



MALDON DIVISION ANNUAL REPORT APRIL 2023 – COUNCILLOR JANE FLEMING

How time flies. This year has obviously been dominated by the cost of living crisis and the impact of inflation on budgets and the delivery of services.

In response, a Cost of Living Summit was held at County Hall in November last year, where ECC announced their latest plans to support families and households through the winter. The plans announced detailed how over £8.6m from the Household Support Fund would be used to support those residents who may otherwise struggle with the cost of energy, to buy food, pay for household bills or to meet other essential living costs. Funding was directed to food support groups, the extension of food vouchers for free school meals for families, help with energy costs and grants for community and voluntary organisations. Support provided included: £3.75m for the provision of food vouchers for the December 2022, February and Easter 2023 school holidays for eligible children aged 4-19 and 2-4-year-olds who are entitled to pupil premium or attract free entitlement funding supplement, £1.8m towards the Essential Living Fund which enables vulnerable people to pay for essential items, £135,000 to fund warmth hampers for care leavers, £1m to support households where those with disabilities use assistive equipment to maintain their health and wellbeing and that requires use of electricity, a new £400,000 grant to schools to support vulnerable families in addition to the free school meal vouchers. Support was also directed to: £280,000 to the voluntary and community sector, £100,000 to the Citizens Advice Bureau to provide additional capacity, £300,000 to support Essex food support groups, £300,000 to support a food education programme managed by Active Essex, £90,000 to support young carers, £100,000 to support the Winter Warmth Fund, £85,000 to support community winter resilience and hospital discharge

Essex County Council also produced a round-up of different Cost of Living help and an online hub where information is updated as and when new support becomes available. ECC also continued to provide the holiday free school meal vouchers scheme it has run successfully since Christmas 2020. Free school meal vouchers were made available to around 50,000 eligible pupils across Essex during school holidays thanks to renewed funding from the Department for Work and Pensions. The funding of £1.5m was allocated by the County Council from the Household Support Fund grant. The fund aims to support those in most need this winter with the cost of food, energy, water bills and other essentials. The Vouchers were sent to parents of eligible children and young people via their school, college or early years setting before the holidays started. They are worth £15 a week per child and can be used to buy food in most supermarkets. In addition, in December through the ActivAte Programme, there were 223 clubs, trips and family Christmas experiences available, offering fun physical activity, food education and healthy meals with 48 of the clubs offering special support for SEND pupils or mental wellbeing support. These clubs were open to young people eligible for free school meals, as well as children from working families who may be struggling financially and require extra childcare support.

The ECC Locality Fund reopened for applications in May this year but with only £5k allocated per Division. I am pleased to say that like last year, every penny of the funding specifically allocated for the Maldon Division Locality Fund, was spent. Projects that benefitted this year were St Peter's Hospital Café work to end period poverty, North Fambridge Village Hall installation of a disabled access, The Maeldune Centre in Maldon creation of a new website, and the Woodham Walter Allotment Group. My thanks go to the councils and community groups who approached me with their projects and for the hard work put in.

The remaining Locality funding was directed to a new fund – the Local Levelling Up Fund. This new scheme gave all members a great opportunity to become involved in ECC's important levelling up work. Each County Councillor was attributed £5k and then asked to come together on a district basis, with fellow county councillors to discuss how to use the money together. This allowed for larger schemes across areas to be driven forward by the local members with funding. The money was directed to cohorts of people who were identified as a priority for levelling up. These were people with SEND, learning disabilities, or mental health conditions (children and adults), children on free school meals, working families on low incomes and young adults (16-25) who have not been in education, training, or employment for more than six months.

We (the ECC Division Members for the Maldon District) decided to direct funding specifically to help schools to purchase educational and pastoral care resources specifically to support disadvantaged and vulnerable children at Homework, Breakfast and Tea Time Clubs.

The projects that I put forward in the Maldon Division were Maldon Primary School, to purchase a chest freezer required to start their partnership with The National School Breakfast Programme; All Saints, Maldon & Woodham Walter Primary, to purchase Chrome Books and pastoral resources to support their homework and afterschool club work, which will specifically concentrate on leaning outcomes for disadvantaged children. Other schools that benefitted in the District were St Mary's Burnham, Southminster CofE Primary, and St Cedds in Burnham.

The Locality Fund opens again for applications this May, so if you have a project or community initiative, please do contact me with your suggestions/applications at cllr.jane.fleming@essex.gov.uk

In February, Essex County Council agreed it's new Budget for 2023/24. The Council had a stark choice in balancing its budget - of increasing taxes or facing unacceptable cuts in services. The Everyone's Essex Annual Plan and budget was approved at Full Council and the net cost of services was set at £1,176.9million (m) for 2023/24 with the net revenue budget requirement set at £1,011.2m (net cost of services less general government grants) for 2023/24 and the total council tax funding requirement set at £799.0m for 2023/24.

Billing Authority	2023/24 Final Tax Base Band D Equivalent	2023/24 Gross precept £000
Basildon	61,230	88,794,199
Braintree	55,801	80,920,936
Brentwood	33,870	49,117,258
Castle Point	31,258	45,329,414
Chelmsford	70,763	102,618,220
Colchester	65,865	95,515,592
Epping Forest	54,884	79,590,550
Harlow	28,483	41,305,192
Maldon	25,892	37,548,208
Rochford	32,889	47,694,496
Tendring	51,050	74,031,179
Uttlesford	39,007	56,567,086
Total for ECC	550,992	799,032,330

The Essex County Council's element of the council tax was increased by 3.5% comprising of a 1.5% increase in general council tax and 2.0% adult social care precept. This spending supports the most vulnerable in our communities including older people, people with learning difficulties, mental health difficulties and physical and sensory impairments. This resulted in the Essex County Council element of the council tax being £1,450.17 for a Band D property in 2023/24. At Full Council, the Cabinet Member for Highways also announced an additional £9m for highways maintenance and the Chancellor of the Exchequer recently announced £250m for highways maintenance budgets nationally – this will equate to £5.4m of additional funding for Essex highways.

In February, ECC announced the trial of a booking system for all vehicles at Essex Waste Recycling Centre. This is an extension of the pilot booking scheme that ran at the nine van friendly site for large vehicles and at the Rayleigh Recycling Centre, where all vehicle booking was piloted. The pilot is being extended to all vehicles and all locations for 9 months from March 2023. Two online booking systems running will run in parallel: large vehicles with visit slots of 1 hour and small vehicles with visit slots of 15 minutes. The number of visit slots is set at location level based on current demand and safe operating practice. The booking process is being extended to all sites to help manage waiting times, reduce congestion both in and around the sites, and improve the customer experience. The trial will be monitored, and amendments can be made as necessary. Any decision to retain a booking system in the longer term will be subject to further public engagement and decision. Blue badge holders and pedestrians do not need to book a slot and bookings can be made by telephone for those who do not have access to the internet.

The plans for the new Beaulieu Park Station took a big step forward this year after the contract between Essex County Council and Network Rail was signed. The agreement allows Network Rail to enter into a construction contract with a delivery contractor with work on the highly anticipated station to commence early in the new year. The scheme together with the new Chelmsford North East Bypass, is progressing with £218 million funding from the Government's Housing and Infrastructure Fund and £34 million for the South East Local Enterprise Partnership and developer Countryside Zest. The new station, which will be the

first built on the Great Eastern Mainline in over 100 years, will help to relieve pressure on Chelmsford Station, reduce car journeys into Chelmsford and support economic growth.

The Local Highways Panel work continued slowly this year, with delivery of schemes impacted by resource issues at Essex Highways. The feasibility study into measures to be implemented to reduce speeding through Cock Clarks has recently been presented to the Parish Council and the Cabinet Member for Highways remains committed to finding a solution. Other schemes I've submitted for the Maldon District in the past year include: High Street, Maldon request for a change to kerb line and height at bus stop, Fambridge Road, Maldon request for zebra crossing, Mill Road and Wantz, Maldon request for 20sPlenty, Park Drive, Maldon request for signage to football club, Latchingdon Road, Cold Norton, request for an extension of the 30mph, St Stephens Road, Cold Norton request for 20s Plenty, footway improvements to The Street, Woodham Walter and Latchingdon Road, Cold Norton. Speed and weight of traffic through villages continues to be a regular feature in my inbox. I am in favour of lowering speed limits in rural areas due to the increasing vehicle numbers from the cumulative impact of housing development in the District and because 60% of road fatalities occur on rural roads.

Throughout the year, I have continued to support residents with their concerns and to assist parishes with their issues requiring escalation. If you have concerns about an issue in the Division, please email me: cllr.jane.fleming@essex.gov.uk



Beautiful Maldon District