**Update from Cllr Derrick Louis, Essex County Council Member for Witham Southern December 2021**

**1. Reporting and Tracking of Highway Defects**

There is an escalation hierarchy in Essex Highways. Therefore, if a Parish Cllr identifies a defect or a resident contacts a HPPC Member about a Highways defect, please, in the first instance use/refer them to the Essex Highways reporting website: <https://www.essexhighways.org/transport-and-roads.aspx>

They should make note of the reference number and if the matter is unresolved then I am happy to escalate.

If it is a long-standing issue and they have a reference (or reference numbers), please forward to me to escalate.

**2. Member Locality Fund**

Every ECC member has £10k to spend this financial year.  Members can nominate projects on which the money can be spent.  Projects must benefit the member’s division. The deadline for applications is 20th December 2021 and the money must be spent by 3st March 2022.

**What are the Rules?**

The agreed criteria are contained in a decision which you can reach from here [Locality Fund 2021/22 (essex.gov.uk)](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fmembers.essex.gov.uk%2Fguidance-resources-and-key-documents%2Flocality-fund-202122%2F&data=04%7C01%7C%7C040b2dddd40a4196344108d92421d3dc%7Ca8b4324f155c4215a0f17ed8cc9a992f%7C0%7C0%7C637580549980924514%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=4t%2B%2BqVeec%2BJq%2Fw64US0AnlZJVkTAj7GAs3Ljmsjfi54%3D&reserved=0) but here is a summary:

* The minimum nomination is £300.
* There must be benefit for my division specifically, meaning that projects which benefit the whole of a district are unlikely to be eligible.
* The money can’t be used to fund things which the organisation was already going to do anyway, or to pay for the ordinary running costs of the organisation.
* Not all organisations are eligible to receive funding –  broadly speaking it must be a not for profit organisation.

**How do I apply?**

In the first instance, send me a brief outline of your project: what it is, who it will benefit and how much you are asking for.

**3. Local Highways Panel**

I can confirm that all the requests sent to me by John Cockell have been submitted. They will be validated over the next couple of months and along with others schemes across District be presented to the March 2022 LHP for funding consideration.

As it is likely that all District scheme costs will be more than four times the budget, a member of the Parish Council/TWP may wish to address the LHP in support of Hatfield Peverel schemes. I will forward the date etc. when confirmed.

**4. Highways Defects in Hatfield Peverel**

Following a site visit with Cllr Lee Scott, I forwarded a comprehensive list of outstanding defects to him (thanks to John Cockell for supplying many of these).

So far, the longstanding issues of vegetation obscuring the 30 mph sign on Maldon Road has been rectified and the “sinkhole” has had another temporary repair (which seems to be holding up well).

Cllr Scott has offered to attend the January Parish Council meeting to give an update on the other defects and answer questions on any other highways matter. Please let me know if this is something the Parish Council would like to go ahead with.

**5. Bus Shelters**

The project is designed to establish a long-term contract to create a better bus shelter estate, incorporating all maintenance, cleaning, replacement and supply of shelters – all paid for from the generation of income through advertising.

This is being delivered in collaboration with District, Borough and City council colleagues and involves a complex and vast network of locations to pull together, requiring extensive legal discussions and negotiations. It is also a vital project and important commitment within the Council’s [Bus Service Improvement Plan](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.essexhighways.org%2Fuploads%2Fdownloads%2Fecc%2520bsip%25202021%2520to%25202026.pdf&data=04%7C01%7C%7Cdbdf0d596db84c891e4f08d9b030a8bb%7Ca8b4324f155c4215a0f17ed8cc9a992f%7C0%7C0%7C637734545457615399%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=WQCTHmN2ZtT6MgFcPfrv4f9DVdo2o2l9Fo9MiwmPgkQ%3D&reserved=0) (BSIP); which sets out our vision for improving bus services across Essex in partnership with bus operators and others.

The project is anticipated to deliver benefits, including:

* **A modernisation of the estate** – bring shelter provision into the 21st century, improving customer experience for residents - and by extension increased and sustainable bus patronage
* **Ability to expand the bus shelter network** – through commercial income, resulting in residents being more likely to benefit from their use and protection from the weather elements
* **Planned, programmed and sustainable cleaning regime** - offering a better bus stop experience, aiding efforts to increase sustainable transport journeys
* **Estate rationalisation and reduced street clutter** – improved street scene environment for residents and improved accessibility
* **Income leveraged from advertising** - replacing taxpayer funding with commercial funding.

As part of the ongoing conversation with the market, post July 2021, the recovery in advertising sales has bounced back strongly. The Council will be reviewing the market over the coming months with the expectation that we will move quickly to launch the procurement in the new year. Issuing the tender in the new year would likely result in a new contract commencing in Summer 2022. The Council will continue to engage with the market and retains the right to alter the timeline, should the recovery from the Covid pandemic take a turn for the worse.

In the meantime, new requests for shelters will continue to be held until the new contract commences.

**6. VAS/SID**

The new VAS/SID application process is now available online, which now enables Parishes to buy signs to install on the network in places where speeding is perceived. The LHP will still install ones where a significant speeding issue occurs if a VAS is the most suitable measure. Details of this can be found at:

[https://www.essexhighways.org/highway-schemes-and-developments/vas-members-guide](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.essexhighways.org%2Fhighway-schemes-and-developments%2Fvas-members-guide&data=04%7C01%7C%7Cf16bbd57cf7140641f8208d9a387277b%7Ca8b4324f155c4215a0f17ed8cc9a992f%7C0%7C0%7C637720623419270070%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=2aSZ%2FnbBN6Op5IMMT7EqmEzHkS2eONf0Ak%2BryjuyZMQ%3D&reserved=0)

[https://www.essexhighways.org/apply-to-install-a-vas-or-sid-illuminated-sign](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.essexhighways.org%2Fapply-to-install-a-vas-or-sid-illuminated-sign&data=04%7C01%7C%7Cf16bbd57cf7140641f8208d9a387277b%7Ca8b4324f155c4215a0f17ed8cc9a992f%7C0%7C0%7C637720623419270070%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=CYY38C4KHD238bXIqqYI6CaiVQIyeEYD4S0bcQwQrxo%3D&reserved=0)

**7. Update on Covid 19 from Cllr John Spence, Cabinet Member for
Health and Adult Social Care**

**Case rates**

The rate of Covid in Essex has increased over the last week to 518 although it seems to be starting to stabilise. This is above the Regional and national level but not significantly higher. The increase in rates is largely driven by primary and secondary aged school children with rates in primary school age children now exceeding those in secondary aged children.

Parents are encouraged to test their primary aged children twice weekly where this is not distressful for the child. This will help us identify possible cases early.  More positively rates in over 60s remain low and further are decreasing slowly

**Hospitalisations**

The number of hospital beds occupied by people who are positive for Covid continues to very slowly fall. Over the last week there has been a further 9% reduction in beds occupied across Essex

**Omicron**

While we are still awaiting some test results, those to date have not suggested any spread into the community. The tests so far in KFC have all been negative and while, as we would expect some Larchwood children have tested positive, this is all delta variant. We still await however the results from the isolating class who were most exposed.

There is evidence the Omicron does not show typical symptoms so it is more important than ever that people do regular twice weekly LFD tests to make sure they are not infected. As there is every chance vaccines will be less effective and the strongest possible immune response will be required, having a booster when invited is now critically important.

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**If any Cllr requires help or advice, please don’t hesitate to contact me on 07967 830277 or** [**cllr.Derrick.Louis@essex.gov.uk**](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5CDerrick%5CAppData%5CLocal%5CMicrosoft%5CWindows%5CINetCache%5CContent.Outlook%5CV0CCF6ZA%5Ccllr.Derrick.Louis%40essex.gov.uk)