

ECC Report November 2011

New £50m support for Essex residents to help with the cost of living

A new raft of measures and money to help families battle against increasing cost of living pressures has been announced by Essex County Council (ECC)

The plans include £17 million of government cash to help households pay for insulation and other energy saving improvements at home, a community led 'winter warmth and welcome' campaign to provide local places for winter warmth over the coming months, including a grant scheme to help groups fund activities, and additional funding to help vulnerable people with essential costs.

The full range of the £50m support is outlined in the Council's [Cost of Living Support for Households and Communities Plan](#) which aims to help those needing immediate support. [Help for Households - Get government cost of living support](#)

Through the plan, ECC brings together partners, charities and organisations to tackle the issues residents are facing. It also maps the wider support being delivered across the county.

The Council's approach is based on three pillars – Response, Resilience and Root causes, along with a six-point plan to support residents.

A number of support initiatives are already underway with others due to launch in mid-October onwards. This plan will continue to evolve and will respond to the changing needs of people and communities in Essex.

While these measures will offer immediate relief to residents in difficulty, ECC is also looking at the medium and long term, building resilience and looking at the root causes of cost-of-living pressures, such as access to skills and good jobs.

Cllr Louise McKinlay, the County Council's Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Community, Equality, Partnerships and Performance, said: "We know people across the country are struggling and many are really worried about how they are going to cope with the rise in the cost of living.

"We understand the challenges many are faced with, and tackling this crisis is a key priority for us, so people have access to the food, heating and essential items they need.

“Our Cost of Living Support for Households and Communities plan highlights how we will be funding and mobilising support across the county - how we will help people keep warm, eat and keep well and happy this winter, and beyond. We will also be providing valuable advice and guidance to communities to help them, help themselves.

“Even though these short-term solutions will make a difference in the ‘here and now’, we recognise that it is essential that support measures are put in place to help residents become as resilient as possible, so that they are more able to cope with future pressures and I will be making more announcements in the coming weeks.”

ECC remains committed to the goals of its Levelling Up strategy, a longer-term programme looking beyond the immediate impacts of inflation and the rising prices of essentials.

Later this month, November 2022, Essex County Council is hosting a summit with partners to ensure all public service agencies are working together to support communities.

[Cost of living support for households and families \(ctfassets.net\)](https://ctfassets.net)

Applications open for 2023 primary school places

The primary school admissions window for places from September 2023 is now open.

Children are entitled to start primary school in the September after their fourth birthday. This means parents and carers of children born between 1 Sept 2018 and 31 August 2019 need to apply.

Parent and carers can apply for their child’s school place online from today (7 November 2022) until the closing date of 15 January 2023.

Applications received after the 15 January deadline will only be considered once all on time applications are determined. This means applying late could reduce your child’s chance of getting a place at their preferred school.

[Find out more about the admissions process or apply](#) at our admissions website [Admissions - Essex County Council](#)

How should the pandemic be remembered in Essex?

Remembrance, reflection and memorials are ways in which we could remember the pandemic – and now Essex residents are being asked for their views.

An [online survey](#) is available where people can state their preferences or offer their own ideas.

The survey, launched last month by [The UK Commission on Covid Commemoration](#), is open until Monday 5th December and can be found [online](#). Responses can also be submitted by post or email and alternative formats are [available](#).

The Commission is also seeking suggestions on suitable dates to hold a national day of remembrance and views on how future generations should be educated about the sacrifices made throughout the pandemic, as well as marking key achievements such as the development of the vaccines and the valuable contribution made by volunteers.

More details can be found about the consultation and how to take part can be found [here](#).

The consultation findings will be published as an annex to the Commission's report to the Prime Minister. The Commission is expected to report to the Prime Minister by the end of March 2023.

Carbon Literacy training for staff and councillors

The County Council is upskilling its workforce to be more aware of how climate change affects Essex.

A programme is under way for staff and councillors to take part in Carbon Literacy training. This will provide a better understanding of the causes and effects of climate change.

The training specifically focuses on climate change in Essex and how the county is currently being affected.

On successful completion of the training individuals receive Carbon Literacy accreditation from [the Carbon Literacy Project](#).

Across Essex County Council more than seventy individuals have already received this accreditation, with plans to increase this to 1,000 in coming months.

The County Council's Climate Czar, Cllr Peter Schwier, said: "It's encouraging to see so many at Essex County Council receiving their Carbon Literacy accreditation.

"To achieve our goal of Essex becoming a net zero county by 2050 it is crucial that those within the organisation understand the climate change challenge, but more importantly how we can fight it."

The training is part of [our £200 million Climate Action Plan](#), which was created based on recommendations from the Essex Climate Action Commission's report, [Net Zero: Making Essex Carbon Neutral](#).

Further £700k funding to boost gigabit-capable broadband in rural Essex

An additional £700,000 of funding from Essex County Council has been secured to bring lightning-fast and more reliable broadband internet connections to the hardest-to-reach addresses in the county.

Vouchers from the government's Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme (GBVS) are currently available in Essex to groups of two or more residents or businesses, to subsidise the costs of bringing gigabit broadband to areas currently experiencing slow speeds.

The additional funding from Essex County Council will 'top up' these vouchers, so even more money is available to improve digital connectivity and boost the regional economy.

Combined with funding from the GBVS, eligible residents will be awarded up to £8,500 towards a gigabit-capable connection, while businesses can receive up to £15,000.

Cllr Lesley Wagland OBE, Essex County Council Cabinet Member for Economic Renewal, Infrastructure and Planning, said: "This additional funding will allow us to bring better connectivity to residents, businesses and communities who are still unable to access decent broadband speeds.

"This intervention is significant as, currently, one per cent of our Essex residents and businesses are still unable to access superfast broadband speeds.

We want to make sure every individual and business has the opportunity to benefit from digital technologies, and improving connectivity is the first step to achieving this goal.”

Residents and businesses can [visit the Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme website here](#).

Women's night-time safety survey launches

Essex County Council has teamed up with the University of Essex to lead a [research project](#) about women's safety at night.

Late last year the County Council conducted a countywide survey on women's safety. The findings showed that women felt most unsafe at night with 47% of respondents stating this. The survey also found that 21% of women felt unsafe in pubs, clubs and bars at night with 45% of women avoiding certain nightlife or hospitality venues because they made them feel unsafe.

To look deeper into the reasons why women feel most unsafe at night, residents are being asked to share their views on night-time safety with a particular focus on anything related to businesses and services that run during the night such as pubs, bars, clubs and restaurants. While this research is focused around women's safety, the survey is open to both men and women.

The [online survey](#) takes around 5-10 minutes to complete and responses will be used to inform future work of Essex County Council's Safety Advisory Group (SAG).

The SAG is committed to making the county safer for women and supporting them in feeling safer too, this research project is one of the many initiatives launched by the Safety Advisory Group.

The survey is open until Sunday 18 December, residents can take part [here](#).

Foster carers in Essex welcome John Lewis Christmas commercial

Foster carers across Essex have expressed their delight at the new John Lewis Christmas commercial.

The 90-second commercial follows the story of a foster dad as he attempts to master the art of skateboarding. There are failed attempts and several injuries along the way.

It is not until the end of the commercial that we learn why he has gone to so much trouble. The foster carers open their door to a social worker and a teenage girl with a skateboard in hand.

Essex County Council foster carers have given their reactions.

Foster carers Debbie and her partner Ali, from Epping said: "We thought the advert was great, it made us cry. It's fantastic to see John Lewis focussing on fostering and bringing it to the forefront of everyday life.

"When we know we have a child arriving we do try to make them more comfortable by doing things and arranging things that matter to them.

"For anyone who sees it and is thinking of fostering, take that step forward, don't doubt yourself or your abilities. You can make a difference to that young person's life and give them the Christmas they deserve."

Foster carers Brian and Lorraine from Clacton-on-Sea said: "I thought it was great to see an advert as iconic as John Lewis' Christmas advert highlighting fostering. It was admirable to see them shining a light on our vulnerable young people in care. It brings into focus what is important at Christmas and in life.

This Christmas there will be over 1,000 children in care across Essex.

Fostering is rewarding, offers great flexibility and puts family at its heart. Carers are welcome from any background, including single, married, LGBTQ+ or retired.

Essex County Council matches children to your family, offers excellent local training and has a network of support groups.

It also offers 24/7 local support, a dedicated social worker and access to a clinical psychologist and mental health coordinators. Families can receive on average £483 per child.

You can find out more about fostering by attending an [information event](#) or by calling 0800 801 530

