

County Council report January/February 2017

Budget plans set out

Investment of more than £260 million of capital spend into roads, schools and special education needs are planned within the 2017/18 budget it has been announced.

The council also plans to take up the Government's three per cent social care 'levy'.

The levy, announced by Government following the Autumn Statement, will be added to council tax bills and directed specifically for social care.

The Council will be making no other increase to Council Tax.

Announced as part of the 2017/18 budget plans, £524 million will be spent on social care, which represents 42 per cent of the entire budget excluding schools.

There will also be a capital investment programme of £263 million – the largest ever announced.

The budget plans will be discussed at a meeting of Cabinet on 24 January before going to Full Council on 14 February.

'Once-in-a-lifetime' A120 consultation launches

Residents are being urged to take advantage of a 'once-in-a-lifetime' opportunity to improve the A120 in Essex and boost the local economy.

Tuesday, 17 January saw the launch of an eight-week public consultation into five alternatives for a new dual carriageway link for the A120 between Braintree and the A12.

The five options have been picked for consultation following an in-depth analysis of nearly 70 separate routes.

Drivers, residents, businesses and other interested parties can make their views known by filling out the survey online at www.a120essex.co.uk.

Hard copies of the consultation materials will also be available at 11 public information events in Bradwell, Braintree, Chelmsford, Coggeshall, Colchester, Cressing, Feering, Marks Tey, Rivenhall, Silver End and Witham over the coming months (details at the bottom of this press release). Staff from Essex County Council and consultants Jacobs will be on hand to answer questions.

Public information events are scheduled to take place on the following dates:

- Monday, 30 January (1pm-8pm) – Bradwell Village Hall
- Thursday, 2 February (1pm-8pm) – Silver End Village Hall
- Monday, 6 February (1pm-8pm) – Rivenhall Hotel
- Tuesday, 7 February (1pm-8pm) – Marks Tey Village Hall
- Friday, 10 February (1pm-8pm) – Charter Hall, Colchester
- Saturday, 11 February (11am-5pm) – Spring Lodge Centre, Witham
- Tuesday, 14 February (1pm-8pm) – Feering Community Centre
- Wednesday, 15 February (1pm-8pm) – Civic Centre, Chelmsford
- Saturday, 18 February (11am-5pm) – Alec Hunter Academy, Braintree
- Wednesday, 22 February (1pm-8pm) – Cressing Sports and Social Club
- Saturday, 25 February (11am-5pm) – Coggeshall Village Hall

A number of the A120 consultation events will be run jointly with Highways England's A12 consultation which is set to be launched on Monday, 23 January.

Make your views known by visiting www.a120essex.co.uk.

Public Consultation on Replacement Waste Local Plan

A six week public consultation on the proposed changes to Essex's the Replacement Waste Local Plan has begun.

The consultation runs from Thursday 5 January until Thursday 16 February 2017 and will give residents the opportunity to feedback on key aspects of the plan.

The Plan is a joint document between Essex County Council and Southend-On-Sea Borough Council and proposes 19 possible sites in Essex for future development.

The sites, once developed, would help divert waste away from landfill and help manage commercial waste produced in Essex and Southend.

Around 80% of the waste material produced and disposed of across Essex annually comes from building sites, businesses, restaurants and hospitals and it is this waste which is catered for by the proposed sites. Approximately 20% of Essex and Southend's waste is generated by households. **No new sites are proposed for household waste.**

Information on how to contribute to the public consultation and where to view the consultation documents is available online at essex.gov.uk/wlp.

Nominations now open for Who Will Care Awards? 2017

The prestigious Who Will Care? Awards will make a much anticipated return in 2017 and nominations are now open.

The date of this year's awards has now been confirmed as Wednesday 24 May 2017 and will see a celebration of volunteering across the county.

The awards bring together communities and individuals across Essex who are working to make Essex an even greater place to live, work and visit.

This year there are seven categories:

The Business Award – For commercial organisations who have made an impact in their community.

The Voluntary Community Service Award – Reflecting innovation or outstanding service delivery by a third sector organisation.

Individual Volunteer Award (Young Person) – For volunteers aged under 18 who have demonstrated outstanding commitment within their community. This may be something they have done independently or in connection with a charity/community group or employer.

Individual Volunteer Award (Adult) – For volunteers aged 18+ who have demonstrated outstanding commitment within their community. This may be something they have done independently or in connection with a charity/community group or employer.

Individual Volunteer Award – For volunteers who have overcome adversity to contribute to a group or community despite the challenges they have faced.

Volunteer Team Award - A group of two or more volunteers of any age who have made an outstanding contribution to their community either independently or with a charity, community group or their employer.

Innovation Award - For social enterprises, commercial organizations and individuals who have demonstrated innovation to support the community.

If there is a business, charity or individual that you feel deserves recognition for their volunteering efforts in Essex then nominate them now by filling in an [online form](#).

Nominations close **Friday 3rd March 2017** at midnight.

Start the New Year with a new challenge

10 January 2017

Get your heart racing for half-price every weekend this January with Sky Ropes! Sky Ropes is challenging people to test their skill and balance this January with their nine plus metre rope course.

A special offer means it is only £5 per person each weekend in January to feel the thrill and adrenalin rush of high places. Visit Sky Ropes at Great Notley for an unforgettable experience with the whole family.

The two courses – Sky Ropes at over nine metres high and Sky Ropes Junior for the smaller adventurers – are open all year round and offer great, safe family fun for all ages, shapes and sizes.

Visitors can book their Sky Ropes experience online at www.visitparks.co.uk/sky-ropes or by calling 0345 603 7624. You can also find Sky Ropes on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/skyropes>.

Why not make a day of it – tuck into lunch at Lily's at Notley cafe and explore Essex's longest adventure play trail. There's no better time to discover the adventurer in you!

Simon Walsh, January 2017