

ECC Report August 2021

Essex businesses invited to online drop-in session to learn about the prestigious Queen's Award for Enterprise

Sent on behalf of the office of the Lord Lieutenant for Essex

Businesses looking to boost sales and morale for staff are invited to learn more about the prestigious Queen's Award for Enterprise.

Let us know if you would like to join us to find out more about how the award can help to promote your business- find out how, as part a special drop-in session being hosted virtually, in mid-August.

The award is open for applications from all Essex businesses now. The Queen's Award for Enterprise is recognised globally, businesses can use the emblem on all marketing materials, and winning has been proven to provide a range of benefits. A distinguished honour, the awards celebrate achievement for business recognising our businesses and their successes.

Since 2017, 19 Essex-based businesses have been recognised as winners of The Queen's Award for Enterprise, having been granted an award for outstanding achievement in one of four categories: International Trade, Innovation, Sustainable Development and Promoting Opportunity (through social mobility), to recognise businesses who promote social mobility.

Anyone from large corporations, SME's, all the way through to small local traders can apply for the Queen's Award for Enterprise, if they meet the following criteria:

- **Be based in the UK (including the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man).**
- **Files Company Tax Returns with HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC).**
- **A self-contained enterprise, that markets its own products or services, and is under its own management.**
- **Have at least two full-time UK employees, or part-time equivalents.**
- **Demonstrate strong corporate social responsibility.**

Hosted by the Lord Lieutenant and Essex County Council, this one off, virtual, drop-in session is available to all businesses that meet the criteria. The session will allow you to meet previous winners and listen to their presentations on business prosperity, post awarding, and to discuss the potential benefits and receive application support.

The time and date of the event is to be confirmed, if you are interested in attending the virtual drop in session, please [register here](#).

Essex Highways surfaces 110 miles of road in 2021

Essex Highways' crews have surfaced over 110 miles of road, the equivalent of a journey across Essex from border to coast and back, in the seven months of 2021 so far. Crews used a variety of different surfacing techniques appropriate to each road section.

Various processes were used, including:

- Fast Coverage Surface Dressing, where machines quickly cover the road with sticky "binder" tar layer and then spread stones on top
- Intensive micro-surfacing which is finished by hand
- Full resurfacing where heavy machines grind off the existing road surface and the crew then lay new asphalt.

Councillor Lee Scott, Cabinet Member for Highways Maintenance and Sustainable Transport, said that these are very positive news for drivers and cyclists in Essex that despite COVID-19 restrictions and tighter budgets, the service has still managed to keep to so much of our road surfacing programme, with positive effects for years to come.

Essex Highways engineers carefully inspect and record the condition of all roads, and plan surfacing with the right technique according to how worn, how busy and how fast the road is.

For example, if Surface Dressing is done at the right time, we can efficiently future proof long stretches of rural roads for years, preventing potholes forming. If we just stuck to fixing potholes, we would have thousands more and the costs would be prohibitive.

In order to complete full resurfacing, this work often takes place at night. Although night works can cause delays and possible disturbance to sleeping residents, it is completely necessary to allow longer working sessions avoiding peak traffic, thereby enabling the work to be completed more quickly with minimal delays for drivers.

Surface dressing is used when a road surface is in reasonably good condition, but needs some quick, overall improvement. The work can last up to ten years.

Essex Highways' surface dressing programme is now coming to an end with 84 miles worth of work on 59 road sections completed, using 1,300 tonnes of tar "binder" and 12,000 tonnes of stone chippings.

Micro-surfacing gives more durable results, but is more intensive and more expensive, putting a thin layer of new surface on the road. It takes longer to cover a given area than Surface Dressing but is used where roads are busier. So far, Essex Highways has carried out over 12 miles worth of micro-surfacing.

Full resurfacing is where the existing surface of a road is removed, and a completely new depth of surface is laid as a replacement. This treatment is used

where the road is badly worn and takes heavy traffic. Crews have completed 14 miles using 30,000 tonnes of asphalt. Essex Highways aims to resurface 31 miles before winter, which will require a total of 65,000 tonnes of material.

Surfacing programmes include Joint Sealing and Fine Milling to restore concrete road surfaces, which is just starting now and recycling these surfaces from September.

For more information about our Road Surfacing programme and to view upcoming works, please visit: <https://www.essexhighways.org/roads-and-pavements/renewing-surfaces>

Latimer appointed development partner for Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community

The development partner, to work alongside Mersea Homes, for the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community (TCBGC) was announced on 22nd July as Latimer.

Latimer is the development arm of Clarion Housing Group, the UK's largest provider of affordable housing, with over 125,000 homes and more than 350,000 residents across the country.

Latimer brings a wealth of experience and expertise to the project, and reinvests any profits made into the building and maintenance of more affordable homes across the country, as well as providing support to residents through Clarion's charitable foundation, Clarion Futures.

Richard Cook, Group Director of Development at Clarion Housing Group, said:
"We're excited to be working with Mersea Homes and the combined authorities to develop this innovative and sustainable garden community, providing thousands of much-needed affordable homes and employment opportunities over the next 30 years.

"Placemaking is at the heart of what we do at Latimer, and this project presents an opportunity for us to set a new standard for the delivery of affordable and private homes, community facilities and employment opportunities whilst improving connectivity in the North Essex area. We want to create a lasting legacy by delivering high-quality sustainable new homes of mixed tenure that meet the varied needs of people for generations to come."

Stuart Cock, Managing Director of Mersea Homes continued *"I'm really pleased today to confirm Latimer as Mersea Homes' development partner for the Garden Community. This is the beginning of an exciting and important journey as we work together with local communities plus Colchester, Tendring and Essex Councils to*

deliver a high-quality place for people to live and thrive in. Mersea Homes has been building homes locally for over 70 years and I have always been a huge advocate of the local area, having lived here all my life. This is a wonderful opportunity.”

The partner authorities for the TCBGC project, Colchester Borough Council; Tendring District Council; and Essex County Council are currently working towards producing the DPD for the TCBGC, which will set out the core policies and preferred layout option for the new community. Following a programme of community and stakeholder engagement over the summer and early autumn, a draft version of the DPD is expected to be consulted on in the early part of 2022.

The members representing the three Councils for the project; Cllr Paul Dundas (Leader of Colchester Borough Council); Cllr Carlo Guglielmi (Deputy Leader of Tendring District Council); and Cllr Tom Cunningham (Deputy to the Cabinet Member for Economic Renewal, Infrastructure and Planning at Essex County Council) released a joint statement saying:

“We are pleased to welcome Latimer to the project, alongside Mersea Homes, and look forward to what will be a productive and meaningful relationship over the coming years. We will work closely to ensure that this community is sustainable, future proof, of the highest quality and achieves the very best for new and existing residents”.

Free school meals and support for families to continue over summer

This summer Essex County Council is continuing the holiday free school meal vouchers scheme it has run successfully since Christmas 2020.

A final £3.6m Covid Local Support Grant from central government is being used to provide free school meals over the summer holidays and extra support for families hit by the pandemic.

Essex County Council (ECC) has allocated £2.6m to continue the holiday free school meal vouchers scheme it has run successfully since Christmas 2020. Vouchers will be sent direct to parents of eligible children and young people by their school, college or early years setting before the holidays start. They are worth £15 a week per child for four weeks and can be used to buy food in most supermarkets.

Parents can find out more at [Free school meals - Essex County Council](#).

The rest of the grant will continue support for families who need extra help until the end of September as follows:

- £200,000 to the Essential Living Fund, which provides emergency grants for food, heating, energy and water bills and essential household goods. See [Money, debt and benefits: Emergency money and food - Essex County Council](#)
- £300,000 for targeted family support and childcare delivered through locally trusted organisations
- £160,283 to expand Essex ActivAte, the successful holiday food and activities programme run by Active Essex in partnership with ECC. This offers free face-to-face clubs for children and young people who are eligible for benefits-based free school meals. The clubs give children and young people the chance to socialise, join in fun and creative activities and enjoy nutritious food. See [Essex Activate | Active Essex](#).
- £185,000 to support homeless people and rough sleepers who need help to get food and essential items such as toiletries.
- £150,000 for grants to local initiatives nominated by Essex County Councillors that provide food or help with household essentials to vulnerable people in the councillor's division (2).

Cllr Louise McKinlay, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Community, Equality, Partnerships and Performance, said that although the pandemic isn't over, the future is looking brighter so we are grateful to the government for this Covid support grant and to the many local groups who are helping us use it to continue to provide vital support to those who need it most.

Through holiday free school meals, the children's food and activity clubs, help for homeless people, emergency grants and targeted support, we want to ensure children and young people can enjoy nutritious food and fun activities, alongside helping families feeling the financial strain to pay their bills and look forward with hope.

Additional information

The Covid Local Support Grant is provided to upper tier authorities by the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions to support children and households who are experiencing, or at risk of experiencing poverty due to Covid-19. On 21 June 2021 the government announced it was extending the grant for a fourth and final time, until 30 September 2021. The £3.6m allocated to Essex is part of a national allocation of £160m.

Essex Education Task Force unveils plan for education renewal

The task force will invest £1million to ensure that every child in Essex leaves school able to read at their age level or better.

The newly formed Essex Education Task Force has announced it will invest £1million in reading over the next 18 months, to support children and young people affected by the loss of learning and missed opportunities during the Covid-19

pandemic.

Marked by the launch of a new campaign, *Essex Year of Reading 2022*, the group's aim is to ensure that every Essex child leaves school able to read at their age level or better.

The investment is part of ambitious plans to address the short- and long-term impact of Covid-19 on children and young people's education.

In addition, the task force plans to invest £500,000 into mental health and emotional wellbeing support. This includes pledging commitments and resources in the following areas:

- Providing transition coaches for vulnerable children moving from primary to secondary school
- Helping vulnerable students over 16 years of age move into further education
- Providing £100,000 of funding to the voluntary sector for summer and half-term holiday outdoor learning for vulnerable students and those with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities
- Investment in the wellbeing of leaders
- Investment in early years' language development.

Roy Blatchford CBE, Independent Chair of the Essex Education Task Force, said: "We know that being able to read confidently is the key to being a successful learner in all other areas of life. We strongly believe this investment will help those who have fallen behind with their reading over the past year and help them to thrive in other aspects of their education. Together, with the additional commitments we have outlined, we will help children and young people prosper after a very disruptive time.

"During the roll out of the Year of Reading, we will be working with many local partners across Essex such as libraries, Adult Community Learning, and local businesses, in addition to schools and colleges. We also recognise the enormous impact that Covid-19 has had on education colleagues. Our plans include additional support and resources to help both their pupils and their own wellbeing."

Cllr Tony Ball, Essex County Council's (ECC) Cabinet Member for Education Excellence, Skills and Training, said that investing £1million to improve and promote reading from early years through to schools and into further education, demonstrates the level of ECC's commitment to children and young people across Essex. It has been an incredibly difficult year for them and this additional support will help them to thrive and support education colleagues to enable them to do so.

The investment plan for the Education Task Force mirrors the three guiding principles of Renewal, Equality and Ambition set out by ECC's Leader, Cllr Kevin Bentley, in May.

ECC is committed to championing equity, inclusion and excellence for all to ensure that no child in Essex is left behind or disadvantaged from the pandemic.

Following the launch of the Essex Education Task Force, a [new website](#) has been

created to keep interested parties informed on the Task Force's priorities and activities, and will be updated in due course.

Libraries in Essex are calling for children to sign up to read six books this summer as part of Wild World Heroes –

The Summer Reading Challenge 2021

Before the summer break Essex Libraries launched on 10th July a challenge to all children, and all they had to do was to sign up at their nearest library, where they will be given a collector folder to keep a record of their Summer Reading Challenge journey. Then, they are asked to read six library books. As they read, they will collect transformation stickers to add to a fold-out map of Wilderville. Their stickers will fix the environmental problem in each area and make Wilderville a better home for everyone. After reading six books they will earn a certificate and medal.

Cllr Louise McKinlay, Essex County Council Cabinet Member for Community, Equality, Partnerships and Performance, said all Essex libraries are valued by us and our residents for many reasons, not only as spaces where community groups can come together but places to encourage and support reading and learning for children and young people.

Investment in many of our libraries across the county is bringing forward new facilities, buildings and initiatives, meaning that younger generations in Essex will be able to enjoy their much loved libraries, for many years to come. It will also see initiatives like the Summer Reading Challenge continue to flourish, helping the county's children and young people embrace and develop a love of reading.

This year our libraries are running the Summer Reading Challenge again. In 2019 almost 32,000 children took part and we hope that with the additional 500 volunteers we have recruited, this year's challenge will be even bigger and better.

Cllr McKinley said that finally, later this year, ECC will be publishing an updated Library Strategy, which will underline the Council's commitment to the service across the county. There are some good opportunities to expand the use of libraries and upgrade the facilities and offer, so that they are placed at the heart of our communities, and I look forward to sharing the plans accordingly.