

ECC Report May 2018

New look Cabinet unveiled at Full Council 15th May 2018 and £5 million extra funding for pothole and highways repairs.

A new-look Cabinet was unveiled at Essex County Council's Full Council on Tuesday 15th May along with almost £5 million extra funding for pothole and highways repairs.

Announcing the reshuffled Cabinet, Council leader David Finch said that as 2020 was fast approaching this Council will no longer receive any central government funding.

£350m of savings had already been delivered in the last four years by driving out inefficiency, innovating, generating income and reducing costs. This year the target is a further £59m of savings, and to achieve this, these changes to the Cabinet will form the base to deliver these.

The new-look Cabinet

Cllr Kevin Bentley will continue in his role as Deputy Leader, but will take on a new and larger Infrastructure portfolio, which now includes highways. Cllr Bentley will continue to lobby for infrastructure investment that can drive economic growth.

Cllr Gagan Mohindra will take on the new portfolio of Economic Development, which includes housing, in his first senior Cabinet role.

Cllr Dick Madden remains responsible for Children and Families.

Cllr John Spence retains Health and Adult Social Care.

Cllr Ray Gooding continues in Education, but will now take on additional responsibility for skills to ensure the county has a workforce equipped for the future.

Cllr Simon Walsh continues in his role as Environment and Waste portfolio holder.

Cllr Louise McKinlay retains finance, but gains additional responsibility for traded and commercial services to help the council increase its income.

Cllr Susan Barker keeps the Customer portfolio, in charge of libraries, but gains responsibility for corporate services.

Cllr Sue Lissimore takes on the new Culture and Communities portfolio.

Cllr Finch also congratulated Cllr John Jowers on his election as Chairman of the Council, along with his deputy Cllr Eddie Johnson, while paying tribute to the achievements of former highways boss, Cllr Ian Grundy, who is leaving the Cabinet, and outgoing Chairman Cllr John Aldridge.

In his speech to the Council Chamber of 75 members, Cllr Finch announced almost £5 million of funding for pothole repairs and highways improvements.

He said: “Thanks to the financial prudence I am pleased to announce additional funding for our highways that have deteriorated more rapidly due to the bad weather earlier this year.

“There will be an extra £2.5m for pothole repairs, £1.2m for local highways panels, £1m for highways works that can be devolved to as local a level as possible, and £200,000 to keep Essex tidy by improving the appearance of highways and verges.”

100 years of the Commonwealth celebrated with a Service at Chelmsford Cathedral

In the presence of the new HM Lord-Lieutenant of Essex, Mrs Jennifer Tolhurst, over 400 people gathered at Chelmsford Cathedral last Sunday, 29 April to celebrate 100 years of the founding of the Commonwealth and its past, present and future.

60 young people, children, and students from across the County, representing Commonwealth countries, processed into the Cathedral, who were led by piper Lt. Colonel Jackie Allan.

Six boys from King Edward 6th Grammar School sounded a fanfare and the band of the Royal Engineers from Chatham together with the Cathedral Choir started the Service with *All people that on Earth Do Dwell*.

Akbar Khan, Secretary-General of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association led the congregation in the Commonwealth Act of Affirmation, which advocates fellowship, justice, peace and mutual respect amongst the 53 member countries.

The sermon was given by The Rt. Revd Trevor Mwamba, Assistant Bishop in the Diocese of Brentwood, and other readings and prayers were read by the Lord-Lieutenant of Essex, Sidra Naeem the Muslim Chaplain at Anglia Ruskin University, Cllr Tunde Ojetola Mayor of Thurrock, and Fr. Hugh Allan O.Praem the Titular Abbot of Beeleigh.

Dancers from Essex Dance Theatre performed during one of the Psalms and a Fijian Choir from the Parachute Regiment sang both during the Service and afterward during the reception, much to everyone's delight. The Service was the idea of the Lord-Lieutenant who together with the Dean and Chapter of Chelmsford Cathedral and the help of Cllr. John Aldridge the Chairman of Essex County Council, Cllr Duncan Lumley the Mayor of Chelmsford and a very able team, put together a Service open to everyone. The bright colours of the congregation's national dress, the music and dance, brightened a dull day at what was a very inclusive and uplifting event.

Lovable bear helps to raise awareness of the importance of fostering

With Foster Care Fortnight fast approaching, Essex County Council is asking local people to help them to name their Bear in Care and highlight the need for more foster carers across the county.

The Bear in Care has been the mascot for the council's Fostering Recruitment Team since May 2017 and is part of a wider campaign for Foster Care Fortnight, which this year is from Monday 14 May to Sunday 27 May.

The campaign has seen the bear attending the popular Essex Park-runs to raise the profile of fostering.

Foster carers across the county have also joined in by actively posting stories on social media of how their own teddy bears have adapted to life with their foster family.

Councillor Dick Madden, Essex County Council's Cabinet member for Children and Families, said that around 100 new foster families needed across the county, and

that he was delighted to once again join in the Fostering Network's annual national campaign to raise awareness.

Anyone considering becoming a Foster carer, Essex County Council should be the first port of call. It will provide local training and support to become part of the amazing fostering community in Essex, together with a competitive financial package.

There are no special qualifications required for being a foster carer; as we are looking for people who are supportive and caring and willing to go the extra mile to provide a secure home environment for a child.

He added: "We also have the largest number of children in Essex which enables us to make the best possible match for our foster carers and their families. I would urge anyone who is interested to come along to one of our information events and speak to one of our existing foster carers and our fostering team to find out more."

To put forward a suggestion for the bear's name, entrants should email their ideas to bearincare@essex.gov.uk or submit their idea on social media by liking @essexadoptandfoster on Facebook and essex_CC on Twitter #namethebearincare.

A video about the Name in Bear campaign is also available on the council's YouTube channel which you can view by visiting www.youtube.com/EssexCountyCouncil/

If you are interested in becoming a foster carer you can find out more by calling the Fostering team on 0800 801 530 or enquire via our website.

More information about fostering with Essex County Council and the dates for upcoming fostering information events are also available on the Essex County Council website at www.essexadoptionandfostering.co.uk/fostering.

To find out more about Foster Care Fortnight, visit the Fostering Network Website at <https://www.thefosteringnetwork.org.uk/>.

- Foster Care Fortnight is the UK's biggest foster care awareness raising campaign, delivered by The Fostering Network. The campaign showcases the commitment, passion and dedication of foster carers. It also supports fostering services to highlight the need for more foster carers.
- Over 7,000 new foster families are needed in the next 12 months in the UK to care for a range of children.
- A high proportion of children who come into care in Essex are aged ten and over so there is also a particular need for foster carers who can provide homes for older children, as well as those who can accommodate sibling groups and children with disabilities.

It's time to register for ACL accredited courses

ACL (Adult Courses Learning) Essex has just released its programme of accredited courses that will start from September 2018.

Accredited courses are those that lead to a recognised qualification and include subjects such as GSCE Maths, English and Biology, Access to Higher Education, IT and Accountancy but also more hands on courses such as Beauty Therapy, Hairdressing, Sports Massage and First Aid. ACL's other range of non-accredited courses will go live from the end of May.

Course fees are applicable but there are a range of funding options and financial support available depending on course criteria and individual circumstance. Essex County Councillor Ray Gooding, Cabinet Member for Education said: "An ACL accredited course is a great way to improve job prospects and future career choices. Recently rated Good by Ofsted ACL Essex really does offer opportunities to learn and excel in a creative, supportive environment."

ACL Essex runs courses across the county; to find out more, see what courses are available or find out about financial support when studying visit www.aclessex.com or phone 0345 603 7635 or email lifelong.learning@essex.gov.uk