

# ECC report May 2016

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## **New Chairman announced**

Cllr John Aldridge has been elected as the new Chairman of Essex County Council for the coming year.

County Council Member for the Broomfield and Writtle Division since 2005, Cllr Aldridge takes over the post from the outgoing Chairman, Cllr Norman Hume.

Cllr Aldridge was very honoured to be elected as Chairman of the Essex County Council, and said that following on from his two years serving as Vice Chairman, he wished to acknowledge the outstanding contribution to the County of Essex by his predecessor, Cllr Norman Hume.

The role of Chairman of the County Council dates back to 1889, when the County Council was formed, and there has been a long tradition of service to the community and it is his aspiration to follow in that tradition and the example of his predecessors.

Amongst his priorities he will promote entrepreneurial skills at all levels whilst also seeking greater recognition for all those voluntary groups and carers that make such a major contribution to the wellbeing of the residents of Essex.

During his time as a County Councillor, Cllr Aldridge has served as Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and as Chairman of a number of Council Committees.

He has also served on a number of outside bodies including the Anglian Eastern Regional Flood & Coastal Committee, Chelmsford Youth Strategy Group, the County Council's Network, Chelmsford Local Highways Panel and as Chairman of the Epping Forest District Locality Board

## **Changes to Council Cabinet**

At the same Full Council meeting changes to the Cabinet were also announced, following Cllr Roger Hirst's election as the new Police and Crime Commissioner for the county.

The changes will see Cllr Simon Walsh, member for Thaxted, join the Cabinet and take on the new Environment and Waste portfolio. Deputy Leader Cllr Kevin Bentley will take on responsibility for public sector reform and strategic partnerships. Cllr John Spence will take on additional responsibility for Planning, while IT and digital transformation will move under the Leader's portfolio.

## Cabinet Members

Name	Portfolio
Cllr David Finch	Leader
Cllr Kevin Bentley	Deputy Leader and Economic Growth and Partnerships
Cllr John Spence	Finance, Housing and Planning
Cllr Rodney Bass	Infrastructure
Cllr Eddie Johnson	Highways and Transport
Cllr Anne Brown	Corporate, Communities and Customers
Cllr Dick Madden	Adults and Children
Cllr Ray Gooding	Education and Lifelong Learning
Cllr Graham Butland	Health
Cllr Simon Walsh	Environment and Waste

## Deputy Members

Cllr Anthony Jackson (Property and Project Assurance)

Cllr Stephen Canning (Digital Innovation)

Cllr Penny Channer (Broadband and Enterprise)

Cllr Ricki Gadsby (Creative Economy and Skills)

Cllr Mick Page (Planning and Rural Affairs)

Cllr Ray Howard (Local Transport and Parking)

Cllr Malcolm Maddox (Age Care)

Cllr Sue Lissimore (Early Years and Customer Service Improvement)

Cllr Susan Barker (Health Living and Wellbeing)

Cllr Kay Twitchen (Sustainability)

Cllr Malcolm Buckley (Waste Reduction)

### **New Essex Waste-Busters Initiative**

To boost recycling and improve figures a new county wide initiative has been put in place; Essex Waste-Busters are looking for volunteers who are passionate about the environment to join their award winning team.

If you are interested in helping your community, the Waste-Buster team is holding a recruitment drive for enthusiastic volunteers on the 21 May at Clacton Library from 9.30am to 4pm.

The Waste-Busters Champions help their local community to reduce waste, increase recycling and save money. Volunteers will be able to attend a free training day to find out about becoming a Waste-Buster as well as get advice on reducing food waste reduction, home composting, reusing and refurbishing items. They will then be able to speak to local groups, small or large to give demonstrations or workshops, as well as blog and share their knowledge.

It is hoped that the Waste-Busters Initiative can really make a difference to a local community not just by helping neighbours reduce waste, recycle more and save money but also by giving volunteers the opportunity to meet likeminded people and share their knowledge and experience. They will be able to attend training session, as well as get involved in events to find out more about reducing food waste, recycling reuse and home-composting.

Annual training, continued support and travel expenses will be provided for all recruited Waste-Busters and rewards will be offered on completion of 15, 30 and 60 hours of volunteering.

For more information please email [waste.busters@essex.gov.uk](mailto:waste.busters@essex.gov.uk) or visit the website [www.recycleforessex.com](http://www.recycleforessex.com)

### **Summer grass verge cutting**

Drivers are being asked to be cautious and allow time and space to pass tractors as Essex County Council begins its summer roadside grass verge cutting programme.

Up to eight tractors will be working on the Essex road network at any one time during the peak summer cutting season.

Motorists are urged to keep a safe distance between their vehicle and the cutting machinery in case of flying debris, such as tree branches.

Grass verges on all of Essex's priority routes (main roads) are cut to improve visibility and so safety for drivers and other road users.

The cutting programme includes verges next to roads and pavements, as well as vegetation on central reservations and anywhere growth affects sightlines at junctions.

Around 6,100 miles of verge will be cut during the summer.

Engineers will also begin spraying weeds in some more urban areas to limit the damage they can cause by growing through the surfaces. Weeds can also trap litter and block drains.

Wider verges on sections of the A127, A13 (Pitsea Flyover to Five Bells roundabout), A1245, A130 and A133 can take up to four passes by the tractor cutters to cover the whole area. To keep delays for drivers to a minimum the cutting will take place at night when roads are less busy.

To keep the verges at an acceptable height during fast growth in summer, Highways staff will trim the county's roadside verges twice. The first cut is to a minimum width of three feet, wherever possible, to account for sightlines at junctions, bends and known areas of higher risk.

A second trim up to 18 feet wide in particular spots, is carried out by staff following up after the tractors, to ensure that the areas close to road signs, street lights and other obstructions are cut with strimmers. Verge cutting is often complicated by piles of litter so people are also reminded to take all their litter home.

### **New "Families Included Prize" launches across Essex to help isolated families**

The 'Families Included Prize' which aims to reduce the social isolation and loneliness of Essex families with children aged 0-5 was launched at County Hall on Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> May.

Essex County Council, working with Nesta, the UK's innovation foundation, will deliver the first ever, local government challenge prize\* and is encouraging people across the county to enter.

The Families Included Prize is an exciting new way for the Council to engage local communities, as well as discover and support great solutions. Social isolation is a growing concern for parents, guardians and carers in Essex, regardless of background, and impacts all aspects of life.

ECC are inviting applications from individuals, groups and organisations across communities in the county – anyone who has a great idea about how to address this issue – to apply. Ideas can relate to any aspect of life including personal, professional and social experiences.

Open until Thursday 14 July 2016, the prize process has several stages. Entrants will be whittled down to 10 finalists who will each receive mentoring and financial support to develop and test out their ideas. The winner, who will be announced in January 2017, will receive £10,000 to help develop their idea.

A short animated video has been produced outlining the Prize, its aims, who can enter and how. This can be viewed at <https://youtu.be/-UXUP5bqVSw>

Looking after a young child is one of the most rewarding things someone does but it can also be one of the toughest; there are families and carers in the county who feel isolated and are in need of support.

But there are also people among the Essex community with great ideas that the Council wants to work with and it encourages anyone with an idea, who's thought 'I know how I can solve this challenge' to enter.

Challenge Prizes are a proven way to develop new ideas that tackle real problems, said Helen Goulden, Executive Director at Nesta, and that's why we're excited to be supporting the delivery of Essex's first challenge prize. The Families Included Prize will give people in Essex the opportunity to put their ideas forward to help build more resilient families by reducing isolation."

For more information about the Families Included Prize in Essex, please visit: <http://challenge-prizes.essex.gov.uk> and follow the [#familiesincluded](#) on Twitter.

\*Challenge prizes offer a reward to whoever can most effectively meet a defined challenge. They act as an incentive for meeting a specific challenge, rather than being a reward for past achievements (eg. Nobel Peace Prizes). They have a long history of tackling issues as diverse as food preservation and navigation, to health revolutions

About Nesta: Nesta is the UK's innovation foundation. We help people and organisations bring great ideas to life. We do this by providing investments and grants and mobilising research, networks and skills. We are an independent charity and our work is enabled by an endowment from the National Lottery. Nesta is a registered charity in England and Wales 1144091 and Scotland SC042833

**Council retains 'excellent' rating for equality**

Essex County Council has retained its 'excellent' rating for embedding equality and inclusion into its work; it was announced at a meeting of the authority's Full Council on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> May.

The news comes following a reassessment of the Council by inspectors from the Local Government Association (LGA) which looked at every aspect of the Council, assessing how the organisation works with local communities and partners embedding equality and inclusion.

Essex is one of only two county councils in England to be reaccredited as Excellent – Leicestershire County Council is the second.

Essex is a diverse county with many different communities and faiths; the culture of equality and inclusion has always been the ethos within the Council and the inspectors not only spent time with officers but also went into out into the communities and were clearly impressed with some of the work that is happening across the county; they made particular reference to the partnership work done to tackle domestic abuse, the work undertaken to support the community in adopting, and the introduction of work experience opportunities for young people with autism.

The inspectors also noted the work the Council has been doing in supporting the Syrian Refugee Crisis, bringing together local authority, health, faith and community organisations to support arrivals into the county.

The full report from the LGA will be available in the coming weeks.