

# ECC Report February 2021

## **New fast Covid-19 testing centre opens in Tendring**

As of Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> January 2021, a new fast testing centre opened in Tendring for those who DO NOT have symptoms of Covid-19.

The new Tendring Testing Centre is situated at Long Meadows Community Centre, Long Meadows, Harwich CO12 4US.

This additional site now makes a total of 13 fast Covid-19 testing centres are now fully operational across the county, offering individuals without Covid-19 symptoms easy access to a fast Lateral Flow Test (LFT – otherwise known as a rapid test) to check if they have the virus.

Tests are by appointment only and bookings should be made online. Residents should live in the Tendring district of Essex and can book a test [here](#).

Booking online should be the quickest and most effective option for residents seeking a Lateral Flow Test.

If individuals are not able to book using the online form, they can call 0333 772 6144 to arrange an appointment. Lines are open from 8am to 8pm, every day including Saturday and Sunday.

Residents can also email: [booking.confirmation@nhs.net](mailto:booking.confirmation@nhs.net) and a member of staff will get in contact to arrange an appointment.

Anyone WITH symptoms should book a test via the NHS Test and Trace App, or [here](#).

This additional centre has been established in response to the infection rate in the district as of 10<sup>th</sup> January in Tendring reaching 1218.3 per 100,000

Dr Mike Gogarty, Essex's Director of Public Health and Wellbeing, said: "Infection rates in Tendring were rising rapidly and local NHS services are coming under significant strain as a result of the new variant of Covid-19. A 'critical incident' was been declared across the county, with critical care and bed capacity rising very fast, as well as high staff sickness and self-isolation levels.

"This additional testing centre will allow us to test even more people in the worst affected areas where we continue to see worryingly high rates. Thousands of people have already been tested at the fast testing centres we have opened.

"Testing people who feel well will help to identify the hidden cases in the community – people who may be unwittingly infecting others. If you test positive following one of the new fast tests, you will be asked to self-isolate, and take a further test to confirm

the initial result. If positive, you will also be required to disclose any close contacts to the local or national contact tracing service.

“It is absolutely vital that in addition to these efforts, everyone continues to adhere to the appropriate Covid-19 guidance. This includes working from home wherever possible and socially distancing, particularly in indoor settings that are permitted to remain open, such as essential shops and supermarkets. Behave as if those around you have Covid-19 and maintain a two-metre distance from anyone outside of your household or support bubble at all times.”

Cllr John Spence, Cabinet Member for Adults and Health at Essex County Council, said: “We are absolutely determined to do all we can to reduce the spread of Covid-19 in Essex, especially in the areas like Tendring where we are seeing cases continue to increase significantly as a result of the new variant.

“Targeted testing programmes are one part of how we will continue to tackle the virus, in addition to everyone playing their part in following the latest lockdown rules to limit the spread. An appointment to carry out a Covid-19 test will count as an essential journey under the lockdown rules.”

Cllr Lynda McWilliams, Tendring District Council Cabinet Member for Partnerships, said: “Testing is a really important strand of the response to Covid-19; by identifying people without symptoms who have the virus, and getting them to self-isolate, we can control the spread and pandemic.

“The addition of a rapid testing site in Tendring is a welcome boost to the PCR swab collection tests we are offering at Clacton Leisure Centre, and the existing mobile testing sites for those with symptoms, and I would really encourage people to go and get tested.”

The full Government Covid-19 guidance is available online here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-lockdown-stay-at-home#support-and-childcare-bubbles>

More information about Covid-19 testing in Tendring is available here: <https://www.tendringdc.gov.uk/communitytesting>

Anyone living or working outside of their home in any district of Essex will be able to access a LFT at the relevant local centre for their district or the district that they work in.4r

If the LFT gives a positive result individuals must self-isolate. There is [support available](#) for anyone who is required to self-isolate, including financial support if they are unable to go out to work or work from home.

If the LFT is negative, it is vital that residents continue to follow guidance on social distancing, keep two metres away from other people, and remember – Hands Face Space.

There is [at least one fast Covid-19 testing centre in each Essex district](#) and appointments are open to book now.

LFTs are available by appointment only and can be [booked online](#) or by calling 0333 772 6144. Lines are open from 8am to 8pm every day, including Saturday and Sunday.

Residents can also email [booking.confirmation@nhs.net](mailto:booking.confirmation@nhs.net) and a member of staff will contact them to arrange an appointment.

Anyone WITH symptoms should book a test via [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk)

### **Essex Covid-19 contact tracing service sets new milestone, as one of the top performing in region**

Essex Covid-19 contact tracing service sets a milestone with over 100,000 contacts – rating among the top in the east of England, both in terms of contacts and cases. This has been achieved despite the services seeing a quadrupling of cases coming in since the start of December.

The milestone has been achieved as a result of an outstanding partnership between Essex County Council, district, city and borough councils and Public Health England and all have agreed that the contact tracing service is a key element in containing the virus by getting to people quickly.

The ask now of residents is to be as open with us as possible about people you have been in contact with, and to stick to the key rules of hands, face and space.

Essex County Council's (ECC) Covid-19 contact tracing service is continuing to successfully contact significant numbers of Covid-19 cases and their contacts, despite a quadrupling of positive cases coming into the service since the start of December.

The service, was set up in June 2020 and is currently one of the top performing local contact tracing services in the East of England region – dealing with up to six times the amount of cases as neighbouring Local Authorities.

It currently supports national contact tracing efforts, where these have been unsuccessful, by applying local expertise and knowledge to trace individuals who have tested positive for Covid- 19 and anyone who may have come into contact with them to break the chain of transmission.

In the four-week period from 13 December 2020, Essex had 56,089 cases and successfully closed 87 per cent and 102,810 contacts successfully closing 98 per cent

Between 28 December 2020 to 3 January 2021, the service communicated with 8,701 contacts of cases alone, reminding them of the need to isolate, offering support and asking them to get a test.

Cllr John Spence, Essex County Council's Cabinet Member for Adults and Health, said: "I am immensely proud of our local Covid-19 contact tracing service which is an integral part of our approach to containing the virus here in Essex.

"Colleagues are continuing to work tirelessly to help break the chain of transmission as quickly as possible and the numbers of completed cases speak for themselves.

"Our success in Essex is absolutely a system-wide effort which has taken the combined support of NHS and city, borough and district council partners.

"I urge anyone who is contacted by the local contact tracing service to please follow their advice – the actions you take as an identified contact will be the difference in preventing further spread of the virus.

"This, as well as everyone continuing to follow the guidance around hands, face and space, is incredibly important now more than ever due to the ferocity with which the new variant is spreading."

The local contact tracing service in Essex now has over 65 staff helping to give advice and support to residents and their contacts that have tested positive, as well as supporting Essex care homes, schools, businesses and health care providers to manage outbreaks.

ECC is also continuing to work with environmental health officers at districts councils who are providing their expertise and helping to identify any remaining positive cases to ensure those people take swift action to self-isolate and have the support they need to do so.

The county council recently provided an additional £1.1m on top of the £900K to support these efforts, as well as further inventions such as Covid marshals and support for business compliance.

Individuals are reminded that if they are approached by the local Covid-19 contact tracing service, it is vital they follow the advice given and self-isolate immediately.

ECC has provided £3million additional funding to city, districts and boroughs in the county to help local people who need to self-isolate and who are unable to work. The £500 grant per resident will be a one-off payment to cover the 10-day period of self-isolation.

More information, advice and guidance for residents and businesses is available on the ECC coronavirus hub: <https://www.essex.gov.uk/topic/coronavirus>

## **Solar energy to give Essex a brighter future**

The Essex Climate Action Commission called for solar panels to be installed on every appropriate available roof in Essex by 2050.

The recommendation includes all domestic, industrial and commercial properties in the county.

Using solar energy to help Essex reach its goal of becoming net zero by 2050 was supported by 100% of all commissioners who voted at the meeting.

The recommendation was just one of many which came from commissioners during a recent meeting to discuss how changes to the way we think about energy and waste can help the county reduce its carbon footprint.

Commissioners talked about how advances in technology and a fast-growing industry have meant that solar panels are now being created to replicate and blend in with regular roof tiles.

Commissioners revealed their ambition for Essex to be able to produce enough renewable energy, such as wind and solar, to meet its own needs by 2040.

Cllr Simon Walsh, Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change Action said that Essex residents can switch to 100% renewable electricity now by taking part in the Essex Energy Switch which was launched in December. It's so quick and easy to do and previous participants saved an average of £230 per household on their energy bills."

The Commission also recommended Essex accelerated the shift to low carbon heating measures such as heat pumps and solar thermal panels.

All 29 recommendations relating to energy and waste proposed by the Commission were approved by commissioners.

Residents can find out more about the Green Homes Grant which can be used to install solar thermal panels to heat water, energy efficiency measures and heat pumps at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-the-green-homes-grant-scheme>

Registering for the Essex Energy Switch can be done online at [www.essex.gov.uk/energyswitch](http://www.essex.gov.uk/energyswitch) or by calling Big Community Switch registration line on 0800 048 8439 to register and receive correspondence by post. Lines are open Mon-Fri, 8:00am - 5:30pm. Please have a recent energy bill to hand.

## **Laptops to Help Children to Study at Home**

“Closing the Digital Divide” is an Essex County Council initiative, aimed at providing laptops to children and young people, who would otherwise be without access to a device at home.

By the end of next week, some 3,000 iPads, Chromebooks and laptops will have been distributed to schools across the county for them to give to families in need.

The scheme, launched in autumn 2020, saw 500 devices delivered before Christmas to colleges across Essex and to schools in Basildon, which had to move to online learning because of the sharp rise of Covid-19 cases. A further 2,500 devices are going out to secondary schools across the county this month.

ECC is also working with primary schools to find out how many younger children are without online access. An initial four hundred iPads are ready to meet urgent requirements, some of which have already gone out in Tendring district.

This initiative builds on a Government scheme, launched in summer 2020, that provided 2,500 devices for the most vulnerable children in year 10 at local authority-maintained schools and care settings in Essex. In addition, schools are also able to apply for more this month via the government portal.

Laptops under the Essex scheme are being distributed to secondary schools on a city / borough / district basis, for the schools to pass on to parents. Families with no access to a device are the first priority. Depending on supply and demand, it is hoped that additional devices can be provided to larger families.

Cabinet Member for Children and Families, Cllr Louise McKinlay said: “With home-schooling here once again, we want to ensure that as many children as possible can partake in online lessons from their school. To do this, technology is of course vital and by investing in these devices, we can support our schools to deliver lessons to our children. It is crucial that during this period of lockdown and the pandemic that our children’s education is at the forefront of all we do.

“By next week we’ll have shared 3,000 devices with secondary schools. We are now working with primary schools to identify their pupils’ needs and hope to start delivering to them on 20 January.

I am determined that as a county council we’ll continue to support schools and families to ensure that we can reach as many children as possible.”

Cllr McKinlay also appealed for businesses to donate old devices to the scheme.

“Last year, when lockdown was eased, we were able to accept some donations. We had a fantastic response with more than 700 being offered. I would like to thank everyone who has donated a device. Your generosity is making a big difference to young people’s education.

“I am keen that we continue to build on all that has been done so far. Due to Covid-19 restrictions, we cannot currently accept donations from individuals but we can collect from companies who may be upgrading their hardware and we would love to receive your old laptops. Our partners at EOL IT services will cleanse and recondition the machines so they are ready for use.”

The device must be a laptop, we cannot accept other devices currently. It does not matter the age, make or condition as they will all either be re-used or the parts will be sold to buy new equipment with the money raised.

Once received, all laptops are thoroughly cleaned inside and out with all data and programmes removed securely, no data on the device will be accessed during this process.

As lockdown eases, it is hoped that individuals will once again be able to contribute to the scheme. Details will follow in due course.

To donate or find out more please email: [TSLaptop.Donations@essex.gov.uk](mailto:TSLaptop.Donations@essex.gov.uk)

### **Shortlist of junction improvement options confirmed as part of Army and Navy Sustainable Transport Package**

Plans to transform the way people travel in Chelmsford have moved a step closer after the expected shortlist of improvement options for the Army and Navy junction was agreed ahead of public consultation in the summer.

ECC has been thoroughly evaluating four options for the junction - a hamburger roundabout, enlarged roundabout, two-way flyover and separate T-junctions. Assessment has looked at the effects on congestion, journey times and use of sustainable modes of transport, as well as environmental and construction impacts.

Each option has been upgraded to include significantly improved walking and cycling facilities at the junction, while proposals are also continuing to be developed for the expansion of Sandon Park and Ride and a proposed new park and ride site in Widford. The sustainable transport improvement measures are a crucial aspect of the Army and Navy Sustainable Transport Package and part of a continued drive to offer people greater choice in the way they travel in the city.

As a result of the latest option assessment analysis, the two-way flyover has now been discounted and the three remaining options – separate T-junctions, hamburger roundabout and enlarged roundabout – have been confirmed as those on the shortlist that is expected to go to public consultation later this year. However, this is subject to some final assessment.

The two-way flyover has been discarded because it would:

- be the worst option for city centre traffic and congestion
- encourage more car journeys, rather than supporting the Park and Ride and encouraging walking and cycling, which goes against the aims of the Chelmsford Future Transport Network Strategy
- be much larger than the previous flyover to comply with the latest design standards and would be considerably more visually imposing
- have the largest noise and air quality impacts
- have the longest and most disruptive construction programme, which would have the most detrimental impact on the local economy
- -not accommodate potential future sustainable transport improvements as well as the other options.

Cllr Kevin Bentley, Deputy Leader of Essex County Council and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure, said that the Army and Navy Sustainable Transport Package represents an opportunity to provide people with greater travel options and to encourage safer, greener and healthier ways of getting around Chelmsford, especially for shorter journeys where walking and cycling needs to be promoted as the natural choice.

With an expansion of Sandon Park and Ride, a potential new Park and Ride site at Widford, pedestrian and cycle route improvements, and layout improvements at the Army and Navy junction all included as part of this project, the scheme will provide a long-term and sustainable solution that will help to make Chelmsford a city of the future.

Having taken another significant step forward with the project by agreeing a shortlist of options it will be good to now engage with the public to seek their views.

By focussing on fewer options now, the Council can now concentrate on those that could make a real difference and people can have a more valuable input at public consultation.

The remaining options – the separate T-junctions, hamburger roundabout and enlarged roundabout – all provide the best opportunity to improve journeys for all transport users and to create a lasting legacy at this vital gateway.

Due to the various stages involved in securing funding for the project, construction of the final junction scheme is currently expected to start in summer 2024 and be completed in early 2026, subject to planning and other necessary processes.

For more information about the Army and Navy Sustainable Transport Package, please visit [www.essex.gov.uk/armyandnavy](http://www.essex.gov.uk/armyandnavy).

**Please find below 4 links to artistic impressions of the options available to download. These are concept images and for illustrative purposes only.**

- [AN 2111 Hamburger roundabout option \(002\).jpg](#)
- [AN 2111 Separate T-junctions option \(002\).jpg](#)

- [AN 2111 Enlarged roundabout option \(002\).jpg](#)
- [AN 2111 Two-way Flyover option \(002\).jpg](#)