COUNCIL

24 NOVEMBER 2026

REFERENCE FROM THE COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

A.2 COUNCILLOR DOYLE'S MOTION ON NOTICE – CALLING ON ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL AND RELEVANT ACADEMIES TO UNDERTAKE OLIVER MCGOWAN MANDATORY TRAINING ON LEARNING DISABILITY AND AUTISM BY ALL SCHOOLS (Report prepared by Ian Ford, Democratic Services Manager)

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To enable Full Council to consider the recommendation made to it by the Community Leadership Overview & Scrutiny Committee in relation to a motion submitted by Councillor Doyle concerning learning disability and autism training for teaching staff in Tendring schools.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At its meeting held on 6 October 2026 (minute 10 refers), the Community Leadership Overview & Scrutiny Committee ("the Committee") was formally made aware that, at its meeting held on 1 September 2026 (minute 44 refers), Full Council had considered a motion submitted by Councillor Doyle concerning learning disability and autism training for teaching staff in Tendring schools.

The text of that motion that had been considered by Full Council at the meeting on 1 September 2026 in respect of Learning Disability and Autism training in schools had been as follows:-

"That Tendring District Council:–

(1) Believes that too many children with Special Educational Needs & Disability (SEND) are still misunderstood or unsupported at school, and too many families must fight to get the right help;

(2) Reiterates that this is not a criticism of school staff but about making sure they have the training and confidence to support every child properly;

(3) Notes that Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training is the Government's preferred and recommended training for learning disability and autism in health and social care, as set out in the most recent Code of Practice published in September 2025 and which is nationally recognised and co-produced with people with lived experience;

(4) Believes in inclusive education, and that understanding should not be optional or dependent on which school a child attends and that every child deserves to be understood, to feel safe at school, and to have the chance to achieve their full potential;

(5) Feels strongly that mandatory training for school staff would bring consistency, earlier understanding, better communication with families, and better outcomes for children across Tendring and that better informed staff can reduce anxiety, improve attendance

and create a stronger learning environment for everyone;

(6) Therefore, calls on Essex County Council and relevant Academies to direct that the Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training on Learning Disability and Autism for all staff across schools in the district of Tendring be implemented urgently as a simple matter of fairness, inclusion and responsibility."

Following the motion being moved and seconded at Full Council, there had been an alteration requested by Councillor Doyle to include the following additional text:

"That my Motion as set out below in full, calling on Essex County Council to direct that the Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training on Learning Disability and Autism for all staff across schools in the District of Tendring, be referred to the Community Leadership Overview and Scrutiny Committee for further information on the type of training mentioned and the implications of 'inclusive education' being researched, with evidence in support, and then submitted back to Full Council prior to making its informed decision on the subject matter."

Consequently, Full Council had decided to refer the matter to the Community Leadership Overview and Scrutiny Committee for further information on the type of training mentioned and the implications of 'inclusive education' being researched, with evidence in support, and then submitted back to Full Council prior to making its informed decision on the subject matter.

Accordingly, at its meeting held on 6 October 2026, the Committee had been asked to consider the information set out in the Officer report (A.1) along with the suggested recommendations, in order for its opinion to be submitted to this meeting of Full Council for Council to then determine the motion having duly considered the recommendation(s) from the Community Leadership Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

In order to support identification of the issues raised in relation to Oliver McGowan training, Officers in their report had referred to Government guidance and the Essex County Council's education team for further information and guidance.

The Committee had also been reminded that Council Procedure Rules 12.8 and 12.10 of the Council's Constitution set out the arrangements for referred motions and the rights of the mover of the motion. Those Rules state:

<u>12.8</u>
[The Committee] "…shall be required solely to consider such motion and to advise the Council (by no later than the second Ordinary Meeting of the Council held following the date of Council's referral) of their opinion as to ***whether such motion should be supported or not supported****. That body will not be required to propose an alternative motion or an amended motion.*

and

"Once the Cabinet/Committee has considered the Motion it will be sent back to Council with that body's response.

<u>12.10</u>
"…the Mover of the Motion (or another Member nominated by them) will be, as a matter of courtesy, made aware by the Democratic Services Manager of the date of the Cabinet/Committee meeting at which their Motion will be considered so that they can attend if they so wish.

As the purpose of the motion will have already been explained at the full Council meeting the Mover of the Motion (or another Member nominated by them) will not have any automatic right to speak at that meeting though they will be permitted to answer questions and/or provide clarification, if requested to do so by the Chairman of the meeting. The Member will also have a right of reply (of no more than three minutes duration) to respond to the debate at the meeting on their motion."

Following consideration of Councillor Doyle's motion on notice and the Officer report (A.1) and following the question and answer session with Officers from Essex County Council, the Committee had formally resolved that it:-

a) *recognised the significant prevalence of young people with SEND including Learning Disability and Autism in Tendring;*
b) *noted the importance of professionals in the education setting to have appropriate training for their role in respect of SEND;*
c) *supported those responsible for encouraging the uptake of SEND training to help ensure a high level of training amongst staff;*
d) *supported the ongoing commitment to collaborative working across schools, ECC and partners, in relation to the Tendring Education Leaders and Strategic Partners groups in working together to improve the experiences and opportunities for all children and young people across the district;*
e) *approved this report to be submitted to Full Council at its meeting on 24 November 2026 alongside the Motion from Councillor Doyle, together with the presentation from Essex County Council officers received at this meeting and the link to the live recording, encouraging all Members to watch in advance, before considering this Committee's response to the Motion; and*
f) *In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 12.8, the Committee determined to advise Council that the Committee thanked Councillor Doyle for raising the important topic of training on Learning Disability and Autism for all staff across schools in the District of Tendring, and whilst it agreed with the spirit of the motion, following the evidence presented to the Committee by Essex County Council Officers, did not feel it could support the motion as put forward, because it is not possible to mandate training and that alternative training was promoted for the educational setting; and would*

RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL that the original motion is amended as follows (as shown by changes highlighted below):

"That Tendring District Council:–

(1) Believes that too many children with Special Educational Needs & Disability (SEND) are still misunderstood or unsupported at school, and too many families must fight to get the right help;
(2) Reiterates that this is not a criticism of school staff but about making sure they have the training and confidence to support every child properly;
(3) Notes that Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training is the Government's preferred and recommended training for learning disability and autism in health and social care, as set out in the most recent Code of Practice published in September 2025 and which is nationally recognised and co-produced with people with lived experience;
(4) Believes ~~in inclusive education, and~~ that understanding should not be optional or dependent on which school a child attends and that every child deserves to be understood, to feel safe at school, and if that is not achievable an alternative support be found for parents and guardians to enable every child to have the chance to

achieve their full potential;

(5) Feels strongly that mandatory training for school staff would bring consistency, earlier understanding, better communication with families, and better outcomes for children across Tendring and that better informed staff can reduce anxiety, improve attendance and create a stronger learning environment for everyone;

(6) Recognises the wealth of relevant learning material produced by Essex County Council on SEND and Autism, in the context of their legal powers in the education system; and

(7) Therefore, calls on all Schools and Academy Trusts in the District of Tendring to take up the available training for all their staff on Learning Disability and Autism, as a matter of fairness and equality. "

For the avoidance of any doubt, Members should note that the original paragraph (6) of Councillor Doyle's motion on notice was deleted and replaced in its entirety.

RECOMMENDATION

That, having duly considered the recommendation of the Community Leadership Overview & Scrutiny Committee in this matter, Council decides to formally approve the following motion:-

"That Tendring District Council:–

(1) Believes that too many children with Special Educational Needs & Disability (SEND) are still misunderstood or unsupported at school, and too many families must fight to get the right help;

(2) Reiterates that this is not a criticism of school staff but about making sure they have the training and confidence to support every child properly;

(3) Notes that Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training is the Government's preferred and recommended training for learning disability and autism in health and social care, as set out in the most recent Code of Practice published in September 2025 and which is nationally recognised and co-produced with people with lived experience;

(4) Believes that understanding should not be optional or dependent on which school a child attends and that every child deserves to be understood, to feel safe at school, and if that is not achievable an alternative support be found for parents and guardians to enable every child to have the chance to achieve their full potential;

(5) Feels strongly that mandatory training for school staff would bring consistency, earlier understanding, better communication with families, and better outcomes for children across Tendring and that better informed staff can reduce anxiety, improve attendance and create a stronger learning environment for everyone;

(6) Recognises the wealth of relevant learning material produced by Essex County Council on SEND and Autism, in the context of their legal powers in the education system; and

(7) Therefore, calls on all Schools and Academy Trusts in the District of Tendring to take up the available training for all their staff on Learning Disability and Autism, as a matter of fairness and equality."

CURRENT POSITION

Council is requested to consider the recommendation submitted to it by the Community Leadership Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

Members are asked to note that if the Committee's recommendation is not approved by Full Council then Members will revert to consideration of Councillor Doyle's original motion as set out within the Executive Summary above.

The Deputy Chief Executive's report which was considered by the Community Leadership Overview & Scrutiny Committee at its meeting held on 6 August 2026 is attached as an appendix to this report, together with the presentation from Essex County Council officers received at the Committee's meeting. The links to the live recording and the published minutes of the Committee's meeting can be found below.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Link to the live recording of the meeting of the Community Leadership Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on 6 October 2026 can be found here Community Leadership Overview and Scrutiny Committee - 06.10.26

Link to the published minutes of the meeting of the Community Leadership Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on 6 October 2026 can be found here (Public Pack)Minutes Document for Community Leadership Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 06/10/2026 19:30

APPENDICES

A2 Appendix A – Report of the Deputy Chief Executive (item A.1) to the meeting of the Community Leadership Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on 6 October 2026

A2 Appendix B - Presentation from Essex County Council officers received at the Committee's meeting