

Report for Parish Councils Regarding Essex County Council

11 March 2018 – Cllr Penny Channer CC

Young people working with Essex Youth Offending Service (YOS) have been supporting Chelmsford-based rucksack project, Cool to be Kind, with its efforts to keep homeless people warm and dry this winter.

The young people who are carrying out reparation work with the YOS, collected, sorted and prepared items donated by the public, including warm clothes, sleeping bags and non-perishable food. The group packed a total of 177 complete rucksacks ready to be delivered to people living on the streets in Essex and beyond.

A £300 million investment in roads, schools and new homes will help Essex reach its “enormous untapped” economic potential following the Council’s budget agreed at Full Council on 13 February.

Essex County Council’s £1.8 billion spending plan for 2018/19 was approved at Full Council in February, including a 4.99% rise in Council Tax (2% being the social care precept).

The approved budget means ECC can continue building the future our residents and business deserve.

Economic growth will improve not only the living standards of people in Essex, but also their health and wellbeing, opportunities and life chances.

This includes developing an Industrial Strategy for the county, investing £14 million in superfast broadband, £126 million into major road schemes and maintenance, plus an extra £3 million for pothole and footpath repairs.

The budget also includes £87 million for mainstream schools and £17 million for special schools to create an extra 2,750 school places to ensure our children get the best start in life.

Buses in Essex are set to become more eco-friendly after Essex County Council and partners secured more than a million pounds in grant funding from the Government.

The Council has announced £1,072,500 secured from The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs’ ‘Clean Bus Technology Fund’.

The money was secured through a joint bid with Colchester Borough Council, Rochford District Council and Southend-on-Sea. It will be used to retrofit 60 Arriva and First buses in the Colchester and Rochford Air Quality Management Areas to Euro VI, which is the highest emissions standard.

The newly upgraded buses, including ECC’s own Colchester Park and Ride vehicles, will be helping to reduce harmful NO2 emissions.

Essex is one of just 20 local authorities in the country to have secured funding and is now looking to upgrade buses as soon as possible.

More than £2 million has been awarded to a number of Essex-based schemes that will help address housing needs across the county. Essex Housing, the housing development arm hosted within Essex County Council but operating on behalf of all public sector partners across Essex, has secured £1.94 million from the Government's Land Release Fund which helps councils release unused or surplus land and property for housing.

Last year 11,370 people in Essex took on an apprenticeship in a range of different sectors from IT, finance, manufacturing, health and social care, finance, logistics, construction and more. National Apprentice Week kicked off on 5 March and Essex County Council's Apprentice Promotion and Brokerage Hub and ACL Essex were highlighting the support they offer to those looking to study for an apprenticeship or those wanting to employ an apprentice. Apprenticeships are for people of all ages who wish to gain employment or upskill in their existing role.

The iconic Essex Design Guide (EDG) has been digitally revamped to provide contemporary socio economic, environmental, and best practice guidance to planners and those interested in the provision of new housing developments.

Produced by Place Services on behalf of the Essex Planning Officers Association (EPOA) the new Essex Design Guide has been produced collaboratively with the help and involvement of all Essex local authorities, representatives of house builders, the NHS, Police, Sport England and the Building Research Institute.

International Women's Day was celebrated by Essex County Council's 'Snapping the Stiletto' Project with the launch of a new website which recruits volunteers to help highlight stories of inspirational Essex Women from the past 100 years.

International Women's Day is an annual event celebrating the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women.

'Snapping the Stiletto' is a county-wide project, which has been launched by Essex County Council's Cultural Development department.

It aims to reveal the currently hidden and overlooked stories of women who have lived in the county and investigate how women's rights, roles and opportunities have changed since the first women gained the vote in 1918.

It also aims to dispel the negative stereotype of 'Essex Girls' by highlighting the lives and achievements of Strong Essex Women.

The new website provides a wide range of opportunities for the public to get involved whether than can give several days or just a few minutes. They are seeking

volunteers to conduct research, help with events and promote the project on social media. There are also training opportunities available.