

## **Executive Statement 10 October 2017**

Mr Chairman, members.

As we come together as a full council for the first time since before the summer, I wanted to take the opportunity to reflect on the upcoming Autumn Statement and introduce some new initiatives to strengthen our communities.

‘Our approach to tackling the challenges we face is simple and has three components. First, we need an adequate funding base. Second, we need to work collaboratively across the system with our partners to achieve the outcomes our residents deserve. Third, we need to recognise that public services are not best placed to do everything and we need to support communities to do more for themselves.’

### **Fair Deal & Autumn Statement**

If you live in Essex, the funding which councils get to run services for you adds up to £193 per person per year. However, cross the border into London and the average funding leaps up to £563 per person, more than triple what an Essex resident receives.

Ahead of the Autumn Statement I’ve written to the Chancellor (as I did last year) setting out the key issues which must be addressed to ensure economic stability and individual wellbeing.

We require a clear, long term funding policy which enables local government to meet local need. County councils were due to receive 100% of locally-raised business rates from 2019 – this is now in doubt after the Local Government Finance Bill was dropped from the Government’s agenda.

This lack of clarity – essential for long term planning - sits against a back drop of:

- **Increasing need for social care services** due to Essex’s hyper aging population - Spending on social care accounted for more than 60p in every £1 spent by Essex County Council in 2016-17.
- **Pressures within children’s services** - Essex has transformed its children’s services – but a funding gap meaning we will need to identify a further £186 million by 2020/21, a proportion of which will be expected to be delivered from our Children and Families services, risks undoing this progress.
- **The demand for more high quality and affordable housing and the delivery of infrastructure projects** to unlock much needed economic growth and improve connectivity - Essex has ambitious plans for growth, seeking to double the size of its economy to £60bn over the next 20 years.

I have spoken many times in this Chamber of the work we are doing to ensure that the people who call Essex home have the opportunity to fulfil the promise of their potential.

There is so much more we want to do and could do if Government gave Essex it's fair share of national resources, and trusted and empowered us to make more decisions locally.

We want to drive prosperity for everyone in Essex and if the Government increased our funding to bring us in line with our far richer London neighbours, then we could achieve so much more.

## **Vision**

Change is unstoppable. And so are we.

I think that is quite a fitting motto for the Future of Essex, our shared long-term vision for our county which launched on 25 September with the backing of more than 50 major organisations.

As our vision states, there's no one way to describe who we are. But if there is one thing that unites us more than anything else, it's our spirit and belief that we can achieve anything.

We know that change is coming. And the purpose of the vision is to make sure it happens on our own terms. To set out the Essex we want to see in the future and unite us in making it a reality. To make sure that the people who call Essex home have the opportunity to fulfil the promise of their potential.

For me, that's why this vision is so important. Because if we are going to truly create a county where people can fulfil the promise of their potential, we need to constantly return to where our ultimate responsibility lies: our residents, not just our individual organisations.

## **Strengthening Communities**

We also know that ECC do not have all the answers and we need to listen to local people to understand what can make the most difference in their area.

We are encouraging new ideas through The Essex Challenge Prize, focussing on dementia;

Investing a million pounds to help communities deliver the projects they want to see happen.

The Essex Crowd is all about bringing people together behind good ideas that communities want to see happen. We want to back local good ideas that create connections and bring people together.

ECC has pledged £500k to match fund great projects and I can't wait to see which ones come up.

I encourage all of you to visit the EssexCrowd website, look at the great projects that are already there, spread the word.

We have also provided £500k of funding to support a Local Services Fund offering formally constituted groups (e.g. parish councils, resident associations) the chance to bid for funding to support local service delivery (e.g. local handyman, community café scheme etc.). The Local Services Fund was launched at the Essex Association of Local Councils (EALC) AGM on 19th September with bid applications accepted from October.

The launch of the Essex Lottery will help to raise much needed funds for charities and good causes. The Essex Lottery is a way to empower Essex's good causes to raise money for themselves and help continue providing vital services for our residents. The first tickets are on sale from 10th October.