

Government confirms Essex to move to high COVID alert level



The government has confirmed that Essex will move to the high COVID alert level from Saturday 17 October.

Cllr David Finch, Leader of Essex County Council, said:

“We welcome the government’s announcement today regarding Essex moving to tier two, the high COVID alert level. This is clear recognition of the severity of the situation we find ourselves in as a county, and indeed across many parts of the country.

“We think the government has decided correctly and been guided by the science. The fact is that the number of cases in Essex is rising exponentially.

“We understand that the move to the high COVID alert level may affect people’s lives and businesses and we understand the very strong feelings about this. However, we have a duty of care to the people of Essex, and we firmly believe that this is the best route to minimise disruptions, to save lives - not just for those with the virus, but for other patients as well - and to protect businesses.

“More information is available on the GOV.UK website around [specific restrictions which apply to the high alert level](#).

“These are difficult times for individuals, businesses and communities, but I know that as a county we will come together to support and protect one another – as we have done previously - and that acting sooner rather than later to curb the spread of COVID-19 is the right thing to do.”

Read about [our request to move to the high COVID alert level](#) and [the data that informed our decision](#).

You can also read our [questions about moving to the high COVID alert level](#).

The data that shows why we need a 'High' COVID-19 alert level

Essex County Council, with the support of partners and MPs, has applied to the Secretary of State for Health for the local alert level for coronavirus to be raised from the ‘Medium’ to the ‘High’ level.

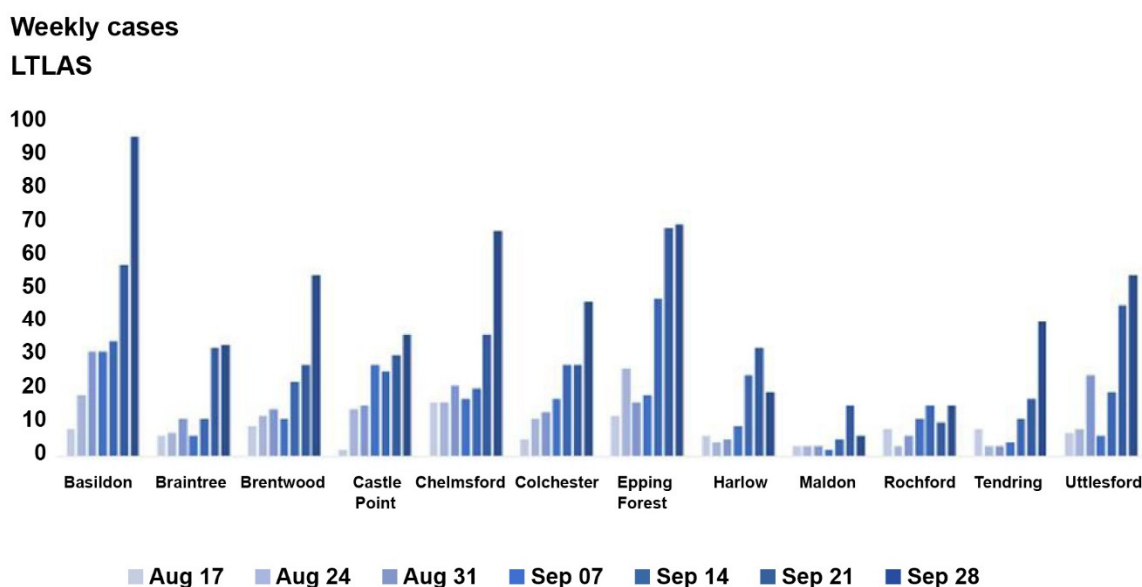
This request has not been made lightly. We appreciate the implications of Essex moving to ‘High’ level measures, however we truly believe that this is in the best interests of residents and businesses. This is because it will reduce the rapidly increasing number of cases, prevent further deaths, and protect businesses from ‘Very High’ level restrictions being introduced.

Below, we have outlined the data we have used to inform our request and the rationale for taking this step.

Background

Cases of coronavirus are rapidly increasing all over Essex. Analysis has shown that all areas (except Maldon at the time of the analysis) had moved to epidemic growth. This means that cases have been doubling every week, as evidenced in the table below.

Bar chart showing the number of weekly COVID-19 cases by district



The difference in rates for each area between 1-11 October are also shown below. The rates are the number of cases per 100,000 residents per week and while they are low, the fact remains they are doubling everywhere across Essex. We believe that this trend will continue over the coming weeks and we will soon find ourselves in the same position as many northern towns.

District	1 October cases per 100,000 per week	11 October cases per 100,000 per week
Basildon	28.85	62.50
Braintree	13.11	39.32
Brentwood	29.86	89.59
Castle Point	23.24	64.18
Chelmsford	15.14	49.89
Colchester	15.14	49.89
Epping Forest	42.52	81.25
Harlow	32.16	42.50
Maldon	18.48	35.42
Rochford	13.74	32.05
Tendring	11.60	72.32

District	1 October cases per 100,000 per week	11 October cases per 100,000 per week
Uttlesford	37.25	72.30

In the table above, you will note that the place with the lowest rates now have rates similar to those of places with the highest rates 10 days ago. The places in Essex with the lowest rates are therefore only a week or so behind those with the highest rates, which are in turn are a week or so behind areas in the North and Midlands.

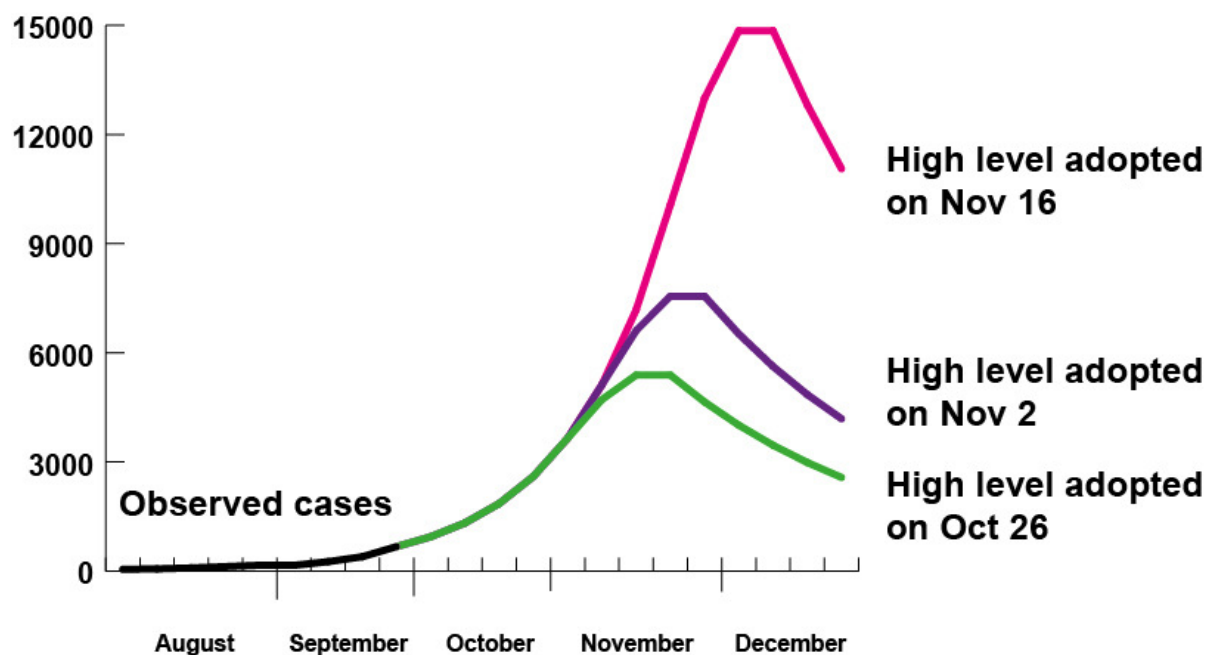
Additionally, while hospital admissions are thankfully low, the fact remains that there are currently 57 people with coronavirus in Essex hospitals, while a month ago there were none. There have also been 13 deaths due to COVID-19 in Essex hospitals in the last three weeks, following a month with no deaths.

While these numbers remain low, they are increasing at an alarming rate and if we don't take action soon, we are likely to see a doubling in line with the increasing cases soon.

The County Council has a responsibility to make decisions based on what the evidence tells us, in order to protect residents, local health services, schools and businesses, and we have considered how best to do this for the people of Essex. The interventions implemented within the 'High' tier of measures have been devised by SAGE to reduce the rate of transmission and reverse case growth.

We have used the below model to show the potential impact if the introduction of 'High' level restrictions is delayed.

Line graph showing how cases of COVID-19 will increase if we delay moving Essex into 'High' alert level



We believe that by moving to Tier Two sooner, the curve will turn more quickly and the peak will be lower. This will reduce the time Essex spends within this tier, as well as the chances of the county needing to move to 'Very High'. It is our intention that if approved by the Secretary of State, we will work rapidly to reduce the amount of time spent under Tier Two restrictions.

It has not been an easy decision to make this request, but we feel on balance that it is absolutely the correct one for Essex at this time.

Read our [guidance on what the high COVID-19 alert level means for you](#) and the [government guidance on the COVID-19 alert levels](#).

Read our announcement on [Essex Leaders and MPs requesting a move to 'High' level COVID-19 restrictions](#).

The following youtube link explains the rationale behind taking this decision.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iLZO6r3Bfwk>

NewsRelease



19 October 2020

County-wide campaign aims to raise awareness of online child exploitation

With a digital Halloween approaching due to Covid-19 restrictions, safeguarding partners across the county are joining forces once again to raise awareness about the dangers of online child exploitation.

Parents are being alerted to the possibility that children may take their seasonal celebrations online. This could result in sharing frightening content and peer pressure to undertake harmful online challenges.

Online exploitation has been a growing concern for several years, with the internet and social media becoming so integral to daily lives. For children, the internet has become the new classroom and playground, and this has been amplified during this year of Covid-19 lockdowns and restrictions. Sadly, there are people there that take advantage of this.

That is why the Essex Safeguarding Children Board (ESCB), alongside Southend and Thurrock Safeguarding Children Partnerships, are continuing their Child Exploitation Did You Know Campaign, working with local authorities, Essex Police and organisations including Brook, The 2 Johns, The Children's Society, Barnardo's and to raise awareness of the exploitation risks that an increased time on the internet can pose.

The social media campaign will run 19 – 25 October and will cover topics such as online gaming, youth involved sexual images and online bullying. It aims to challenge the perception that the victim is to blame; instead creating a supportive network around the child in which they feel able to speak openly about concerns they may have.

In addition to the campaign, the ESCB have teamed up with [Brook Essex](#), who are running two Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) sessions aimed at parents, during the week of the campaign. These will be bookable online sessions about the importance of having conversations about healthy relationships. There will be a session for parents of primary students on Wednesday 21 October and for parents of secondary students on Thursday 22 October.

David Archibald, ESCB Independent Chair/Facilitator on behalf of the Statutory Partners said: “Going online has become a way of life, with more of us using social media and mobile apps to communicate. For children, it has replaced meeting up with friends.

“Online exploitation is a horrific crime and can have a significant impact on the lives of the individuals, families and communities involved.

“I am pleased that we are continuing the Parents, Did You Know Campaign along with our partners to support parents to recognise the signs and talk to their children about the risks of online exploitation.

“Together we can support children and parents to be aware of the dangers and know there is someone to talk to if they’re concerned.”

The 2 Johns, E-Safety Training said: “Throughout lockdown our discussions with parents have highlighted an increasing number of difficult situations arising online that the parents have felt unable to deal with without support. We hope that through our involvement in this project we will be able to get our message out to more people and give them more confidence to deal with issues as they arise.”

The [Essex Safeguarding Children Board website](#) will have resources for professionals and those working with families to enable them to fully support children and parents. Parents can also follow the campaign on the ESCB [Facebook page](#) and [Twitter account](#).

Apply for Love Essex Grants to Reduce Household Waste

Individuals and organisations are invited to apply for micro-grants to help reduce household waste.

The Love Essex Fund offers grants of up to £500 to support local organisations and individuals providing innovative ideas that promote repair, reuse and recycle and ultimately prevent waste being thrown away in the home. It can include projects which inspire people and communities to be

creative and sustainable with their waste or which provide skills and opportunities to build an environmentally sustainable community. The current round of funding is open now and applications will be accepted until 1 November.

Councillor Simon Walsh, Essex County Council's Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change Action said: "We're looking for inspiring ideas that promote repair, reuse and recycle. From repair cafes to composting groups, if you have a great waste-reducing idea then why not apply for a grant to help kickstart the project?"

In the last round of funding 14 grants were given out and successful projects included:

- BabyStuff Braintree - An expansion of the existing store, providing enough storage space for the second-hand baby clothes and donated items.
- Castle Hedingham - A parish council creating a community garden with composting facilities.
- Chelmsford Nappy Library - An expansion of the existing Chelmsford Cloth Nappy Library into Notley and Braintree.
- Eco Colnes and Halstead - An eco-group seeking to raise awareness of their group and activities.
- Eco Essex - An eco-group that also wishes to raise awareness about their group and activities.
- SILO - A zero-waste store seeking funding for promotional purposes.
- South Woodham Ferrers Nappy Library - The creation of a cloth nappy library in South Woodham Ferrers.
- Tub: Refillables - A plastic-free grocery delivery service based in Saffron Walden, with a pop-up zero-waste shop.

For more information including guidelines for applicants visit the [Love Essex Website](#)

This is Essex campaign launched

Today (Wednesday 14th October), Visit Essex launched [This is Essex](#), a short film which sees the good people of Essex stepping forward to showcase the *real* Essex and to take on - and dispel - some long-standing stereotypes.

The film, made earlier this year and delayed due to Covid-19, is part of a wider, 'Place Making' strategy to promote Essex as a prime location to live, work, study and invest.

In the film, comedian Ellie Taylor takes a wry look at the Essex accent, pantomime dame Anthony Stuart-Hicks shows off his white stilettos with tongue firmly planted in cheek and eighth generation Mersea oysterman, Tom Haward, proves going '*out, out*' doesn't always mean getting out the false eyelashes and fake tan! On top of all that, female rally champion, Nabila Tejpar shows us all that, surprise, surprise, the county is not full of '*boy racers*' after all.

The film also stars Essex treasures like Michelin starred chefs, the Galvin Brothers, Super Scientist Dr Miles Adcock, Paralympian Anne Wafula-Strike, Coggeshall Vintner, Jane Mohan, Harwich Town Crier, James Cole, Hedingham Castle owner, Demetra Lindsay and metal detectorist, Adrian Gayler.

Simon Walsh

October 2020