

# ECC Report November 2025

## Harwich Library reopens after £1.16m refurbishment



Harwich Library has reopened after a £1.16 million refurbishment.

The library's reopening was marked with a special event on Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> October with a ribbon cutting ceremony, guided tours of the new space, and more information on the new services on offer.

The project has provided a new space for Adult Community Learning (ACL) and community events to be held at the library. It has created:

- 182 sqm of new floorspace
- two new rooms
- an updated, modern design
- a mezzanine floor

Improvements mean the library can continue to support residents and businesses, with further special events, including author visits, will take place this autumn.

In 2023, Tendring District Council's previous administration and Essex County Council successfully applied for £6.7 million to the government-funded Capital Regeneration Project. A total of £9 million will be spent on the Dovercourt Town Centre revamp, with the rest of the money being provided by the two authorities.

A number of additional projects are being planned in the area, including a new car park at Milton Road and new council homes in Victoria Street. Work on the [new car park](#) has started.

Find out more about the refurbished [Harwich Library](#).

## **Train for free and land a job interview with Skills Bootcamps**



Residents aged 19 and over can now apply for free [Skills Bootcamps](#) in Essex.

These courses offer flexible training and guaranteed job interviews upon completion.

Whether you're looking to change careers, return to work or progress in your current role, Skills Bootcamps provide a fast, accessible way to gain in-demand skills.

Delivered by more than 15 colleges and independent training providers, the programme is backed by £4.1 million from the Department for Education.

Skills Bootcamps are part of our Essex Year of Opportunity. This is a £1.33 million campaign helping residents of all ages access essential skills and remove barriers to employment.

Adding to existing Skills Bootcamps in sectors like childcare and construction, new subjects include:

- AI for screen production
- software development
- device repair
- data analysis
- manufacturing
- protective security

Employers can also enrol existing staff into Skills Bootcamps. Training is heavily subsidised, with small and medium-sized businesses contributing just 10% of the cost and larger employers 30%.

Courses are designed to fit around different lifestyles, with online and face-to-face options available. They typically last up to 16 weeks.

Councillor Tony Ball, Cabinet Member for Education Excellence, Lifelong Learning and Employability at Essex County Council, said:

“With more subjects than ever before, Skills Bootcamps are now even more accessible to residents across Essex, whether you’re looking to change careers, return to work or grow your business, there’s never been a better time to get involved.

“The discounts available to businesses enrolling their staff make it a cost-effective way to upskill quickly, with courses lasting up to 16 weeks.

“Bridging the skills gap will not only enrich the lives of individuals but it will also help create a thriving economy where businesses can feel confident about hiring skilled workers. I look forward to seeing more projects and partnerships from the Essex Year of Opportunity over the coming months.”

**What to do next**

[View the full list of Skills Bootcamps](#) and contact the course provider to enrol.

Employers can contact providers directly or email [bootcamps@essex.gov.uk](mailto:bootcamps@essex.gov.uk) for more information.

## **Beaulieu Park Station opens its doors to passengers**



Beaulieu Park Station has officially opened ahead of schedule.

Passengers can travel from north Chelmsford to London Liverpool Street in 40 minutes and Colchester in 25 minutes.

The new train station was officially opened by the Rt. Hon. Sir James Cleverly MP for Braintree and Lord Peter Hendy CBE, the Minister for Rail.

They unveiled a plaque commemorating the station opening in the 200th year of rail in the UK. They then toured the station with:

- Cllr Louise McKinlay, Deputy Leader Essex County Council
- Cllr Stephen Robinson, Leader Chelmsford City Council
- Martin Beable, Greater Anglia
- Katie Frost, Network Rail
- Martin Leach, Countryside (part of Vistry Group) and L&Q

- Cllr Ray Gooding, Chairman Essex County Council
- Cllr Carlo Guglielmi, Vice Chairman Essex County Council

Councillor Louise McKinlay, Deputy Leader at Essex County Council, said: “It is fantastic to see Beaulieu Park Station open. This key piece of infrastructure will improve journey times and connectivity around the county and into the capital. It is a great example of how planning should be done - new developments built with the infrastructure that works for residents, visitors and businesses.

“We are being bold and ambitious to future-proof the county and put investment where it's most needed. I want to thank everyone involved for their hard work in helping delivering Beaulieu Park Station ahead of schedule.”

Ran by Greater Anglia, Beaulieu Park Station is the first new station on the Great Eastern Main Line for over 100 years. It features:

- three platforms
- central loop line for passing trains
- over 700 parking spaces
- over 500 cycle spaces with covered and secure storage options
- bus interchange
- step-free access
- ticket vending machines
- gate line
- taxi rank
- drop-off areas
- accessible toilets
- baby change facilities
- space for retail/catering

There are [many ways to reach the new station](#). This includes extended bus routes and improved walking and cycling paths.

The landmark infrastructure project began after £175 million of funding was secured by:

- Homes England
- Essex County Council
- Chelmsford City Council
- South East Local Enterprise Partnership
- Countryside (part of Vistry Group) and L&Q

The station was expected to open in 2026. Progress by Network Rail and its contractor Murphy means it has opened early.

Beaulieu Park Station will transform travel in the north of Chelmsford. It will ease pressure on the city's existing train station and reduce car journeys into the city centre and it will form the first phase of the new Chelmsford Garden Community.

The garden community will comprise over 10,000 new homes. 4,350 already have planning permission, including almost 2,000 which have been built. A further 6,250 homes will be delivered over the coming years pending planning approval.

Beaulieu Park Station will provide easier and quicker access to jobs. This will help the economic development of the area and encourage further investment.

Housing growth will be further supported by much-needed infrastructure. This includes shops, community services, health services, schools and transport links.

Find out more about [Beaulieu Park Station](#) and the [Chelmsford Garden Community](#).

## **Improvements to key Colchester junction**



Improvements are being made to a key walking and cycling route in Colchester.

Works at the Albert Roundabout Junction started on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> October and are expected to take up to 4 months; operational hours will take place between 7.30 pm and 05.00 am, with the noisiest works finishing by 11pm.. They form part of a series of walking and cycling improvements being made across the city.

The location is a key junction, connecting Colchester Station, Colchester Hospital and the city centre.

Works will include:

- widening of existing shared-use walking and cycling paths
- creation of a new widened, single toucan crossing point
- refreshed road markings

The changes are funded by Active Travel England. They were consulted on in 2021 as part of a wider Active Travel Fund consultation.

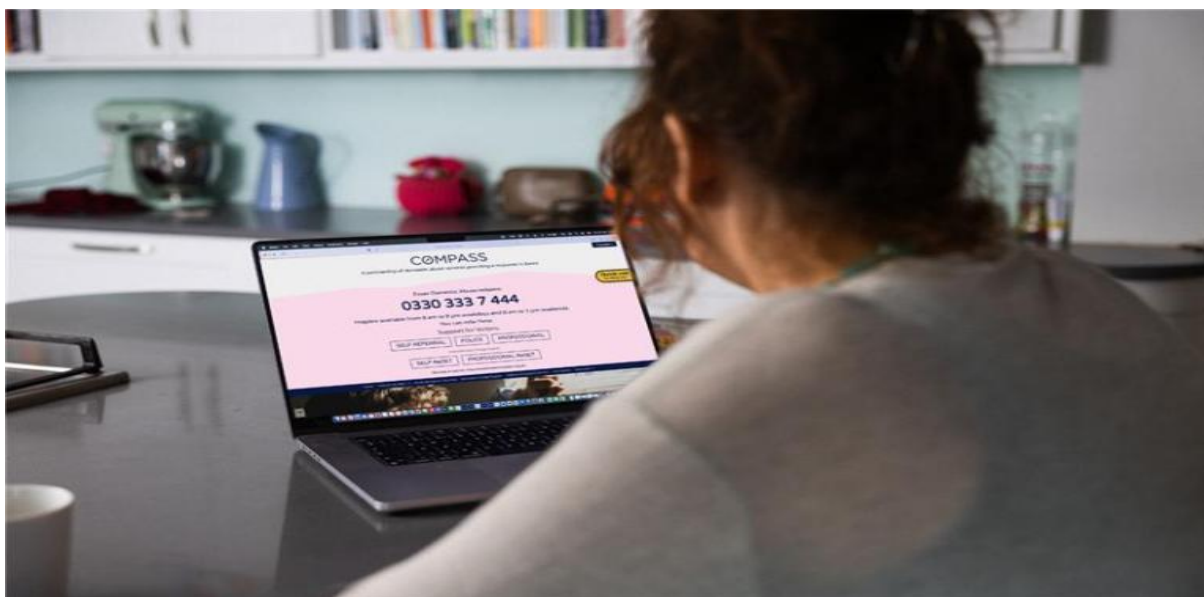
Councillor Tom Cunningham, Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Sustainable Transport said: “I am excited to see these key improvements at the Albert Roundabout are set to get underway.

“There is a strong cycling ethos in the city, and we have seen, working alongside Colchester City Council as Team Colchester, where there has been investment into making safer, accessible cycling infrastructure that ties into other routes, such as on Head Street, there is a significant increase in use.

“Ultimately, as a growing, thriving city, where many thousands of journeys being made are very short, what we want to see is greater choice that helps make travel safer, greener and healthier for residents.”

[Find out more about the project](#) and keep up to date with the latest on the works.

## **Spotting the signs of domestic abuse in older people**



We have launched a campaign to raise awareness of domestic abuse in older people. The campaign aims to help friends, families, carers and professionals spot the signs of domestic abuse, particularly in people over 70.

Domestic abuse doesn't always look the way we expect, and it can be physical, emotional, psychological, sexual, or financial. It is not always loud or violent, but it can be. It is not always just between younger people and it's not always easy to spot.

The Essex 2024 Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment shows that despite older people experiencing domestic abuse, only 560 out of 7,249 sought advice and support during over 2024/25

That means thousands could be suffering in silence.

Older people can face the same barriers to seeking help as anyone else, but they may also face additional challenges like reduced mobility, emotional dependency, or limited social support. This can make it even harder to speak up or get support.

Our campaign has been developed in partnership with the Southend, Essex and Thurrock Domestic Abuse Board (SETDAB).

It aims to help people recognise the signs of domestic abuse, trust their instincts, and start gentle conversations that could lead to life-changing support. Like the support Patricia, a domestic Abuse survivor received that helped her start a new life after decades of abuse. [Read Patricia's story.](#)

While every case is different, some signs could be:

- a loved one becoming withdrawn or missing social events
- someone being told what to wear, where to go, or who they can see
- a partner who seems overly possessive or controlling
- criticism or belittling that chips away at self-esteem
- confusion, anxiety, or a sense that they're "walking on eggshells."
- financial control, restricted access to medicine or healthcare
- unexplained bruises or injuries
- signs of sexual coercion.

If you have noticed something isn't right and would like advice or support, contact COMPASS on 0330 333 7 444 or visit their website. [www.essexcompass.org.uk](http://www.essexcompass.org.uk)

### **Domestic Abuse survivor shares her experience of starting a new life at 72**



Names and some details have been amended to protect identities.

Following on from the story above, we hope that this new campaign will raise awareness among professionals, families, and communities on the signs of abuse among older people. It aims to empower them to trust their instincts, start gentle conversations, and connect older people to support.

As part of the campaign a group of survivors have shared their experiences to reach victims and those close to them in the hope of raising awareness of the signs of domestic abuse and where support is available.

Even though Essex has more older residents than ever, data shows that very few of them have sought support for domestic abuse.

However, the first case study highlights the transformative journey of Patricia, a 72-year-old woman who escaped decades of abuse with the help of local services.

Patricia's story is a powerful testament to the importance of recognising domestic abuse in later life and ensuring older survivors are heard, supported, and protected.

For over four decades, Patricia lived in silence. Behind closed doors, she endured emotional, financial, and physical abuse from her husband.

Despite being the main breadwinner and homeowner, Patricia had no autonomy, no financial control, and no voice. Her life was confined to cooking, cleaning, and caregiving.

She was banned from driving, rarely left the house, and was completely isolated.

The only time she was allowed to leave the house on rare occasions was to attend the GP.

Patricia felt as though no one believed her and felt silenced in her own home.

It wasn't until a referral from Chelmsford CVS to Next Chapter, a specialist domestic abuse charity, that her story began to change.

Patricia was supported by a Community Domestic Abuse Practitioner (DAP) through Next Chapter.

Patricia said: “I told her I just wanted to get out of the house, maybe find a local club or cooking class, anything to feel like a human being again. But as I opened up more, it became clear there was a much bigger need. I wasn’t coping. I was tired, in constant pain in my legs, and mentally drained.

“I had already decided I wanted a divorce. I was trying to get legal advice and had even instructed a solicitor, but the process was overwhelming. I told the practitioner about a time I had fled to a refuge, years ago, when things got really bad, like the time my husband came at me with a shovel and the police were called. He was arrested, but I went back because I didn’t know what else to do. I had no one.

“The practitioner asked if I would like to be referred to Adult Social Care for safeguarding. I said yes immediately. I needed help, and for the first time, someone was really listening.”

Talking of the support she received, Patricia said: “Next Chapter didn’t just help me access social groups, they recognised the depth of my situation. They listened, believed me, and acted. I went from being invisible in my own home to having a team behind me.

“I’m working on building a life for myself, away from fear. The support I have received has been life changing.”

The campaign will run for three months across traditional media, digital platforms, and community outreach channels, with tailored messaging for older people, their families, community organisations and professionals such as GPs, care workers, and volunteers.

[Find out more about the campaign and the support available for victims of domestic abuse.](#)

## **Council to be reimbursed for RAAC work**



We have confirmed we will sign a funding agreement with the Department for Education (DfE). This is for us to recover £6.5 million spent supporting schools affected by Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC).

In August 2023, changes to DfE policy required urgent action at school buildings containing RAAC. Essex was one of the counties disproportionately affected, with a total of 62 schools impacted.

We took financial responsibility for funding mitigation works across all schools. This helped works get underway immediately and minimised disruption. Works included building works, securing temporary accommodation and providing transport to other sites.

We have spent around £6 million on this work. Our total spend is expected to reach £6.5 million by the end of the financial year. Working with the DfE, we have prepared funding agreements which will see these costs reimbursed.

Councillor Tony Ball, Cabinet Member for Education Excellence, Lifelong Learning and Employability, said: "I'm pleased the current government has confirmed the funding arrangement we initially set out with their predecessors.

“Essex County Council acted swiftly and decisively to support schools affected by RAAC, ensuring children could return to safe, face-to-face learning environments as quickly as possible.

“Throughout this process, our priority has remained the safety and education of every child in Essex. Thanks to sound financial planning, we were able to provide the necessary support to schools across the county.

“I want to thank our teams, headteachers, and school staff for their dedication. Their efforts have made a real difference.”

Find out more about the [decision](#).

## Cllr Carlo Guglielmi

Cllr Giancarlo Guglielmi  
ECC Member for Tendring Rural West  
Chairman of the D&R Committee  
Vice Chairman of Essex County Council  
Vice Chairman of the People and Family Committee

TDC Ward Member for Lawford, Manningtree, and Mistley  
Chairman of the Planning Policy and Local Plan Committee  
Vice Chairman of Tendring/Colchester Border Garden Community