

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. Improving the County's Infrastructure

Moved by Councillor Chris Pond and seconded by Councillor Wendy Stamp.

'Council considers that there is a continuous need to improve the county's infrastructure, which is under constant pressure from new development. Council therefore 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; and calls upon local planning authorities to assist the County Council by ensuring as much is delivered as possible.'

2. Supporting Essex Residents and Businesses

Moved by Councillor Tom Cunningham and seconded by Councillor Holly Whitbread

'The combined effects of the Covid 19 Pandemic and Vladimir Putin's war in Ukraine have led to rising energy prices, with Essex residents and businesses facing significant cost pressures.

This council therefore welcomes the measures taken by Essex County Council to support residents and businesses with a package of measures including the following:

Allocating £9.4m of the Household Support Fund, including:

- **£4.2m** for food vouchers for children in school holidays.
- **£3.2m** for food vouchers for pensioners.
- **£1.3m** for the Essential living fund for general living expenses, furniture, household furnishings, white goods, clothing and other essential goods for people on low incomes.
- **£482,000** for support for unpaid carers, vulnerable adults and targeted family support delivered through trusted voluntary and community sector organisations and foodbanks to support children and their families.

Keeping families and individuals warm this winter by:

- Investing **£17m** in helping households improve their energy efficiency.
- Distributing **£600,000** from the Warm Homes Grant to help residents with energy efficiency.
- Through the new Community Winter Warmth and Welcome Programme, working with partners, community organisations and using our services to provide local and accessible places for winter warmth over the coming months. This includes a grant scheme to enable community groups to access small grants to put on activities.

Ensuring people have food on their tables and are eating well by:

- Investing an additional **£4.2m** to continue the Essex ActivAte Holiday Activity and Food Programme, providing families with a healthy meal, activity sessions and education on the importance of eating well and moving more.
- Supporting foodbanks and other food support groups through the Household Support Fund.
- Helping residents learn how to cook low-cost meals and giving them access to equipment to do so through 'Slow Cooker Clubs'.
- Investing up to **£500,000** to establish community supermarkets in Essex, starting with ECC's 6 priority levelling up areas.

Providing help with money management for residents by:

- Offering 14,000 residents easy access to free maths and finance training through the **£7.9m** Essex multiply initiative.
- Delivering free financial wellness sessions to Essex businesses and employers to support employees in being able to better manage their money and build financial confidence.
- Piloting financial wellbeing coaches in a number of parts of Essex, supporting 1,000 working families to manage their finances.
- Exploring the development of financial support tools and services for jobseekers and benefits claimants.

Providing information and guidance for residents by:

- Investing **£120,000** in the Citizens Advice network in Essex this year to assist them in supporting residents with information and advice.

- Investing **£50,000** to offer free legal advice thanks to a partnership with Central Law Community Interest Company.
- Working with Age Well East to help with information and advice for older people in relation to cost of living pressures.
- Through a partnership with UK Power Networks, create a Priority Service Register so vulnerable customers are supported quickly should there be any power disruption.

Looking after the wellbeing of our residents by:

- Investing **£6m** in the Essex Wellbeing Service to support residents across a range of wellbeing issues and day-to-day needs.
- Continuing to connect people and communities through the digital social movement 'United in Kind' which helps people connect with their community and foster neighbourly acts of kindness.

However, this Council believes that long term prosperity for the residents and businesses of Essex can only come by removing the barriers to enterprise and delivering economic growth.

This Council therefore welcomes the Government plans for Investment Zones and calls on Ministers to work in partnership with Essex County Council in developing Essex based Investment Zones, to drive opportunities for businesses to grow, creating new and better jobs for the residents of Essex.'

3. Afghans, Ukrainians and the Housing Crisis

Moved by Councillor Mike Mackrory and seconded by Councillor Mark Cory.

'Essex County Council offers thanks to the generous Essex residents who offered their homes to host new residents from Ukraine and to others who have volunteered to support new residents from Afghanistan.

The Council notes that we need to ensure that if placements under the Homes for Ukraine scheme end for any reason that local authorities work together to ensure that refugees are rematched with new hosts wherever possible.

This Council regrets that there are over 300 Afghans stuck in hotels around the county, some of whom have been there nearly a year, due to a lack of homes for them to rent. This Council believes that hotels, except for a short stay, are inappropriate housing for such a long period, in particular for the long-term wellbeing of children.

This Council notes the ongoing housing crisis in Essex, where there is a huge lack of affordable homes to rent or buy, meaning there are thousands of Essex residents who are currently homeless and being housed in emergency accommodation by the city, district, and borough councils.

Therefore, this Council asks the Leader of the Council to:

Work with the Borough, City and District councils to ensure that rematching works as effectively as possible.

Ensure that funding allocated by central Government for the Homes for Ukraine scheme is made available to all local authorities who are incurring costs with respect to the scheme , to reduce the risk of housing authorities having to locate and fund emergency accommodation for Ukrainians.

Request the Secretary of State at DLUHC to (a) redouble discussions with other Government departments to identify Government-owned land and property where Afghan families might be accommodated, and (b) support councils so that they can build substantial, extra numbers of genuinely affordable homes, whilst protecting the Green Belt, so that ALL residents of Essex can afford a decent home.'