

## ECC information for May 2022 meeting

### ECC- Household Support Fund - Grant Allocation

In March 2022, Essex County Council (ECC) received £9.437m from the Department for Work and Pensions Household Support Fund (HSF) and has today, Tuesday 17 May, announced how it will be spent.

Allocations have been agreed for free school meals during the upcoming holidays, support for essential items, food and utility bills for pensioners and vulnerable families/adults and assistance for food support groups are some of the ways the money will be distributed.

Allocations include:

- **£4.185m** for the provision of food vouchers with a value of £15 per child per week, for the 2022 May and summer holidays. This also includes the distribution of the vouchers. Schools and childcare settings, including childminders, will be contacted directly and eligible parents will be notified.
- **£3.212m** to support households that include a person who has reached state pension age by 30 September 2022 and in receipt of means tested benefit. The council is working with District, Boroughs and City councils to determine timescales for £80 payments to be distributed to those identified as being eligible.
- **£1.298m** for the Essential Living Fund, a scheme managed on behalf of the County Council by Southend Borough Council that provides general living expenses, furniture, household furnishings, white goods, clothing and other essential goods.
- **£482,000** for support for unpaid carers, vulnerable adults and targeted family support delivered through locally trusted voluntary and community sector organisations and foodbanks to support children and their families.

Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Community, Equality, Partnerships and Performance, Cllr Louise McKinlay said: “The last few years have been hard for everyone, and we know that people across the county continue to feel the strain financially as the cost of living continues to rise.

“The Household Support Fund will make sure that those most in need in our county including children and older people receive support.

“I would urge anyone not sure if they are eligible for support to take a look at our website to see what funding is available and how to access help.”

Residents are also urged to contact the [Essential Living Fund](#) if they are struggling financially:

The fund can support with:

- furniture
- household furnishings
- white goods
- general living expenses - these are day to day living expenses such as groceries, nappies, toiletries and fuel.

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## Two open days at Essex County Hospital archaeological dig.

Members of the public will be invited to view archaeological excavations at the site of the former Essex County Hospital during two open days in May.

The open days will take place **from 9.30am to 4pm on Friday 20 and Saturday 21 May.**

Members of the public will be able to drop-in to the site to view the excavations, speak to members of the archaeology team about their work, and see some of the finds recovered so far.

There will be two viewing locations, one accessed from Lexden Road and a second from Gray Road.

The open days have been commissioned and funded by Essex Housing, Essex County Council's housing development company, as part of preparatory work for the redevelopment of the site, plans for which were approved by Colchester Borough Council in 2020.

Excavations have been ongoing at the site for more than two years. A public open day was last held in March 2020 with plans for further open days put on hold due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The excavations are being conducted by the Colchester Archaeological Trust with archaeological consultancy by RPS Heritage.

A range of interesting Roman finds have already been discovered including:

- The remains of at least 19 brick/tile-built bread ovens.
- A mysterious square building with stone foundations about a metre across, partially surviving foundations of another rectangular plan stone founded building, several post-built structures and several possibly cellared buildings.
- More than 70 Roman burials.
- Large quantities of rubbish pits and quarries.
- A series of ditch defined plots.
- A large quantity of items such as pottery and glass vessels, jewellery and tools made from metals and animal bone.

Some of the key finds from the excavations can be viewed in an exhibition at the Roman Circus Centre.

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## Essex Explorer Magazine - Summer 22

To access the digital version of the Essex Explorer magazine to either read online or download, both the latest edition and previous ones, please use this link :

<https://www.explore-essex.com/culture/essex-explorer>

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## ECC Travel Essex App - easy to use + download

We have recently launched the TravelEssex app to help people plan their journeys more sustainably – download it, it's easy to use:

<https://www.essexhighways.org/news/new-sustainable-travel-app-for-essex-launched>

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## ECC - Highway Highlights April '22

This will also be published on the website and can be accessed via [this link](#).

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## ECC -Four Year Vision for Essex Libraries to become a reality.

Ambitious plans for a vibrant, modern and sustainable Library Service will now become a reality as the County Council's four-year plan gets the green light.

Essex County Council's (ECC) Cabinet has today, Tuesday 19 April, approved 'Everyone's Library Service 2022-2026', marking the next step in an exciting future for the county's libraries.

This follows an 8-week public consultation that took place between November 2021 and January 2022 where thousands of residents shared their views on the draft plan.

Feedback received was used to mould the final plan approved today, which can be found at [www.essex.gov.uk/everyoneslibrary](http://www.essex.gov.uk/everyoneslibrary)

Helping children and adults improve their literacy, encouraging people to enjoy reading for pleasure and increasing the range of online resources available to customers are just some of the commitments in the plan.

It also commits to keeping all 74 libraries open with investment in training and the upskilling of existing library staff.

The plan also sets out three key aims for the next four years and details how these will be achieved.

### ***Library Service and Literacy***

- Improving Literacy for children and adults and creating 'Literacy Areas' in every Essex Library by the end of June.
- Supporting children in becoming school ready.
- Offering up to date and refreshed stock and resources.
- Delivering a programme of exciting events in the libraries.
- Upskilling Staff and working with volunteers to enhance the service.

### ***Communications and Infrastructure***

- Improving communications with residents so they know what is on offer and working to attract new users.
- Investing in our spaces so they are vibrant, accessible and flexible.
- Ensuring our buildings are as 'green' as can be.

### ***Supporting our communities and levelling up***

- Making sure no one is left behind by expanding our outreach and community involvement.
- Enhancing employability, wellbeing, culture and arts through bringing people together.

- Encouraging greater footfall, including welcoming new users through exciting new activities.

Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Community, Equality, Partnerships and Performance, Cllr Louise McKinlay said:

“Following consultation with residents, ‘Everyone’s Library Service 2022-2026’, the county council’s final Library Plan, has now been approved by Cabinet.

“This is an important moment for our Library Service and signifies the start of new and exciting opportunities for residents.

“The plan will help create a service that is modern, vibrant and sustainable, with improved access, better facilities and more opportunities for local people.”

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One Stop shop to support Essex residents in finding new job

If you are looking for a new job, considering a career change or thinking of retraining or improving existing skills there is support available for you from Essex County Council (ECC).

The [Essex Opportunities website](#) is funded by Essex County Council and Southend Borough Council and managed by a team at ECC.

In its first year the website has had more than 90,000 visits and 5,000 clicks to apply for jobs. Essex Opportunities has also hosted a series of virtual jobs fairs and live broadcasts, with more events planned.

On Thursday 31<sup>st</sup> March at 11am residents can join the team for a virtual job fair focusing on opportunities in and around the Braintree area.

It will provide the opportunity to meet employers, hear about their current opportunities and they will also discuss their application and interview process.

Viewers can also send messages directly to employers via the live chat during the event. This is great opportunity to speak to employers, have your questions answered and even arrange follow up phone calls with recruiters.

Employers joining the job fair include, Essex Police, Essex Cares, Linc Group, Stansted Airport, Rail Futures and many more.

The first series of a live broadcast programme, [Essex Opportunities Live](#), has been running since January, focusing on different topics each week and inviting employers, experts, colleges and training providers to feature in each show.

Topics have included apprenticeships, public sector jobs, careers in logistics and becoming self-employed.

The shows are all still available to [watch back on demand](#).

ECC is committed to levelling up the county and supporting people to gain employment and skills is key to this. This year the Essex Opportunities team have been joined by an employment advisor, who is available to help families and parents secure employment, gain confidence and pursue career aspirations.

You can speak with her online, over the phone and in person as well as booking an appointment with her at the [Basildon Advice Store](#). Soon residents will be able to chat to her via the website using a new instant messaging service.

The [Essex Opportunities website](#) has information on the events and live broadcasts and is a one-stop shop providing help for residents and employers so they can access information and support and find opportunities in Essex.

You can search for jobs, apprenticeships, and courses on the site as well as access information in order to help you apply, interview, start a new job or find a new career.

Cllr Tony Ball, ECC Cabinet Member for Education Excellence, Lifelong Learning and Employability, said “We know that developing and maintaining high quality skills is essential, especially as many people now have multiple careers in their working life.

“We launched the Essex Opportunities website to help our residents access information on employment and skills, to support residents to gain employment in sectors that have vacancies now and access training programmes to re-skill and up-skill to secure jobs in the industries that are growing in Essex.

“Over the last year we have seen how beneficial the portal has been with over 90,000 visits to the website over 5,000 clicks to apply for jobs.

“With more support and programmes planned for this year, we hope to help even more residents.”

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A partnership of organisations, including Essex County Council (ECC), are working to provide immediate support and assistance as the first Ukrainians arrive in Essex under the Government’s Homes for Ukraine scheme.

The [Homes for Ukraine](#) scheme invites residents to apply to sponsor a named Ukrainian and their immediate family to come over to the UK, as long as they can provide accommodation for at least six months.

Essex County Council is working with partners, including district councils, to provide support to those arriving under the scheme, both in the short and longer term.

The County Council will be on hand to support the safeguarding needs of arrivals, including providing social care support for adults and children as well as assistance to meet children’s educational needs.

ECC will be carrying out DBS checks, which are required of all sponsors under the Homes for Ukraine scheme, as well as enhanced DBS checks for hosts who will have Ukrainian children staying with them.

The requirements also set out that accommodation must be suitable and district council partners will conduct the relevant housing checks.

The Government is providing funding of £10,500 per person to councils to enable them to provide support to families.

As ECC is the education authority in Essex, it will also receive additional funding from the Government to support the provision of education for Ukrainian children and young adults who will be staying in Essex.

Partners will be on hand to support any further needs of Ukrainian arrivals, as these emerge. The British Red Cross, Essex Welfare Service and voluntary and community sector groups will help provide this support.

Over the weekend the first Ukrainians arrived into Essex via Stansted Airport.

ECC and partners including the British Red Cross, Border Force, Stansted Airport, Uttlesford District Council and the NHS have set up a hub, providing meet and greet assistance and immediate humanitarian support.

The hub will act as an initial reception for arrivals and offer things like translation and interpretation services as well as emotional support, thanks to the British Red Cross.

The hub is also available to those arriving into Essex via the Ukraine Family scheme.

Cllr Kevin Bentley, Leader of Essex County Council, said: "Essex has quickly mobilised and working closely with our district council colleagues and other partners we are ready to help as many refugees as we possibly can.

"This is a humanitarian crisis on a scale that many of us have not seen before in our lives and the County Council is going to put its shoulder to the wheel to do all we can to help people fleeing from this dreadful war.

"The generosity of our residents in contributing to humanitarian aid efforts has been astonishing and we know people in Essex will have also generously signed up to the Government's Homes for Ukraine scheme, offering their own homes to those seeking safety in the UK.

"Our job, along with our partners in national and local government, the NHS, and the voluntary sector, is to ensure those who arrive into Essex have all the support they need, both as soon as they arrive and for as long as they are in this county. We will work together to make sure this is the case."

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**Whether it's for work, school or pleasure, cycling has many benefits. It's convenient, environmentally friendly and can help you keep fit.**

For further information: <https://saferessexroads.org/road-users/cycling/>

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A school in Essex has received Platinum accreditation for its travel plan encouraging active and sustainable travel and has been judged the top school in the East of England for active sustainable travel.

Woodville Primary School in South Woodham Ferrers received the platinum accreditation, the highest award available within the scheme, from national organisation Modeshift STARS after working closely with Essex County Council.

A travel plan is a strategy a school puts together to support more pupils walking, scooting or cycling to school. This includes a 'park-and-stride' initiative whereby parents and carers opt to park in local car parks and walk to school from there, thus reducing the negative effects of the school run on roads in the area and improving safety for youngsters and their families.

On top of achieving Platinum accreditation, on Friday 25<sup>th</sup> March, Woodville School was named STARS East of England Primary School of the Region 2021/22 coming top for active

sustainable travel out of all the schools in Essex, Suffolk, Norfolk, Cambridgeshire, Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire.

Cllr Lee Scott, Essex County Council Cabinet member for Highways Maintenance and Sustainable Transport, visited the school to present the Platinum accreditation award to pupils and teachers and thank the school for their pioneering work.

Cllr Scott said: “Achieving Platinum accreditation for a school travel plan is no mean feat and I’m proud to see the young people at Woodville Primary School are leading the way in the fight against climate change, finding ways to stay safe on their journey to school and helping reduce air pollution.”

“School travel plans are an extremely important tool for promoting sustainable travel in Essex as part of our Safer, Greener, Healthier campaign. We want families to feel safe enough to leave their cars at home for the school run as it benefits everyone in their area as well as the environment.”

“Hopefully the achievements of Woodville Primary School can be a shining example to other schools across Essex.”

Woodville Primary School has enacted a raft of other initiatives during the development of its bespoke travel plan over the past 20 years. These have had a noticeable impact on journeys to school with fewer cars being used and more pupils travelling sustainably.

To achieve Platinum status in the scheme the school had to:

- Promote sustainable travel, embracing it as the norm through the school community
- Hold pupil travel surveys for four years
- Achieve a reduction of at least five per cent in car use on the journey to and from school
- Be able to show the levels of active travel – walking, scooting and cycling – have risen by at least 5 per cent over this time (35% increase in children walking, cycling, scooting or park and striding since September 2019)

Ms Jacqui Phillips Headteacher of Woodville Primary School said: “Since 2019, many factors have had a negative impact on the emotional health and wellbeing of all school communities. We saw an opportunity through the Modeshift Stars Scheme to improve this situation, for example through the 3PR scheme which encourages children not only to walk to school, but also the chance to share more quality time with other members of their family.”

“In April 2021 we launched the Living Streets ‘WOW’ scheme, where all the children log their daily commute to school on a dojo on the Living Streets website. All those children who travel sustainably at least 3 times a week receive a WOW badge provided by Living Streets at the end of each month. The impact and popularity of this scheme has been fantastic, support from children and their families has made this such a success. For example, in September 2021 over 300 of our children (out of 415) travelled sustainably at least 3 times a week and were very excited to receive their badge.”

Schools across Essex are encouraged to sign up to create their own travel plan. Essex County Council can provide support throughout the process.

One of ECC’s Sustainable Travel Planning Officers will offer their expertise and assistance. Schools move through the levels of accreditation, with the ability to attain the next level the following term.

To get started, you can either register your school on the Modeshift STARS website

at <https://modeshiftstars.org> or contact [travelplanteam@essex.gov.uk](mailto:travelplanteam@essex.gov.uk) or 0333 0139390.

Find out more about travel plans at [www.essex.gov.uk/sustainable-travel](http://www.essex.gov.uk/sustainable-travel).

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Recycling centres and waste transfer stations in Essex will soon be operated directly by ECC, delivering a high quality, customer focused and sustainable service, which offers value for money to taxpayers.

Today (Friday 1st April), Veolia staff at ECC's recycling centres and waste transfer stations have moved to being directly employed by the County Council, following a consultation with employees and the GMB Union.

The move will help the County Council operate a service which meets the aims and objectives set out in our Everyone's Essex strategy to minimise waste and increase recycling of non-reusable items, whilst also providing maximum flexibility to adapt to future requirements.

Recycling centres and waste transfer stations will continue operating as normal, however, residents may notice updates to signage at sites to reflect the change, as well as new uniforms for staff.

Going forward, ECC aims to support sustainability and drive improvements to services at both recycling centres and waste transfer stations.

Cllr Bob Massey, ECC Deputy Cabinet Member for Waste Reduction and Recycling, said: "Bringing recycling centres and waste transfer stations in-house will bring multiple benefits including providing value for money for Essex taxpayers as well as helping plan for future growth, as we implement the aims of our Everyone's Essex strategy.

More information about waste and recycling services in Essex is available at [www.loveessex.org](http://www.loveessex.org).

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## Essex Library Service



[Essex Library of Things!](#)

[Brentwood Photographic Club](#)

[Windrush Exhibition](#)

[Poetry Competition](#)

[Colouring for Adults at Basildon Library](#)

[Knit and Natter Clubs](#)

[April Book of the Month](#)



## April activities and events

This edition of the Essex Library Service newsletter is a highlight of events and activities available throughout April. So come along to one of our libraries, we can't wait to see you!

Check them out below and don't forget to tag us in your photos visiting the library on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#).

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## Get active and save money with the Essex Library of Things



From goal posts and volleyball nets to crazy golf sets and circus show kits, you can now borrow a range of equipment for fun indoor and outdoor activities – entirely free of charge.

Thanks to funding from Find Your Active, lots of new items — including basketball hoops, archery sets and more — have been added to our stock. As with all Essex Library of Things items, you can borrow from Chelmsford, Witham, Great Parndon (Harlow),

Clacton-On-Sea and Laindon Libraries, as well as the mobile library service.

Find out more about the Essex Library of Things and start borrowing today. Visit [loveessex.org/libraryofthings](https://loveessex.org/libraryofthings).

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## **Brentwood and district photographic club exhibition**



Come along to the first post-Covid exhibition by the Brentwood Photographic Club. Running throughout April. See [opening times and more information](#) on our website.

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## **Windrush Exhibition**



On 22 June 1948, 800 Caribbean citizens arrived at Tilbury on board the *Empire Windrush*, pioneering the multi-cultural society and redefining what it means to be British. They were the first of half a million Commonwealth citizens who had settled in this country by 1971.

Celebrate the immense contribution the Windrush generation has made to British life, by visiting the exhibition the Essex Cultural Diversity Project has put together.

You may have seen this exhibition in 2021-22 at several of our libraries. We are excited to continue the tour at Harwich and Saffron Walden.

The exhibition's next port of call is Harwich Library between 21 March and 18 April 2022. See the event [here](#).

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## Queens Platinum Jubilee Poetry Competition



Celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee by entering our Poetry Competition at Coggeshall Library.

Everyone is invited to write a poem on a royal theme for the Jubilee and these will be judged by a local poet.

The Closing date is 21st May 2022. [Read more on our website.](#)

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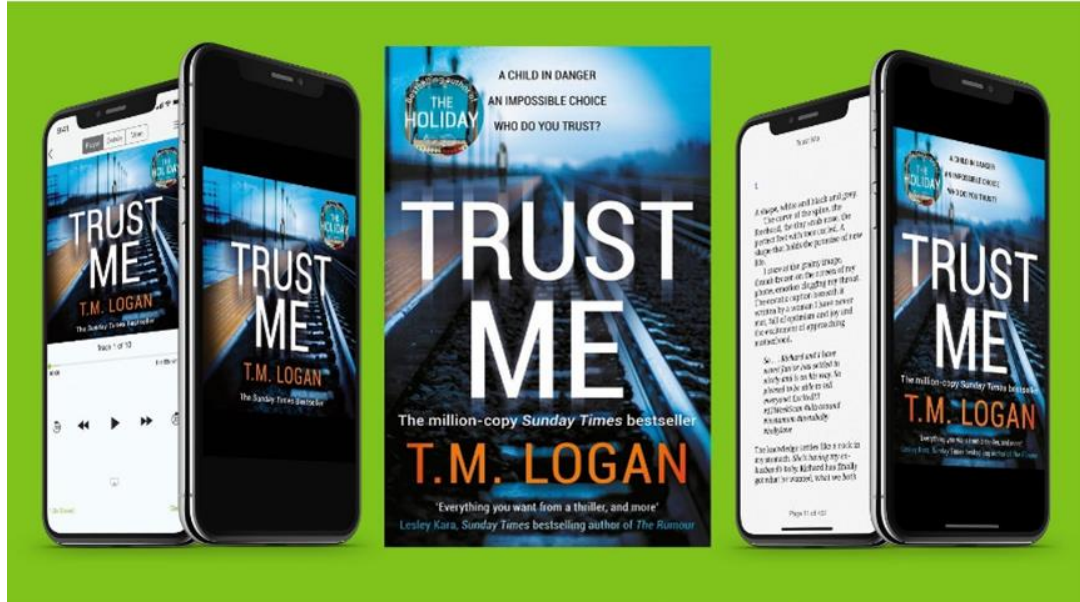
## Colouring for adults at Basildon Library



Come and join in with a new event at Basildon Library, Colouring for Adults. Meet new people, make friends and let your creativity flow!

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## April Book of the Month



What started as a friendly gesture, left Ellen literally holding an abandoned baby. As Ellen is about to raise the alarm, she finds a hastily scrawled message that reads: Please protect Mia, don't trust the police, don't trust anyone. What should she do now? Could being helpful cost her everything?

Trust Me is a gripping and fast paced thriller by T.M. Logan, the Sunday Times bestselling author of the Catch and Richard & Judy pick, The Holiday.

[Download the e-book and e-audio](#) this month with unlimited downloads on BorrowBox. Or [reserve a copy](#) from your local library.

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## Knit and Natter at West Clacton Library



Come along bring your friends and meet like minded people. Swap ideas, share patterns, offer help and advice to new knitters and have a good old natter.

Find our [other Knit and Natter locations](#).

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### **Essex County Council opens applications for new £500,000 Community Challenge fund**

Sometimes it only takes a small amount of money to bring a good idea to life and £500,000 funding is now available via a new Community Challenge Fund, to enable for direct investment in our local communities.

This new fund will be used to help connect local people and give them the power to make a real difference in improving their own neighbourhoods. This forms part of our commitment to reducing inequalities between different areas of our County and levelling up Essex.

With a simple and quick application and decision process, bids will be awarded to small scale projects between the value of £300- £2,000 to fund a new, not for profit scheme, group, initiative or idea.

It may be that local residents have been sitting on an idea for a while for how they can enhance their community and it has just lacked the necessary funding to get it started, in which case the Community Challenge Fund could really help.

Ideas might include setting up a food growing initiative in the local community to create a garden and social space, or perhaps creating an informal childcare club of likeminded parents in the local library. Or money might be needed for training and equipment to share skills; printing for a local event or newsletter; hosting and promoting an online magazine for young people; setting up a local community seed exchange; providing taxi or licenced hire vehicles to bring isolated residents together or maybe setting up a clothes swap in the village hall.

Applications are open now and will operate on a rolling basis, so there is no deadline for applications. The fund is specifically targeted at communities in the identified levelling up areas of Clacton, Harwich, Canvey, Harlow, **Rural Braintree** and parts of Colchester and Basildon.

Applications can be made via [www.essexfuture.org.uk/boards-networks/communities-mission-network/community-challenge-fund-applications](http://www.essexfuture.org.uk/boards-networks/communities-mission-network/community-challenge-fund-applications)

# Transport & Travel Update



Regular Transport and Travel Updates with news regarding public transport in Essex.

## March/April 2022

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This edition includes:

[Service Changes](#)

[New Essex Travel App](#)

[Introducing DigiGo](#)

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Welcome to the Transport & Travel newsletter providing information on forthcoming changes to local bus services in Essex.

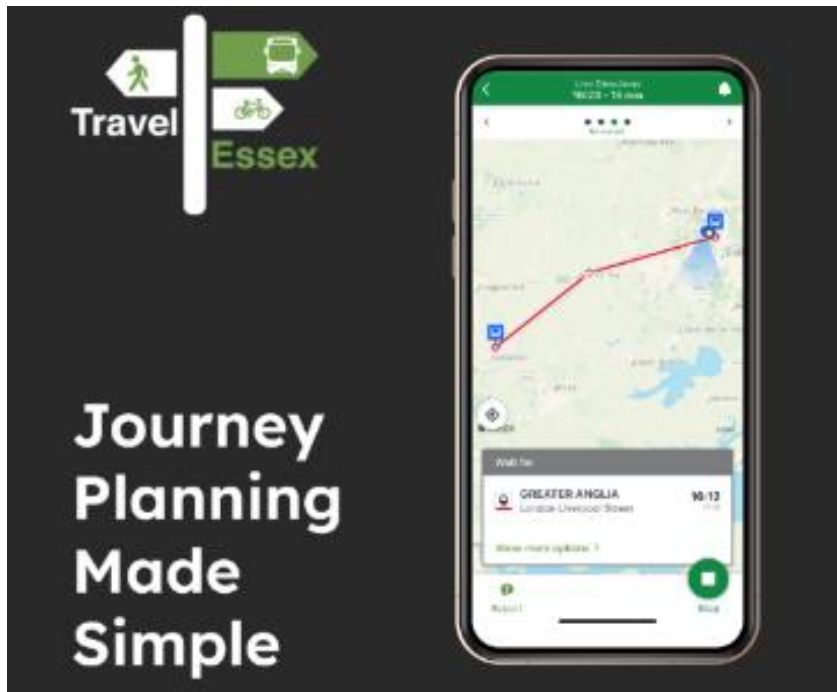
The newsletter is slightly later this month so that we could share with you the introduction of a new sustainable travel app for Essex, as well as an on demand travel service putting you in control of your journey.

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### Service Changes

A summary of each service change that we are aware of can be found in Bus Passenger News.

## New sustainable travel app for Essex launched



A free-to-use sustainable journey planner, the new TravelEssex app helps people in Essex to plan their journeys and travel by foot, bike, bus and train anywhere in the county.

Providing real-time travel information, users are given detailed expected journey and departure times for walking and cycling routes as well as bus services, including First, Arriva, Heddingham, and Stephensons, as well as Greater Anglia and C2C rail, National Rail and London Underground trains.

To download the TravelEssex app, search for it on the [Play](#) or [Apple app](#) store. For more information visit [www.travelessex.co.uk](http://www.travelessex.co.uk)

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## Introducing DigiGo - Travel on demand





[DigiGo](#) is a fully electric shared public transport service which offers on-demand or pre-bookable travel in Central Essex and South Braintree. There is no fixed route or timetable, which puts you in control of your journey. DigiGo is booked through the [TravelEssex](#) journey planning app, simply:

- **Book** - Select your pick-up and drop-off points within our operational areas and pay on the app.
- **Track** - Watch on your smartphone as your designated vehicle makes its way to you in real-time.
- **Ride** - Hop on, and off you go!

A journey can be booked to travel on-demand or up to 7 days in advance. Bookings are made and paid for on the TravelEssex app, where you can also track your vehicle in real time before and during the journey.

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## Transport & Travel Update



Regular Transport and Travel Updates with news regarding public transport in Essex.

# April 2022

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Welcome to the Transport & Travel newsletter providing information on forthcoming changes to local bus services in Essex. This edition includes:

## Service Changes

### Major Changes to the First Essex Bus Network

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## Service Changes

A summary of each service change that we are aware of can be found in Bus Passenger News. These include the First Essex Bus changes below.

[Bus Passenger News](#)

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## Major Changes to First Essex Bus Network

There are substantial network changes to both routes and timetables with effect from Sunday 17 April.

These changes are in response to the change in travel habits. Some buses will run earlier and later in the day, some more/less often and there will be new networks in the Basildon, Chelmsford and Colchester areas.

See further information on the [First Essex Buses website](#).

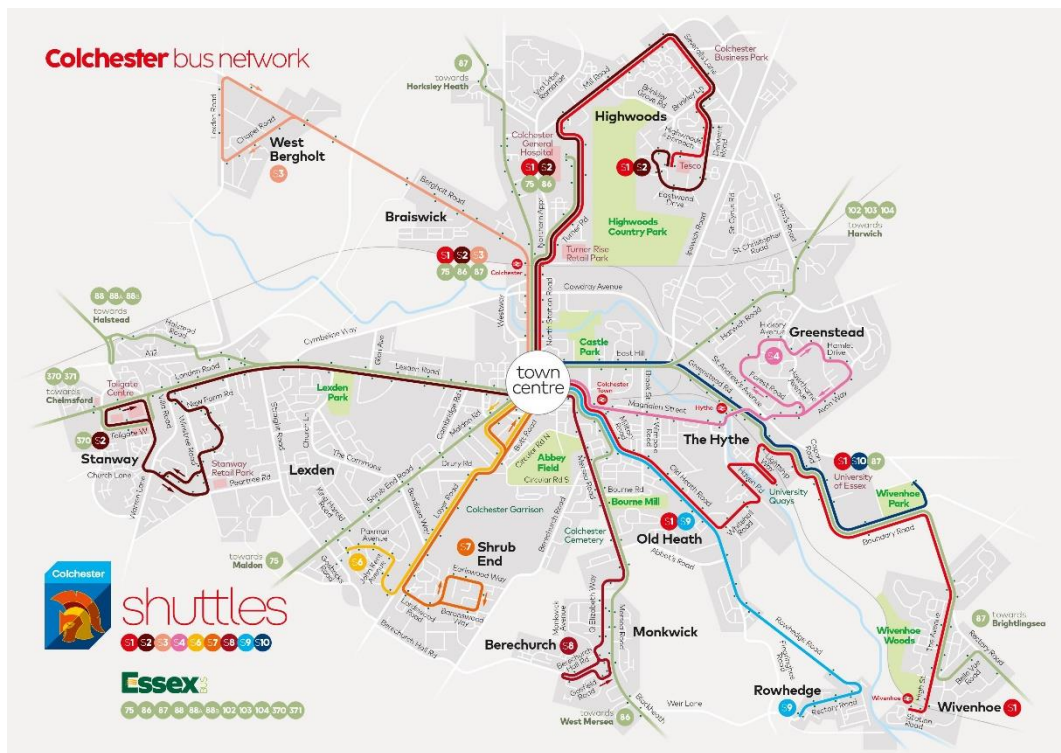
### Basildon changes



The local bus routes in Basildon, connecting the town centre with Pitsea and Laindon, will be replaced by the Basildon Shuttles network to make them more reliable and easier to understand. This network will operate with hybrid vehicles to reduce emissions in the town centre.

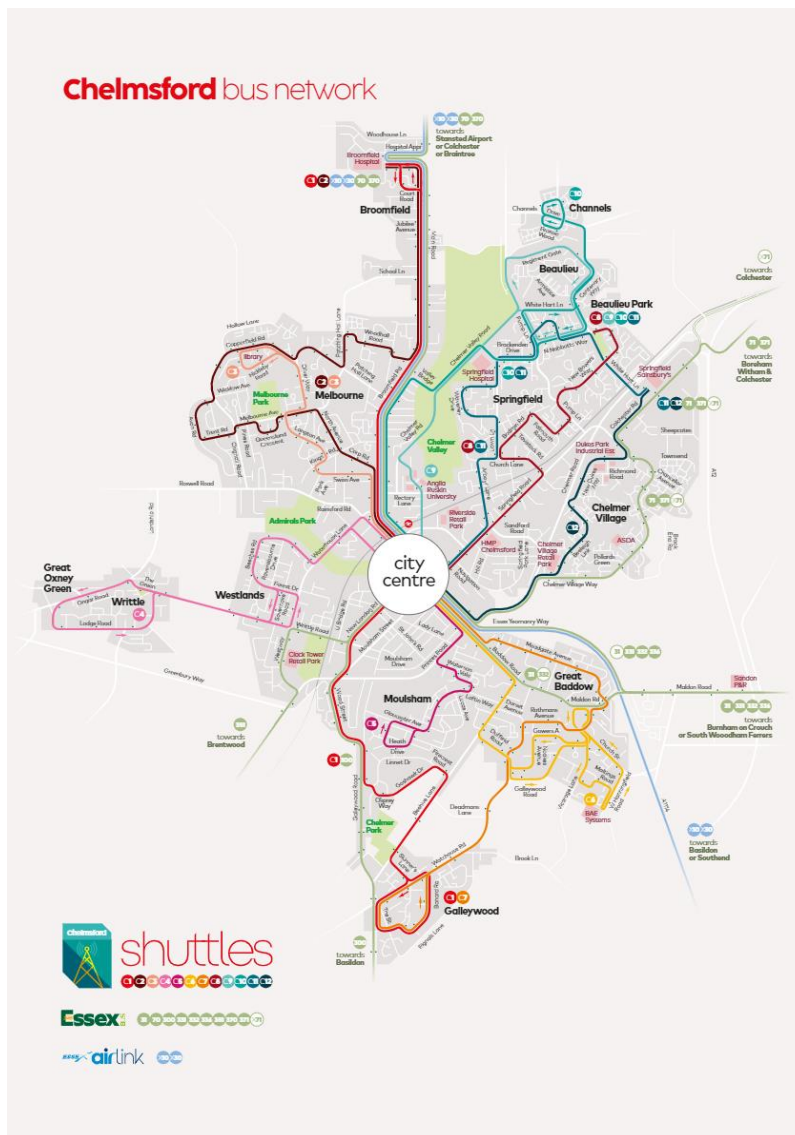
Further information about the changes affecting Basildon can be found [here](#).

**Colchester changes**



Amongst other changes, routes 61, 62, 64, 65, 66 and 67 (and their variants) are to be withdrawn and replaced by the new Colchester shuttles network. Further information about the changes affecting Colchester can be found [here](#).

## Chelmsford changes



As well as other changes, routes 40, 42, 45, 51, 54, 56, 57 (and their variants) are to be withdrawn and replaced by the new Chelmsford shuttle network. Further information about the changes affecting Chelmsford can be found [here](#).

## Timetables

Roadside timetables are in the process of being replaced. For online timetables, please see the links provided above.

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*Essex residents are invited to join notable organisations for the Blueprint Circular Economy roadshow - a free, virtual event series dedicated to waste reduction and reuse.*

An exciting, week-long virtual roadshow exploring the benefits of a circular economy and how people can encourage reuse, repair, remanufacturing and recycling in their work, is due to take place between 9-13 May.

The circular economy is about transitioning from the current 'take, make, dispose' systems to those where there is no waste, and resources can be returned to the natural world to be used again.

It has many benefits, including encouraging efficient resource use, creating new job opportunities, and reducing emissions.

Open to all to attend from the comfort of their own home or office, attendees will hear from inspiring speakers from areas such as policy, fashion, construction and more. This includes those from leading organisations the Chartered Institute of Waste Management (CIWM), Elvis & Kresse, Hubbub, ReLondon and TRAID.

They will share their expertise on how they integrate the circular economy into their work and lead the way in sustainable development. Those attending will also gain a better understanding of the skills needed to succeed in the circular fashion industry, as well as be equipped with knowledge to support this green transition.

Cllr Malcolm Buckley, ECC Cabinet Member for Waste Reduction and Recycling, said: "The Blueprint project is helping us to achieve our climate and waste reduction objectives outlined in Everyone's Essex and level up communities across the county and beyond. This event series will raise awareness of the environmental and economic benefits of moving towards a circular economy. It will encourage collaboration, education and promote change for sustainable businesses, schools and households."

For more information and to register for the free sessions, please visit <https://projectblueprint.eu/roadshow>.

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A new review identifying the green skills opportunities in Essex has been published by Essex County Council (ECC).

[The Essex Green Skills Infrastructure review](#) includes a number of recommendations designed to help ensure Essex residents have the appropriate green skills needed by businesses.

The recommendations focus on improving future green skills infrastructure by raising awareness, aligning strategic leadership, and promoting collaboration and partnerships throughout the county.

It identifies green skills gaps in Essex as well as business needs, reviews the capacity of existing providers, and identifies good practice and opportunities for development.

The 'green economy' is a growing sector and Essex is well positioned to attract new businesses with analysis showing green skills jobs in Essex could increase by 96% by 2030.

Projects such as Lower Thames Crossing, new garden communities, and retrofitting Essex's 640,000 housing and building stock to meet new standards, will all require green skilled jobs.

It is crucial that Essex residents have the opportunity to gain the right skills to take advantage of jobs in this growing sector.

ECC will consider the review's recommendations carefully and publish an action plan in the coming months as part of work to deliver on the County Council's Everyone's Essex strategy, the Essex Skills Plan, and Sector Development Strategy.

Cllr Tony Ball, ECC Cabinet Member for Education Excellence, Lifelong Learning and Employability, said: “I was pleased to announce this green skills infrastructure review as part of our ambition for a greener and more prosperous Essex, and I am now delighted to see the recommendations that have a clear focus on the collaboration required to lead us to a sustainable future.”

You can find out more information about the [Green sector on the Essex Opportunities website](#) or by [watching the Essex Opportunities live show on the green sector and free retrofit training](#)

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Essex Explorer is a quarterly publication which celebrates our Essex Country Parks and green spaces, as well as showcasing some of the best of our county’s heritage and cultural offerings and includes features from local businesses and tourist attractions.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic our Country Parks have become even more of a haven, not just for our human residents but for the plant and animal species who rely on our green spaces as their natural habit. Maintaining and improving the ecology of our Essex Country Parks is important and we do this through a programme of stewardship activities and work in conjunction with bodies such as Natural England through initiatives such as the Countryside Stewardship Scheme. Seven of the eight ECC owned or managed Country Parks hold the Green Flag Award which recognises and rewards well managed parks and green spaces, setting the benchmark standard for the management of recreational outdoor spaces.

Our open green spaces are important to all our residents and one of our key priorities is to ensure that we are welcoming visitors from all areas of our community. This summer Essex Country Parks will play host to a series of workshops and activities run by the Essex Cultural Diversity Project, with the aim of encouraging residents from all backgrounds to visit and enjoy the Essex Country Parks. These events will run from May to July and take place as part of our Summer of Culture. You can find out more about the events, and all the fantastic cultural and heritage events taking place across Essex on the Explore Essex website: [www.explore-essex.com/events](http://www.explore-essex.com/events)

We are also supporting the Year of Reading with Books in the Parks events which will see the mobile libraries visiting the Essex Country Parks. We are continuing with tree planting programmes as part of the Essex Forest Initiative work and supporting Forest Schools and weekly park runs and charity races so there really is something for everyone.

Essex Explorer magazine will be available in 30 of the largest libraries throughout the county as well as the Culture, Heritage and Green Space sites including the Essex Country Parks, Barleylands Farm Park, and County Hall reception from 16<sup>th</sup> May and the digital edition can be downloaded from the website: [www.explore-essex.com/essexexplorer](http://www.explore-essex.com/essexexplorer)

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## Essex Wellbeing Service- Update

I am writing to update you on enhancements to the Essex Wellbeing Service (EWS), following a competitive tender process which aims to align and simplify care and support pathways.

EWS was originally designed during the Covid-19 isolation period for vulnerable people without the support of family, friends or neighbours, and thousands of volunteers were mobilised to support requests around shopping and prescriptions.

This partnership approach with providers, charities and volunteers was so successful we are now scaling the model to encompass the previous Essex Lifestyle Service, following the end of the contract. This

brings together existing providers and services and new specialised partners to widen the service offering to Essex residents.

Residents that have previously used the service and new users will now benefit from improved support. The service now includes befriending services, emotional and mental wellbeing support, debt, housing and employment queries, child and family lifestyle services and carers support, as well as a range of health improvement services including smoking cessation, physical activity, NHS health checks and weight management.

The focus of the service is very much on promoting the wellbeing of people, looking at the wider determinants of health and supporting those in most need. We aim to support individuals by preventing needs from escalating and reducing demand on health and social care services.

Although there are a multitude of partners delivering EWS, there is a single case management system to record cases and manage referrals across the system. The streamlining of the service and system means there is now a single point of access for voluntary, community and specialist support for residents and professionals. This will ensure that all residents receive the same level of service, no matter where they live in the County.

Residents and healthcare professionals can refer into the service by calling 0300 303 9988 or email [provide.essexwellbeing@nhs.net](mailto:provide.essexwellbeing@nhs.net)

In 2020/21 EWS completed over 14,000 jobs, recruited 2,285 volunteers, and supported 35,518 new clients. We expect the number of Essex residents supported and the help EWS can offer to significantly increase with the new changes. We will closely monitor the effectiveness and reach of the service at regular six-monthly review points

Key Highlights of the service include:

1. This is a **highly innovative** service. The true integration of new alliance partners will deliver an improved Essex Wellbeing Service, which will be able to deliver wellbeing outcomes both at scale and sustained over a longer period of time by:
  - **Working as one system**, bringing together a collective of expert partners, using a shared platform for case management, ensuring appropriate referrals to the right support area and supporting the person holistically.
  - **Joining up care pathways**, looking outward to other parts of the health and wellbeing delivery system, streamlining pathways and ensuring wrap-around support for the individual.
1. It is driven by **population and person-centred approaches**, with the aim of supporting people with aspects that can limit their health, increasing engagement with underrepresented populations and improving the service offer. Ways the service will achieve this are:
  - **Being connected to hyper local communities**, via localised support, outreach to communities we typically don't connect with and the use of digital channels. This will help to drive social action and will reach and engage thousands of people, with wellbeing objectives generated, owned and engaged with by local communities.
  - **Being simpler for users**, providing a single point of access and 'one front door'
  - **Bringing together expertise** under this new model, thus enabling EWS to carry out one **holistic assessment**, allowing it to look at the whole person and not just individual health behaviours.



The new arrangements will allow ECC to more **deeply evaluate** new approaches and give us a richer evidence base to consider which elements produce wellbeing at scale, sustained over time, and which we need to modify.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact Public Health

via: [Public.Health@essex.gov.uk](mailto:Public.Health@essex.gov.uk)

Or visit the EWS website for more information: <https://www.essexwellbeingservice.co.uk>