

Report To Parishes Regarding Essex County Council- December 2017

Essex County Council won Transport Local Authority of the Year at this year's National Transport Awards in the autumn.

Judges were impressed by a number of success stories in the county including:

- securing accreditation for Essex Highways recognising its partnership working and management of its highways assets worth more than £10 billion
- strategic and collaborative working with Highways England to plan for key infrastructure that will unlock further economic growth for Essex, for instance on the M11, the A12 and the A120
- bringing forward strategic cases for potential investment in the A127
- securing £200m of South East Local Enterprise Partnership funding
- rising bus passenger satisfaction across the county
- the rollout of new 'smart' LED streetlights

Let's Talk Dementia – new pan-Essex dementia strategy launched

Plans to transform dementia care across Greater Essex have taken a major step forward with the launch of a new joined-up countywide dementia strategy. It builds on the pan-Essex mental health strategy announced in July 2017, and is a new Southend, Essex and Thurrock Dementia Strategy, 'Let's Talk Dementia'

Nearly 20,000 people are estimated to be living with dementia in Essex, and this is set to increase to over 25,000 in the next ten years. Alongside this are those who are caring for a loved one with dementia, often over 50 hours a week. This is a challenge that local authorities and the NHS across Greater Essex are determined to tackle together.

The new strategy sets out plans to transform dementia care across Greater Essex and has been 'co-produced' with people who have experience of using dementia services in Greater Essex, both directly and as carers. It focuses on nine key priorities, including greater access to information and advice, timely diagnosis and support for carers.

Essex County Council becomes one of the first local authorities to receive Disability Confident Leader status

Essex County Council (ECC) has achieved the highest level an employer can receive as part of the DWP's Disability Confident scheme, Level 3 Leader. The Disability Confident scheme, run by the national government promotes a disability-inclusive culture among employers across the UK. The scheme has three levels of accreditation and Level 3 employers are challenged

thoroughly by a rigorous, independent validation of their self-assessment before being granted this status.

They also commit to becoming an advocate and peer mentor employer, promoting the benefits of employing adults with disabilities. Becoming a Disability Confident Leader means the council will be working together to encourage and share the journey of continuous improvement with partners and businesses across the county.

Stay Well This Winter -No one in Essex needs to suffer because of the cold

During the winter months lots of people suffer because of the cold. No one in Essex needs to suffer- is the message Essex County Council sent residents as the local and national 'Stay well this winter' campaign was launched.

Winter conditions can be bad for our health, particularly for those most vulnerable.

This winter, Essex County Council's Public Health team are teaming up with partners and organisations across Essex to keep the county's most vulnerable residents well and warm.

The campaign highlights how people can keep well and warm, make their homes winter ready and signpost to local support services.

Older people tend to be most vulnerable as they are often less active, spend more time indoors and have reduced muscle and body fat to help insulate them from the cold. This can increase the likelihood of a heart attack, stroke, pneumonia, and other chest diseases. We hope that the awareness raised by the campaign and the advice given will help people understand what support is available and where to go for help.

What you can do to stay well and warm:

- The NHS advises that at the first sign of a cough or cold you should get immediate advice from your pharmacist before it gets more serious.
- Think about any medicines that you or your family may need during the winter months to make sure that you have enough and also ensure you pick any prescriptions up before the Christmas holidays because of closures.
- For over 65s, those with long term conditions, some carers, pregnant women and children aged two and three and in reception year as well as years 1, 2 , 3 and now 4. The flu vaccination is available for free, because these groups are most at risk.
- Keeping your home warm this winter is key to making sure you stay well. Your home should be heated to at least 18°C (65°F) and it is also it's important to make sure your boiler has been serviced recently.

- Make sure you have enough warm clothes, blankets and food and drinks in stock. Also make sure you eat and drink plenty of hot meals and drinks.
- Keeping safe on the roads is also important. If you want to know when and where highways crews will be gritting the roads this winter, you can find all the information you need online at www.essex.gov.uk/gritters. The page also includes some helpful winter driving tips and details on where to access free salt stocks to help keep important public footpaths, like those leading to doctors' surgeries, clear of ice.
- If you do need help over the holiday period when your GP surgery or pharmacy is closed, call NHS 111 or visit www.nhs.uk who can direct you to a local service that is open. Always call 999 in an emergency.
- Look after each other, especially those who are elderly or vulnerable.

For more information on how to stay well this winter, visit www.livingwellessex.org or nhs.uk/staywell

Essex housing vision praised

Plans to create 1,800 new specialist homes for local older people with a care need in the county have won national praise. Essex County Council's Independent Living programme was commended in the Local Government Association's Housing our Ageing Population report, published this autumn.

The report sets out what is required to meet the housing needs and aspirations of the ageing population nationally. In particular, Essex was commended for:

- Having a clear vision, promoting awareness and changing attitudes towards housing in later life
- Planning for its ageing population
- Delivering and enabling new housing for older people
- Promoting a combined approach towards housing, care and health.

The council's Independent Living programme will see £27.7 million invested between now and 2022 to help the development of new, self-contained homes for the county's ageing population. The investment will enable many more older people in Essex - who would otherwise live in residential care or a home of their own that may no longer meet their needs - to live independently.

Parents in Essex can apply for their children's reception places.

Children are entitled to start primary school in the September after their fourth birthday, and parents/carers of children born during the period 1 September 2013 and 31 August 2014 must apply between 13 November 2017 and 15 January 2018.

Essex County Council has warned that any late applications, submitted after the deadline on 15 January 2018, will only be considered once all on-time applications have been determined.

The council has also encouraged parents to use all four of the preferences available and to check the admissions criteria for each school they wish to apply for.

Applications can be made online at www.essex.gov.uk/admissions.

Essex County Council has launched a brand new website for Care Providers. The Care Provider Information Hub is a one stop shop of useful information to support businesses who are currently providing care or who may wish to provide care in the future.

The easy to use website contains helpful information for providers, such as:

- Information for businesses, who may wish to work with or become a supplier of services to Essex County Council. This includes information on what to expect from quality inspections, an introduction to staff members, who to contact for specific queries and how to share ideas with us.
- Essex's vision around the future needs of the County and how businesses can help.
- An interactive map outlining the capacity and demand for services across Essex. This contains information on demographics, hospitals, healthcare centres and social care services.
- Latest news and events which are available on the website and to download
- Access to free training (such as e-learning) and an update on various initiatives and activities such as new innovations and recruitment fairs

Sunday Sandon Park and Ride for festive shoppers

Christmas shoppers are being urged to avoid the stress of city centre congestion and finding a parking space by using a special Sunday Park and Ride service in Chelmsford on 17 December 2017.

Essex County Council is opening its popular Park and Ride service from Sandon on 17 December 2017, as it did with 26 November, 3 December, 10 December.

The service will cost just £1.50 for adults and will be free for the under 16s and concessionary pass holders. Buses will run every 15 minutes into and out of the city centre from 9am until 5pm.

This unique Sunday service will only run from Sandon Park and Ride (conveniently placed off Junction 18 of the A12). The last Park and Ride bus returning to Sandon will leave Chelmsford city centre shortly after 5pm.

After this time Park and Ride tickets are transferable for use on the 33 bus service – which leaves Chelmsford on Sundays at 5.48pm, 7.48pm or 9.48pm – and the 36 service – which leaves Chelmsford at 6.48m and 8.48pm. Both services will pick up Park and Ride ticket holders at Duke Street, New London Road and Parkway bus stops in the city centre and drop customers outside Sandon Park and Ride.

All Essex Park and Rides will be closed on Christmas Eve.

Small businesses get on board in Essex

Local small businesses and entrepreneurs in Essex gained valuable advice and support when the Small Business Bus Tour pulled into Essex.

The Small Business Bus Tour which was part of Small Business Saturday UK (SBS) visited Maldon on Thursday 16th November. Experts from SBS offered insight to local small businesses and those interested in setting up and running a business. A number of local businesses were there including three of the Small Business Saturday's Top 100; Mandie Holgate, Business Coach, Secret Hamper and Evo Supplies.

Essex Libraries will help communities explore major health and wellbeing issues like stress, obesity, body image and even death.

Out of 120 applicants nationwide, two projects from Essex County Council's library service were among 14 chosen to receive a share of £200,000 from the Carnegie UK Trust and Wellcome, organisations dedicated to improving the lives and wellbeing of people.

The purpose of the one-year 'Engaging Libraries' programme is to inspire curiosity, spark debate and create conversation by enabling people to get involved in imaginative and interactive projects exploring health and wellbeing topics on a national scale.

One of the successful applicants is Essex Libraries' Wellbeing Selfies project, which aims to encourage children and young people to discuss how they manage stress and improve their mental wellbeing.

Essex Libraries was also chosen to work with St Helens Libraries, Libraries Unlimited in Devon and Sheffield Libraries in partnership with EmpathyLab to explore local wellbeing and empathy-linked issues, with a £13,000 grant. Together they will run a series of workshops designed to support people's emotional skills, culminating in a series of interactive experiences on Empathy Day in June 2018.

Business workshops available for Essex entrepreneurs

Essex businesses and budding entrepreneurs could benefit from a business skills programme offered across the county by BEST Growth Hub.

The Essex Business Workshop Programme runs until March 2018 offering local businesses and entrepreneurs business development skills and techniques to help them develop their business offer by gaining valuable knowledge. The full business skills programme covers business disciplines including: •Carrying out market research, Marketing and PR •Innovation and Intellectual Property •Bidding and tendering •Investment readiness •Succession planning •Generating sales •HR practices.

Funded by BEST Growth Hub, it is delivered in partnership with LAR Consultancy with workshops taking place across Essex as well as online. Individuals may attend workshops up to a maximum of 21 hours in total. A maximum of two employees from a business can attend each workshop.

The BEST Growth Hub is funded by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy to provide a business support service for entrepreneurs and Small to Medium Enterprises across Essex business. The Growth Hub works closely with Essex County Council to ensure Essex businesses get the support they need to start-up and grow in the county.

To book onto one of the courses, visit: <http://www.bestgrowthhub.org.uk/our-workshops/>

Make time for quality time with an adult learning course

The new ACL adult learning course guide is packed full of intriguing and exciting courses and is set to land on doormats across Essex in the new few weeks.

With courses set to start in the New Year an ACL course is the perfect Christmas gift for the person who has everything, or an excuse for some quality “you time” to perfect a new skill in the New Year.

From floristry to photography; Spanish to spray tan application; sewing to sugar craft; aromatherapy to art classes, there are hundreds of opportunities to learn a new hobby, have a go at being creative and stimulate mind and body.

With venues all across Essex and a discount of 10% off non accredited courses with production of a valid Essex Library Card it has never been easier to try something new.

For more information, including seeing the academic opportunities and qualifications also on offer visit www.aclessex.com or call 0345 603 7635.

Switch and save with Essex Energy Switch

Residents can save over £250 on their gas and electric bills by joining the Essex Energy Switch which harnesses people power to secure cheaper deals from energy suppliers.

The county's collective switching initiative has already saved thousands of Essex people more than £2,297,539 from the past five switches.

Rather than switching energy supplier alone which can be a daunting and complicated task, we should work together to save money.

By joining a collective switch made up of thousands of like-minded people, we increase our purchasing power so we can negotiate a better deal from energy suppliers, who compete against each other at auction to offer the best tariffs.

Paying over the odds for your electric and gas is not fair, so we hope people take advantage of the Essex Energy Switch. It's a safe and easy way to save money in which we take all the hassle out of switching.

Registration opened on Tuesday, December 5, and closes on Tuesday, February 13, before the one-day auction.

Everyone who registers will receive a personalised offer on 23 February, 2018, which details how much they could save by switching to the winning provider, or cheaper tariff.

But there is no obligation for people to take up the offer.

At the last switch in May, we had more than 6,500 people sign up to switch saving around £250 per year on their bills.

People who have been on the same tariff with the same supplier for a number of years are particularly likely to make savings.

But even those who switched recently could still save more money by signing up again.

To register for the next auction, visit www.essex.gov.uk/energyswitch or call 0800 0488285

If you don't have access to the internet, you can ask a relative, friend or neighbour to help because registrations can be made using their email address. One email address can be used up to five times to register for the scheme.

