported [Track it - Essex County Council \(essexhighways.org\)](#)

Find out what road works are happening in your area [one.network](#)

Find out what works Essex highways are responsible for and planned programmes of capital works [Highways Information Map | Essex County Council \(essexhighways.org\)](#)

Find out about road works happening two weeks up to 12 months into the future [Future Roadworks Map | Essex County Council \(essexhighways.org\)](#)

Track gritters [Track the gritting lorries | Essex County Council \(essexhighways.org\)](#)

Essex highways latest news [News, Press Releases and Highway Highlights \(essexhighways.org\)](#)

Further reading road strategies including annual maintenance plans [Road strategies | Essex County Council \(essexhighways.org\)](#)

The Local Highways Panel has taken a lot of criticism from myself and another Councillor as it certainly has NOT delivered anything for years in this division. It is

changing but I can't see any imminent improvements yet, I will keep you all informed and up to date.

A letter has gone to Cllr Scott explaining all concerns and lack of progress. He is going to address them.

There is a couple of highway safety schemes under discussion now but again its early stages even after years of collecting data and evidence – a slow process is an understatement.

Primary School Offers 2023

This year, Essex County Council received a total of 15,923 applications. Of these, 14,455 pupils who are due to start in Reception Year in September 2023 have been offered their parent or carer's first preference of primary school.

This is 90.78 per cent of the total eligible cohort and is an increase on the 89.51 per cent who obtained their first preference last year. Another 5.52 per cent of children were offered their parents' second preference of school.

Those who applied received confirmation by email on Monday 17th April.

These are the figures for 2023:

- * First preference school – 90.78 per cent
- * Second preference school – 5.52 per cent
- * Third preference school – 1.75 per cent
- * Fourth preference school – 0.45 per cent
- * 1.5 per cent of pupils could not be offered one of their parent's preferred schools and have been offered a place at the nearest school with a place available.

Click below for information on school-based planning via ECC.

School organisation and place planning (<https://www.essex.gov.uk/school-organisation-and-place-planning/school-organisation-and-place-planning-service>)

A meeting has been scheduled for June for an update on school places, SEND provision and future schemes.

Essex County Council Climate Czar Cllr Peter Schwier, shares the first [Annual Essex Climate Action Report](#), 12 months after we announced our £200 million [Essex Climate Action Plan](#).

This report provides an update on the hard work that has been going on across the length and breadth of the county of Essex as we continue our journey to becoming a net zero county.

Essex has been rated as one of the best places in the world when it comes to tackling climate change. CDP, formerly known as the Carbon Disclosure Project

(CDP) has awarded Essex with an A rating for its climate action. We are the only county council in the UK to be given such a rating and only one of 122 places across the globe.

I think I have sent this link of how you can help previously but just for information.

[What Can I Do? | Essex Climate Commission](#)

Recycling Centre.

[Vello | Essex County Council](#)

Can I ask everyone or anyone who wishes me to ask any questions daily or at Full Council to send me an email – with evidence and facts and I will do everything I can.

The booking scheme is still in operation being monitored and the facts reported back to Council.

I haven't covered everything in the report, but I hope I have kept you informed throughout the year.

As soon as the latest infrastructure report is published I will send to you but we are still working hard to press for the agreed delivery thus far.

Please continue to email me with any problems and thank you all for all your hard work and working together with me – trying to improve the place we live, love and work.

Wendy

Cllr Stamp

Southminster Division