

WE SAID, WE DID

2021-25

EVERYONE'S
ESSEX



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INTRODUCTION

BY COUNCILLOR KEVIN BENTLEY,
LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

When we launched Everyone's Essex in 2021, we made a bold promise: to deliver real change for the people of Essex.

We set out 20 clear commitments that were focused on the economy, the environment, children and families, and health and wellbeing. These weren't just aspirations, they were a contract with our residents to deliver an extraordinary Essex.



The economy



The environment



Health and wellbeing



Children and families

Now, four years on, I'm immensely proud to introduce this We Said, We Did report - a reflection of what we've achieved together, collaborating with all our partners across public, private, and voluntary and community sectors. It's a story of delivery, resilience, and ambition. Through global uncertainty and local challenges, we've stayed true to our word. We've acted with purpose, led with heart, and never lost sight of the people we serve. This report isn't just about policies and programmes, it's about people. It's about the young person who found their first job through our skills initiatives. The family who now has access to better early years support. The older resident who feels safer and more connected in their community. These are the lives behind the headlines.

I'm proud to say we've achieved much to make Essex greener, fairer, and more prosperous. We've supported businesses, invested in infrastructure, and taken bold steps to improve and protect the environment. We've improved outcomes for children, strengthened social care, and championed mental health. And we've done it all while being financially responsible and transparent with our people. But this isn't the end of the journey. It's a milestone, a moment to reflect, celebrate, and recommit our intent, because Essex never stands still.

Indeed, those next steps are towards Devolution, the shift from central government to more local decision-making. This is truly the next evolutionary step in democratic government – and it is something that, coupled with the development of new unitary authorities, can provide the services people rely on in the most affordable and efficient ways. All while retaining a sense of local identity that will allow our communities, who share a proud history and track record of entrepreneurial brilliance, to thrive.

We are a county of ambition, of innovation, and of community spirit. And as we look to the future, we do so with confidence and clarity.

To everyone who has played a part in this journey, thank you. Your voices, your ideas, and your trust have shaped everything we've done. This report belongs to all of us.





COUNCILLOR LOUISE MCKINLAY

DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER
FOR COMMUNITIES, ECONOMIC GROWTH
AND PROSPERITY

Our Levelling Up programme is on track to deliver positive benefits to almost 140,000 residents by December 2025.

Initiatives include our Best Start programmes and Education focussed programmes such as Harlow Futures, which have successfully supported young people from an early age to give them a strong start to school and improve their life chances. We have funded the Poppins and Nightingale Bursary Schemes, which are designed to widen access to learning and qualifications for roles in some of those key sectors that are facing recruitment challenges.

We have also opened fourteen not for profit Community Supermarkets – more than one per

District, supporting over 5,200 members to access affordable food and household items. Our Essex ActivAte holiday activity and food programme has worked with over 100 local community based organisations, and engaged and supported over 100,000 young people and their families in free holiday activity clubs.

**OUR FREE ESSEX ACTIVATE
HOLIDAY PROGRAMME HAS
SUPPORTED OVER 100,000
YOUNG PEOPLE AND
THEIR FAMILIES**

We have focussed our efforts on boosting economic growth in Essex. Key developments include, signing an international memorandum of understanding with the City Government of Virginia Beach, establishing a relationship with KBC (a European Investment Bank) to encourage more investment into the County, and we are now working with a Commonwealth Business Group. We have also launched the Greater Essex Business Board, comprising senior business leaders taking on an advisory role - the Board will be key to unlocking economic growth across Essex.

WE HAVE OPENED
FOURTEEN NOT FOR
PROFIT **COMMUNITY**
SUPERMARKETS,
SUPPORTING **OVER 5,200**
MEMBERS TO ACCESS
AFFORDABLE FOOD





**A STRONG,
INCLUSIVE
AND
SUSTAINABLE
ECONOMY**

WHAT WE HAVE ACHIEVED



By **business**,
for **business**
and with **business**

Launched the **Greater Essex Business Board** bringing together experts from the world of education and business to create shared priorities and plans to meet skills shortages in Essex.



Improved numeracy skills for 11,000 residents through our £8 million **Multiply** programme funded by Government.

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

Launched an **advanced training offer** in partnership with South Essex Advanced Technical Skills and led by key industry partners. 58 apprenticeships and 123 additional training opportunities have been awarded.

DP WORLD

Ford

TEVVA



SE
South Essex
Councils

LEONARDO

Secured £30.7 million over five years to deliver **Connect to Work**, a free employment support programme for Greater Essex residents who are unemployed and face barriers to work, such as disability, health conditions or life challenges. Over the next 5 years we aim to support 7,800 people across Greater Essex.



Played a key role in the creation of **Stansted Airport College**, part of Harlow College, creating opportunities for young people to gain specialist insight and skills in the growing airport economy. We are working with education partners on the proposed Phase 2 expansion, bringing even greater opportunities regionally, nationally and internationally.

ACL



Delivered over 17,000 **Adult Community Learning** opportunities to almost 8,000 people, including 6,000 Level 1 to 6 qualifications on average each year and 900 apprenticeships and placements for young people aged 18-24.

EVERYONE'S ESSEX STRATEGIC AIM: A **STRONG, INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY**



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

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



Launched the **Essex Careers Magazine** to over 30,000 readers in print and online, showcasing job and training opportunities in industries for the future.



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



Launched the **Ambitious Women in Essex** network to support business growth for local business owners and partners, attracting over 5,000 social media followers and over 1,000 attendees to events across Essex.

Held the first **Ambitious Essex Business Summit**, attended by over 250 attendees and 130 businesses who took part in free workshops on key topics, such as how to export internationally.'



NatWest



Opened **Workaries** in libraries in Harlow and Loughton, in partnership with Wimbletech, offering affordable co-working space and community events.



EVERYONE'S ESSEX STRATEGIC AIM: A **STRONG, INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY**



Secured £69 million and planning approval to transform the **Army and Navy junction** in Chelmsford with a new roundabout and sustainable transport package, which includes walking, cycling, bus and Park and Ride improvements.

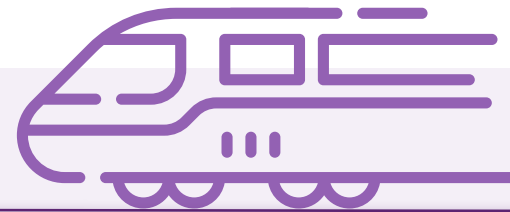


Completed works to the **M11 Junction 7A** ahead of schedule, which will ease congestion in Harlow and create housing and business opportunities.



Introduced a new **Community Infrastructure Levy** on developers in Castle Point and Brentwood to provide £34 million of future funding for new local infrastructure projects.

With Colchester City Council, secured just under £13 million for the regeneration of **St Botolph's Circus**, from Government's Levelling Up Fund. We have consulted over 2,000 residents to help shape the project, creating a safer, more accessible gateway to the city centre for all transport users and vibrant new public spaces.



Construction on the fully accessible **Beaulieu Park Railway station** is on track and almost complete, the first new station to be built on the Great Eastern Main Line in a century.

Secured £94 million from Government's Housing Infrastructure Fund for North Essex housing and transport infrastructure, including the new **A1331 Link Road** and a **Rapid Transport System in Colchester**. Both programmes are underway to support delivery of the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community and construction of up to 7,500 new homes.

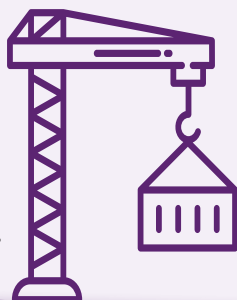
Secured £225 million from Government's Housing Infrastructure Fund to deliver the **Chelmsford North East Bypass** and **Beaulieu Park Railway Station** which are essential to support 11,000 new homes in the Chelmsford area.



EVERYONE'S ESSEX STRATEGIC AIM: A **STRONG, INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY**



Essex Housing completed the construction of **four new housing schemes**, College Gardens in Rochford, Shernbroke in Waltham Abbey, Novus in Shenfield and Oakview Walk in Harlow. The schemes have delivered a total of 52 homes for private sale, 22 affordable homes, ten homes for specialist use and a new library and commercial unit.



Essex Housing has started construction of a 120-home development at the **former Essex County Hospital site** in Colchester, with the first phase set to deliver 63 homes for private sale launching Summer 2026.

Essex Housing has taken a lead on the **Greater Essex One Public Estate programme**, securing over £9 million of capital funding for 19 schemes being delivered by Local Authorities across Greater Essex. This includes schemes that may otherwise have not progressed.

Adopted our first **Essex Housing Strategy, 2021-2025**, setting out our priorities to deliver with housing partners:

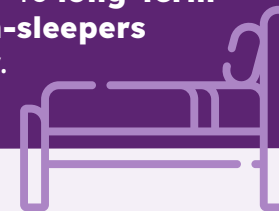
- Growing Essex while protecting the best of the county
- Enabling people to live independently throughout their life
- Supporting people facing homelessness or rough sleeping

Essex Housing has designed and submitted planning applications for:

- A pilot scheme of 10 low carbon new homes with a community use building in Chelmsford
- A new community Hub for Clacton, as part of regeneration plans for the town
- An outline planning application in Chelmsford for 185 new homes in addition to a 60 unit Extra Care scheme
- A scheme of 71 homes in Colchester for Extra Care and Adults with Complex Needs



Secured £780,000 in Government funding to deliver 48 **long-term homes for rough-sleepers** across the county.



Secured £84 million investment for 10,000 new homes with East Herts Council for the new **Harlow & Gilston Garden Town**.

Approved the **Essex Renewal Fund** to support the creation of new jobs and new homes over the next 20 years, aiming to invest over £100 million in Essex.

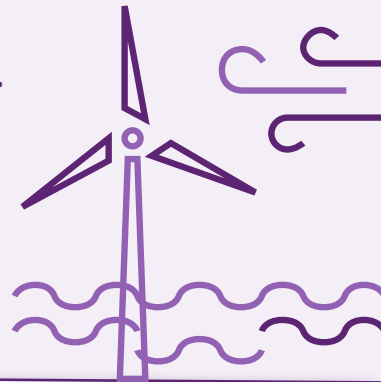
Published the **Digital Connectivity Strategy**, securing over £20 million investment in Superfast Broadband for more than 140,000 properties.



EVERYONE'S ESSEX STRATEGIC AIM: A STRONG, INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY



Signed a partnership agreement with the **US city of Virginia Beach**. A collaboration for growing international trade in offshore wind, manufacturing, digital sectors and academic collaboration.



Organised the **Essex Build Expo** attracting over 450 businesses and generating £13,600 in sponsorship income. 99% of businesses who gave feedback said they made valuable connections.



Launched the **Growing Essex Global** programme with London & Partners to create international opportunities for Essex business to expand. So far, businesses have participated in trade missions to Zurich, Paris, New York and Los Angeles.

Launched **Extraordinary Essex**, an online resource to promote Essex as a place to do invest and do business, highlighting connectivity, innovation, and entrepreneurial spirit, as well as showcasing local investment opportunities.



Invested £250,000, plus match funding, to encourage businesses to take on more **apprenticeships**. As a result, 200 new apprenticeships have been started.

Signed the **Civic University Agreement** as a commitment to work with partners to improve prosperity and wellbeing of communities across North Essex.



University of Essex



North East Essex
Health & Wellbeing Alliance

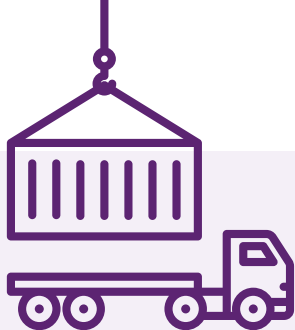


Colchester
City Council

Supported £150 million private investment and 80 jobs in Harlow and Uttlesford by supporting **Kao Data** and **AbCellera Life Sciences** to establish themselves in Essex.



EVERYONE'S ESSEX STRATEGIC AIM: A **STRONG, INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY**



Secured £25 million in Government funding to help unlock 3,500 new jobs in Harwich and Bathside Bay, as part of plans for the development of **Freeport East**.

Secured around £2 million **UK Creative Growth Finance** funding to support creative businesses and grow the creative economy in the South East.

Relaunched the **Business Essex, Southend and Thurrock (BEST) Growth Hub** to provide advice and support to help local business to grow.

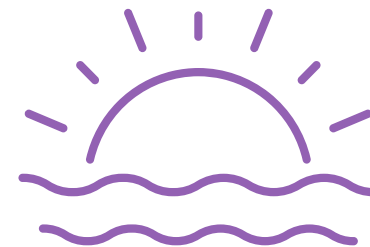
The BEST growth hub has supported Essex businesses to protect and create over 1,500 jobs, with £2 million **Backing Essex Business** investment.



OPEN

Supported more than 50 brand new businesses to start up and scale up through our tailored **Essex Innovation and Start Up** programmes.

Embedded a **Cultural and Creative Industries Strategy** to support the creative sector and improve quality of life, community and the economy.



Developed and launched the landmark, multi-award winning £5.3 million **Sunspot** business centre in Jaywick with Tendring District Council. All business units are occupied and a waiting list in place.



Awarded grants of between £2,500 and £30,000 to over 80 organisations from our **Arts and Cultural Fund**. 420,000 residents have accessed funded cultural activities, and 638 creative practitioners have been employed as a result. 11,200 school children have engaged in cultural activities they would not otherwise have been able to access.



Invested around £750,000 in **tourism marketing** campaigns, generating over £5 million of new business for the local economy.

EVERYONE'S ESSEX STRATEGIC AIM: A STRONG, INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY



The **Essex Film Office** has helped to generate over £3 million in local economic impact from film and TV production activity in the county.



Supported the first ever **Essex International Film Festival**, attracting entries from across the globe and supporting emerging Essex film makers.

Established the **Essex Cultural Ambassadors** campaign to promote skills and talent in the cultural and creative industries in Essex. Ambassadors include Dame Helen Mirren, Olly Murs and Busayo Ige.



Visit Essex has promoted the county's growing reputation for wine production as part of **English Wine Week**, for the past three years. Promotional activities have led to numerous national press articles and TV coverage, raising the profile of Essex wine as part of our wider tourism offer.

Visit Essex was awarded prestigious **Local Visitor Economy Partnership** status by VisitEngland in November 2023. As the official tourism organisation for Greater Essex we join 42 such partnerships across the country, delivering the national framework, increasing our national profile and bringing additional training, research and funding to the visitor economy.

Launched the **Essex Big Weekend**. Over 20,000 residents have applied through Visit Essex for free tickets to over 50 local attractions.



EVERYONE'S ESSEX STRATEGIC AIM: A **STRONG, INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY**



Published the **Green Skills Infrastructure Review**, setting out future requirements to create a highly skilled workforce for Essex.



Awarded £5,000 seed funding from the **Green Entrepreneurs Programme** to help three young entrepreneurs grow their innovative new businesses. Following its success, we launched a further programme to support 30 young entrepreneurs.

Hosted the first ever **Essex Green Skills Summit** where the **Essex Green Skills Pledge** was launched, encouraging local businesses to become part of a network to support green skills.

Won awards for the **Harlow and Tendring Retrofit Pipeline project**, in partnership with Retrofit Academy.



Invested £100,000 in the **Harlow College Electric Vehicle Centre**, training 150 qualified technicians



Awarded 95 people **home retrofit qualifications** through our partner, Retrofit Academy, funded with £200,000 from the Homes Decarbonisation Skills Training competition.

Created the first national **non-domestic retrofit training programme**, delivering it to 30 small to medium businesses to enhance their competitive edge.

Launched the **Essex Retrofit Forum** and **Essex Construction Alliance** to support growth in low carbon and sustainable construction, promoting local business opportunities.



Launched **Great Start**, offering free sustainability training to help businesses gain economic advantage towards low carbon, with digital badges for learning.

EVERYONE'S ESSEX STRATEGIC AIM: A **STRONG, INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY**



Worked with city, district and borough councils to secure over £120 million from Government's **Levelling Up Fund, Towns Fund and Plan for Neighbourhoods**, for regeneration in Colchester, Harlow, Canvey Island, Clacton, Harwich and Dovercourt.

Launched **ACL Essex outreach services** in Tendring, Canvey and rural Braintree.

Launched **Aspirational Essex**, encouraging local employers and skills training providers to upskill their workforce and open new career pathways for residents.

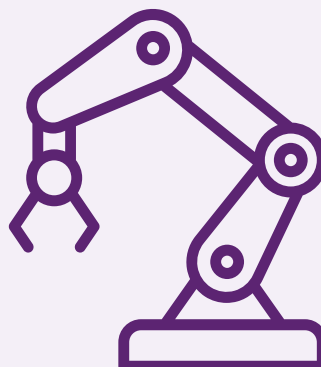


Provided training opportunities for 600 16 to 25 year-olds who are **not in education, employment or training (NEET)**, including the Mid and South Essex programme.



Distributed over 6,500 **pre-owned digital devices** to refugees, residents, schools and community voluntary services.

Piloted an **Introduction to Robotics** session with the We Rise Youth Movement in Canvey Island, introducing young people to career opportunities in technology and the world of robotics.



Introduced **Barclays Local in Essex libraries**, including Clacton, Rayleigh, Maldon, Brentwood, and Canvey Island, offering face-to-face financial support and banking services, as well as training to manage finances online securely.



EVERYONE'S ESSEX STRATEGIC AIM: A STRONG, INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY



Launched **Digital Champion training** for asylum seekers in Colchester and Tendring and extended the training for other groups within our communities. Around 40 people have been trained in total so far.

Trained staff in all our libraries as **Health and Digital Literacy Champions** and to help people access the NHS app.



Launched the **Get Online** interactive map showing residents where to access free digital support through the Digital Help Finder.

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

Digital Essex became **Network Ambassadors** for the National Digital Inclusion Network.



Launched a **social value campaign** to get the best outcomes for residents and communities from our £1.2 billion Essex supplier base, explaining our approach through a Social Value Catalogue on the Essex Provider Hub.

EVERYONE'S ESSEX STRATEGIC AIM: A STRONG, INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY



COUNCILLOR LEE SCOTT

CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING,
PLANNING AND REGENERATION

Under the Everyone's Essex strategy, Essex County Council has made significant progress in delivering sustainable housing, modern infrastructure, and resilient communities across the county.

We have completed four major Essex Housing developments College Gardens (Rochford), Shernbroke (Waltham Abbey), Novus (Shenfield), and Oakview Walk (Harlow) providing 84 new homes, including 52 for private sale, 22 affordable homes, and 10 for specialist use. These schemes also delivered a new library and commercial unit. Construction is underway on 120 homes in Colchester, with 63 due to launch in Summer 2026. Planning is advancing for Extra Care housing and a new community hub in Clacton.

Through updates to the Essex Design Guide, we secured £123 million in developer contributions over four years, primarily supporting new and expanded schools. The introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy in Castle Point and Brentwood unlocked a further £34 million for local infrastructure.

**WE SECURED £123 MILLION
IN DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS
OVER FOUR YEARS, PRIMARILY
SUPPORTING NEW AND
EXPANDED SCHOOLS**

Key transport projects, including the Chelmsford North-East Bypass and the Tendring-Colchester Borders link road, received planning permissions supporting early infrastructure for two new Garden Communities. We also secured over £120 million in regeneration funding through the Levelling Up Fund, Towns Fund, and Plan for Neighbourhoods, benefiting Colchester, Harlow, Clacton, Harwich, and more.

Through the Greater Essex One Public Estate programme, we unlocked £9 million for 19 local authority-led schemes and £450,000 to deliver 48 homes for rough sleepers.

These reflect Essex County Council's commitment to building a greener, fairer, and more resilient Essex for future generations.

WE UNLOCKED **£450,000** TO DELIVER **48 HOMES** FOR ROUGH SLEEPERS





COUNCILLOR MARK DURHAM

CABINET MEMBER FOR THE ARTS,
HERITAGE AND CULTURE

Over the last four years we have worked to celebrate what makes Essex unique: The Cultural Strategy, the inaugural Essex Film Festival and our funding for National Portfolio Organisations have showcased our vibrant creative economy supporting businesses across Essex to thrive.

The Essex Film Office attracted international productions to the county and by promoting the diversity of Essex – from industrial landscapes to medieval churches, rural villages and unique architecture – supported filming of Mr Bates Versus the Post Office, the Essex Serpent and other prestigious productions. Visit Essex continued to support tourism – responsible for 10% of jobs in Essex – generating over £5 million of new business for Essex.



We remain focused on improving residents' lives and through the library service – the second largest in England – and have continued to develop our service. Our staff are working to become dementia friendly, achieved Library of Sanctuary Status, and have been trained as Health and Digital Literacy Champions supporting residents to access the NHS App. Some of our libraries have welcomed opticians and high street banks ensuring that services remain on our high streets close to communities, and working in partnership with Essex Housing, we have redeveloped the old library in Shenfield to include a new modern library. We have refurbished Harlow Library and have secured funding to develop Harwich and Colchester libraries which will reopen soon.

OUR LIBRARY SERVICE
IS THE **SECOND
LARGEST** IN ENGLAND

VISIT ESSEX CONTINUED
TO SUPPORT TOURISM –
RESPONSIBLE FOR
10% OF JOBS IN ESSEX





**A HIGH
QUALITY
ENVIRONMENT**

WHAT WE HAVE ACHIEVED



Endorsed the recommendations set out in the Essex Climate Action Commission's **Making Essex Carbon Neutral** report, in 2021. As a result of our own initiatives, the Council's emissions dropped by nearly a third between 2020/21 and 2023/24.



Achieved bronze status as a **Carbon Literate Organisation**, from the Carbon Literacy Project, with 440 fully accredited staff and a further 343 staff undertaking training.



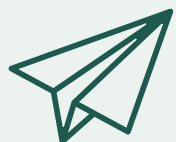
Delivered an **award-winning planning policy** for sustainable homes and new development in Essex.

Promoted our efforts to **build climate resilience in Essex** through:

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



Published our four-year £250 million **Essex Climate Action Plan**.



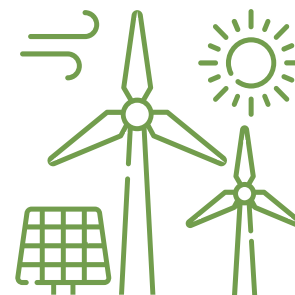
Achieved an **A-rating for our efforts to cut emissions and strengthen climate resilience** in 2022, 2023 and 2024, from the international benchmarking organisation CDP (previously the Carbon Disclosure Project). Essex is the only county council in the UK to achieve this standard.



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 and three new primary schools with **sustainable construction**, and helped install solar panels at 32 schools across the county.

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



EVERYONE'S ESSEX STRATEGIC AIM: A HIGH QUALITY ENVIRONMENT



Developed best practice planning guidance, the **Essex Green Infrastructure Standards**, which won Building with Nature's green planning award.

Secured £6 million funding for the **Warm Homes Local Grant** scheme, to provide additional support to low-income households with energy efficiency measures.

Delivered £4.5 million from the **Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund** for energy efficient upgrades to 258 low-income households.



Launched the first Essex wide **Energy Company Obligation** flex scheme, working with District, Borough and City councils, supporting energy efficiency improvements for 162 low income or vulnerable households, installing 414 energy efficiency measures, saving 3,424,678kgs CO₂ lifetime savings.



Developed a **Local Area Energy Plan** for Greater Essex, turning national energy targets into a local clean energy plan and a pathway to sustainable heat power and transport. The plan will feed into regional energy planning with Government.



Created **practical climate action guides** on environmental goals for residents, early years settings, schools and businesses.

Secured £75,000 Discovery Phase and £556,276 Alpha Phase funding, before winning £9.5 million Ofgem funding with other agencies for the **SHIELD project** to develop and test low carbon heat and energy solutions for vulnerable households, using innovative technologies and business models.

Worked with partners to secure £13.9 million grant funding for energy-efficiency and low carbon heating for 1,049 low-income homes, through the **Sustainable Warmth Fund and Home Upgrade Grant 2**. Promoted the grant to enable uptake for schemes, delivered by the Greater South East Net Zero Hub.



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

EVERYONE'S ESSEX STRATEGIC AIM: A HIGH QUALITY ENVIRONMENT



Begun installing public **EV chargepoints** across Essex and secured over £8 million for an additional 4,500 more over the next 5 years.



Resurfaced over two square km of roads with **new road-surfacing materials** which are expected to last up to 50% longer than traditional methods.



Invested an **additional £25 million into road maintenance** during 2024/25 through our Priority One programme. Works included drain cleaning, repainting white lines, vegetation clearance, sign repairs and 129 resurfacing schemes.

Introduced a **Members Highway Initiative** in 2024/25 to improve the condition and upkeep of our highways, with £12 million allocated to repair more than 14,000 defects and re-surface over 49 square km of roads.

Completed the **replacement of over 130,000 streetlights** with energy efficient, low maintenance LEDs, saving around 30 million kilowatt hours of energy each year.

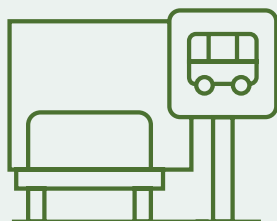


Launched **DigiGo**, one of the first on-demand minibus services for more remote areas, transporting more than 100,000 passengers so far.



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

Commenced a 10-year programme with Clear Channel UK to **upgrade, maintain, and expand bus shelters** across Essex, in collaboration with 10 district, borough and city councils.



Produced 15 **Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans** for places in Essex, totalling over 400 routes and including the rural network to provide connections between them.



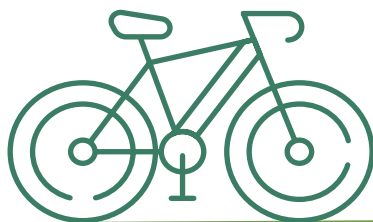
Delivered new **active travel schemes** across Essex, including six safer school streets, with £20 million of Government investment.

EVERYONE'S ESSEX STRATEGIC AIM: A HIGH QUALITY ENVIRONMENT



Supported over 130 schools in Essex to encourage **sustainable, safe and active travel**. 62 schools have gained national travel plan accreditation, including two who have won the Eastern Region School of the Year.

Delivered over 35,000 **Bikeability training sessions**, supporting children and adults to cycle confidently and safely.



Awarded over £92,000 of **Essex Cycle Grant funding** to 19 organisations, to encourage more people from diverse backgrounds to travel by bike.

Ran **Safer, Greener, Healthier** and **Travelling Cheaper** online campaigns to raise awareness of the benefits of sustainable travel. The three campaigns were viewed 15,239 times.



15,000+ views

Delivered over 3.5 million e-scooter trips across Essex through our **e-scooter hire scheme**, with 44% of riders now using cars less.



Launched the **Travel Essex** app to make journey planning by public transport easier. The app has been downloaded 82,000 times.

82,000 downloads



Worked with over 20 large organisations in Essex to deliver **workplace travel planning**, helping their employees to make sustainable journeys to work.



TELEDYNE TECHNOLOGIES

EVERYONE'S ESSEX STRATEGIC AIM: A HIGH QUALITY ENVIRONMENT



Adopted the ambitious joint **Waste Strategy for Essex**, a 30-year countywide plan to deliver zero waste, high recycling levels and create a more circular economy. Our public consultation on the draft strategy received more than 4,500 responses.



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



Joined the **East of England Plastics Coalition** to help combat plastic waste and pollution, and the UK Food and Drink Pact to reduce food wastage.



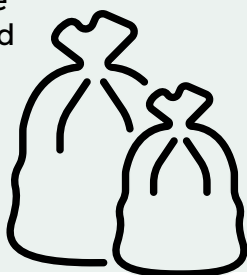
Secured new value for money contracts for the **treatment of food and green waste**, expanding local recycling capacity.

Introduced an upgraded booking system at **Essex recycling centres** to improve the customer experience and tackle congestion, responding to feedback.



Provided micro-grant funding to over 200 projects to deliver **community action on waste reduction**, reuse, repair and recycling.

Secured a new £1 billion **waste disposal contract** for our black bag (residual) waste, enabling Essex to stop the landfilling of waste 5 years ahead of target and reducing our carbon emissions by 30%.



Created a **directory of businesses, organisations and charities** working on reuse, repair and recycling, to accelerate the move to a circular economy.



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

EVERYONE'S ESSEX STRATEGIC AIM: A HIGH QUALITY ENVIRONMENT



Brought the running of the Essex **recycling centre, waste transfer station and haulage operation** back into the Council to increase the range of materials for reuse and recycling, improve service resilience and value for money.

Provided support to 500 families using **cloth nappies**, helping them to save money and reduce their environmental impact.

Supported over 500,000 households to make better use of the **food waste recycling service** through the provision of caddy liners and advice.



Extended the range of **materials accepted at Essex recycling centres**, making it possible for residents to reuse or recycle difficult materials like coffee pods, hard plastics, paint, and medical aids such as crutches and bikes.

Launched a new **Love Essex** website to make it easier for residents to find reliable advice and information on how to reduce, reuse and recycle.



Launched the **Let's SCRAP Fly Tipping** campaign, encouraging residents to dispose of waste correctly, and worked with partners to increase enforcement across Essex.



Helped over 4,000 households to **compost organic waste** through the provision of low-cost home compost units.



Completed an **analysis of household waste** contents so we can better target our actions and support to enhance services to reduce waste and recycle.

Committed to invest £1.8 million to **trial innovative approaches** to support reductions in waste, increase recycling and protect our environment.

Provided guidance to Essex businesses to improve sustainability and reduce waste, through the **Net Zero Innovation Network**, free webinars and online resources.

Captured **gas from more historic landfill sites** to reduce environmental impacts and generate electricity. In 24/25, we generated around 4,216MW of electricity, of which approximately 65MW was used on site and the remainder exported to the grid.



Designed a new approach to secure **contributions and commitments from developers** to deliver a more circular economy, making reuse and recycling easier for everyone.

EVERYONE'S ESSEX STRATEGIC AIM: A HIGH QUALITY ENVIRONMENT



Delivered four rounds of **Solar Together** schemes, installing solar panels and battery storage on 2,447 homes, increasing renewable energy capacity by 9.75MW and reducing CO₂ emissions by 2,146 tonnes each year.



Launched **Switch Together**, the first group purchasing scheme for heat pumps of its kind in the UK, which is already set to provide heat pumps to 90 homes in Essex.



Worked with partners to launch the **Jaywick Energy Hub**, a one-stop-shop for energy advice in Jaywick Sands, co-designed with members of the community. This has delivered advice to more than 200 residents and helped more than 30 homes apply for over £230,000 in unclaimed benefits.

Delivered the **Community Energy Pathways** capacity building programme, which has increased the number of community benefit societies in Essex from 0 to 9 and supported the Essex Community Energy Network to develop a pipeline of local energy projects worth approximately £10 million.

Won the **Supportive Local Authority Award** at the 2023 Community Energy England Awards, for our work with community energy groups.



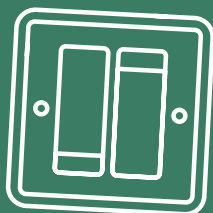
Delivered **Community Led Energy Planning Workshops** in Uttlesford, Maldon and Colchester, resulting in a new community energy group in Great Dunmow and Maldon and four Colchester parishes collaborating on local energy opportunities.

Partnered with the Rural Community Council of Essex to provide advice on how to incorporate **clean energy into Neighbourhood and Local Plans** for rural communities. This has led to renewable energy being included in four Neighbourhood Plans already.

EVERYONE'S ESSEX STRATEGIC AIM: A HIGH QUALITY ENVIRONMENT



Working in partnership with Citizens Advice Essex and Cadent Gas Network to **alleviate fuel poverty in rural Essex**, helping more than 280 residents to manage and save money on gas bills.



Procured **Essex Energy Switch** in 2021, a free scheme helping residents save on their energy bill and reduce CO₂ emissions by moving residents to a renewable electricity tariff.

Introduced a **Carbon Cutting Essex app** to encourage climate action among residents. The app now has over 1,350 registrations and over 25,000 actions have been taken which includes watching videos, taking quizzes and making pledges.



25,000+ actions

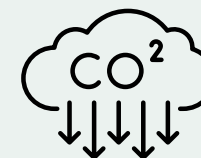
Worked with partners to establish an independent **Essex Community Energy** community interest company, which has received £150,000 from Innovate UK to help communities develop local energy generation and storage projects.



Awarded a total of £500,000 from the **Climate Action Challenge Fund** to 40 local organisations and schools.



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



Worked with the Rural Community Council for Essex to offer **support to Parish Councils** on community energy opportunities.

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



EVERYONE'S ESSEX STRATEGIC AIM: A HIGH QUALITY ENVIRONMENT



Supported the creation of the **North Essex and the Tendring Farm Clusters**, working with partners on the potential to create similar clusters in the west and the south of Essex.

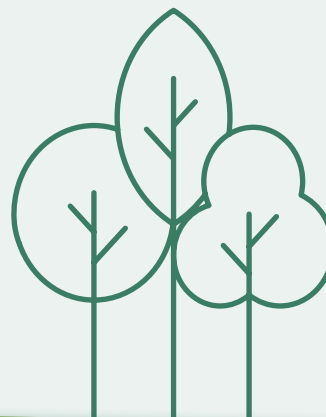


Delivered outdoor education programmes to 32,500 children between 2022-2025 through **Essex Outdoors Education Rangers**, including Forest School and Education Days.

Promoted **physical and mental wellbeing and skills development** for 498,000 school children and young people at Essex Outdoors sites.



Introduced the first **Essex Tree Management Plan** for trees on the Council's estate.



Secured 10-year funding from the Rural Payments Agency for **Countryside Stewardship schemes** in four further country parks, ensuring funding agreements are now in place for all of the Council's country parks:

- Belhus Woods Country Park
- Hadleigh Country Park (Hadleigh Downs)
- Thorndon Country Park
- Weald Country Park



Delivered over 1 million trees across Essex between 2020-2025, with **The Essex Forest Initiative** planting 476,200 trees and work with the wider Essex Forest Partnership delivering a further 623,095.



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.

EVERYONE'S ESSEX STRATEGIC AIM: A HIGH QUALITY ENVIRONMENT



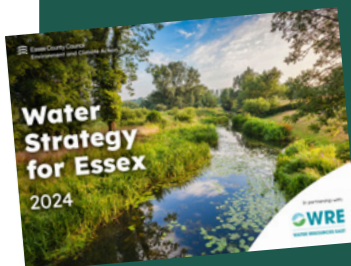
Worked with partners including the Environment Agency to deliver plans to **manage the risk of flooding and coastal erosion** across Essex, including Flood Risk Management Plans.

Delivered **23 major flood schemes**, protecting or reducing the flood risk for 1,011 properties, and provided new green spaces in the form of rain gardens and flood storage basins. We also delivered **Make Rain Happy** sustainable drainage projects across 28 schools in Essex, Basildon Hospital and Canvey Island.

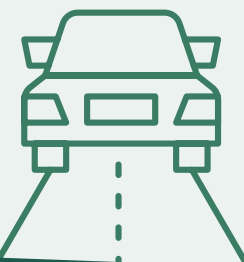


Ensured that 250,000 properties are not subject to increased flood risk by reviewing over **3,500 planning applications**.

Developed actions to **address water pollution from the road network** by prioritising Natural Flood Management solutions, through our Floods Capital Programme and work with Anglian Ruskin University.



Published the **Essex Water Strategy** setting out 30 actions for residents, businesses, public and private sector organisations to address water supply and quality issues in Essex.



Responded to 278 planning applications and 121 policy documents, including local and Neighbourhood plans and national consultations, providing **advice on integrating nature into developments**.

Launched the **Essex Local Nature Partnership** (LNP) establishing county wide targets for nature recovery.



Led the development of the new **Local Nature Recovery Strategy** for greater Essex, which has been publicly consulted on and is due to be adopted in 2025.



EVERYONE'S ESSEX STRATEGIC AIM: A HIGH QUALITY ENVIRONMENT



COUNCILLOR PETER SCHWIER

CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT,
WASTE REDUCTION AND RECYCLING

Over the past four years, Essex County Council has taken bold and decisive action to lead the way in protecting and enhancing our Essex Environment.

Our Waste Strategy is a shining example of this commitment. We've adopted a visionary 30-year plan to move Essex towards zero waste and a truly circular economy. We've empowered over 200 community projects to tackle waste locally, expanded recycling centres to accept hard-to-recycle items, and brought key operations back in-house to improve service and value for money.

Through transformative initiatives like the Blueprint to a Circular Economy, we've helped over 100,000 residents and hundreds of businesses embrace reuse, repair and sustainability.

Thousands of Essex homes are now powered by the sun thanks to the council's Solar Together scheme. Over 2,400 households have had solar panels installed, cutting energy bills and reducing carbon emissions by more than 2,100 tonnes a year. Renewable power with real impact.

THANKS TO THE COUNCIL'S
**SOLAR TOGETHER
SCHEME, OVER 2,400
HOUSEHOLDS HAVE HAD
SOLAR PANELS INSTALLED**

We've also been planting the future, through the Essex Forestry Initiative and in close partnership with every district, borough and city council, we've delivered over one million new trees across Essex- transforming landscapes, capturing carbon and restoring vital habitats.

But our environmental leadership doesn't stop there. Essex is the only county council in the UK to have achieved an A-rating from the Carbon Disclosure Project - 3 years in a row. This international recognition reflects our unwavering commitment to protecting and caring for our Essex environment, improving air and water quality, and supporting healthy communities for everyone.

ESSEX IS THE **ONLY**
COUNTY COUNCIL
IN THE UK TO HAVE
ACHIEVED AN **A-RATING**
FROM THE CARBON
DISCLOSURE PROJECT
- **3 YEARS IN A ROW**





COUNCILLOR TOM CUNNINGHAM

CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS,
INFRASTRUCTURE AND SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT

Over the past four years, Essex has made outstanding progress in delivering sustainable, inclusive growth and a high-quality environment, with a focus on embedding sustainable transport principles into the design of future communities.

This ambition has been underpinned by record investment in public transport, including the launch of the Travel Essex app, downloaded over 82,000 times, and a 10-year programme to modernise and expand bus shelters across the county.

A determined focus on 'Pride of Place' has driven major improvements to highways services. Over £48.8 million has been additionally invested in the Highways Network, including road maintenance,

resurfacing over 49 square kilometres, repairing over 14,000 defects and enhancing vegetation management. Completing the replacement of over 130,000 streetlights with energy-efficient LEDs, along with initiatives such as the Members Highway Initiative and the Priority One programme which, have further improved the condition of our highways and public footpaths across the county.

Essex continues to work in close partnership with agencies to improve road safety, with a renewed focus planned for the year ahead. At the same time, the county is preparing its highways and transport services for the transformational opportunities of devolution ensuring they are ready to unlock long-term benefits for residents.

From delivering over 3.5 million e-scooter trips to supporting 130 schools in promoting active travel, Essex is leading the way in sustainable mobility. Putting people and projects before politics, Essex remains committed to working collaboratively with the new Government on infrastructure priorities and continues to lobby for further improvements.

These achievements reflect a steadfast commitment to a better quality of life for all, economic opportunity, and climate resilience.

**OVER 3.5 MILLION
E-SCOOTER TRIPS
DELIVERED**

**OVER £48.8 MILLION
ADDITIONAL INVESTMENT
IN THE HIGHWAYS
NETWORK**



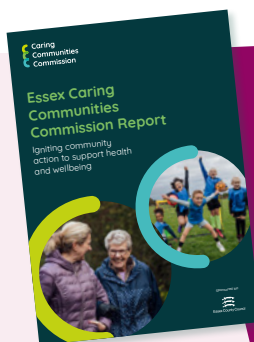


HEALTH, WELLBEING AND INDEPENDENCE FOR ALL AGES

WHAT WE HAVE ACHIEVED



Established the independent **Essex Caring Communities Commission** to propose new and shared ways to address the growing demand for health and care services. The Commission published its report in May 2025, setting out five clear commitments and 23 practical actions for organisations across Essex that will build community capacity to improve residents' health and wellbeing. Action is now being taken forward across the Essex system to start implementing the report.



Collaborated with London Marathon Events to deliver **Ride London-Essex** events, investing £2.25 million of charitable funds in local projects for active and healthy lives.



Launched the **Health Determinants Research Collaboration** for Greater Essex, a multi-year, £5 million research project with the University of Essex and partners. Findings from the research will inform provision of health services across Greater Essex to meet the changing needs of residents and reduce health inequalities.

Provided community support to 41,000 residents each year to improve their health and wellbeing, through the **Essex Wellbeing Service**.

Launched the **Move With Us** campaign to encourage children and young people to take part in sport and physical activity. Almost 2% more children in Essex are classed as 'Active' since the campaign began. So far, move with us has:

- ✓ recruited 34 Move With Us Ambassadors to help shape future activity
- ✓ awarded a monthly "Move Maker" award, shining a light on 14 young people in Essex who have helped others to find their active
- ✓ established the Move With Us Leadership Academy with over 200 young people gaining new skills in physical literacy, team building, communication, increased confidence and resilience



EVERYONE'S ESSEX STRATEGIC AIM: **HEALTH, WELLBEING AND INDEPENDENCE FOR ALL AGES**



Grown the **Find Your Active** campaign, supporting community activities that help residents find the best way to move more. We secured additional funding from the London Marathon Foundation, following the successful delivery of Ride London-Essex, with a total of £2.25 million funding secured for the campaign so far.



Supported 85 organisations to access grant funding from the **Sports England Together Fund** for projects to tackle inequalities in physical activity. A total of £293,725 was secured between 2021 and 2023.

Increased levels of active travel to school by 8% at 31 schools, supported by our £100,000 **Essex School Active Travel Grant**. Five Essex schools have received Mode Shift Stars national accreditation.



Gathered over 4,800 responses to the latest 2025 **Young People's Relationships, Sex and Health Education survey** to keep improving our Essex Sexual Health Service.



Launched **Phoenix Futures**, a new Multiple and Complex Needs Service to support offenders with issues including addiction, homelessness and mental ill health. Over **1,600 people were supported** in 2024/25 with 95 per cent of those using the service not requiring further support after a year.



Hosted the first **Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Conference** for Essex schools and education settings. Over 200 Designated Senior Mental Health Leads attended to learn and share practical examples of best practice.

Provided **free workplace health and wellbeing support** to over 680 organisations, training more than 1500 people in Mental Health First Aid and carrying out over 250 workplace health checks.



EVERYONE'S ESSEX STRATEGIC AIM: **HEALTH, WELLBEING AND INDEPENDENCE FOR ALL AGES**

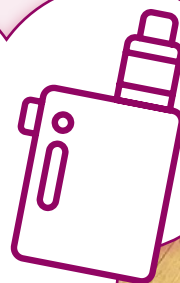


Launched the **Summer of Volunteering Campaign** in 2023, promoting volunteering opportunities and highlighting the benefits for individuals and communities.

Secured £60,700 in funding from The National Lottery Heritage Fund to develop our **Open the Box: connecting communities through archives** project.



Carried out over 120 test purchases based on reports of children being sold **age restricted goods**. Vapes now make up most reported cases, and two persistent sellers are being investigated for prosecution. We also intercepted nearly 400,000 unsafe or non-compliant vapes coming into the UK at Harwich port.



Launched an **Essex Creative Health report** to evidence the connection between creative activity and improved health and wellbeing outcomes across Essex.

Funded 78 projects to help residents to live a healthy life through the three-year £4.8 million **Public Health Accelerator Bids** grant programme. An estimated 140,000 residents have been supported in total.



EVERYONE'S ESSEX STRATEGIC AIM: HEALTH, WELLBEING AND INDEPENDENCE FOR ALL AGES



The Care Quality Commission has rated our **Adult Social Care services as Good**, with an overall score of 73%. The assessment report highlights our commitment to putting people at the heart of our services.

Received around 53,000 requests for **personal care and support** in 2023-24, providing services to around 16,000 residents at any given time.

Supported over 620 people aged 16 -25 as they made the **transition from Children's Services to Adult Social Care**.



Reduced **waiting times for people needing a social care assessment** or other social care interventions by around 40% in 2023/24.

Supported over 14,500 residents to live their lives to the fullest, enhancing independence, supporting carers and enabling employment opportunities, through the **Essex Care Technology service**.



Commissioned around 800 care providers to deliver support in different settings, with around 83% rated 'Good' or 'Outstanding' by the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

Completed a **ward-led enablement service pilot** with all five hospitals in Essex, via our local authority trading company ECL, to get older hospital patients moving sooner after treatment for a faster recovery. The pilot will inform future service provision.

Introduced over 30 new **Workforce Ambassadors in Adult Social Care** to represent social care colleagues' perspectives within our service and across the wider organisation.



Hosted over 60 **newly qualified social workers** in their Assessed and Supported Year in Employment, as part of their formal training and support.



Awarded Adult Social Worker of the Year (2021) and Team of the Year (2023), for the Mental Health and Wellbeing Team, at the **National Social Worker of the Year Awards**.



EVERYONE'S ESSEX STRATEGIC AIM: **HEALTH, WELLBEING AND INDEPENDENCE FOR ALL AGES**



Launched the **Nightingale Care Bursary** which so far provided 505 funded qualifications for new and existing health and care workers and supported 243 apprentices, all delivered by ACL Essex.



Achieved **Working to Become Dementia Friendly** recognition for the whole Essex libraries service. We now have Memory Cafés in seven libraries and have delivered 19 events to support almost 200 people with dementia and their carers.

Signed up over 250 organisations through our **Inclusive Dementia Communities** programme, who have committed learn more about the impact of dementia, change attitudes and raise awareness of local support. The programme is developed together with people living with dementia.

Published our **Meaningful Lives Matter** strategy to improve outcomes for people with disabilities, with a user reference group to help support and shape delivery.



Distributed over 400 printed copies plus digital downloads of the **Shaping my Future** guide, providing resources to help people effectively manage disabilities and long-term health conditions.

Begun rolling out a new approach to **mental health social care** focussed on strengthening prevention and early intervention to support people sooner.



Introduced a new approach for **mental health supported housing**, helping more people to build the skills and confidence needed to live independently and releasing supported housing for those with higher levels of need.

Introduced around 120 **Community Micro Enterprises**, small providers from diverse backgrounds who understand their communities' needs to offer personal and culturally sensitive care.



Worked with the Home Office to agree **safeguarding arrangements and support for asylum seekers** living at Weathersfield Air Base.



Worked with HM Prison Chelmsford to ensure appropriate **support for prisoners** with eligible needs under the Care Act.

EVERYONE'S ESSEX STRATEGIC AIM: **HEALTH, WELLBEING AND INDEPENDENCE FOR ALL AGES**



Worked with health partners through our five place-based alliances to **improve hospital discharges**. This has led to one of the lowest delayed discharge rates in the country, helping more people return home safely with reablement services or care technology.



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

Opened **14 community supermarkets** offering affordable essentials to residents, with at least one now open in each Essex district. The most recent was opened in Braintree.



Worked with the NHS to implement **Shared Care Records** across the three Integrated Care Boards in Essex, most recently the Mid and South Essex Shared Care Record in 2024.



Delivered the **Community Initiatives Fund**, allocating approximately £950,000 to around 160 voluntary and community sector organisations and Parish and Town Councils. Funded projects will improve local places and spaces, bringing people together to create more vibrant and resilient communities.



We have worked constructively with partners to shape the development of the three **Integrated Care Partnership (ICP) strategies**, to improve health outcomes and inequalities for residents and achieve as much consistency as possible across Essex.



Mid and South Essex
Integrated Care
System



Hertfordshire and
West Essex Integrated
Care System



CAN DO
HEALTH & CARE
Suffolk & North East Essex
Integrated Care System

EVERYONE'S ESSEX STRATEGIC AIM: **HEALTH, WELLBEING AND INDEPENDENCE FOR ALL AGES**



Secured £1.7 million **Rough Sleeping Initiative** funding to extend our rough sleeper outreach service for three years and to nine districts. Due to its success a further £600,000 has been secured for an additional year.



Signed up 2,000 residents to **Community Voice** to influence service delivery for the Essex Recovery Foundation, which provides support with drug and alcohol addiction.

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

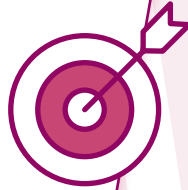


EVERYONE'S ESSEX STRATEGIC AIM: **HEALTH, WELLBEING AND INDEPENDENCE FOR ALL AGES**



Launched our **All-Age Carers Strategy** setting out support for unpaid carers, including young carers. We are implementing the strategy through:

- ✓ a new and improved 'core offer' for carers
- ✓ improving identification of carers through the Essex Wellbeing Service
- ✓ improving information, advice and guidance for carers
- ✓ improving support for carers through service delivery, technological and digital improvements and joining up work with our partners



Delivered a £50 million **Cost of Living Support** programme after the pandemic to help residents pay for essentials, like food and heating, and provide advice to improve their financial wellbeing. This was funded by Government and the Council. Residents will continue to be supported with an additional £16.6 million funding from Government's Household Support Fund, until March 2026.



Celebrated 172 **National Young Carers in Schools Awards**, awarded to Essex schools.



Established a **Cost of Living Strategic Group**, bringing together representation across different council services, to make residents and partners aware of wider cost of living advice and support.



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

Conducted five **Quests** to improve inclusivity in our Adult Social Care workforce, focusing on race, disability, LGBTAI, age, and neurodiversity.

EVERYONE'S ESSEX STRATEGIC AIM: **HEALTH, WELLBEING AND INDEPENDENCE FOR ALL AGES**



Ran the most successful **Beat the Street** game in Harwich, with almost one in five residents playing and active for six weeks. Successful Beat the Street games also ran in Maldon, Chelmsford and Braintree.



Delivered 250 holiday clubs and 80 half-terms clubs each year for low-income families through the **Essex ActiveAte** holiday activity and food programme.

Distributed 3,797 free bikes in Clacton and Jaywick, Harwich, Colchester and Basildon and Castle Point through **Essex Pedal Power**.

Delivered the biggest **disability cycling project** in the UK in Tendring, creating 6 cycling hubs that provide regular free, safe and fun cycling for people with disabilities and long-term health conditions.



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



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



Improved the experience for residents **applying for a Blue Badge** based on customer feedback, with a new user-friendly online system which has helped reduce processing response times by nearly 50%.



Improved **access to Registration services** with a new user-friendly online booking system, which will be rolled out for Ceremony bookings in 2025.

Launched an **audiology trial in Waltham Abbey library** with Specsavers, offering free hearing tests and consultations, with potential for more trials in other libraries.



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



EVERYONE'S ESSEX STRATEGIC AIM: **HEALTH, WELLBEING AND INDEPENDENCE FOR ALL AGES**



COUNCILLOR JOHN SPENCE

CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S
SERVICES, ADULT SOCIAL CARE,
PUBLIC HEALTH AND INTEGRATION

Over the past four years, we have continued to invest at scale in the services which support residents to live their everyday lives to their fullest potential, be that young families accessing our Family Hubs, individuals with long-term health conditions to live at home, or those in our care to be looked after and safe, working across public health, adults' and children's social care to meet residents' needs.

We have supported 41,000 residents to improve their health and wellbeing through the Essex Wellbeing Service, supported over 1,600 offenders with multiple and complex needs to live without further need of our assistance, and continued the rollout of Essex Care Technology supporting 14,500 residents to live independently. 800 of our adult social care providers are rated "good" or "outstanding" by the Care Quality

Commission (CQC), and we have worked with our five place-based health alliances to reduce hospital discharge leading to one of the lowest delayed discharge rates in the country.

This relentless commitment to supporting our residents has now been rewarded by a 'Good' rating from the CQC for our adult social care services.

WE HAVE SUPPORTED
41,000 RESIDENTS TO
IMPROVE THEIR HEALTH AND
WELLBEING THROUGH THE
ESSEX WELLBEING SERVICE

In children's social care, our work was recognised as outstanding by Ofsted and we have continued to invest in support for families and the children and young people in our care increasing our support to Essex foster carers, developing bespoke in-house residential care for those who need it and delivering a new Domestic Abuse Strategy, shaped by those with lived experience.

Through our Health and Wellbeing Board and strategic partnerships we have worked constructively with partners to shape the development of the three Integrated Care Partnership (ICP) strategies, to improve health outcomes and inequalities for residents and achieve as much consistency as possible across Essex.

IN CHILDREN'S SOCIAL
CARE, OUR WORK
WAS RECOGNISED AS
**OUTSTANDING BY
OFSTED**





COUNCILLOR TONY BALL

CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION
EXCELLENCE, LIFELONG LEARNING
AND EMPLOYABILITY

Lifelong learning is about the people of Essex having equal access to excellent learning and training opportunities throughout their life.

Opportunities that are clearly aligned to future need and relevant to local areas; levelling up success, driving down inequalities, and providing the means for each person to achieve their own ambitions.

This intent has driven the delivery of key pieces of work over the last four years to make sure that there is opportunity for all.

Whether that is the 2,800 new primary school places and 1,500 new secondary school places across Essex, including four new primary schools and one new secondary school, or creating a new, dedicated post-16

learning space for pupils with SEND; the places we learn in shape the opportunities we see.

Sometimes we need to provide innovative approaches to overcome barriers to opportunities, such as securing £30.7 million over five years to deliver Connect to Work, the free employment support programme for residents across Greater Essex who are unemployed and face barriers to work.

**2,800 NEW PRIMARY SCHOOL
PLACES AND 1,500 NEW
SECONDARY SCHOOL
PLACES ACROSS ESSEX**

In terms of our children and young people with SEND, we have invested millions of pounds to bring in more education psychologists to address the backlog of Education, Health and Care Needs Assessment requests. We've made changes to our processes to speed things up. We've also introduced more support while families wait for an assessment. Families are already experiencing the benefits, but we are not complacent.

We recognise that it's not just about money. It's about embedding change from the ground up. That's why we've also introduced better support for professionals, including implementing the Education

Inclusion Strategy across the sector, working in and with the education system to ensure inclusivity throughout schools and settings – levelling up educational outcomes across Essex.

This intent was also at the core of establishing the Essex Education Task Force. It has delivered the successful Essex Year of Reading and Year of Numbers, with £2.5 million of funding support from the Council. This has culminated in the Year of Opportunity in 2025, which has been launched with the support of a further £1.3 million, contributing to a greater joined up Essex-wide system, breaking down barriers to opportunity.

**£2.5MILLION OF
FUNDING FOR THE
SUCCESSFUL ESSEX
YEAR OF READING
AND YEAR OF
NUMBERS**





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

WHAT WE HAVE ACHIEVED



Achieved an **‘Outstanding’ rating for children’s social care services** from Ofsted, the first local authority to achieve Outstanding in every area.



Recognised for our **high-quality support for children at risk of harm** by our focused Ofsted inspection of services for children who are subject to care proceedings.



gettyimages
Credit: sturti

EVERYONE’S ESSEX STRATEGIC AIM: A GREAT PLACE FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES TO GROW



93% of Essex schools have achieved a 'Good' or 'Outstanding' Ofsted rating.



Launched our **Ready to Regulate** training programme and launched the Early Years Ready to Regulate Programme.



Delivered a **STEM event on digital connectivity** to Clacton Coastal Academy students, with Openreach.



Trained over **360 Disadvantage Champions** to improve educational attainment across schools. The role is being redefined with Headteachers and Champions to support the wider Education Inclusion strategy.



Essex Year of **REAding**

Delivered the **Essex Year of Reading**, a countywide, £1 million literacy campaign to inspire pupils and families to read.



Essex Year of **NUMBERS**

Delivered the **Essex Year of Numbers**, a countywide £1.5 million numeracy campaign for 0-18-year-olds, featuring events, competitions and resources, building on the success of the Essex Year of Reading.



Implemented the **Essex Education Inclusion Strategy** across the education sector, as the first stage of our Education Transformation Programme.



Inclusion best practice visits continue to capture learning from around the country, and our Family worker pilot is established. Our six Inclusion Delivery Plans will be shared at our 2025 School's Inclusion Conference, along with findings from the research and pilot evaluations.

We have undertaken more than 100 **Inclusion Reviews** and evidenced the positive impact of a wide range of Inclusion Framework bids.

EVERYONE'S ESSEX STRATEGIC AIM: A GREAT PLACE FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES TO GROW



Worked with the East of England Energy Group (EEEGR) and University of Essex to develop the **Tendring Future Skills Programme**, providing 74 skills and careers sessions to 5,000 Essex young people and adults in growing sectors like renewable energy, construction of Garden Communities and Freeport East.

Secured **£123 million** from housing developers for **social and community infrastructure** to support new housing, including new and expanded school places, libraries and waste facilities.

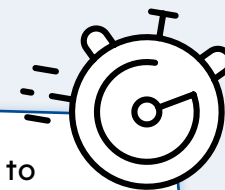


Established the **Essex Education Task Force** to support children and family learning after COVID-19. The Task Force has delivered the very successful Essex Year of Reading and Year of Numbers. **Essex Year of Opportunity** has been launched and is underway in 2025.

Delivered **2,800 new primary school places and 1,500 new secondary school places** delivered across Essex, including four new primary schools and one new secondary school.



Created a **new, dedicated post-16 learning space** for pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) at the former Abbotsweld ACL Essex building. This allows specialist activities to be provided for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties. It has also reduced pressure on space at the main school site.



Responded swiftly to **minimise disruption for schools affected by RAAC concrete**. The effectiveness of our response was recognised by the Education Secretary. We are working with the Department for Education to remove RAAC from 41 schools in Essex, as part of our School Rebuilding Programme.

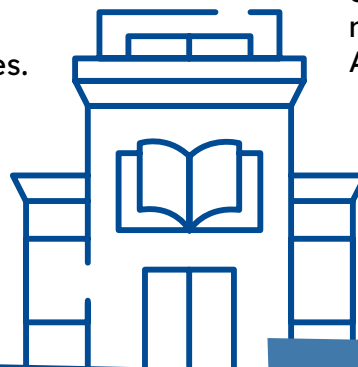
EVERYONE'S ESSEX STRATEGIC AIM: A GREAT PLACE FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES TO GROW



Opened the newly **rebuilt Shenfield Library** in February 2025, a vibrant, future-ready space designed to serve the whole community. The new library includes study areas, rentable office and meeting rooms, a dedicated children's area and communal garden, as well as a commercial unit and nine new residential flats. It is powered by an air-source heat pump, a first for Essex libraires.

Progressed the £1.16 million **transformation of Harwich Library** to open in time for its 50th anniversary, as part of the Dovercourt Town Centre Improvement Corridor, with Tendring District Council. The new library will offer 182 square meters extra space and two new rooms for community-based learning. ACL Essex will move into the library in 2025.

Created **74 literacy areas** to support reading and literacy skills in every library in Essex.



Refurbished Harlow Library, with a new ACL Essex learning centre, children's section, study area, cafe and events space.



Secured £330,000 from Arts Council England to create a new **Children's Imagination and Literacy Centre** at Colchester Library. It will be a community hub offering reading materials, local history, digital access, study spaces, interactive learning and a play area for children.

Generated higher footfall and engagement with the library service through our **first Author in Residence**, best-selling novelist Syd Moore. A new Author in Residence will deliver events for teenage readers.



EVERYONE'S ESSEX STRATEGIC AIM: A GREAT PLACE FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES TO GROW



Celebrated the **Family Solutions service's 10th anniversary**, which has supported over 9,100 families with 7,600 achieving good outcomes.

Launched the **Essex Short Breaks Commissioning Strategy** for children with special educational needs and disabilities. Over 8,000 children and young people benefit from provision such as clubs, social and sporting activities, short breaks and overnight respite for parents and carers.



Trialled a new **Multi-Disciplinary Team** approach to work with vulnerable children and families in North Essex, which avoided 32 children being placed into care and the level of concern being reduced for 42% of all children the service worked with. Based on its success the approach has been continued and extended into South Essex.



Recognised in independent research for the Department for Education for the **success of our integrated services** to improve children's wellbeing.



Launched a **new online directory** to help families and those who work with them find the right services in the community to support them.



Employed **occupational therapy assistants** for children and young people with SEND, to deliver earlier interventions for families and reduce the need for specialist equipment.



EVERYONE'S ESSEX STRATEGIC AIM: A GREAT PLACE FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES TO GROW



Delivered **Bystander Intervention Training** e-learning for 1,095 people and equipped individuals with the skills to recognise and safely respond to harmful or inappropriate behaviour. We are training our own staff so that they can deliver face to face training to others within their networks.

Worked with partners and the Home Office to address extremism in Essex through the **Prevent programme**. In 2024, we delivered training to 937 people. We are 'exceeding' in 6 out of 7 of the Prevent benchmarks.



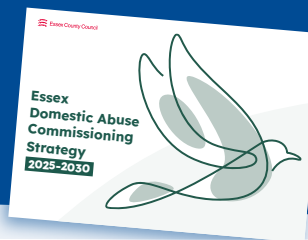
Working with the **Essex Violence Against Women and Girls strategic partnership** and the White Ribbon Steering Group to make Essex a safer place for women.

Provided **child safety training and resources** to employees of public spaces and services, such as pubs and transport providers, so they are confident in dealing with concerns for children and young people.

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

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

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.



Collaborated with the Essex Violence and Vulnerability Unit to enhance the capacity of **Team Around the Family Support Officers**, providing additional support to schools and vulnerable children at risk of school exclusion.

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



EVERYONE'S ESSEX STRATEGIC AIM: A GREAT PLACE FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES TO GROW



Worked with the residential care market to expand the **availability of places in Essex** where children in care can live, meaning they can stay closer to home and their family networks.

Showcased **LGBTQ+ foster carers** through communications and marketing activity to encourage more members of the Essex community to consider fostering.



Opened three new **Council run specialist residential homes** for children in care in Essex in 2024/5, with further provision planned.

Held annual **It's My Life Festivals** for around 1,000 children and young people in care each year, including separated migrant children and those with disabilities.

Made significant progress with implementing our **Anti-Racist Practice Strategy**, rolling out essential Anti-Racist Practice training to the whole social care workforce and sharing our good practice regionally and nationally.

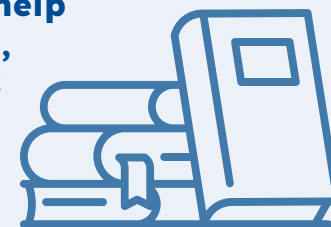
Launched our **Co-Parenting Strategy and Corporate Parenting Pledge** for children in our care, signed by Essex County Councillors.



Increased fees for foster carers by an average of 16% in 2025/26 and introduced additional benefits, including increases to specialist fees, loyalty and welcome bonuses.



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



EVERYONE'S ESSEX STRATEGIC AIM: A GREAT PLACE FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES TO GROW



Entered an **Adoptive Placements Service Agreement** with eight other eastern region local authorities to improve adoption matching.

Embedded an effective approach to **supporting children and young people who are at high risk of harm** outside of their home, including online, through gangs and exploitation.

Recommissioned the **Essex Advocacy service**, provided by VoiceAbility, to ensure quality, independent support is available to people of all ages so their voice is heard in decisions that affect them.



Opened a new hub to improve the welcome and support provided to **newly arrived Separated Migrant Children**, within our Children in Care teams.



Launched the **Essex Fostering Friendly Charter** to encourage Essex businesses to support their employees to consider fostering and become foster carers.



Started a whole county roll out of training to embed a **Solution Focused approach** to children and young people's social care. We are supporting our staff to build positive relationships with families and focus on their strengths, helping them move towards a more positive future.

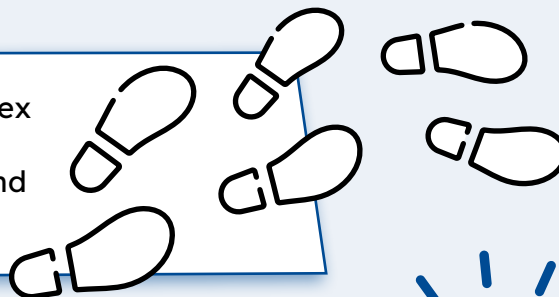
Held a 10th anniversary event for the **Children and Young People with Disabilities Service**, celebrating a decade of helping children and young people with disabilities, and their families, to achieve their ambitions and thrive into adulthood.



EVERYONE'S ESSEX STRATEGIC AIM: A GREAT PLACE FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES TO GROW



Signed up 403 Essex schools in Essex to participate in **The Daily Mile**, which encourages daily physical and mental fitness for pupils.



Piloted approaches to **improve communication and language outcomes** in Tendring schools, including establishing two Communication Hub leads in schools and training 28 Lead Communication Practitioners who have achieved Communication Friendly Settings status.

Allocated new funding from the Department for Education to create **new early years places** for children aged 9 months to 2 years and wraparound childcare places for school-aged children.

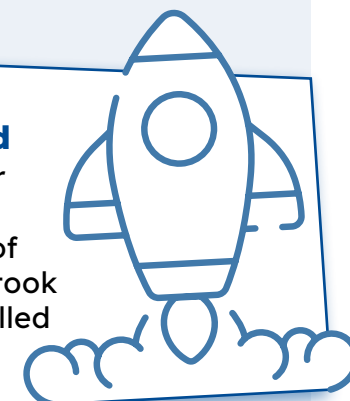
Delivered an **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Communication and Language Project** in Colchester to boost children's Good Level of Development.



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

Implemented an enhanced funding rate to encourage childcare providers to offer **additional places for disadvantaged 2-year-olds**.

Introduced a **Flying Start and Beyond** literacy programme for children in Canvey Island, which increased the EYFS Good Level of Development in all schools that took part. The programme is being rolled out in Tendring and Harlow.



EVERYONE'S ESSEX STRATEGIC AIM: A GREAT PLACE FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES TO GROW



Delivered **Essex Unlocked**, supporting ex-offenders with literacy and community integration.



Organised **community events in rural Braintree and Canvey Island** to ensure residents in our priority areas can access opportunities and services.



Funded the **Harlow Futures** project to boost students' learning engagement and emotional wellbeing, with universal support in every primary school and targeted support secondary schools, provided by the Essex Youth Service.

A **Charitable Music fund** was established with the Essex Community Foundation, providing annual funding to support more young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to take part in music education. The fund has had support from notable musicians, including Rick Wakeman who held a fund-raising concert, as well as individual donations which have doubled the initial investment into the fund.



Established the **Essex Music Hub** to coordinate music education across the county, supporting schools and young people to access high quality music opportunities in partnership with local and national organisations.



Began to roll out an **early intervention programme** to prevent at-risk Year 10 students from leaving education, following a successful trial in Basildon.

Used the **annual childcare sufficiency assessment** to identify areas where capital funding has been used to support the early years sector to fill gaps in provision.

Launched a **Family Friendly Employers Charter** to support parents and carers manage work and caring responsibilities, with 40 employers signed up.



EVERYONE'S ESSEX STRATEGIC AIM: A GREAT PLACE FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES TO GROW



The Essex Education Task Force funded the Essex Boys and Girls Club to deliver **residential and outdoor learning experiences** to over 150 vulnerable young people. Feedback from the young people and schools showed improvements in their self-esteem, confidence and wellbeing.



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



Rolled out our accredited **Library of Sanctuary Service** across all libraries to make newly arrived refugees feel welcome. This includes a new Sanctuary Library card and reading materials and information provided in multiple languages.



EVERYONE'S ESSEX STRATEGIC AIM: A GREAT PLACE FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES TO GROW



COUNCILLOR CHRISTOPHER WHITBREAD

THE CHANCELLOR OF ESSEX

Throughout the past four years we have ensured that the Essex County Council budget delivers real value for residents—both in terms of long-term investment and everyday services.

We have worked hard to ensure that Council Tax is kept as low as possible, never raising it any more than was necessary to deliver essential services to our residents.

We also understand the importance of everyday experiences of Essex residents. Recognising the need for better customer service, we have transformed the Blue Badge application process. Thanks to a new, user-friendly online system shaped by resident feedback, processing times are being greatly reduced, making the service faster and more accessible.

In addition, we have championed a social value campaign to ensure that Essex's £1.2 billion supplier base delivers more than just contracts – it delivers community impact through the new Social Value Catalogue, which encourages suppliers to contribute to local wellbeing and economic inclusion.

These initiatives reflect a clear vision: a council that listens, invests wisely, and puts residents first.

WE HAVE WORKED
HARD TO ENSURE THAT
**COUNCIL TAX IS KEPT
AS LOW AS POSSIBLE**



COUNCILLOR DERRICK LOUIS

CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSFORMATION

Much of the work of the transformation portfolio goes on behind the scenes, in the engine room, amid the wielding of spanners and oiling the wheels; but it is no less important for that.

While this document provides a strong record of delivery against our promises, the people, the buildings and the technology that make our council tick, and that power the work of the council's services, have played a fundamental role in this success.

Improvements to recruitment, retention and training have greatly strengthened our workforce, ensuring we have the right people with the right skills in the right places. Estate transformation, including an on-going review of all our buildings, has continued apace, working to reduce our footprint, ensuring offices are

fit for purpose, providing financial savings for the taxpayers of Essex. Meanwhile, upgrading our IT network, telephone systems and digital connectivity will make a major contribution to better working practices and, crucially, strengthening our cyber security. A new digital strategy, being launched this year, points the way forward, and new laptops and other equipment will enable still more speedy and effective work and communication.

THE PEOPLE, THE BUILDINGS AND THE TECHNOLOGY THAT POWER THE WORK OF THE COUNCIL'S SERVICES PLAY A FUNDAMENTAL ROLE IN OUR SUCCESS

Our Whole Council Transformation programme has been progressing at pace, with the third phase due to start in autumn 2025. Channelling good practice and innovation through key transformation programmes, such as in children's and adults' social care, and trialling AI, will improve outcomes and save money - with £50 million in savings identified so far.

Taken together, these elements help build a more efficient, agile, responsive organisation, responding to the needs of Essex residents, saving council taxpayers' money, and leaving a strong legacy for the new unitary councils to come.

GOOD PRACTICE AND
INNOVATION THROUGH
**KEY TRANSFORMATION
PROGRAMMES** WILL
IMPROVE OUTCOMES
AND SAVE MONEY

Our strategic aims and commitments:

THE ECONOMY

- Good jobs
- Infrastructure
- Future growth and investment
- Green growth
- Levelling up the economy

THE ENVIRONMENT

- Net zero
- Transport and built environment
- Minimise waste
- Green communities
- Levelling up the environment

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

- Healthy lifestyles
- Promoting independence
- Place-based working
- Carers
- Levelling up health

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

- Education outcomes
- Family resilience and stability
- Safety
- Outcomes for vulnerable children
- Levelling up outcomes for families

This information is issued by:
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