
Essex County Council

17 October 2023

Order Paper

Agenda item 8

Motions

The following amendments to Motions have been received:

Motion 2 Tackling the Concrete Crisis in Schools and Hospitals

An amendment moved by **Cllr Lewis Barber** and seconded by **Cllr Andrew Sheldon**

(The words deleted are shown ~~struck through~~ and additions are shown underlined)

That the motion be amended to read:

This Council notes that:

- i) At the end of August 2023, just days before the new school term was due to begin, the ~~Government~~ Department for Education announced that ~~more than 150 schools in England, including 60 schools in Essex,~~ needed to address urgently the presence of ~~unstable concrete known as RAAC in their buildings.~~
- ii) ~~Affected schools, colleges and nurseries were told that they cannot use affected buildings unless safety measures are in place~~ ECC is committed to returning our children and young people to full time face to face learning as soon as possible and has committed its own resources to assist schools to achieve this.
- iii) ~~That dealing with the Concrete Crisis will put local authorities and other public sector bodies — already facing severe budgetary pressures — under even more pressure.~~ This is in addition to schools who have used their own resources.
- iv) ~~Since a school roof collapsed in 2018 the Government have failed to heed the warnings of organisations such as the Local Government Association that this is a serious problem which needed addressing.~~
- v) ~~Successive years of Government underfunding in schools has resulted in 24,000 school buildings beyond their estimated initial design life and 700,000 pupils learning in schools which require major rebuilding or refurbishment.~~

Council believes that:

- vi) ~~It is a national scandal that some children were being taught in crumbling classrooms and some patients are being treated in hospitals with roofs at risk of collapse.~~
- vii) ~~This Government's commitment to eradicate RAAC from the NHS estate by 2035 is not soon enough.~~

Council further notes with concern that:

- viii) ~~It has been reported that when Prime Minister Rishi Sunak was Chancellor of the Exchequer, he rejected requests from Department of Education officials for an extra £900 million a year for school funding in the 2021 Spending Review.~~
- ix) ~~In the same spending review, he slashed taxes for the banks, choosing big finance over children's safety. The cost of the NHS repairs backlog is more than £10bn, up by a tenth on the previous year.~~

This Council expresses its thanks and gratitude to:

- Officers across all departments of ECC for their excellent response and hard work to the RAAC issue.
- Teachers and their staff, for their response and hard work in what was and is a stressful time for them, children and parents.
- Essex MPs, other Local Authorities, partners and the business community during this time.

This Council welcomes the Government's commitment to fund all "reasonable costs" incurred related to RAAC and calls on it to deliver on this commitment without undue delay."

~~Council therefore calls on the Government to:~~

- ~~1. Provide urgent clarity over where RAAC has been found in schools, hospitals and other public buildings like courts, police stations, leisure centres, libraries, and public housing in Essex.~~
- ~~2. Urgently set up a national risk register of all public buildings.~~
- ~~3. Publish all advice presented to Rishi Sunak when he was Chancellor of the Exchequer on RAAC in schools and hospitals. Set out additional funding from the Treasury to replace RAAC in affected public buildings without having to sacrifice other essential repairs, and to mitigate the disruption caused to pupils, patients, and other public service users.~~

~~Launch a Ministerial Taskforce to draw up a road map to ensure replacement work is carried out urgently.'~~

(The motion, if amended, would then read:)

'This Council notes that.

- i) At the end of August 2023, just days before the new school term was due to begin, the Department for Education announced that 60 schools in Essex needed to address urgently the presence of RAAC in their buildings.
- ii) ECC is committed to returning our children and young people to full time face to face learning as soon as possible and has committed its own resources to assist schools to achieve this.
- iii) This is in addition to schools who have used their own resources.

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- Teachers and their staff, for their response and hard work in what was and is a stressful time for them, children and parents.
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