

17<sup>th</sup> December 2020 Full Council

Leaders Statement

Agenda Item 9

Thank you, Chairman, my fellow councillors, members of the public and press. I present to you as the elected leader of Maldon District Council, the councils report and programme for the remainder of the municipal year.

It is a huge honour & privilege to represent the district as its new Independent council leader. It means a great deal to all the elected Independent Councillors that won their seats in May 2019 and the high number of residents who voted for change. Thank you for giving us this opportunity and believe me we do not intend to waste it. I personally wish to thank Cllr Stephen Nunn my first-class Deputy who has also hit the ground running.

What happens in Maldon District matters to me.

The people we work with, the people we work for, and the people we serve. Regardless of our differences, this is the one thing that unites us all. We have the responsibility of looking after the Maldon District and leaving a positive legacy.

We have already demonstrated how we want to work together for the benefit of the residents by being inclusive. We should all show kindness, respect to each other, and recognise everyone's qualities and values.

The Independent administration of this Council is keen to change Maldon District Council, and importantly, how the council has been perceived, recently following the last few months of turmoil.

That does not mean we are going to rip up all the policies that have gone before, we will look to keep what is good and to make the necessary changes in a balanced and measured way. We will challenge and seek to change what currently appears to be "inconvenient to the system" whether that is excessively slow responses from our partners or "that's how it has always been done". We will look at strengthening and revising parts of our constitution including our Code of Conduct ensuring that even if something may not be deemed illegal it could be ill advised and reflect negatively on our Council as a whole. We need to ensure integrity, openness, and transparency. We will look to improve working in partnership with our communities, listening to our residents and focussing on providing excellent customer service.

We will build on the great partnerships that already exist; we recognise how effective partnership working has been in dealing with the Covid response. The Covid response across the Maldon District has been fantastic. That has been because organisations have worked together - whether that is the District Council, our partners in the voluntary sector, health providers, police, County Council, Town & Parish Councils, and the communities themselves. With common purpose and

understanding of each other's roles and strengths, we have been able to provide more support and work together better than ever. It is that co-operative shared approach we want to take forward with our partner organisations and our communities.

With that in mind we will be looking to develop and update our Corporate Plan, we are keen to build on the current work the Council is delivering, but with a renewed focus in key areas including:

- Climate and Environment – we will be bringing forward a Climate Emergency Declaration early in the New Year and will then establish a Climate and Environment Strategy to follow.
- Economic recovery, we will focus on working with our businesses to help them to recover from the current challenges and to enable the District economy to thrive. Creating new jobs.
- Commercial Strategy & Financial Stability – this is paramount, and we will be taking a more business commercial approach to futureproof and safeguard the council for the future.
- Strengthening Communities and enabling them to thrive - recognising how well we worked together this year and capturing that approach to deliver wider benefits.

I have embraced the Leadership role and have loved working more closely with the Officers who are full of ideas and energy. Teamwork is essential for the council to feel

free and comfortable to voice suggestions no matter how extreme or sometimes unpopular they maybe.

I have attended numerous meetings, watching an excellent "Scrum" meeting, enabling cross team support, ideas, actions, tasks, and important updates for the benefit of the whole District – I was extremely impressed - so many new ideas in the pipeline which will be brought to the Council in the future – I hope.

Our officers work exceptionally hard and sometimes I feel there is a need for this to be publicised and recognised more. Directors and officers are working with Members and our partners to make Maldon District a better place to live – to work – to visit.

I would like to thank the officers and support staff for all their hard work not only through the transformation but this year dealing with the covid pandemic. It would not be fair to single out anyone team as they are just that. A TEAM. having faced and still facing huge challenges and extra work they have taken on, as well as operating business as usual.

Finally, I am proud to represent and live in the Maldon District and I hope my leader's speech has empowered you and inspired you to share my vision to demonstrate that we are a professional, hard-working council that cares. Thank you Chairman.