FUTURE OF ESSEX

RENEWAL FOR THE COUNTY OF ESSEX

BEYOND COVID-19: THE FIFTEEN RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE ESSEX RENEWAL PROJECT

JUNE 2023

University of Essex

Essex County Council

THE ESSEX RENEWAL PROJECT (ERP)

The Essex Renewal Project (ERP) was established to identify and prioritise policies and practices that would support renewal in Essex following more than two years of living with Covid-19 and the effects of both the policy and behavioural response to the pandemic. The project brought together a group of independent, expert Commissioners to advise Essex Partners and other public, private and third sector organisations in Essex on opportunities to positively shape the lives of Essex's 1.9 million people in the decades to come. The top priority 15 Recommendations have been made by the Commissioners.

The Essex Renewal Project was sponsored by Gavin Jones (Chief Executive, Essex County Council) and Prof Anthony Forster (Vice-Chancellor, University of Essex) on behalf of Essex Partners. The ERP was supported by a secretariat comprising Alastair Gordon, Emily Brodie, Dr Paola De Pascali, Chris Holmes, Poppy Reece, Lucy Smith, Liz Roberts, Felix Shaba and Gavin Wilkinson, and with thanks to the support of Alex Quiroz Flores.

THE ESSEX RENEWAL PROJECT (ERP)

The Essex Renewal Project Commissioners:

Prof Jules Pretty OBE (Chair): Director Centre for Public and Policy Engagement, University of Essex; Chair Essex Climate Action Commission

Azeem Akhtar: Chief Technical Officer, BT Global Services Division; Chair of Active Essex

Prof Thankom Arun: Professor of Global Development and Accountability, Essex Business School, University of Essex

Dr Jeannette Baxter: Research Convenor for English Literature, Anglia Ruskin University

Dr Mike Brewer: Chief Economist and Deputy Chief Executive, The Resolution Foundation

Dr Aurelie Charles: Senior Lecturer in Global Sustainability, Department of Social and Policy Sciences, University of Bath

Rosalind Green: Director of Essex Book Festival

Prof Margaret Greenfields: Professor of Social Policy, Anglia Ruskin University

Carole Herman: Head Teacher, Shenfield High School, Chair of the Association of Secondary Heads in Essex

Dr Pauline Lane: Associate Professor, Faculty of Health, Education, Medicine and Social Care, Anglia Ruskin University

Dr Rachel Lichtenstein: Author, Associate Professor in English, Manchester Metropolitan University

Dr Simon Lyster: Chair of Essex Local Nature Partnership; Chair of Trustees of Conservation International (UK); Trustee of Rural Community Council of Essex, Kilverstone Wildlife Charitable Trust, World Land Trust

Prof Jacqueline McGlade: Professor of Sustainable Development and Resilience, University College London, Professor, Strathmore University Business School, Kenya

Umesh Patel: Pharmacist and small-business owner

Dr David Pencheon: Founding Director of the Sustainable Development Unit for NHS and PHE

Hattie Phillips: WWF-UK Youth Ambassador and campaigner for the protection of the planet

Jo Roberts: Director and Chief Executive of The Wilderness Foundation

Prof Sasha Roseneil: Vice-Chancellor, University of Sussex (formerly Pro-Provost & Executive Dean, University College London)

Trevor Scott: Managing Director, Simarco International Ltd, Witham

Sally Shaw: Director of Firstsite Gallery, Colchester

Dr David Smith: Reader in Social Policy, Anglia Ruskin University

Ken Worpole: Writer and social historian

CONTENTS

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

TERM	DESCRIPTION
Anchor institutions	Anchor institutions play an important role in creating and reinforcing local renewal and economic regeneration. These include organisations which have an important presence in the local area, e.g., large employers or purchasers of goods and services, and are embedded in a place due to mission, assets, histories or relationships e.g. local authorities, NHS Trusts or Universities.
Asset Based Community Development	Asset based community development (ABCD) is a localised and bottom-up way of strengthening communities through recognising, identifying and harnessing existing 'assets' that individuals and communities have which can help to strengthen and improve the local economy. Instead of looking at what a community needs or lacks, the approach focuses on utilising the asset bases that are already present.
Blue economy / infrastructure	Blue infrastructure and economy refer to an economy that aims to preserve and regenerate the marine environment.

TERM	DESCRIPTION
Green economy / infrastructure	Green infrastructure and economy refer to an economy that aims to reduce environmental risk and ecological scarcities, and that aims for sustainable development which does not damage the environment.
Levelling up	Levelling up is a national priority, focused on identifying areas of disparities of opportunity and working towards change.
Net-Zero	Net Zero emissions refer to the state where carbon dioxide, methane and other greenhouse gas emissions are no longer greater than natural and human-made methods of carbon capture. The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change sets out a target of 80% actual emissions reduction with no more than 20% as carbon capture in order to reach net zero.
Social Prescribing	Social prescribing is defined as "supporting people via link workers to make community connections and discover new opportunities, building on individual strengths and preferences, to improve health and well-being."

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The pandemic has transformed the world. It has changed societies, economies and individuals. Covid-19 itself and the measures taken by national and local governments to manage infections, protect public health, and preserve the economy have all had an immeasurable impact on individual lives, on society and on the economy which will extend over decades and generations.

As we emerge from the early years of the pandemic, we all have a role to play to secure renewal, improve outcomes for people, the community, the economy and nature, and to create new opportunities for regeneration, growth and equality in Essex.

The Essex Renewal Project proposes a top 15 priority recommendations that can be taken up by partners across Essex to help secure renewal and address key challenges faced by all communities today.

What is Renewal?

The Essex Renewal Project defines "renewal" as the cultivation of five regenerative capital assets, the development and growth of which will deliver benefits and services that will improve the lives of the people of Essex.

These five capital assets are:

- **Social capital:** the trust, reciprocity and relationships that increase togetherness, kindness, connectedness and collective action between and within communities;

- **Natural capital:** stocks of natural resources in whole ecosystems (clean air and water, flood control, tree and soil carbon, biodiversity) which provide benefits that underpin all economies and societies making human life possible;

- **Human capital:** the capability of individuals, based on knowledge, skills, health and nutrition, the value of which is magnified when individuals in public, private and third sector organisations work together;

- **Cultural capital:** the local assets created by people that comprise customs, arts, language, stories, innovation, laws, science and technology;

- **Physical capital:** the human-made resources and infrastructure, comprising buildings, housing, factories, utilities, energy and transport infrastructure, and communication systems.

After two years of the Covid-19 pandemic, all five forms of these renewable capitals were left in a damaged and diminished state. Regeneration is an inclusive strategy that creates, builds and heals. It is intended to be inclusive and effective, producing collective and committed effort. This is the core of renewal: creating the context by which public, private and third sectors create more than they take.

Securing renewal in Essex means regenerating these five capital assets. But the relationship between these capital assets is complex – they are intimately linked, connected and interwoven. Action taken to secure renewal must consider these complex links. We should aim to foster a virtuous circle of synergistic renewal over the longer term – a cycle through which investment in any one capital builds up and strengthens the value of the remaining four. To achieve this, decision-makers across the public, private and third sector will need to listen and learn from diverse perspectives, seeking out lessons from experiences that go beyond their own. Only by doing so will they create long-term change and opportunities for sustained renewal.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Five themes for the fifteen recommendations

The Essex Renewal Project has framed its recommendations in these five themes:

1. **Social Justice;**
2. **Young People;**
3. **Community Well-being;**
4. **The Climate and Nature Crises;**
5. **The Green Economy.**

These themes reflect key challenges and opportunities for people and communities across Essex. The detailed recommendations are intended to be specific in their scope, measurable in terms of progress, and achievable with the policy levers available to local partners. Where possible we have sought to specify realistic time frames for action.

But the ERP recognizes that the context in which its work began is very different to that in which it is delivering its final report and recommendations. The UK has endured national political turmoil while awaiting a new Prime Minister. In the year to June 2022, workers' pay rose by 4.7% but real pay, adjusted for the effects of inflation, fell by 3% - a record fall for pay levels. Spiraling inflation is driving a cost-of-living crisis in which the costs of everyday essentials are rising faster than average household incomes, and across the country industrial strike action emerged as a result.

This is, in large part, driven by global forces: the Covid-19 pandemic and resulting supply chain crisis has caused worldwide shortages and affected consumer behaviour. Fossil fuel prices have increased, and the nationwide loss of available workforce has also added pressures for both the public and private sectors. At the local level, households are experiencing rising fuel and energy costs, increasing food bills and, for many, higher rental and mortgage payments.

The fiscal and regulatory levers required to tackle this crisis lie with national government. Making specific recommendations on local partners' response to this crisis goes beyond the remit of the ERP. Nevertheless, the ERP urges local partners to work together to help households survive intensifying financial pressure and to support the fast growing numbers of families being driven into poverty. Our package of recommendations is designed to support long-term renewal in Essex, and efforts to regenerate Essex's natural, social, human, cultural and physical capital becomes an even greater priority when households are under unique financial pressures.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The fifteen recommendations

The ERP has made fifteen recommendations grouped under the five themes.

Theme 1: Social Justice

1. Public sector partners should establish a series of Community Involvement Panels to improve engagement with minority ethnic groups, so as to embed their voices in the policy development process and to improve decision-making across Essex. These panels should be functioning by the end of 2024.

The aims of this recommendation are to:

- bring together representation from Essex's minority ethnic groups, including individual residents and community leaders, in an advisory capacity. Panel Members would be invited to participate in forums where senior leaders across Local Authorities, Police, Fire services, health services, voluntary services, education and anchor institutions can bring forward discussions on key challenges to inform decision;

- establish a two-way, open and continuing dialogue so that public services can make better and more informed decisions and actions based on experiences, challenges, and perceptions of communities in Essex. Residents participating in the groups will act as the representation and voice of their communities, contributing to discussions and supporting activities, quality assurance and accountability;

- strengthen public services' existing work to embed equality practices and to recognise the experiences of ethnic minorities through their policies and practice.

These Community Involvement Panels should build on the lessons of the Independent Advisory Groups (see also case study R1: G) established by Essex Police, but with the aim of bringing minority voices into discussion across the full range of local public services.

The initial focus should be ethnic minority groups, but this model can be used as a pilot with the view of scaling-up to include all lesser heard communities, particularly LGBTQ+ groups, young people, and Gypsy, Traveller and Roma communities (where applicable also non-ethnic Showmen and Boater populations).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Theme 1: Social Justice

2. Create an Essex Digital Inclusion Network, where public services, private businesses, voluntary organisations, and community groups will work in partnership to co-ordinate and strengthen work on digital inclusion across the county. This should be functioning by 2023.

The aim is to create a forum which draws together all partners working on issues related to digital inclusion across Essex. We propose that this forum should involve partners such as NHS Integrated Care Systems, local authorities, the volunteering community, libraries, the youth service (e.g. Duke of Edinburgh scheme), private businesses, education institutions and digital champions across public service. It should look to:

- identify and co-ordinate responses to the needs of communities most at risk of digital exclusion;
- enable and empower community-level responses;
- facilitate investment in infrastructure (including devices) from across the private, public and voluntary sector;
- develop and deliver initiatives to increase the knowledge, skills and confidence of residents at risk of digital exclusion.

Due to the wide landscape of digital initiatives in motion across Essex, we recommend the Essex Digital Inclusion Network be convened by Essex County Council. The partnership should work on a principle of active involvement, engagement and accountability from all members. The partnership should facilitate initiatives such as ensuring every child in Essex has access to a suitable digital device for schoolwork.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Theme 1: Social Justice

3. Evolve community spaces to draw together partners' activities, and the services they provide for communities, making these accessible to all through a network of local community assets. The mix of local services, and the sites through which these are provided, should be tailored to the needs of local residents.

The aim should be to ensure that services required by those in need can be accessed in the heart of community, and in a shared space where communities can come together. To ensure this is effective, this will require partners to:

- engage with residents and communities to understand local the needs, and any barriers to accessing services, to ensure the activities and services are specifically tailored to the needs to residents

- map the community infrastructure available within each community – identifying those which could provide a platform for partnership working and/or the co-location or services in a suitable space.

This approach should include (but is not limited to) providing a central place for digital champions to run skills programmes, digital hubs to provide access to technology, a base for financial advice, social meeting places, children and family activities and support services, food banks, mental health and wellbeing services, health and social prescribing services, public service access, physical activity groups such as walking or yoga and environmental activities such as green skill development, swap shops, or provide warm places for individuals in need. Outreach activities may need to be considered to help target groups most in need of services, but less likely to spontaneously access them, for example minority or marginalised communities.

There is the potential to build on similar models in development across Essex (such as the in Harlow library or the Colchester Digi-hub). Partners should aim to have secured substantial progress by 2026.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Theme 2: Young People

4. Senior officials and elected decision-makers from across Essex public services should commit to regular engagement with the Young Essex Assembly (YEA), Children in Care Council, and Multi School Council.

The aim is to reinforce and increase the role of young people in decision-making, ensuring that they are listened to and acted upon. The ERP proposes that:

- board-level officials, and where relevant elected politicians, from across local government, including County, District, Borough and Town councils, the NHS and Essex's emergency services meet with the YEA and other representatives at least once every 3-4 months, providing an opportunity for YEA members to find out about key issues and to both share their views on these, and share insights with their constituents

- partners establish a 'pairing-up' scheme for YEA representatives and elected politicians in their area, facilitating and ongoing exchange of views and ideas, with opportunities for collaboration and skills sharing

- the YEA and other forums be engaged in 'task and finish' style groups, working alongside key decision-makers, on specific challenges with a view to driving policy development

- the YEA be expanded to engage a larger number of young people and to secure broader representation from young people with more varied and diverse backgrounds across districts in Essex. This will help ensure that elected youth leaders are reflective of the populations they represent and serve.

Throughout our engagement with young people, they have emphasised the importance of being involved from the start in any decision-making process that affects them. This allows them to have meaningful input, in a way that requires less technical knowledge of specific issues and processes, and which meets their needs. It is also crucial to 'close the loop' on engagement with young people, making clear how their input has made a difference, shaped decisions and influenced outcomes. This recommendation builds on a model already in existence in Essex, the ambition is for this to evolve at pace, with greater engagement and youth representation by 2024.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Theme 2: Young People

5. Work with all schools to ensure that all young people across Essex, regardless of where they live, have access to high quality, practical careers guidance by 2024

Schools hold a statutory duty to ensure that careers advice is provided to their pupils. The aim is to ensure that schools across Essex are supported by public service partners and private businesses to provide careers advice that is engaging, inclusive, and of a consistently high-quality, that young people can aim high, taking confident decisions about their future careers and the learning pathways they pursue to achieve their aspirations.

This will help to:

- ease worries and concerns that young people may have about their futures and the opportunities available to them. It will enable young people to access high quality careers guidance and opportunities for engagement with employers, which is known to increase aspirations, opportunities and earning potential in later life;

- equip young people with the skills and knowledge required to progress towards their hopes and aspirations, including supporting them to achieve the best possible academic attainment outcomes, particularly for those from lower socio-economic backgrounds;

- educate and raise awareness for young people and families of future employment opportunities and alternative career choices, such as routes to gain skills for a career in the green sector, or opportunities in the arts and culture sectors;

- level the opportunities for young people by ensuring those from disadvantaged backgrounds, or those with additional needs, can access the same quality of guidance and opportunities as their peers.

The recommendation is for this to be mainly delivered through secondary schools, in line with existing statutory duties. But success will require a deeper partnership with anchor institutions, local employers and community groups. Careers advice should start as early as possible (e.g., from Year 7) to maximize future opportunities for all young people. The ERP hopes that this can evolve to into a "Young Person's Guarantee" for Essex (modelled on similar guarantees in other parts of the UK) where employers commit to providing education placements, apprenticeships, training, or volunteering opportunities for all young people, whether in or out of school.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Theme 2: Young People

6. Support the implementation of the key initiatives of the Essex Education Task Force (EETF) by encouraging a system-wide response through Essex Partners.

The EETF is moving forward with an array of projects and innovations that are targeted at addressing the reduction in attainment and wellbeing amongst young people as a result of Covid-19. This includes continuing to build on the successes of the Year of Reading which aimed to promote the importance of reading, encourage every family to enjoy reading together and encourage businesses across Essex to promote the joy of reading, and has already had a significant impact within schools and across the county.

The EETF will be embarking on initiatives focused on math's and numeracy skills during 2023 and continuing to collaborate with partner organisations such as Essex Libraries and Adult Community Learning to address the short- and long-term impact of Covid-19 on children and young people's educational attainment and wellbeing.

It is important that all partners across Essex get involved and support EETF initiatives, helping ensure that educational impacts, build social, natural, human and cultural capital across the county in the long term. This will require the communication of EETF progress and pipeline across the system. EETF should provide the steer to the type of support required by partners, but is likely to need involvement of Essex County Council, District/Borough and Parish councils, voluntary and community groups, the Young Essex Assembly, the Youth Service, Anchor institutions across Essex and businesses, including small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Theme 3: Community Wellbeing

7. Grow capability within the Essex Voluntary Sector by linking capacity building for smaller, grass root organisations to community development and micro-grants processes.

The aim is to support smaller organisations that struggle to compete for funding from grant-giving foundations and/or government departments to build capacity to help them become successful and sustainable in the long term. This will be achieved by:

- working alongside current micro-grant structures and voluntary infrastructure organisations, to help identify and target smaller organisations or community groups;

- amending local grants processes to ensure that, alongside monetary awards, smaller organisations can receive training and support around common capacity challenges such as fundraising, demonstrating impact and organisational management for smaller organisations.

This may also include a focus on specialist green grant capacity building for charities in rural areas, particularly those looking to offer provisions such as green exercise, wellbeing, and therapeutic activities with nature.

We understand that capacity building for smaller organisations goes beyond the need for funding and could reflect other forms of support such as skills building or process and system infrastructure development as part of a broader an Assets Based Community Development approach. This recommendation does not focus on providing more grant schemes or funding, but rather seeks to link existing micro-grants to build capacity across the voluntary sector. This will require further collaboration with providers of micro-grant schemes, and infrastructure organisations to enhance the current offer, and make these links in practice.

Work is already being done in this space, capacity-building activities, such as training, community support and business development advice, are currently being offered on a case-by-case basis. We recommend that by 2024, engagement in capacity building activity be developed as a condition of micro-grant awards.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Theme 3: Community Wellbeing

8. Create a comprehensive Social Prescribing Network to link Essex Integrated Care Systems, voluntary organisations, and other community groups in an inclusive, social and prevention-pays model of health by 2024.

The aim is to:

- develop provision of social, educational and community options at the point of primary care so as to empower patients, prevent illness, and improve health. This can be more effective, acceptable and convenient and is almost undoubtedly a better use of resources in helping the NHS be a health service rather than an illness service;

- create stronger, and more valued, working partnerships between those with the ability to deliver and support social prescribing across Essex, such as statutory services, voluntary, community and social enterprises (VCSEs) - including smaller organisations - educational institutions and community organisations.

- develop a more equal partnership between statutory services, VCSEs, educational institutions and community organisations in the shaping of approaches to better connecting residents to social prescribing programmes across Essex.

Evaluations of Social Prescribing programmes have measured reductions in GP visits (by 12% per person over 6 months, by 28% over 12 months); falls in A&E visits (by 24% over 1 year); reductions in secondary care appointment (down by 35% over 1 year). For each £1 invested in SP, the social benefits are £1.43 (3 months); £2.30 (1 year); £1.98 (5 years); and reduced costs of the order of £250–500 per person per year. The Healthy London partnership for Social Prescribing has noted that London could have saved £110 million over three years if SP had been widely available and used. The benefits of expanding Social Prescribing programmes go beyond public service savings. There is opportunity to better connect social prescribing expansion to the education and access to natural assets via green therapies which ultimately work to improve health and wellbeing through utilising natural capital.

There are initiatives already underway in Essex that provide a foundation for a network to facilitate Social Prescribing. These will require further support, particularly around education, skills development, expansion of green therapies, establishing links with physical and active travel activities, and to support services to better engage and support minority communities and groups, but may be a route for developing VCSE capacity in order to improve community wellbeing (as discussed in recommendation 7).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Theme 3: Community Wellbeing

9. Place the concept of age and disability-friendly communities at the centre of social care provision, integrating decisions on housing, health, care and support to enable residents to live well and independently into older-age.

The aim is to:

- bring health, social care, housing and town planning professionals together to ensure that provision for older people and those with disabilities is a central consideration for future decision making. Enabling older residents, and those with disabilities to feel safe, able and empowered to enjoy life, live well and feel part of the wider community

- create models of care, in all parts of Essex and across the spectrum of need, that bring together housing and care solutions and position older people and those with disabilities as part of an inclusive community

- learn from innovative models of social care, such as the Netherlands Buurtzorg model (see case study R9: B), which is providing high quality services on lower costs

- develop pilot projects for age-and-disability-friendly housing and multi-tenure accommodation that fit resident's needs, including those from minority communities, learning from exemplars deployed elsewhere in the UK.

The development of new Integrated Care Partnerships provides a vehicle for enabling this, drawing in partners from across the local public service system.

Age-and-disability-friendly communities are places where age or disability is not a barrier to living well and where the environment, activities and services support and enable older people and those with disabilities, including those from minority groups, to have opportunities to enjoy life and feel well, and to participate in society and be valued for their contribution.

New communities have been created in the UK by the ExtraCare Charitable Trust and feature in the work of the UK Network of Age-Friendly Communities. Lessons can be learned from these examples to inform practice in Essex. As we are increasingly faced with an ageing population, it is a vital consideration for the development of infrastructure for the future.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Theme 4: The Climate and Nature Crises

10. Establish a commitment from Essex Partners to work to a policy framework that puts nature recovery, net-zero, environmental sustainability and implications at the heart of decision-making.

The aim is to:

- implement a policy which requires public service partners across Essex to commit to assessing the sustainability and environmental implications and long-term impacts of the decisions they make

- support this with collaborative and inclusive approaches to decision-making – bringing multiple diverse voices into the policy development process

- ensure integrated, long-term, preventative thinking that builds shared values and creates commitment and accountability

- address broader, more systemic challenges beyond an immediate crisis response

- ensure all businesses in Essex have net-zero, nature recovery and environmental policies.

The new Local Nature Partnership (LNP) could prove a good vehicle to pilot this approach. The LNP is already working towards bringing together agencies from across the county to ensure Green and Blue infrastructure and biodiversity thrives, as well as providing important benefits to the people of Essex. Due to the urgent need to reach net-zero and achieve nature recovery, we recommend that work on this is mobilised across Essex Partners by mid-2023.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Theme 4: The Climate and Nature Crises

11. Improve access to natural Green/Blue infrastructure across Essex so that all residents are able to participate and benefit from current and future natural assets

The aim is to:

- address the inequality of access to natural green/blue spaces in rural, coastal and urban areas, including amongst underrepresented or disadvantaged groups;

- link social prescribing schemes to 'green' social prescribing options to make better use of local green space;

- ensure that all current and future public green and blue spaces have accessible walkways and footpaths, are well-served by public transport and that transport options are well communicated;

- enhance nature literacy and young people's access to nature within schools and educational settings;

- highlight the importance of enhancing and protecting natural assets while improving accessibility to the green/blue infrastructure.

The Essex Climate Action Commission's recommendations include increasing Natural Green Infrastructure (natural and semi-natural habitat) in Essex from 14% to 25% by 2030 and 30% by 2040. It is vital to both enhance and protect natural assets as well as improving access to them. Large-scale initiatives aligned to this recommendation are already happening in Essex and require collaboration across multiple partners. We recommend that in these planning stages access and participation initiatives are incorporated into decision making. Meaning by 2040 all Green/Blue infrastructure should have improved accessibility and participation.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Theme 4: The Climate and Nature Crises

12. Support local communities to self-mobilise, and implement pro-environmental initiatives, by educating on what can be done at a local level and enabling collaboration across community groups.

The aim is to:

- create a social infrastructure where local community groups and organisations can learn how to collaborate and share best practice; groups should encourage an intergenerational model to encourage younger and older residents to work together and transfer knowledge and skills;

- enable initiatives and pilots to be used as an education tool for local businesses, education institutions, residents and local community groups to demonstrate what can be achieved at a local level;

- create education packs that can be circulated across the Essex community, for example to schools, local businesses, voluntary organisations, residents, community groups, health centers or faith groups, highlighting initiatives such as reducing food waste in schools, reducing single use plastics in business premises, use of home-composting, shifting to sustainable transport or alternative use of energy sources e.g., solar panels;

- support community ownership of local initiatives such as community farming (regenerative and sustainable agriculture approaches), rewilding projects, community energy schemes, community sustainable transport schemes or implementation of Nature-Climate placed-based action projects, and new forms of living;

- amplify and scale-up small-scale, grassroots initiatives;

- involve people with an interest in achieving the goals and ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of the area;

- support the emergence in all Districts and Boroughs, Cities, Towns, and Parishes of local Climate or Nature Action Committees.

Locally-driven action will be central to creating platforms for the engagement and education of all people of Essex in positive action to improve natural, social and cultural capital. The emergence of new institutions (committees, groups, collectives) to coordinate action will help the transition towards low-carbon and nature-rich futures. This is a long-term, ongoing, goal but we recommend Essex County Council and District/Borough, City, Town and Parish Councils work together to mobilise this community approach by 2030.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Theme 5: The Green Economy

13. Enhance the Net-Zero Innovation Network (NZIN) to strengthen working partnerships with Essex Partners, anchor institutions, the community and local businesses, to increase diversity of membership and implement models to improve capacity and spread innovative projects.

The aim of the NZIN is to involve the community and local businesses in reaching the net-zero carbon emissions target by 2050 creating opportunity for innovation, jobs and helping them to thrive by maximising the opportunity of a green transition. To do this, the network requires greater support and commitment from partners and organisations across Essex to contribute both resources and the capacity to move forward the green projects and develop a wider educational element. The network will be integral to highlighting successful projects that will inspire other local business owners, educational institutions and public services to change practices and contribute more to the move towards net-zero.

We recommend that a resource structure is developed across the NZIN as part of the membership commitments. This should include Essex County Council, the contributing universities and colleges, and the larger local Essex businesses. Representatives will work in collaboration to lead the Net-Zero Innovation Network with the aim to:

- extend the diversity of the network to include more businesses and to engage with the wider Essex community through mechanisms such as the Youth Essex Assembly, the proposed Community Advisory Groups or local community groups and organisations.

- be action focused, moving forward pilot projects and promoting the successful pilots across the Essex Partnership Board with the view to upscale projects Essex-wide.

An example of some pilot projects that could be prioritised are; ensuring solar PV schemes are installed in every community of Essex, on every business roof, over every outdoor car park, for every school, as well as for private individuals; implement a waste reduction, recycling, and reuse project in every school of Essex (551 schools); reflect on the sustainable transport infrastructure, technologies and alternative fuel are cheap, reliable, and accessible across the whole of Essex; upscale the retrofit skills development programme across Essex; engage with local organisations such as Essex Business Forum to explore future challenges of the green transaction and opportunity in creating new jobs.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Theme 5: The Green Economy

14. Develop communication links, resources and tools between industry leaders, educational institutions, and local communities to raise awareness of green skill opportunities by 2024.

The aim is to:

- improve understanding of the long-term benefits of transitioning to greener business models and offering green skills-based training to employees or prospective students.

- de-mystify the green employment market by communicating to residents what opportunities are available and how to gain relevant training and employment.

- showcase and upscale successful pilot projects to businesses and education institutes, such as the Retrofit pilot in Harlow and Tendring, to encourage a wider adoption of training courses and apprenticeships.

- increase capacity of courses and increase number of apprenticeships on offer that align to the future skills demand.

- develop a sustainable pool of skilled workers to aid the growth of the green sector across Essex.

This may be actioned by the creation of tools, such as prospectuses, skills directories, green career's fairs / forums, that are easily accessible and promoted through appropriate routes for target residents, as well as being directly targeted at businesses with the potential to diversify or pivot into the green sector. The emphasis should not only be on green technical skills, but it is important to raise awareness of the importance of problem solving and learning strategies as transferrable skills for green employment.

Partners that would need to be involved are, Essex County Council, primary and secondary schools, Further Education and Higher Education institutions, South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP), business forums (including small and medium sized enterprises), District/Borough and Parish Councils, Local Nature Partnership and the Essex Climate Action Commission. Due to the growing need of green jobs, this is seen as an immediate first step and should be actioned by 2024.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Theme 5: The Green Economy

15. Establish 'Green and Blue Jobs Hubs' in all coastal areas of Essex to promote regeneration through the development of green sectors and green/blue employment.

There is a need to develop green and blue employment opportunities, and the skills to fill these, across Essex if we are going to reach the net-zero ambitions. This includes job opportunities that are both directly green or blue in nature and those that are enablers to the green and blue economy. By focusing efforts on creating educational programmes to develop green skills in the coastal areas of Essex that have the infrastructure, population and thus opportunity to benefit, such as Harwich, Clacton, Tendring, Southend, this could give a boost to wider regeneration by:

- supporting existing businesses in these areas that are already investing in the green and blue economy gain access to a local employment pool to maintain a sustainable business model;

- attracting green businesses to the areas and encouraging diversification of existing businesses to the green space. Bringing new jobs and educational opportunities into the economy which would help improve the overall economic, social and health outcomes of these areas;

- preparing our coastal communities to maintain pace with the ever changing landscape of the green and blue economy;

- working to increase and celebrate pride of place, local identity and improve environmental and natural assets, which would work to attract business and commercial interests beyond green sectors, such as improving coastal tourism or raised awareness of the importance of the blue economy;

- liaising and linking with the new Centre for Coastal Communities established at the University of Essex.

Utilising the need for green and blue jobs will help to tackle the inequalities often felt in coastal communities, working towards better outcomes for all and helping to position Essex as a green hub for innovation and regeneration.

1. INTRODUCTION TO CONTEMPORARY CONTEXT

The Covid-19 pandemic has transformed the world. It has changed societies and economies and us as individuals. It has brought grief to survivors and left many suffering from the long-term effects of social isolation, illness, and long waiting lists for medical treatment. Both Covid-19 itself and the measures taken by national and local governments to manage infections, protect public health, and preserve culture and the economy have all had an immeasurable impact on lives, on society and on the economy.

These effects could extend over decades and across generations.

The pandemic appeared at a particular moment in history. By early 2020, GDP (Gross Domestic Product) had grown across the previous four decades, across local and national economies, yet wealth had neither trickled down nor had been shared. Happiness remained at levels experienced in the 1950s and 1960s. Economic growth brought hidden costs, climate change was already creating a crisis in many parts of the world and was set to worsen, global inequality had advanced, and people were often unkind to others.

The Covid-19 pandemic then prompted something unprecedented: national and local governments implemented new policies at astonishing speed. Actions and inactions had immediate consequences. Communities and individuals repeatedly showed kindness, generosity, and unity. And people came to wonder: could other challenges be addressed with such ambition and speed?

1. INTRODUCTION TO CONTEMPORARY CONTEXT

These changes, pressures and questions highlighted during the crisis should not be wasted and provide the backdrop for the deliberations of the Essex Renewal Project. But the ERP recognizes that the context in which its work began is very different to that in which it is delivering its final report and recommendations. Spiraling inflation is driving a cost-of-living crisis in which the costs of everyday essentials are rising faster than average household incomes, and across the country industrial strike action emerged as a result.

This is, in large part, driven by global forces: the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting supply chain crisis has caused worldwide shortages and affected consumer patterns. Fossil fuel prices have increased, and the nationwide loss of available workforce has also added pressures for both the public and private sectors. At the local level, households are experiencing rising fuel and energy costs, increasing food bills and, for many, higher rental and mortgage payments.

The ERP convened a collective of 22 independent Commissioners, with the aim of:

- Identifying the key challenges that Essex communities will face as they emerge from the early years of the Covid-19 pandemic;

- Prioritising a core set of recommendations for Essex public services on the next steps to secure renewal, improve outcomes for people and the community and natural assets of Essex, and create new opportunities for regeneration and growth.

The Essex Renewal Project and the recommendations have been developed independently of local and national government structures and are based on evidence of how people in Essex are living their lives, and how other renewal initiatives have been developed and implemented within and beyond Essex. The recommendations are not limited to specific administrative boundaries within Essex, and are thus relevant for implementation across the whole of the county.

2. EFFECTS OF COVID-19 ON ESSEX

Essex has unique natural and physical assets and a distinctive culture and society. We present here a snapshot of Essex and key impacts of Covid-19 on our communities.

Essex overview:

36% **of residents in Essex** undertake unpaid, voluntary work (measured within the previous 12 months)

In 2020-21,
64,163 **food parcels** were distributed in Greater Essex by the Trussell Trust Network, with many more community groups and independent food providers distributing parcels.

The Essex Wildlife Trust is one of the largest wildlife trusts in the UK with **40,000** members and volunteers supporting the effort.

43% **of Essex residents** have caring responsibilities for others due to long-term physical or mental health conditions or illnesses, or problems related to old age.

21% **of land is natural** or green assets, yet Essex also has one of the lowest proportions of land for trees in the UK.

350-400 **miles of coastline** facing increasing vulnerability to rising sea levels.

1/3 of residents live in rural areas which means achieving net-zero carbon transport emissions by 2050 will be a challenge.

Availability of local jobs is lower compared with the rest of England and East of England at 0.82 per 100 working people (England 0.88; East 0.87); many people commute to London, which in turns brings income into the county.

Population is ageing at a faster rate compared with England: a 44% increase over the last 10 years of 70-74s compared with a 37% national increase.

Essex has a vibrant economy, with some **142,000 businesses** (at the end of 2021), a 3.4% increase in 2020; In June 2020 there was a record breaking number of new business formations.

Essex is home to a rich array of cultural and historic assets, events and traditions, including museums, the Essex Book Festival, the museum of the year (Firstsite), local authors, folk traditions, St Peters on the Wall at Bradwell-on-sea, Greenstead church near Ongar, Roman capital of Britain (Colchester), Hadleigh Castle, Southend-on-Sea Pier (the longest pleasure pier in the world), fishing and coastal traditions, industry and ship building, and links across North Sea to other communities.

75 **of neighbourhoods (LSOAs)** are among the 20% most deprived nationally. They are home to over 120,000 Essex residents, a figure which has doubled since 2007.

2. EFFECTS OF COVID-19 ON ESSEX

Covid-19 impacts:

Increase in loneliness across groups, particularly young adults (18-24), women, unemployed and residents with a limiting disability:

39% **feel they often lack companionship** vs. 33% in 2020

38% **often feel left out** vs. 36% in 2020

38% **feel isolated from others** vs. 36% in 2020

Inequalities of mental and physical health across cohorts has worsened;

80% of young people with pre-existing mental health needs had worsened mental health, and new issues emerged, especially anxiety, fear, and stress among young people.

Ethnic minority groups had a higher death rate once infected: Bangladeshi ethnic individuals had the highest risk at 4.4 and 5.2 times greater for men and women respectively compared with the White British ethnic individuals.

Greater appreciation and need for green and natural space during Covid-19: **usage of parks increased by +97%**;

Reduction of car use as more people work from home.

Increase in domestic waste arisings due to home working.

Unemployment reached an all-time high during the pandemic (**5.2% in July 2021**) – recovering to **3.6% by December 2021**; young people and women were disproportionately impacted.

Urban hubs saw lower footfall, greatly affecting the retail sector which were already suffering from closures.

Hospitality, arts, entertainment and travel businesses bore the brunt of closures during Covid-19, but the arts sector in particular are projected to see steeper bounce back over the next few year.

Overall waste arisings increased by 5% between 2019-20 and 2020-21, particularly PPE, plastics, and household waste.

Exposed a lack of access to digital technology, **37% of households in Essex having 'limited' digital capabilities**, 22% lack digital skills, confidence, and internet usage

For further information on the impacts of Covid-19 see the Essex County Council Covid-19 Impact Assessment reports, and for Essex residents' views, perceptions and behaviours see the Essex County Council Residents Survey report.

3. PRINCIPLES AND VALUES FOR RENEWAL

The Essex Renewal Project has identified 15 Recommendations to address the key challenges facing Essex people, communities and institutions. Commissioners have reviewed extensive evidence and examples to identify these challenges and opportunities. We collaborated over the course of a year to draw upon our own experiences across the public, private and third sectors, and develop themes through personal and professional networks, drawing on input from a wide group of contributors, evidence and exemplars of good practice at an international, UK and Essex level.

3.1 What is Renewal?

The Essex Renewal Project defines "renewal" as the cultivation of five regenerative capital assets, the development and growth of which will deliver benefits and services that will improve the lives of the people of Essex (Figure 1).
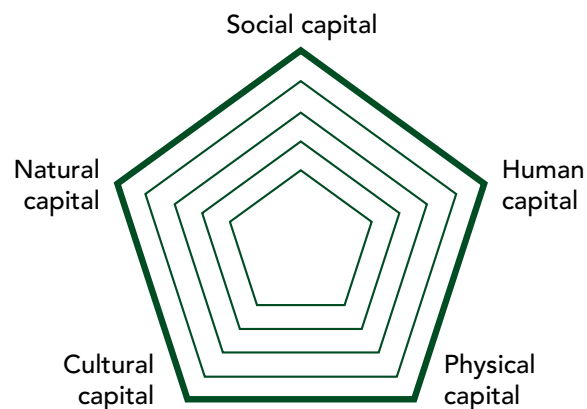

Figure 1

Five renewable capital assets for regenerative economies and places

These five capital assets are:

- **Social capital:** the trust, reciprocity and relationships that increase togetherness, kindness, connectedness and collective action between and within communities;

- **Natural capital:** stocks of natural resources in whole ecosystems (clean air and water, flood control, tree and soil carbon, and biodiversity) which provide benefits that underpin all economies and societies making human life possible;

- **Human capital:** the capability of individuals, based on knowledge, skills, health and nutrition, the value of which is magnified when these individuals in public, private and third sector organisations work together;

- **Cultural capital:** the local assets created by people that comprise customs, arts, language, stories, innovation, laws, science and technology.

- **Physical capital:** the human made resources and infrastructure of buildings, housing, factories, utilities, energy and transport infrastructure, and communication systems.

3. PRINCIPLES AND VALUES FOR RENEWAL

After two years of the Covid-19 pandemic, all five forms of these renewable capitals were left in a damaged and diminished state. Regeneration is an inclusive strategy that creates, builds and heals. It is intended to be inclusive and produce collective and committed effort. In the timely and internationally-important 2021 book, 'Regeneration', Paul Hawken and more than 100 co-authors call for economic systems and structures that will heal rather than steal the future: "the economic structures created to support human well-being have degenerated life on earth, creating loss, suffering and a heating planet."

At the same time, the business leaders Paul Polman and Andrew Winston in their 2021 business book, 'Net Positive', have observed we cannot have healthy people on an unhealthy planet, and that "businesses will grow and prosper over the long haul by serving the world – that is, by giving more than they take."

This is the core of renewal: creating the context by which public, private and third sectors create more than they take. Securing renewal in Essex means regenerating these five capital assets on the route to regeneration. The relationship between these capital assets is often synergistic, with improvements in one helping to foster virtuous circles of renewal for the longer term. Investment in one capital asset builds up and strengthens the value of the other four.

To achieve this, decision-makers across the public, private and third sector will need to listen to and learn from diverse perspectives, seeking out lessons from experiences that go beyond their own. This will help to create long-term change and opportunities for sustained renewal and health for the county.

Most of the contemporary problems existed or were growing in significance before the arrival of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, but all have been exacerbated in the past two and a half years. Some have become more apparent as behaviours and choices have changed amongst the public. Other trends have not changed as much as hoped: the climate crisis and extreme weather events could have been affected positively by reduced consumption and travel during the pandemic, but worldwide carbon concentrations in the atmosphere have continued to rise dangerously.

Changes in supply and demand for energy (mainly fossil fuels), and its impact on cost of living, has brought into sharp focus the need for cleaner, more resilient, and more effective renewable energy systems. The race to net-zero will lower energy costs, but investments will be needed in the short term for transitional infrastructure. Global opinion polling suggests that concern about the climate emergency was the strongest common global value in the months preceding the pandemic, and that concern about climate has doubled over the past decade, yet there are barriers for individuals to changing behaviours to help tackle this, such as equal access to affordable electric vehicles and charging. The need for action is urgent, with actions and leadership needed more than ever.

3. PRINCIPLES AND VALUES FOR RENEWAL

Structural and inter-generational inequalities have worsened. Ethnic minority groups suffered greater personal losses as a result of Covid-19 than the White British population. Racism remains a lived daily experience for many people in Essex. Young people suffered substantial educational reversals, isolation from peers, disruption to educational progress, reduced physical activity. The uncertain future for young people is intensified by the economic crisis. Vulnerable members of the community were more likely to be made redundant. Women bore the highest economic and caring burdens. Reports of domestic violence increased. Those living in Essex's more deprived areas experienced more unemployment and lack of access to much needed resources for our changed way of living, widening the deprivation, education attainment and economic gap between these communities and more secure, affluent parts of the county.

Mental ill-health and well-being amongst young people has worsened, as the pressure of financial uncertainty and thinking of life beyond education has sharpened. Regular access to nature brings many health benefits, but inequalities of access have been exposed and there is an increased desire for, and recognition of, the value of local access to nature. Loneliness has worsened for all age groups, and the costs on the NHS have increased as incidence of non-communicable diseases arising from the way we live has increased. Population is ageing, which will continue to put pressure on our health and social care services, particularly in areas that have a high older population relation to density.

The proximity of the voluntary community and social enterprise sector (VCSES) to communities allowed them to react quickly to front line needs to protect and support the most vulnerable, but as needs increased dramatically, an urgent need to expand capacity of operations was required. This led to a substantial surge in volunteering, all motivated by kindness and a desire to help neighbours and communities, to feel a part of something greater and to find a sense of common purpose. As we emerged from the pandemic into a cost of living economic crisis, VCSES remain vital to provide front line support to communities. Yet, the complexity of funding, partnering and access to services means many struggle to rekindle the momentum seen during the pandemic.

There has been a measurable worldwide decline in institutional trust over the last two decades. Essex organisations are no different, and thus are presented with challenges in how to embed public messaging regarding Covid-19 and other collective challenges. This has wider implications beyond the pandemic. As we seek to renew, tackle social and economic inequalities, the climate and nature crises and work towards better and greener outcomes for all, we require an underlying level of social capital, kindness and trust between communities and public services.

This is a foundation for social cohesion and participation and to improve social, economic, environmental and health outcomes in the long-term.

3. PRINCIPLES AND VALUES FOR RENEWAL

3.3 Overarching Aim:

Building regenerative cultures and economies

The primary aim of the Essex Renewal Project is to support the recovery and building of social, natural, human, cultural and physical capital across the region. These assets supply important services that benefit health, reduce public service costs and form a sense of public good. But all five forms of renewable capital have been diminished in recent times and need investment and deliberate action to be recovered.

Regenerative economic systems tend to be multifunctional: their components do more than one job. For example, by investing in nature and people, and seeking to build assets that provide multiple services to all people, we can create a society with greater well-being and happiness, equitable distribution of prosperity and income, industry mindful to sustainability, and the re-imagination of living places with access to nature. These nature-based solutions (NBS) are a widely recognised term to draw attention to the services from natural assets that increase the well-being of people, as well as support unique and rich landscapes, habitats, and species

Regenerative cultures also seek to be fairer and more equal, offering opportunities for personal growth for all people. High levels of public engagement are a social good, as this increases personal sense of agency and capability, increases creativity and grows problem-solving and entrepreneurial capacity.

We see the engagement of the people of Essex in renewal projects as a key part of future success. A regenerative future requires the capacity to listen and learn from diverse perspectives.

3.4 Renewal and collective action work already underway in Essex

There are many important initiatives already underway in Essex, and the Essex Renewal Project is seeking to be complementary and supportive with additional renewal recommendations. A summary of some of the key renewal work already underway in Essex now follows.

3.4.1 Essex Climate Action Commission

In 2021, the Essex Climate Action Commission (ECAC) released its report 'Net Zero: Making Essex Carbon Neutral', which made more than 100 recommendations to aid the transition to net-zero for Essex by 2050. These have had comprehensive cross-party and county-wide support. £200m has already been assigned by Essex County Council to implement specific initiatives and interventions aimed at tackling the climate crisis at a local level. Within this the Climate Action Fund holds £500,000 to offer grants of up to £20,000 to support voluntary and community projects tackling climate change in the county. The ECAC is progressing actions on green infrastructure, energy, waste, the built environment, low-carbon transport, community engagement and the green economy.

3. PRINCIPLES AND VALUES FOR RENEWAL

3.4.2 Parish, Town and Borough/District climate and nature action committees and initiatives already established

Across Essex, a number of parish, town, district, borough and city councils have declared a climate emergency, developed a climate strategy or action plan. Others are planning similar initiatives. Similarly, the climate crisis is being recognized across the county's parish and town councils, supported by the Essex Association of Local Councils, working closely with the Essex Climate Action Commission.

3.4.3 Essex Forest Initiative and Essex Forest Partnership

In October 2019, Essex County Council committed to plant £1million worth of trees over the next five years, with an aim of planting 375,000 trees in total. All district councils in Essex have separate targets which add up to a current total target of 870,000 trees. The Essex Forest Partnership is a partnership of local authorities working together to achieve this target and more.

3.4.4 BLUEPRINT to a Circular Economy

Funded by the Interreg FCE programme and led by Essex County Council, BLUEPRINT aims to help councils across England and France transition to a circular economy. By creating policies and strategies for local authorities, rolling out a new training programme and launching behaviour change campaigns, the project will help to embed circular growth within local communities.

3.4.5 Local Nature Partnership

The independent Local Nature Partnership for Essex (LNP) was launched by Essex County Council (ECC) in 2022. It will form part of the national network of LNPs and will be responsible for encouraging, supporting, and facilitating nature recovery across the county, including increasing and improving access to natural greenspace, enhance health and wellbeing opportunities for all Essex residents, and assuring the future for local and regional biodiversity.

3.4.6 Essex Developers Climate Action Charter

The Essex Developers Group responded to one of the recommendations of the ECAC by bringing together partners from across the public and private sector to deliver a Climate Action Charter in 2022. This charter aims to secure global net-zero by 2050 and keep the target of limiting global heating to +1.5oC, adaptation to protect communities and natural habitat, and mobilisation of finance by working together to deliver these goals.

3.4.7 Essex Net-Zero Innovation Network

The Sector Development Strategy in Essex has a strong focus on green growth and decarbonisation. As part of creating an environment to foster green innovation, the Net-Zero Innovation Network was launched to connect community groups, organisations, energy providers, and institutions across the public and private sectors to develop pioneering sustainability projects and decarbonisation solutions.

3. PRINCIPLES AND VALUES FOR RENEWAL

3.4.8 Transport East Strategy

Transport East, in partnership with the Transport East Strategic Offices Groups, released a Transport Strategy in 2021, with the aim of transforming transport connections to help drive long-term economic growth over the next 30 years. The four strategic priorities involve decarbonizing transport, connecting growing place and business clusters, energizing coastal and rural communities, and improving connections to ports to help UK based businesses thrive.

3.4.9 Essex Year of Reading 2022

The Essex Year of Reading is a county-wide campaign created to help children and young people discover a love of reading and ensure every Essex child can read at their age level or better. This campaign is part of a programme to address the short and long-term impact of Covid-19 on children and young people's education and the missed opportunities caused by the pandemic. Essex County Council is funding the Essex Education Task Force to work with education providers and stakeholders to deliver the programme. £1million is being invested in a programme of reading during 2022. Events, activities and competitions will be taking place.

3.4.10 Essex Education Task Force

The Essex Education Task Force (EETF) was created in 2020 in response to the Covid-19 pandemic to tackle the challenges that emerged around attainment and wellbeing. Through securing funding from Essex County Council, the EETF has launched an Early Years Communication Project to provide a suite of training for early years and childcare settings, funded every secondary school to support teenage mental health, embedded transition coaches in further education settings to aid young people moving toward higher education, funded placements for children and young people to participate in outdoor activities, launched the Education Leaders Wellbeing Toolkit and invested in bespoke teacher training in over 150 primary schools.

3.4.11 Everyone's Library Service Plan

The Essex Library Service have launched a new Libraries Plan. This aims to improve and promote the new opportunities around the county service. This involves placing libraries at the heart of communities. Over four years, there are 22 priority commitments for the library service and literacy, communications, infrastructure, and supporting communities in levelling up.

3.4.12 Digital Essex

In June 2022, Essex County Council launched a new Digital Strategy for Essex, aiming to boost connectivity and tackle digital exclusion. The strategy includes opportunities to develop digital skills and identifies ways to drive adoption of digital technology including improvements to infrastructure to provide residents and businesses access to improved digital connectivity, with aims to achieve plans by 2025.

3. PRINCIPLES AND VALUES FOR RENEWAL

3.4.13 Levelling Up Initiatives

Levelling up is a national priority, focused on identifying areas of disparities of opportunity and working towards change. Across Essex organisations have been identifying what this means for our local communities and moving forward with agendas to identify ways to support the levelling up agenda. For example, Essex County Council have identified places and cohorts that are a central focus and are working towards innovation and initiatives to overcome difficulties experienced by these residents and places.

The priority cohorts identified by Essex County Council are Children and Adults with SEND, learning disabilities, or mental health conditions; Children on free school meals; Working families and young adults (16-25) who have to been in education, training or employment for around 6-12 months.

The priority places identified by Essex County Council are Tendring, Basildon housing estates, Colchester housing estates, Harlow, rural Braintree; Canvey Island. Southend Borough Council have secured Community Renewal Funding for two projects which are aimed at improving employment opportunities for the most deprived wards in Southend.

3.5 Principles for the Selection of Recommendations

We have selected five key themes for renewal and three recommendations for each. We seek to ensure these are relevant, actionable, and visible. The aim is to provide a menu of choices for all institutions of Essex. We do not expect that all will be relevant to all institutions, but they are focused on the long-term opportunities, they represent a road map of choices, and will collectively show Essex as an exemplar county in terms of responses to renewal after more than two years of Covid-19 infection and spread.

We know from experiences elsewhere and the example cases selected that the recommendations could have the following impacts:

- Each recommendation has already been tested: we know they have reduced long-term public costs;

- Each requires investment in new technologies, practices, and institutions to save these costs for public services in the long-term;

- Each is designed to improve the well-being and reduce inequality within the county;

- Each will build trust and social capital within Essex;

- Each recommendation is aiming for saturation impact: we are seeking to transform the whole of the county through greater public engagement to increase the effectiveness of local democracy and institutions.

3. PRINCIPLES AND VALUES FOR RENEWAL

These recommendations are important for renewal: the long-term ambitions of leaders across Essex may not be achieved if these priorities are not implemented. They collectively have salience in Essex, in reflecting the experiences of local populations or the material conditions of different Essex communities. We hope these will give rise to local and collective action. These are areas in which local partners can secure progress and make choices for prioritisation without the need for major changes in national policy, legislation, or spending. Many, though, do require a system-level response. We have therefore not sought to identify priorities that relate to the performance or targets of specific agencies.

We have structured the recommendations around these five themes. These themes are broad and interrelated, and we have indicated throughout the report where recommendations have common ground and have the potential to be linked:

THEME 1	**Social Justice:** how inequality and injustice have been exacerbated by the pandemic.
THEME 2	**Young People:** how the pandemic has impacted on young people's wellbeing and life chances.
THEME 3	**Community Well-being:** how community activism and volunteering have begun a transformation in the wellbeing of Essex communities.
THEME 4	**The Climate and Nature Crises:** how policy and practice can create sustainable ways of living and working.
THEME 5	**The Green Economy:** how local action can position Essex as an innovation-lab for jobs, growth, and green intervention.

4. FIVE THEMES AND FIFTEEN RECOMMENDATIONS

Common structure for each theme

We have used a common structure for each of the five themes: a background introduction, the recommendation, and the supporting examples. Each of the 15 recommendations is designed to begin development immediately to work towards delivery of long-term outcomes.

1. **Background to each recommendation.**

2. **The recommendation (R1-R15).**

3. **Exemplar cases to support each recommendation.**

THEME 1: SOCIAL JUSTICE

Recommendations R1–R3

R1

Public sector partners should establish a series of Community Involvement Panels to improve engagement with minority ethnic groups, so as to embed their voices in the policy development process and to improve decision-making across Essex. These panels should be functioning by the end of 2024.

R2

Create an Essex Digital Inclusion Network, where public services, private businesses, voluntary organisations, and community groups will work in partnership to co-ordinate and strengthen work on digital inclusion across the county. This should be functioning by 2023.

R3

Evolve community spaces to draw together partners' activities, and the services they provide for communities, making these accessible to all through a network of local community assets. The mix of local services, and the sites through which these are provided, should be tailored to the needs of local residents.

Religious gathering on the beach at Southend, one of a long tradition of such seaside gatherings by many different faiths.' Photo taken by ERP commissioner Ken Worpole

THEME 1: SOCIAL JUSTICE

R1 background:

Trust between Public Services and Essex's Minority Communities

The importance of trust between communities and public institutions is a foundation for the development of progressive societal outcomes, the encouragement of participation and creation of better social cohesion. It requires openness, integrity, fairness in treatment of all residents and is underpinned by public engagement, listening and understanding communities. Covid-19 brought to light just how important establishing a base level of trust is to keep communities safe and working towards a common goal. Evidence shows that a lack of confidence in public institutions is linked to worse outcomes during the pandemic, whereas communities with a greater sense of civic engagement have been linked with lower mortality rates and better health outcomes.

The levels of trust across institutions and community groups is not evenly spread. A YouGov polling survey conducted during the pandemic showed higher levels of trust in NHS around issues of Covid-19 (87% trust a fair amount or a great deal) compared with local

MPs (35%) and other Members of Parliament (27%). This national data is reflected at an Essex level, where trustworthiness is cited as the second most important requirement of public institutions, but the NHS is seen as more trustworthy than local councils, police and fire services. This disparity in trust is more apparent for ethnic minority groups compared with those from white British backgrounds. In Essex, those from ethinic minority groups are less likely to feel public institutions are trustworthy or listen effectively compared to white Bristish residents. YouGov polling also shows consistently lower levels of trust amongst all ethnic minority groups.

This challenge is not a new phenomenon, the UK as a whole has seen some of the lowest trust in Government scores compared with other countries, currently at 35%. The introduction of shielding during the initial 2020 lockdown, and the roll-out of the national vaccination programme, were each supported by engagement programmes specifically aimed at involving people across minority

ethnic backgrounds. These programmes were developed, at least in part, in recognition of the fact that levels of trust in public institutions, public health messaging, clinicians and scientists, is lower amongst some ethnic backgrounds. Despite these efforts, there was still greater vaccine hesitency amongst ethnic groups, with 72% of Black and Black British feeling vaccine hesitant compared with 15% of White British or Irish groups. This is reflected in lower vaccine uptake rates in Essex (30% of those of Caribbean heritage remained unvaccinated (at Feb 2022).

Exploratory research conducted by the government's Race Disparity Unit suggests that levels of trust around Covid-19 were rooted in the personal histories of minority ethnic individuals, lived experience, and daily experiences of racism. These prolonged experiences to discrimination have wider implications beyond Covid-19, as psychological stress is known to affect health and wellbeing over the long term.

THEME 1: SOCIAL JUSTICE

R1 background:

Trust between Public Services and Essex's Minority Communities

Programmes and initiatives that have been most effective in building trust between communities and public services have focused on embedding civic and public engagement. This centres on creating opportunities for regular and open dialogues with communities so that public services can learn directly from lived experiences, and then embed resources to take action on policy and decision making. If engagement, transparency and communication is improved across communities in Essex, then a more inclusive, welcoming and diverse society can be created, where every resident, no matter what their background, feels comfortable and a full part of society.

Recommendation R1

Public sector partners should establish a series of Community Involvement Panels to improve engagement with minority ethnic groups, so as to embed their voices in the policy development process and to improve decision-making across Essex. These panels should be functioning by the end of 2024.

The aim of this recommendation is to:

- bring together representation from Essex's minority ethnic groups, including individual residents and community leaders, in an advisory capacity. Panel Members would be invited to participate in forums where senior leaders across Local Authorities, Police, Fire services, health services, voluntary services, education and anchor institutions can bring forward discussions on key challenges to inform decision;

- establish a two-way, open and continuing dialogue so that public services can make better and more informed decisions and actions based on experiences, challenges, and perceptions of communities in Essex.

Residents participating in the groups will act as the representation and voice of their communities, contributing to discussions and supporting activities, quality assurance and accountability;

- strengthen public services' existing work to embed equality practices and to recognise the experiences of ethnic minorities through their policies and practice.

These Community Involvement Panels should build on the lessons of the Independent Advisory Groups (see case study R1:G) established by Essex Police, but with the aim of bringing minority voices into discussion across the full range of local public services.

The initial focus should be ethnic minority groups, but this model can be used as a pilot with the view of scaling-up to include all lesser heard communities, particularly LGBTQ+ groups, young people, and Gypsy, Traveller and Roma communities (where applicable also non-ethnic Showmen and Boater populations).

THEME 1: SOCIAL JUSTICE

Seven exemplars of good practice

Recommendation R1 has been informed by examples of local, national and international initatives that have successfully improved trust and relationships between public services and communities and are now working towards better long-term health, social and economic outcomes. Across Essex there are initiatives already underway to improve relationships with communities by adopting open dialogues and collaboration with groups.

A: Communities Creating Racial Equity Initiative: Charlottesville Community Project, USA

The Communitities Creating Racial Equity Initiative (CCRE) was developed by Everyday Democracy in 2007, with the aim to help communities and organisations across the US create a widespread dialogue to deepen understanding of structural racism, and create new solutions to resolve racial inequalities in systems. This was approached in two ways: i) to help cross-sector community coalitions develop their own ability to create sustained civic engagement on issues of racial equity; and ii) to support those coalitions in learning about how to connect community engagement to measurable racial-equity outcomes.

Charlottesville was one community seeing the benefits of this approach. As a culturally diverse city with a long history of racism, racial discrimination, segregation and mistrust between ethnic minority communities and the state, public agencies adopted a community centred Dialogue on Race initiative to engage the community in an open, honest and continuing discussion on race, racism and diversity, to identify problems and work towards solutions. These discussions led to new initiatives such as cultural festivals, the development of a Minority Business Council, and greater voicing of awareness of institutional racism from political institutions.

THEME 1: SOCIAL JUSTICE

B: Belfast Friendship Club and Small World Workshops: Northern Ireland

The Belfast Friendship Club was established in 2009 by civil society organisations and charities in response to a series of unprovoked racial attacks in 2004 on Belfast's Filipino community, leading to a worsening mistrust within minority groups due to a spread of misinformation. The group aimed to be a safe place for people to come together and build relationships. It harboured an environment of diversity and support and through the weekly meetings, and members learned from one another and formed strong relationships. The success of the club lead to the establishment of the Small World Workshops which brought together community, business and youth groups, probation officers, prison inmates and staff, teachers, and students across Northern Ireland. The workshops have helped to bring similarities and experiences to light, and to help staff from public agencies for health, social services, housing and the police respond with greater understanding. This resulted in a greater understanding and trust between services and communities.

C: PatientsLikeMe, Worldwide

PatientsLikeMe (PLM) is an online community of 930,000 people with 2,900 conditions and diseases. The mission of PLM is to improve the lives of patients through knowledge derived from real-world experiences and outcomes. The community begun in 1998 by one patient, and has grown to become the world's largest community-health management platform. Each individual is seen as a citizen scientist. Data is collected and quantified, and provides context on lifestyle choices, social and demographic conditions, and the effects of treatments on individuals. This platform has directly changed medical and health services.

D: The Gypsy, Traveller, Roma, Showmen and Boater (GTRSB) School Pledge, Nationwide

The GTRSB Pledge for Schools was developed in addition to the GTRSB in HE: Improving Access and Participation for GTRSB Pledge, and is a commitment schools sign to work towards creating a welcoming environment and conditions in which Gypsy, Traveller, Roma, Showmen and Boater (GTRSB) pupils can become more resilient and thrive academically. It has been developed in consultation with schools, third sector organisations and individuals from the GTRSB communities. It contains specific actions on building and supporting a welcoming culture, data monitoring, cultural awareness, curriculum and outreach and engagement to local communities. It demonstrates how effective an action-based initiative can be to build better relationships and trust to improve outcomes for severely marginalised groups of people.

THEME 1: SOCIAL JUSTICE

E: A Day of Welcome, East of England

A joint venture between Anglia Ruskin University, Norfolk Schools of Sanctuary and UNHCR, 'A Day of Welcome' is an annual day of action in schools that raises awareness of refugee history and heritage, past and present, local and global. Each year community researchers, including refugees and asylum seekers, and local teachers to develop resources and activities for the students to take part in on the day. The main aim is to build understanding of experiences of refugees and asylum seekers, uncover little-known stories, and to sign-post Refugee Week events. In 2021, 130 schools participated across the East of England, engaging with over 190,000 pupils. In Norfolk, this yearly event has led policy changes for Norfolk Schools of Sanctuary and increased participation in NSoS network activities (from 7 to 103 schools). 9 schools have achieved School of Sanctuary Status since 2018.

F: Essex Faith and Communities Tactical Co-ordination Group

In March 2020, the Essex Reslience Forum set up strategic structures to coordinate the response to the pandemic across Greater Essex. As part of this, a working group of faith leaders was set up to ensure these plans considered the needs of all groups and to maintain an open dialogue throughout the response work. This evolved into the Essex Faith and Communities Tactical Co-ordination group which extended membership to include a more diverse range of communities. Many communication intiatives were actioned through the group. This group opened a wider dialogue with faith and ethnic communitities in Essex, acknowledging the need to engage at a community level to encourage adherence to guidance. Despite being task-oriented and short term, this could set a precedent for co-production on policies and interventions in the future.

G: Independent Advisory Groups (IAGs), Essex-wide

The Independent Advisory Groups (IAG) are an initiative across all ten of the policing districts in Essex, and aim to bring local police and communities together. It is an opportunity for community leaders representing many different groups across Essex such as faith groups, youth groups and the disabled community to feed directly to senior Police leaders such as the Chief Inspector. The meetings occur regularly and are set up as an open and honest environment in which challenging topics can be discussed. The IAG have a quality assurance panel to ensure that any actions identified are reviewed and actioned. IAGs have a focus on building relationships with communities, and while they are continually evolving to ensure broad representation, consistency of approaches across districts, and involvement from wider public services, Essex has been ranked second most established of the 45 IAG initiatives across the UK.

THEME 1: SOCIAL JUSTICE

R2 background:

The Digital Divide

The pandemic has increased reliance on technology and digital communications. Periods of national lockdown saw many employers adopt home-working practices, many of whom have continued to do so with 36% of working adults reporting working from home in 2022 at least once a week. Schools, colleges, and higher education institutions adopted remote-learning. Firms adapted their business models to build and sustain online trade. While digital communication is no replacement for in-person socialising, individuals, families and friends embraced digital platforms for social contact, accessing support, shopping and generally participating in society.

Many people have come to rely on the internet and digital devices for many daily services. Some recent changes are likely to be permanent, for better or worse, such as the heavier reliance on social media and gaming platforms for young people to socialise. Fewer people are living entirely offline, digital engagement is increasing, and people are becoming more digitally capable than ever

before. In May 2020, over half the population (57%) reported that they had improved their digital skills, and we see a steady increase in internet usage across Essex: In 2020, 93.7% of Essex residents used the internet in the previous three months. However, estimates suggest that some 22% of adult internet users in Essex can be classified as 'narrow users', meaning they only undertake a very limited number of online activities and generally lack digital skills.

For those who remain on the wrong side of the digital divide, largely low income families, older residents, those living in rural communities, frequent movers, those from minority groups such as GTRSB and people living with a disability, there is a risk of becoming ever-more marginalised and cut-off from economic and social opportunities. For example, the move towards a cashless society could be detrimental for the informal economy who are unable to implement digital means or to individuals unable or uncomfortable using digital payments. Addressing inequalities

which feed the digital divide will have many benefits for those most in need. The following represent major priorities:

- **Improving educational outcomes for disadvantaged students:** 20% of children in reciept of free school meals had no access to technology during Covid-19, compared to 7% of children not receiving free-school meals. The attainment gap in Essex between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students is consistently wider than the UK average (e.g. disadvantaged pupils in Essex are 10.1 months behind at the end of KS2 in 2018-19, compared with 9.3 months nationally).

- **Improving employability and earnings:** 55% of people in the UK who are offline earn under £20,000, and people with high digital engagement have a higher earning power. 50% of the UK feel digital access helps them find employment, 67% feel it helps them save money and 63% feel being online has helped develop professionally and improve future work prospects.
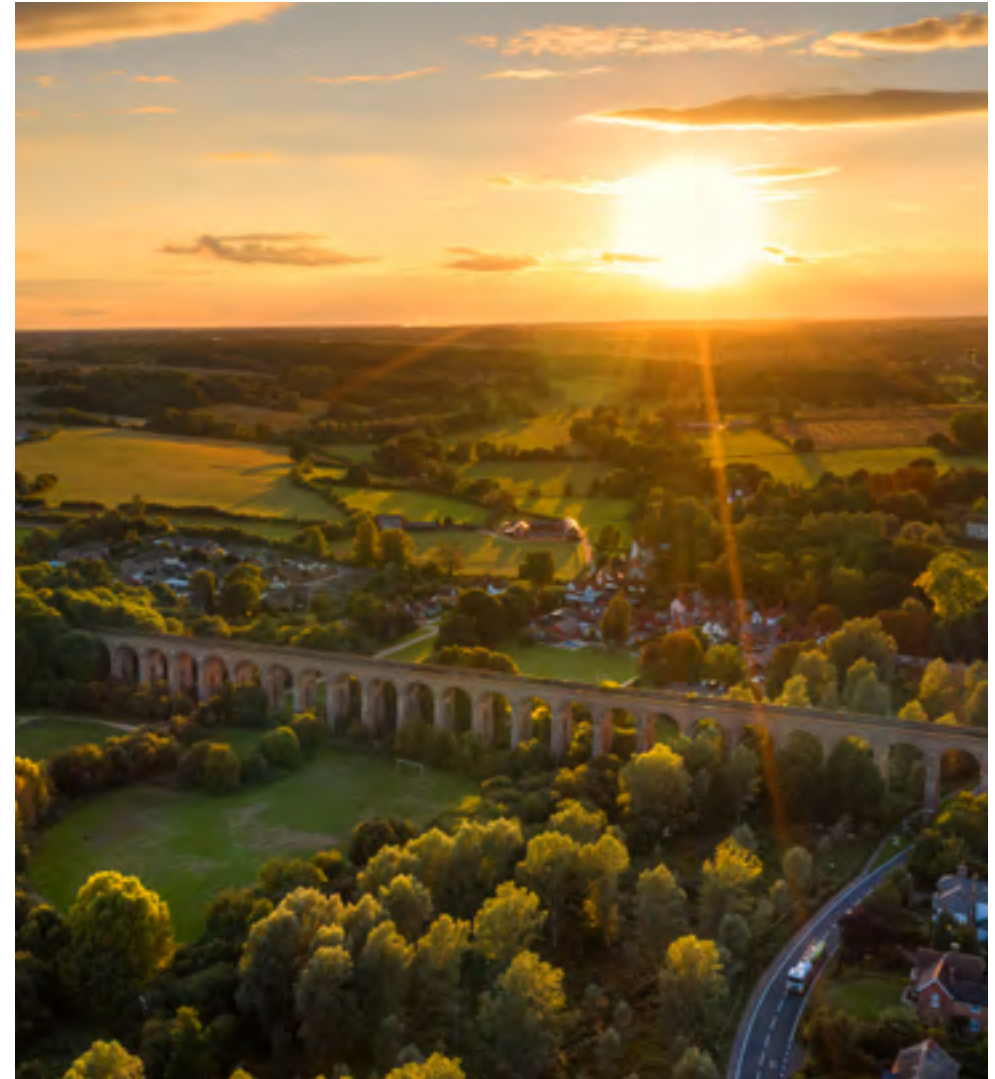
THEME 1: SOCIAL JUSTICE

R2 background:

The Digital Divide

- **Enabling better access and connections to services:** many services are now moving online, from applying for childcare benefits to booking GP appointments and monitoring health appointments. Since 2019 there has been an increase in remote GP appointments across Essex: In 2022, telephone and online appointments have increased to 29% of overall GP appointments from 12% in 2019. Yet, those who would benefit the most from these services, e.g. the elderly population, are increasingly located in rural areas with no access to digital connectivity.

- **Bringing renewed vigour to the rural Essex economy:** with more than 20% of businesses based in rural Essex, improving connectivity, access and affordability will help local economies to grow.

The challenge of the digital divide today is less about access to the physical infrastructure required to receive a good broadband connection, though this remains a challenge amongst certain groups and areas of the county, such as rural communities. Instead, those who experience exclusion are more likely to struggle with affordability of broadband connectivity, access to devices and a lack of skills.

THEME 1: SOCIAL JUSTICE

Recommendation R2

Create an Essex Digital Inclusion Network, where public services, private businesses, voluntary organisations, and community groups will work in partnership to co-ordinate and strengthen work on digital inclusion across the county. This should be functioning by 2023.

The aim is to create a forum which draws together all partners working on issues related to digital inclusion across Essex. We propose that this forum should involve partners such as NHS Integrated Care Systems, local authorities, the volunteering community, libraries, the youth service (e.g. Duke of Edinburgh scheme), private businesses, education institutions and digital champions across public service. It should look to:

- identify and co-ordinate responses to the needs of communities most at risk of digital exclusion;

- enable and empower community-level responses;

- facilitate investment in infrastructure (including devices) from across the private, public and voluntary sector;

- develop and deliver initiatives to increase the knowledge, skills and confidence of residents at risk of digital exclusion.

Due to the wide landscape of digital initiatives in motion across Essex, we recommend the Essex Digital Inclusion Network be convened by Essex County Council. The partnership should work on a principle of active involvement, engagement and accountability from all members. The partnership should facilitate initiatives such as ensuring every child in Essex has access to a suitable digital device for schoolwork.

THEME 1: SOCIAL JUSTICE

Four exemplars of good practice

The impacts of Covid-19 on the digital divide, particularly for the most vulnerable, were felt across the UK. As a result, many parts of the UK have seen new programmes and initiatives to tackle digital exclusion, particularly in terms of access and skills. The examples we can learn the most from are those which create partnership working across public, private, and voluntary institutions.

Essex is no different from other areas in terms of digital inclusivity being a priority for future strategies. There are many interventions currently in progress around Essex from the Digital Essex work stream at Essex County Council to programmes launched by the voluntary and charity sector, or local district councils mobilised by Covid-19 additional funding grants.

A: Connecting Cambridgshire

The Connecting Cambridgshire programme was established in 2011 and is led by Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, working with local councils, government bodies, telecomms suppliers and mobile operators. The aim is to address the digital divide by levelling up access and reducing inequality in health and access to education, jobs and public services, including improving connectivity for social housing residents. Many initiatives have come out of this programme. CambWifi increases free public access to wi-fi in public buildings such as libraries, open space, market town centres, and village halls in rural areas. It has a part to play in supporting struggling high streets and improving the health and wellbeing of residents. The Cambridgeshire Digital Partnership (CDP) is a network which has been established to bring together service provider organisations and individuals from the voluntary, community and statutory sectors to connect, promote good practice, share learnings on how to get people connected, online and learning new skills. The Digital Technology Grant Scheme supports growth and resilience of small-medium size enterprises (SMEs), aiming to increase the number of SMEs that were using digital technology to boost their businesses by helping invest in equipment, systems, and support.

THEME 1: SOCIAL JUSTICE

B: Tech to Community Connect Project: Surrey

The Tech to Community Connect project was established in 2020 by the Surrey Coalition of Disabled People to provide technology, support in using technology, and virtual groups to reduce feelings of loneliness and isolation in people with care and support needs across Surrey. An aim is to provide training and build confidence in using technology for those at high risk of digital exclusion by i) lending devices which suit specific needs; ii) pairing residents up with a Tech Angel for training; iii) connecting participants to other virtual social groups or wellbeing hubs. The project has helped people overcome loneliness and social isolation, enabled better organisation of services such as health appointments, improved access to education such as online courses in computer skills and English, access to translation services which provided better connection to communities, and increasing digital skills.

C: Levelling up Laptops: Brighton & Sussex

During the pandemic, millions of children across the UK were expected to shift to online learning without having access to appropriate resources. The risks of digital exclusion and the loss of education as a result could be catastrophic in the long term for the poorest and most vulnerable children. The campaigns and sales digital solution company, Sopro, partnered with the Tarner Community Project, KLYK and Tech-Takeback to launch the Levelling up Laptops campaign. The aim was to provide schools with laptops and tablets that could enable remote learning, so ensuring that no child was left behind due to their background and circumstance. The campaign was directly targeted at local Sussex businesses who were encouraged to contribute by funding new devices or donating spare devices. The campaign successfully secured donations from 45 companies, amounting to 154 devices and £13,150 donations. This modest campaign provides an example of how mobilising community response within the business sector can support connectivity and work towards better outcomes for those most at risk of digital exclusion.

THEME 1: SOCIAL JUSTICE

D: Digital Strategy, Essex County Council

Essex County Council have launched a new Digital Strategy devoted to ensuring all residents and businesses in Essex have quality and affordable access to the internet, understand the benefits technology can bring, and can develop the skills required to meet individual needs.

The strategy aims to co-ordinate collaborative activity to ensure that the reduction of digital exclusion sits at the heart of decision making. A major focus has been those most in need: working families and young adults, and places such as Braintree, Basildon, Harlow and Tendring. Some activities include i) Essex Libraries providing free wi-fi access, online courses, public network computers and voluntary support; ii) Barclays bank offering free digital skills courses; iii) ACL offering digital skills courses, Digital Ambassadors and Parent Ambassadors to help reach harder to reach communities. The success of these interventions and the digital strategy relies on strong partnerships and utilising community assets. As such a Digital Steering Board has been developed which brings partners together to focus on the connectivity challenges across Essex. The Digital Essex brand was launched in September 2022 with the aim to create an umbrella brand of Digital Connectivity and Inclusivity across Essex partners and stakeholders.

R3 background:

Protect and Enhance Public and Community Assets

During the pandemic, individuals and communities were kept at a distance, unable physically to connect or build relationships alongside being cut off from public and private infrastructure that provides vital services and resources for many. This experience has highlighted the importance of enabling every resident equal opportunity to access local, community assets and resources to enable social divides to be bridged, and to provide local services that contribute to the wellbeing of residents.

The benefit of accessing community assets and infrastructure in a community approach is not a new phenomenon. There is already a strong asset infrastructure: 74 Essex libraries, with home and mobile library services, some 200 community halls and venues, 800 community clubs and activities, 400 assets focused on physical health and wellbeing and 21% of land area devoted to natural and green places. Yet, Essex has faced a long-standing challenge around enabling equal access to public services and assets for all residents at all locations. Historically, this has been a greater difficulty for rural and coastal areas.

In 2021, the Oxford Consultants for Social Inclusion (OCSI) developed an Essex Community Needs Index (ECNI) to identify areas with more acute levels of community need, in terms of community assets, connectedness and community engagement. This confirmed the varied and unequal access of vital community assets across the county. (Figure 2).

THEME 1: SOCIAL JUSTICE

District	Density of community space		Density of cultural assets		Density of educational assets		Density of sport and leisure assets		Density of green assets	
Essex	3.7	R	0.3	R	2.5	R	1.8	R	2.4	R
Basildon	2.2	R	0.1	R	2.1	R	1.3	R	0.1	R
Braintree	4.3	G	0.4	A	2.5	A	1.7	R	2.6	A
Brentwood	5.2	G	0.3	A	4.3	G	3.0	A	1.9	R
Castle Point	1.6	R	0.1	R	1.9	R	1.1	R	0.2	R
Chelmsford	4.0	A	0.3	A	2.8	A	3.4	G	5.7	G
Colchester	2.9	R	0.3	A	2.1	R	1.1	R	1.3	R
Epping Forest	5.2	G	0.4	A	4.3	G	2.8	A	2.2	A
Harlow	3.6	A	0.2	R	3.0	A	2.0	A	5.3	G
Maldon	4.7	G	0.8	G	1.8	R	0.9	R	3.1	A
Rochford	3.7	A	0.3	A	1.5	R	0.9	R	2.6	A
Tendring	4.2	A	0.3	A	2.2	R	1.2	R	2.4	A
Uttlesford	4.6	G	0.3	A	1.7	R	2.3	A	1.7	R
East of England	4.3	A	0.3	A	3.0	R	2.1	R	3.4	A
England	4.2		0.4		3.3		2.9		3.4	

Key

R = areas ranked as having higher needs

A = areas within average need

G = areas ranked as having lower needs

Figure 2:

Community Needs Index: Civic Assets (number of community assets in each category per 1,000 residents): The CNI is composed of 29 indicators grouped into the three distinct domains; Civic Assets, Connectedness and Active and Engaged Community. It gives a relative score and rank to each ward in England based on its position with respect to these indicators.

THEME 1: SOCIAL JUSTICE

R3 background:

Protect and Enhance Public and Community Assets

In addition, some groups are less likely to engage with these assets, particularly ethnic minority groups, those living in deprived areas, working families, the elderly and those with disabilities. Since the pandemic, how we connect to communities, our sense of place and how we access and use community assets has become more complex. Even though public spaces and places are vital to build strong communities, and improve wellbeing and health , whilst access is unequal, there will be residents that are unable to benefit as a result. There is a need for a localised strategy in which access to community, public and green assets and services are at the centre.

Recommendation R3

Evolve community spaces to draw together partners' activities, and the services they provide for communities, making these accessible to all through a network of local community assets. The mix of local services, and the sites through which these are provided, should be tailored to the needs of local residents.

The aim should be to ensure that services required by those in need can be accessed in the heart of community, and in a shared space where communities can come together. To ensure this is effective, this will require partners to:

- engage with residents and communities to understand local the needs, and any barriers to accessing services, to ensure the activities and services are specifically tailored to the needs to residents

- map the community infrastructure available within each community – identifying those which could provide a platform for partnership working and/or the co-location or services in a suitable space.

This approach should include (but is not limited to) providing a central place for digital champions to run skills programmes, digital hubs to provide access to technology, a base for financial advice, social meeting places, children and family activities and support services, food banks, mental health and wellbeing services, health and social prescribing services, public service access, physical activity groups such as walking or yoga and environmental activities such as green skill development, swap shops, or provide warm places for individuals in need. Outreach activities may need to be considered to help target groups most in need of services, but less likely to spontaneously access them, for example minority or marginalised communities.

There is the potential to build on similar models in development across Essex (such as the in Harlow library or the Colchester Digi-hub). Partners should aim to have secured substantial progress by 2026.

THEME 1: SOCIAL JUSTICE

Three exemplars of good practice

The landscape of community, public and natural assets is complex. There are many initiatives already in progress which aim to improve access, including Essex Libraries Plan, the Levelling-up Essex initiatives and the Essex Climate Action Commission's recommendations and action plan. As well as more specific initiatives currently in the pipeline such as the creation of an Adult Centre for Learning Digital Hub in Colchester (by 2023): a re-developed under-used gym building, which aims to provide the space for community groups and individuals to use to access digital facilities and maintain/learn new digital skills; the re-imagining of Harlow library to bring together Essex County Council services in one place. We have highlighted examples of good practice for initiatives that have demonstrated a targeted approach to reenvisaging community assets to cater to those most in need.

A: Idea Stores: Community Spaces, Tower Hamlets, London

Low usage of libraries and adult learning centres, high levels of social deprivation and digital poverty prompted Tower Hamlets to open their first of five Idea Stores in Bow in 2002. The radical redesign of the role of libraries to become community-learning spaces aimed to make libraries more accessible, attractive, and useful. It brought together library services with all adult learning in the borough, as well as new Digital Hubs, and an increased focus on dedicated community spaces. Residents can access free wi-fi as well as new computers. Staff are trained as digital champions and are available to help people who need low levels of digital support. In 2020, a new Digital Support Service was added. Residents can access support focused on helping with public service processes and completing official forms.

Overall, there has been increased usage of library space, moving from around 500,000 to more than 2 million since 2013. The council has made no cuts in opening hours or replaced paid staff by volunteers. Local people value the service; 92% rated this as 'good' or 'very good'. Idea Store is the highest rated council service in the council's own Annual Residents Survey and there is a 98.9% learner satisfaction for Idea Store Learning, making Tower Hamlets the second highest rated council in England.

THEME 1: SOCIAL JUSTICE

B: For All Healthy Living Centre, North Somerset

The For All Healthy Living Centre (FAHLC) is a purpose-built community centre run by a social enterprise with a healthy living focus. It is located in an estate in Weston-Super-Mare situated in one of the 2% most deprived wards in the country. The FAHLC provides a range of key public and community services, including a locality health centre, a community café, a church, charity shop, foodbank, clothes bank, allotment group, lunch club, meeting space for clubs and activities, local councillor and MP surgeries and many more.

The FAHLC has a board comprising the main partners, and local residents who ensure that there is a strong community voice in how the centre is run. The central location on the estate makes it a focal point for the community and the FAHLC is well used, largely due to the community café and location of the GP. The library and by extension the "Council Connect" services, benefit from this higher footfall: the library now has 871 active borrowers and over 40,000 visits per year. GPs use the library as part of their social prescribing and have been referring patients to the Books on Prescription service, while family support workers and social workers bring children, families, and older people who they are working with into the library.

C: Essex Libraries, Essex County Council

Essex Library Services are an integral part of local asset infrastructure, with 74 branches across Essex. Many function as central community spaces, especially in smaller towns and villages in rural areas where there was quicker return to library usage following the pandemic compared with town users.

Libraries offer a range of different activities and programmes, and the new plan (2022-2026) recognises that some traditional patterns of library use are changing. Aware of the 'shortfall' in literacy levels amongst some young people due to the pandemic, Essex Libraries carried on with the Summer Reading Challenge in 2021, enrolling 17,000 participants, a record number. Rhyme Time sessions with young children and their parents or carers are popular in all libraries, as are reading groups and book promotion events. School party visits are also organised in most libraries in co-operation with local schools. Essex Libraries have organised events with Refugee Action, and have helped individual refugees and asylum-seekers access learning via the Adult Community Learning programme.

'Knit and natter' groups, adult community learning classes including digital skills courses via digital champions, well-being sessions and even job-ready programmes have similarly found a home in Essex libraries. Barclays Bank pays to run services in several small rural libraries. Some libraries also serve towards the county's environmental agenda. The Essex Libraries strategy demonstrates the importance of utilising space for support of community initiatives based on the needs of the local communities each branch serves.

THEME 2: YOUNG PEOPLE

Recommendations R4–R6

R4

Senior officials and elected decision-makers from across Essex public services should commit to regular engagement with the Young Essex Assembly (YEA), Children in Care Council, and Multi School Council.

R5

Work with schools to ensure that all young people across Essex, regardless of where they live, have access to high quality, practical careers guidance by 2024.

R6

Support the implementation of the key initiatives of the Essex Education Task Force (EETF) by encouraging a system-wide response through Essex Partners.

THEME 2: YOUNG PEOPLE

R4 background:

Giving young people a voice

Young people have been disproportionately affected by Covid-19. There has been disrupted education, an increase in mental wellbeing challenges (anxiety, isolation, lack of confidence, and social media platforms), concerns over the rises in cost of living and the climate crises. All have created an ever more uncertain future. Here we focus attention on unlocking opportunity and on helping young people realise their value and hopes. Young people have been required to make huge sacrifices to protect public health and the health of older and vulnerable residents. Young people are also vital to the future of our county, they are our future workers, leaders, carers, and decision makers. A key step to help achieve this is to give young people a stronger voice in local policy-making processes.

By involving young people in policy-making processes across Essex, we can expect:

- To make better decisions: young people have a body of lived experience unique to their situation. They will also be the future's leaders. If decision-makers recognise the legitimacy of young people's experience, then this can shape and inform better decisions on policy and service design;

- To enhance young people's wellbeing: by allowing them to express their views and have their opinions taken seriously;

- To strengthen local democracy: young people are less likely to believe they can influence local decisions than those in higher age groups. Giving young people a stronger voice is an opportunity to make visible the role that young people can play.

It is vital that Essex builds on the work that is currently happening with young people to ensure their voices are heard and most importantly actioned in local policy-making. We have engaged with young people involved in existing youth forums in Essex (the Young Essex Assembly) to understand how we can build on what is working well. The young people were keen to have more opportunities to speak directly with decision-makers, to have a stronger voice where the views and needs of young people are truly listened to and acted on by people with the power to make change. Other important youth forums within Essex include the Children in Care Council (CiCC) who ensure young people in care have opportunities and that their views are listened to by relevant services, and the Multi School Council (MSC) who ensure young people with special educational needs and disabilities have a voice.

THEME 2: YOUNG PEOPLE

Recommendation R4

Senior officials and elected decision-makers from across Essex public services should commit to regular engagement with the Young Essex Assembly (YEA), Children in Care Council, and Multi School Council.

The aim is to reinforce and increase the role of young people in decision-making, ensuring that they are listened to and acted upon. The ERP proposes that:

- board-level officials, and where relevant elected politicians, from across local government, including County, District, Borough and Town councils, the NHS and Essex's emergency services meet with the YEA and other representatives at least once every 3-4 months, providing an opportunity for YEA members to find out about key issues and to both share their views on these, and share insights with their constituents

- partners establish a 'pairing-up' scheme for YEA representatives and elected politicians in their area, facilitating and ongoing exchange of views and ideas, with opportunities for collaboration and skills sharing

- the YEA and other forums be engaged in 'task and finish' style groups, working alongside key decision-makers, on specific challenges with a view to driving policy development

- the YEA be expanded to engage a larger number of young people and to secure broader representation from young people with more varied and diverse backgrounds across districts in Essex. This will help ensure that elected youth leaders are reflective of the populations they represent and serve.

Throughout our engagement with young people, they have emphasised the importance of being involved from the start in any decision-making process that affects them. This allows them to have meaningful input, in a way that requires less technical knowledge of specific issues and processes, and which meets their needs. It is also crucial to 'close the loop' on engagement with young people, making clear how their input has made a difference, shaped decisions and influenced outcomes. This recommendation builds on a model already in existence in Essex, the ambition is for this to evolve at pace, with greater engagement and youth representation by 2024.

THEME 2: YOUNG PEOPLE

Five exemplars of good practice

There are many examples of good practice in the UK and across the world where governments and local authorities have embedded youth voices and scrutiny into daily practices. Success is driven by focusing on specific challenges which reaffirms purpose, ensuring good representation from young people, having a clear pathway of outputs and recommendations, independence from public bodies but with expert advice when required.

Reassuringly, in Essex we are not starting from a blank slate. The Youth Essex Assembly (YEA) is already well-established with good engagement from young people and authorities. We are not looking to replace this, but instead to enhance the infrastructure currently in place to ensure voices are heard across all decision making.

Young Essex Assembly

THEME 2: YOUNG PEOPLE

A: Young Minds Activists 2019-20: London

Young Minds activists was an initiative set up by charity Young Minds with the aim of giving young people a powerful voice around addressing mental health challenges for young people. Young Minds activists range between aged 14-25. Each member brings their experiences of living with mental health problems directly to the charity, they inform and co-create nearly everything the charity works on. They act as spokespeople for Young Minds in the media, in Parliament, and at meetings, roundtables and events. The initiative has dual benefits, for the activists themselves, with 87% saying they felt more confident to speak out about mental health issues, and to embed the young person's voice in every initiative of the charity. To date 63 activists have participated in 293 programme opportunities: 97% said they had better knowledge of their own mental health.

B: Future Generations Commissioner for Wales, The Welsh Assembly

In 2015, the Welsh Assembly passed the Well-being of Future Generations Act, enshrining in law a requirement for public bodies in Wales to think about the long-term impacts of their decisions. The world's first Future Generations Commissioner was appointed. The Commissioner's role is to act as the guardian of future generations. This means helping public bodies and those who make policy in Wales to think about the long-term impact their decisions have.

The Future Generations Commissioner ensures young people's voices are central to any reviews and recommendations the Commissioner makes. For example, in the run up to the 2021 Senedd elections (the first election where Welsh 16 and 17 year olds were allowed to vote), the Commissioner published a Manifesto for the Future with 48 recommendations co-developed with young people. As part of this process, to find out more about what young people want from the next Welsh Government, the Commissioner collaborated with 11-17 years to create their own Young Persons' Manifesto for the Future through poem, song, drawing, and conversation.

The Commissioner also runs a Future Generations Leadership Academy to support and inspire future leaders for Wales. During the programme the participants challenge current thinking through reverse mentoring and collaborate with experts and decision makers on the most pressing challenges. This programme helps young leaders to build the skills, knowledge, and networks they need to make decisions for better public services in Wales now and in the future. It encourages the cohort to put into practice the skills that they are learning, within their own organisation, sector or community, via a Well-being of Future Generations Action Plan which is supported by the Commissioner's own team of Change Makers.

THEME 2: YOUNG PEOPLE

C: Youth-led Citizens' Assembly on Climate Change, Western Australia

Millennium Kids is an Australian youth-led charity in Western Australia that has enabled thousands of young people to have their say about the environment and led to hundreds of youth-led initiatives. In 2018, 500 people were surveyed about the issues they were most concerned about, with climate change coming out on top. Following this survey, Millennium Kids worked with Professor Janette Hartz Karp, a renowned architect of large-scale, inclusive, deliberative processes, and a panel of expert advisors, and elected to design and run a youth-led Citizens Assembly process focused on climate change.

The world's first youth-led Citizens Assembly, run by young people for young people, in September 2022 will be tasked with resolving the climate change challenges young people have prioritised. The Assembly will be made up of 100 randomly selected high school students, who will deliberate over four days to develop a set of collectively agreed recommendations. These will form the basis of an Action Plan, to be submitted to decision-makers. Evidence and evaluation of Citizens' Assemblies from elsewhere in the world, including on climate change, have found them to be effective democratic tools to being in a representative group of people collectively to generate solutions on complex and contentious issues.

Young Essex Assembly

THEME 2: YOUNG PEOPLE

D: Youth Mayor for Lewisham, London

The Lewisham Young Mayor's Programme began in 2004 and was the culmination of a decade-long successful young people's participation project between young people and the Lewisham Youth Service. It was intended to mirror the political structure of the borough, particularly given the change to a directly elected adult Mayor of Lewisham, so that there could be a formal and constitutional recognition of the voice of young people and its need for representation. The Young Mayor is democratically elected by direct ballot each year and, along with a Deputy Mayor and cabinet of Young Advisors, and is given a budget to initiate a programme of work. The Young Mayor also acts as the youth advisor to the Mayor of Lewisham, as well as scrutinising the work of the Mayor and the Council in key areas. The Young Mayor provides a focus and a channel for young people's views to be heard by decision makers, and is supported by young advisers and a Young Citizens' Panel.

The programme sits in the Mayor's Office in

Lewisham (instead of the Children and Young People's Directorate), providing genuine dialogue between the Directly Elected Mayor and the Young Mayor and his/her advisors. Each year, the Young Mayor funds and oversees a programme of projects and campaigns. Current campaigns and projects include the Bank of Things project to provide access to daily essential items, an Anti-racism Activism campaign, Mental Health Awareness Week, and the White Ribbon campaign focusing on tackling violence against women.

The Young Mayor's programme is the first and longest established Young Mayor programme in the country. The programme has been recognised by the Council of Europe as an example of international best practice for "putting real power and responsibility in the hands of young people and treating them seriously". The model presents lessons about how formally to give young people power and a voice in local democracy.

Young Essex Assembly

THEME 2: YOUNG PEOPLE

E: Young Essex Assembly (YEA): Essex

YEA is the elected youth council for Essex. The YEA is made up of 75 young people from Essex aged between 11-19 years old who have been elected to represent young people in the county and campaign to make a positive difference to their lives. As part of the YEA, members will be listened to by the County Council, and by other groups working with or for young people. The YEA reviews priorities and consults with young people as well as campaigning. The YEA enables members to grow confidence and support their personal and social development.

YEA come together for monthly meetings that take place in Chelmsford, but local projects are also in Mid Essex (Braintree, Chelmsford, Maldon), North East Essex (Colchester and Tendering), South Essex (Basildon, Brentwood, Castlepoint, Rochford), West Essex (Epping Forest, Harlow and Uttlesford). In 2022, the YEA took part in the national survey 'Make Your Mark' to find out what the biggest issue is for young people. The YEA managed to obtain a huge response from over 20,000 young people across Essex. Jobs, money, homes, and opportunities came up as top issues with some 4,550 votes, with Health and Wellbeing coming in close second. The YEA members will prioritise this as their county-wide campaign for the year.

Young Essex Assembly

THEME 2: YOUNG PEOPLE

R5 background:

Improving Careers' Advice

A good job and/or career is considered by young people (aged 9-17) to be the most important factor in a successful future. It is also an area they worry about the most after the climate crisis. Many feel pressure to make long term, firm decisions before feeling ready. Engagement with young people in Essex highlights concerns about the future in a post-Covid-19 world. Many feel that missed learning due to school closures will limit their job prospects and future earning potential, with the perception that there are fewer job or work experience opportunities which will make life after education harder for young people.

Access to high quality careers guidance is vital in helping young people discover and access opportunities that may not directly be known to them and to help them make informed choices to fulfil their potential. Research indicates that most young people have high aspirations for themselves but lack the knowledge and skills to progress towards their aspirations. The sharing of experience, knowledge and advice across generations is important, but their parents also often lack the knowledge needed to support them in this. Interventions around careers should therefore focus not just on aspirations, but supporting young people to secure the skills, knowledge, and educational attainment required to achieve their aspirations. Careers guidance that includes opportunities for engagement between young people and employers has also been found to be beneficial. Research from the Education and Employers Taskforce shows that a young person who has four or more encounters with an employer is 86% less likely to be unemployed or not in education or training and can earn up to 22% more during their career. Existing networks such as the Strategic Development Network and STEM Learning recognise this as a core principle.

But support and advice around careers and education choices is not evenly distributed. Young people from disadvantaged backgrounds or those who are marginalised and at risk of engaging in anti-social behaviour, are less likely than their peers to engage with careers advice. There is also evidence to suggest that young people from more disadvantaged backgrounds tend to rely on informal information from social networks rather than information from official sources. A need for greater careers guidance has also been identified for adults within deprived communities and for those young people not in education, employment or training, and several initiatives are underway via Adult Community Learning (ACL) services and the Essex Opportunities portal, to create awareness of different career opportunities, provide guidance and skills development to adults seeking work, and encourage people into growth sectors.

In addition, in relation to inequalities in access to opportunities, research shows that connections between young people from ethnic minorities and local employers are weak, which can further exacerbate employment inequalities between ethnic groups. Simply providing information on careers may not be enough, other mechanisms

THEME 2: YOUNG PEOPLE

R5 background:

Improving Careers' Advice

such as development of apprenticeships, contact with businesses, earlier guidance, and mindfulness of the Equality Act to ensure careers advice considers the duty to make reasonable adjustments to prevent young people being disadvantaged from processes need to be considered. This may involve stepping away from the traditional careers service model and adopting a model similar to Targeted Employment in Essex. This seeks to address the inequalities in the career journey for disadvantaged groups by practicing person centred planning which helps to map career pathways that are focused on an individual's skills and talents.

Given these challenges, we consider it vital that collaboration with Essex businesses and careers networks be placed at the centre of advice for young people. Through collaboration and early intervention, there is the chance to improve and expand the advice and support available to young people from all backgrounds and abilities, giving everyone the opportunity to succeed later in life.

THEME 2: YOUNG PEOPLE

Recommendation R5

Work with all schools to ensure that all young people across Essex, regardless of where they live, have access to high quality, practical careers guidance by 2024

Schools hold a statutory duty to ensure that careers advice is provided to their pupils. The aim is to ensure that schools across Essex are supported by public service partners and private businesses to provide careers advice that is engaging, inclusive, and of a consistently high-quality, that young people can aim high, taking confident decisions about their future careers and the learning pathways they pursue to achieve their aspirations.

This will help to:

- ease worries and concerns that young people may have about their futures and the opportunities available to them. It will enable young people to access high quality careers guidance and opportunities for engagement with employers, which is known to increase aspirations, opportunities and earning potential in later life;

- equip young people with the skills and knowledge required to progress towards their hopes and aspirations, including supporting them to achieve the best possible academic attainment outcomes, particularly for those from lower socio-economic backgrounds;

- educate and raise awareness for young people and families of future employment opportunities and alternative career choices, such as routes to gain skills for a career in the green sector, or opportunities in the arts and culture sectors;

- level the opportunities for young people by ensuring those from disadvantaged backgrounds, or those with additional needs, can access the same quality of guidance and opportunities as their peers.

The recommendation is for this to be mainly delivered through secondary schools, in line with existing statutory duties. But success will require a deeper partnership with anchor institutions, local employers and community groups. Careers advice should start as early as possible (e.g., from Year 7) to maximize future opportunities for all young people. The ERP hopes that this can evolve to into a "Young Person's Guarantee" for Essex (modelled on similar guarantees in other parts of the UK) where employers commit to providing education placements, apprenticeships, training, or volunteering opportunities for all young people, whether in or out of school.

THEME 2: YOUNG PEOPLE

Three exemplars of good practice

A: Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC) Network

The CEC is the national body for careers education in England, supporting schools and colleges to deliver modern, 21st century careers education. They seek to do this by supporting Careers Leaders, linking employers with schools and colleges through Careers Hubs, and providing practical tools and resources. The service is free at the point of access. Their mission is to help every young person find their next best step, and they seek to work in partnership to bring about sustainable, system change. There are currently 4,500 schools and colleges signed up across the country, which account for the vast majority of educational institutions in the country.

In 2014, a comprehensive review of English careers education found that careers support and guidance in the UK fell significantly below international standards and criticised it for being inconsistent and patchy, prompting the development of the Gatsby Benchmarks setting out eight dimensions of good career guidance which is now part of statutory careers guidance and in the Skills Bill which confirms the CEC role in support. Careers Hubs are a policy response designed to address this issue and transform how young people access high-quality careers education. They aim to do this by bringing lots of organisations in a place - schools, colleges, employers, and apprenticeship providers, together in a focused and coordinated way for young people. The goal is to make it easier for schools and colleges to support young people.

Career Hubs drive progress against the Gatsby Benchmarks by enabling schools and colleges and their Career Leaders to access training and support, and to collaborate in a focused way, bringing together best practice and local labour market insights to ensure careers guidance is as tailored as possible to the local economy. Each Hub brings together a group of up to 40 schools and colleges to improve careers support for young people in their area and offers them dedicated support from the local hub team and facilitate partnerships with employers. Career Hubs are often supported by and build on local Enterprise Adviser Networks, a network of business volunteers who work in senior roles. They volunteer their time to help bridge the gap between the world of work and education and offer advice on the skills needed in the workplace and how these can be taught in the careers programme.

Career Hubs have been found to accelerate overall careers education progress and performance by 56 per cent in 12 months. A separate independent evaluation, using a matched comparison group - found that Career Hubs resulted in improved career guidance in schools, identifying collaboration Career Leaders, leadership support, employer engagement and regional strategy alignment as key drivers of success. To date, 45 Careers Hubs have been created across England including in the New Anglia LEP (Suffolk & Norfolk); Kent & Medway; Southend and Thurrock; Hertfordshire; and East London. This covers 1,300 schools, while more than 3,800 schools have access to an Enterprise Adviser.

THEME 2: YOUNG PEOPLE

Three exemplars of good practice

B: Young Person's Guarantee, Greater Manchester Combined Authority

A Young Person's Guarantee is an initiative to bring together employers, partners, and young people to guarantee young people opportunities to work, study, volunteer or gain experience. In late 2020, the Mayor of Greater Manchester and the GMCA created a Youth Task Force to co-design its own Young Person's Guarantee for Greater Manchester. Twenty-four people aged 11-30 were recruited to form the Youth Advisory Group (YAG) to bring young people's insight and challenge to the Youth Task Force.

The Greater Manchester Young Person's Guarantee focuses on four areas: preparing for transition into work and/or education, reducing economic inequality, keeping connected socially and digitally, and supporting mental health and wellbeing.

The Guarantee is also supported by a campaign to ensure local businesses and organisations to sign up to take part and make commitments. During the process of its development, the Youth Task Force invited businesses, public sector organisations, and charities and community groups to make a range of commitments, which included specific initiatives under the themes of careers guidance and information, employment support, digital inclusion services, subsidised travel, and mental health support. A core part of the Guarantee is the Greater Manchester Apprenticeships and Careers Service (GMACS), which acts as a clearinghouse for apprenticeships. The GMACS brings together different stages of career planning, helping students navigate the choices open to them

and develop the tools to start working life. It provides information and advice about potential next steps and what Manchester has to offer, as well as a direct way of applying for courses, jobs, and apprenticeships.

Currently, around 13,000 young people access the site to explore careers, activities and opportunities and more than 125 schools and colleges across GM have already incorporated GMACS. The Young Person's Guarantee provides a novel place-based model for bringing together key stakeholders in an area to secure commitments and develop a compelling offer to support young people with the information and support they need to decide on their next steps in life.

THEME 2: YOUNG PEOPLE

Three exemplars of good practice

C: Increasing Access to STEM Careers, In2Science UK

Poverty and social background are barriers to progressing to careers within STEM. If students do not receive the right guidance and support through their schools and personal networks, they may never consider pursuing a career within this sector. This is important as salaries in STEM are 20% higher on average than other sectors, while there is also a large and growing STEM skills gap in the UK. Research shows that women, people from minority ethnic backgrounds, and children from low-income families are all far less likely to become inventors than white men from high-income families. According to the Social Mobility Commission, only 15% of scientists and 6% of doctors come from working class backgrounds.

In2ScienceUK is a charity that aims to inspire and support the next generation of scientists, engineers, and innovators by tackling poor careers advice and work experience. In2ScienceUK taps into the expertise and experience of volunteer STEM professionals to offer students from disadvantaged backgrounds mentoring and work placements and an insight into what it's like to work in STEM, skills days and career workshops, and support and guidance on access to university, apprenticeships, and further training to increase their exposure to the world of science. Students completing the programme were more likely to feel that anyone can become a scientist or engineer, know a wide range of STEM careers and pathways, feel confident to write a high-quality personal statement, and know significantly more STEM professionals who can give them advice.

Wider evidence suggests that youth mentoring has a positive effect and is a cost-effective intervention. The Careers and Enterprise Company found that positive outcomes associated with employer mentoring include improvements in behaviour, engagement, attainment and progression, while a rapid evidence review into youth mentoring found that it can improve outcomes across academic, behavioural, emotional and social areas of young people's lives.

THEME 2: YOUNG PEOPLE

R6 background:

Tackling and reducing attainment gaps

Nationally, over a third of pupils are below the expected KS2 standards in reading, writing, and maths, with outcomes varying between different groups and regions. The Department for Education has released a white paper to respond to this challenge, which includes a vision for a school system that helps every child to fulfil their potential by ensuring that they receive the right support, in the right place at the right time – founded on world-class literacy and numeracy as the cornerstone of an excellent education. This aligns with our own ambitions for children and young people in Essex.

In all phases of education, fewer pupils in Essex are disadvantaged compared to the national average. Attainment in Essex is also consistently just above or just below the national average for all phases of education. However, disadvantage gaps in Essex are consistently wider than the national average for every phase of education. The 16-19 disadvantage gap in Essex has historically wider than what is observed nationally,

meaning that disadvantaged pupils in Essex achieve lower A level grades on average than other disadvantaged pupils nationally. There are concerns that this attainment disadvantage will be accentuated by the impacts of the pandemic and the disruption to learning and Early Years settings. This will likely impact disadvantaged students disproportionately due to mixed home schooling support and digital exclusion.

The Essex Education Task Force (EETF) was created in 2020 as an independent body, in direct response to tackle the challenges emerging around young people's attainment and wellbeing as a result of the pandemic. As part of this work, the Education Policy Institute (EPI) have been commissioned to identify the learning gaps within Essex that the Task Force needs to address and evaluate the impact of the Task Force's work over the next 3 years.

To date, the EETF has launched an Early Years Communication Project to provide a suite of training for early years and childcare settings, funded every secondary school to

support teenage mental health, embedded transition officers to aid young people moving toward higher education, funded placements for children and young people to participate in outdoor activities, launched the Education Leaders Wellbeing Toolkit and invested in bespoke teacher training in over 150 primary schools. A key success has also been the Essex Year of Reading, which has had a significant impact within schools. As part of the Year of Reading, 57 schools within Essex have completed the Herts for Learning Fluency Training. At the end of the 8-week intervention, 80% made more than 4 months progress in reading, with 77% of children making more than 6 months progress. For KS2, the average comprehension age increase was 2 years and 2 months, with a 1 year and 1 month average increase for KS3.

THEME 2: YOUNG PEOPLE

Recommendation R6

Support the implementation of the key initiatives of the Essex Education Task Force (EETF) by encouraging a system-wide response through Essex Partners.

The EETF is moving forward with an array of projects and innovations that are targeted at addressing the reduction in attainment and wellbeing amongst young people as a result of Covid-19. This includes continuing to build on the successes of the Year of Reading which aimed to promote the importance of reading, encourage every family to enjoy reading together and encourage businesses across Essex to promote the joy of reading, and has already had a significant impact within schools and across the county.

The EETF will be embarking on initiatives focused on math's and numeracy skills during 2023 and continuing to collaborate with partner organisations such as Essex Libraries and Adult Community Learning to address the short- and long-term impact of Covid-19 on children and young people's educational attainment and wellbeing.

It is important that all partners across Essex get involved and support EETF initiatives, helping ensure that educational impacts, build social, natural, human and cultural capital across the county in the long term. This will require the communication of EETF progress and pipeline across the system. EETF should provide the steer to what support is required by partners, but is likely to need involvement of Essex County Council, District/Borough and Parish councils, voluntary and community groups, the Young Essex Assembly, the Youth Service, Anchor institutions across Essex and businesses, including small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs).

Essex Year of Reading

THEME 3: COMMUNITY WELLBEING

Recommendations R7–R9

R7

Grow capability within the Essex Voluntary Sector by linking capacity building for smaller, grass root organisations to community development and micro-grants processes.

R8

Create a comprehensive Social Prescribing Network to link Essex Integrated Care Systems, voluntary organisations, and other community groups in an inclusive, social and prevention-pays model of health by 2024.

R9

Place the concept of age and disability-friendly communities at the centre of social care provision, integrating decisions on housing, health, care and support to enable residents to live well and independently into older-age.

THEME 3: COMMUNITY WELLBEING

R7 background:

Securing Funding and Improving Co-ordination

The national response to the pandemic placed the vital role played by volunteers, civil society and the wider voluntary community and social enterprise sector (VCSES) in the spotlight. During the pandemic, there was an upswing of volunteering across the county, driven by the desire to support those more in need: Essex Welfare Service had 3,600 volunteers sign up, 18,300 from GoodSAM and an average of 1,700 volunteers were available daily in community hubs. The immediate demand on these VCSE services changed overnight as communities required more support for social, physical, and mental wellbeing. The agility of these organisations allowed them to make effective use of volunteers for front-line activity, particularly for the most vulnerable.

As the immediate demand for volunteers during the height of the pandemic eased, and the 'new wave' of volunteers began to return to employment and resume their previous lifestyles, there are challenges around maintaining momentum of volunteering as we emerge from the first years of the pandemic, though the need to address community needs remain the same. In Essex, there is a culture of social responsibility and kindness: 25% of residents volunteer, either formally or informally, on a monthly basis, increasing to 36% over the last 12 months.

We believe that VCSES, and the volunteers that drive them forward, will function as a central component in the renewal of Essex and the improvement of community well-being. We need to prioritise creating conditions that further strengthen civil society, enhance access to support, and enable a flourishing and sustainable VCSES in Essex. Many voluntary and community funded projects will be vital in tackling health and social inequalities, increasing social capital and will play an essential role in preventative services; saving public money in the long term.

THEME 3: COMMUNITY WELLBEING

R7 background:

Securing Funding and Improving Co-ordination

Recent analysis of 360Giving data[1] shows us that Essex outperforms other home counties in terms of the total monetary sum of funds and grants awarded to the voluntary sector. But despite this, the number of recipient organisations remains lower than neighbouring counties, and the funding is not equally available across all districts or diverse communities, nor is there a centralised stream through which organisations can access grants. This fragmented nature of the funding landscape has also brought about the de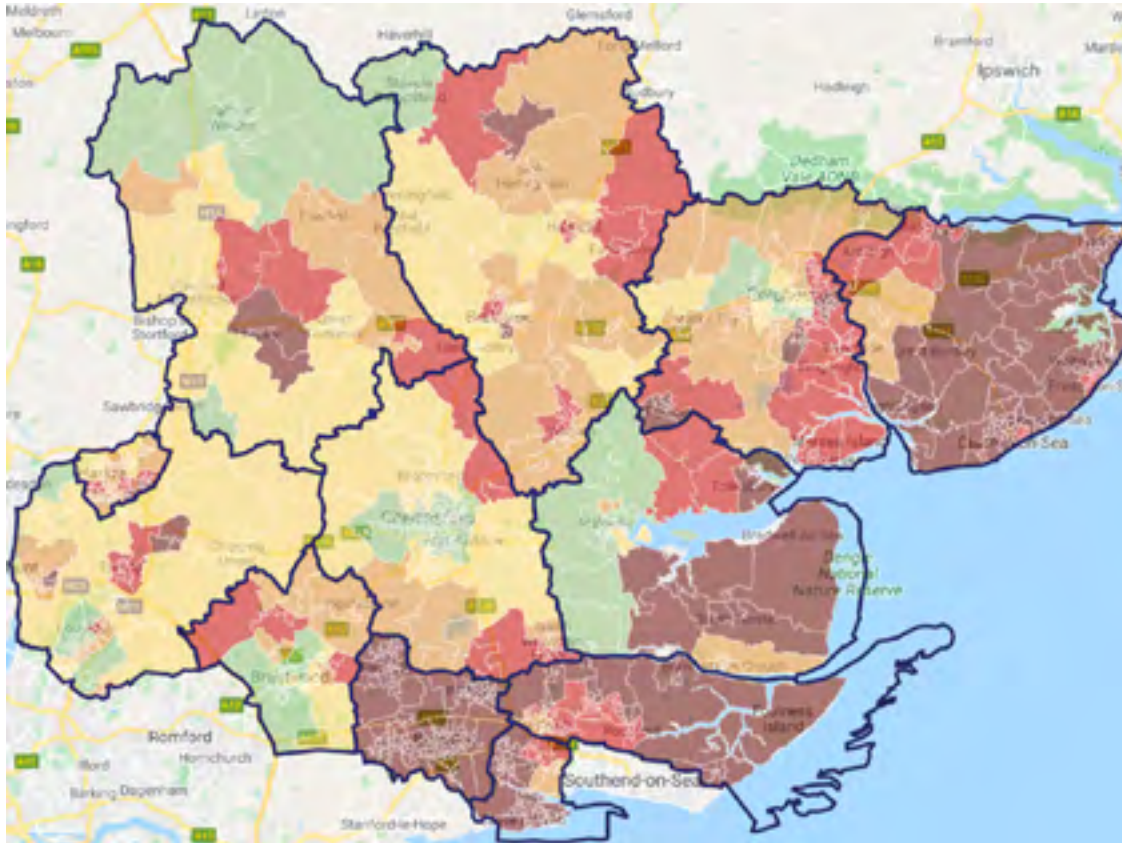velopment of several "cold spots"; districts that score higher on the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) and have greater levels of community need (OSCI 2021) have fewer third sector assets. These districts receive lower levels of VCSE grant funding: under £20 per head[2], with Basildon being the least funded district in Essex at £3.30 per person. By contrast, districts ranked as the least deprived with low levels of community need also tend to have the highest amount of VCSE funding. In both Maldon and Chelmsford, funding per person exceeds the national average at £36.50 in Maldon and £44 in Chelmsford.

---

[1] It should be noted that the 360Giving GrantNav relies on organisational users to contribute their own grant making data. This means that insights from the platform may not be fully representative of all grant making activity at the regional level. The GrantNav data has therefore been used in this context of this paper to provide a generalised overview of patterns and trends.

[2] The national average is £35 per head (OSCI 2021).

THEME 3: COMMUNITY WELLBEING

Figure 3: Heat Map of Community Needs within Essex

Quantiles are defined relative to national benchmarks (i.e. bottom 20% is bottom 20% of all wards in England)

Map key

- 0%-20%: Most acute community need
- 20%-40%
- 40%-60%
- 60%-80%
- 80%-100%: Least acute community need

Larger organisations in operation for 10+ years and with a turnover of £10-£100,000, with the in-house capacity to secure funding from multiple sources are also more likely to be successful in grant bids. Smaller grass-root organisations struggle to compete. This model is inefficient, creates uncertainty and requires VCSES organisations to devote significant capacity to securing funding from multiple sources. This results in inequalities within the sector, and risks disengagement with public services when small community groups, including minority groups, feel unheard, remain under funded and struggle with capacity and the knowledge required to acquire funding. Furthermore, there is also evidence to suggest that communities across Essex have less access to civic assets, including natural and green spaces, than other areas in the South East, and that within Essex there are significant inequalities, with some of the most deprived communities facing the greatest shortage of assets.

THEME 3: COMMUNITY WELLBEING

Recommendation R7

Grow capability within the Essex Voluntary Sector by linking capacity building for smaller, grass root organisations to community development and micro-grants processes.

The aim is to support smaller organisations that struggle to compete for funding from grant-giving foundations and/or government departments to build capacity to help them become successful and sustainable in the long term. This can be achieved by:

- working alongside current micro-grant structures and voluntary infrastructure organisations, to help identify and target smaller organisations or community groups;

- amending local grants processes to ensure that, alongside monetary awards, smaller organisations can receive training and support around common capacity challenges such as fundraising, demonstrating impact and organisational management for smaller organisations.

This may also include a focus on specialist green grant capacity building for charities in rural areas, particularly those looking to offer provisions such as green exercise, wellbeing, and therapeutic activities with nature.

We understand that capacity building for smaller organisations goes beyond the need for funding and could reflect other forms of support such as skills building or process and system infrastructure development as part of a broader an Assets Based Community Development approach. This recommendation is not focused on providing more grant schemes or funding, but rather linking existing micro-grants to build capacity across the voluntary sector. This will require further collaboration with providers of micro-grant schemes, and infrastructure organisations to enhance the current offer, and make these links in practice.

Work is already being done in this space, capacity-building activities, such as training, community support and business development advice, are currently being offered on a case-by-case basis. We recommend that by 2024, engagement in capacity building activity be developed as a condition of micro-grant awards.

Finding your Feet Walks in Braintree

THEME 3: COMMUNITY WELLBEING

Two exemplars of good practice

There is a wide range of avenues across Greater Essex where community groups and charitable organisations can access funding, as well as models already in place to help build capacity or strengthen the voluntary sector, for example via an Asset Based Community Development approach, infrastructure organisations (e.g. the CVSs), Active Essex or the Communities Mission Network, that will be vital to meverage capacity building across the system. The Greater London Authority (GLA) is currently piloting a novel funding scheme as part of their Civil Society Recovery Strategy. This pilot scheme shares similar objectives:

A: Greater London Authority (GLA), Civil Society Roots: London, UK

As part of the Building Strong Communities mission, which aims for all Londoners to have access to a community hub to ensure they can volunteer, receive support, and build strong network, the GLA manages a targeted funding offer for the direct use of Covid-19 recovery related activities. The funding is aimed at organisations that were identified to be located in 'cold spots' or Boroughs with low resilience based on the Civil Strength Index score. Funds within these Boroughs were aimed specifically at groups and communities impacted by structural inequalities, such as Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Londoners, Deaf and Disabled Londoners, LGBT+ Londoners, Older Londoners, and Women. Funding was delivered in this way so that targeted support could reach areas in need.

This funding model provides an example for addressing unequal distribution of funding that could be adopted in Essex, by specifically providing grants for smaller, community interest groups located within "cold spots", rather than through a second tier infrastructure such as through CVSs, VCs which tend to absorb funding. Grants come with offer of additional support, such as "ideas camp" sessions to help smaller organisations develop capacity through building relationships and networks, strengthening their voice, increasing their capacity and skills, particularly on data maturity.

THEME 3: COMMUNITY WELLBEING

B: Green Grants: Across Essex

Essex is a county rich with natural capital in the form of woodland, lake and river, marsh and coastline. Green exercise and other therapeutic activities within nature are being delivered within Essex, but the availability of these services differs between districts. Many of these schemes are offered to vulnerable residents, including those with SEND, chronic medical conditions, disadvantaged youth, people experiencing poor mental health including depression, anxiety and social isolation. Districts which offer these provisions report better public health and quality of life scores. There are many provisions available across Essex, for example:

Dig It! Nurturing Soil and Self, Saffron Walden: A community allotment project which runs on local volunteers and runs regular activities where people of all ages and abilities can join to learn about healthy eating, garden maintenance all while keeping fit and socialising with a friendly and supportive group. It uses nature activities to improve physical, emotional and social wellbeing for those who attend.

Roots and Shoots Horticultural Project, Rochford: A project run by the Hamelin Trust as part of Livewell Southend, it aims to use gardening to develop knowledge of natural and green skills required to gain employment and develop interpersonal skills. The project is aimed at Adults with disabilities and other support needs.

THEME 3: COMMUNITY WELLBEING

R8 background:

Facilitating a New System for Social Prescribing

The UK health system has developed social prescribing as an important model where GP surgeries offer alternatives to medical intervention. These have been called non-clinical community interventions (NCCIs) and are particularly focused on people and patients with non-communicable diseases.

The National Academy for Social Prescribing (NASP) was established by the NHS in 2019, and is seeking to expand social prescribing (SP) as a new social movement. The NASP notes that SP is part of an aim to prescribe personalised medical and social interventions, but also note that health improvements may be "long slow journeys" for many patients.

Social prescribing is defined as "supporting people via link workers to make community connections and discover new opportunities, building on individual strengths and preferences, to improve health and well-being." The longest serving SP operation is at Bromley-by-Bow (25 years), and there are exemplars in Brighton, Doncaster, Dudley, Frome, Leeds, London (City and Hackney,

Croydon, Tower Hamlets), Newcastle, Rotherham, and Yorkshire and Humber.

Social Prescribing is a continually evolving and emerging model across England, and rates of referral across the country still remain fairly low. Though Essex does fare well compared with the East of England in terms of referral rates, there remain inequalities in access as social models of health are not yet available across all 143 GP surgeries in the county. Research has found that children and young adults, working age adults, men, non-binary people, and minority ethnic groups are all less likely to access social prescribing services. Limitations within the current model may exist on two accounts: 1) the general availability of local community-based treatments, 2) likelihood of patients with certain characteristics to seek medical help and/or to be considered for referral by their GP.

Seven SP pilots were funded in Essex between 2015-17 as part of a programme to link individuals with early interventions. These programmes relied on partnerships between

ICSs and VCSEs (such as Connect Well, Ways to Wellness, and Smart Life). 5,461 people were referred to the projects, leading to 59% reduction in the use of primary care, 34% reduction in the number of prescriptions received, 31% reduction of secondary care, and 25% reduction in the use of social care.

A sub-set of social prescribing is Green Social Prescribing: making use of natural capital and green infrastructure to support health cost prevention. Essex is a county rich with natural capital in the form of woodland, lake and river, marsh and coastline. Access to green space is closely linked to better public health and wellbeing. Yet despite this, high levels of community need persist in some districts where green space is plentiful. Many of the healthier districts within Essex have VCSE organisations which provide residents with green exercise and other therapeutic activities within nature. Services currently provided include initiatives such as community gardening including teaching around food growth, allotments for people with SEND,

THEME 3: COMMUNITY WELLBEING

rambling and walking for isolated people and sailing for disadvantaged youth.

The ERP would like to see health agencies establish Social Prescribing in every GP surgery in Essex (total 143 surgeries). This will require new partners working with a stronger VCSES sector. Creating more partnership opportunities with VCSEs, education institutions and community organisations, will not only enable more community projects but can also be used to enhance capacity and funding opportunities of early intervention models, such as Social Prescribing (SP). Already an emergent project for partners across Essex, which aims to provide patients with better care through direct referral to community activities to improve personal wellbeing and quality of life.

'Move it or Lose it' dance session in Canvey for 'Find Your Active'

THEME 3: COMMUNITY WELLBEING

Recommendation R8

Create a comprehensive Social Prescribing Network to link Essex Integrated Care Systems, voluntary organisations, and other community groups in an inclusive, social and prevention-pays model of health by 2024.

The aim is to:

- develop provision of social, educational and community options at the point of primary care so as to empower patients, prevent illness, and improve health. This can be more effective, acceptable and convenient and is almost undoubtedly a better use of resources in helping the NHS be a health service rather than an illness service;

- create stronger, and more valued, working partnerships between those with the ability to deliver and support social prescribing across Essex, such as statutory services, voluntary, community and social enterprises (VCSEs), including smaller organisations, educational institutions and community organisations;

- develop a more equal partnership between statutory services, VCSEs, educational institutions and community organisations in the shaping of approaches to better connecting residents to social prescribing programmes across Essex.

Evaluations of Social Prescribing programmes have measured reductions in GP visits (by 12% per person over 6 months, by 28% over 12 months); falls in A&E visits (by 24% over 1 year); reductions in secondary care appointment (down by 35% over 1 year). For each £1 invested in SP, the social benefits are £1.43 (3 months); £2.30 (1 year); £1.98 (5 years); and reduced costs of the order of £250–500 per person per year. The Healthy London partnership for Social Prescribing has noted that London could have saved £110 million over three years if SP had been widely available and used. The benefits of expanding Social Prescribing programmes go beyond public service savings. There is opportunity to better connect social prescribing expansion to the education and access to natural assets via green therapies which ultimately work to improve health and wellbeing through utilising natural capital.

There are initiatives already underway in Essex that provide a foundation for a network to facilitate Social Prescribing. These will require further support, particularly around education, skills development, expansion of green therapies, establishing links with physical and active travel activities, and to support services to better engage and support minority communities and groups, but may be a route for developing VCSE capacity in order to improve community wellbeing (as discussed in Recommendation 7).

THEME 3: COMMUNITY WELLBEING

Five exemplars of good practice

A: The Bromley by Bow Centre, Social Prescribing Legacy (1997-present)

The Bromley by Bow Centre (BBBC) was created in response to the high levels of health inequality and deprivation in the local community. The centre takes a holistic approach to social prescribing, offering a range of services from physical activity to therapeutic wellbeing. BBBC operates as a community hub, primarily from a single community building, the Bromley by Bow Centre, which has within it built in facilities to promote socialising such as a café and a roof top garden. Since 1997 BBBC has created strategic partnerships with both local VCSE organisations and funders to work collaboratively to deliver 220 community-led services for people with different conditions and from various social groups, including ethnic minority communities. BBBC collaborates directly with PCNs and CCGs, working with both GPs and Link Workers to ensure that referrals are properly targeted. The BBBC SP service received a total of 583 referrals within the reporting period April 2018-March 2019 from 6 GP practices within the network. Within this period, 469 (80%) service users were actively engaged by the Social Prescribing service. Popular services included money/debt/benefit advice, and actions for anxiety/stress/depression/low mood. The BBBC is an effective example of embedded VCSE commissioning and partnership work. It shows that VCSE partners with strong, local networks can provide comprehensive and agile services in circumstances where statutory partners (PCNs, CCGs) otherwise lack capacity by themselves.

Photo credit: Tom from Reading, UK, CC BY 2.0 via Wikimedia Commons

THEME 3: COMMUNITY WELLBEING

Five exemplars of good practice

B: Levelling up for Health and Wellbeing through the Local Delivery Pilot (2020-2025): Sport England and Active Essex

Public health data at the county level reveals significant health inequalities between Essex districts. Tendring continues to have the lowest life expectancy at birth. It also has the highest rates of suicide, diabetes, musculoskeletal problems, stroke, coronary heart disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, chronic kidney disease, hypertension, dementia, rheumatoid arthritis, epilepsy, heart failure, cancer, atrial fibrillation, peripheral arterial disease, and palliative care provision. Public health in districts such as Basildon is similarly poor. In response, to improve public health in these districts, the Active Essex Local Delivery Pilot (LDP) has funded targeted pilot schemes to help disadvantaged communities improve health and wellbeing through physical activity.

The LDP relies heavily on collaboration with the voluntary sector, Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) and Primary Care Networks (PCNs) and a social prescribing framework to deliver projects. These include Pedal Power in Tendring, an initiative providing residents of Jaywick and Clacton-on-Sea with access to free bikes and scooters as alternatives and supplements to public transport. Dancing on Prescription is a mobile dance therapy service for patients who suffer with type 2 diabetes and other co-morbidities which impact general mobility.

The LDP is piloting multiple initiatives in partnership with VCSEs to ascertain what works with the view to inform similar initiatives both locally and nationally, meaning there is an opportunity for development of VCSE capacity around community wellbeing across Essex. Relationship building between CCGs, PCNs, and VCSEs is at the heart of operations. The LDP also have an embedded micro-grant programme targeted at smaller organisations whereby Relationship Managers support with collaborative bid writing and provide ad hoc advice and guidance if required.

The Active Essex Local Delivery Pilot, Essex Pedal Power

THEME 3: COMMUNITY WELLBEING

Five exemplars of good practice

C: Essex Libraries Strategy: How Libraries Can Help to Promote Community Capacity and Health

Essex Libraries deliver a public service which is accessed by users of different ages, genders, ethnicities, and the service also includes mobile provision to residents in remote communities. Improving public health is already a pledge in the new Libraries plan, a long-term project which will see our libraries take further steps towards actively promoting individual health and wellbeing. As well as offering informational resources and signposting services, many Essex Libraries will soon offer residents opportunities to improve their social capital through the provision of schemes such as exercise classes and befriending services.

Better signposting and general awareness of what is currently available locally to support health and wellbeing could help volunteers and patients with not only overcoming access barriers within care, but also to improve public health more generally. Essex Libraries have a unique role as community spaces which publicly promote informational access and educational services to all residents and could support this ambition.

D: The Green Light Trust: Suffolk and Norfolk

The Green Light Trust (GLT) deploys the concept of Green Care to use nature and the environment as a method to improve the mental wellbeing of its service users. The activities GLT run are focused on developing physical, social and emotional skills and are targeted at individuals that would not normally have access to nature, and those that are the most marginalised and vulnerable in society. For example, those with mental health challenges, victims of violence, trauma or abuse, military personnel, ex-offenders, and those recovering from alcohol and substance misuse. The GLT has proven impact on attendees lives: on average, each person supported sees GP visits fall by 10 per year and A&E visits reduce by an average of 1.75 per year.

Harwich Library: Memory Café and Rhyme Time singing

THEME 3: COMMUNITY WELLBEING

Five exemplars of good practice

E: The Wilderness Foundation: UK wide

The Wilderness Foundation UK serves approximately 7,000 children, teens and adults across Essex, offering environmental education, special needs and disability nature based programmes, or therapy programmes for individuals face to face, online or in small groups. All their work takes place out in nature and focuses on the benefits of the natural world on human health and wellbeing, teaching participants to love, respect and care for the natural world around them through ethics and practice such as Leave no Trace and systems thinking.

Longitudinal research with the University of Essex has evidenced how the work of the Wilderness Foundation creates connections to nature and how this connection services a range of positive wellbeing outcomes for vulnerable youth and adults. Recent work has measured the impact of the wilderness programmes on survivors of domestic abuse including adults, children and teens with significantly positive results:

Impact case study, a parent's view:

"I am a parent of two daughters who have both suffered mental health issues and benefited immensely from the Turnaround programme for young people. Both daughters participated in the project, which is a programme involving going on trial, which teaches the young people to connect with nature and challenges them to move out of their comfort zone and achieve things, which they never believed they could. In addition, they benefit from regular workshops, social events and mentoring […] Both my daughters continue to be involved in various projects with the Foundation and both describe it as their "happy place" […]"

The environmental education aspect has now expanded to the Wild Schools project. Working with students to help them better understand climate change and support them in environmental action programmes. This focuses on biodiversity enhancement as well as factors such as sustainable food, energy, pollution and a range of factors affecting the health of the planet.

Wilderness Foundation holiday camp

THEME 3: COMMUNITY WELLBEING

R9 background:

New models for ageing communities and social care

Today over 65s make up 18% of the UK population, but by 2046 this figure will be 25%. The Office for National Statistics has predicted that in the UK by 2040 the population of those over 85 in England will number 2.7 million, and by 2057 females will have an at-birth life expectancy of a hundred years. In 2020/2021 it was estimated that 22% of the UK population had a disability, up from 18% in 2010/2011, 42% of which were state pension age. Yet as the numbers grow, capacity for later life care is declining. According to a King's Fund report in 2021, the total number of NHS beds in England has halved over the past thirty years, from 299,000 in 1987-88 to 141,000 in 2019-20.

A recent RIBA report, 'Age-Friendly Housing: future design for older people' highlights compelling examples of architectural flair and quality now emerging in designing for residential care. Two of their findings in particular speak to the idea of de-institutionalisation. The first is an emphasis on how residential care buildings can also function successfully as a 'community hub, which might include a range of services for the local community such as a crèche, healthy living centre, library, adult education facilities, a community hall, gym and health club, and so on.' The second is the assertion that 'Homes for later life must be integrated into age-friendly neighbourhoods.'

The renewed interest in improving the quality of social care as a result of the pandemic offers opportunities in Essex for partnerships and programmes which greatly improve the range, diversity and quality of care provision in the county. It would make sense to target such a strategy to where need is greatest. The 2021 Census revealed that highest populations of over 65s in Essex are in Basildon, Chelmsford, Colchester and Tendring. However, Tendring is spotlighted for another reason in that it combines a very high proportion of older people with a very low population density, which suggests that loneliness and the need for more flexible forms of social care could be explored in places such as the coastal communities of Clacton, Frinton and Harwich which additional experience the additional challenges faced by many coastal communities.

The fact that there has been real innovation in forms of care for older or more vulnerable people in recent decades – whether this is in the growth of retirement villages, a revival of the Almshouse movement, in the expansion of hospices and Maggie's Centres focusing on palliative care and support, intergenerational engagement within age-friendly communities, the cohousing communities seen in Denmark and other specialist forms of provision – shows that involving the public, private and charitable sectors in co-operative ventures and partnerships, is one way towards innovation at a local level. The social care sector is already on the way to becoming a major new sector of the economy, as the international developments specialist, JLL, now note: 'There is a clear case both socially and economically for care homes to be a central component of community infrastructure.' At the same time the RIBA report on age-friendly housing policies was suggesting that, 'Our small towns

THEME 3: COMMUNITY WELLBEING

R9 background:

New models for ageing communities and social care

and villages are set to become retirement communities.'

There are a number of impressive developments in the growing charitable sector committed to lifelong support in mixed tenure communities. A pioneer of retirement villages was the Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust, when it opened Hartrigg Oaks in York in 1998, a mixed development of 152 one or two bedroom bungalows, together with a 43-bed care home. It was early in adding a wide range of on-site recreational and leisure facilities including gym, spa, library, café, DIY workshop, arts and crafts studio and much else.

The social care system of support currently cannot provide the required support to all people in their communities. The primary care system will benefit from all approaches that are able to maximise the support to older people in their homes and communities. This will save resource for hospitals and other primary care facilities. During Covid, social care came under severe pressure. Data from Essex shows that the problems of service and support were particularly poor during the Covid years. The pressure on social care systems will grow. Reforms have been proposed at national level, but it is not expected that these will deliver quick or system-wide change at local level in the immediate future. The focus here is on two components: reform of social care delivery in homes and communities, and implementation of new age-friendly housing and residential developments. There is a need to plan ahead locally, and implement reforms in support of the ageing population.

THEME 3: COMMUNITY WELLBEING

Recommendation R9

Place the concept of age and disability-friendly communities at the centre of social care provision, integrating decisions on housing, health, care and support to enable residents to live well and independently into older-age.

The aims are to:

- bring health, social care, housing and town planning professionals together to ensure that provision for older people and those with disabilities is a central consideration for future decision making. Enabling older residents, and those with disabilities to feel safe, able and empowered to enjoy life, live well and feel part of the wider community;

- create models of care, in all parts of Essex and across the spectrum of need, that bring together housing and care solutions and position older people and those with disabilities as part of an inclusive community;

- learn from innovative models of social care, such as the Netherlands Buurtzorg model (See case study R9: B), which is providing high quality services on lower costs;

- develop pilot projects for age-and-disability-friendly housing and multi-tenure accommodation that fit resident's needs, including those from minority communities, learning from exemplars deployed elsewhere in the UK.

The development of new Integrated Care Partnerships provides a vehicle for enabling this, drawing in partners from across the local public service system.

Age-and-disability-friendly communities are places where age or disability is not a barrier to living well and where the environment, activities and services support and enable older people and those with disabilities, including those from minority groups, to have opportunities to enjoy life and feel well, and to participate in society and be valued for their contribution.

New communities have been created in the UK by the ExtraCare Charitable Trust and feature in the work of the UK Network of Age-Friendly Communities. Lessons can be learned from these examples to inform practice in Essex. As we are increasingly faced with an ageing population, it is a vital consideration for the development of infrastructure for the future.

THEME 3: COMMUNITY WELLBEING

Four exemplars of good practice

A: The ExtraCare Charitable Trust

The ExtraCare Charitable Trust, established in 1988 owns and manages 16 retirement villages and four housing schemes, most currently in the Midlands and the North of England. They provide more than 4,200 homes, 40% for private sale, 40% for shared ownership, and 20% for rent. The work of the Trust is to continue to develop and support new villages based on an 'extra-care' model, more than any other private housing development scheme in the later-life market. Each village offers a range of social, health and leisure facilities that are 'accessible to residents, volunteers and local people representing all age groups living in surrounding communities.' The emphasis is on supporting an open house model, accessible to the wider community, and integrated into the life of the area, where most residents previously lived.

According to research from Aston and Lancaster Universities, NHS costs attributed to ExtraCare Trust residents were cut by over 38% in a year, GP appointments fell by 46%, 75% of residents increased their exercise levels once settled in, and 85% said that they 'never or hardly ever felt lonely'. The Trust grew out of the Coventry Churches Housing Association, and like the hospice movement has its origins as an exercise in faith and community. These examples, together with many others contributing to a new era in social care, make it clear that big changes are coming and it is better to be prepared with strategies and partnerships in place.

B: Buurtzorg Community Health and Social Care, Netherlands

Jos de Blok established Buurtzorg community health care in the town of Enschede with four nurses in 2006. He had a simple idea for the social enterprise: eliminate bureaucracy, back-offices and managers and give teams of nurses the authority and responsibility for providing care to groups of patients in their neighbourhoods. Teams are connected through a web-portal that enables nurses to share information and knowledge and extend and receive support. Today they have grown to 500 self-governing teams, 10,000 nurses and 4500 home-help workers, caring for 100,000 people. They have only one stated objective: delivery of the best and most appropriate care

This patient-centred model has been found to be good for patients, carers, general practitioner doctors and other health professionals. The service is more responsive to specific needs of patients, particularly the elderly, with community nurses able to make operational and clinical decisions. Buurtzorg has high patient and employee ratings and is now the most satisfied workforce of any Dutch company with more than 1000 employees. On average, Buurtzorg nurses end up using only 40% of the care hours they are allocated per client/patient, realising considerable local and national savings for health care. Healthcare systems across the world are trying to adopt primary care service models that will reduce health costs and keep as many people out of hospital as possible. This model demonstrates the importance of a connected approach which focuses on residents' needs can lead to better and lower-cost outcomes.

THEME 3: COMMUNITY WELLBEING

Four exemplars of good practice

C: U3A: UK-wide

The University of the Third Age (U3A) is a UK-wide organisation which draws together thousands of charities who work with individuals aged 65+ or those that no longer work to provide new learning opportunities, volunteering opportunities and activities to stay active, both online and in person. Ultimately U3A aims to promote health and wellbeing as we age. This includes challenging discrimination due to ageism by providing advice and guidance to members about how to challenge ageism and promote positive ageing perceptions. UK-wide U3A has over 430,000 members and has a large presence in Essex. The organisation provides an example of charities working in partnership and centralising the needs of an ageing population at a community level.

D: Intergenerational Housing Model: H.O.M.E, Chicago, US

H.O.M.E (Housing Opportunities & Maintenance for the Elderly) is an organisation which fosters the independence and ideal of living well for elderly people by providing intergenerational housing and support services for seniors on low income. The model works on the principle that seniors should not be segregated, and that people of all-ages can benefit from living in a community whereby they are able to connect with other generations on a daily basis. H.O.M.E has 3 apartment buildings where seniors have a choice to independently or in a family setting. On each site, older residents have access to social services and creative and social activities.

THEME 4: THE CLIMATE AND NATURE CRISIS

Recommendations R10–R12

R10

Establish a commitment from Essex Partners to work to a policy framework that puts nature recovery, net-zero, environmental sustainability and implications at the heart of decision-making.

R11

Improve access to Natural Green/Blue Infrastructure across Essex so that all residents are able to participate and benefit from current and future natural assets.

R12

Support local communities to self-mobilise, and implement pro-environmental initiatives, by educating on what can be done at a local level and enabling collaboration across community groups.

Photo credit: Tamara Stoll – 'Eastbrookend Country Park with the Havering Walking for Health Group'

THEME 4: THE CLIMATE AND NATURE CRISIS

R10 background:

Frameworks for action and implementation

The climate and nature crises are the biggest challenges facing the world. The scientific consensus around climate change is clear, and the humanitarian implications are stark. The impacts of climate change are already disrupting lives. The need for action is urgent. The importance of partnerships and collaboration, good governance practices, long-term decision-making, and public engagement in shaping decision-making are being recognised across the public sector and the public via the UK Climate Assembly as being integral to tackling the climate and nature crises.

The Essex Climate Action Commission is an independent body set up by Essex County Council to advise on how best to tackle the climate crisis. It recognises that if Essex is to become a net-zero county by 2050, then much of the work needs to be done by the end of this current decade. Through the work of the Essex Climate Action Commission, £200m has already been assigned by Essex County Council to implement specific initiatives and interventions aimed at tackling this crisis at a local level. The ECAC made more than 100 recommendations for making the transition to net-zero for Essex, and these have had full and comprehensive cross-party support.

The Essex Renewal Project does not wish to duplicate the work being done by the Essex Climate Action Commission nor through the newly formed Local Nature Partnership (LNP) for Essex. A key common priority centres on the actions needed to implement these recommendations across businesses, and the public and third sectors. An opportunity exists for leadership within Essex at all levels of parish, town, city, Borough and District.

The Commission has explored different models for developing and adopting local policy and practice frameworks that put sustainability at the heart of local decision-making. The framework for policy development based on the Well-Being for Future Generations (Wales) Act provides a potential model. It requires all public partners in Wales to ensure that the decisions they take meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It sets out a model for policy development to help ensure this requirement is met, see case study R10:A for more details.

THEME 4: THE CLIMATE AND NATURE CRISIS

Recommendation R10

Establish a commitment from Essex Partners to work to a policy framework that puts nature recovery, net-zero, environmental sustainability and implications at the heart of decision-making.

The aims are to:

- implement a policy which requires public service partners across Essex to commit to assessing the sustainability and environmental implications and long-term impacts of the decisions made;

- support this with collaborative and inclusive approaches to decision-making – bringing multiple diverse voices into the policy development process;

- ensure integrated, long-term, preventative thinking that builds shared values and creates commitment and accountability;

- address broader, more systemic challenges beyond an immediate crisis response;

- ensure all businesses in Essex have net-zero, nature recovery and environmental policies.

The new Local Nature Partnership (LNP) could prove a vehicle to pilot this approach. The LNP is already working towards bringing together agencies from across the county to ensure Green and Blue infrastructure and biodiversity thrives, as well as providing important benefits to the people of Essex. Due to the urgent need to reach net-zero and achieve nature recovery, we recommend that work on this is mobilised across Essex Partners by mid-2023.

THEME 4: THE CLIMATE AND NATURE CRISIS

Four exemplars of good practice

Adopting a policy framework inspired by the Well-Being of Future Generations Act at the system level within Essex could help ensure that all local decisions, not just those associated with specific low carbon investments or climate change initiatives, reflect the urgency of the climate and nature crises. Within Essex, there are already a number of partnership initiatives focused on the climate and nature crises that could benefit from adopting a policy framework to move forward decision making.

For example, the Essex LNP provides an example of a newly formed partnership that could work to and promote a similar framework outlined by the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act.

THEME 4: THE CLIMATE AND NATURE CRISIS

Four exemplars of good practice

A: Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act

The Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act is about improving the social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being of Wales. The Act gives a legally-binding common purpose, the seven well-being goals[3], for national government, local government, local health boards and other specified public bodies. It details the ways in which specified public bodies must work, and work together, to improve the well-being of Wales. It aims to make the public bodies listed in the Act think more about the long-term, work better with people and communities and each other, look to prevent problems and take a more joined-up approach.

The Act puts in place a 'sustainable development principle' to instruct organisations how to go about meeting their duty under the Act. It identifies five areas for public bodies to show they have applied the principle. These are:

- Collaboration: Acting in collaboration with any other person (or different parts of the body itself) that could help the body to meet its well-being objectives.

- Integration: Considering how the public body's well-being objectives may impact upon each of the well-being goals, on their other objectives, or on the objectives of other public bodies.

- Involvement: The importance of involving people with an interest in achieving the well-being goals and ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of the area which the body serves.

- Long-term: The importance of balancing short-term needs with the need to safeguard the long-term needs.

- Prevention: How acting to prevent problems occurring or getting worse may help public bodies meet their objectives.

The Wales Act provides an example of how Essex can embed a way of working which was widely adopted during the Covid-19 pandemic, into a more formalised framework that would help to address broader challenges beyond immediate crisis response.

---

[3] Prosperous; Resilient; Healthier; More equal; Cohesive communities; Vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language; Globally responsible

THEME 4: THE CLIMATE AND NATURE CRISIS

Four exemplars of good practice

B: Essex Local Nature Partnership

Local Nature Partnerships (LNPs) bring together local organisations, businesses and people who want to improve local natural capital. The LNP helps the management of this natural environment as a whole system and seeks to embed values in local decisions for the benefit of nature, people, and the economy. The Local Nature Partnership is managed by an independent Board, with 14 representatives drawn from agriculture, development, local government, conservation organisations, community groups, health organisations and youth groups.

The newly formed Essex LNP forms part of a national network of LNPs and is responsible for encouraging, supporting, and facilitating nature recovery across the county. It will work to benefit Essex by:

- Preventing further loss of biodiversity and working towards reversing the decline;

- Supporting nature recovery, to restore habitats and wildlife;

- Producing positive outcomes that integrate the needs of nature, people, and the economy;

- Enabling a diverse range of organisations and communities to work together in partnership, to make the best use of our available resources;

- Raising awareness of the value of Essex's environment to the economy and society.

The Essex Local Nature Partnership Board, July 2022, at Abbotts Hall Farm, Essex Wildlife Trust

THEME 4: THE CLIMATE AND NATURE CRISIS

Four exemplars of good practice

C: The First Climate Focus Area (CFA)

In June 2021, The Essex Climate Action Commission delivered its recommendations for Essex to tackle the climate crisis and become a net-zero county by 2050. The core recommendation of the Land Use & Green Infrastructure Climate Action programme is that by 2050, 30% of land in Essex is defined as Natural Green Infrastructure and is being managed for nature, and 100% of farmland and other non-farmed land is being managed according to sustainable principles. The idea of the Climate Focus Area (CFA) is to reach these climate action targets quicker through a focusing of effort and resource, to trial and test new approaches, and to act as a pilot and pathfinder for the rest of the county.

The first CFA covers the catchments of the Blackwater and Colne Rivers, where a focused effort will be made to combat climate change. This will see a transformation in land management that delivers multiple benefits such as net gain for biodiversity, improved soil health, improved air quality, reduced flooding, reduced urban heat island effect, and improved amenity, liveability, and wellbeing of Essex communities.

Central to the success of the CFA is a recognition that actions and developments must have the support of individuals and groups that live and work within the CFA, and the means to agree management changes and actions. Participatory planning will support individuals and communities to have their voices integrated in any climate action proposals delivered by the Essex partners, whilst consultation with local people and communities in the CFA, whether they live in rural areas, villages, or towns will be critical.

D: Offshore wind supply chain plans, UK

As part of planning and consenting, offshore windfarm developers are required to create supply chain plans that help address any potential skills shortages. Each plan covers the topics for development, construction, operations and maintenance and decommissioning phases of the project: Skills commitment, assessment of future skills requirements, assessment of skills gaps, investment in skills and training, apprenticeships, best practice and lessons learnt. A similar approach could be incorporated to a wider policy framework, forcing routine consideration of green skills.

These offshore windfarm developments are a major step forward for the UK to generate green energy and develop economies in the areas nearby. For example, for Dogger Bank wind farm being built 130km off the North East Coast of England will be capable of powering 6 million British homes, all while being mindful of protecting landscapes on land. The Denmark wind energy project also provide a good example of mindful wind farm development, where by 2040 the offshore development will provide 150% of Denmark's electricity needs.

THEME 4: THE CLIMATE AND NATURE CRISIS

R11 background:

Access and Participation in Natural and Green Spaces

Access to, and use of, green and natural spaces is widely recognised as having a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities. During the pandemic, people's reliance on, and appreciation of, nature and green spaces became more apparent. In response to an April 2021 survey, 87% of Essex residents agreed that visiting local green and natural spaces had become more important to their wellbeing since the pandemic.

The Essex Climate Action Commission highlight that large areas of meadow, hedgerow, marsh, orchard and woodland, together with the wildlife they contained, have disappeared in Essex over the last century, primarily due to intensification of agriculture and growth of towns and villages. Furthermore, it notes that Essex has one of the lowest areas of land given over to trees in the UK, whilst only 29% of its population is within a five-minute walk of a publicly accessible green space. This issue is prevalent across Essex, with even rural communities lacking in publicly accessible green space, for example Uttlesford has one of the lowest densities of green assets in Essex. Results from the 2022 Essex Residents survey show that 88% of residents feel green and natural spaces are within easy walking distance, compared to 67% nationally.

The presence of green/blue and accessible natural space is known to improve mental and physical wellbeing. It has been shown to reduce the incidence of non-communicable diseases (such as cardiovascular disease, mental ill-health, type 2 diabetes, loneliness). Green space close to residence reduces mortality, reduces levels of stress hormones, increases levels of physical activity, changes dietary decisions and habits, and affects longevity of the elderly. Regular exercise and rich social networks add five years to life, walkers live longer and have lower incidence of dementias, and healthy plant-based diets play a role in reducing mortality. Natural spaces are linked to increased happiness and life satisfaction, and these play a direct role in creating greater longevity. The happiest third of the population aged above 50 have a 10% chance of dying over the next 9 years, the middle third a 20% chance, and the least happy a 30% chance. Overall, people living within 0.5km of green space live longer and experience healthier lives.

However, inequalities in both access and participation are seen nationally and within Essex amongst a number of groups, including people from low-income households, more deprived urban areas, ethnic minority backgrounds and those with a limiting illness or disability.

THEME 4: THE CLIMATE AND NATURE CRISIS

Recommendation R11

Improve access to natural green/blue infrastructure across Essex so that all residents are able to participate and benefit from current and future natural assets

The aims are to:

- address the inequality of access to natural green/blue spaces in rural, coastal and urban areas, including amongst underrepresented or disadvantaged groups;

- link social prescribing schemes to 'green' social prescribing options to make better use of local green space;

- ensure that all current and future public green and blue spaces have accessible walkways and footpaths, are well-served by public transport and that transport options are well communicated;

- enhance nature literacy and young people's access to nature within schools and educational settings;

- highlight the importance of enhancing and protecting natural assets while improving accessibility to the green/blue infrastructure.

The Essex Climate Action Commission's recommendations include increasing Natural Green Infrastructure (natural and semi-natural habitat) in Essex from 14% to 25% by 2030 and 30% by 2040. It is vital to both enhance and protect natural assets as well as improving access to them. Large-scale initiatives aligned to this recommendation are already happening in Essex and require collaboration across multiple partners. We recommend that in these planning stages access and participation initiatives are incorporated into decision making. Meaning by 2040 all Green/Blue infrastructure should have improved accessibility and participation.

Bird-watching at Rainham Marshes, former military land acquired by the RSPB, and now a pre-eminent wildlife site on the Thames Estuary' Photo credit: Ken Worpole

THEME 4: THE CLIMATE AND NATURE CRISIS

Two exemplars of good practice

A: Land of the Fanns, South West Essex and East London

The National Lottery Heritage Fund part-funded the 5-year Land of the Fanns project that seeks to reunify and discover the landscape, strengthen attachment, and create a sense of enjoyment of the landscape area for local people and visitors. Extensive work was undertaken in the development stage to understand the characteristics of the areas included in the project, identify the natural assets, what made them culturally special. The connection and access communities currently had to these areas was explored in the Audience Development Plan, and target groups were identified as having low engagement: ethnic minority residents new to the area, those living in deprived areas, white working class, schools, young families, elderly people and those with a disability.

Access to these areas was the main challenge for local communities. But the review also found that a lack of activities suitable for all resident groups, accessibility for those with disabilities, confidence in using spaces, lack of tailored spaces to be used for sensory activities, engagement and limited marketing were barriers for residents making the most of the natural assets. In response, 26 projects were proposed that culminated into the Landscape Conservation Action Plan (LCAP).

Projects currently in progress include i) 'Rediscovering the Lost Fens', which aims to improve the footpath network to help open up lost landscapes; ii) 'Walking the Fanns' which seeks to improve accessibility of the path network; and iii) walking programmes targeted at less engaged residents to improve local knowledge and promote physical activity.
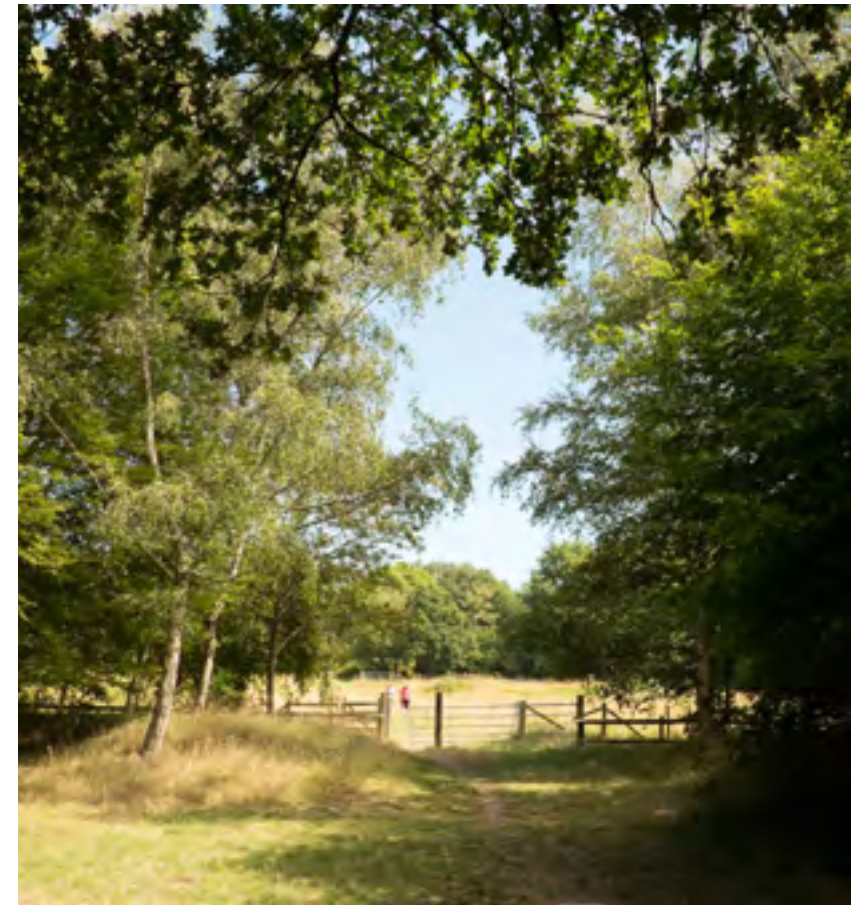

Photo credit: Tamara Stoll – 'Havering Country Park'

THEME 4: THE CLIMATE AND NATURE CRISIS

Two exemplars of good practice

B: South Essex Estuary (SEE) Park

SEEPark is a proposed single and integrated park system along the Thames Estuary. It sets a revolutionary vision for tackling climate change, by creatively utilising green and blue infrastructure at a regional scale.

The park will be a single, unified, regional parkland to encompass all of South Essex. This single system will address the challenges of providing access to green spaces, improving health and well-being and air quality, mitigating the effects of climate change including flooding, boosting eco-tourism and green job creation, restoring biodiversity, and helping the region achieve a net-zero carbon footprint. This project will create 16,000 hectares of new green spaces, around 200km of new waterfront paths, 450km of green walking and cycling loops, plant 9,200 hectares of new woodland and restore 13,800 hectares of marshland. It will result in:

- a high-quality green space within 300 metres of every front door or workplace in South Essex;

- cycleways to connect every doorstep to the countryside and to work;

- a continuous coastal path stretching 70km from Tilbury Fort to Shoeburyness.

SEEPARK is one of five pioneer programmes being delivered through ASELA (the Association of South Essex Local Authorities), a partnership of neighbouring councils that have come together to promote growth and prosperity in the region: Basildon, Brentwood, Castle Point, Rochford, Southend-on-Sea, Thurrock, and Essex County councils.

THEME 4: THE CLIMATE AND NATURE CRISIS

R12 background:

Community Engagement, Co-Production and Education

Addressing the climate and nature crises requires a significant effort across society. The Essex Climate Action Commission highlight that its recommendations cannot be delivered by any single agency or body, and everyone has a role to play. Individual and community-led action is vital, particularly where much of the required emissions savings will need to come from changes in individual behaviours and choices.

Whilst Essex residents express high levels of concern about climate change, in practice the issue often feels distant and less of a priority than other national and local concerns. Furthermore, although 72% of Essex residents feel that they are very or fairly well informed about what they could do to help reduce climate change, just 16% consider themselves to be 'very well informed'.
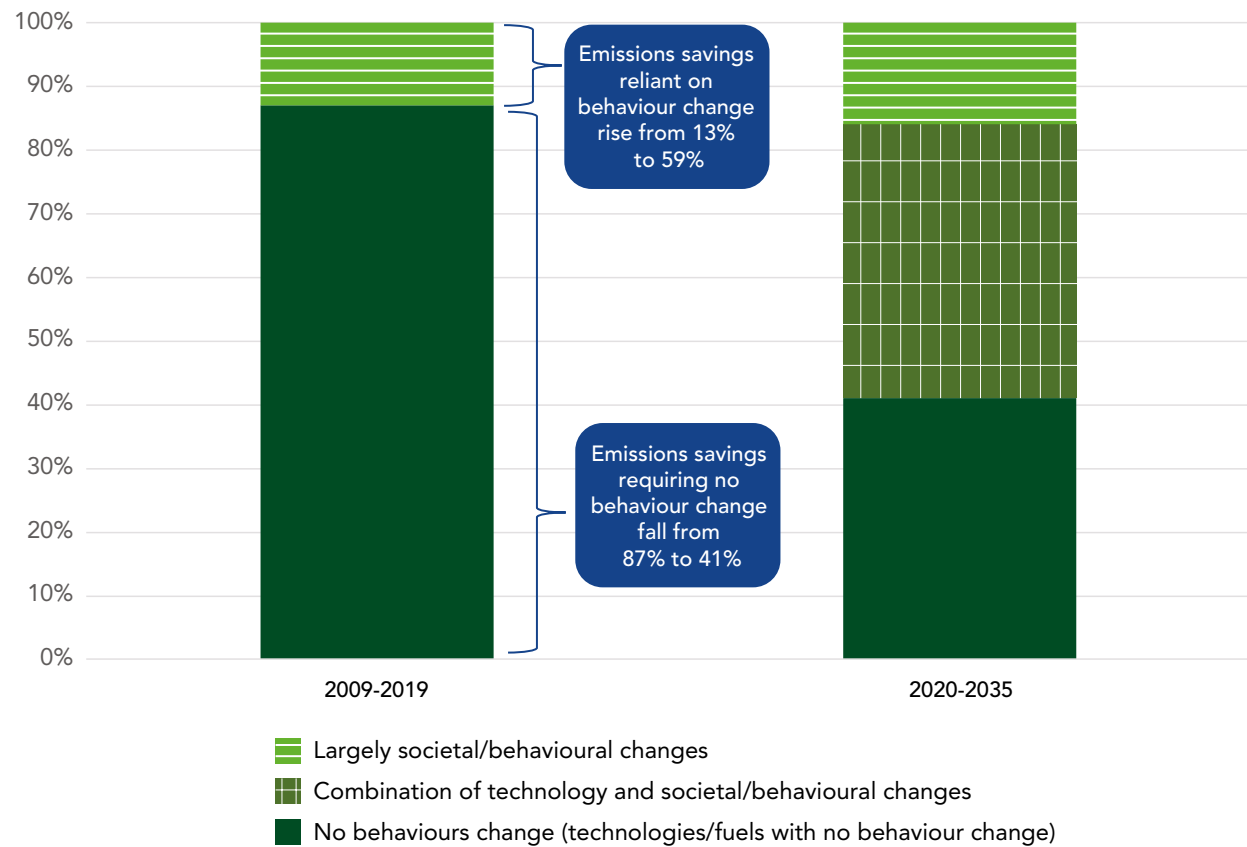

Emissions savings reliant on behaviour change rise from 13% to 59%

Emissions savings requiring no behaviour change fall from 87% to 41%

Legend:
- Largely societal/behavioural changes
- Combination of technology and societal/behavioural changes
- No behaviours change (technologies/fuels with no behaviour change)

Figure 4: Pathway to Net-Zero

THEME 4: THE CLIMATE AND NATURE CRISIS

R12 background:

Community Engagement, Co-Production and Education

Increased community engagement and participation could bring a range of benefits as Essex works towards net-zero. Embedding and normalizing low-carbon lifestyles within communities will be vital in seeding and accelerating the transitions required of society. Simultaneously, it will be crucial that communities' voices are clearly heard, and they are allowed to participate in identifying, agreeing, and delivering equitable solutions. It is also critical to consider the opportunities for intergenerational working, the climate crises will impact all generations, particularly our young residents, and improving engagement and joint working across generations will help to share skills and knowledge needed to work towards a net-zero future. The benefits of public engagement have been indicated in this way:

- Raising awareness and promoting public learning around changes required for net-zero, including how individual actions link to broader societal shifts;

- Enhancing the legitimacy of decisions and the decision-making process on how to reach net-zero;

- Enhancing trust in government and other organisations, which in turn may lead to great perceptions of fairness, shared responsibility, and collective efficacy for climate action;

- Creating a social mandate for action and improve political confidence that government-led climate action is supported, expected, and accepted by the public;

- Better understanding of the 'conditions' of policy acceptance and behaviour change required for reaching net-zero;

- Strengthening democracy and citizens as active participants in the delivery of net-zero.

Improving engagement will require community and partnership working, but it is not the only step required to work together. Local partners also have a vital role to play in influencing and educating residents, businesses, and communities about the realities of climate change. Educating communities is a foundation block to move towards community-led action.

THEME 4: THE CLIMATE AND NATURE CRISIS

Recommendation R12

Support local communities to self-mobilise, and implement pro-environmental initiatives, by educating on what can be done at a local level and enabling collaboration across community groups.

The aim is to:

- create a social infrastructure where local community groups and organisations can learn how to collaborate and share best practice; groups should encourage an intergenerational model to encourage younger and older residents to work together and transfer knowledge and skills;

- enable initiatives and pilots to be used as an education tool for local businesses, education institutions, residents and local community groups to demonstrate what can be achieved at a local level;

- create education packs that can be circulated across the Essex community, for example to schools, local businesses, voluntary organisations, residents, community groups, health centers or faith groups, highlighting initiatives such as reducing food waste in schools, reducing single use plastics in business premises, use of home-composting, shifting to sustainable transport or alternative use of energy sources e.g., solar panels.

- support community ownership of local initiatives such as community farming (regenerative and sustainable agriculture approaches), rewilding projects, community energy schemes, community sustainable transport schemes or implementation of Nature-Climate placed-based action projects, and new forms of living;

- amplify and scale-up small-scale, grassroots initiatives;

- involve people with an interest in achieving the goals and ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of the area;

- support the emergence in all Districts and Boroughs, Cities, Towns, and Parishes of local Climate or Nature Action Committees.

Locally-driven action will be central to creating platforms for the engagement and education of all people of Essex in positive action to improve natural, social and cultural capital. The emergence of new institutions (committees, groups, collectives) to coordinate action will help the transition towards low-carbon and nature-rich futures. This is a long-term, ongoing, goal but we recommend Essex County Council and District/Borough, City, Town and Parish Councils work together to mobilise this community approach by 2030.

THEME 4: THE CLIMATE AND NATURE CRISIS

Five exemplars of good practice

The importance of community action to tackle the climate crisis is well-recognised. Projects that have managed to empower communities to take local action or educate on the realities of climate action, are the most successful in terms of working towards a common goal. Across Essex, individuals and communities are engaging in collective action to help address the climate and environmental crises, including with small amounts of support and funding.

A: Plastic Free Communities

Plastic Free Communities is a grassroots campaign developed by Surfers Against Sewage (SAS) that empowers and connects people in a shared journey to free where they live from avoidable, throwaway plastic. Supported by a toolkit, it centres on achieving five objectives to achieve the Plastic Free Communities award:

1. Working with the local council;

2. Encouraging local businesses to reduce single use plastic;

3. Signing up community groups, schools and organisations;

4. Holding events and actions;

5. Setting up a steering group to drive the movement.

In addition to helping to eliminate the use of single-use plastic in communities, a range of secondary benefits have been identified, with those involved showing increased awareness of environmental issues, reporting having taken additional pro-environmental actions, developing a greater sense of belonging in their neighbourhood and a greater connection to nature and making more effort to use local businesses.

There are five Plastic Free Communities within Greater Essex at Burnham on Crouch, Feering, Lawford, Maningtree and Mistley, and Leigh-on-Sea.

B: Local Climate Partnerships and Community Groups

Across Essex, local communities are self-organising and coming together to help reduce the impact of climate change, protect nature locally, and promote more sustainable and low-carbon behaviours and ways of living. Whilst reflecting local challenges and concerns, commonly these are focussed on i) raising awareness of key issues related to climate change and the environment; ii) providing information and education to encourage sustainable lifestyle choices; iii) Involving a range of local pro-environmental initiatives and projects, including community energy schemes; and iv) building community resilience.

These place-based groups with a focus on climate, biodiversity and sustainability included in mid 2022 to be: Tollesbury Climate Partnership; Sustainable Danbury; PACE Manningtree; Castle Point Climate Action Group; Bishop's Stortford Climate Group; Saffron Walden Town Council; Canvey Island Town Council; Transition Wivenhoe; Coggeshall Climate Emergency Committee; Walton Naze Protection Society; Epping Forest Climate Action Committee, Chigwell Climate Committee.

THEME 4: THE CLIMATE AND NATURE CRISIS

Five exemplars of good practice

C: Climate Action Challenge Fund

Running alongside the work of the Essex Climate Action Commission, a Climate Action Challenge Fund has been launched to support community activities that embed behavioural change in Essex residents around key climate issues. Voluntary and community sector organisations, community groups, parish councils and schools in Essex can apply for up to £20,000 of funding to support the development of community-led responses to key climate change priorities. Funding is being offered by Essex County Council until 31 March 2023 or until funds are fully allocated.

Projects are required to demonstrate high levels of community engagement and participation and be diverse and inclusive in nature – recognising a collective responsibility to tackle climate issues – with applications for projects that engage with/ and or involve children and young people particularly encouraged.

D: Love Essex: a programme to enable community action on climate change

Love Essex is an initiative created and shared by the Essex Waste Partnership, which is composed of the Southend-on-Sea Borough Council, the unitary authority of Essex County Council, and the 12 city, district, and borough councils. The goal of Love Essex is to work consistently and county-wide on waste projects with residents, businesses, and schools. The Love Essex team wants to promote communities to minimise waste and litter by motivating behaviour change. The group makes use of the Love Essex website and social media channels.

In collaboration with Freegle, the Love Essex team undertakes initiatives to reduce single-use plastics, encourage the use of cloth diapers and home composting, and promote sharing and reusing. The Love Essex Fund has given assistance to 43 community-based initiatives that encourage repair, reuse, and recycling. Freegle is an online platform that allows users to donate and receive free stuff in their local region. Love Essex has partnered with Freegle to support the online resource for local organisations and advertising expenditures. There are presently twenty local Freegle clubs in Essex, with over 70,000 members.

The Love Essex team has assisted a network of volunteers in educating locals and students on how to reduce their trash and negative environmental effects. In addition, they oversee the "BLUEPRINT to a Circular Economy". Community-based initiatives such as Love Essex are widely seen to play an essential role in a societal move towards a more sustainable future for all. Through similar initiatives, residents can learn how to reuse products and reduce waste, but most importantly we can create social infrastructure that enable residents to collaborate, reuse and pass on material items.

THEME 4: THE CLIMATE AND NATURE CRISIS

Five exemplars of good practice

E: The Love Food Hate Waste Education Pack: Scotland

Tackling food waste is recognised as one of the foremost challenges to Scotland's circular economy and climate change ambitions, with 1.35 million tonnes of food and drink wasted in Scotland annually. Zero waste Scotland has created 'The love food hate waste Educational pack' to tackle food waste for the Scottish curriculum. The school pack represents practical materials on how to reduce food waste. Through a variety of engaging and easy to use inter-disciplinary lessons students are given a voice in the fight against food waste and will further understand this significant problem facing our world today. They contribute directly in a positive and tangible way to reducing the amount of food we throw away. The first lesson of each age group will inform and inspire learners, the second will have them loving and valuing food, while the third will give them all the practical know-how to hate waste and save food from the bin.

THEME 5: THE GREEN ECONOMY

## Recommendations R13–R15

R13

Enhance the Net-Zero Innovation Network (NZIN) to strengthen working partnerships with Essex Partners, anchor institutions, the community and local businesses, to increase diversity of membership and implement models to improve capacity and spread innovative projects.

R14

Develop communication links, resources and tools between industry leaders, educational institutions, and local communities to raise awareness of green skill opportunities by 2024.

R15

Establish 'Green and Blue Jobs Hubs' in all coastal areas of Essex to promote regeneration through the development of green sectors and green/blue employment.
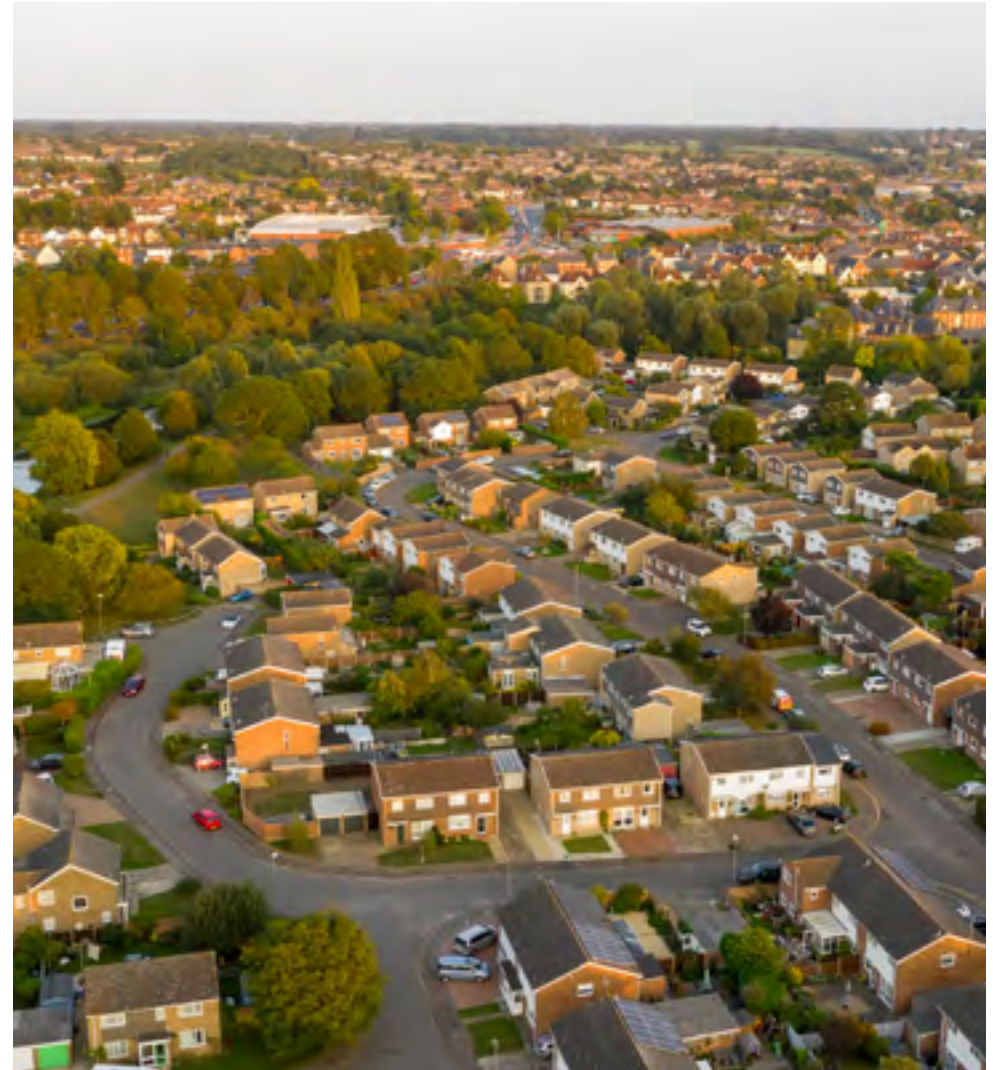
THEME 5: THE GREEN ECONOMY

R13 background:

Demonstrating the opportunities to innovate

Essex is well-placed to become an innovation hub for environmental projects and interventions. The support for the 2021 Essex Climate Action Commission recommendations has set a foundation for positive change. This change has already begun. There are many innovative ideas and initiatives that are being driven forward, and multiple areas that have been identified as central to work towards the net-zero target, for example:

- Energy: Essex annually has on average some 1,600 hours of sunlight, 17% above the national average. The expansion of installation of solar PV panels is a pressing priority and opportunity. These should be standard on new homes, installed on existing roofs and over car parks, and will ensure local electricity generation supports the transition to electric vehicles: One example of an Essex initiative is the Danbury Primary School solar panel project (see case study R13:F).

- Waste: each year, the average Essex home generates more than a tonne of waste. Waste disposal authorities collect 700,000 tonnes of domestic waste. Managing this waste has an impact on climate, adds to local pollution, and constitutes an unsustainable use of natural resources. While the county recycles 54% of household waste, large amounts of material that could be recycled or reused still is sent to the waste disposal route. The Love Essex team is currently developing a food waste initiative as an attempt to shift household behaviours around food waste (see case study R12:E).

- Sustainable transport and fuel: transport is one of largest sources of greenhouse gas emissions and is responsible for over quarter of greenhouse gas emissions in the UK. In Essex, the transport emissions are higher than the national average. Transitions to transport systems using renewable energy will save public and private costs, and allow for greater investments in economic growth. An example of an Essex level innovation is the E-Scooter pilots around Chelmsford, Basildon and Colchester (see case study R13:G).

- Built environment: of 85,000 homes in the county 67% of homes in Essex have a poor Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) of D or below. This increases the need to use energy in households and therefore increase the emissions emitted. Retrofitting is a huge opportunity for Essex in both a domestic and commercial capacity and is expected to create up to 13,000 jobs in the county. A pilot retrofit programme has already started in Harlow and Tendring and demonstrates the opportunity of partnership working to improve skills and local economies (see case study R14:B).

THEME 5: THE GREEN ECONOMY

R13 background:

Demonstrating the opportunities to innovate

Collaborative working across partners, including local businesses, voluntary and educational institutions is vital to move towards more innovative approaches to reach net-zero and to evolve pilots into county-wide, embedded programmes. The Net-Zero Innovation Network (see case study R13: A) was established in 2021 to work towards these goals. It is vital that this network is appropriately resourced and supported across partners to action the innovative projects that will have a substantial impact on reaching net-zero.

THEME 5: THE GREEN ECONOMY

Recommendation R13

Enhance the Net-Zero Innovation Network (NZIN) to strengthen working partnerships with Essex Partners, anchor institutions, the community and local businesses, to increase diversity of membership and implement models to improve capacity and spread innovative projects.

The aim of the NZIN is to involve the community and local businesses in reaching the net-zero carbon emissions target by 2050 creating opportunity for innovation, jobs and helping them to thrive by maximising the opportunity of a green transition. To do this, the network requires greater support and commitment from partners and organisations across Essex to contribute both resources and the capacity to move forward the green projects and develop a wider educational element. The network will be integral to highlighting successful projects that will inspire other local business owners, educational institutions and public services to change practices and contribute more to the move towards net-zero.

We recommend that a resource structure is developed across the NZIN as part of the membership commitments. This should include Essex County Council, the contributing universities and colleges, and the larger local Essex businesses. Representatives will work in collaboration to lead the Net-Zero Innovation Network with the aim to:

- extend the diversity of the network to include more businesses and to engage with the wider Essex community through mechanisms such as the Youth Essex Assembly, the proposed Community Advisory Groups or local community groups and organisations.

- be action focused, moving forward pilot projects and promoting the successful pilots across the Essex Partnership Board with the view to upscale projects Essex-wide.

An example of some pilot projects that could be prioritised are; ensuring solar PV schemes are installed in every community of Essex, on every business roof, over every outdoor car park, for every school, as well as for private individuals; implement a waste reduction, recycling, and reuse project in every school of Essex (551 schools); reflect on the sustainable transport infrastructure, technologies and alternative fuel are cheap, reliable, and accessible across the whole of Essex; upscale the retrofit skills development programme across Essex; engage with local organisations such as Essex Business Forum to explore future challenges of the green transaction and opportunity in creating new jobs.

THEME 5: THE GREEN ECONOMY

Seven exemplars of good practice

There are many initiatives happening across the UK, and Essex that will enable a solid starting point to identify the opportunities for partnership working on innovative green projects:

A: Net-Zero Innovation Network, Essex

In direct response to one of the Essex Climate Action Commission's Community Engagement recommendations, the Net-Zero Innovation Network (NZIN) was established in 2021 to engage more directly with businesses. It brings together individuals from a wide range of public sector, education and business sectors across Essex. The aim is to support partnerships and drive innovation, helping Essex achieve its target of being a net-zero carbon emissions county by 2050. 2022 has seen a period of action, initiating a pipeline of pilot projects that can be jointly owned by members of the network. The future of the network is to secure resources, funding and delivery from 2023 onwards. The pilot projects identified fall within 4 key areas: built environment, sustainable transport, energy and waste. Essex County Council takes the leadership role in supporting the network.

B: Locally Feeding the City Hospital, Queens Medical Centre and the NHS Trust in Nottingham

In Nottingham, the City Hospital, and the Queens Medical Centre form one of the largest NHS Trusts in the UK with nearly two million meals per year. The Trust developed in-house catering, coffee shop and restaurant services across the two sites eliminating outsources of catered meals. The main dishes were supplied from within the hospital by NHS employees thereby reducing the number of staff required to produce meals for the patients on the ward, and staff and visitors in the hospital restaurant thereby increasing profitability and income for the Trust. This not only saved money but generated income, offsetting some of the inevitable costs of transition and procurement of higher quality local produce such as organic milk. Moreover, the cost remained below the national average suggesting that quality can be improved without increasing cost. This programme reduced the use of diesel vehicles for deliveries, as well as increased income to local suppliers to empower the local food and farming; this, in turn, involved the hospital menus being seasonal. Now 77% of all raw ingredients comes from local providers. Meat, fresh produce, bakery products and milk are sourced locally, ensuring security for local suppliers, and helping the local economy. Switching to these local suppliers put £2m per year into local sustainable businesses: the target is now £22m for the next decade.

This case study shows how a large public sector organisation can help green growth in the local economy. The kitchen protected 120 jobs and created 20 new jobs. Before this project, for every £100 spent on food, £5 stayed in the regional economy; now, for every £100 spent on food, over £50 remains in the regional economy.

THEME 5: THE GREEN ECONOMY

Seven exemplars of good practice

C: Alternative Fuel: Simarco, Essex

As a part of sustainability strategy, Simarco is investing to support UK's net-zero target and reduce impact of its commercial fleet on the planet. Simarco will soon start using HVO (Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil) fuel across its fleet. HVO is a sustainable drop-in diesel alternative that offers superior operational and environmental performance over fossil diesel. It is synthesised from 100% renewable raw materials, which reduces net CO_2 greenhouse gas emissions by as much as 90%. At the start of this initiative, Simarco will be using HVO in its 44T vehicles with the highest mileage in the network. To fulfil the fuelling requirements of these vehicles, Simarco is installing a 50,000 Litres HVO fuel tank on site.

D: Gridserve, The UK's first electric car charging forecourt opens in Essex

In December 2020, GRIDSERVE unveiled the UK's first Electric Forecourt in Braintree. It is designed to make charging electric vehicles (EVs) as simple as using a petrol station. The project shows how to remove range and charging anxiety for EV drivers. Any type of EV can be charged from the 36 chargers at the Electric Forecourt, which can deliver over 200 miles of charge in around ten minutes. The energy for the chargers is provided from both zero carbon and net-zero carbon sources. The zero-carbon energy is provided from the 206kWp solar power canopy above the chargers as well as a solar roof, which is expected to generate sufficient energy to drive 800,000 miles each year in EVs. The balance of the net-zero carbon energy is provided from a 9.84MWp hybrid solar farm 44 miles from the facility that is connected to the project through the national grid, generating 10GWh of energy annually. As well as using the grid connection for electric vehicle charging, a 5MW(AC) 6MWh battery provides grid services. The battery stores electricity from the renewable sources.

THEME 5: THE GREEN ECONOMY

Seven exemplars of good practice

E: Energy Usage transformation: Simarco, UK

The Simarco Lighting upgrade project lays a pathway for its energy usage transformation. Simarco is redesigning and changing the entire lighting infrastructure at one of its transport hubs in Witham. The project will include installation of highly energy efficient lighting systems (a combination of efficient light fixtures and intelligent presence detection devices) across the warehouses and offices, allowing Simarco to reduce our onsite electricity consumption and related CO2 emissions by an estimated 70%. As well as reducing CO2 emissions, the move to energy saving lighting also benefits business by reducing maintenance costs, energy savings and improving a positive working environment. Studies show that using energy efficient lighting can increase work productivity, alertness, supports mental wellbeing and decreases fatigue, bringing a positive synergy with our employee wellbeing strategy.

F: Solar Panels, Danbury Park Community School, Essex

Danbury Park Community School in Chelmsford has partially gone solar. In October 2020, solar panels were fitted which will save 15 tonnes of carbon in the first year and 375 tonnes over the panel lifetime. At the same time, the school embarked on a sustainability journey with the pupils researching all aspects of sustainability in class, including how to recycle plastic and participating in Sustrans Big Pedal Week. The pupils explored simple ways to reduce the school's carbon output and save the school money in energy costs. Essex Outdoors, Danbury was also fitted with solar panels at the same time as part of the Council's commitment to acting on climate change. Most recently, in June 2021, St John's C of E Primary School in Danbury was fitted with solar panels as part of the same project.

G: E-Scooter pilots, Essex

At the end of 2020 Essex County Council partnered with Spin, district, borough and city councils and Essex Police to trial the public use of electric scooters (e-scooters) as part of its Safer, Greener, Healthier transport campaign. The trial was managed in six locations, Basildon, Brentwood, Clacton, Chelmsford and Colchester, and use 'Geo-fencing' technology to stop e-scooters being used in areas they are not permitted. The ultimate aim is to provide alternative, sustainable travel for those wishing to make short car journeys, reducing the use of cars and hence harmful greenhouse gases. There has been over one million e-scooter trips to date across the county.

THEME 5: THE GREEN ECONOMY

R14 background:

The new opportunities from the Green Economy

New models of living and working are going to be necessary to reduce human impact on natural capital. The climate crisis will bring about fundamental changes to economies. This offers the opportunity for new forms of green jobs and economies through local innovation, collaboration and policy. There is work already underway in Essex to accelerate the transition to a green economy, and there will be opportunities and benefits for green infrastructure and sustainable growth.

By 2030, it is estimated that 16,000 new jobs will be created in Essex to support the low carbon and renewable energy sector and 13,000 new jobs will be created to support the retrofit development pipeline. But this is only the start, as a whole, jobs that have a positive and direct impact in the future tend to feature renewables, electric transport, energy efficiency or conservation. As more industries start to transform and make the transition to a low carbon, there will inevitably be more opportunities to create green industry jobs.

Aside from supporting an economic recovery post-pandemic, the creation of new jobs in clean electricity and low carbon heating solutions could enable the UK to reach its net-zero targets for 2050. We can rethink and reshape the employment landscape and place the environment at the core. A long-term investment plan in clean energy and green industries offers one of the best solutions for accelerated the post-pandemic economic recovery in the UK.

According to the Essex County Council Growth Sector Research (2021), 62% of local business see possible opportunities in 'Green Growth' but constraints are identified such as the lack of help and advice about what can work to transition to green economy, especially for SMEs, and the lack of staff with green skills. The Green Skills Infrastructure Review for Essex also identifies gaps and challenges to developing green skills in Essex. This is largely driven by; the lack of technical expertise to develop local policies; the limited amount of data available for the future supply and demand of green industries, making it difficult to predict skill needs; inconsistent understanding of the green skills opportunities amongst stakeholders, individuals or education institutions; a shortage of teaching staff with the required technical skills; businesses focusing on immediate need rather than looking to future skill needs; the cost of upskilling and creating educational programmes, and a lack of careers advice in schools around green sector jobs. It is estimated that 50% of all employees will need to reskill by 2025, primarily this refers to incorporating softer skills such as analytical and critical thinking or creativity, but it is important to consider these transferable skills alongside the development of green skills to ensure longevity, sustainability and continuous development of the workforce.

Effectively developing green skills is a pre-requisite to transitioning to a green economy, which will bring additional, and widespread economic and health benefits. For example, of the 85,000 homes in Essex, 67% of homes in Essex have a poor Energy Performance

THEME 5: THE GREEN ECONOMY

R14 background:

The new opportunities from the Green Economy

Certificate (EPC) of D or below, meaning residents are paying more to heat their homes as well as emitting more greenhouse gas emissions. In 2020, 12.7% of households in Greater Essex were defined as fuel poor, but latest projections suggest an estimated 21.5% of households in Essex are now at risk of fuel poverty in Essex due to the rise in cost of living and energy prices. Cold homes are linked to poor health, mental health, educational and financial implications for individuals as well as businesses so supporting green initiatives is vital for the future socio-economic and health outcomes for all residents.

A green transition will bring a reduction in emissions. Renewable sources of energy, once installed, have much lower running costs than fossil fuels, which already account for 21% of the UK's greenhouse gas emissions. Both domestic and non-domestic institutions such as hospitals, schools, hospitality establishments, offices, retail, storage, and community and recreational facilities all contribute to carbon emissions. Each could benefit in terms of lower costs from green economy transitions.

These widespread benefits cannot be achieved without first upskilling the workforce to build long-term capacity to implement innovations required to move towards net-zero, and to support the proposed strategic projects in Essex (e.g., the Garden Communities, Bradwell Power Station, Longfield Solar Farm, and the Freeports). One of the key challenges identified for Essex is how to draw together industry and training providers from across the diverse landscape of Essex to identify and demonstrate opportunities for businesses and individuals in the green job space.

THEME 5: THE GREEN ECONOMY

Recommendation R14

Develop communication links, resources and tools between industry leaders, educational institutions, and local communities to raise awareness of green skill opportunities by 2024.

The aim is to:

- improve understanding of the long-term benefits of transitioning to greener business models and offering green skills-based training to employees or prospective students.

- de-mystify the green employment market by communicating to residents what opportunities are available and how to gain relevant training and employment.

- showcase and upscale successful pilot projects to businesses and education institutes, such as the Retrofit pilot in Harlow and Tendring, to encourage a wider adoption of training courses and apprenticeships.

- increase capacity of courses and increase number of apprenticeships on offer that align to the future skills demand.

- develop a sustainable pool of skilled workers to aid the growth of the green sector across Essex.

This may be actioned by the creation of tools, such as prospectuses, skills directories, green career fairs / forums, that are easily accessible and promoted through appropriate routes for target residents, as well as being directly targeted at businesses with the potential to diversify or pivot into the green sector.

The emphasis should not only be on green technical skills, but it is important to raise awareness of the importance of problem solving and learning strategies as transferrable skills for green employment.

Partners that would need to be involved are, Essex County Council, primary and secondary schools, Further Education and Higher Education institutions, South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP), business forums (including small and medium sized enterprises), District/Borough and Parish Councils, Local Nature Partnership and the Essex Climate Action Commission. Due to the growing need of green jobs, this is seen as an immediate first step and should be actioned by 2024.

THEME 5: THE GREEN ECONOMY

Five exemplars of good practice

In Essex, there are already initiatives in underway that offer an opportunity to better connect relevant partners to develop a green employment base in Essex and hence promote opportunities for our local residents.

A: Race to Zero Campaign, by the High Level Climate Champions for Climate Action

'Race To Zero' is a global campaign to rally leadership and support from businesses, cities, regions, investors for a healthy, resilient, zero carbon recovery that prevents future threats, creates decent jobs, and unlocks inclusive, sustainable growth. Part of this is educating and mobilising a coalition of leading net-zero initiatives, representing 1,049 cities, 67 regions, 5,235 businesses, 441 of the biggest investors, and 1,039 Higher Education Institutions. These 'real economy' actors join 120 countries in the largest ever alliance committed to achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2050 at the latest. Collectively these actors now cover nearly 25% global carbon emissions and over 50% GDP. The objective is to build momentum around the shift to a decarbonized economy, thus supporting government action to implement the 2015 Paris Agreement. Race to Zero encourages both fast carbon emission reduction and carbon capture to achieve net-zero. The key target for each signatory is at least an 80% absolute reduction in emissions, with the remainder 20% being able to come from carbon capture and sequestration.

THEME 5: THE GREEN ECONOMY

Five exemplars of good practice

B: The Community Renewal Fund (CRF) in Essex: The Harlow and Tendring Retrofit Pipeline for Green Economic Growth

The Community Renewal Fund (CRF) is currently funding two pilots in Harlow and Tendring. These are supporting skills training, training for trainers, and pipeline development with local housing associations by raising awareness/knowledge. Parts of Tendring are amongst the most deprived coastal communities in the country.

Retrofit offers triple benefits, for people, the planet and local prosperity. It improves public health, reducing emissions and fuel poverty whilst also saving money for public services like the NHS (for every £1 spent on retrofit we save the NHS £0.42). Retrofit is a future growth area providing excellent opportunities to level up our communities with huge potential for increasing gross valued added (GVA). ECC formed a partnership with the retrofit academy to deliver a The Harlow and Tendring Retrofit Pipeline for Economic. Essex is becoming a retrofit pioneer and can be a future leader in this sector, creating a supply chain for the rest of East England. This is turn will generate a market opportunity to local businesses and creating new jobs. Through the upskilling programmes, of which ~250 training places have been made available plus 30 businesses are being supported to achieve the PAS 2030 certification, the aim is to train the future workforce in helping to achieve the 2050 decarbonisation target. The retrofit career path will close the gender gap in the construction sector and provide new careers as Retrofit Advisors, Retrofit coordinators, managers and assessors.

C: Engineering Construction Industry Training Board (ECITB): UK

The Engineering Construction Industry Training Board (ECITB) is an employer-led skills, standards and qualifications body for the development of the engineering construction workforce of the UK and reports to the Department for Education. In preparation for net-zero, the ECITB has curated a publicly available list of some of the current training options from national institutions to help a prospective workforce source training / upskilling opportunities such as:

- Bioenergy: Biofuels and Biorefining; Chemical Engineering with Biorefining; Biogas

- Carbon Capture: Climate Change: Carbon Capture and Storage; Carbon Capture, Utilisation and Storage (CCUS); Carbon Capture and Removal Methodology Advances and Current Status

- Carbon Management: Carbon Management for Business; Sustainable Growth Bootcamp.
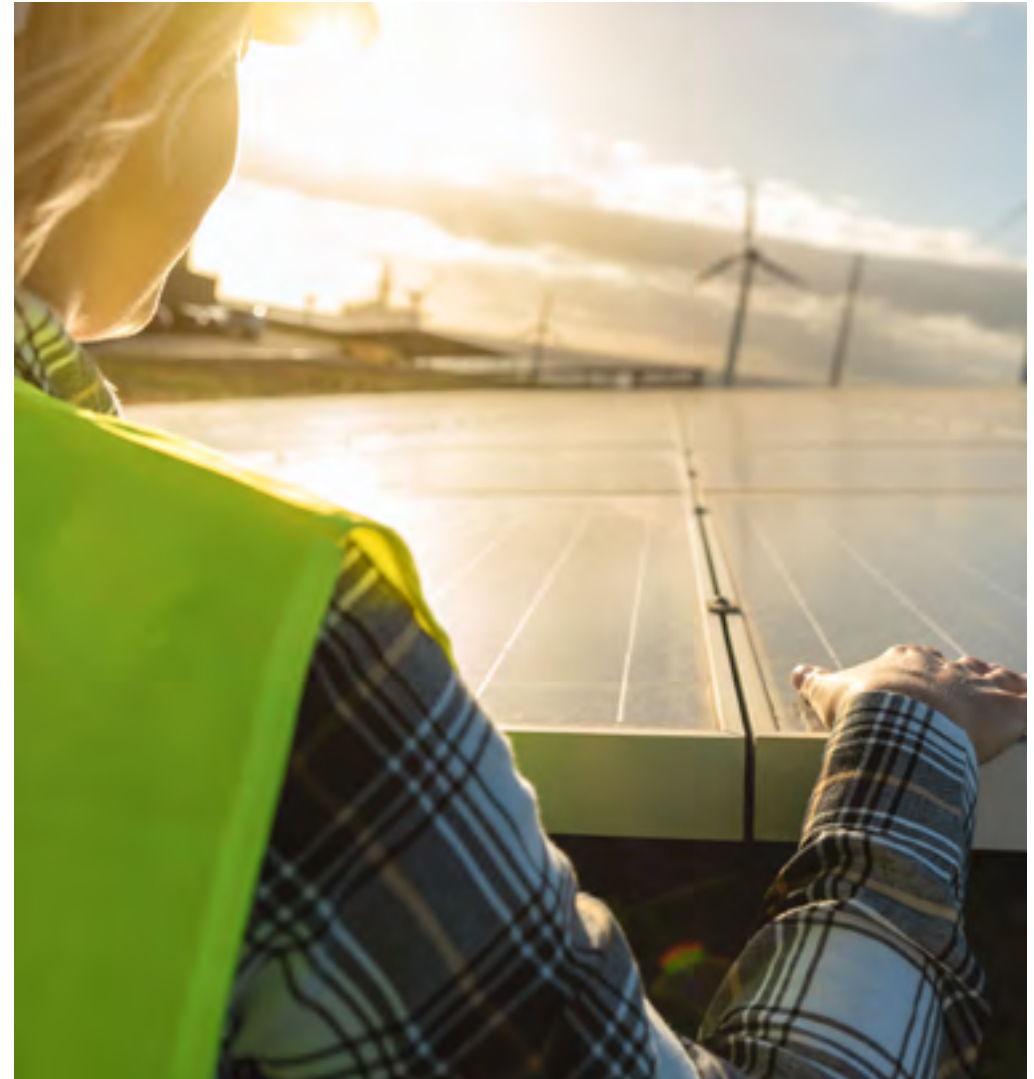
THEME 5: THE GREEN ECONOMY

Five exemplars of good practice

D: Tech East 100: Norfolk and Suffolk

Tech East is an organisation which aims to grow and amplify the tech economy in the East of England by developing a community to connect local authorities, education institutions, local businesses, and residents together to drive recognition and investment into tech economy solutions, create connections and collaborations to encourage innovative thinking, and accelerate digital awareness across sectors. Tech East actively promotes digital skills hubs, digital employment opportunities and good practice in the tech sector so the community can learn and grow.

E: Skills for Energy: East of England

Skills for Energy is an organisation devoted to developing the skills of current and future employees, educational capacity and connecting employers and educational institutions to work together towards improving skills in the Energy sector across the East of England. For example, Skills for Energy are supporting the development of University of East Anglia (UEA) energy engineering programme, providing advice and guidance for ex-military personnel to transfer skills for employment within the energy sector, and works with schools to provide resources for young people and raise awareness of future opportunities.

THEME 5: THE GREEN ECONOMY

R15 background:

Coastal Community and Seaside Economic Revival

Coastal villages and towns include many of the most beautiful, vibrant and historically important places in the region. They also have some of the worst health outcomes in England, with low life expectancy and high rates of many major diseases. The 2021 Annual Report of England's Chief Medical Officer (CMO) observed that the drivers of health challenges are more similar to each other than their nearest inland neighbours. The CMO called for a national strategy to address the repeated problems of health in coastal communities to complement local action. If the health problems of coastal communities are not tackled vigorously and systematically, then there would be a long tail of preventable ill-health which will grow worse as current populations age. Coastal communities also face an additional challenge: under current climate change expectations, sea level rise arising from warming water will threaten many physical and natural assets.

Most coastal and seaside communities have tended to rely on a single traditional industry to support the economy, and on domestic tourism. Both have left them open to risk. The long-term decline in tourism and fishing industries has impacted coastal communities, which have struggled to overcome economic decline. Coastal communities are also challenged by the poorer transport links and digital connectivity, due to a lack of investment and the challenges of coastal geographies. The unique architecture of the coast, a legacy from the Victorian and Edwardian era, and decades of decline has resulted in a poor quality housing stock of large properties.

Coastal and seaside communities tend to have the following features: i) high levels of deprivation, low-pay and low-skilled work; ii) above average working-age claimant levels; iii) lower levels of education and skills, and higher proportions of young people who do access Further Education or Higher Education; iv) lower life expectancy with a range of health inequalities reducing health and wellbeing; and vi) struggle to recruit and retain medical and teaching staff which reinforces and worsens inequalities.

The coastal and seaside communities of Essex have many unique assets. But they have over time become increasingly forgotten, isolated and deprived. Some coastal communities of Essex are repeatedly mentioned as being amongst the most economically-poor in the UK.

Over the past decade, there have been a number of key innovations to support coastal and seaside communities. The first Coastal Community Teams were set up in 2015, since when £1.5 million has been provided to 146 teams on the UK coast (average £10,000 each). Essex has CCTs in Harwich, Clacton, Maldon, Burnham-on-Couch, Shoeburyness, Southend, Leigh-on-Sea and Canvey Island. The Coastal Revival Fund Round 5 has allocated £3.8 million to 92 projects, and the Coastal Communities Fund Round 5 has awarded a further £50 million to 47 projects. None of this central support, though, has changed the structures of coastal economies, nor the health outcomes for residents. A

THEME 5: THE GREEN ECONOMY

R15 background:

Coastal Community and Seaside Economic Revival

new coordinated and integrated approach is needed for a new phase of place-based regeneration. Research has shown that areas across Britain that are struggling most with unemployment and economic risk as we move beyond the pandemic, have the highest opportunity for green job growth, by both creating new jobs within the green and blue sector and creating opportunities for existing businesses to diversify into the green space and thus upskilling those currently in employment. In Essex, focusing green and blue job growth in coastal communities could impact the overarching regeneration of these areas, by improving the wider economy, residents' financial prospects, and improving health outcomes such as physical and mental wellbeing. Overall, bringing a new lease of life to our coastal communities.

Recommendation R15

Establish 'Green and Blue Jobs Hubs' in all coastal areas of Essex to promote regeneration through the development of green sectors and green/blue employment.

There is a need to develop green and blue employment opportunities, and the skills to fill these, across Essex if we are going to reach the net-zero ambitions. This includes job opportunities that are both directly green or blue in nature and those that are enablers to the green and blue economy. By focusing efforts on creating educational programmes to develop green skills in the coastal areas of Essex that have the infrastructure, population and thus opportunity to benefit, such as Harwich, Clacton, Tendring, Southend, this could aim kickstart wider regeneration by:

- supporting existing businesses in these areas that are already investing in the green and blue economy gain access to a local employment pool to maintain a sustainable business model;

- attracting green businesses to the areas and encouraging diversification of existing businesses to the green space. Bringing new jobs and educational opportunities into the economy which would help improve the overall economic, social and health outcomes of these areas;

- preparing our coastal communities to maintain pace with the ever changing landscape of the green and blue economy;

- working to increase and celebrate pride of place, local identity and improve environmental and natural assets, which would work to attract business and commercial interests beyond green sectors, such as improving coastal tourism or raised awareness of the importance of the blue economy;

- liaising and linking with the new Centre for Coastal Communities established at the University of Essex.

Utilising the need for green and blue jobs will help to tackle the inequalities often felt in coastal communities, working towards better outcomes for all and helping to position Essex as a green hub for innovation and regeneration.

THEME 5: THE GREEN ECONOMY

Two exemplars of good practice

Coastal cases from Folkestone, Colchester and Margate, and Dale Bay show some promise in helping coastal regeneration. These case studies provide an example of how targeted investment which develop job opportunities can impact wider coastal regeneration. There are already projects in the pipeline that could help to focus green jobs in and near Essex's coastal areas, such as the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community, Freeport East and the North Falls and Five Estuaries Offshore Windfarm, that provide good opportunities to develop a skilled employment pool in these coastal areas.

A: Folkestone Town Heritage: Kent County Council

Folkestone Town Heritage Initiative is a partnership between Kent County Council, Folkestone and Hythe District Council and The Creative Foundation. The initiative was developed following a successful bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund, securing a total of £1.3m in grant funding for the project to enhance the old town area of Folkestone, matched with £400,000 from Kent County Council and £100,000 from Folkestone and Hythe District Council. The goal of the project was to grow Folkestone as a cultural destination, building collaborative relationships with hotels, transport providers, and other visitor attractions in the area, and to create the community and ecology of a dynamic visitor economy.

THEME 5: THE GREEN ECONOMY

Two exemplars of good practice

B: Firstsite gallery, Colchester, Essex

The tourism industry in Britain's seaside towns has been in decline since the mid-1970s when increasing competition from newly developed holiday destinations and changes in the dynamics of the tourism market made the traditional week-long British domestic seaside family holiday obsolete. Many seaside towns have attempted to regenerate their local areas through diversifying to attract more cultural tourism. For example, Margate's 'Turner Contemporary' gallery opened in 2011, and in its first two years attracted over one million visitors, which has helped to support the local economy and create more jobs.

In Essex, Firstsite gallery in Colchester, opened in 2011, has evolved the role that culture plays in the community. In 2021, Firstsite became the Art Fund Museum of the year. The mission is to improve the wellbeing and life chances of residents in East Anglia via innovation, ingenuity and creativity. To do this Firstsite engages directly with local partners and the local community to ensure every aspect of their programmes are co-created to truly benefit the community. This includes tackling challenges such as racism, diversity and inclusivity, promoting local heritage, championing the needs of children and young people through its Holiday Fun programme which has supported over 400 families from some of the most deprived areas of Colchester. By 2020, Firstsite had matched the initial public investment with at least £17m return on investment, of which a large part goes back into the community via providing jobs, drawing in more investment, and providing much needed cultural activities to improve the wellbeing of communities. Thinking innovatively about regenerating economies by focusing on cultural activities can positively impact the local economy and employment, and social capital for the wellbeing of communities.

Photo credit: Jayne Lloyd

5. CALL TO ACTION: HOW THE ESSEX RENEWAL PROJECT RECOMMENDATIONS SHOULD BE IMPLEMENTED

This report has outlined recommendations the Commissioners from the Essex Renewal Project believe should be prioritised to secure renewal, improve outcomes for people, the community and natural assets of Essex, and to create new opportunities for regeneration and green growth.

These recommendations speak together of the need for systemic change, and therefore will require collaboration both within and between public services, voluntary and third sector organisations, small to large private businesses and amongst individuals and communities.

These recommendations also aim to build social, natural, human, cultural and physical capital in Essex, thus increasing resilience and capacity for creativity for many years to come. A regenerative of this sort will heal rather than steal the future. It requires collective and committed effort.

The Essex Renewal Commissioners invite discussion and alignment of ownership for each of the recommendations to action. For many priorities this will require cross-organisation ownership and the establishment of working groups or expansion of existing groups.

The Essex Partnership Board (EPB) is ideally suited to coordinate these actions. We suggest the following actions to mobilise these recommendations across Greater Essex:

- The Essex Partnership Board to coordinate actions across system partners. Identifying organisations to work together towards recommendation goals and to create a plan for action.

- The Essex Partnership Board to review and monitor progress by acting as the steering board to ensure mobilisation of actions and institutions across public, private and voluntary sectors

- The Essex Partnership Board to prepare a statement after one year that can be made public; this will detail the responses to each recommendation and what the next steps will be. We suggest this is conducted on a yearly basis to 2030 due to the long-term nature of the challenges set out here.

The progress towards renewal for the county is the responsibility of all partners, organisations and communities, and only by collaborating effectively will we be able to make substantial improvements to the short and long-term outcomes for all Essex residents.

REFERENCES

3. Principles and Values for Renewal

Civil Society Futures (2018) 'Let's Talk about Race: Civil Society and race equality'

Civil Society Futures (2018) 'Civil Society in England: It's current state and future opportunity'

Company Formations (2021) 'Company incorporations in Essex in 2021 reflect wider UK performance'

DFID (1997) Eliminating World Poverty: A Challenge for the 21st Century, White paper on International Development

Essex Climate Action Commission: Website: www.essexclimate.org.uk

Essex Year of Reading Project Directory (2022)

Hawken P. 2021. Regeneration: Ending the Climate Crisis in One Generation. Penguin, London

HM Government (2022) 'Levelling Up the United Kingdom: Executive Summary'

Ipsos MORI (2020) 'Now What? Climate Change and Coronavirus'

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2021) 'Building trust to Reinforce Democracy'

Polman P and Winston A. 2021. Net Positive: How Courageous Companies Thrive by Giving More than They Take. Harvard Business Review Press, Boston.

Superfast Essex (2022) 'Digital Strategy for Essex'

Transport East (2022) 'Transport Strategy'

United Nations: Department of Economic and Social Affairs' (2021) 'Trust in public institutions: Trends and implications for economic security'

Young Minds Survey (2021) 'The Impact of Covid-19 on young people with mental health needs'

4.1 Social Justice

Broadband Stakeholder Groups, Communications Chamber 'Covid-19 & accelerated digitalisation: implications for broadband'

Carnegie UK Trust (2020) Recognising the value of community assets

Chatterjee. HJ, Mugal R, Thomson L J (2021) 'Community COVID: How can community assets address health inequalities'

Civil Society Futures (2018) 'The story of our times: shifting power, bridging divides, transforming society'

CL: Institute for Education (2020) 'Schoolwork in lockdown: new evidence on the epidemic of educational poverty'

Connecting Cambridgeshire, website: www.connectingcambridgeshire.co.uk

Education Policy Institute (2022) 'Report to Essex Education Task Force'

Elgar. F et al. (2020) 'The trouble with trust: Time-series analysis of social capital, income inequality, and COVID-19 deaths in 84 countries'

Essex County Council (2018) 'Essex Libraries'

Essex County Council (2019) 'Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2019 full report'

Essex County Council (2021) 'Digital exclusion'

Essex County Council (2022) 'Digital Strategy for Essex'

Essex County Council (2022) 'Trust in Public Institutions' Essex Residents Panel

REFERENCES

Essex County Council (2022) 'Young People's reflections on coping with the Covid-19 pandemic'

Everyday Democracy (2010) 'Communities Creating Racial Equity: Ripple Effects of Dialogues to Change'

GTRSB (2020) 'The Gypsy, Traveller, Roma, Showmen, and Boater's Pledge for Schools' Pledge for Schools report

Hayanga B, Stafford M, Becares L. Ethnic Inequalities in Healthcare Use and Care Quality among People with Multiple Long-Term Health Conditions Living in the United Kingdom: A Systematic Review and Narrative Synthesis. International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health. 2021;18(23).

Heselwood. L & Pritchard. J (2019) 'Inclusive by default: Reform Digital Services'

Kadambari. S and Vanderslott. S (2021) 'Lessons about COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy among minority ethnic people in the UK'

Land of the Fanns (2016) 'Landscape Conservation Action Plan'

Level Up Laptops by Sopro, website: http://leveluplaptops.co.uk

Lloyds Bank (2021) 'UK Consumer Digital Index 2021'

Mitchell. S. (Civil Society Futures) Belfast Friendship Club 'Belfast is welcoming refugees with a radical new approach: speaking to them'

National Immunisation Management system data (accessed 24th February)

NHS Digital (2022) 'Appointments in General Practice, April 2022'

OECD (2021) 'An Updated OECD Framework on drivers of trust in public institutions to meet current and future challenges'

Office for National Statistics (2021) 'Internet Users'

Office for National Statistics (2022) 'Home working and spending during Covid-19 Pandemic, Great Briton: April 2020 to January 2022'

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2020) 'Trust in Government'

Oxford Consultants for Social Inclusion and Essex County Council (2020) 'Assessing the strength of communities in Essex: the Essex Community Needs Index 2020

PatientsLikeMe website: www.patientslikeme.com

Public Health England (2015) A guide to community-centred approaches for health and wellbeing

Public Health England (2020) 'Improving Access to Green Space: A new review for 2020'

Race Disparity Unit (2021) 'Final Report on progress to address Covid-19 Health Inequalities: Appendix C: Ethnic Minority experiences of Covid-19'

Scadding, J., Sweeney, S. and Friends Families and Travellers (2018) 'Digital Exclusion in Gypsy and Traveller communities in the United Kingdom'

Stone, E. and Good Things Foundation (2021) 'Digital Exclusion and Health Inequalities'

Surrey Coalition of Disabled People: Tech to Community Connect Project, website: https://surreycoalition.org.uk/tech-to-community-connect-project

The Essex Map, website: www.essexmap.co.uk

The Health Foundation (2022) 'The continuing impact of COVID-19 on health inequalities'

REFERENCES

The Marmot Review (2010). Fair Society, Healthy Lives.

The Sutton Trust (2021) 'Remote Learning: The Digital Divide'

UK Government (2021) 'Culture and Community: Visits to the Natural Environment'

Watts. G (2020) 'Covid-19 and the digital divide in the UK'

Worpole. K. (2021) 'Covid and the rise of the non-place'

YouGov (2021) 'Who do BAME Britons trust when it comes to Covid-19?'

4.2 Young People

Armitage, H. et al: Nesta (2020) What Makes for Effective Youth Mentoring Programmes: A rapid evidence summary'

Chambers, N., Percy, C. and Rogers, M. (2020) 'Disconnected: Career aspirations and jobs in the UK'

Children's Commissioner (2021) 'The Big Ask'

Essex County Council (2021) 'Covid-19 Impact Assessment: Education and Skills'

Essex County Council (2022) 'Young People's reflections on coping with the Covid-19 pandemic'

Friedman et. Al (2017) 'Social Mobility, the class pay gap, and Intergenerational Worklessness: New Insights from the Labour Force Study'

Gatsby Charitable Foundation (2014) 'Good Career Guidance'

Greenbank, P., & Hepworth, S. Improving the career decision-making behaviour of working class students. Journal of European Industrial Training, 32(7), 492–509, 2008.

Hooley, T, Matheson, J. and Watts, A.G., The Sutton Trust (2014) 'Advancing Ambitions: The role of career guidance in supporting social mobility'

Millennium Kids: 2022 Youth Led Citizens Assembly on Climate Change, website: www.millenniumkids.com.au/citizens-assembly

Ministry of Youth Development: Youth Participation in Decision making, website: www.myd.govt.nz/working-with-young-people/youth-participation-in-decision-making

Morris, M. Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2015) 'Supporting ethnic minority young people from education into work'

Percy, C. and Tanner, E. (2021) 'Careers Hubs: pilot of place-based school improvement network in England'

Scottish Government (2021) 'Decision-making: children and young people's participation'

STEM Learning, website: www.stem.org.uk

Strategic Development Network: The Education Landscape resource: https://educationlandscape.org.uk/the-landscape

The Careers and Enterprise Company (2016) 'Effective employer mentoring: Lessons from evidence'

The Careers and Enterprise Company. Moments of Choice How education outcomes data can support better informed career decisions: A Research Paper, 2016.

UK Gov (2022) 'Opportunity for all: Strong schools with great teachers for your child'

UK Gov (2022) 'Skills Bill becomes law' website: www.gov.uk/government/news/skills-bill-becomes-law

REFERENCES

University of Essex (2018) Catalyst: 'Young Colchester: Life Chances, Assets and Anti-Social Behaviour'

Young Essex Assembly, website: https://youth.essex.gov.uk/young-people/young-essex-assembly

Young Minds (2021) 'Impact Report: 2019/20'

4.3 Community Well-being

Active Essex Local Delivery Pilot, website: www.activeessex.org/local-delivery-pilot

Bromley by Bow Centre 'The bonds with our friends are strong': video link: https://vimeo.com/377317801

Bromley by Bow Centre, website: www.bbbc.org.uk/about-us/our-stories

Centre for Ageing Better website: https://ageing-better.org.uk/uk-network-age-friendly-communities

Dayson, C., Macmillan, R., Paine A E. and Sanderson, E. (2017) 'Third sector capacity building : the institutional embeddedness of supply', Voluntary Sector Review, 8(2): 149-168.

Dig-It: Nurturing soil and self: website: http://dig-it.org.uk/what-we-do

Essex County Council (2017) 'Evaluation of Social Prescribing Models across Essex'

Essex County Council (2020) 'Volunteering Insight project'

Essex County Council (2021) ' Covid-19 Impact Assessment: Families'

Essex County Council (2022) 'Essex Future Library Services Strategy'

Essex County Council (2022) 'JSNA Health Outcomes – Length and Quality of life Dashboard access: https://data.essex.gov.uk/dataset/2ndz8/jsna-health-outcomes-length-and-quality-of-life-dashboard

Essex County Council (2022) 'JSNA Health Outcomes – Mental Health Dashboard' access: https://data.essex.gov.uk/dataset/23r73/jsna-health-outcomes-mental-health-dashboard

Essex County Council (2022) 'Essex Residents Survey 2022'

GrantNav 360 (website accessed June 2022): https://grantnav.threesixtygiving.org

Hamelin Trust: Roots & Shoots: Website: https://livewellsouthend.com/kb5/southendonsea/directory/service.page?id=liYKPDgR6vY

JLL (2020) 'UK Care Homes: An opportunity to build communities and invest capital'

Kirk-Wade. E (2022) 'House of Commons: UK Disability statistics: Prevalence and life expectancy'

Macmillan, R., (2021) "A surprising turn of events - episodes towards a renaissance of civil society infrastructure in England"

Mayor of London: London Assembly (2021) website: www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/communities/civil-society/civil-society-roots

National Academy for Social Prescribing, website: https://socialprescribingacademy.org.uk

NHS England, website "What is Social Prescribing?": www.england.nhs.uk/personalisedcare/social-prescribing

Office for National Statistics (2021) Population and Household estimates, England and Wales: Census 2012

REFERENCES

ORCHID Social Prescribing Heat Maps website accessed July 2022: https://orchid.phc.ox.ac.uk/index.php/social-prescribing-heat-maps

Oxford Consultants for Social Inclusion and Essex County Council (2020) 'Assessing the strength of communities in Essex: the Essex Community Needs Index 2020

Realdania (2020) '10 examples of new Danish: Cohousing Communities for Seniors'

Renaisi (2021) 'Civil Society Roots 3: Identifying cold spots'

RIBA (2018) 'Age-Friendly Housing: Future design for older people'

Royal Institute of British Architects. 2018. Age-Friendly Housing: future design for older people

Social Prescribing Observatory (2021) 'Who is and isn't being referred to social prescribing?'

Talk London 'Building Stronger Communities' website: www.london.gov.uk/talk-london/building-strong-communities

Tendring, Basildon and Castle Point have wards which rank amongst the 10% most deprived in the country (IMD via ONS, 2019).

The Extra Care Charitable Trust website: www.extracare.org.uk

The Green Light Trust: website: www.greenlighttrust.org/Pages/Category/our-guiding-principle

Worpole, K., (2013) Contemporary Library Architecture: a planning and design guide, Routledge: London.

Ziemer, J. (2020) 'Covid-19 and the voluntary sector'

4.4 The Climate and Nature Crises

Britain Thinks, Essex County Council and Essex Climate Action Commission (2021) 'Essex Climate Action Research'

Climate Assembly UK (2019) 'The path to net zero: Climate Assembly UK Final report'

Climate Change Commission (2020) 'Sixth Carbon Budget'

Demski C (2021) Net zero public engagement and participation: A research note (Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy)

Dogger Bank Windfarm; website: https://doggerbank.com

Essex Climate Action Commission (2021) 'Net Zero: Making Essex Carbon Neutral'

Essex Climate Action Commission: Website: www.essexclimate.org.uk

Essex County Council (2022) 'Essex Residents Survey 2022'

Figure 4: Pathway to NET-Zero www.theccc.org.uk/publication/sixth-carbon-budget/ and TBI analysis

Institute for Government: Involve (2021) Public Engagement and net zero: How government should involve citizens in climate policy making'

Office for National Statistics (2021) 'How has lockdown changed our relationship with nature?'

Oxford Consultants for Social Inclusion and Essex County Council (2020) 'Assessing the strength of communities in Essex: the Essex Community Needs Index 2020

Parliament.uk 'Growing back better: putting nature and net zero at the heart of the economic recovery'

REFERENCES

Scottish Government (2020) 'The role of public sector bodies in tackling climate change: consultation analysis'

Groundwork (2021) Out of Bounds: Equity in Access to Urban Nature

Surfers Against Sewage (2022) 'The Plastic Free Communities Impact Report'

Welsh Government (2015) Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015: Essentials Guide'

World Economic Forum (2022) 'Denmark is building an artificial island to provide enough wind power for the entire country'

Zero Waste Scotland (2022) 'Food waste whole school teaching resources'

4.5 The Green Economy

Chief Medical Officer, Prof. Chris Whitty (2021) 'Independent report: Chief Medical Officer's annual report 2021: health and coastal communities'

Community Renewal Fund, website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-community-renewal-fund-prospectus

Creative Foundation: Culture Kent: Folkstone Case study: culture-kent-case-study-2-folkestone.pdf (wordpress.com)

Equity Consulting on behalf of the Local Government Association (2020) 'Local green jobs – accelerating a sustainable economic recovery'

Essex Climate Action Commission (2021) 'Net Zero: Making Essex Carbon Neutral'

Essex County Council (2021) Written evidence to parliament committee re. built environment, access: https://committees.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/26513/pdf

Essex County Council (2022) 'Fuel Poverty April 2022 and beyond'

Essex County Council (2022) 'Joint Strategic Needs Assessment: Income'

Green Alliance (2021) 'Jobs for Green Economy: Levelling up through Nature'

Mace (2022) 'Essex County Council, Green Skills Infrastructure review for Essex'

Qa Research and Ortus Economic Research (2021) 'Essex County Council, Growth Sector Research'

Retrofit Works, news article 'Economic and Planetary Recovery through Retrofit', website: https://retrofitworks.co.uk/research/economic-and-planetary-recovery-through-retrofit/

RSA (2018) Blog: 'How Food systems in the public sector can lead the way in being environmentally, socially and financially sustainable'

Skills for Energy website: https://skillsforenergy.co.uk

Tech East 100 website: https://techeast.com/te100

UK Gov Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (2019) '2019 UK Greenhouse Gas Emissions'

United Nations Climate Change, Race to Zero, website: https://unfccc.int/climate-action

World Economic Forum (2020) 'These are the top 10 skills of tomorrow – and how long it takes to learn them'