

STURMER PARISH COUNCIL

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Minutes of the **ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING** of **STURMER PARISH COUNCIL** held at **STURMER VILLAGE HALL** on **TUESDAY 18 MAY 2021** at **7:30 PM**

Present: Cllr Garrod Cllr Porth Cllr Collar Cllr Carter Cllr Choat Cllr Jones
County Cllr Peter Schwier

00 Member of the public

21/20 NOMINATE AND ELECT THE CHAIRMAN FOR PERIOD 2021-2022

RESOLUTION – Cllr Diana Garrod was duly elected as Chairman for 2021-2022: Proposed Cllr Choat, Seconded Cllr Carter – unanimous approval

The Acceptance of Office was duly signed and witnessed

21/21 NOTE AND APPROVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None required

21/22 DECLARATION OF INTEREST FOR THIS MEETING

Cllr Jones declared a non-pecuniary interest in a matter being discussed under Item 21/29.
Cllr Garrod declared a non pecuniary interest in a matter being discussed under Item 21/30(a)

21/23 APPROVE MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ONLINE ON 09 MARCH & 13 APRIL 2021 (period of mourning two weeks from 09 April, resolutions passed during that period were not deemed lawful)

RESOLUTION – Minutes 09 March 2021 reapproved and Minutes 13 April 2021 adopted as true record: Proposed Cllr Jones, Seconded Cllr Carter - Unanimous agreement

21/24 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION

This provides an opportunity for members of the public to raise questions and comment on items on the agenda or of import. Time for this session is limited to 15 minutes (03 minutes per person)

No members of the public present

21/25 DISTRICT AND COUNTY CLLRS REPORT(S)

Dist Cllr Garrod - Full report at **APPENDIX A**
County Cllr Finch (outgoing county councillor) – Full report at **APPENDIX B**
Cnty Cllr Schwier shared the following observations:-

- Whilst newly appointed County Councillor for the region he is not new to the sector, having spent several years in the Independent Standards Committee, a number of years as a parish councillor followed by six years as a District Councillor.
- Has 33 parish councils so support and will attend meetings as often as his workload permits.
- Essex County Councillor has a new leader in Kevin Bentley who intends to bring a new direction to the county council revolving around three core aims, 1-Renewal, 2 – Equality, 3 – Ambition
- 1 Will surround Businesses ad Employment
- 2 Will involve the maintenance and improvements to Child and Adult Services
- 3 Aims to ensure a cleaner and greener environment within Essex

21/26 RECEIVE CLERK’S REPORT & NOTE CORRESPONDENCE

I have received an email from a concerned resident observing the speed at which motorists pass through the village, circulated to members; council will be aware of what is seemingly an ongoing problem and have indeed

	<p>been successful in having Vehicle Activated Signs installed, 30mph roundels painted in the road and the rubbish bin sticker initiative. Currently we do not have an operating Speedwatch group.</p> <p>Concerns raised by a resident on a planning related matters which will be covered by the agenda item on planning.</p> <p>Invitation from Dedham Vale AONB to their 17 June annual Forum for 2021, via Zoom – circulated to members.</p> <p>County Cllr Finch May report will be added to these minutes.</p> <p>I believe you are all aware the outcome of the recent elections has seen the appointment of Peter Schwier to the position of County councillor, he will be a familiar name and face to this council and the community.</p> <p>All other matters are to be covered by the items on the Agenda</p>
<p>21/27 Cnty Cllr Schwier joined meeting</p>	<p>RECEIVE AND NOTE THE INTERNAL AUDITOR REPORT 21/27(i) - RECEIVE AND SIGN EXEMPTION CERTIFICATE 21/27(ii) – SIGN THE ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 21/27(iii) – SIGN THE ANNUAL ACCOUNTING STATEMENT</p> <p>RESOLUTION – Approve Annual return items as listed above: Proposed Cllr Carter, Seconded Cllr Choat – Unanimous approval The Exemption Certificate will be forwarded to the External Auditor, the remainder of the necessary Annual return documents will be placed on the parish council website</p>
<p>21/28</p>	<p>FINANCE – RECEIVE FINANCIAL STATEMENT - AGREE PAYMENTS, APPOINT AUTHORISER RE-APPROVE FINANCE STATEMENT FROM 13 APRIL (period of mourning)</p> <p>RESOLUTION – Re-Approve Finance statement for 13 April and the current finance statement: Proposed Cllr Choat, Seconded Cllr Jones – unanimous approval - Cllr Carter to Authorise. Finance Statements at APPENDIX C</p>
<p>21/29 Cnty Cllr Schwier left the meeting</p>	<p>REVIEW & COMMENT ON CURRENT PLANNING APPLICATIONS/APEALS</p> <p>APPLICATION NO : 21/01161/FUL DESCRIPTION : Demolition and replacement of 8A Abbotts Cottages with a three/four bedroom dwelling. LOCATION : 8A Abbotts Cottages The Street Sturmer Essex Comment date 19 May 21/01161/FUL Demolition and replacement of 8A Abbotts Cottages with a three/four bedroom dwelling. 8A Abbotts Cottages The Street Sturmer Essex (braintree.gov.uk)</p> <p>Four members of the council OBJECTED to this application on the grounds of the “Design, size and scale being too large for the site” and unsuitable for the location; also wishing to refer to the council’s previous comments on the proposals for the development of this site under Ref 19/00660/FUL, October 2019. Cllrs Garrod and Jones abstained from commenting and voting on this matter.</p> <p>Ref. 21/01054/FUL Demolition and replacement of 8A Abbotts Cottages with a three/four bedroom dwelling. - 8A Abbotts Cottages, The Street, Sturmer Comment date 18 May 21/01054/FUL Demolition and replacement of 8A Abbotts Cottages with a three/four bedroom dwelling. 8A Abbotts Cottages The Street Sturmer Essex (braintree.gov.uk)</p> <p>Four members of the council OBJECTED to this application on the grounds of the “Design, Size and scale being too large for the site” and unsuitable for the location; also wishing to refer to the council’s previous comments on the proposals for the development of this site under Ref 19/00660/FUL, October 2019. Cllrs Garrod and Jones abstained from commenting and voting on this matter.</p> <p>Ref. 21/01130/HH</p>

	<p>Proposed single storey rear extension. - The Pumphouse, The Street, Sturmer Comment date 27 May 21/01130/HH Proposed single storey rear extension. The Pumphouse The Street Sturmer Essex CB9 7XF (braintree.gov.uk)</p> <p>NO OBJECTION</p>
21/30	<p>CONFIRM REPRESENTATIVES FOR THE PERIOD 2021-2022 FOOTPATHS – Cllr Choat FLOOD ACTION GROUP – Cllr Carter PLAY AREA – Cllrs Porth & Carter PARISH MAINTENANCE – Cllr Carter WAR MEMORIAL – Cllr Porth</p> <p>Proposed new Representative positions VILLAGE HALL – To be combined with the Defibrillator management - Cllr Jones HIGHWAYS – Cllr Choat</p> <p>RECEIVE REPRESENTATIVES REPORT: a) Footpaths – FP3 remains eroded and in need of urgent attention; footbridge by the weir remains broken but could be easily repaired b) Flood Action Group – Woody Dams installed; Highways have now located water services under the bridge, works may commence 2023/24. c) Play Area – Ready for annual inspection; sadly newly laid safety flooring crumb has grass growing through it – CLERK to contact supplier d) Parish Maintenance – Necessary works continuing as contracted e) War Memorial – Grant award organisation have been asked to consider the lower of the repair quotes for their grant award</p>
21/31	<p>CONSIDER FORMAL ADOPTION OF THE WAR MEMORIAL AND REGISTER LAND OWNERSHIP</p> <p>Clerk to approach Solicitor for indication of cost</p>
21/32	<p>RECEIVE UPDATE ON THE DEFIBRILLATOR AND ASSOCIATED MATTERS – Cllr Jones</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Support team in place, signs advising site of the Defibrillator are being displayed at various locations around the village. ❖ Training due to recommence, however, due to backlog created by the pandemic there will be an extended waiting time.
21/33	<p>RE-APPROVE STREET CLEANING AGREEMENT WITH BDC (period of mourning)</p> <p>Unanimous re-approval to continue with the Street Cleaning contract.</p> <p><i>Members of the public will be asked to leave the meeting for the next item, 20/79, Exclusion of Public and Press – Under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting whilst discussion takes place on the following item on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt and commercially sensitive information</i></p>
21/34	<p>RECEIVE UPDATE ON THE VG52 LAND SALE PROPOSALS</p> <p>No update to report</p> <p><i>Members of the public to be readmitted to the meeting</i></p>
21/35	<p>ITEMS OF REPORT TO BE NOTED OR ADDED TO NEXT COUNCIL AGENDA</p> <p>Consider action to mark the Queens Jubilee, suggested tree planting, Woodlands Trust giving away free trees, consider location for planting.</p>
21/36	<p>DATE OF NEXT MEETING – 13 JULY – CLOSE – 8:45pm</p>

Signed.....Date.....

APPENDIX A

District Councillor's Report May 2021 to Parish Councils
Diana Garrod - Bumpstead Ward)

05/05/21 **(Cllr.**

Temporary Road Traffic Orders

Intended road closure of Sages End Road, due to commence on 5th May 2021 for 3 days. The closure is required for the safety of the public and workforce while Anglian Water undertakes new connection.

Intended road closures of North Street, and Water Lane Steeple Bumpstead on 15th May 2021 while Anglian Water undertakes mains installation and North Street again on 22nd May 2021 for 1 day while Gas Transportation Co Ltd undertakes new connection.

Local Plan Sub Committee Meeting 13th May 2021

Members of the LPSC will be examining the *draft Local Plan*; **Local Development Scheme 2021-2023 (LDS)**. The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires the Council to prepare LDS and keep it up to date. The main purpose is to set out the rolling programme for the preparation of planning documents that will form Braintree District Council’s Development Plan and planning guidance. It identifies the key stages and timescales in the preparation of planning documents. This will provide the public and other relevant stakeholders with information on what documents are being produced and the predicted timescales involved. It is split into a number of different sections. The first section sets out the current national, regional and local planning policy context relevant to Braintree District. The second part of the document provides the timetable for the preparation of planning documents as well as an update on neighbourhood planning activities within the district. This is followed by an updated list of key evidence base documents which support the Braintree Development Plan. The final section of the document is provides information monitoring and reviewing as well as resources required and an analysis of the risks involved. Since the previous version, Section 1 of the emerging Local Plan was adopted in February 2021 and a provisional date of July 2021 has been set for the examination of Section 2.

The LDS contains information about **Neighbourhood Planning**. The Localism Act 2011 introduced neighbourhood developments plans which help communities with or without Parish or Town Councils to establish general planning policies for the development and use of land in a neighbourhood. Once ‘made’, these plans will form part of the statutory development plan for the area and will be used in the determination of planning applications. The first stage of developing a neighbourhood plan is to designate a neighbourhood area. The District has agreed 13 Neighbourhood Areas. Other parish councils are considering developing a neighbourhood plan. Once a neighbourhood area has been agreed preparation of a neighbourhood plan can be carried out by a parish or town council or in the case of unparished areas a neighbourhood forum.

AREA

STAGE

Bradwell& Pattiswick	‘Made’ 22 nd July 2019
Coggeshall	Referendum on 6 th May 2021
Cressing	‘Made’ 17 th February 2020
Earls Colne	Preparation of draft plan
Feering	Working towards Regulation 15 consultation

Hatfield Peverel	'Made' 16 th December 2019
Kelvedon	Working towards Regulation 15 consultation
Great Bardfield	Preparation of draft plan
Gt Saling & Bardfield Saling	Examiners report received – progressing towards referendum
Great Yeldham	Preparation of draft plan
Stisted	Preparation of draft plan
Steeple Bumpstead	Preparation of draft plan
Toppesfield	Preparation of draft plan

The Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) 2021 update is being presented to Local Plan Sub-Committee for approval. It builds on the 2017 IDP report by further updating the position of services and facilities being delivered to support the allocations and policies within the Local Plan Section 2 examination. The document will also be used to guide s.106 negotiations for allocated sites, strategic growth and future planning applications that come forward in the district. The term 'infrastructure' covers a wide range of services and facilities provided by public and private organisations. The Braintree IDP Update covers the following infrastructure areas:

- Schools and other educational facilities
- Health and social wellbeing
- Utilities
- Transport, including pedestrian facilities
- Flood defences
- Emergency services
- Waste
- Social and community (including libraries, allotments and community halls)
- Leisure and recreational facilities (including children's play, youth and sports facilities)
- Open space/green infrastructure

Emerging policy changes since the 2017 IDP publication: The Braintree Emerging Local Plan Part 1 has been jointly prepared by Braintree, Colchester, Essex and Tendring Councils ('the North Essex Authorities') and covers the period 2016 to 2033. It was submitted for Examination in Public in 2017 and examined in early 2018. The Inspector's preliminary report identified significant issues in respect of two of the three proposed Garden Communities, on the Colchester/Braintree border and West of Braintree. Following the requirement for further work to be undertaken by the North Essex Authorities in respect of these Garden Communities, the examination resumed early in 2020. At the completion of the Examination, the Inspector's report recommended that both Garden Communities be removed from the Part 1 Plan. A consultation on the proposed main modifications to the plan was undertaken between August and October 2020 and the final modifications were approved by the Inspector in January 2021. The Part 1 Plan was adopted by the North Essex Authorities in March 2021.

Growth in Braintree: Over the period 2013 to 2033, the Part 1 Plan requires 14,320 dwellings to be delivered in Braintree district (716 dwellings per annum). It also requires between 20.9 and 43.3 hectares of employment land. The one major, specific item of infrastructure required to support the growth in the Plan is a dualled A120 road from Braintree to the A12. Alongside the Part 1 Plan, the Braintree Part 2 Plan was also published for consultation in 2017. Unlike the Part 1 Plan, this has not been the subject of any examination; this part of the plan-making process cannot proceed until the Part 1 Plan has been adopted. Reflecting the fact that the Garden Communities relevant to Braintree district have been removed from the Part 1 Plan, Policy LPP17 of the Part 2 Plan allocates residential growth. The locations are shown within the IDP document.

Cross-boundary considerations: To inform the IDP Review, an assessment of the local plans in neighbouring districts to Braintree has been undertaken. **NB:** With regards to South Cambridgeshire, West Suffolk and Uttlesford, the document states “There are no major allocations that are likely to have a significant impact on infrastructure needs in Braintree district”. However, West Suffolk and Uttlesford state “Work on new Local Plan is at very early stage”.

The full (draft) LDS and IDP can be viewed in the Local Plan Sub Committee agenda 13/05/2021 on the BDC website.

Business Grants are Open to Applications

These two grant schemes are now open to applications:

Business Adaptation Grant

This scheme allows businesses to adapt their premises and operations so that they can continue to operate safely and in line with government guidance.

Grants of £500, £1,000 and £1,500 will be awarded based on the need of individual businesses.

The scheme will be open to all types of businesses, and will not be limited to customer facing businesses.

Additional Restrictions Grant

This discretionary grant scheme seeks to help businesses who have had their trade severely affected by COVID-19 restrictions, regardless of whether they pay business rates or not.

Market traders, taxi firms, businesses operating from home, companies in shared work spaces and those in the events sector are amongst the businesses which can apply. Grants up to £5,000 will be awarded based on the size of the business.

Please note: Businesses in receipt of a Restart Grant will not be eligible.

Allocation of funds: Essex County Council has allocated **£407,000** in financial support to help the businesses in our district impacted by COVID-19 restrictions.

We are also adding, to that amount, the discretionary grant funding we have left, of **£265,000**, to support businesses through the two schemes.

Application process: Businesses can check their eligibility on the BDC website.

The window for applications will be open for 2 weeks or until the funds are spent.

Funds are limited. Grants will be issued on a first-come, first-served basis.

Once this allocation is spent, we will not be able to offer another round of grants until additional funding is released by the Government.

Return to In Person Meetings – Position Update

On 28 April 2021 the High Court released its decision on the legal challenge brought by LLG, LGA and Hertfordshire County Council on the interpretation of the Local Government Act 1972, and have unfortunately dismissed the case, stating:

".... the Secretary of State was correct in November 2016 and July 2019 to say that primary legislation would be required to allow local authority "meetings" under the 1972 Act to take place remotely. In our view, once the Flexibility Regulations cease to apply, such meetings must take place at a single, specified geographical location; attending a meeting at such a location means physically going to it; and being "present" at such a meeting involves physical presence at that location. We recognise that there are powerful arguments in favour of permitting remote meetings. But, as the consultation documents show, there are also arguments against doing so. The decision whether to permit some or all local authority meetings to be conducted remotely, and if so, how, and subject to what safeguards, involves difficult policy choices on which there is likely to be a range of competing views. These choices have been made legislatively for Scotland by the Scottish Parliament and for Wales by the Senedd. In England, they are for Parliament, not the courts".

The outcome of these proceedings is disappointing particularly in light of the support for the continuation of remote meetings. We understand that the LLG and LGA will now direct their energy into lobbying government to quickly bring forward the necessary legislation required to enable virtual meetings to continue and ensure that councils have local choice to determine the methodology by which meetings can take place long term. However, it does mean that we will now have to re-commence face to face meeting.

Public Attendance and Public Speakers

Members of the public will be permitted to attend those meetings that are conducted in Public. However, due to configuration of the room, any members of the public attending will observe the meeting from the Councils reception area, where there will be a seating area and screen through which the broadcast will be streamed. Members of the public are reminded to register with the Governance Team if they wish to attend, so that numbers can be managed accordingly. Seats will be allocated on a first come first served basis, and once filled, any further attendees will be turned away, and asked to view the meeting via the Councils YouTube Channel. Any public attending will enter and exit the reception area via the front doors to Causeway House. Registered Public Speakers will continue to have the ability to deliver their statement in person or request that an officer read it out on their behalf. Any registered public speakers will be invited into the room on a one in one out basis, and will enter through the reception area. After they have finished their statement, if there is seating available in the reception area, they will be permitted to remain and observe the remainder of the meeting.

National Grid – Bramford to Twinstead Project

I attended a presentation on this proposal and in my April report, I conveyed that this consultation ends 6th May 2021. The Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and Stour Valley Partnership put together a working group to produce a response. It is very comprehensive and naturally, they felt that the applicant should consider preserving the natural beauty of the nationally designated AONB and the Stour Valley project area. Braintree District Council also produced a comprehensive response.

Covid-19 (Coronavirus) Vaccination Update

Vaccination total numbers:

First dose: As of 29 April, around 785,000 people across Essex county have received at least one dose – an increase from 778,000 last week. The current focus remains on second doses and about 90% of vaccinations have been second doses.

Second dose: Around 292,000 people in Essex have now received both doses – an increase from 231,000 last week. District level and parliamentary constituency level data is listed at the end of this briefing or via: [Statistics » COVID-19 Vaccinations \(england.nhs.uk\)](https://www.statistics.gov.uk/covid-19-vaccinations)

92.8% of clinically extremely vulnerable have had their first dose and 62.3% have had two doses.

Eligibility has been extended to all adults aged over 42 years old. From Friday 30th April this will be extended to over 40's. It is expected that the booking system for over 30's will open up towards middle/late May. (People aged 42 and over - or turn 42 before 1 July 2021 are now invited to receive their vaccine, so don't hesitate book online at www.nhs.uk or call 119. Your GP may also contact you to offer an appointment).

Social care: the current position is: 80% of care home workers vaccinated and 76% of homecare workers vaccinated.

Second dose bookings: The advice for people in instances where they have not been contacted, or where they are concerned the date is being missed, is that the individual who is due a second dose needs to contact the provider who gave them the first vaccine or alternatively to call the helpline number 03442573961.

Booster vaccines: planning is now underway for booster vaccinations to take place later this year. The UK has secured some additional vaccine supplies. Further detail will emerge in due course.

In the seven days up to 15th April, we were pleased to see another fall in the number of COVID-19 cases per 100,000 in the Braintree district (7.86). However, as at week ending 22nd April there was an increase to 11.8 so we need to keep up the good work in Braintree district and continue to follow the rules and keep safe as lockdown is eased.

BDC wish to thank the 80,000 of our residents who have taken up their vaccination offer so far. Every vaccination brings us hope, so thank you for being part of that.

Order Covid-19 (Coronavirus) Lateral Flow Tests (FREE)

These tests are now be available free for everyone in England. The tests can also be ordered for FREE OF CHARGE for HOME DELIVERY from: <https://www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests>

Lateral flow devices have the advantage of giving a result in under 30 minutes but aren't as accurate as "gold standard" PCR tests, which must be sent to the lab. If a positive result is identified on the Lateral Flow Test. You must then report your test result on gov.uk/report-covid19-result and if you test positive then you must start self-isolating immediately and book a confirmatory PCR test.

Cllr. Diana Garrod
District Councillor - Bumpstead Ward

APPENDIX B

Cllr Finch Parish Update – May 2021

Essex in top 10

Essex County Council continues to be ranked in the Top 10 most effective top tier authorities in the country, as independently ranked by iMPower. Since 2018 we have been in the top ten in terms

of productivity, demonstrating how we achieve better outcomes for residents from a less-than-average spend per head.

Over the last decade we have invested heavily in transformation for long-term sustainability and as a result we have been able to improve the quality of the services we provide, putting the resident, not institutions, at the heart of our services.

- 89% of our children now attend a school that is rated as Good or Outstanding
- We have improved our Adult Community Learning offer to nearly 11,000 students.
- We have an award-winning broadband team, enabling over 150,000 Essex homes and businesses to access superfast broadband.
- We engage 32,000 young people through our nationally recognised youth service.
- The condition of our roads is now among the best in the country.
- We have invested billions in improving and maintaining our infrastructure.

Council Tax

This year, for the sixth time in the last ten years, we announced no increase in council tax, and only a 1.5% increase in our social care precept this year. Very few authorities across the country are in a position to act with this level of confidence. Most are increasing their rates by two or three times this amount.

In fact, since 2010, while inflation has increased by around 35%, the cumulative impact on council tax has been much less, at around 22%.

Climate Commission

The Essex Climate Action Commission is looking to get the views of Essex residents on a selection of the recommendations the Commission will make which will help Essex become a net-zero county by 2050.

Since its inception in May 2020, the Commission has been developing recommendations for ways in which Essex can tackle climate change.

Through the Commission's [consultation](#), launched on 16 March, it hopes to find out how much public support there is for its recommendations, whether residents think the focus is on the right areas, and if the recommendations have the right level of ambition. Residents have until 27 April to have their say.



Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery scheme works underway

The first energy efficient home upgrades under the Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery scheme have been completed.

John Davies of Clacton has had external wall insulation which has raised his Energy Performance Certificate from E to D.

The Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery scheme is a government-funded initiative which is being managed by Essex County Council in conjunction with seven city, district and borough councils. The purpose of the scheme is to install energy efficiency measures in Essex homes which help to reduce heating bills and cut carbon emissions.

Residents can follow Mr Davies' lead by [visiting the Essex County Council website](#) to find out more about the scheme and how they could also make potential savings to energy bills. To be eligible for up to £10,000 funding residents must own a home in Essex with an EPC rating of E, F or G, and have a household income below £30,000.

Funding is also available for private landlords, local authority-owned properties and social housing, however a 33% contribution from the landlord is required and the maximum funding per property is £5,000.

COVID-19

1) It is a tribute to the residents of Essex that we have gone from having some of the highest case rates in the country to among the lowest.

2) As we move from lockdown, the need for testing becomes more important. As a result, we have created possibly the most extensive self-testing availability in the country, using libraries as collection points.

3) We had concerns about the clarity and effectiveness of Essex's payment scheme for people who have to stop work to self-isolate. Therefore, this has now been standardised and re-launched.

4) Care homes have again experienced an extremely tough time over the last few months. We are pleased to see care home visiting resuming, and we are working to ensure quality and capacity in all parts of the county.

5) Essex County Council have played a critical role in supporting the NHS vaccination programme by recruiting volunteers to help at sites and assisting with communication via our channels.

ECC Budget

At Full Council on 23 February we approved our budget for the next year. We also announced some additional initiatives

- An additional £2million investment in economic development to ensure a successful reopening of the Essex economy.
- £1.5million to support the Educational Recovery Task Force which will lead and oversee the educational recovery of all Essex children.
- A further £1million investment in mental health support for children and our health and care workforce.
- A further £1million community action fund for environmental initiatives to help communities create less waste, travel sustainably, use renewable energy and produce less carbon.
- A further £500,000 to break the cycle of violence and protect young people from gangs.
- A further £7.2million of capital funding for Local Highways Panels (LHP) - £200K more for each panel, each year, for the next three years.
- An additional £180,000 added to LHP revenue budgets for smaller highways projects.

Major Capital programmes

In March we agree the unlocking of grant funding worth over £200 million for Chelmsford North East By-pass and a new rail station at Beaulieu Park.

In total 14,109 new homes will be built through these two projects. By securing the funding, ECC has delivered an Infrastructure First approach whereby the infrastructure schemes will be brought forward earlier than would otherwise have been the case and existing residents will see the benefit as early as possible.

This funding is in addition to the £99m secured by ECC to support a new Link Road and Rapid Transport System to the east of Colchester. The Chelmsford and Colchester funds combine to over £300m, which will help drive economic recovery from Covid-19 by supporting thousands of construction jobs in Essex and adding 10bn to the economy.

Freeports

Felixstowe/Harwich and the Thames Freeport proposals have been chosen by the Chancellor as two of the 8 new Freeports in the UK. This will be a huge boost to the wider North and South Essex economies, and the county and country as a whole. Again, Essex County Council's work supporting and influencing these outcomes has paid off.

Essex and the East of England will play a leading role in powering local and national economic growth. We can drive the regional recovery from the challenges of Covid-19 – while helping lead the rest of the nation down the path of increased prosperity.

Outstanding Childrens Services

We have one of the best children and families services in the country, with some of the lowest spend, rated by Ofsted as outstanding. We did this by investing heavily in the right leadership, early intervention, and innovation in practice.

Education Recovery and Young People

Laptop Scheme

Last Summer, we launched an initiative called "Closing the Digital Divide" which provides laptops to young people who need devices. Clearly, with the advent of home schooling and remote learning, this has become a very prominent issue.

As part of our response to the COVID 19 pandemic, Essex focused its efforts on supporting young people to gain access to ensure they could continue with their education. The "Closing the Digital Divide" scheme involves ECC working with partners to donate redundant devices to the scheme, which are then refurbished and sold to fund the purchase of new chrome books for school children who require them. The initial focus was on providing the equipment to colleges for students in need and was later expanded to include Secondary and Primary Schools. In total we distributed in the region of 5,000 laptops (1,000 of which were purchased by ECC) and continue with the scheme. As we emerge from the COVID 19 crisis, we will once again be taking donations of devices from the wider population and business as we further expand the scheme.

The next phase of the programme will see us extend support for larger families. Even with the schools now back, access at home is crucial for young people's education.

Easter Holiday Camps

Essex ActivAte is the new holiday activity and food programme run by Active Essex in partnership with Essex County Council and funded by the Department for Education. Working with a network of holiday club delivery partners the programme provided FREE face to face clubs for young people who are eligible for benefits based free school meals, as well as young people from working families who would benefit from this extra support. Clubs included fun activities, including sports and arts & crafts, for at least 4 hours per day over 8 days of the Easter holidays.

In total over Easter we have provided 22,125 spaces over 8 days. This includes 20,845 spaces on the Essex ActivAte programme, 1176 SEND specialist spaces, and 640 spaces on mental wellbeing hubs. Within that offer we have provided around 420 spaces per day for working families - over the 8 days that is 3360 spaces available.

