

# The Essex Climate Action Commission:

# Calls-to-Action



Essex Climate Action Commission  
**Powering positive change**



## **Ensure everyone in Essex has a home that's fit for the future:**

Ensure all new homes granted planning permission are built to a healthy homes (passive house) standard to keep bills low, provide a healthier living environment and reduce pressure on the energy grid.<sup>1</sup>



## **Champion water efficiency:**

Ensure all new homes, schools and other developments are built to the highest standards of water efficiency, helping to safeguard our water supply.<sup>2</sup>



## **Champion sustainable land and water management:**

Leverage the strength of Essex farmers and wildlife sectors, building on farm clusters and charities, to deliver landscape-scale projects that support water supply and local food production, reduce flood risk, expand biodiversity and create new jobs.



## **Expand green space and unlock investment in nature:**

Deliver the Local Nature Recovery Strategy to expand the networks of natural places in Essex, ensuring that all people can access local green space and coastal areas. This will lead to better health, cleaner air and increased protection for homes and businesses from flooding, water scarcity and overheating.<sup>3</sup>



## **Expand innovations in local energy systems:**

Use Essex's rich potential for renewable and local energy to build a clean energy system that supports economic growth and delivers lower bills, energy security, secure jobs and benefits to communities.<sup>4</sup>



## **End fuel poverty:**

Deliver the Warm Homes Plan and tackle fuel poverty by increasing energy efficiency in existing homes. This will put money in people's pockets, create jobs and support growth, whilst reducing pressure on the NHS and social care system and on the electricity grid.



## **Invest in skills to create new jobs:**

Champion inward investment by equipping people with the right skills for key growth sectors: sustainable construction, retrofit, clean-tech and regenerative agriculture.



## **Support communities doing it for themselves:**

Build on the Commission's track record of engaging, empowering and working with a diverse range of communities on a wide range of issues (green space, biodiversity, affordable food, community energy), fulfilling local needs and delivering better health and improved quality of life for all.



### Invest in rural and active transport:

Improve bus services (identified as a priority by young people) and accelerate electric vehicle charging rollout in rural areas to increase access to services, jobs and education.<sup>5</sup> Improve the transport network to support active travel and cleaner air, boost town centre footfall and create safer, more liveable communities.



### Champion sustainability in schools and colleges:

Support learning and initiatives in schools and colleges, alongside apprenticeships in clean, sustainable industries, to create more job opportunities for young people and ensure they have the skills they need to access them.



### Accelerate the shift to a circular economy:

Foster cross-sector collaboration to reduce waste at source and deliver resource efficiency and circularity, creating jobs and economic growth. Invest in education, behaviour change and grassroots activities to enable reuse, repair and recycling to build a circular and fair economy, creating more jobs.



### Invest in the creation of 'third spaces':

Prioritise the creation of safe, accessible, public green and indoor spaces where people can spend time together, to support health and wellbeing, reduce youth crime rates and develop a sense of belonging and civic identity.

## Background

- Essex's geography makes it particularly vulnerable to the impacts of a changing climate that already features greater weather extremes, rising seas, increased inland floods and subsidence, drinking water scarcity, and rising air pollution. These impacts are detrimentally affecting peoples' lives, the delivery of public services, and the success of businesses.
- The Essex Climate Action Commission is an independent cross-party body of public, private and community leaders.<sup>6</sup> The Commission was set up by Essex County Council in 2020 and tasked with advising on how to address climate and nature recovery in Essex.
- In its first major **report**, the Commission made more than 100 recommendations focused on improving the lives of people of Essex. These centred on:
  - » lower household bills from improved energy and water efficiency, with upgraded homes, solar panels, heat pumps, and new housing built to high quality and energy efficient standards;
  - » improved public health from warmer, healthier homes, increased walking, cycling and public transport, cleaner air and more access to green spaces;
  - » development of skills and jobs in renewable energy, construction and agricultural sectors, which in Essex are dominated by small and medium-sized businesses with the potential for fast growth.
- Essex has won several national prizes for its innovative approach and delivery. A July 2024 **report** documented 64 major impacts of the work supported by the Commission on energy, land use and nature, transport, housing and planning, community engagement, waste and water, and economic growth.
- Climate action in Essex has helped attract new inward investment over 2020-2025. Further public and private investment is anticipated for schemes addressing renewable energy, biodiversity, water, regenerative agriculture and coastal protection.

## Endnotes

- 1 85,000 of these homes are already committed and expanding this to all the 300,000 homes needed by 2055 will strengthen local supply chains, support local businesses and provide quality construction jobs.
- 2 Essex is one of the most water-stressed counties in the UK, and so adoption of new homes standards (85l/p/d) will help to safeguard the supply of clean water for residents, businesses and the agricultural sector.
- 3 Natural places include parks, tree-lined streets, green walking/cycling links, coastal habitats
- 4 Parishes and local authorities are already developing and supporting community energy groups.
- 5 Improvements to bus services to focus on frequency, reliability, integrated ticketing, reduced fares for young people.
- 6 The Commission is chaired by Professor Jules Pretty OBE DL. All Commissioners work voluntarily and are listed at: [www.essexclimate.org.uk/our-commissioners](http://www.essexclimate.org.uk/our-commissioners). A summary of the Commission's activities and impacts is published in a recent blog by the Chair: [www.essexclimate.org.uk/what-is-the-essex-climate-action-commission](http://www.essexclimate.org.uk/what-is-the-essex-climate-action-commission).