

Report Regarding Essex County Council Matters for Parish Councils - January 2019 - Cllr Penny Channer ,Maldon Division, Essex County Council

Essex Children's Social Care rated Outstanding

Essex County Council is celebrating the fantastic news of achieving an Outstanding rating from Ofsted for its children's social care services.

Following a period of assessment in November 2018 Inspectors judged the local authority to be outstanding in its services to children, with consistently high standards applied across the county, innovative and high quality help and support available and a well-trained and highly skilled workforce.

The report in particular praised the staff and social workers, highlighting that "Staff enjoy working in Essex; morale and motivation are high. Workers describe the work they are able to undertake with children and families as the reason they came into social work." And that "Social workers know children very well. They demonstrate a good understanding of their needs and plans and are passionate about securing and sustaining improvements in their lives."

It is a marvellous achievement to all working in children's social care in Essex .Essex CC has invested in the staff, improved practice and developed innovative methods but all the time ensuring at the heart of everything is the drive to improve the lives of our vulnerable children and their families.

The report also highlighted that the strong political and corporate support has meant the local authority has been able to manage demand and prioritise children's needs across the council, with praise for senior leaders in their pursuit of excellence for children.

The full Ofsted report can be found at :

www.reports.ofsted.gov.uk

The right bus services for the people of Essex

Essex County Council launched on Wednesday 19 December a consultation to find out more about how important evening and Sunday local bus services are to the county's residents and to ask them for their views on some proposed changes to how those services are delivered.

With low passenger numbers on some services, the County Council is looking again at the way it supports local bus services on evenings and Sundays. Around 85% of the bus network in Essex is run commercially; this includes most of the daytime and peak period services in and between towns. These services do not form part of this consultation. The remaining 15% of services are not commercially viable and are

subsidised by the County Council; this means that the commercial bus operators will not run them. These non-commercial services mainly operate in rural areas and at less popular times for travel, such as in the evenings and on Sundays. The supported and evening services (buses that operate after 10pm) are the ones that are being reviewed. In particular we are reviewing supported services that run after 10pm on weekdays and 11pm on Saturdays; and on Sundays reviewing services that run after 7pm and run more frequently than two hourly.

The consultation also looks at how Essex CC might develop the right type of service to meet the travel needs of residents and visitors by making more use of a wider variety of ways for providing services, such as smaller vehicles, 'demand responsive' transport or taxi-buses.

Residents will also be asked their views on giving local communities and their representatives at district, town and parish level the opportunity and funding to commission local bus services in their area, based on their understanding of local needs and where this can be done more cost effectively.

At present the authority spends around £9m of tax payers money on these services each year. However with the number of passengers in some cases falling below six per journey, coupled with the strong financial pressure on all local government funding, means that we have to look very carefully at how we provide our services to ensure that the limited funding available is focused where it will do most good and where the local communities need it.

The Council knows that buses are important to many people. The consultation is the opportunity to let residents have their say on the proposals. It's imperative if residents have any comments or concerns to include these within the consultation, all will be considered.

Essex County Council has made £750million of savings since 2010 and continued financial pressure means that unless we change, reform and re-invent services, they will stop keeping pace with what people need and we will not succeed in delivering for our county.

This means that, alongside those services which we retain and continue to invest in, or invest even more in than in previous years, some will change and some will no longer be provided in the way they are now.

The consultation was launched at 12noon today, Wednesday 19 December 2018 and runs until 22 March 2019.

The consultation can be accessed at::

www.essex.gov.uk/local-bus-consultation

Paper versions are also available to collect from all libraries and on request. Residents can also complete the consultation over the phone by calling 03457 430 430 or e-mailing passenger.transport@essex.gov.uk.

Thousands have their say on new libraries strategy

The consultation on the future of Essex library services has reached its half-way point, and with six weeks to go there is still plenty of time to have your say.

As of 9 January, over 13,000 surveys have been completed – including online, paper copy and via the Essex contact centre.

There have also been responses from organisations and from people and organisations who are interested in running community libraries, where that could be a potential future option. Responses have been received from individuals, families, children and young people.

During the consultation, information drop-ins are being held at each of the 74 libraries the council runs around the county. Based on public feedback, the Council has changed its approach to these. Instead of one two or four hour slot, the Council is offering a week at each library when the public can drop in at any time the library is open to ask questions and find out about plans for libraries in the future. The change means people can access the drop-ins at a more convenient time and those who may need help to access the information have the time and space to do so.

If you need help to access the consultation and survey, library staff can provide it.

A list of the remaining drop-ins can be found at:

<http://libraries.essex.gov.uk/libraries-consultation/information-drop-ins/>

The drop-in sessions are to provide information not take feedback – completing the survey is the best way to ensure individual views are recorded and heard.

The consultation is open till 20 February so I would encourage anyone who hasn't yet completed the survey to please do so.

The survey can be found at :

essex.gov.uk/libraries-consultation.

Residents are encouraged to complete the survey online, however, if this is not possible the survey can be completed over the phone on 0345 603 7639 or a paper copy, large print or Easy Read version can be sent to you.

Taskforce agrees way forward for the Army and Navy

The dedicated Taskforce set up to explore the future of the Army and Navy junction met on 10 December 2018 to look at ideas to improve traffic problems at this key

gateway into the city of Chelmsford. Members of the Taskforce, including Chelmsford MP Vicky Ford, met to discuss key objectives, funding and the time-frames for delivering any changes to the junction and the flyover. The Army and Navy is a complex junction and the flyover is 40 years old and was built as a temporary traffic solution in 1978.

Taskforce members discussed a wide variety of potential ideas presented to them by engineers and marked the start of a complicated planning and design process to provide an interchange befitting of one of the UK's newest cities. The potential for a variety of approaches was demonstrated including examples of flyovers, under-passes, new connecting roads and the roundabout as well. There is now a clear opportunity to provide new infrastructure for one of Chelmsford's busiest interchanges which helps to improve traffic flow and promotes more sustainable travel.

The design planning and development of any scheme is likely to take a number of years and will require further funding to be secured. Whilst there are many challenges ahead, improvements to the Army and Navy junction will play a key role in enabling future growth, investment, and development in the city and the region for years to come.

There are a number of different approaches we can take, some of which may not require a flyover at all. What is clear is that simply fixing or replacing the Army & Navy flyover with a one or two-way structure, without considering the alternatives, will only encourage more traffic through the junction and put further pressure on the road network. Also, the need to bear in mind that Chelmsford is a growing city and will need more capacity. Therefore, there is the need to consider all possibilities.

Details of subsequent Taskforce meetings will be reported regularly and will be shared with members of the public to ensure that everyone who is interested is kept informed. Residents, businesses, and organisations will also be given the chance to have their say about the future of the flyover and junction as proposals are developed.

Essex Council Leaders' letter highlights concerns of London Homeless being placed in the County.

A letter signed by every Essex council leader highlighting concerns about families being re-housed from London into the county has been sent to senior politicians in the capital.

Agreed by the Essex Leaders and Chief Executives Group, the letter raises 11 issues which have been highlighted by housing officers across the county.

Issues include a lack of communication between London authorities and Essex councils informing them of people being moved into the area, families being placed in inadequate housing, and the impact on local services.

It also warns of cases where families have been moved far away from support networks such as friends, family and jobs, meaning their situation can actually worsen.

The Essex Leaders and Chief Executives Group includes all 12 district and borough councils, Essex County Council, Southend and Thurrock unitary authorities and the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner.

The letter, which has been sent to the Mayor of London and the leaders and directly elected mayors of each of the London Boroughs, also details some positive steps to resolve the concerns raised and also invites politicians on both sides of the county divide to work together to lobby government on related national issues.

Save money this year

Do you love flicking through a magazine? Did you know you can save money by reading them online, free with your library card?

There's a wide range of titles, including Amateur Gardening, Top Gear and OK, using RBdigital , while PressReader covers everything from homes and gardens to sports and entertainment. Visit our e-magazines page and start saving now!

Become the best version of you!

Did you know ACL offer courses in life coaching and successful goal setting? View these upcoming courses in Colchester:

[Life Coaching Introduction](#) - An ideal route if you want to improve your personal performance whether this is for home or work life .

[Successful Life Goal Setting](#) - This course will help equip participants with skills and tools to set exciting, effective and achievable goals, using a range of powerful and practical techniques taken from the latest coaching, positive psychology and motivational development models.

There are a wide range of personal and professional development courses available countywide - view on the ACL website.