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She gave a description of her attacker and a media appeal for information from the public was made.

However Essex Police said today the young woman had admitted the assault never happened.

Detective Superintendent Tim Wills said: “Essex Police takes all allegations of sexual assault very seriously and investigates each one thoroughly.

“False allegations take up a lot of police time and can have serious consequences.

“It is now evident that certain factors in the young woman's life had influenced her allegation and we will continue to work with her and her family and with partner agencies to address these issues.”