



Essex County Council

DELIVERING FOR OUR EXTRAORDINARY COUNTY

**EVERYONE'S
ESSEX**

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FOREWORD

We published Everyone's Essex in October 2021, just four months after the County Council elections, to set our course for the next four years. We agreed four key areas of focus: a strong, inclusive and sustainable economy; a high-quality environment; health, wellbeing and independence for all ages; and a good place for children and families to grow.

We are immensely proud of the work that the Council has done over the last three years working with our partners to make good the promises we set out. And we are hugely optimistic about what we can achieve over the next twelve months to go even further in the pursuit of these ambitions.

This document demonstrates what we have done working with our partners across Greater Essex. Not promises or wishes but hard achievements. And it sets out what we are committed to doing before the end of this Council period in March 2025. Our track record of delivery to date should give us all confidence in our ability to achieve these ambitions.

In setting this out, we have also taken the opportunity to refresh our Everyone's Essex strategic plan. This does not mean that we are less committed to our key strategic aims. We remain firmly focused on working to secure a stronger economy, to creating places that people want to live in, to supporting residents' wellbeing and independence; and to ensuring that our young people and families can grow up and flourish in safe and nurturing environments. These remain the bedrock of our ambition.

But going beyond that, in this final full year of the Council, we want to be really clear about the priorities that we will focus on – based on what we have heard you say is most important to you.

First, financial competence.

All public services are hard pressed. Since 2012, local government has seen a 40% reduction in funding whilst also addressing increasing demand pressures on our services. The County Council has saved £800 million over that period whilst continuing to protect front line

services and invest in our roads and infrastructure to support economic growth. We have only been able to do that because of the sensible and prudent decisions we have taken in the management and deployment of the County Council's budget.

Second, we care.

As a County Council, we are responsible for looking after, supporting and keeping safe and secure some of the most vulnerable members of our communities. We take that responsibility very seriously. We are proud that we have some of the very best social care services in the country and we will continue to invest in the people and technology that will enable everyone in this extraordinary county to live the lives they choose, as independently as possible.

Third, we are on your side.

We know many have struggled with the recent challenges of high inflation. That is why we created a £50 million cost of living programme and have invested in summer clubs so that thousands of young people could participate in holiday activities and get a hot meal out of school term

times. And we have continued to invest in the services that you value, including expanding our library service, unlike many other places; and we continue to improve our country parks and other green spaces which you have told us make such a difference to your wellbeing.

Fourth, we are proud of Essex.

Many councillors, ourselves included, have lived and worked in this extraordinary county for most of our lives. We take the stewardship of Essex very seriously. Over the next year, we want to work closely with communities, promoting pride in our neighbourhoods. We also want to celebrate the rich cultural and artistic heritage of the county which sometimes gets overlooked.

Finally, trust.

We prize this above everything else. After all, whether it is the county's roads, country parks, libraries or schools, they belong to us all. Our job is to make sure that we manage them well today and leave them

DELIVERING FOR OUR EXTRAORDINARY COUNTY

in a better place tomorrow so that future generations can enjoy and benefit from them as we have done. We will not always get everything right. No person or organisation can do that. But we will always be transparent and open with our residents and taxpayers.

The headwinds facing public services are severe. There has never been a more challenging time for public services than now. Despite that, we hope that this refresh paper leaves you feeling as optimistic as we do.

This is an extraordinary county and, working together, we remain capable of achieving extraordinary things.

Councillor Kevin Bentley,

Leader of the Council

Councillor Louise McKinlay,

Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Levelling Up, Communities and Business Engagement



OUR PRIORITIES



Financial
Competence



We care



We are on Your Side



We are proud
of Essex



Trust



1. Financial Competence

The financial pressures facing local authorities are huge. Inflation has been high for a sustained period of time. We are experiencing rising demand and complexity of cases in children and adults social care and special educational needs, increased by impacts from Covid. And there are also market capacity and staffing shortages in some areas that are increasing costs.

Faced with this, some councils are warning they may have to declare bankruptcy in the next year. But Essex County Council is not in that position. This is because of our strong record of financial competence. We have consistently been ranked as one of the most efficient county councils in the country in sector league tables. We have delivered over £800 million in savings since 2012 despite a very challenging operating environment. And our Council Tax rate remains in the lowest quarter compared to other councils. It is because of our financial competence that our Council and our officers have been asked to support other local authorities across the country.

Financial competence enables us to sustain our core services, keep investing in your priorities, and to keep Council Tax low compared to other authorities.

Over the next year we will remain focused on financial competence by continuing to ensure that our services and operations are efficient and that spend is effective in delivering improved outcomes; by addressing rising demand through prevention and early intervention; and by delivering on our transformation programme.

2. We care

As a Council, we are responsible for looking after some of the most vulnerable children and adults in the county. We take this responsibility very seriously.

In August 2023, our children’s social care services were reviewed by Ofsted and judged to be “outstanding”, not only overall, but in every single category – making it one of the very best children’s services in the country. The Ofsted report says: “Children’s needs are at the heart of decision-making

and the whole workforce is unrelenting in its commitment, passion, and determination to achieve even better progress for children”.

Our adults social care services will be inspected by the Care Quality Commission later in the year. We remain focused on ensuring that people have access to high quality care when they need it. Our wider goal is to help people lead as safe, healthy and independent lives as possible, and a broad range of services are focused around this goal, including public health programmes, support for people with mental health issues, support for people with learning disabilities, support for carers, and the provision of care technology and re-ablement services to help people to live at home for as long as they can.

Over the next year, we will remain focused on delivering high quality care for vulnerable people in Essex and we will continue working with our system partners to provide the support that vulnerable people need and to address the wider determinants of health and wellbeing.



3. We are on Your Side

We are on your side because we are focused on delivering the things that matter to you. You have told us that you care about cost of living pressures, about the state of the highways, about sustaining our libraries, and about the quality of our local environment. And we have taken action on all these things.

We have invested more in our roads in every single year of this Council period because the quality of our infrastructure is important not just to connect people to each other but to support our ambitions for the wider economy and business growth. We have delivered interventions to ease cost of living pressures, including the Essex ActivAte programme providing free school holiday activities and meals for children. We are keeping all our libraries open and investing in them so that they are not only places of learning but also welcoming community spaces. And we are working every day to protect the Essex environment from threats such as flooding and drought, and also to make it accessible and attractive for our residents and visitors.

You have also told us that you care not only about today's issues, but also about the future, in particular about education, life chances, and about the climate. We have the vision to look forward and not just manage the County Council but build for future generations. We help support a high quality education system in Essex, with 91% of schools in Essex rated by Ofsted as good or outstanding. We provide first-class adult education through our Adult Community Learning programme. And on economic growth, skills, and levelling up we have ambitious plans, working with businesses, universities, and other partners to create a prosperous economic future for the county in which all residents can achieve their potential. Through our climate action plan, we remain a sector leader in protecting the future of our planet through effective local action.

Over the next year, we will remain focused on all these issues, ensuring that we respond to your priorities with tangible actions that deliver real benefits to people's lives and communities.



4. We are proud of Essex

Pride of place means not only that we have pride in the physical environment in which we live, but also that we have pride in our culture and who we are. This is important because communities that take pride in these things are happier and more successful.

The Council runs a series of grant programmes aimed at enhancing local communities. This includes the £350,000 Community Initiatives Fund and the Locality Fund, where elected county councillors can fund local projects in their area.

The Council has put championing local arts and culture at the centre of our strategy. Through our Arts and Cultural Fund we have invested £625,000 in arts and culture projects across the county – examples include the Eco Festival, Colchester and the We are Music programme working with children and young people in Tendring.

Over the next year, we will continue focusing on pride of place issues, investing both in the physical renewal of our communities and in supporting a vibrant arts and culture sector.



5. Trust

Trust is at the heart of being an effective Council and of a healthy local democracy.

Trust comes from knowing that we will continue to be financially competent and that you can trust us with your money.

Trust comes from knowing that we will continue to care for the most vulnerable people in society, helping them to lead safe, healthy, and independent lives.

Trust comes from knowing that we take pride in our local communities, as you do, and that we will continue supporting the physical environment of communities, as well as a vibrant arts and culture sector.

And trust comes from knowing that we are on your side, that we will continue investing in and addressing the issues you care about most, so that Essex can continue to be, both now and in the future, a truly extraordinary county.



**A STRONG,
INCLUSIVE
AND
SUSTAINABLE
ECONOMY**

A STRONG, INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY

In Everyone's Essex, we set out five commitments under the economy aim to improve the lives of the people of Essex. These are:

Good jobs: We will work hard to address the impacts of the Covid pandemic on unemployment by supporting business recovery and building a stronger economy for the future, enabling people to build the skills they need to be part of it, and working alongside Essex businesses to help reduce barriers to employment for disadvantaged groups.

Infrastructure: We will deliver and maintain high quality infrastructure to improve opportunities for people living in Essex as well as supporting a growing economy and the delivery of new homes and communities by investing in the region of £1 billion by the end of this council.

Future growth and investment: We will help grow existing businesses and the economic sectors of the future in Essex, including the arts, and secure high levels of new investment by working with

partners to promote the county, by creating the conditions for growth and by maximising the impact of public sector spend within the county.

Green growth: We will develop Essex as a centre for innovation, supporting new technologies and business models to enable our economy to transition to net zero and secure green jobs for the future by ensuring we have the right local skills and drawing in investment opportunities.

Levelling up the economy: We will work to level up the economy by addressing the drivers of socioeconomic inequality (including income, education, employment, health and housing), based on the foundation of good jobs and a higher skilled and healthier workforce.

Next we set out what we **have achieved**, with our partners, since Everyone's Essex was launched, and what we **aim to achieve** by March 2025.

WHAT WE HAVE ACHIEVED:



Delivered **16,000+** Adult Community Learning opportunities, including **6,000** Level 1 to 6 qualifications and **900** apprenticeships and placements for young people



Launched South Essex Advanced Technical Skills, an advanced training offer led by key industry partners



Organised the **Festival of Learning** with free workshops and training for **3,000+ residents**

Trialled new ways to support people in Tendring and Harlow into work with **£4m** from the **Community Renewal Fund**

Launched the **Essex Careers Magazine** showcasing job and training opportunities in industries for the future

Improved residents' **numeracy skills** with the **£8 million** nationally funded Multiply programme



Trained **200 recently unemployed adults** for work through the COVID Recovery Academy



Launched the **Ambitious Women in Essex network** with leading business partners



Opened the ACL Colchester Digital Hub, offering digital skills and digital access for residents



Our 4-year commitments to build an economy that works for local residents:

1. Good Jobs

2. Infrastructure

3. Future growth and investment

4. Green growth

5. Levelling up the economy



Progressed four Essex Housing schemes to deliver **168 private and 36 affordable or special use homes**

Secured **£90 million investment** for **10,000 new homes** with East Herts Council

Approved the **£100 million Essex Renewal Fund** to support **1,500 jobs and 1,000 homes** over 20 years

Delivered **48 long-term homes** for rough-sleepers with £450,000 Government funding

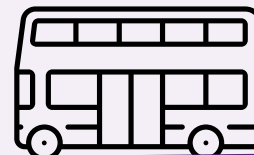
Adopted our first **Housing Strategy**, setting out priorities and plans to work with housing partners



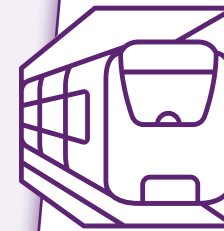
Secured **£34 million new Community Infrastructure Levy funding** in Castle Point and Brentwood

Secured **£100 million** from the Housing Infrastructure Fund for **North Essex housing and transport infrastructure**

Commenced work on the **Colchester Rapid Transit System**, connecting the A12 Park and Ride to the University of Essex and a new Garden Community

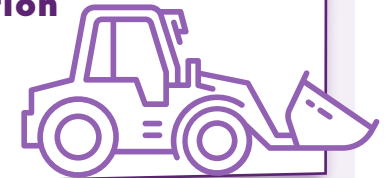


Released the Digital Connectivity Strategy, securing **£20+ million** investment in **Superfast Broadband for 140,000+ properties**

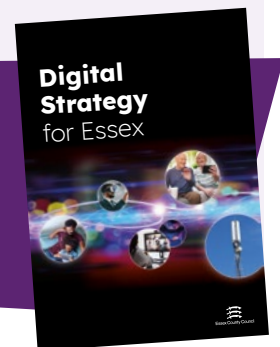


Started construction on the **fully-accessible Beaulieu Park station**, the first new station to be built on the Great Eastern Main Line in a century

Secured **£69 million** to transform **Chelmsford's Army and Navy junction** with sustainable travel options



Completed works to the **M11 Junction 7A ahead of schedule**, to ease Harlow congestion and create housing and business opportunity



Our 4-year commitments to build an economy that works for local residents:

1. Good Jobs

2. Infrastructure

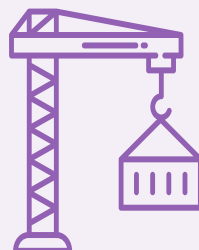
3. Future growth and investment

4. Green growth

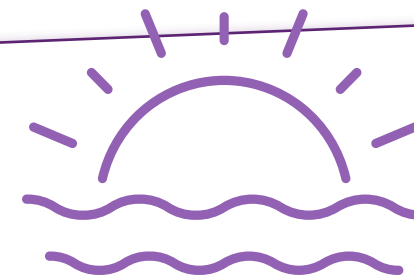
5. Levelling up the economy



Signed the **Civic University Agreement**, a commitment to work together to improve prosperity and wellbeing of communities across North Essex



Submitted plans for Freeport East development to unlock **£25 million funding, tax benefits and easier customs procedures for businesses**



Opened the **landmark £5.3 million business centre 'SUNSPOT'** with Tendring District Council

Supported businesses to protect and create **720+ jobs** with **£2 million** Backing Essex Business investment

Worked with **North Essex Councils and South Essex Councils** to deliver sustainable economic growth and better outcomes for residents across Greater Essex



Welcomed Kao Data in Harlow and AbCellera Life Sciences in Uttlesford, securing **£150 million investment and 80 jobs**

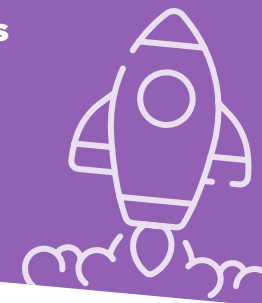
Secured **£1+ million UK Creative Growth Finance Funding** for creative businesses in the South East

Secured **£6 million funding** for ten Greater Essex One Public Estate projects across Essex

Invested **£750,000 in tourism marketing campaigns** to generate £5 million new business for the local economy

Prepared local business to grow with the **Innovation and Investment Readiness Service**

Relaunched the **Business Essex, Southend and Thurrock (BEST) Growth Hub** business support service



Our 4-year commitments to build an economy that works for local residents:

1. Good Jobs

2. Infrastructure

3. Future growth and investment

4. Green growth

5. Levelling up the economy



Awarded grants of between £2,500 and £30,000 to **60+ arts and cultural organisations**



Launched the first ever **Essex High Streets summit**

Released our new **Cultural Strategy** to support the creative sector and improve quality of life, community and the economy



Promoted **Crouch Valley** to celebrate English Wine week

Published the **Green Skills Infrastructure Review**, setting out future demands for a skilled workforce

Awarded **£5,000** seed funding to three young entrepreneurs from our **Green Entrepreneurs Programme**

Awarded **£200,000** from the **Homes Decarbonisation Skills Training** competition to fund a home retrofit skills programme

Hosted the first ever **Essex Green Skills Summit**

Won awards for the **Harlow and Tendring retrofit pipeline project** with the Retrofit Academy



Launched the **Essex Film Office** to promote Essex for film and TV locations

Supported the short film **"Essex Girls"**, which was screened at the BFI London Film Festival

Achieved **Local Visitor Enterprise Partnership** accreditation for Visit Essex, one of only 25 destinations to be recognised

Celebrated the **Summer of Culture** with free and affordable events, exhibitions and festivals



Held the **Visit Essex Big Weekend**, with **8,000+** residents applying for free tickets to over 50 attractions

Invested **£100,000** in the Harlow College EV centre, with **150 technicians qualified**



Our 4-year commitments to build an economy that works for local residents:

1. Good Jobs

2. Infrastructure

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5. Levelling up the economy



Secured **£120 million** from the **Levelling Up Fund and Towns Fund** for regeneration in Colchester, Harlow, Clacton, Harwich and Dovercourt



Launched the **Essex Business Community Pledge** for employers to commit to **fostering talented staff**

Invested **£500,000** to create **opportunities for 16-to-25-year-olds** who are not in education, employment and training



Distributed **6,000+** pre-owned devices to **refugees, residents, schools and community voluntary services**

Launched **digital champion training** for **asylum seekers** in Colchester and Tendring



Launched **Health and Digital Literacy Champions** in 26 libraries

Launched the **'Get Online' interactive map** showing where to access free digital support

Launched a **social broadband tariff campaign** in Harlow, Tendring and Colchester saving low income households **up to £200 a year**

Become Ambassadors for the **National Digital Inclusion Network**



Provided **free SIM cards** in libraries and to jobseekers with Reed in Partnership



Launched **ACL outreach services** in Tendring, Canvey and Rural Braintree



Launched a **social value campaign** to get the most for communities from our **£1bn Essex supplier base**



Our 4-year commitments to build an economy that works for local residents:

1. Good Jobs

2. Infrastructure

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5. Levelling up the economy

CASE STUDY:

SUNSPOT, JAYWICK SANDS

The Sunspot is a landmark, purpose-built and energy efficient business centre on the seafront at Jaywick Sands, offering 24 affordable units, suitable for retail, office, studio and workshop tenants. It provides a range of other community facilities, including indoor and outdoor market space, meeting space, public toilets, cycle parking, as well as a community garden.

The £5.3 million project was funded by a range of partners, including £2.4 million from the Government's Getting Building Fund, with an additional £2 million funding from Essex County Council, and £800,000 from Tendring District Council. Tendring is also using part of its UK Shared Prosperity Fund allocation for operating costs.



Councillor Lee Scott, Cabinet Member for Planning a Growing Economy, Essex County Council:

“This is a fantastic space which will contribute to local economic growth, allowing new and existing businesses to develop. This project will also support the recently completed cycle link upgrade to Clacton, encouraging more people to use this beautiful area.

“We have also taken the opportunity to provide upgraded facilities for local residents, such as a pavement along the first section of Brooklands for pedestrians and a bus shelter, meaning this project is delivering for residents and businesses alike.”

WHAT WE WILL DELIVER:

1. We will offer high quality learning opportunities to over 10,000 residents, by providing training and employment support, through our Adult Community Learning service. New initiatives will include skills bootcamps, guaranteed interview schemes and bursaries for training opportunities in key growth sectors.
2. We will level up access to jobs for Essex residents by helping businesses to secure over £1 million of unspent apprenticeship funding and delivering over 6,000 opportunities for employment and skills programmes in our levelling up priority areas. We will implement the Essex Local Skills Improvement Plan, an employer-led plan that will influence the commissioning of £5.5 million of skills funding across the county. Its focus will be on important sectors for job growth, including construction and retrofit, clean energy, advanced manufacturing, Digi-tech and life sciences.
3. We will use £3 million of funding from the Government's Multiply programme to commission 6,000 adult numeracy training opportunities. This will support students to develop everyday life skills like budgeting, as well as helping to unlock job opportunities and gain a maths qualification.
4. We will continue construction of a new three platform station at Beaulieu Park, the first new station on the Great Eastern Main Line for 100 years. There will be car parking for around 700 vehicles, including electric vehicle charging, and cycle parking. The station is expected to be open by the end of 2025. We will also continue to progress the enabling works for the Chelmsford North East Bypass that will increase road capacity for the new station and the city.
5. We will continue to deliver the Army and Navy Sustainable Transport Package, which includes considering the redesign of the Army and Navy junction in Chelmsford. This will improve conditions for all road users, including pedestrians, cyclists and buses, and expand the Sandon and Chelmer Valley Park & Ride sites.

WE WILL CONTINUE
CONSTRUCTION
OF A NEW **THREE**
PLATFORM STATION
AT BEAULIEU PARK



6. We will continue to deliver major transport schemes, funded by the Government's Housing Infrastructure Fund and Grant, which will unlock infrastructure for housing-led growth across the county. In Colchester, we will continue construction of the new Rapid Transit System, connecting the future Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community to the city centre and railway station. We will also commence construction of the first phase of the A120-A133 link road. In Harlow, we will complete construction of a new access road into the Templefields Industrial Estate, from Cambridge Road, and begin construction of a new Sustainable Transport Corridor, connecting Harlow station to a new bus station in the town centre.
7. We will continue construction works to improve access between the M11, Junction 8 and the A120 with London Stansted Airport, Bishop's Stortford, Birchanger Services and Takeley. This will reduce congestion and support future plans for housing, employment and business development.
8. We will continue work with our city, district and borough council partners to deliver new homes across three Garden Community developments in Essex - Chelmsford, Dunton Hills and Harlow Gilston Garden Town. We will also continue to work with our council partners on plans for the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community and further



phases of Harlow Gilston Garden Town, to bring forward acceptable developments. We will continue to negotiate for developer Section 106 funding for new schools, early years facilities and sustainable transport measures for new Garden Communities. We will continue to insist on excellent transport and street design standards, with a focus on parking, urban realm quality and mobility hubs.

FREEPORT EAST AT HARWICH PORT IS ANTICIPATED TO GENERATE £500M INVESTMENT AND 3,000 NEW JOBS



9. We will progress construction and sales on four new housing schemes through Essex Housing, our housing development arm. When completed, we anticipate that these schemes will provide 168 private homes, six affordable homes and two new community assets.

10. We will complete a review of our 255 operational properties and our office estate for maximum efficiency and to minimise future costs. We will explore opportunities to release land and buildings to enable regeneration and growth in places, working with partners across the county. We will also continue to progress the disposal of assets that we no longer need to provide funding for our capital programme. We will continue to work with the Shire Hall Charitable Trust to develop plans for the Shire Hall in Chelmsford and develop detailed proposals for County Hall, based on our own requirements and wider redevelopment options.
11. We will collaborate with partners to unlock the full potential of Freeport East at the proposed Bathside Bay development at Harwich Port. This is anticipated to generate an additional £500 million investment for the local economy over five years and lead to the creation of over 3,000 new jobs. This is a unique and unprecedented opportunity to provide high-quality employment and an economic boost for residents of Tendring and Essex.
12. We will continue our work and co-investment with South Essex Councils (SEC) and the newly formed North Essex Councils (NEC), to deliver ambitious programmes for a strong, sustainable and inclusive economy. Closer collaboration on services will provide more effective use of public money. The joint committee of SEC will support economic


development, including South Essex Advanced Technical Skills (SEATS) training for careers in engineering, digital and logistics, creating opportunities with employers. Delivering the North Essex Economic Board Action Plan, with NEC, will provide a joined up inward investment offer linked to our Extraordinary Essex work, develop the Young Entrepreneurs programme in North Essex, and jointly promote the visitor economy.

13. In line with government policy, we will integrate functions provided by the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) back into Essex, to help deliver our ambitions for economic growth. This will include ensuring a strong voice for business in decision making through new Greater Essex business board arrangements.
14. We will deliver a new approach to client relationships with 100 businesses, strengthening relationships with business intermediaries, establishing new business support programmes and continuing to deliver the Ambitious Women in Essex network. This will create and safeguard over 550 jobs and builds on our work to establish the Essex Community Business Pledge.
15. We will support the growth of Essex businesses in key industry sectors, by working with partners to implement our Sector Development Delivery programme and with business intermediary bodies.

This will allow us to create the conditions for over 40,000 new jobs in the county by 2040.

16. We will continue to work with Greater Essex public and private sector partners to develop opportunities that will make our region stand out and compete as a great location for inward investment, a high-skilled workforce, tourism and students. In the initial year we will secure 25 new inward investment leads, attract 100 jobs and help retain 50 jobs through business retention activity.

**WE WILL CREATE
THE CONDITIONS
FOR OVER **40,000**
NEW JOBS IN THE
COUNTY BY 2040**



17. We will support Visit Essex and coordinate activity with the new Greater Essex Inward Investment and Place Promotion Partnership. We will work to develop Visit Essex's role as the formal Local Visitor Economy Partnership body for Visit England. We expect this to achieve £11 million extra spend in the Essex visitor economy, support 540 visitor economy businesses, create 190 jobs and win 165 million media impressions.

18. We expect to award £125,000 grant funding to cultural organisations through the third round of our Arts and Cultural Fund. Successful organisations will receive funding of between £2,500 to £30,000, depending on the size and nature of the project. This will help them deliver exhibitions, events and activities in 2024/25 to engage communities and benefit residents.
19. We will continue to promote Essex as an attractive location for production companies to use for filming through the Essex Film Office, working with city, district and borough councils to provide a countywide service.
20. We will deliver a new Cultural Ambassadors programme, enlisting the help of cultural role-models to front a campaign that champions the county's creative and cultural sector and rich cultural heritage.

WE WILL CONTINUE
TO **PROMOTE ESSEX**
AS AN **ATTRACTIVE**
LOCATION FOR
PRODUCTION COMPANIES
TO USE FOR FILMING



21. We will continue to build the economic conditions in Essex to maximise the benefits of the transition to a green economy. This will include additional support for Essex businesses to access green grants and support to innovate, as well as development of a green skills action plan and collaboration in the Tending Future Skills Programme, which is supported by £340,000 investment.

**A NEW LIBRARY IN
CLACTON-ON-SEA,
AND A FULLY
REFURBISHED
LIBRARY IN
HARWICH**



22. We will continue to work to deliver major levelling up regeneration plans in priority places across Essex, using funding from government. In Clacton-on-Sea, the £20 million Clacton Hub will create a new library, Adult Community Learning facilities, and introduce the Centre for Coastal Communities to the town. Our Levelling Up Partnership with government and Long Term Plan for Towns funding

will deliver £40 million of additional investment in Clacton. In Harwich, a fully refurbished library will be created in the town, with the reintroduction of Adult Community Learning to the library, and in Dovercourt, new public realm works will improve the town centre. In Colchester, we will support the delivery of the City Centre masterplan, including Towns Fund projects and the St Botolph's Circus scheme, which seek to regenerate this important gateway to the city for all users.

23. We will begin to realise the potential of the Essex Renewal Fund by seeking suitable acquisitions to support good jobs, future growth and investment, green growth and levelling up the economy. Over the next 20 years, the fund aims to invest over £100 million, supporting 1,500 jobs and bringing to market enough land to deliver 1,000 new homes.

24. We will work with city, district and borough council partners to use the planning system to generate developer funding for local infrastructure, skills and community development, including Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects. We will support two district councils to introduce the Community Infrastructure Levy in 2024/25 to access over £50 million from a new source of developer funding, which is flexible in how and what it can be used for, including investment in infrastructure and levelling up priorities.

25. We will commission a new Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Infrastructure Provider to deliver a quality assured, digital self-serve Universal Support Offer to the sector. Supported by other targeted VCS infrastructure support, to places and communities of greatest need, this investment will build capacity and strength in the sector to contribute to our ambitions to level up the county and reduce inequalities.

26. We will help families to get online and stay online, by raising awareness of affordable social tariffs for households who receive benefits and promoting other digital affordability offers to residents. We will work with voluntary and community organisations across Essex and in our levelling up areas to share information to save residents money and prevent them from becoming digitally excluded. Ahead of the digital phone network switchover in 2025, we will develop digital infrastructure to increase high-speed connectivity and increase digital inclusion across Essex, including:

- a countywide awareness campaign, focussing on digitally excluded residents and businesses
- exploring alternative technologies that will reach more remote areas
- establishing a device recycling programme to increase digital inclusion and reuse digital devices, to support our new waste strategy and a circular economy



A HIGH QUALITY ENVIRONMENT



Handbook: Our Garden
The sign
This sign was used in the process
of rebranding the garden.
The history is a process of preparing
the garden as the sign is fixed.

Smoking

A HIGH QUALITY ENVIRONMENT

In Everyone's Essex, we set out five commitments under the environment aim to improve the lives of the people of Essex. These are:

Net zero: We will work across the council and the county to hit our net zero targets, by ensuring that the council significantly reduces its carbon footprint, whilst also supporting an acceleration in the progress towards sustainable housing and energy, and active and alternative forms of travel across the county.

Transport and built environment: We will deliver a step change in sustainable travel across the county, by growing passenger transport and active travel, and will ensure we support the move towards net zero, climate resilient developments, including our new garden communities, by delivering sustainable, healthy neighbourhoods for the future.

Minimise waste: We will minimise the impact on the environment by supporting residents and

businesses to reduce waste and increase the amounts recycled, and by working with others to deliver a more circular economy whereby we better protect our natural resources through the efficient and ongoing reuse of materials.

Green communities: We will work with communities and businesses, providing advice and support to enable and empower local action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and build climate resilience.

Levelling up the environment: We will help all our communities to enjoy a high-quality environment, by making them more resilient against flooding, heat stress and water shortages, by enhancing our county's green infrastructure and by reducing air pollution.

Next we set out what we **have achieved**, with our partners, since Everyone's Essex was launched, and what we **aim to achieve** by March 2025.

WHAT WE HAVE ACHIEVED:



Supported the Essex Climate Action Commission's "**Net Zero: Making Essex Carbon Neutral**" report.



Published the **£250 million** Climate Action Plan

Promoted climate actions in Essex through:



- ✓ Climate Summits
- ✓ Electric Road to COP26
- ✓ Carbon Battle Bus
- ✓ Climate Action Conference and Summits

Secured £2 million from the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund for **energy-efficient upgrades to 200 low-income households**



Promoted the **Sustainable Warmth Fund** with grants of up to **£10,000**, enhancing energy-efficiency for **80 low-income homes**



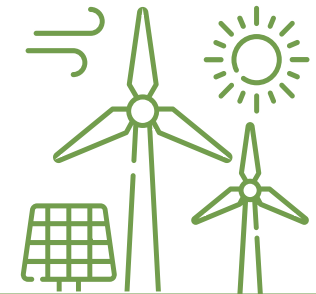
Achieved an A-rating for action on climate change from the Carbon Disclosure Project in 2022 and 2023



Installed **renewable energy systems** like solar panels and air source heat pumps at Essex Records Office, Witham Adult Community Learning Centre and Goodman House

Expanded three secondary schools with **net zero construction** and helped install solar panels at schools across the county

Secured a six-year contract for **100% renewable energy** for council buildings



Our 4-year commitments to ensuring that Essex has a high-quality environment today and for our children and grandchildren to enjoy:

1. Net zero

2. Transport and built environment

3. Minimise waste

4. Green Communities

5. Levelling up the environment

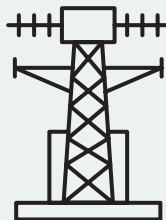


Delivered an award-winning net **zero carbon planning policy for sustainable homes** by 2025 and advocated for no stamp duty on new green homes



Won **Building with Nature's green planning award** for the Essex Green Infrastructure Standards

Led a campaign with Norfolk and Suffolk County Councils **opposing National Grid's proposal for high-voltage pylons** for offshore wind energy transmission



Allocated an additional **£12 million** to Essex Highways for **road maintenance and repair** in 2023/2024

Replaced **115,000 streetlights** with longer-lasting and energy-efficient LEDs



Trialled **new road-surfacing materials** to increase the lifespan of roads and reduce the impacts of future maintenance



Launched DigiGo, one of the first on-demand minibus services for more remote areas, **transporting 35,000+ passengers** so far



Delivered **Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans** for six Essex towns and cities, with Department for Transport's **£12+ million investment**



Improved park and ride services with **family and multi-trip discounts**



Piloted **e-scooter hire** with **3+ million trips** across Basildon, Braintree, Chelmsford and Colchester

Launched the **Travel Essex app** to make journey planning by public transport easier

36,000+ downloads



Launched the **Safer, Greener, Healthier campaign** to promote money saving benefits of sustainable travel

Our 4-year commitments to ensuring that Essex has a high-quality environment today and for our children and grandchildren to enjoy:

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2. Transport and built environment

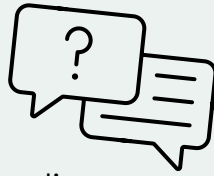
3. Minimise waste

4. Green Communities

5. Levelling up the environment



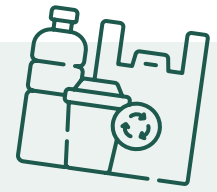
Consulted widely on the ambitious **Essex Waste Strategy**, a 30-year plan aiming for zero waste, high recycling levels and creating a circular economy



Made improvements to our **recycling centre booking system**, based on consultation feedback from customers



Joined the East of England Plastics Coalition to help combat **plastic waste and pollution**



Secured value for money contracts for collecting **residents' food and green waste**, expanding long-term recycling capacity

Provided microgrants to **130+ community recycling projects** through Love Essex and a further **40 microgrants to schools**



Created **climate action guides** on net zero goals for residents, early years settings, schools and businesses

Created a **directory of businesses and charities** working to accelerate the move to a **circular economy**



Won **two national awards** for the "Love Your Period" campaign, promoting more sustainable products

Led "Blueprint to a Circular Economy", a Europe-wide project helping **100,000+ people, 250+ businesses** and **six local authorities** in Essex to reuse materials, reduce waste and increase sustainability



Our 4-year commitments to ensuring that Essex has a high-quality environment today and for our children and grandchildren to enjoy:

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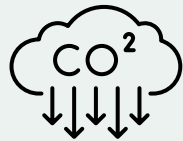
5. Levelling up the environment



Introduced a **Carbon Cutting Essex app** to encourage climate action among residents



Conducted **bi-monthly climate action webinars** for the Essex Association of Local Councils



Secured **£9 million** from the Greater South East Net Zero Hub to fund home energy improvements for **500+ low-income households**



Worked with Cadent Gas Network to **alleviate fuel poverty in rural Essex**, helping 280+ residents to manage and save money on gas bills

Supported formation of the **Essex Energy Community Interest Company**, connecting 20 community and parish-led local energy group networks



Launched **Essex Energy Switch**, a free scheme helping residents **save £160** on average on energy bills and reduce CO₂ emissions



- ✓ Hosted a **carbon zero workshop** offering energy-saving advice for the Rural Community Council for Essex
- ✓ Granted **£500,000** from the Climate Action Challenge Fund to **40+ local organisations and schools**
- ✓ Conducted a renewable energy resource assessment and **planned feasibility studies for local renewable energy schemes** with community groups

Backed a new north Essex farming cluster to promote **sustainable farming**



Created **“Restoration,” an anthem for climate action** performed by Essex Youth Orchestra and Essex Young People’s Orchestra at Saffron Hall



Our 4-year commitments to ensuring that Essex has a high-quality environment today and for our children and grandchildren to enjoy:

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Introduced the first Essex Tree Management Plan and **planted 375,000 trees** so far through the Essex Forest Initiative



Launched an outdoor education programme through **Essex Outdoors Education Rangers** to connect young people with nature

Secured **15-year funding from the Rural Payments Agency** for environmental management schemes in five country parks:

- Cudmore Grove Country Park
- Danbury Country Park
- Great Notley Country Park
- Hadleigh Country Park
- Marsh Farm Country Park



Promoted physical and mental wellbeing and skills development for **150,000+ school children and young people** at Essex Outdoors sites



Retained **Green Flag Status** for seven country parks, reflecting excellent quality and facilities



Commemorated the **70th anniversary of the 1953 North Sea flood** with events, a film and teaching resources



Adopted a **six-year Flood Risk Management Plan** to manage the risk of flood and coastal erosion



Delivered **eight major flood schemes protecting 215 properties** and a sustainable drainage and surface water flooding project on Canvey Island



Lowered the flood risk for **76,000 properties** by reviewing 1,000+ planning applications

Our 4-year commitments to ensuring that Essex has a high-quality environment today and for our children and grandchildren to enjoy:

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CASE STUDY: ESSEX FOREST INITIATIVE

The Essex Forest Initiative (EFI) was established to help Essex reach its net zero targets, by planting trees to help offset the county's carbon emissions. There are a number of other benefits, including increasing biodiversity, improving air quality, and reducing flooding. By the end of 2023/24, EFI will have planted an estimated 375,000 trees in Essex, exceeding its original four-year target by 125,000 trees. By the end of 2025, the initiative now expects to have planted up to 500,000 trees over five years.

Tsahia, who works for Oakland Care in Chigwell, the first care home group in the UK to be classified as carbon neutral, volunteered for the EFI:

“Tree planting with the Essex Forest Initiative was a great day out contributing to an essential cause. It was a good workout and a day in the fresh air is always good for the body and mind! Oakland Care is always looking to contribute positively, and planting hundreds of trees will not only benefit the local area, but also help with the fight against climate change. Being out in nature and the fresh air is really beneficial for wellbeing, and hopefully these new trees will grow to bring joy to local people, as well as wildlife.”



WHAT WE WILL DELIVER:

1. We will invest an additional £12 million on top of the existing highways budget to support a highways improvement programme, focussing on priorities that matter to residents. More than £8.3 million will be spent on new crews to work for councillors on their highways priorities; Local Highways Panels will receive an additional £2 million to deliver larger schemes with guidance from a 'Chairman's Advisory Panel'; and extra funding to respond to flooding, the impacts of winter, enforcement and communications, and resurfacing.

**AN ADDITIONAL
£12M TO SUPPORT
A HIGHWAYS
IMPROVEMENT
PROGRAMME**



2. We will work with partners, including city, district and borough councils and the energy network operator to inform local area energy planning. This will investigate opportunities for renewable generation, storage, building retrofit, and clean

heat infrastructure to enable effective local progress toward net zero.

3. We will support Essex residents to access affordable energy and energy efficiency measures for their homes, through schemes including:

- Essex Energy Switch, which helps households to get a better price for their energy supply
- Solar Together, which helps homeowners to purchase high quality solar panels for less
- the Government's Help to Heat scheme, which provides energy efficiency support and upgrades to low-income households

4. We will work with Uttlesford, Chelmsford and Colchester councils to embed net zero carbon planning policies into draft Local Plans. This will require all new homes to meet the new net zero energy standards.

5. We will partner with electric vehicle chargepoint operators to install around 60 electric vehicle on-street residential chargers as part of our Office of Zero Emission Vehicles (OZEV) on-street residential charge points funding. We will develop a business case for £8 million funding from OZEV for on-street charge points.

6. We will work toward our goal of Silver status as a Carbon Literate Organisation for Essex County Council. We will support 1,000 council employees to achieve Carbon Literacy accreditation.
7. We will develop a new Local Transport Plan in consultation with the public and other organisations. The plan will be central to securing future government funding for transport improvements in Essex which support a wide range of positive outcomes – Supporting People, Health, Wellbeing, and Independence; Creating Sustainable Places and Communities; Connecting People, Places and Businesses. We will also work to develop a number of other important transport studies and plans, including:
 - a ‘functional road hierarchy’, called Place and Movement, to provide an up to date understanding of how all road users travel throughout Essex
 - local transport studies to identify priorities for strategic investment in transport in levelling up areas, including Tendring and South Essex
 - work with other councils in Essex to deliver sustainable growth via Local Plans and Future Transport Strategies, helping to plan future projects to be prioritised for funding
 - a new Speed Management Strategy to reflect the needs of residents and our road network, making sure our roads are safe for all users



8. We will continue to work within the Safer Essex Roads Partnership to help us achieve our aspiration for zero deaths and serious injuries on Essex roads by 2040. We will continue to work towards integrating and implementing the safe system approach. This aims to reduce risk to all road users, across all county council functions, so that the safety of our road users and residents is considered in all our policies and service delivery.
9. We will provide more up to date and reliable travel information about bus services via the TravelEssex website and app, by implementing a new Transport Provider Portal. The portal will also allow us to work more effectively with transport providers who run our services.
10. We will continue to provide DigiGo, our on demand, electric vehicle public transport service. We will expand the DigiGo service to replace some existing supported local bus routes, providing a more flexible service to users with significantly more choice about when they travel.
11. Subject to successful contract award, we will begin the replacement, refurbishment and new installation of more than 200 high-quality bus shelters across Essex.
12. We will continue to deliver active travel schemes in Braintree, Brentwood, Chelmsford, Colchester, Harlow and Wickford, with funding from Active

Travel England. Subject to consultation, these will create safer spaces for walking, cycling and wheeling, providing sustainable choices for residents and visitors. Schemes will include the creation of segregated cycle paths, junction improvements and safer crossing facilities.



13. We will develop opportunities to encourage cycling and e-scooters across Essex, increasing health and wellbeing, and reducing climate impact. This will include:
 - consulting on a new Essex Cycling Strategy, so that cycling plans and initiatives support local and national priorities
 - working with all districts to develop Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plans, which are essential for securing government funding to support infrastructure projects that make it easier for residents to walk and cycle

- aiming for our Essex e-scooter trial to reach 3.5 million rides overall, encouraging sustainable methods of transport and providing greater choice to residents and visitors
14. We will produce a Healthy School Streets toolkit to allow us to focus support where it is most needed to make it safer for children, families and carers to walk, cycle or wheel to school. This will include a prioritisation tool, a 'catalogue' of measures which can be introduced, a toolkit for schools to use, and refresh of our guidance for schools in new developments.
 15. We will complete our transformation programme to upgrade all streetlights in Essex with LED light fittings, by replacing the remaining fittings that are harder to replace, such as older style columns. LED streetlights are better for the environment, have fewer faults and are a more effective use of taxpayers' money. Overall, this will save 6,500 tonnes of carbon per year.

16. We will work as part of the Essex Waste Partnership to develop the new Waste Strategy for Essex, taking into account the results of the public consultation. Action plans will identify priorities for delivery to ensure sustainable waste management in Essex.
17. We will work to deliver new arrangements for the treatment of waste which cannot be recycled or is not biodegradable, known as residual waste, by 2025. This will ensure the future sustainability of the service.
18. We will work as part of the Essex Waste Partnership, using the Love Essex brand, to share best practice to reduce waste and create a more circular economy, where products and materials are kept in circulation for as long as possible. We will increase the types of materials that can either be recycled or taken for reuse at our recycling centres.
19. We will deliver a range of activities to encourage and support partners and communities to take climate action themselves, including:
 - holding spring and autumn climate conferences for all Essex local authorities and other partners
 - Climate Czar visits to Essex businesses
 - face-to-face advice and support at community climate events
 - continuing to promote and develop the Carbon Cutting Essex app



- bringing the content in our climate advice packs up to date with the latest information
 - providing support to Community Energy groups
 - rolling out new school sustainability kits
20. We will launch the new Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Greater Essex for public consultation and develop the first actions. The final strategy will set out the ambition for a greener, healthier Essex with space for wildlife and people, describing how we can deliver 30% of Essex as natural green infrastructure by 2030. Increasing green infrastructure captures carbon, reduces flood risk, overheating and soil degradation, while supporting pollinators crucial to farming. Increasing green space for public access also benefits physical and mental health.
21. We will make £4.5 million available to deliver 7 major capital flood programme schemes to protect 187 properties, seeking match funding from the Environment Agency.
22. We will continue to deliver our 5-year programme to map all the Essex County Council managed trees on the public highway, alongside newly planted street trees under the Essex Forest initiative. This will include identifying sites for new trees on our highways.



23. We will continue to deliver the Essex Forest Initiative, with a target to plant a further 125,000 trees in 2024/25. This will bring the total number of trees planted since 2020 to 490,000, by the end of the financial year. We will seek additional grant funding to support delivery of the initiative from external funds, such as Urban Tree Challenge.
24. We will continue to develop the Essex Climate Focus Area, which pilots and accelerates climate action across the Blackwater and River Colne Catchment areas. We will do this in partnership with the district and borough councils, the North Essex Farm Cluster, local parishes, the four Net Zero Innovation Futures estates, the three Nature Plan parishes and others. We will promote the Climate Focus Area with a full communications campaign, including website, case studies and blogs.
25. We will develop a new Essex Water Strategy to set out a series of recommendations to tackle water scarcity and water quality across Essex, building upon the regional water strategy work undertaken by Water Resources East. This will help residents and businesses to understand the importance of reducing their own water usage and ways to do so.
26. We will work to establish two more sections of the King Charles III England Coast Path, a long distance coastal path that follows the coastline of

England. Once formally opened, this will bring the total number of completed sections in Essex to six, with another three sections subject to approval by government.

27. We will deliver key initiatives to increase biodiversity, reduce climate impact and improve health and wellbeing through access to quality open space, including:
 - maintaining Green Flag Award status across seven Country Parks and welcome over 900,000 visitors again in 2024/25
 - seeking further Countryside Stewardship funding to enhance the management of natural environments in our Country Parks
 - beginning to deliver a Biodiversity Net Gain scheme in East Mersea, Colchester
 - seeking external funding for the following sites: Belhus Woods Country Park, Hadleigh Country Park (Hadleigh Downs), Thorndon Country Park and Weald Country Park
28. We will publish a biodiversity report to communicate the positive actions we are taking to improve the environment for nature to thrive in Essex. This will build on our existing Tree Strategy and brings together the policies and actions that are necessary to comply with the Government's new Biodiversity Duty for councils.



**HEALTH,
WELLBEING AND
INDEPENDENCE
FOR ALL AGES**

HEALTH, WELLBEING AND INDEPENDENCE FOR ALL AGES

In Everyone's Essex, we set out five commitments under the health aim to improve the lives of the people of Essex. These are:

Healthy lifestyles: We will aim to increase the proportion of people able to live healthy lifestyles by embedding a community-first approach, by helping people to overcome social isolation, mental ill health and substance misuse, and by helping people to live fit and active lifestyles.

Promoting independence: Our vision for adult social care is for people to be able to live their lives to the fullest. We will achieve this by investing in our people and technology to ensure forward-looking services; by helping secure accommodation, and access to careers and meaningful activities; and by working with partners to deliver the best intermediate care and services. We want our residents to have quality lives and that includes freedom from abuse and neglect.

Place-based working: Care needs vary from place to place, therefore, we will work with local authority, health and the voluntary sector partners to ensure care provision is shaped to the needs of the local population. Our goal is to provide services which feel fully joined-up; continuous improvement is fundamental.

Carers: We will help those carers of all ages whose caring duties are impacting most on their lives by achieving a step-change in the advice, guidance and support we provide to enable wellbeing and independence.

Levelling up health: Our long-term ambition is to narrow the differential in quality life expectancy across the county. This will require us to continue addressing the root-causes of poor health outcomes, such as poor housing, deprivation, and access to health facilities. We want everyone to have the best start in life.

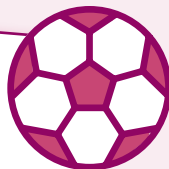
Next we set out what we **have achieved**, with our partners, since Everyone's Essex was launched, and what we **aim to achieve** by March 2025.

WHAT WE HAVE ACHIEVED:



Relunched the **Essex Wellbeing Service**, a one-stop health and wellbeing network helping residents with community support, which has received **33,000+ enquiries** so far

Ran the Active Essex **'Move with Us' campaign** to encourage children and young people to take part in sport and physical activity



Launched the Active Essex 'Find your Active' campaign, with **£1.25 million grant funding** for local community and social activities to **improve health and reduce isolation**

Helped **39 organisations** to secure **Sports England Together Fund grants** for physical activity projects



Piloted specialist services for residents facing multiple challenges from homelessness, mental health and addiction



Assisted children from **31 schools** to travel actively to school with our **£100,000 Essex School Active Travel Grant**

Gathered **3,670+ responses** to our 2022 Young People's Relationships and Sex Education Survey to improve sexual health services



Provided free workplace health and wellbeing support for **580+ organisations** and training for **1,000+ mental health first aiders**



Hosted the first **Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Conference** for schools and education settings employees from across Greater Essex

Introduced a three-year, **£7.5 million Essex Public Health Accelerator Bids grant programme** to fund new projects that help people to live a healthy life

Our 4-year commitments to ensure the best quality health, care, and wellbeing for all the parts of our population:

1. Healthy lifestyles

2. Promoting independence

3. Place-based working

4. Carers

5. Levelling up health



Launched **Essex Care Technology Service**, improving quality of life and independence for **9,500+ people**



Awarded **Team of the Year** at 2023 Social Worker of the Year Awards

Collaborated on a **mental health-supported housing model** to encourage independent and socially-connected living

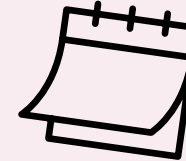


Expanded the successful **Nightingale Care Bursary**, funding **200+ free qualifications** for existing health and care workers and **60 apprenticeships** through ACL



Developed a new **ward-led enablement service**, delivered by ECL and with NHS Trusts, to get older hospital patients moving sooner after treatment to improve recovery times

Supported our Adult Social Care workforce with **new wellbeing initiatives** and flexible working patterns



Celebrated **one year** of the successful **Memory Café** at Harwich Library, aiding dementia patients and their carers



Supported new **Community Micro Enterprises**, offering personal and culturally-sensitive care services



Published **“Meaningful Lives Matter”**, a disability strategy focusing on independent living, meaningful activities, social connections and health needs



Launched the **“Shaping My Future”** guide, enabling discussions for a better life among residents with disabilities and long-term health conditions

Our 4-year commitments to ensure the best quality health, care, and wellbeing for all the parts of our population:

1. Healthy lifestyles

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Worked with the NHS to implement a **shared care record** for patient information, leading to faster and more informed decisions



Won a **Municipal Journal award**, recognising the success of our Connect programme with the NHS to improve lives for **8,000+ older residents**

Collaborated with London Marathon Events to deliver **Ride London-Essex events**, investing **£1.75+ million** of charitable funds in local projects for active and healthy lives

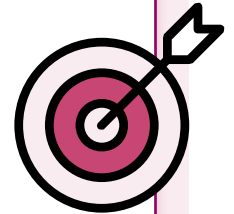


Commemorated **155 Young Carers in Schools Awards** won by Essex schools

Delivered the Community Initiatives Fund, allocating **£700,000+** to nearly **120 local community projects**

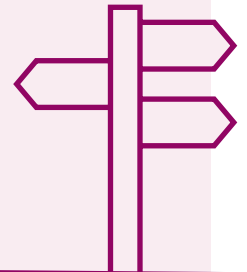


Launched our **All-Age Carers Strategy**, outlining partnership support for unpaid carers, including young carers



Established **three new Integrated Care Partnerships** with the NHS, councils and voluntary sector to improve health outcomes and inequalities

Created the **Essex Recovery Foundation**, an independent charity placing Essex residents at the heart of decision making for services to support drug and alcohol problems



Agreed arrangements for prison release housing and hospital discharge housing with public sector partners to **prevent homelessness and rough sleeping**

Secured **£1.7 million Rough Sleeping Initiative** funding to extend our rough sleeper outreach service for three years and to nine districts

Our 4-year commitments to ensure the best quality health, care, and wellbeing for all the parts of our population:

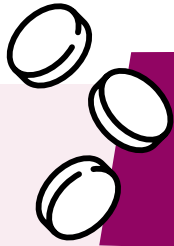
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Introduced **£50 million Cost of Living Support** to help residents pay for essentials like food and heating and manage their spending and wellbeing

Conducted four **'Quests'** focusing on race, disability, LGBTQIA+ and age to **improve inclusivity** in our Adult Social Care workforce



Introduced **"Ready 4 School"** physical literacy breakfast clubs for **300 children and families** in Canvey Island

Introduced **Essex Pedal Power**, providing **1,000+ free bikes** in Clacton and Jaywick with lessons and support. Pedal Power has been expanded to Harwich, Colchester and Basildon

Led a disability cycling project in Tendring, which helped **7,500+ people with free bikes** for independent, regular cycling



Upgraded **51 GP surgeries** to ultrafast broadband, benefitting **300,000 patients**



Funded the **Beat the Street** games promoting physical activity in Harwich and Clacton, with **6,000+ residents** taking part and travelling a total of **70,000+ miles**



Responded to nine avian influenza outbreaks, with our approach adopted as **national best practice**



Organised **220 holiday clubs** and **90 half-terms clubs** for low-income families through Essex ActivAte



Published our **Active Essex 10-year Fit for the Future** strategy to address inequality and promote equal access to an active lifestyle

Our 4-year commitments to ensure the best quality health, care, and wellbeing for all the parts of our population:

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CASE STUDY:

ESSEX CARE TECHNOLOGY SERVICE

The Care Technology Service enables people in Essex to live as independently as possible, for as long as possible by issuing them digital devices based on their individual needs. This complements and enhances traditional forms of care, by supporting carers, improving housing environments, enabling employment opportunities, improving technological and digital capability in the care market and developing social care practice. The service is delivered by Essex County Council in partnership with Millbrook Healthcare and Provide Community Interest Company.

As of January 2024, the Care Technology Service has supported over 9,500 Essex residents, significantly exceeding expectations. The monitoring and response service has attended 3,865 response visits and helped 1,870 people who have fallen. This has achieved total savings of almost £31 million and avoided further costs and pressures to the NHS, by preventing ambulance call outs and hospital stays. 1,625 care professionals, within and outside of the County Council, have been trained to prescribe care technology across Essex. Our ambition is that every adult in receipt of adult social care has access to care technology to support them to be as independent as possible.

Examples of how customers have benefited from the Care Technology Service:

D is 80, with a diagnosis of Parkinson's and other medical conditions. He is determined not to lose his mobility but is susceptible to falls. D doesn't want to be dependant on his wife but needs someone near him in case he falls. The Care Technology Service provided an Essence base unit and EPA falls detector to allow him to raise an alarm in the event of a fall. His wife can now go shopping and leave him knowing he is able to get help if needed.

Ms P is 50 and has a number of physical and mental health conditions for which she takes different medications. She has forgotten to take these on a number of occasions. Ms P was given a Pivotel medication dispenser to remind her to take her medication on time and as a result is no longer experiencing low moods as frequently as she used to.

WHAT WE WILL DELIVER:

1. We will develop a healthy weight strategy with partners, setting out a different approach to promoting healthy weight, recognising the limitations of current approaches to reducing obesity. We will focus more on a collective effort on reducing the obesogenic nature of the local environment, which limits the free choice of residents to adopt and sustain behaviours for a healthy weight.
2. We will look for opportunities to promote oral health and healthy weight among children. This will include working with partners in education and health on a joint approach to educating children and families on the risks of high sugar intake and encouraging them to reduce added sugar intake in packed lunches. We will work with health partners to support a reduction in the number of under 5s having multiple teeth extracted due to tooth decay.
3. We will successfully deliver Ride London-Essex, which will release new funding of £750,000 from London Marathon Foundation to increase sport and physical participation across Essex. We will work with partners and organisations to raise our profile as a sporting county, showcasing the benefits of holding mass participation events that inspire residents to get involved and boost the economy.
4. We will continue to work with the Essex Recovery Foundation (ERF) to support delivery of its 5-Year Strategic Approach to Drugs and Alcohol and the National Drug Strategy. The ERF 5-year strategy has four main aims:
 - Growing the recovery community – supporting people to maintain their recovery and improve their health and wellbeing
 - Empowering people and their ideas – to work with the community to better support them to influence the way support is provided
 - Influencing life changing services – delegating responsibility to the community to develop and fund treatment and support
 - Changing perceptions – reduce the stigma associated with addiction and drug/alcohol use

TAKE A JOINT APPROACH
TO EDUCATING CHILDREN
AND FAMILIES ON THE
**RISKS OF HIGH
SUGAR INTAKE**



5. We will continue to support residents to quit smoking, prioritising areas and populations in Essex with higher rates of smoking, including expectant mothers and routine and manual workers. We will work with our partners across the health system to support the Government's ambition of a smoke free generation.
6. We will lead countywide efforts with partners to reduce youth vaping in Essex. This will focus on co-designing effective messages with young people and providing information to support and inform parents. We will review the resources available to schools and develop a clear pathway of support to quit vaping. Insight from our activities will be used to inform the design of a countywide youth vaping campaign.
7. We will deliver initiatives to protect the health and wellbeing of Essex consumers through our trading standards team by:
 - prioritising cases that pose the greatest risk to consumers and businesses, including rogue traders who target the most vulnerable in our community
 - enhancing our work to tackle the underage sales of age restricted goods (including vapes) and disrupting the sale and supply of illicit tobacco products

- intercepting unsafe, dangerous and illegal goods entering the UK through Essex ports and airports and preventing them from entering the marketplace
- ensuring the highest standards of livestock welfare are maintained and respond to outbreaks of notifiable animal diseases, such as avian influenza

**DELIVER INITIATIVES
TO PROTECT THE
HEALTH AND WELLBEING
OF ESSEX CONSUMERS
THROUGH OUR TRADING
STANDARDS TEAM**



8. We will launch a new Air Quality Strategy for public consultation, which will set out how we will work with partners and stakeholders with the aim of improving the quality of the air we all breathe.
9. We will continue to support delivery of the new Essex Sexual Health Service for young people. This will ensure that all young people are supported to have healthy relationships and can access youth-friendly

sexual health services when they need them. We will implement a young person mystery shopping programme to test service provision. We will lead countywide efforts to continue to reduce under 18 conceptions and under 18 abortions, through an action plan that matches the national teenage pregnancy prevention framework.

10. We will work with our partners to deliver the Southend, Essex and Thurrock Mental Health Strategy and support action to reduce suicide through the Suicide Prevention Partnership. We will develop a plan to tackle mental health stigma, enable positive everyday wellbeing, prevent low-level mental health disorders, and enable people with poor mental health to be physically active and more socially connected. We will develop a new delivery model for adult social care mental health services that addresses the wider determinants of mental health and promotes greater choice and control for people with long-term mental illness.
11. We will continue to support the health and wellbeing of employees via our Working Well workplace health offer for organisations across Essex. This will include training more people in Mental Health First Aid and a targeted approach to reduce lifestyle risk factors, with a particular focus on routine and manual workers.



12. We will establish a £5 million Health Determinants Research Collaboration for Greater Essex, defining a joint research programme across Southend, Essex and Thurrock with the University of Essex. The findings will help to inform decisions by partners across Greater Essex, as they work to understand and deliver improvements to the health of Greater Essex residents, with a focus on those places and groups who experience greater health inequalities.
13. We will implement the Essex Care Market Strategy to support and shape the market so that it meets the diverse range of needs of residents, builds capacity for more people to be supported in their own homes and remains vibrant and stable.
14. We will implement the commitments in our disability strategy, Meaningful Lives Matter, to help improve the lives of adults in Essex who have a learning disability, physical disability or sensory impairment.
15. We will expand the provision of the Essex Shared Lives Service, independent living provision and develop our in-house residential homes to increase accommodation options for people with learning disabilities and autism.
16. We will promote inclusive employment and support increasing numbers of adults with learning disabilities and autism and adults accessing

mental health services into paid work. Through Adult Community Learning we will continue to support adult learners with learning difficulties to lead healthy, independent and socially included lives.

17. We will grow our Direct Payments Service to support more people to manage their own care, support plans and budgets where they want greater control.

**GROW OUR DIRECT
PAYMENTS SERVICE TO
SUPPORT MORE PEOPLE
TO MANAGE THEIR
OWN CARE**



18. We will continue to plan for the Government's proposed changes to the adult social care charging regime.
19. We will continue expanding delivery of the Essex Care Technology Service, which provides a range of care technology to help older people and people with disabilities to live more independently.
20. We will enhance our early help, information, advice and guidance to help improve customer experience and manage increasing demand.

21. We will develop a strategic approach to the adoption and use of technology for adult social care and the development of digital skills to improve access to services for residents, enable self-serve options and make processes simpler and more efficient.

**CONTINUE TO MANAGE
OVER £580,000 OF
GOVERNMENT FUNDING
THROUGH THE
ROUGH SLEEPING
INITIATIVE**



22. We will continue to manage over £580,000 of government funding through the Rough Sleeping Initiative, working with 350 individual rough sleepers and helping over 200 of them off the streets. We will provide a further 48 units of supported accommodation for rough sleepers with £210,000 funding secured from the Government's Next Step Accommodation Programme.
23. We will coordinate work across districts, boroughs and cities in Essex to better accommodate rising numbers of homeless households placed in emergency and temporary accommodation. This will include accelerated joint efforts to bring

forward new housing supply that is more affordable to local housing authorities, reducing financial pressures. We will explore options for data sharing and service improvement to avoid the negative impacts when households are displaced and dislocated within and beyond Essex.

24. We will deliver a new model of integrated intermediate care services working with the NHS to help people to regain independence and to reduce ongoing care needs.
25. We will continue to deliver the commitments in our All-Age Carers Strategy and bring greater visibility to the needs of carers in Essex. This will include providing access to a first point of contact at the Essex Wellbeing Service, the procurement of a new core offer, the launch of a carers' community fund to help meet needs at the local level and by developing a carers' short breaks offer. This will improve support to the many thousands of unpaid carers supporting family and friends in Essex, including young carers and young carers transitioning to adulthood.
26. We will support the Health and Digital Literacy Champions across Essex, integrating them with our Integrated Care Systems and GP surgeries to promote the NHS app and online consultations. We will also collaborate with community hubs to employ a digital triaging tool, directing digitally excluded residents to local support. We will map

digital exclusion risks and use this data to identify intervention areas, aligning with local providers to address digital inclusion gaps effectively.

- 27. We will continue to build resilient communities, supporting people to be independent and stay connected. Our social movement, United in Kind, fosters community connections and activities bringing people together in acts of kindness. We will continue to enable people to remain at home and manage independently through our Community Agent team who provide a home visit and support service based on individual needs.
- 28. Our Holiday Activity and Food programme will support school children aged 4-16 who receive free school meals across Essex. Over 240 clubs will offer around 200,000 free spaces during the year for young people to access enriching activities, physical activity, food, education and family support during the Easter, summer and Christmas school holidays as well as at half term.

OVER 240 HOLIDAY CLUBS WILL OFFER **AROUND 200,000 FREE SPACES** FOR CHILDREN WHO RECEIVE FREE SCHOOL MEALS



29. Our Move With Us programme will engage young people in finding an activity that is right for them and that they enjoy. Within a year, we will see a 1% increase in children classed as active and will raise awareness through proactive and targeted communications to engage an additional 100,000 young people in Essex. We will increase the number of activities for children and young people on our activity finder by at least 10% and will coordinate a programme for over 100 young people to become Move With Us Ambassadors, who will encourage their peers to participate.

ESSEX PEDAL POWER WILL
GIVE OUT **4,000 NEW**
BIKES TO RESIDENTS



30. Essex Pedal Power will give out 4,000 new bikes to residents in the levelling up areas of Clacton, Harwich, Colchester, Basildon and Canvey Island, which will positively impact on health, active travel, carbon reduction and community cohesion. In Harlow, a new Essex Pedal Power scheme will be supported by Sport England's Place Expansion programme. We will explore all investment opportunities for the sustainability of Essex Pedal Power in future years.

31. We will fund new projects through The Public Health Accelerator Bids (PHAB) £7.5 million grant programme, to help people in Essex to live a healthy life. Projects will be expected to make a difference to the lives of many vulnerable residents and reduce health inequalities across Essex. Covering an initial three-year period, funded projects will lay the foundations for the achievement of longer-term health outcomes that will support all residents to live a healthy life and achieve their full potential.

32. We will make sure all residents have access to essential resources and support to prevent them from becoming socially isolated, by offering effective information and signposting in our libraries. Maintaining libraries as inclusive and welcoming spaces will help us to foster healthier and more connected communities across Essex.

WE WILL MAKE SURE
ALL RESIDENTS HAVE
ACCESS TO ESSENTIAL
RESOURCES AND
SUPPORT TO PREVENT
THEM FROM BECOMING
SOCIALLY ISOLATED





**A GREAT PLACE
FOR CHILDREN
AND FAMILIES
TO GROW**

A GREAT PLACE FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES TO GROW

In Everyone's Essex, we set out five commitments under this aim to improve the lives of the children and families in Essex. These are:

Education outcomes: We will achieve educational excellence and high standards for all children and young people as we recover from the pandemic, by working in partnership with early years providers, schools, colleges and universities, by building greater coherence across the system and by engaging businesses, communities and the arts sector in supporting education outcomes.

Family resilience and stability: We will work to strengthen family resilience and stability, as part of thriving communities, by embedding an approach that tackles the drivers of family instability, and provide support to low income, vulnerable and working families.

Safety: We will continue to improve the safety of Essex residents, including children and young people, by sustaining our nationally recognised approach to early intervention, safeguarding and neglect,

addressing domestic abuse, child criminal and sexual exploitation, and peer on peer violence and abuse. We will continue close working with our partners to help make our communities safer and address key issues such as violence and vulnerability, and safety for women and girls.

Outcomes for vulnerable children: We will work to improve outcomes for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups including Children in Care, Care Leavers, Children with SEND and children from ethnic minority communities, by working with children, young people and partners across the system.

Levelling up outcomes for families: We will work to address inequalities affecting children and families by focusing on recovery from the pandemic, tackling family poverty, mental health support, emotional wellbeing and healthy, active and productive lifestyles, and making sure that we engage hard to reach groups.

Next we set out what we **have achieved**, with our partners, since Everyone's Essex was launched, and what we **aim to achieve** by March 2025.

WHAT WE HAVE ACHIEVED:



Achieved an **'Outstanding'** rating for children's social care services from Ofsted, the only local authority to achieve Outstanding in every area



Established the **Essex Education Task Force** for post-COVID-19 recovery of children's learning

91% of Essex schools have achieved a 'Good' or 'Outstanding' Ofsted rating



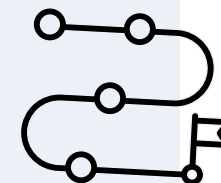
Secured **£82+ million** from housing developers for new and expanded schools



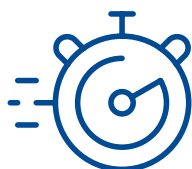
Delivered a **STEM event** on connectivity for Clacton Coastal Academy students with Openreach

Launched the **Essex Education Inclusion Strategy; Equity and Excellence for All: equitable education** and special focus on SEND/disadvantaged children

Published a 10-year plan for **8,000** primary, **5,600** secondary school places, including three net zero schools



Trained **360+ Disadvantage Champions** to improve educational outcomes across schools



Responded swiftly to minimise disruptions at RAAC-affected schools, earning recognition from the Education Secretary

Created **new space for post-16 learning** at the former Abbotsweld ACL building, reducing pressure on the main school site and **benefitting SEND students**

Our 4-year commitments to boosting the safety and prosperity of local families:

1. Education outcomes

2. Family resilience and stability

3. Safety

4. Outcomes for vulnerable children

5. Levelling up outcomes for families



Delivered the Essex Year of Reading, a **£1 million countywide campaign** to inspire and engage pupils and families to read and reduce the impacts of COVID-19 on learning

Secured **£330,000 funding** for a new Children’s Imagination and Literacy Centre at Colchester Library

Hosted Essex Libraries’ **first “Author in Residence”** with the bestselling novelist Syd Moore



Set up **74 literacy areas** to support reading in every library in Essex

Launched the **Essex Year of Numbers**, a countywide numeracy campaign for 0-18-year olds with events, competitions and resources

Extended the Tendring Multi-Disciplinary Team pilot **helping 190+ vulnerable children and 75 families**, and preventing **14 children from entering care**



Launched the **Essex Short Breaks Strategy** for children with special needs, benefitting **3,000 children and young people**, and **1,300 families**



Celebrated the Family Solutions service’s **10th anniversary**, which has supported **8,000+ families** with **6,800 achieving positive outcomes**

Recognised in independent research, commissioned by the Department for Education, for the success of our integrated services to **improve children’s wellbeing**



Employed occupational therapy assistants for children and young people with SEND, **saving £100,000+** on specialist equipment and earlier interventions for families

Our 4-year commitments to boosting the safety and prosperity of local families:

1. Education outcomes

2. Family resilience and stability

3. Safety

4. Outcomes for vulnerable children

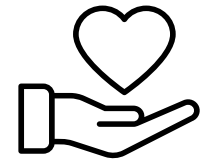
5. Levelling up outcomes for families



Collaborated with the Essex Violence and Vulnerability Unit to **enhance the capacity of Team Around the Family support officers**

Formed a **Safety Advisory Group** to recommend changes that will help make Essex a **safer place for women**

Worked with the residential care market to **expand care for vulnerable young people**



Turned our libraries into **safe spaces for domestic abuse victims**, certified by the J9 Domestic Abuse Initiative



Organised five **'Firebreak' youth awareness sessions** with the Essex County Fire and Rescue Service to address violence, misogyny and harm towards women and girls



Enhanced child safety with training and resources for employees of various public places and services

Launched our **Co-Parenting Strategy** and **Corporate Parenting Pledge** for children in our care, signed by Essex councillors

Established our **Anti-Racist Practice Framework** to address the over-representation of black and dual-heritage children in care and create a skilled, confident workforce

Published the **Essex Domestic Abuse Commissioning Strategy** with a new service offer for victims, survivors and perpetrators, informed by those who have used our services

Increased capacity of the Involvement Team to support children who go missing from home and their families



Held the **It's My Life Festival** for nearly **1,000** children and young people in care, asylum seekers and those with disabilities

Published a series of **unique books to help children in care**, created with Essex young people

Our 4-year commitments to boosting the safety and prosperity of local families:

1. Education outcomes

2. Family resilience and stability

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4. Outcomes for vulnerable children

5. Levelling up outcomes for families



Showcased **LGBTQ+ fostering stories during Pride month** to encourage fostering

Entered an **Adoptive Placements Service Agreement** with eight local authorities for improved adoption matching

Increased foster carers' fees by **9%** to ensure fostering is affordable



Funded the **Harlow Futures project** to boost struggling students' education and mental health

Piloted the Basildon early intervention programme to **prevent at-risk year-10 students** from leaving education

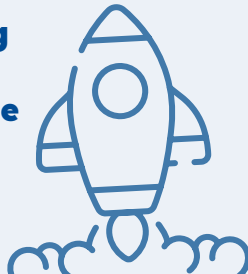


Launched our **Early Years and Childcare Strategy** for children to reach their full potential and to ensure sufficient, **affordable, high-quality and inclusive** childcare places

Delivered an **Early Years Foundation Stage Communication and Language Project** in Colchester to **boost children's Good Level of Development**



Introduced a **"Flying Start and Beyond" literacy programme** for children in Canvey Island



Piloted a programme in Tendring schools to **improve communication and language outcomes** for pupils

Launched a **Family Friendly Employers Charter** to support parents and carers manage work and caring responsibilities, with

40 employers signed up



Our 4-year commitments to boosting the safety and prosperity of local families:

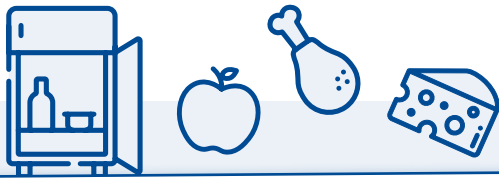
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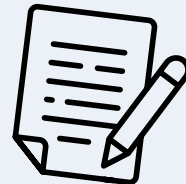


Launched **six community supermarkets for affordable essentials** in Basildon, Canvey Island, Chelmsford, Colchester, Harlow and Tendring

Organised **community events** in Rural Braintree and Canvey Island to ensure residents in levelling up areas can **access opportunities and services**

Launched the **Summer of Volunteering Campaign**, promoting volunteering opportunities and highlighting benefits

Collaborated with the Digital Essex Team on Essex Unlocked, **aiding ex-offenders** with **literacy** and **community integration**



Established a **music charitable fund** with Essex Community Foundation

Delivered our **National Lottery Heritage Fund project**, 'Communicating Connections: sharing the heritage of the Marconi Company's wireless world'



Earned Libraries of Sanctuary status for our inclusive and welcoming services to new arrivals in the UK

Offered **Warm Welcomes in all libraries**, offering hot drinks, advice and support to customers

Encouraged **361 schools** to join The Daily Mile for daily physical and mental fitness



Refurbished Harlow Library, with a new **Adult Community Learning centre**, children's section, study area, cafe and events space



Started a new **holiday outdoor education programme** with Essex Boys and Girls Club, backed by the **Essex Education Task Force**



Our 4-year commitments to boosting the safety and prosperity of local families:

1. Education outcomes

2. Family resilience and stability

3. Safety

4. Outcomes for vulnerable children

5. Levelling up outcomes for families

CASE STUDY:

ESSEX YEAR OF READING

Launched in 2022, the Essex Year of Reading was a year-long, countywide campaign created to help children and young people discover a love of reading. Funded by Essex County Council, and created by the Essex Education Task Force, the campaign was launched to address the impact COVID has had on young people's education.

Over £1 million was invested into delivering the programme. Projects involved primary, secondary and SEND schools across Essex. Activities took place in every corner of the county and included; distributing 160,000 free library cards to primary school pupils, author visits from famous faces including Dermot O'Leary and Michael Rosen, a free app full of reading materials and tips, and shared filmed story time sessions featuring local people.



**Natasha Outhwaite, Head Teacher,
Trinity Road Primary School, Chelmsford:**

“Our whole school took part in everything the Essex Year Of Reading had to offer and we made it a School Improvement Priority. As a result, we saw our reading and writing attainment levels at Key Stage 2 rocket compared to the year before.

Classes were renamed after authors relevant to their reading stage, families attended bedtime reading sessions, children did ‘bring a book swap a book’, we raised money for our library to be renewed and, of course, we taught reading as part of the timetable. We embraced all the professional learning on developing fluency and ensuring that the core reading skills were taught across all lessons.

I am very proud of our school and the improving journey we are on to get the best for our children. We have signed up to the Essex Year of Numbers; maths rightly needs to be a core School Improvement Priority for our school next year.”

WHAT WE WILL DELIVER:

1. We will continue to design and deliver school buildings that are net zero carbon in operation, by investing over £38 million in the education estate. This includes opening two new primary schools, to deliver 1,725 additional mainstream school places in time to increase school intakes for September 2024, and investing over £3 million to replace ageing temporary classrooms with new, permanent, low carbon buildings. We will secure around £25 million investment toward new schools and extensions to existing schools by negotiating Section 106 funding, using the updated 2023 Essex Developer Contribution Guide.
2. We will continue to deliver and develop capacity to provide school places for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). We will invest £19 million towards priority projects and will use the new SEND

sufficiency plan to identify future areas of growth. We will develop SEND expansions at 16 different sites across Essex, improving learning and inclusion opportunities for children with severe learning difficulties.

3. We will work with all education partners, as a member of the Essex Education Task Force, to continue to minimise the impact of the pandemic on children and young people's learning and grow best practice across the education system. Together, we will deliver the Year of Numbers, a countywide campaign that aims to inspire a love of learning, with a focus on numeracy, with activities in education and community settings, which will include:
 - Number Stacks, a large scale, continuous professional development for Essex teachers to learn new ways to engage primary children with maths
 - small maths group sessions, designed to boost the numeracy skills for our lowest achieving primary and secondary pupils, run by the Essex Educational Psychology Service
 - Labs in the Libraries, maths and science sessions for primary age children, held in libraries
 - Cricket4maths, running cricket clubs with Essex Cricket to support children and young people to develop maths skills by scoring games

**OPEN TWO NEW
PRIMARY SCHOOLS,
TO DELIVER 1,725
ADDITIONAL
SCHOOL PLACES**



4. We will continue to implement the Early Years and Childcare strategy, working with schools to develop the plan and fully implement the new childcare wraparound policy for primary age pupils. Outcomes from the strategy will include:
 - an increase in the percentage of children achieving a Good Level of Development (GLD)
 - identifying those children as early as possible who will need more support, such as improved assessment at the 2-year check, and focus on the cohorts who generally do not achieve a GLD (those born in summer and those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities)
 - an increase in take up of access to funded learning for eligible 2-year-olds
 - a focus on children who are at an economic disadvantage, to help narrow their word gap

5. We will continue to develop activities that enhance the personal development and informal education of young people across Essex. We will work with voluntary sector partners to create new youth provision for young people while supporting young carers and their families. Activities will include Duke of Edinburgh, Young Carers, Plan B and Hospital Projects.



6. We will continue to help children and families to access education, by promoting and monitoring attendance. We will support those families who choose to educate their children at home with monitoring and positive challenge. We will work directly with schools through the Attendance Specialist Team to identify concerns about absence at the earliest opportunity, as part of the Government's nationwide absence portal which captures daily and real time attendance data.

COMPLETE THE ROLL
OUT OF **COMMUNITY
SUPERMARKETS**
WITH ONE IN EACH
ESSEX DISTRICT



7. We will complete the roll out of community supermarkets with one in each Essex district, giving more people across the county access to affordable essentials.
8. We will deliver the Harlow Futures programme, working with headteachers and community partners, to address high levels of need among children and young people related to Social Emotional and Mental Health, those Not in

Education, Employment or Training and those who have not reached their expected reading age. Programmes will include:

- Trauma Perceptive Practice training (TPP) for teachers, which has been shown to improve emotional resilience and behaviour
 - RISE programme to support primary age children with social, emotional and mental health and wellbeing
 - PATHS programme to support secondary age pupils with social, emotional and mental health and wellbeing
9. We will provide training to schools and early years settings that have committed to increase the number of children attaining a Good Level of Development at the Early Years Foundation Stage. We will work with a specialist training provider, ELKLAN, to support Early Years settings in Canvey Island to work towards Communication Friendly accreditation, giving staff knowledge and skills to support children with speech, language and communication needs.
 10. We will help to improve children's life chances in Colchester, by launching a Communication Hub that serves as a model of best practice for the wider school community within the district. We will also implement the Let's Talk programme in Colchester which prioritises social, emotional and mental health needs.

11. We will continue reducing educational inequality in Tendring through our Tendring Levelling Up programme. We will launch a Communication Hub and train Communication Champions in the district. We will support schools by offering Emotional Literacy Support Assistance training and running a Home School Liaison pilot which will promote the regular and punctual attendance of all students.
12. We will implement the Essex Education Inclusion Strategy across the education sector, as the first stage of our Education Transformation Programme. Our priority will be to undertake inclusion reviews in as many schools as possible, to track the impact of the Inclusion Framework and to pilot the Ready to Regulate training programme.
13. We will continue to prioritise improvement across all Special Educational Need and Disability (SEND) services through the Co-ordination and Oversight Groups. The SEND Partnership Board will oversee this work and we will work closely with the Essex Family Forum, early years settings, schools, colleges and health partners. We will also lead a new piece of work to support the sustainability of the High Needs Block, which funds the SEND system in Essex.
14. Essex Music Service will continue to lead on the development of a Greater Essex Music Hub. This will provide the capacity to help 90% of schools in Essex

to deliver music education, reduce the cost of music education for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds and allow us to bring together Essex Music Hub partners to provide inspirational experiences and opportunities for our young people.

PROVIDE THE CAPACITY TO HELP 90% OF SCHOOLS IN ESSEX TO DELIVER MUSIC EDUCATION



15. We will continue to provide a strong offer that supports literacy in Essex libraries. Libraries will continue to seek to enhance their offer through outreach and partnership working particularly in areas of greatest need. We will leverage libraries' expertise in promoting reading for pleasure, working with education and other services to build vital skills that significantly impact a child's future opportunities and overall wellbeing.
16. We will transform the ground floor of Colchester Library into an Imagination and Literacy Centre, supported by Arts Council England funding. This will focus on science, art and technology and provide interactive learning and a play space for children and their families.

17. We will continue to work across children and family services in a way which focuses on continuous self-evaluation and improvement, using opportunities to review what we do and identify ways to evolve or innovate. We will use our Children's Transformation Board to pilot new ways of working, aiming to deliver improved outcomes in a cost-effective way. We will use learning gained from evaluating our transformation projects to inform the future development of our service offer and the wider Whole Council Transformation Programme. This year, we will explore the role that digital technology can play in enabling us to achieve our ambitions.

18. We will continue to work with partners to deliver a range of accessible support for families, helping them to address their needs and reducing demand on our statutory services. This includes:

- achieving the full potential of our Supporting Families Programme
- continuing to invest in the Family Innovation Fund
- maximising the potential of contracts, such as the Essex Child and Family Wellbeing Service
- improving the accessibility of online resources, such as the Local Offer website and Essex Directory of Services
- delivering externally grant funded parenting support



19. We will pilot the implementation of a Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) in South Essex based on the successful evaluation of our MDT in Tendring. We will evaluate the pilot to identify if the same positive impacts that were achieved in North Essex can be replicated in the south, focused on reducing the number of children going into care and on the re-establishment of links between families and community resources.
20. We will work across our services, with partners and communities, to ensure an effective response to those arriving in Essex from other countries, including families and young people who arrive independently. We will meet our statutory duties and ensure new arrivals are welcomed, informed of local community resources and engaged in local health and education providers. Separated

migrant children will receive a service from our Arrivals Team that will consider all of their needs and provide a wraparound service to aid their settlement.

21. We will refresh our Domestic Abuse Commissioning Strategy to ensure we maintain a robust approach to delivering on our statutory duties for victims and survivors. We will ensure this work is informed by our domestic abuse discovery research, to support the redesign of an improved offer for victims, survivors and perpetrators in future.
22. We will coordinate a strategic and joined-up response to community safety priorities across Essex, Southend and Thurrock through Safer Essex. This will include work to stop violence against women and girls (including domestic abuse) through education and training, creating safer public spaces and providing support to victims. We will support initiatives to reduce reoffending, aiming to improve outcomes for offenders as well as protect victims and strengthen public confidence. Working with city, district and borough councils, we will fulfil our statutory Community Safety Partnership responsibilities.
23. We will deliver on our core functions to support and promote the welfare of children who are at risk of harm. This includes working with families to support children staying safely at home and,

ENSURE NEW ARRIVALS ARE **WELCOMED**, INFORMED OF **LOCAL COMMUNITY RESOURCES** AND ENGAGED IN LOCAL **HEALTH AND EDUCATION PROVIDERS**



when necessary, placing them in high quality care settings suitable to their needs. We will work with system partners to remain alert to the variety of issues impacting on children, young people and families today and will consider how we can develop our services to reflect these and to respond to growing demand.

24. We will use the findings from our Outstanding Ofsted inspection of Children's Services to inform how we embed and share excellent practice and continue to provide cost effective and high-quality care for those who need it. In response to the report's recommendation, we will seek to improve practice related to separated migrant children to ensure they are being provided with consistent and trauma informed care that meets their individual needs.
25. We will continue to improve the sufficiency of placements for children in care through our programmes of work under the governance of the Children's Transformation Board and as part of the Whole Council Transformation Programme. We will achieve this by continuing to strengthen support aimed at diverting children and young people from care, by further expanding the availability of in-house foster placements and by continuing to deliver our ambitious programme to increase residential provision in Essex. This will

involve improving our relationship with the market, improving the way we commission placements and developing our own in-house residential homes.

26. We will deliver our Co-Parenting Strategy and Children in Care and Leaving Care Partnership Strategy, working through our Children in Care Partnership Board to maximise the potential of the Essex system to deliver improved outcomes for this priority group. Our actions will be driven by the voices of children and young people in care and leaving care; we will incorporate opportunities to listen to children and young people into everything we do.
27. We will continue to engage with changes to the national policy agenda for children, families and education, including the reform strategy for children's social care and the transformation of SEND and alternative provision. We will make use of opportunities to shape developments so that they reflect the voice of children and young people and advocate for a more robust national response to the growing external pressures faced by local authorities. We will engage with piloting and trailblazing to ensure that solutions reflect on the ground experience, including providing support to the National Workload Action Group and piloting the new early careers framework for social workers.

28. We will continue to ensure we are effectively responding to an increase in diversity in our population and the over-presentation of some groups who come into contact with children's services by further embedding our commitment to anti-racist practice. Under the governance of the Children's Transformation Board, we will continue to implement our Anti-Racist Practice Strategy impacting on our service users, staff and partners. We will provide spaces to surface and explore relevant issues and to influence the practice of others across the system.
29. We will recommission our advocacy service, led by the voices and experiences of children and young people, to provide an effective and accessible offer of support, ensuring those who use our services have their views heard and complaints are effectively acknowledged and responded to.
30. We will use our position as an Outstanding provider of Children's Services to influence the development of practice nationally by continuing our successful role as a Sector Led Improvement Partner, by consolidating our commercial offer, including our children in care books and thinking tools, and by piloting the Essex Solution Focused Centre. We will maximise the commercial visibility of this activity by developing an online presence to promote our achievements and the opportunities of partnering with Essex.



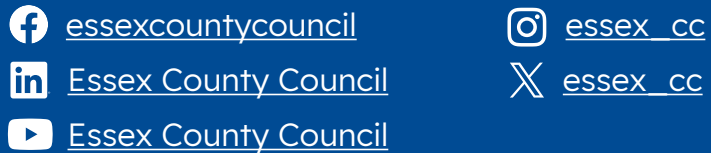
31. We will work with partners to address the growing pressures around children's mental health, by improving emotional wellbeing and expanding the availability of early help. This will include deepening and furthering the impact of Trauma Perceptive Practice and designated mental health leads in schools and supporting school mental health teams. We will also engage with health partners to address the lack of capacity in acute and crisis provision and will work to strengthen the provision and oversight of Mental Health Act (MHA) Section 117 aftercare support.
32. We will coordinate our response to tackling child criminal exploitation with our partners, including the Violence and Vulnerability Unit and Essex Police, to better understand the changing landscape of criminal exploitation and its impact on children, young people and their families. Making best use of evidence and the voice of our communities, we will support continuous practice developments, leading to new approaches to prevention and targeted intervention, and ensure we are providing an effective response to the new Serious Violence Duty.
33. We will work with under-represented and disadvantaged groups to support their progression towards learning opportunities. We will widen participation in priority areas by working in partnership with families, community groups and training providers. Adult Community Learning engagement officers based in Canvey, Harwich and Braintree will support family learning and delivery of training in adult numeracy via the Multiply programme and progression to English, Maths, Digital Skills and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL).
34. We will create an improved customer experience for those who use our services, by implementing streamlined digital platforms, user-friendly interfaces, and efficient service delivery processes. We will continue to place a special focus on providing an equal and accessible services for those who need us most, promoting inclusivity and social equality. We will continue to explore opportunities to use automation technology, where it will improve the customer experience, increase our efficiency and reduce costs.

This information is issued by:
Essex County Council Corporate Strategy Team

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