

Motions

Members have given notice that they intend to move the following motions in accordance with paragraph 16.8.2 of the Constitution:

The Courts have made it clear that the Public Sector Equality Duty applies to the Council when it is considering these motions, even if they are motions without legal effect. There is not a general requirement for an equality impact assessment but regard should be had to the equality duty when drafting and considering motions.

The equality duty requires Council to have due regard to the need to:

- (a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act. In summary, the Act makes it unlawful to discriminate etc on the grounds of a protected characteristic.
- (b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- (c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, gender, and sexual orientation. The Act states that 'marriage and civil partnership' is not a relevant protected characteristic for (b) or (c) although it is relevant for (a).

1. Reducing speed limits on residential roads

Moved by Cllr Dave Harris and seconded by Cllr Lee Scordis.

'Essex County Council notes that:

More than half of all accident casualties occur on roads with 30mph limits, and a pedestrian is seven times more likely to die if they are hit by a vehicle travelling at 30 mph than they are at 20mph, a figure that rises to ten times more likely if the pedestrian is over the age of 60.

Reducing speed limits on residential roads has been found to significantly reduce air pollution and improve health outcomes.

Over 28 million people now live in local authorities in the UK which have adopted or are adopting a default speed limit of 20mph on residential roads.

Essex County Council therefore resolves to:

- call upon the leader to implement a Council-wide 20mph speed limit on residential roads as soon as is practically possible. Establishing 20mph limits in roads with schools should be treated as a priority. This measure should be comprehensive and cover all residential roads unless there are specific exceptions which would make this inappropriate.
- set up an all-party working group to oversee the implementation of the policy and to seek to advise the executive on roads where the lower speed

limit may not be appropriate and identify if other enforcement measures could be introduced in these areas. The views of residents should be sought to establish what measures would be regarded as most desirable’.

2. Adult and Children’s Social Care, Recognition and Reform

Moved by Cllr Jane Fleming and Seconded by Cllr Jaymey McIvor

‘This council commends all its officers and staff across Adult and Children’s Social Care for their achievements in 2023, as measured by outcomes for our residents, customer satisfaction levels, the Ofsted Report on Children’s Services, and national recognition.

However, This Council recognises that:

- There is always more to do and scope for improvement
- The levels and complexity of demand are increasing
- We must be prepared for the new CQC regime and social care reforms

This Council therefore commits to continuing innovation and calls on all members of the council to work on these initiatives, from scrutinising and challenging whilst understanding the continuing need for change.

This Council also calls on the Government to:

- Confirm the dates for the implementation of previously announced Social Care reforms and to ensure that resources commensurate with this timetable are put in place, in order for the complex planning and development to progress.
- Explore reforms to the privately-owned children’s social care sector, to ensure it provides excellent value for money, whilst maintaining high standards of provision.’

3. Central government constriction of local democracy

Moved by Cllr Paul Gadd and seconded by Cllr Chris Pond.

‘Council notes the requests made by Kent and Hampshire County Councils in November 2022 that Central Government should start to fund councils properly. Council also notes the statements made by those councils that:

"We have experienced more than 12 years of national austerity and cuts to our core budgets. Inflation continues to grow, along with demand for services such as social care for vulnerable adults and children. We are also constrained by outdated laws created in the 1940s and 1960s and have no autonomy to be able to introduce initiatives for some local services to help generate our own revenue. As a result, our budgets are now at breaking point. We have gone as far as we can to close the budget gaps we have faced to date, and there is nowhere left to go in future without severely impacting some of the most vulnerable people in our society."

Essex County Council has faced and continues to face the same pressures of greatly reduced Government funding, high inflation, and restrictions on income.

Council notes the statements made by Cllr Whitbread on 8 November 2023 confirming the financial pressures Essex County Council is under.

As well as the issue of reduced Government funding, the extra money we can raise from council tax and business rates is significantly below inflation each year. This is not just a medium-term problem that can be fixed with more one-off handouts to keep the sector limping along, it needs fundamental change.

We have a responsibility to the residents of Essex to do everything possible to protect the future of their vital local services such as the maintenance of our roads and footpaths, the running and maintenance of our schools and libraries as well as adult and children's social care. ECC urges the Government to take steps to address the financial challenges faced by local authorities, and to halt the long-term decline in council service provision.

Therefore, Council supports the requests made by the county councils of Kent and Hampshire to Government to fund local authorities properly.'