

County Councillor's Report October 2020

Public Health chief issues warning over increased coronavirus cases in Epping Forest and Brentwood

The Director of Public Health for Essex, Dr Mike Gogarty, is today expressing concern over a rise in cases of coronavirus in both Epping Forest and Brentwood.

Over the past two weeks confirmed cases of coronavirus in Epping Forest and Brentwood have risen to the highest in Essex.

Brentwood now has a rate of 40 cases per 100,000 and Epping Forest 36.

We are also seeing the percentage of individual tests that come back positive increase in these areas to around 4%.

Dr Mike Gogarty said: "I am very concerned about Epping Forest and Brentwood.

"Cases are continuing to rise across the county, but these two areas in particular now have the highest rate of cases per 100,000 in Essex.

"We can't attribute these cases to a particular event, area or outbreak which makes me even more concerned. Cases appear to be random across both districts which makes it much more difficult to contain and prevent further spread.

"Even though on the surface some may not think that these numbers are high enough to warrant concern, however, the figures have to be seen in relation the rate of infection too. If every one of the cases infects a further 1 or 2 people, then this will very quickly escalate.

"To prevent spread and the need for further measures it is important people in these areas take particular action to prevent spread. It is particularly vital that where possible people who can work from home do so and advise their employers why this is so important.

"Where people need to commute especially using public transport it is asked please that you download and use the Covid App. This will allow your identification if you are in contact with a case so you can avoid contact with others who may be at high risk.

"Please wear masks where you can, wash hands regularly and especially keep 2 metres apart from others. If you have symptoms you must self-isolate and book a test as soon as possible.

"We are now working with the NHS to facilitate extra testing resource in these areas."

Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care, Cllr John Spence said: "We knew that coronavirus cases would rise across the county. However, even with this happening, our cases are at or below the national average and that is where we want to remain.

"Better still, let's buck the trend and start pushing the numbers down. That will only happen if everyone one of us stick to the core messages- keep your distance, if you can't, then wear a face mask. Keep washing those hands and self-isolate when asked or if you have symptoms."

Quicker and easier Blue Badge renewal process launched

Essex County Council (ECC) has launched a new, quicker process for residents to renew Blue Badges that are due to expire.

The new online system will take residents less than 15 minutes to complete, compared to nearer 60 minutes previously.

Applicants can use the online renewal process if their previous badge was awarded based on one of the automatic eligibility entitlements which still applies, or if when it was awarded it was decided no further assessment would be required.

The online system, which can be found at www.essex.gov.uk/renew-a-blue-badge will advise applicants if it can be used to renew their badge, or if a full application will be required.

Cabinet Member for Customer, Communities, Culture and Corporate, Cllr Susan Barker said: “We are always looking to make interactions with the Council easier for our residents, this is another way which will help.

“The new online process is much quicker than before and will make renewing a Blue Badge a much smoother experience.”

Registration Opens for New Essex Residents' Panel



Essex residents, aged 18 and over, are invited to join a new residents' panel to share their views and opinions on a variety of local issues.

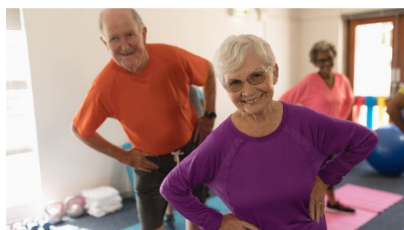
The panel, which will be run by Essex County Council, will ask residents about a wide range of issues which could include surveys on education, travel, the environment, mental and physical health, local services and amenities and more...

Councillor Dick Madden, Cabinet Member for Performance, Business Planning and Partnerships said: “This is a unique opportunity to tell us your views about the services and issues that matter most to you. We will listen to the feedback and use it to help us improve services in the future. The only criteria for joining are that you are an Essex resident and aged 18 or above so I would strongly encourage as many residents as possible to get involved.”

Panel members are unpaid but there may be prize draws as an incentive and thank you for taking part. Most of the panel's research will be conducted online and there will be a maximum of one survey per month to complete. Panel members will not be obliged to take part in any of the surveys although they will be encouraged to complete as many as possible.

[Join our Residents' Panel](#)

Better Health Greater Essex campaign launches



Let's do this! Let's get Essex fighting fit for winter!

A new campaign has launched aiming to support Essex residents to get moving and get healthy, to prevent serious illness from a second wave of coronavirus.

The [Better Health Greater Essex campaign](#), run by Active Essex and Essex County Council (ECC), offers a wealth of ideas and resources to inspire people to kick start and maintain a healthier lifestyle.

It builds on the national Better Health campaign by providing local and targeted help to those most at risk from coronavirus and other health conditions in Essex, Southend and Thurrock.

The launch coincides with the inaugural Great British Week of Sport which runs from 19 to 27 September and Healthy Eating Week (28 September to 4 October).

Better Health Greater Essex offers:

- simple activities to do outside
- over 200 Keep Essex Active workout and gentle exercise videos to follow
- ideas on how to get active from the comfort of your own home
- tips on taking care of your wellbeing
- [weight management support with ACE](#) (Essex) [Everyone Health](#) (Southend) and [Thurrock Healthy Lifestyle Service](#)

Coronavirus has been a wake-up call for us all. People who are at greater risk of being admitted to hospital if they contract Coronavirus include:

- those who are inactive and overweight
- older people
- Black, Asian or from an ethnic minority
- those who live in more disadvantaged areas
- those who are clinically extremely vulnerable or with long term health conditions

In Essex, 63% of adults are overweight or obese, just above the national average of 62%.

Evidence shows that keeping moving builds your resilience against COVID-19, other winter illnesses and diseases like diabetes, heart disease and cancer.

And many people are keen to get active; Sport England says 70% of adults used activity to manage their physical health during lockdown. A national social study found 35% would like to exercise more once the pandemic is over.

Cllr John Spence, ECC's Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care said: "With coronavirus cases on the rise and winter on its way it is now more important than ever that we all stay as healthy as we can. The campaign will help Essex residents understand the opportunities to get moving and

ways to eat healthier. Small lifestyle changes, such as watching what you eat and moving more can make a big difference.”

Dr William Bird, national physical activity expert said: “Now is the time for inactive people to start moving to prevent serious illness from a second wave of Covid-19. The huge benefits that come from an active lifestyle are proven and evidence across the world is indisputable. Physical activity is for everyone, it can be fun and inexpensive. We want to help prepare people for winter and kick start Essex’s healthier and more active lifestyle.”

Mrs Taylor attends online classes in Epping Forest. She said: “I wasn’t interested in doing exercise for quite a while but doing it at home means I can move at my own pace and it feels personalised to me. I have improved each week and am now doing things I couldn’t do at the start of the sessions. I’m also motivated to keep doing it, which is a first for me!”

Play the Essex Lottery to support good causes recovering from lockdown



Play the Essex Lottery to support good causes across Essex facing financial hardship following the lockdown AND have a chance to win a weekly £25,000 jackpot.

The Essex Lottery is an online lottery created by Essex County Council to support local causes across the county.

Since the Essex Lottery launched in 2017 over £215,000 has been donated to good causes in the county. This is thanks to the thousands of players who buy a weekly £1 ticket – with 60p of every ticket they purchase going to good causes.

Many of the good causes supported by the Essex Lottery have done great work supporting communities during the lockdown, but at the same time are now struggling due to events being closed down by social distancing protocols.

Currently more than 260 charities and good causes are signed up to benefit from The Essex Lottery – supporting a diversity of causes across Essex from animal welfare, education and arts groups to organisations supporting children, disadvantaged groups and the elderly. Local good causes include community groups, sports clubs, brownies or scout’s and school PTAs. Players are able to select the good causes they wish to support.

Now is the time to support these charities and good causes by buying tickets for the Essex Lottery. One such charity supported by the Essex Lottery is Essex Retired Police Dogs Fund.

Linda Belgrove, founder of Essex Retired Police Dogs Fund, said: “Regular funding streams are so important to us. The monies we receive from The Essex Lottery go directly towards vet and welfare costs of retired police dogs.

“Last year we paid out over £8,000. This year an emergency op for stomach blockage was £2,400; then there are the regular payments for debilitating arthritis. We are so grateful to be part of The Essex Lottery and how it helps our retired police dogs.”

Causes which can be supported by playing the Essex Lottery include The East Anglian Railway Museum, South Essex Wildlife Hospital and Colchester Foodbank.

Prize draws take place every Saturday night when a 6-digit winning combination is picked. Prizes will be given to players with tickets that match the first or last 2-6 numbers from the winning combination. Match all 6 and you win the JACKPOT, won for the first time in January 2019.

Every week there are prizes to be won of free tickets and cash prizes of £25, £250, £2,000 and £25,000 - to players whose numbers match the winning number combination.

To find out more visit: essexlottery.co.uk or call the Essex Lottery support team on 0300 302 32 32

A total of 20p from each £1 ticket goes to the prize, with 60p going towards funding good causes (nominated causes receive 50p from each £1 ticket brought via their page on the lottery with a further 10p funding local good causes and initiatives via the Central Fund). The remaining 20p is used to administrate the lottery

Secondary School Admissions Round Open



As schools across Essex start their autumn term, parents of Year 6 pupils are being reminded that it will soon be time to apply for their child's September 2021 secondary school place.

Parents and carers can now apply online for their child's Year 7 secondary school place. Applications must be made by the national closing date of 31 October 2020.

Applications can be made at www.essex.gov.uk/admissions with the website also holding information on different schools and their admissions criteria.

Cllr Ray Gooding, Essex County Council Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, said: “I strongly urge all parents of year 7 students to correctly complete their child's secondary school place application by the national closing date of 31st October 2020.

“This has been an unprecedented year, presenting challenges to education which have been admirably met with courage, hard work and resilience.

“Despite these challenges we remain committed to maintaining our excellent record of securing first choice places for year 7 pupils in Essex.

“Last year, Essex County Council investment in school places meant that 85.45 per cent of Essex pupils were offered their first preference of school.

“For such a large county that is an impressive level, we’ve held it at that level for several years now and we want to provide a similar excellent service next year.

“But we can only do this if parents complete their child’s Year 7 secondary school place application correctly, by the national closing date of 31st October 2020. Please help us and get those applications in.”

The 31st October deadline for applications is a national deadline and applications made after this are considered once all on-time applications have been determined. Applying late could reduce the chance of a child being offered a place at their preferred school.

Parents are advised to carefully consider each school’s admissions criteria, consider how their child will get to and from school, and use all six preferences on their application.

Further High Court Ruling on Essex Waste Facility

A further judgment has today been handed down in the High Court by Mr Justice Pepperall in relation to the Tovi Eco Park waste disposal facility in Basildon.

The initial judgment was handed down in the High Court on 18 June 2020, when the judge first ruled overwhelmingly in favour of Essex County Council.

He concluded that the ongoing performance issues with the facility are because of UBB’s ‘fundamental design error’.

Following the initial judgment, the remaining matters still to be considered included the basis on which the Council could recover its legal costs from UBB, as the losing party, and the rate of interest to be awarded on the costs and damages owed to the Authority.

UBB also requested permission to appeal certain points of the judgment.

These matters were considered during a court hearing on 13 and 14 July 2020 when the judge reserved judgment to a later date. He today issued his decision, finding in favour of Essex County Council and refusing UBB’s request for permission to appeal.

Cllr Simon Walsh, Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change Action said: “We are delighted that once again the judge has made orders favourable to Essex County Council in this case.

“The judge ordered that UBB should pay the highest possible level of the Council’s recoverable costs and interest on the costs and damages it owes the Authority.

“This is an excellent outcome for the Council and the taxpayers of Essex and further justifies our decision to commence legal proceedings.

“We would like to reassure residents that they will see no difference in how their bins are collected as a result of this latest judgment.”

The operator of the facility stopped accepting deliveries of waste to the facility on 29 June 2020 – no further waste has been delivered to the facility since then.

Essex County Council’s contract with UBB remains in place and the facility continues to process the remaining waste already within it.