

ECC report June 2022

Climate advice packs launched

ECC has launched a series of climate advice packs to help everyone across Essex play their part and take action on climate.

The packs have been developed as a response to recommendations set out in the Essex Climate Action Commission's 'Net Zero – Making Essex Carbon Neutral' report.

There are three different advice packs:

The Residents' Advice Pack

Targeted to help people living in Essex understand options to reduce their carbon footprint and provides easy examples on how to be climate-friendly in everyday life.

The Business Advice Pack

Provides practical guidance for businesses to cut their carbon footprint, concentrating on sustainable funding guidance that will help Essex businesses take advantage of the opportunities arising from the move to low carbon living.

The Schools' Advice Pack

Provides a framework for action for schools and educational establishments across Essex, both primary and secondary.

They are now available for everyone to download on the Essex Climate Action Commission website [What Can I Do? | Essex Climate Commission](#)

£350,000 Community Initiatives Fund invites applications for projects to build communities

The Essex Community Initiatives Fund (CIF) 2022-23 is now open for applications.

The fund is administered by Essex Association of Local Councils (EALC) on behalf of Essex County Council.

This year £300,000 is allocated to the main CIF round with grants of up to £10,000 available to support projects that benefit the wider community and demonstrate a real community need. These projects may be new amenities, equipment, new local services or cultural initiatives all of which contribute towards strengthening communities.

The deadline for full applications to the main CIF round this year is 19 August 2022.

You can apply to the fund here – <https://www.ealc.gov.uk/community-initiative-fund/>

On top of this, the fund operates a £50,000 Micro Grant Community Chest Fund with grants of up to £500 available to help grassroots groups reduce social isolation, improve wellbeing or help communities connect.

Applications to the micro grants fund can be made on a rolling basis until all funds are used.

You can apply to the Micro Grant Community Chest Fund here – <https://www.ealc.gov.uk/micro-grant-fund/>

Peter Davey, Chairman of the Essex Association of Local Councils, said that EALC is proud to have been asked to administer the grant scheme on behalf of Essex County Council; it has well-established links to many Essex organisations and is ideally positioned to triage applications, address the financial standing of applicants, create and administer the CIF funding panel and ensure funds are released in a timely manner to successful applicants.

The Community Initiatives Fund provides vital funding for deserving organisations and their community projects, well-being initiatives and other important improvement schemes.

Cllr Louise McKinlay, Deputy Leader of Essex County Council and Cabinet Member for Equality, Partnerships and Performance, said that ECC is pleased to support the Essex Community Initiatives Fund, as it aligns with our levelling up priorities and plans, and local groups and voluntary organisations are well placed to understand the needs and opportunities of their areas

There are two levels of grant:

- Grants up to £10,000 towards capital or revenue projects that benefit the wider community
- Micro grants up to £500 to help grassroots groups reduce social isolation, improve wellbeing, or help communities connect.

Applications are invited from town and parish councils, community groups, social enterprises, or individuals in the Essex County Council area (not Southend and Thurrock).

Projects should have community backing and show that they help meet a real community need. They could be to:

- Create, buy, or develop new community assets
- Enhance existing community assets
- Enhance or develop initiatives that strengthen a community, including cultural initiatives.

The fund was set up in 2019. Examples of projects it has funded include:

- Children's play areas

- Upgrades to sports facilities
- Improvements to community buildings such as new heating systems or accessible toilets
- A new minibus
- Staff costs for projects or maintenance
- Restoring a nature reserve
- IT systems or support
- Cultural events and activities.

Essex County Council outlines first year action taken to kickstart real change and further aims to create a better future for all county residents

With the first 100-day plan goals completed and four-year strategy Everyone's Essex now being implemented, ECC outlined the action it has taken, and continues to take, to create a better future for all county residents.

At the Full Council meeting of 10th May 2022 ECC's Leader Cllr Kevin Bentley set out the action the council cabinet took within its first 100 days of being elected in May 2021. Cllr Bentley then outlined the council's ongoing Everyone's Essex strategy for the future.

To hit the ground running after election, the new ECC cabinet set out its ambitions in a 100 Day Plan based on the core principles of Renewal, Equality, and Ambition. This plan set out the actions the Council would take to kickstart real change in the county.

The achievements of the 100-day plan can be viewed here:

<https://www.essex.gov.uk/news/marking-100-days-of-our-new-cabinet>

Cllr Bentley then outlined the long term aims of the ongoing Everyone's Essex four-year strategy which includes 20 commitments across 4 aims:

- for a strong, inclusive, and sustainable economy
- for a high-quality environment
- for health, wellbeing, and independence for all ages; and
- for a good place for our children and families to grow

Cllr Kevin Bentley said: “Today, I’m pleased and proud to tell full council and all residents of Essex; We said, we did!

“I am a great believer in two things: first, that everyone should have the chance to reach for the stars, it doesn’t matter if they touch them but they should have the opportunity to do so; and second that a society is judged by the way it cares for its elderly and most vulnerable members.

“We are facing up to huge challenges – particularly in the short term – around inflation and the cost of living crisis that will make things difficult for many of our residents – we will continue to work day and night to do what we can to offset these pressures.

But that makes us even more determined not to be distracted from our long-term commitment towards climate change and levelling up the county.

“Our work to improve the long-term lives of all county residents does not mean we are not concentrating on the vital day to day services we deliver as an authority, such as repairing our roads, ensuring children have an excellent level of education and facilitating care for vulnerable elderly people and young children.

“We are strengthening our communities and creating partnerships with other public bodies, promoting Essex as a great county to visit and a well-connected base for a dynamic business.

“Economic prosperity, educational opportunity, strong communities, efficient infrastructure, and good and joined-up public services remain the core ingredients needed to help our people and places thrive.”

To build **a strong, inclusive and sustainable economy**, Essex County Council has already:

- Launched a levelling up programme in four locations across the county and in so doing committed investment for a new Electric Vehicle skills programme in Harlow; a £500k community fund; social supermarkets; a community hub; literacy corners in our libraries
- Worked with the Government’s Kickstart scheme to create over 600 new roles to help unemployed young people into short term paid employment and provide them with local work experience opportunities

- Invested £10.5million in a Business Adaptation Grant Scheme, supporting more than 3,500 Covid impacted local businesses to apply for grants of up to £5000
- Invested £100,000 in the COVID Recovery Academy, supporting 200 recently unemployed adults with the training they need to get into jobs in key sectors
- Completed a roads maintenance programme to repair over 1 million square metres of roads and 40 thousand square metres of footpaths and cycleways

To create a **high-quality environment in Essex**, the council has in the past year:

- Supported the ongoing work of the Essex Climate Action Commission which published the 'Net Zero: Making Essex Carbon Neutral' report on how everyone can help make the county carbon neutral by 2050. In response we've established a £200million climate action plan to deliver on the recommendations made by the Commission.
- Launched a new £500,000 Climate Action Challenge Fund to support community action on climate, offering grants of up to £20,000 to support voluntary and community projects tackling climate change in the county – with over £100,000 already awarded
- Installed more than 27,000 LED streetlights through year 1 of a 3 year programme to replace street lighting across Essex
- Undertaken a pilot programme to expand three secondary schools using construction methods designed to deliver net-zero, future-proofed, inclusive school buildings. We've also helped install roof mounted solar panels at 29 schools across the county.
- Enabled over 350,000 e-scooter journeys as part of its Department for Transport funded pilot.

To build **health, wellbeing and independence for all ages**, over the past year Essex Council has:

- Launched the Active Essex “Find your Active” campaign supported by a £1.25 million fund to enable hundreds of local clubs and organisations to take part in the campaign to provide activities for local people
- Launched the Active Essex “Fit for the Future” Strategy aimed at levelling up the playing field across Essex by supporting those who are already active and tackling head on the inequalities that currently prevent others from accessing the life changing impact of an active lifestyle

- Launched Essex Pedal Power, a £2.7 million community-based project being piloted in Clacton and Jaywick Sands. The scheme is the first of its kind in Essex and will provide more than 1,500 local residents with a free quality bike to get them more active and travel for work, school, college, shopping, and leisure.
- Launched the new Essex Care Technology Service to support people with care needs access and use the latest technology to help them to live as independently as possible and improve their quality of life
- Opened the Community Initiatives Fund 2021 for applications for individuals, groups, and voluntary organisations to apply for grant funding of up to £10,000 for projects that benefit their local community.

To ensure Essex is **a good place for children and families to grow**, Essex County Council has this year taken action which includes:

- Announcing a £1million investment in reading through the Essex Education Task Force, to support children and young people affected by the loss of learning and missed opportunities during the Covid-19 pandemic. This investment is targeted at the Essex Year of Reading 2022 which launched in February and is already building real enthusiasm.
- Delivering school improvement with 89.5% of schools across Essex judged to be good or outstanding by March 2022
- Launching a Family Friendly Employers Charter which set out a series of principles on how employers can help parents and carers manage their work and caring commitments – and to date 15 firms employing over 37,000 employees
- Launching a pilot programme to support emotional wellbeing and behaviour in schools, including £100,000 for schools to access additional support from the local voluntary and community sector in pilot areas of Basildon and Clacton
- Establishing a Safety Advisory Group for women’s safety in Essex, which is undertaking research into local needs and issues, which will inform recommendations on changes to help make Essex a safer place.

Notes for Editors

To view the full list of commitments contained in the Everyone’s Essex strategy visit <https://www.essex.gov.uk/everyones-essex-our-plan-for-essex-2021-2025>

Get your Covid-19 vaccine ahead of summer holidays

The new Director of Public Health, Lucy Wightman, is encouraging residents who haven't had the Covid-19 vaccine to get it as soon as possible.

Getting the vaccine will help residents avoid potentially missing out on holidays and other special events.

With thousands of people looking forward to trips and events this summer, including the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Bank Holiday weekend, the vaccine offers the best chance of reducing significant illness and ensuring plans can go ahead.

You can [book your Covid vaccination at the NHS website](#).

Ms Wightman said: "While it might feel like Covid-19 has gone away, this is sadly not the case and vaccination remains one of the best defences against it. I cannot recommend it highly enough, particularly if you're looking forward to a holiday or another event this year.

"I would also urge anyone who is eligible for the fourth dose to have it. This has been shown to significantly increase the body's immune defences beyond the peak of the third dose. It is important to keep your immunity topped up, especially if you are older or more vulnerable. The vaccine offers the best chance of doing that."

While travel guidelines can differ between countries, proof of Covid-19 vaccination status, or exemption, is a requirement for many.

Some countries also require travellers to demonstrate that they have received their primary course of a Covid-19 approved vaccination or booster within a certain time period.

Residents should carefully [check all requirements before travelling](#).

Although there are no longer legal restrictions in place, [the Government has issued guidance to reduce the risk of catching and spreading Covid-19](#).

A library card for every child

We want every child to experience the joy of reading. That's why we're giving every pupil in Essex a library card as part of our Essex Year of Reading campaign.

Pupils will receive their library card and a campaign bookmark from their school. All they need to do is take it to any Essex Library to activate it and start borrowing. As well as access to thousands of books, Essex Libraries also offer e-books, e-audio and e-comics.

Reading is not only enjoyable, but it can also open up opportunities for young people throughout their lives. That's why, from 2023, the parent or carer of every child in Essex will receive details about how to sign-up for a library card with their child's school place offer.

For more information about the [Essex Year of Reading campaign](#), download the free app from the App Store or Google Play. You can also discover what's happening at your local [Essex Library](#).

Essex Year of Reading

The Essex Year of Reading is a countywide campaign created to help children and young people discover a lifelong love of reading and ensure every Essex child can read at their age level or better.

Whether you're a parent or carer who wants to support their child on their reading adventure, a young person looking for inspiration, or an adult keen to rediscover the joy of reading, we're here to help.

One moment can change a life forever. This lovely [blog from Sophie Wills](#) on how in 'one super-powered flash', she got her confidence back and started writing again. Read Sophie's blog and see if you are inspired to enter any of our competitions.

Start your year of reading

Enjoying the fun of reading is the first step to becoming a confident reader, see how we can help you.

Discover the app [Essex Year of Reading - Apps on Google Play](#) or [Essex Year of Reading on the App Store \(apple.com\)](#)

What's on?

Over the course of the Essex Year of Reading we'll be running a series of events, activities and competitions to encourage the people of Essex to become authors, poets, illustrators and photographers.

Activities, competitions and events

[Jubilee poetry competition](#)

We have launched a poetry competition to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. If you are a budding poet and want to see your poem in print, put your creative skills to the test and show us what you've got! The competition closes at 5pm on Friday 1 July.

[Storytelling competition](#)

The search for spectacular storytellers across Essex has begun! Write a short story with the theme of Essex in the past, present and future and enter by 1 July.

[Dragon's Den competition](#)

Write a short proposal on your idea to promote a love of reading to everyone, including older people and people living with Dementia. The closing date is 27 May.

[Essex Book Festival](#)

The festival returns in June and there are a wide range of events to take part in.

Throughout the month of June, Essex Library Service is hosting [15 author events](#) as well as bringing back the always popular Essex Authors Day and featuring a brand new children's festival.

[Author visits to libraries](#)

Essex Libraries are running numerous author events as part of the Essex Year of Reading. These take place across the county and are open to children and their families.

[Story of the month - Owl Babies](#)

Every month we will be sharing a fabulous story video for families to share along with some activity ideas. This month's story is Owl Babies by Martin Waddell and illustrated by Patrick Benson.

[New Quick Reads for adults](#)

Essex Library Service are now stocking eight new exciting Quick Reads titles. Quick Reads are short, simpler reads for adults written by best-selling authors. The authors this year include popular authors Graham Norton, Santa Montefiore and Kate Mosse. Quick Reads are ideal if you have limited time, are returning to reading or simply prefer shorter stories.

[Talk, Listen, Cuddle](#)

The first few years of a child's life are key to the development of speech, language and cognitive skills. Talk, Listen, Cuddle is a great resource to help your child gain the best start in life through playful learning at home before they start school.

[Adult learning](#)

If you want to improve your literacy skills, ACL Essex offers a positive environment with the dedicated support of tutors to give you the learning experience you deserve.

[Parent Ambassador Programme](#)

A pilot scheme for parents, grandparents or carers who have children that attend schools in the Basildon, Harlow, Tendring or Colchester area. Currently recruiting parent ambassador.

Working with schools

There are a number of projects underway involving primary, secondary and SEND schools throughout Essex. You can see an overview of all projects, with contact details in the [project directory](#).

The Essex Year of Reading is a countywide campaign created to help children and young people discover a love of reading and ensure every Essex child can read at their age level or better.

The campaign is part of a programme to address the short and long-term impact of Covid-19 on children and young people's education and the missed opportunities caused by the pandemic.

Essex County Council is funding the [Essex Education Task Force](#) to work with education providers and stakeholders to deliver the programme. Over £1million will be invested in a programme of reading during 2022.

The Essex Year of Reading app will inspire you or your child to read with confidence. Use the free digital library to enjoy immersive audio readings, animations, quizzes and download texts to read offline anytime, anywhere.

You'll find information about Essex libraries, online and in-person events as well as exciting competitions and challenges, updated throughout the year.

You'll be able to choose from the:

- pupil library – including poetry and fiction and non-fiction stories
- literacy boosting library – including high-interest and phonics-based reading support
- parent or carer library – including guides on how to support your child's reading and wider learning