

ECC Report November 2017

£14million primary school expansion projects set to start across Colchester as council's investment in the area continues

Work is set to begin on creating more than 900 new places across five primary schools in Colchester.

Essex County Council has already spent £30million on primary school projects in the borough since September 2014, including two new schools (Braiswick Primary School and Camulos Academy) and a number of school expansion projects.

However, with the area's population and the demand for places continuing to grow, the council is now planning to spend a further £14million on expansions at St Michael's Primary School, Stanway Primary School Stanway Fiveways Primary School, Home Farm Primary School, and Monkwick Junior School for September 2018.

315 extra places will be created at Stanway Fiveways Primary School through the construction of a two-storey teaching block, containing nine new classrooms and a school hall.

The project, together with one at the neighbouring Stanway Primary School, is being completed by Barnes Construction. Stanway Primary School will benefit from nine new classrooms – some of which are replacing existing relocatable classrooms. The scheme will increase the school's capacity by 120 places.

Eight new classrooms will be built within a new two storey teaching block at St Michael's Primary School, along with a new school hall, food science room and other facilities. The project, which is being managed by Morgan Sindall, will create 210 new places.

Subject to final agreement, an additional eight new classrooms and 210 places will also be created at Home Farm Primary School, along with two classrooms and 60 extra places at Monkwick Junior School.

All five projects will also involve works to enhance external areas and increased car parking.

Construction is set to start on some of the projects later this month, while works on others is scheduled to get underway early in the New Year.

In addition to the primary school projects due for completion next September, Essex County Council hopes more than 1,000 other primary school places will also be created in the Colchester area in the coming years.

The council hopes to build a new primary school at the Lakelands site in Stanway, while the Education and Skills Funding Agency has approved proposals for an all-through free school on the Chesterwell site in Mile End and a primary free school elsewhere in Colchester (location TBC).

Cllr Ray Gooding, Essex County Council's Cabinet Member for Education, said: "We have already spent £30million creating more than 2,300 new school places in Colchester since September 2014 and are committed to ensuring that investment continues in the years to come.

"I am very pleased that work is now set to start on the expansion of these five primary schools.

"The 915 new places these projects will create will be crucial in helping us continue to offer the vast majority of pupils a place at one of their parents' preferred schools."

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.

Cllr John Spence, Cabinet Member for Adult Health & Social Care, ECC, said:
"Our ambition is to provide the maximum help we can so that everyone can have somewhere safe, pleasant and supportive to live in later life. It's heartening that our approach in Essex has been recognised as an example for other local authorities around the country to follow."

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 counties 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 meets their needs - to live independently.

The first two new Independent Living housing schemes for older people in Essex, Rosebank Park in Harwich, and Beaumont House in Walton, opened in 2017. A third new scheme, Cornell Court in Saffron Walden, is due to open in summer 2018. Construction will also begin on new schemes in the Braintree, Colchester, Epping Forest, Harlow and Rochford districts during 2018.

The LGA is the national voice of local government, working with councils to support, promote and improve local government. In addition to Essex, its report also identified Birmingham City Council, Central Bedfordshire Council, Mansfield District Council, Newcastle City Council, North Somerset, Bristol, Bath and North-East Somerset Councils, and Worcestershire County Council as demonstrating good practice.

Find out more about Independent Living housing in Essex:
www.independentessex.co.uk

Read the LGA's report: [Housing our Ageing Population](#)

Watch: [Cllr Spence explains why ECC is investing in Independent Living homes](#)

Watch: [The first residents of Rosebank Park in Harwich explain how their new Independent Living homes are benefitting them](#)

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 is sending residents today as the local and national 'Stay well this winter' campaigns are 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 will highlight how people can keep well and warm, make their homes winter ready and signpost to local support services.

Mike Gogarty, Director of Wellbeing, Public Health & Communities said:

"According to Age UK, every winter in the UK one older person dies needlessly every seven minutes. In this day and age no one should be suffering because of the cold and certainly no one should be dying as a result."

"In Essex we are working with key providers and organisations across the county to ensure our most vulnerable residents stay well and warm this winter.

"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 this campaign and the advice given will help people understand what support is available and where to go for help."

Cllr John Spence, Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care said: "With the clocks turned back, and the weather turning colder, I encourage everyone to prepare for winter.

"Make sure you have had your boiler serviced, stock up on blankets if you need to, and make sure you have all the medication you may need in case you can't get to a pharmacy."

"Please also look out for others, especially elderly or vulnerable friends, relatives and neighbours, for whom keeping warm this winter could be a

matter of life or death. Make sure their homes are ready for the cold, they can keep warm with suitable clothing, and have stocks of food and enough medication.”

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. If you are in one of these groups and have not had your flu vaccination yet please contact your GP or midwife to get this booked in as soon as possible.
- 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.
- Many people worry about the cost of heating but with the success of the Essex Energy Switch, people can be confident that when they turn up the heating, they are still getting value for money. The Essex Energy Switch saved Essex residents over £2 million over the last three years. To sign up or the switch visit www.essex.gov.uk/energyswitch. You may also be eligible for support towards your fuel payments, visit <https://www.gov.uk/winter-fuel-payment/overview> for more information.
- 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

A video of Cllr Spence launching the campaign can be found here- <https://youtu.be/Mj75aosqPYY>

A new graffiti wall made available to local artists

A local construction company has provided access to a wall in order to encourage art work from local artists in the community.

Taylor Wimpey has created a temporary street art provision at the construction site next to Essex Record Office. The company was aware that the graffiti wall in Wharf Road car park was closed, and this was regularly used by local artists in the community.

To respond to the closure, Taylor Wimpey has created a new space on their hoarding, which can be used by local artists in the community. Taylor Wimpey was keen to provide the new space as part of their wish to engage with the local community.

The graffiti wall has already generated a positive response from the community, including local street artist Steven Harris, who has created graffiti art work on the new wall.

Peter Monk, Taylor Wimpey Project Consultant, "After speaking to many of the street artists over the last few months it's apparent how important this is to the artist community and how far people travel to express their art. Taylor Wimpey promotes community engagement and looks forward to seeing the artist at work"

Essex County Council's Cultural Development Team will be working closely with Taylor Wimpey to spread the word about this opportunity and encourage use of the new space, including through exploreculture.org.uk, a one stop shop to find out about cultural events and activities across Essex.

Construction companies build foundations for the future at networking event

Fifty local construction companies attended a networking event to discuss upcoming growth opportunities in Essex.

Companies networked at 'Construction Opportunities in Essex', a breakfast event, on Wednesday, 25 October at Colchester Institute's Colchester campus organised by the Essex Employment and Skills Board (ESB).

The event showed the wealth of opportunity in Essex for the construction sector over the next ten or more years, along with the positive steps being taken to address the skills shortages and negative perceptions of the sector. This led to discussions on how their business would prepare for the future pipeline and their business support needs.

Businesses also heard about the work of Colchester Institute in supporting employers to make their construction courses more industry-focused, as well as how the BEST Growth Hub can help businesses identify and realise their potential.

Cllr Gagan Mohindra, Deputy Cabinet Member for Economic Growth at Essex County Council, said: "Construction is a vital sector in Essex, employing 64,500 people across the county, so it was important for construction companies to get together. As well as gaining valuable insight and information, the event gave them the opportunity to network and build relationships.

"The event covered the industry as a whole and discussed future workforce and growth opportunities to meet the exciting and significant future pipeline.

For further information on Construction, visit: essexesb.co.uk

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.

The announcement coincides with the first of ECC's networking events being held with businesses from across the county at Writtle College. The event included a Q&A session with current ECC disabled employees, all of whom shared their employment experiences, good and bad, as well as the opportunity to talk to a number of organisations who can support employers to recruit and retain more adults with disabilities.

Speaking at the networking event, Gavin Jones, Chief Executive at Essex County Council said; "It is a great honour to become a Level 3 Disability Confident Leader, and we will be advocating the benefits of employing more adults with disabilities, as well as encouraging other employers across the county, and indeed the UK, to take action and change their recruitment practice.

"While we're immensely proud of what we've achieved by becoming a recognised Disability Confident Leader, this is only the start of a much broader journey. Under the Disability Confident scheme we will carry on learning and strengthening the networks we will need to continue to improve our offer to existing and future disabled employees."

Mike Adams, chief executive of Purple who carried out the validation, said: "What was really impressive about Essex County Council's approach was the commitment from the top to build a Disability Confident organisation and to promote that philosophy with its supply chain and the Essex business community.

"It was good to see the range of activities already undertaken to promote Disability Confident to businesses and that they go beyond awareness-raising to support real understanding of building capacity of organisations, including through the active engagement of disabled people."

Kate Crofts, chair of the Disabled Employees Network (DEN) at ECC, said; "It is great to see Essex County Council recognised in this way and I am pleased to have been part of the work that took place.

The DWP's Disability Confident scheme promotes a disability-inclusive culture, helping us to identify and remove barriers to employment. It equips employers to attract, retain and develop disabled talent and for this to become part of everyone's day-to-day business.

Disability Confident Leaders also commit to supporting partners and other local employers in becoming Disability Confident.