

ECC Annual report 2018/2019

Education

2018/19 has been another very busy for ECC with the creation of the delivery of more than 3000 new school places.

65% of pupils achieved at least a level 4 pass (Grade C in the old system) in GCSE English and Maths and 94% of Essex schools have been judged by OFSTED good or outstanding – five percentage points higher than the national average.

Despite significant growth of pupil numbers in parts of the county, the council's continued investment in creating new school places has meant that 95.25% have been offered either their first or second preference, (88.13% 1st choice and 7.12% 2nd choice) per

OFSTED inspectors visited ACL (Adult Community Learning, Essex) in February 2018 and found that leaders, managers and staff have worked hard to improve its adult learning provision; they awarded an overall rating of Good in its recent OFSTED inspection.

In March 2018 a County wide initiative was launched, to raise awareness to Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), so that parents, carers and peers alike, would be more alert in identifying the signs of online abuse, the dangers of social media, and the privacy settings of all social media apps.

Young people aged 8-13 years old are the most vulnerable as this is a crucial age where mobile phones and the internet are often introduced

Moving on to the older population, the Adult Community Learning (ACL) was judged to be "GOOD" in all aspects of the service by an OFSTED inspection, including the effectiveness of leadership and management; apprenticeships; quality of teaching, learning and assessment; Adult Learning Programmes; personal development, behaviour and welfare and outcomes for learners.

ACL runs courses across Essex. These include recognised qualifications as a route to employment, as well as creative courses to develop new interests and improve health and wellbeing.

For more information visit www.aclessex.com

School projects completed in time for the 2018 Autumn term:

- New 420-place primary school, Newhall, Harlow
- New 210-place primary school, Magna Carta Primary Academy, Stansted Mountfitchet

- New 420-place primary school and Early Years building, Beaulieu Park, Chelmsford (to operate as county's first all through school from September 2019)
- Expansion of Home Farm Primary School, Colchester (210 new places)
- Expansion of Stanway Fiveways Primary School, Colchester (315 new places)
- Expansion of Stanway Primary School, Colchester (140 new places)
- Expansion of St. Michael's Primary School, Colchester (210 new places)
- Expansion of Roding Valley High School, Loughton (150 new places)
- Expansion of Elsenham Primary School (210 new places)
- Expansion of Moulsham High School, Chelmsford (240 new places)
- Expansion of Clavering Primary School, Saffron Walden (35 new places)
- Expansion of Philip Morant School, Colchester (300 new places)
- Expansion of Stanway High School, Colchester (270 new places)
- Expansion of The Fitzwimarc, Rayleigh (150 new places)
- Expansion of Stebbing Primary School, Dunmow (35 new places)
- Expansion of Roseacres Primary School, Takeley (60 new places)
- Expansion of Monkwick Junior School, Colchester (60 new places)

School projects scheduled to be completed later in 2018:

- Expansion of West Hatch High School, Chigwell (300 new places)
- Expansion of Westerings Primary Academy, Hockley (210 new places)

Projects being delivered for the 2019/20 academic year:

- New 900-place secondary school, Beaulieu Park, Chelmsford (to operate as county's first all through school from September 2019)
- New 900-place secondary school, Colchester – Paxman Avenue (former Alderman Blaxill site)
- Relocation and expansion of Lexden Springs School, Colchester (80 new places, plus 30 boarding places)
- Expansion of Oak View School, Loughton (24 new places)

A 12 weeks consultation was launched on the future of all Essex Libraries on 29th November which run to 21st February. This has given rise to the biggest ever response from the public, with over 21.000 responses and 57.000 signatures to an Essex wide petition.

An independent firm had been chosen to analyse the responses and it's expected that a report with the results and findings will be sent to Cabinet in mid-June.

A combined response from the four District Councillors, as well as a combined response from the three Parishes of Lawford, Manningtree and Mistley, was submitted to the consultation.

Children Services

The Council celebrated the news of achieving an OUTSTANDING rating on all fronts from OFSTED for its children's social care services, following a period of assessment in November 2018.

The full Ofsted report can be found at www.reports.ofsted.gov.uk

Under this heading, fostering received a range of high profile promotions to try to identify over 100 families needed to foster children in care in Essex, who would

benefit from a very competitive financial package, ranging from £479 a week for each child they care for, to up to £600 a week specialist therapeutic scheme

There are no special qualifications required for being a foster carer; as the only qualities needed are to be supportive, caring and willing to go the extra mile to provide a secure home environment for a child.

If anyone is interested in becoming a foster carer please call the Fostering team on 0800 801 530 or enquire via the website:

www.essexadoptionandfostering.co.uk/fostering or visit the Fostering Network Website at <https://www.thefosteringnetwork.org.uk/>.

Highways

Option D was chosen as the Council's favoured route option for a new dual carriageway between Galleys Corner, Braintree and the A12 junction 23 just south of Kelvedon.. This announcement was also followed by the news that ECC had been successful in a Housing Infrastructure Bid, known as HIF, where the council had been successful in reaching the final stage of a £250 million investment Bid, for the A120, 3rd lane on the A12 and a brand new Link Road between the A133 and the A120.

For more information on the A120 Braintree to A12 scheme, please visit www.a120essex.co.uk.

So far 40,000 of the 127,000 street lights have been converted to LED; by the time the programme will be completed, it will eventually deliver a saving of £24million over 20 years.

This summer over 250 miles of road have been covered in 3,652 tonnes of binder and then 38,000 tonnes of stone chippings, which are rolled in to form a new top layer. The technique can be viewed at www.essex.gov.uk/surfacing

A major restructure will be trialled with devolving more functions to Parish Councils later this year, and the way all Local Highway Panels operate across Essex. A new Direct Delivery Team has been set up who will deliver smaller schemes much more quickly.

Planning and Housing

A new Essex Planning and Housing development scheme was officially unveiled at the end of October; it has delivered the first 3 of 27 potential development sites

which will be announced in the near future, which will go some way to tackle the county's housing shortage

Essex Housing was set up to help tackle the housing shortage by redeveloping surplus buildings and land at risk of lying empty and drifting into disrepair. The council recognises the importance housing plays in enabling a broad range of positive outcomes for the residents of Essex.

The council has continued to support the North Essex Garden Community, (NEGC) the biggest project of its kind in the country, which will see the delivery of well over 40,000 homes between Tendring, Colchester and Braintree.

Environment and Public Health

In July "Solar Together Essex" was launched as the solar panel group buying scheme; well over 1000 people registered, who have benefitted from extremely competitive offer for Solar Panels through an auction purchase by the Council.

The benefits were not only to save money on energy bills, but also to generate clean electricity too. All those who were successful will have the installation in place by the end of this month; for more information please visit www.essex.gov.uk/solartogether

During the unprecedented levels of hot weather last summer, Essex County Council's Public Health Team (PHT) encouraged residents to enjoy the sun but also to know their limits when it comes to alcohol, especially at Barbecues and social gatherings

for more information visit www.dontbottleitup.org.uk/

The proportion of dependent drinkers not in treatment in Essex is 82.6% (2016/17)

- 7% of adults in England regularly drink over the Chief Medical Officer's low-risk guidelines, and 2.5 million people report drinking over 14 units on their heaviest drinking days.
- In 2016, 21% of the population reported not drinking at all and overall consumption has fallen by around 18% since 2004.
- In the UK, in 2015 there were 8,758 alcohol-related deaths (around 14 per 100,000 people). The mortality rates are highest among people aged 55-64.
- In England, there are an estimated 595,131 dependent drinkers, of whom only 108,696 are currently accessing treatment.
- Alcohol misuse is the biggest risk factor for death, ill-health and disability among 15-49 year-olds in the UK, and the fifth biggest risk factor across all ages.
- Alcohol harms are estimated to cost the NHS around £3.5 billion annually.
- While the price of alcohol has increased by 36% since 2005, it remains 60% more affordable than it was in 1980.

Source: <https://www.alcoholconcern.org.uk/alcohol-statistics>

The good weather wasn't just good for socialising but also for Archaeologists in Essex who celebrated the revelation of several hidden archaeological sites,

especially near crop marks, which the prolonged spell of dry weather had very clearly uncovered.

As has inspired people to take part in regular sport and exercise, it has been revealed.

In June more than 800 participants signed up for the first 30:30 challenge by Active Essex, in a campaign to get people more active by completing 30 minutes of exercise a day for 30 days throughout.

In February this year Essex was awarded a “game-changing” National Lottery grant of £10.68 million from Sport England to increase activity levels across Essex. Well over 390,000 people in Essex do not partake in physical activity or an active lifestyle and many suffer from social and mental health problems, which represents one in four of our total population (27%).

Finance

At the February Budget meeting it was revealed that ECC is in the top ten most productive councils in the country for productivity and it announced capital investment of just under **£250m for homes, schools and roads** in the coming year, alongside revenue spending plans which include:

- Funding for **1,066** new primary school places, and **2,198** new secondary school places – the equivalent of five new schools - including those for pupils with special educational needs and disability
- **£117m** for maintaining and improving the road network
- **£14m** for faster broadband connections
- **40** new homes including eight for people with learning disabilities through Essex Housing.
- **Half million pound** to the Police Fire and Crime Commissioner, for a partnership-based approach which will aim to protect young people at risk from those who may exploit them through County Lines.
- **£1,000,000** to tackle the mental health of our young people, which is a growing concern and it will help to sustain the outstanding children’s services.
- **£700,000 extra and on top of the yearly Highways budget** for pavements and footways every year, having tackled potholes last year
- **£250,000** to help prevent homelessness and rough sleeping. A new scheme will see the council recruiting mentors who will work with up to 50 people who are at risk of rough sleeping, and 150 people who are at risk of losing their homes.

With the Council’s revenue support grant from central government reducing fast and set to be phased out entirely from next year, plus the impact of inflation, population growth and increasing demand for and expectation of services, the financial picture remains challenging. This has necessitated a proposed total council tax increase of **3.99%**.

Of this, **1%** would be ring-fenced to adult social care from the Government’s social care precept allowance, with the remaining **2.99%** supporting the delivery of other vital local services. The council tax annual bill for a band ‘D’ property in Essex for County Council services would be **£1,270.44**, a weekly increase of just **£0.94 a**

week.

Cllr David Finch, Leader of Essex County Council, said that if the County Council does not find ways of doing things differently, or innovative the future will be bleak. The challenges of ever-increasing costs and demand are real. Austerity might be over, but its effects are still very much within the organization.

This budget is about making the right decisions and to invest in the correct way for the future. Savings of over £1million a week, every week, over the past four years, have been made, which have only been done by being innovative, enterprising, and embrace internet-age opportunities.

The challenges of ever-increasing costs and demand are real; Essex has the highest percentage of elderly population in the country, and demands on adult Social Services have never been higher.

The way things were done 10 years ago is massively different from today's world; lives, work, travel and leisure time has been radically transformed by technology.

Inflation, population growth and increasing demand and expectation have meant mean that the County Council will have to utilise the Government's 1% increase for social care which will compound council tax by a total of 3.99%.

The organisational plan and budget can be found at <https://bit.ly/2sq9Tvz>

County Councils across the country will once again be able to put up Council Tax by 3% with a further 1% for social care. ECC, following Government direction took up the option of a stepped increase of 3% in 2017/18, 2% in 2018/19, and 1% in 2019/20

Economic Growth

the last year we have:

- Enhanced the Invest Essex service to promote Essex as a place to do business
- Invested with partners in the Anglia Ruskin University Medtech Innovation Centre at Harlow and the University of Essex Innovation Centre in Colchester
- Given substantial business support to 22 firms resulting in about £2.3m finance raised and multiple new products brought to market
- Developed a social enterprise network to create capacity in our health and care sector supply chain
- Developed plans to reduce car use in our main towns including infrastructure improvements in Chelmsford
- Continued planning and campaigning for investment in the major routes, including the

A120 and a £250m bid to build major roads

- Provided almost 100,000 homes and businesses with superfast broadband.