

## MALDON DIVISION MONTHLY UPDATE – COUNCILLOR JANE FLEMING

### 2025/26 BUDGET PROPOSALS

Essex County Council has published its 2025/26 budget proposals ahead of its Cabinet meeting on 21 January.

In them, it sets out how it proposes to invest the more than £2 billion it is responsible for. This includes how it is prioritising what is most important to residents now, planning for a sustainable future and protecting statutory services.

More than 2,100 people took part in the council's recent budget consultation. Results revealed that concern about social care has risen and more residents this year are most concerned about the condition of roads and pavements.

As a result, the council is proposing an additional investment of £88 million in portfolio budgets for 2025/26. This includes an additional £8 million in road and footway maintenance.

In line with residents' priorities and investing in the county's future, other areas of council focus in 2025/26 include:

- spending £101m on mainstream education capital and £59m on the SEND and Alternative Provision capital programme over the next four years.
- completion of key infrastructure such as Beaulieu Park Station and Chelmsford North-East bypass.
- expanding the range of care technology used to support older people and people with disabilities to live independently.
- attracting new businesses to Essex and driving economic growth in the county.

Consultation results also revealed that nearly three quarters of respondents confirmed they would understand if there was an increase in Council Tax, particularly if the additional money was used to protect services for the most vulnerable.

This year, the council's proposals are again set within the national context of high inflation, the increased cost of living and providing services, as well as the impact of the Government's own Autumn Budget announcements.

These issues, along with the Government's intention to reform the local government funding system, are placing additional pressures on the council's limited resources.

Balancing the need to address these pressures, while limiting the impact of increasing living costs for households, mean the council is proposing a 3.75% Council Tax increase for 2025/26.

This would be a 1.75% general increase and 2% increase in the adult social care precept. For an average Band D property, it would mean an increase in the county council element of Council Tax of £1.09 a week.

Essex County Council's Cabinet will consider whether to recommend the Everyone's Essex Annual Plan and Budget 2025/26 on 21 January. The budget and plan will then be discussed for approval at a meeting of the Full Council on 13 February.

The council's budget proposals and annual plan are available to view here:

<https://cmis.essex.gov.uk/essexcmis5/CalendarofMeetings/tabid/73/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/410/Meeting/5439/Committee/36/SelectedTab/Documents/Default.aspx>

## ESSEX CARE SEARCH

Essex County Council has launched the 'Essex Care Search' in collaboration with Health Partners and Essex Care Association. The website allows you to search for care homes online. You can filter search results by location, facilities, CQC rating, price and more. You can also view photos and access contact information for specific homes. Whether you are looking for nursing or residential care, long or short term, Essex Care Search can help. [Visit Essex Care Search now.](#)

## DEVOLUTION AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION

An [extraordinary Full Council](#) meeting was held on Friday 10 January 2025. Councillors discussed ECC's participation in the Government's devolution priority programme. As well as this, local government reorganisation and the potential for new unitary (all-purpose) council structures to be introduced across Essex was also discussed.

The Government recently notified ECC that to be part of the programme, written confirmation must be sent by Friday 10 January. This was sent as a joint request by Essex County Council, Southend-on-Sea City Council and Thurrock Council. The Government will also make a determination as to whether in the light of the submission, they will cancel County elections in May 2025.

At this stage, no decisions have been made. Read more about this at: [our response to the Government's English Devolution White Paper](#).

## FOSTER CARERS

Over 500 children came into care last year, and Essex County Council needs more foster carers to help vulnerable children feel safe and supported. By fostering, you can make a significant impact on a child's life.

Essex County Council will carefully match children to you, offer 24/7 support, training, and carers receive on average £537.12 per week, per child, tax-free. You can foster from as little as one weekend per month. [Visit their website](#) or call 0800 801 530 to find out more and transform a child's life.

## WRAPAROUND CHILDCARE

Wraparound childcare is offered before and after school for primary school aged children during term time. Wraparound hours run from 8am until 6pm. Childcare may be available on a school site or other local settings such as nurseries or childminders. [Find out where you can access wraparound childcare in Essex.](#)

## HEALTHIER HABITS HUBS

Healthier Habits Hubs offer free non-judgemental wellbeing guidance for residents.

Free resources include:

- exercise taster sessions and demonstrations from [Active Essex](#)
- free oral health resources
- support to stop smoking
- advice on [courses with ACL](#)

[Find a Healthier Habits Hub](#) near you.

## LOVE ESSEX FUND NOW OPEN

Do you run a project or have an idea to reduce household waste in your area? Then you could be eligible for a £500 micro-grant! This year, the Love Essex Fund is supporting projects that promote reuse and repair. [Learn more about the Love Essex Fund.](#) Applications open on Monday 6 January 2025 and close on Sunday 9 February 2025.

## RECYCLED FOOD

If your bin is always full, a food caddy might be the answer. Recycling food in a caddy frees up space in your bin. This not only benefits your kitchen but also the planet. In Essex, recycled food is transformed into green energy and fertiliser. Make it your New Year's Resolution to [start recycling your food today.](#)

## APPRENTICESHIP HUB

The Apprenticeship Hub supports school leavers in Essex to find and secure apprenticeship opportunities. Sessions include completing apprenticeship job applications and learning interview

techniques. Hiring an apprentice is a great way to boost your businesses performance and efficiency by developing their employees' skills and knowledge.

[Watch our apprenticeship video](#) where we speak to Colchester United FC apprentice and Hannah one of our Employment Skills Advisors. [Read more about the Apprenticeship Hub and Extraordinary Essex.](#)

## **BECOME A SCHOOL GOVERNOR**

Effective [school governance](#) has the power to transform young lives. However, gaps on a school board can result in a potential decline in educational outcomes. Individuals from a diverse range of backgrounds can develop their professional and personal skills while enriching school boards with their own experiences and knowledge.

For more information about becoming a school governor contact [LAgovernance@essex.gov.uk](mailto:LAgovernance@essex.gov.uk)

## **COURSES AT ACL**

Start 2025 with Adult Community Learning (ACL) Essex! Discover a range of courses to boost your skills, career, or personal growth. From creative arts to digital literacy, there's something for everyone. [Enrol on an ACL course today.](#)

## **BUS SERVICE AGREED CHANGE DATES FOR 2025**

As part of the Enhanced Partnership between Essex County Council and Transport Providers a set of Common Registration Dates has been agreed each year for new registrations, variations and cancellations. These change dates align with the Essex County Council Academic Calendar and will allow better co-ordination when updating roadside printed publicity. It will also limit the number of times a particular bus corridor can change in quick succession.

Agreed change dates for 2025 are as follows:

- Sunday 05 January 2025
- Sunday 23 February 2025
- Sunday 20 April 2025
- Sunday 01 June 2025
- Sunday 27 July 2025
- Sunday 31 August 2025

- Sunday 02 November 2025

*Cllr Jane Fleming*

Member for the Maldon Division

(Maldon Town and Parishes of Woodham Walter, Woodham Mortimer with Hazeleigh, Purleigh including Cock Clarks, Cold Norton, Stow Maries, North Fambridge)

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