



Essex County Council

Environment and Climate Action

Essex Climate Action Plan

(2021 – 2028)

Countryside in Elsenham, Uttlesford



Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Commitments	6
3. Action Within ECC	8
4. A Just Transition to a Green Economy	24
5. Land Use and Green Infrastructure	36
6. Energy	44
7. Built Environment	54
8. Transport	62
9. Waste	80
10. Community Engagement	86
11. Evaluation and Monitoring	98
12. Summary Finance Schedule	103
13. Completed Initiatives	104

1. Introduction

This is the third Climate Action Plan to be published by Essex County Council. It covers the period 2025/26 through to 2027/28, as Essex County Council traverses a period of significant change as a result of Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation (please see the next page for more detail). The original Climate Action Plan was published in November 2021 and updated in 2023.

We have made great strides since the original Climate Action Plan was published. This new plan focuses on programmes of work which are already underway and are set to continue beyond 2025, as well as setting out new initiatives which are building on progress to date. We are committed to both the responsible management of resources and effective support for our residents, communities and businesses.

This Climate Action Plan (like the previous ones) is in response to recommendations made by the **Essex Climate Action Commission** (the Commission) in the report **Net Zero: Making Essex Carbon Neutral**. The recommendations were endorsed by Essex County Council in full in November 2021. The Commission was established as an independent advisory body to support Essex on its journey to tackle climate change, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to build a climate resilient county.

Essex County Council (ECC) recognises that it cannot tackle the environmental and climate challenges we face alone. This document details projects which ECC is managing both directly and in concert with partners to drive effective progress against the Commission's recommendations.

By producing this new Climate Action Plan, we are able to reflect on the significant changes at regional and national levels in the last few years, including new policies and priorities. This goes beyond climate and environment and includes the local government reform agenda, with Essex identified as a priority area for both devolution and local government reorganisation. This will fundamentally change the shape of local government, the powers that local authorities can manage on behalf of their communities and how public services are delivered.



What is Devolution?

Devolution is the transfer of powers and funding from UK government to local authority level. It is important because decisions are made closer to local people, communities and businesses they affect.

Devolution will provide greater freedoms and flexibilities for councils to work more effectively to improve public services and outcomes for residents and businesses.

What does this mean for Essex?

It was announced in February 2025 that Greater Essex (the areas represented by Essex County Council, Southend-on-Sea City Council and Thurrock Council), had been accepted onto the government's Devolution Priority Programme. Essex will establish a Mayoral Combined County Authority (MCCA) in 2026, with a mayoral election to be held in May 2026.

What is Local Government Reorganisation?

Local Government Reorganisation aims to simplify local authority structures – making it clear who is responsible for services.

What does this mean for Essex?

At present, in the Essex County Council area, services are split between the County Council, and 12 city, borough or district council in a 'two-tier' arrangement. Alongside this, there are two unitary authorities: Southend and Thurrock, so a total 15 local authorities.

Reorganisation will see all 15 councils replaced with a much smaller number of all-purpose 'unitary' authorities, which are responsible for all local authority services in their area. These unitary authorities will work with the new Mayoral authority.

At the time of writing (September 2025), across Greater Essex, a number of business cases are being prepared setting out options for the number of new unitary authorities in Essex. Government will consider all submissions and make a decision in 2026.

What does this mean for work across Climate and Environment?

Devolution and Local Government reorganisation present significant opportunities from a climate and environment perspective. A Mayoral Combined County Authority (MCCA) will provide the strong, long-term leadership needed to drive positive change.

The **Devolution White Paper** outlines Climate and Environment as one of the core competencies for MCCAs (for the first time). This will provide Greater Essex with a strong mandate for local, place-based leadership to unlock the opportunities from the transition to a low carbon, clean power economy; ensure our natural environment is protected from the impacts of climate change; and to enhance the environment for the benefit of residents, visitors, businesses and future generations.

The Mayoral Combined County Authority would leverage new powers, responsibilities and funding, developing its role as a convenor to coordinate delivery across diverse policy areas. There is a key opportunity to embed both decarbonisation and climate resilience into the heart of strategic policy and planning at the Greater Essex scale, supporting sustained, resilient economic growth. This provides the opportunity for a cohesive vision for Essex, providing an integrated framework across economic growth and investment, skills development, spatial planning for housing development, planning for transport, energy and nature recovery.

The Mayoral Combined County Authority can play a key role in tackling the impacts of climate change, building resilience and tackling nature emergencies at the local and regional level. Greening the county and prioritising nature-based solutions is key to increasing our climate resilience, adapting to a changing climate, as well as supporting nature recovery. One example of the opportunities available from devolution is that the MCCA will play a 'leadership role in Local Nature Recovery Strategies, through convening partnerships and coordinating action, funding and delivery'.

The new powers and strategic oversight which come with devolution will, fundamentally, allow climate and environment to sit not only within the spheres of enhancing the natural environment and tackling climate change, but help to unlock the economic value and potential across a number of areas. This includes clean energy production (GB Energy predicts 56,000 jobs in the East of England); skills development fit for a green economy; and the creation of thousands of jobs associated with green jobs and services, such as retrofit and renewable energy.

2. Commitments

Essex County Council's organisation strategy, **Everyone's Essex**, (ref: FP/172/10/21) sets out four key strategic aims for the council, which are central to our undertakings:

Key for Contributions to Strategic Commitments

Strong, Inclusive & Sustainable Economy

-  Good Jobs
-  Levelling Up the Economy
-  Infrastructure
-  Future Growth & Investment
-  Green Growth

High Quality Environment

-  Net Zero
-  Transport & Built Environment
-  Minimise Waste
-  Levelling Up the Environment
-  Green Communities

Health, Wellbeing & Independence For All Ages

-  Levelling Up Health
-  Healthy Lifestyles
-  Promoting Independence
-  Place-based Working
-  Carers

A Great Place For Children & Families To Grow

-  Education Outcomes
-  Levelling Up Outcomes for Families
-  Family Resilience & Stability
-  Safety
-  Outcomes for Vulnerable Children

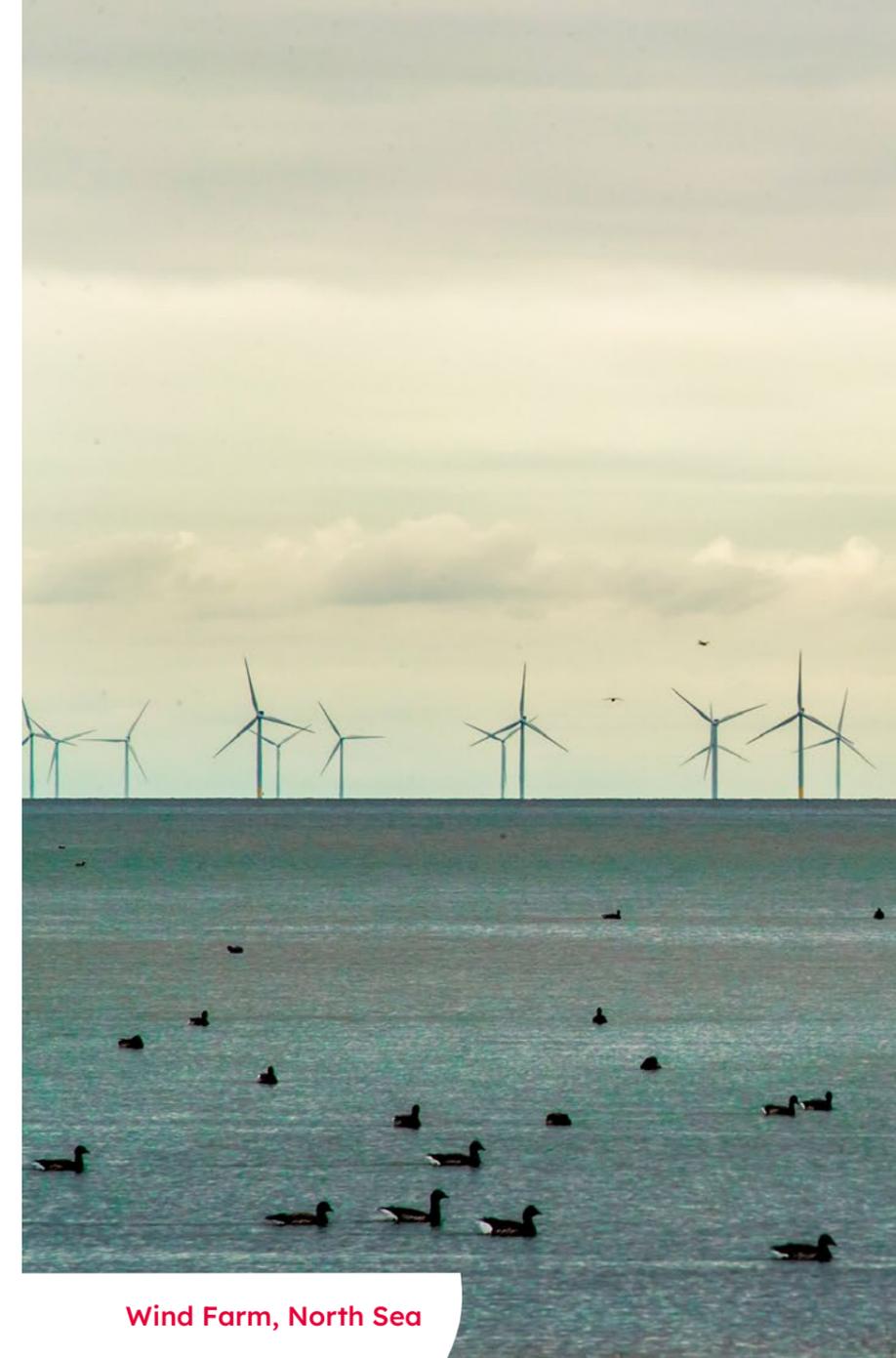
One of Essex County Council's four strategic aims is a core commitment to a High Quality Environment.

This includes objectives to:

1. Deliver on net zero targets
2. To deliver a step change in sustainable travel, helping to support our transition to net zero and climate resilient housing developments
3. To reduce waste and deliver a more circular economy
4. To work with communities and businesses by providing advice and support to enable them to take action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and build their own climate resilience
5. To help our communities enjoy a high-quality environment, by making them more resilient against flooding, heat stress and water shortages, by enhancing our county's green infrastructure and reducing air pollution

In addition, the separate strategic aim in Everyone's Essex of a Strong, Inclusive and Sustainable Economy includes a commitment to green growth in Essex. This encompasses developing Essex as a centre for innovation, supporting new technologies and business models to prepare and enable our economy to transition to net zero and securing green jobs for the future by ensuring we have the right local skills and drawing in investment opportunities.

ECC is therefore committed to ambitious climate action and is embedding this across every aspect of the council's service delivery. We also recognise that the delivery of climate action also meets other ECC strategic aims. This is set out in the following sections of the Climate Action Plan.



Wind Farm, North Sea

3. Action Within ECC

ECC is committed to tackling its own greenhouse gas emissions and building its resilience as an organisation. We measure our greenhouse gas emissions (scope 1 and 2) to understand our environmental impact and identify opportunities for reduction.

Furthermore, we measure the impact of our climate action plan via an international benchmark – CDP (formerly the ‘Carbon Disclosure Project’). **CDP** reviews climate action with regards to decarbonisation and climate resilience. This means we provide information about our progress against our published Climate Action Plan and Climate Adaptation Framework. Essex County Council has been awarded an A-rating for action on climate change for three years in a row since 2022 – the only UK county council to achieve this top rating – and we will continue to benchmark our performance each year.

3.1 Levelling Up & Inclusive Growth

A key organisational priority is continuing to widen access to opportunities for residents and communities across Essex, building on the success of programmes such as the Levelling Up Essex agenda, which is focused on priority places and cohorts of people that face the greatest barriers to success. This work now has a stronger focus on inclusive growth and boosting the economy in Essex and ensuring that all residents in Essex can access opportunities, in particular, good jobs. The challenges that face many residents in Essex can be compounded by climate change. Evidence shows us that certain socio-economic groups are more likely to be affected by climate change. For example, they may struggle to access high-quality, healthy homes and green spaces, or be less able to respond and adapt to changes in weather patterns.



Essex County Council has been awarded an A-rating for action on climate change for three years in a row since 2022 – the only UK county council to achieve this top rating

As such, there is an increased climate-risk factor which could hinder the opportunities available to certain residents and increase inequality. Similarly, the areas of Essex that are more likely to be impacted by climate change are areas of higher deprivation, which underscores the importance of the Levelling Up priority places. Residents who live in areas of higher deprivation tend to have fewer resources to respond to, and recover from, extreme weather events such as flooding and heatwaves; and are therefore less resilient.

This is why the link between Inclusive Growth and Climate Action is integral to the continued work of both programmes. Supporting residents to access good jobs from the growing green economy will be vital to the county and its residents’ prosperity. Investment will be required to attract business from our key green growth sectors, as well as education and skills development for our residents, to be able to realise the opportunities from this sector. More broadly, there will continue to be a strong link with the wider principles of the Levelling Up work and Climate Action.

As the county continues to upgrade homes to improve energy efficiency and reduce carbon emissions, it is also reducing energy costs for households, thus helping to reduce the financial pressures on residents. Similarly, as greening the county continues, this will reduce the likelihood of flooding and mitigate overheating risks, creating a level of resilience for those in deprived areas, as well as providing access to green and open spaces for residents to enjoy. This has a positive impact on social, mental and physical wellbeing. Developing our resilience to the impacts of climate change, and building healthy and happy communities, will improve the opportunities and outcomes for the residents of Essex.



Barn Owl, Martin’s Farm

OPPORTUNITY EAST

HOW THE EAST OF ENGLAND WILL
DRIVE NATIONAL PRODUCTIVITY
THROUGH INNOVATION

#OpportunityEast



3.2 Partnership

ECC works closely with partners within Essex, across the wider region and the UK as a whole, to deliver climate action through collaboration. This includes:

- **The Climate Action Working Group of the Essex Anchors Network:** the network brings together ‘Anchor Institutions’ – large, typically not-for-profit organisations like hospitals, local councils, emergency services and universities – whose long-term sustainability is tied to the wellbeing of the populations they serve. ECC coordinates, supports and participates in the Climate Working Group, whose members work together to deliver sustainable and green growth in Greater Essex.
- East of England Local Government Association’s **Climate Forum East:** this group brings together local authorities from across the East of England to share information and approaches to climate action, as well as to amplify action taken by individual authorities. ECC has helped to shape the group’s overall direction and is active in delivery groups on adaptation and resilience, funding and resourcing, and advocacy and lobbying.
- ECC is an ‘Ally’ member of **UK100:** a network of local leaders who have pledged to lead a rapid transition to net zero with clean air in their communities, ahead of the government’s legal target. ECC joined UK100 in 2022. Cllr Peter Schwier (Cabinet Member for Environment, Waste Reduction and Recycling) has attended the Climate Leadership Academy run by UK100. ECC is also part of their Countryside Climate Network.
- ECC sits on the Environment Board of **ADEPT**, the Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning and Transport. The Board aims to share knowledge and understanding of strategic issues and policies relating to climate change and the environment and to develop collaborative responses where needed. The Board advocates that environmental matters – and tackling and adapting to climate change – must be at the heart of decision making.

- ECC sits on the Board of **WRE** (Water Resources East) the independent, not-for-profit membership organisation pioneering a collaborative, cross-sector approach to water resources and integrated water management planning in Eastern England.
- ECC sits on the Board of the **Greater South East Net Zero Hub.** The Hub is a regional, government funded initiative that works with local authorities and other public sector organisations and their stakeholders to support the development and financing of local projects.

3.3 Essex County Council Estate and School Estate

Essex County Council has committed to be a net zero organisation by 2030.¹

Essex County Council and School Buildings

In 2022, ECC published its **Property Strategy**, focussing on the delivery of a smaller, better and greener estate. The ambition to reduce the carbon footprint of the organisation’s assets is set out in this strategy. However, a focus on wholesale reduction of floorspace – which is a key aim of the strategy – is likely to have the most significant impact on utility consumption. This plan is currently being updated, with consideration of the space rationalisation opportunities that may arise from Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). Across ECC’s core estate and school estate, action is already being taken to upgrade our own and our school buildings. We are rolling out smart meters across our estate and are committed to continue to improve our estate.

¹ Net zero for scope 1 & 2 emissions

- Scope 1 emissions (direct emissions) are those from activities owned or controlled by your organisation. Examples of Scope 1 emissions include emissions from combustion in owned or controlled boilers, furnaces, and vehicles; and emissions from chemical production in owned or controlled process equipment.
- Scope 2 emissions (energy indirect) are those released into the atmosphere that are associated with your consumption of purchased electricity, heat, steam, and cooling. These indirect emissions are a consequence of your organisation’s energy use but occur at sources you do not own or control.



Solar Panels on County Hall, Chelmsford

We have secured £11.9m in grant funding from the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (2021/22 to 2026/27). Alongside support from the facilities management programme, this funding is driving heat decarbonisation projects across 37 sites. This work includes the decommissioning of gas and oil boilers and their replacement with low-carbon alternatives. To ensure the efficiency of these new heating systems, the projects also incorporate energy efficiency measures and fabric upgrades.

Engagement opportunities are actively encouraged throughout these projects. A key example is the work at Kingswood Primary School, where students have incorporated the air source heat pump installation and associated upgrades into their learning experience. This initiative has been featured on [Salix website](#).

More than 60 solar installations have been deployed across our existing school and core buildings, funded through a combination of external grants and capital investment. A live monitoring platform enables us to track these installations, providing visibility into their performance. Since 2021, the total electricity generation has reached 5.7 million kilowatt hours.

We will continue to maximise Government grant support for these costs. We have completed a review of charging infrastructure requirements across ECC's property portfolio to 2030.

Since 2021, all new school buildings being commissioned by ECC are designed to be net zero in operation, including three new primary schools that were opened for September 2024 (Limebrook Way Primary School; Beaulieu Park Primary School; and Chapel Hill Primary School). We will continue to commission only net zero schools, demonstrating our commitment to building for the future. We have a team which works with schools to identify energy efficiency opportunities and position schools to benefit from the maximum in Government grant support to fund retrofit and heating improvements. The team has conducted energy audits in 107 schools – representing 45% of all maintained schools. These audits and reports have led to substantial energy and cost savings. Oakfield Primary School cut electricity use by 24%, saving over £16,000 in a year. St Peter's Church of England Primary School at Coggeshall reduced gas use by nearly 50% over two winter months, saving £2,000. Schools report increased energy awareness, with 47% saving 10-20% on energy costs and 20% saving 20-30%.

We have secured
**£11.9m in
grant funding**
from the Public Sector
Decarbonisation Scheme



Since 2021, the
total electricity
generation from
solar installations
has reached
**5.7 million
kilowatt hours**

ECC has extended
its commitment to
the use of **100%**
**renewable
electricity** for its
own corporate supply
through to October 2028



Essex County Council has been supporting Ashden's Let's Go Zero campaign. Around 30 Essex schools are signed up, with ECC providing [case studies](#) of schools which have taken effective climate action. We have developed Sustainability Kits for schools and early years settings in Essex. The kits will be rolled out as part of the [Carbon Cutting Essex app](#), which was launched in Spring 2023. Individuals will have the option to donate their points which they are awarded on the app to enable a local school to win one of the Sustainability Kits.

In September 2024, the [Essex Schools' Climate Action Network](#) (ESCAN) was launched with the aim of engaging more young people in climate action and is supported by officers from across Essex County Council. ESCAN was created to bring together representatives from schools across Essex to discuss ideas for how to take action on climate change. ESCAN is open to both teachers and students from schools across Essex.

Essex County Council Energy

Essex County Council will work across the council to ensure that as an organisation we maximise our use of renewables, cutting our energy costs, as well as our emissions. ECC has extended its commitment to the use of 100% renewable electricity for its own corporate supply through to October 2028. We are exploring opportunities for solar farms on our own estate.

ECC is committed to supporting acceleration of sustainable energy, with increasing investment in renewable energy across the county and supporting local communities to generate their own renewable energy. We want to ensure Essex benefits directly with increased jobs and economic growth from the transition to clean energy.

Essex County Council Electric Vehicles

Essex County Council (ECC) is supporting a switch to electric vehicles (EVs), which, over their lifetime, emit lower levels of air pollution and lower carbon emissions than regular petrol and diesel cars. Part of ECC's commitment in our [Electric Vehicle and Charging Strategy](#) (adopted September 2024) is to transition ECC's vehicle fleet and encourage ECC members and officers to switch to an electric vehicle (EV), for journeys which require motorised travel.

ECC's Climate Action Plan (2021-2025) also includes a commitment to "support transition to EV fleet for ECC". As part of this commitment, in December 2024, ECC launched a salary sacrifice scheme whereby officers can lease an EV and take advantage of the benefits available through salary sacrifice. As of September 2025, 70 orders for EVs have been made using this service.



EV chargers, County Hall, Chelmsford

In June 2025, ECC completed the installation of 16 dual socketed EV charge points at six ECC buildings, including County Hall in Chelmsford and buildings in Basildon, Harlow, Clacton-on-Sea and Saffron Walden. These charge points, operated by FUUSE, will be available for employees, visitors and members to use at an affordable price and will help more ECC employees have the confidence to make the switch to a zero emission vehicle:

- County Hall – 3 chargers, 6 sockets
- Saffron Walden Adult Community Centre – 1 charger, 2 sockets
- Goodman House, Harlow – 4 chargers, 8 sockets
- Ely House, Basildon – 6 chargers, 12 sockets
- Essex Records Office, Chelmsford – 1 charger, 2 sockets
- Magnet House, Clacton – 1 charger, 2 sockets

The charging points can be used by members, employees, visitors and suppliers of the ECC buildings. We are further investigating the feasibility of installing charging points at other ECC buildings, including Freebournes Road, which will support our library service to transition to EV.

Essex County Council Land

Essex County Council recognises the importance of its own extensive green estate as a carbon sink and in building climate resilience, while providing space for nature. In line with its **Property Strategy**, ECC has initiated a review of all of its property assets in order to identify efficiencies and to deliver on its Smaller, Better, Greener objectives. ECC holds a diverse property portfolio split between operational assets, used to deliver the essential services we provide to residents, and non-operational assets that the Authority holds for a variety of other reasons. Existing work and initiatives, including opportunities for enabling investment in nature rich landscapes to meet **Biodiversity Net Gain** requirements (see **page 42**), will continue as part of this review work. In addition, throughout these separate reviews, ECC will maintain a thread focussed on achieving environmental benefit where possible, building this into decision making to ensure best value is achieved.

Two pilot sites for Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) schemes on the ECC estate are being delivered. This involves an initial investment from ECC of £242,000 to put in place the framework for coordinated management over 30 years to revert land from active arable use to grass scrubland mosaic. ECC aims to offset the costs by selling biodiversity units under the new BNG requirements for development. This seeks to offset negative biodiversity and habitat loss through development in Essex, realising a 10% net gain – an increase in wildlife – on these sites through positive action.

Essex County Council Biodiversity

Essex County Council owns some 140 hectares of woodland across the county and has added two new woodland areas (from within the existing ECC estate), totalling some 14 hectares over the past five years. These new woodlands are registered under the Government’s carbon credit scheme, yielding up to £180,000 – £210,000 through the lifetime of the scheme.

The **Tree Management Plan** sets out how ECC will protect and increase the tree stock on the Essex County Council estate. In addition to the Tree Plan, 34 Tree Management Statements guide ECC officers in delivering the Tree Management Plan within its estate. These statements outline that Essex County Council aims to improve the quality and impact of its tree stock both by good management of existing trees and strategic planting of new trees.

Essex County Council Biodiversity Plan

In line with the strengthened biodiversity duty introduced by the Environment Act 2021, Essex County Council has developed a **Biodiversity Plan** to guide its approach to conserving and enhancing biodiversity across the county. The plan proposes a number of actions and aims to ensure that biodiversity is embedded in how we manage land, deliver services, and engage with communities. The Plan is a product of collaboration between multiple service areas, reflecting a shared commitment to nature recovery. In spring 2026, all local authorities must publish a biodiversity report documenting the policies and actions carried out to comply with the biodiversity duty. The Biodiversity Plan will form the basis for our report.



ECC completed the installation of **16 dual socketed EV charge points** at six ECC buildings

Two pilot sites for **Biodiversity Net Gain** schemes on the ECC estate are being delivered.



ECC will **protect and increase the tree stock** on the Essex County Council estate

Essex Outdoors and Country Parks

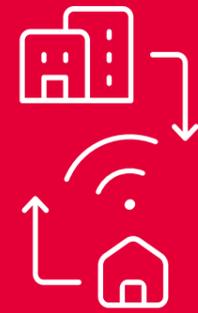
Across Country Parks and Essex Outdoors outdoor education centres, we are working to enhance biodiversity and environmental outcomes, by engaging with and educating visitors about climate and the environment. Working with Natural England, Historic England, National Highways, the Forestry Commission and the Rural Payments Agency, we have entered into Countryside Stewardship agreements to improve and manage these protected habitats in an environmentally focused and exemplar way. This is primarily across Country Parks but also at some Essex Outdoors centres. These grant agreements are attracting a cumulative £1.95m in revenue payments over their 10-year terms, plus £1.04m in one-off funding for enabling works.

Additionally, Essex Outdoors continues to develop and deliver its highly rated Forest School programme through its Education Rangers, delivering in school settings and woodlands, to young people in schools and home educated. We continue to improve water management on these sites with '**leaky dams**', Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) rain gardens, visitor engagement, and the creation of additional ponds for water management and storage, all of which also have wider ecological benefits. Sites have roof mounted solar PV panels wherever possible, including retrofitting and being incorporated into new buildings, including at all Essex Outdoors outdoor education centres.

Arts and Culture Grant

The Arts and Cultural Fund offers funding of between £2,500 – £30,000 for projects which use creativity and culture to deliver against Essex County Council's Everyone Essex strategic aims and commitments, including a High-Quality Environment and Green Communities. Arts and Cultural programmes are uniquely placed to engage residents in innovative and dynamic conversations and activities, explore themes of climate change and our environment. Examples of this include Artist Duo Instar's climate change project in Jaywick, which worked with the community to explore their environment and create artistic responses to it. Another initiative, Jane Stewart's Youth Eco-Project in Harwich, addressed climate change anxiety with young people.

Essex Outdoors continues to develop and deliver its highly rated Forest School programme



Our hybrid work model has significantly reduced our staff travel and building footprint

ECC holds Bronze award status as a Carbon Literate Organisation



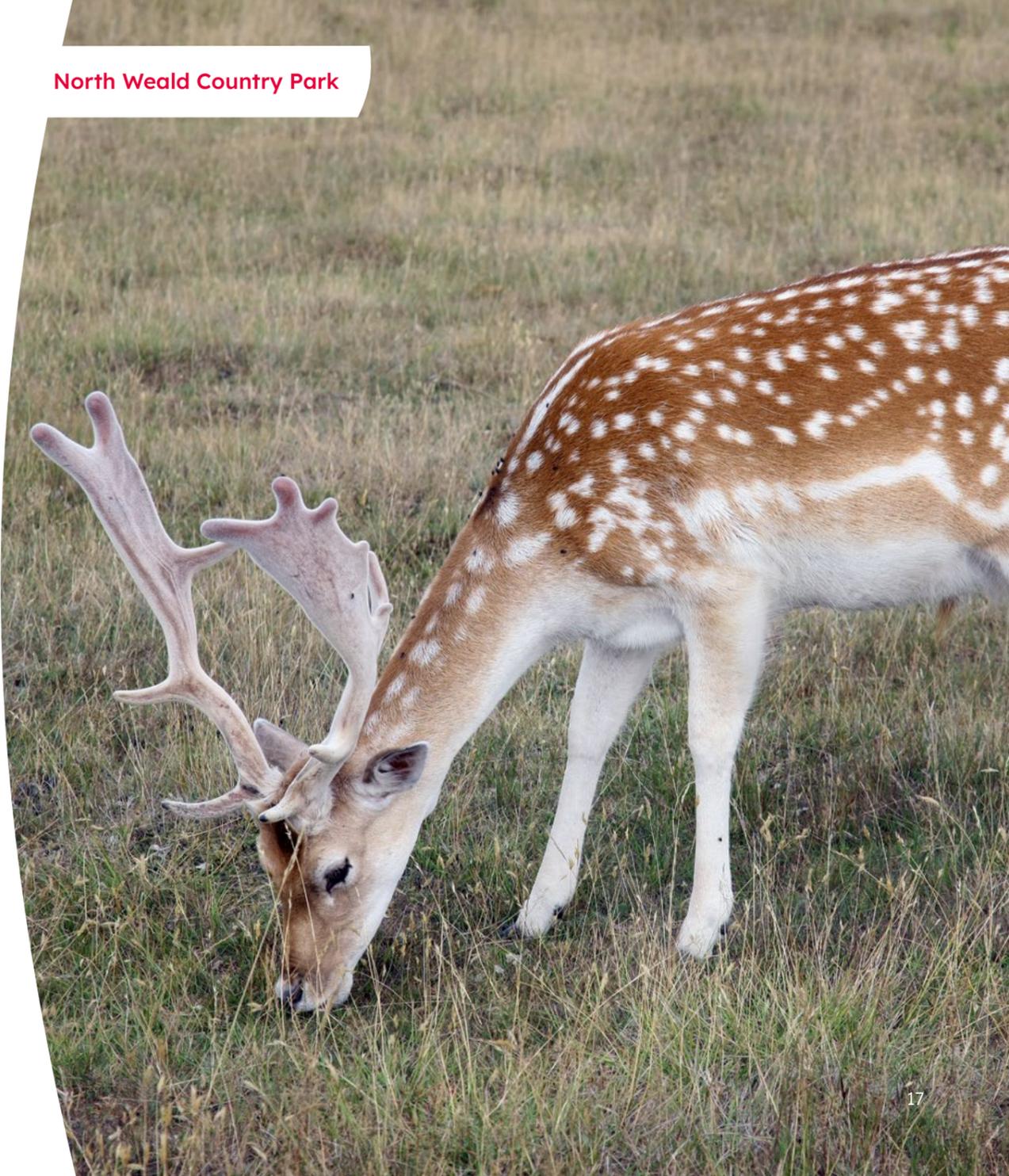
3.4 Essex County Council Staff

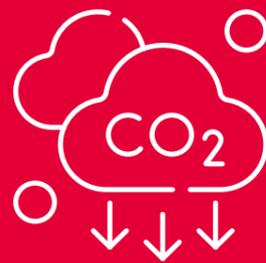
The **Ways of Working (WoW) Programme** has now been fully rolled out and Essex County Council has embraced a new approach to work with a **hybrid work model**. This has significantly reduced our staff travel and building footprint, thus reducing our energy use. Staff are further encouraged to reduce their travel impacts with provision of cycle parking and cycle pools at County Hall and a car share scheme.

In February 2025, Essex County Council introduced a salary sacrifice scheme for **leasing electric vehicles**, with 505 employees already benefiting from this offer up to April 2025. ECC holds Bronze award status as a Carbon Literate Organisation, with over 900 staff and councillors signing up for carbon literacy training and over 400 staff having received accreditation. The Leader of the Council; Executive Director, Climate, Environment and Customer; and Cabinet Member for the Environment, Waste Reduction and Recycling, Cllr Peter Schwier, have all completed the training and are fully accredited. We will continue to support further carbon literacy training.

A staff Climate Network has been established to encourage action to mitigate climate change within staff roles and teams, and outside of the organisation through informed discussion and support.

North Weald Country Park





The Committee has made substantial progress in **decarbonising the Pension Fund portfolio**

3.5 The Essex Pension Fund

The **Essex Pension Fund** – for which ECC is the administering authority – recognises both its responsibility to be a responsible investor (RI) and the range of potential long-term risks associated with climate change that the Fund, as a long-term investor, faces. The Investment Steering Committee (ISC) has appointed specialist external managers to a range of investment mandates. The financial impact of issues, including climate change, forms one part of the process that determines the investments made on the Fund’s behalf. The Committee periodically reviews its Responsible Investment (RI) Policy and RI Beliefs – which includes climate change – to ensure that the Fund’s mandates are aligned and have an aspiration to be net zero by 2050.

The Fund has in total committed £400m of its £1bn target to impact investment solutions, strategies which are not only expected to deliver the desired investment return for the Fund but will generate a positive measurable, beneficial social and environmental impact. In addition, the Committee, having agreed a set of Climate Change Metrics in line with the Taskforce on Climate-Related Financial Disclosures (TCFD) regulations has made substantial progress in decarbonising the Fund portfolio as compared to the 2021 baseline. Weighted Average Carbon Intensity (WACI) and carbon footprint falling around c36% and c58% for scope 1 and 2 carbon emissions, respectively. This progress was largely driven by the ISC’s decision to move to more sustainable/low carbon index tracking equity strategies and the replacement of its emerging market equity manager, with two ACCESS Pool emerging market strategies.

The outcome for the 2023 remeasurement showed that the Fund had met its 2030 target of 50% decarbonisation of scope 1 and 2 carbon emissions of its equity allocation compared to its 2021 Fund baseline. During 2024, the ISC agreed a stretched target of 60% decarbonisation, which was subsequently met. The ISC having established a RI Framework around the 4 pillars of: Portfolio Emissions; Climate Solutions; Alignment and Engagement each year agrees its annual Net Zero Journey Plan and RI Project Plan. This includes dedicated RI engagement meetings with the Fund’s investment managers focussed around the ISC’s RI priorities, annual remeasurement of the Fund’s climate metrics, the review of new impact investment solutions as and when available and dedicated annual training around RI for the ISC. Bringing all this work together in the year will be the Fund’s annual Financial Reporting Council submission to maintain the Fund’s UK Stewardship Code signatory status which the Fund has held since 2022.

3.6 Treasury Management Investments

When the council has surplus cash balances, these are invested until they are next required. The council will not knowingly invest directly in businesses whose activities and practices pose a risk of serious harm to individuals or groups, or whose activities are inconsistent with the council’s values. This would include, inter alia, avoiding direct investment in institutions with material links to:

- Human rights abuse (e.g. child labour, political oppression)
- Environmentally harmful activities (e.g. pollutants, destruction of habitat, fossil fuels)
- Socially harmful activities (e.g. tobacco, gambling)

For further information, please see the **Everyone’s Essex Annual Plan (2025-26)**



Pathway, Chelmsford



Harold's Park Wildland

3.7 ECC Procurement

Essex County Council spends over £1.2bn per annum on goods, services and capital projects in order to run its operations and services. ECC is committed to advancing its sustainability efforts and have continued to make progress on goals and targets to further reduce its Scope 3 carbon footprint.

Key ongoing and future objectives include:

- Ongoing inclusion of climate consideration in all tenders over £100,000, requiring suppliers to provide a Carbon Reduction Plan (CRP) as a minimum.
- Contract Management – consideration of Carbon Reduction Contract Schedule which contains standard terms and conditions to support contract specific decarbonisation objectives to be set and delivered. It provides a framework to monitor and assess the Supplier's decarbonisation performance. These include contract specific greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reporting; setting supplier GHG emissions reduction targets and monitoring; and reducing GHG emissions throughout the life of the contract through a supplier GHG emissions Reduction Plan, which meets the requirements of central government's **Procurement Policy Note 01/24**.
- Strengthening Social Value delivery – ECC plans to further enhance Social Value criteria in contract awards, with a particular focus on environmental benefits. This includes alignment with **The National Procurement Policy Statement** by meeting the requirements of **Procurement Policy Note 002** incentivising suppliers to adopt sustainable procurement practices which aligns with circular economy solutions.
- Ongoing review of Climate Transition Plans – quarterly update of climate transition plans for key emitting categories (Passenger Transport, Highways, Construction, Waste, Nursing & Residential Care, Homecare Services and Facilities Management & Property). This approach enables each category and our Tier 1 contracts to assess specific action plans against targets to reduce emissions throughout the contract's duration.
- We continue to refine our approach to emissions measuring and reporting to aid reduction. An in-house carbon calculator is currently being tested in collaboration with our supply chain, generating 126 responses in the integrated residential nursing within adult social care category. This includes emissions data across gas, electric, water, clinical waste, general waste, air conditioning and heating oil. Future efforts will focus on reviewing this data allowing for more informed, objective decisions regarding baselining and reducing contract-specific emissions within this category. Key learning on the current carbon calculator will inform the design of additional carbon calculators tailored for other categories.
- Our **supplier sustainability charter** outlines our procurement sustainability priorities, and the areas where we mandate minimum standards from suppliers, alongside those areas where we aspire to work with our suppliers to deliver more complex sustainability goals. As we move from most economically advantageous tender (MEAT) to most advantageous tender (MAT) under the new Procurement Act 2023, suppliers can expect the priority areas identified in the charter could be evaluated during the procurement process and for relevant KPIs to be reflected in contracts, with a greater focus on sustainability factors in our contract management meetings.
- Publication of our SMEs **Public Sector Procurement – A Focus on Climate**. Through this document we aim to offer guidance to Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) to better understand how they can commit and deliver initiatives to drive climate resilience when bidding for work within the public sector to support. It provides clear guidance to buyers on how to implement Carbon Reduction Plans (CRPs).
- The new environmental policy implementation will set clearer guidelines, streamline decision-making, promote responsible sourcing, and improve overall organisational sustainability by ensuring compliance with regulations and fostering responsible practices for meeting climate challenges and contributing to broader sustainability goals in collaboration with our supply chain.



Cyclist on Head Street, Colchester

3.8 Climate and Health

There are strong links between climate and health. These links are apparent through both the physical environment and in social responses to challenges. It is clear that working towards better climate outcomes will result in better health outcomes and reduced demand on public services.

Essex has unsustainable levels of demand for health and social care. In response to this, the **Essex Caring Communities Commission** has been set up to review and make proposals to tackle demand pressures at the source, enabling local public services to shift their attention, capacity and resources to community-based prevention working. The Commission’s vision for success is for communities to be healthy, active, empowered, and inclusive; underpinned by strong levels of economic, social, physical, and natural capital.

A key approach in which the Commission is promoting change is through its call for local leaders and public services to commit to vitalising community capacity by igniting the potential in civil society. Civil society creates value through enhancing employment opportunities, improving the local environment, social welfare support, support for mental health and wellbeing, and creating physical activity opportunities – much of which can be bolstered through communities coming together to support environmental improvements.

The Commission is also calling for leaders to dismantle barriers to health and wellbeing through renewing our places as thriving communities. Creating opportunities to increase physical activity and supporting people to access work and public services through suitable public and active travel routes, which will also support our climate goals, will be key to this.

The Commission’s report can be found here: [Essex Caring Communities Commission Report](#)

Essex County Council Estate and School Estate Initiatives

Ongoing Initiatives (March 2025 – 2027/28)

Initiative	Description	Start	End	Finance (£)		Alignment to Everyone’s Essex				
				2021/22 to 2024/25	2025/26 to 2027/28	Econ	Env	Health	Place	
Retrofit ECC Core and School Estate	Energy efficiency, heating and renewables technologies for ECC core and school estate buildings supported by Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) Grants (£11.92m).	Feb 2021	Mar 2027	£24.7m	£4.0m					
EVs and charge points for ECC	Support transition to EV fleet for ECC. Please note, these funds were or are part of the reserve drawdown lines in the financial table in the Summary Financial Schedule.	Apr 2023	Mar 2026	£350,000	£139,000					
Countryside Stewardship	Government Grant funding to support maintenance of country parks (RPA and National Highways grant funding, attracting a cumulative £1.95m in revenue payments over the 10-year terms, plus £1.04m in one-off funding for enabling works.)	Dec 2023	Apr 2024	£888,000	£1.4m					

4. A Just Transition to a Green Economy

Economic growth is the engine that will drive and enable many of our wider ambitions.

We are firmly committed to a Just Transition to a Green Economy, ensuring no one is left behind in the process. Green growth is a direct commitment of **Everyone's Essex** and an important part of delivering against the recommendations of the Essex Climate Action Commission.

Our **Sector Development Strategy** identifies green growth as intrinsic to the county's future growth. Each of our five key growth sectors support our transition to a more sustainable economy through the creation of high-quality jobs for residents, alongside new opportunities for businesses in industries of the future, for example retrofit and decarbonised energy.

As we prepare for devolution in Greater Essex, we are shaping a service which will support residents and businesses to harness the opportunities created by a just transition. This includes through delivering an all-age careers service, incorporating green skills and careers, as well as offering a business support service. We will also work to strengthen existing public-private partnerships, as well as create new ones, ensuring Essex has a strong business-voice to compete nationally and internationally, helping attract funding and investment to scale our impact in this area.

Essex County Council and partners have established a new Essex Growth Agency (AEGA), which has invested over £15m of Department for Work and Pensions grant funding into Skills Bootcamps and Connect to Work programmes. These target help to residents who face additional challenges entering the workplace, equipping them with skills, including those needed for emerging green sectors.

We have delivered successful programmes supporting retrofit training, Green Entrepreneurs' programmes, Great Start programmes and have funded two PhDs at Anglia Ruskin University, researching the opportunities for SMEs in innovation and the green economy.

The Essex Renewal Fund supports land and property projects in Essex and the investment principles, including an expectation to deliver net zero. The fund is part of our commitment to good jobs, future growth and investment, green growth and levelling up the economy. By 2042, the fund aims to invest over £100m (subject to affordability), creating jobs and bringing forward land to deliver new homes.



By 2042, The Essex Renewal Fund aims to invest over **£100million** creating jobs and new homes.

Over the next two years we are committed to:

- Continuing to support the growth of the green construction and retrofit sectors through the **Essex Construction Alliance** and Retrofit Forums. We are committed to commissioning and investing over £400,000 supporting sustainable construction. Business support activities are being delivered by the AEGA. This work includes the commissioning of a job brokerage service, construction sector specific business support, regional skills analysis and a supply chain portal to connect Essex based businesses with local employment and work opportunities.
- Support the growth and diversification of the rural economy, supporting economic growth in rural communities, connecting businesses with commercial opportunities and hosting events.
- Support a further 36, completely subsidised, Domestic Energy Assessor and Retrofit Assessment qualifications at level 4 to Essex based residents.
- Hosting business engagement events to support the Just Transition to a Green Economy, including the inaugural Green Light for business success event.
- Continue delivery of our Green Entrepreneurs’ programme into 2025, supporting individuals with start up support, including sustainable business practices and ensuring they commence their business operations in a resilient manner, with climate focused approaches.
- Continue promotion of our Great Start scheme, which empowers local businesses with accessible, on-demand guidance to grow greener and more resilient. This will build upon the 3,000 views the Great Start content has received in its first year and our now completed one 2 one business support and PR campaigns.
- Continue the support of We Rise in Canvey Island in Castle Point, supporting 30 young people with free introductory extracurricular learning in the “Wonders of Technology”; Robotics, AI and VR.
- ‘Building a Lasting Legacy’ will continue to build on its successful launch by expanding school-based engagement across the county, to inspire diverse young talent into construction careers and strengthen the sector’s future workforce.
- Launch of innovation funding finder to connect businesses with innovation and collaboration opportunities.

Ongoing Initiatives (March 2025 – 2027/28)

Initiative	Description	Start	End	Finance (£)		Alignment to Everyone’s Essex			
				2021/22 to 2024/25	2025/26 to 2027/28	Econ	Env	Health	Place
Green Entrepreneurs’ Programme	A short enterprise programme for 30 individuals with green entrepreneurial aspirations and ideas (aged 18 to 30) – leading to supporting 30 green start-ups in Essex and to hone the knowledge, skills, attributes and values for the future workforce.	Apr 2023	Ongoing	£106,000 Staff time supporting project (Reserve funded)	£40,000 Staff time supporting project (Reserve funded)	 	  		
Great Start	Programme to encourage businesses to make small changes to aid transition to low carbon. Supporting business awareness and engagement.	May 2023	Ongoing	£19,000 Staff time supporting project (Reserve funded)	Staff time supporting project (Reserve funded)	 	    		

Initiative	Description	Start	End	Finance (£)		Alignment to Everyone's Essex			
				2021/22 to 2024/25	2025/26 to 2027/28	Econ	Env	Health	Place
We Rise	A youth movement to promote economic growth including career and skills opportunities from peer to peer. Previously: Future Essex Heroes (Shujaaz).	Apr 2023	Ongoing	3 Staff time supporting project (Reserve funded)	Staff time supporting project (Reserve funded)	   			 
Green Light for Business Success Event	A one-day expo supporting Essex businesses to adopt net zero practices, access green funding, and unlock growth through sustainability. Delivered by Ambitious Essex, the event promotes climate-conscious innovation and collaboration across the local economy.	Apr 2025	Ongoing	0 Staff time supporting project (Reserve funded)	£18,000 Staff time supporting project (Reserve funded)	  	 		

Initiative	Description	Start	End	Finance (£)		Alignment to Everyone's Essex			
				2021/22 to 2024/25	2025/26 to 2027/28	Econ	Env	Health	Place
Building Ambitious Essex - Commissioned sustainable construction job brokerage service	We will establish a job brokerage service to match employers with site-ready and nearly site-ready workers, ensuring: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A future proofed and resilient workforce ready to work in sustainable construction. Faster recruitment for live projects. Better alignment between training and job opportunities. Increased employment for underrepresented groups. 	Apr 2025	Ongoing	0 Staff time supporting (reserve funded)	£190,000 Staff time supporting (reserve funded)	    	 		 
Building Ambitious Essex - Regional Skills Analysis & Time-Lapse Geospatial Mapping	Develop a real-time, spatially aware understanding of workforce dynamics and sustainable development and green infrastructure needs by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mapping construction activity and labour trends across Essex. Identifying skills gaps and future demand hotspots. Informing training and investment strategies. 	Apr 2025	Ongoing	0	£25,000	    	 		 

Initiative	Description	Start	End	Finance (£)		Alignment to Everyone's Essex				
				2021/22 to 2024/25	2025/26 to 2027/28	Econ	Env	Health	Place	
Building Ambitious Essex - Essex Supply Chain Portal	<p>Creation of new digital platform connecting local businesses with local procurement opportunities, enabling them to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compete for contracts on major housing and infrastructure projects. Collaborate across the supply chain. Keep investment and value within Essex. Minimise scope 3 emissions. 	Apr 2025	Ongoing	0	£80,000	   	 			
Building Ambitious Essex - Sustainable Construction Sector Business Support	<p>Building upon the work of the already established Essex Construction Alliance and retrofit forums. We will commission and provide tailored support to Essex-based construction businesses, especially SMEs, to help them:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Innovate and adopt Modern Methods of Construction (MMC). Navigate regulatory and financial landscapes. Access training, apprenticeships, and digital tools. 	Apr 2024	Ongoing	0	£90,000	   	 			

Initiative	Description	Start	End	Finance (£)		Alignment to Everyone's Essex				
				2021/22 to 2024/25	2025/26 to 2027/28	Econ	Env	Health	Place	
Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Virginia Beach	Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Virginia Beach with colleagues from Norfolk County Council and Suffolk County Council in relation to the offshore wind sector.	Apr 2025	Ongoing	Staff time supporting project (Reserve funded)	Staff time supporting project (Reserve funded)	 	 			
Rural Connections Business Summit	Rural Connections is the inaugural event supporting rural businesses. Supporting with diversification, resilience and growth. Understanding the skills needs for within the sector. Opportunities for vulnerable cohorts in the rural jobs market. Identifying opportunities and challenges that are prevalent within rural communities.	Apr 2025	Ongoing	0	£21,000	   	 			
Design and delivery of PAS2038 training	Design of the first national PAS2038 retrofit training for non-domestic retrofit and deliver this to Essex based businesses.	Apr 2024	Ongoing	£92,000	Staff time supporting project (Reserve funded)	  	 			

Initiative	Description	Start	End	Finance (£)		Alignment to Everyone's Essex			
				2021/22 to 2024/25	2025/26 to 2027/28	Econ	Env	Health	Place
Essex Construction Alliance and Retrofit Forums	Creation of the Essex Construction Alliance and the Essex Retrofit Forum. Providing networking opportunities and events for businesses in construction and retrofit.	Apr 2024	Ongoing	£17,000 Staff time supporting project (Reserve funded)	£10,000 Staff time supporting project (Reserve funded)	 	 		
Retrofit Training programme PAS2035	Support a 36, completely subsidised, Domestic Energy Assessor and Retrofit Assessment qualifications at level 4 to Essex based residents.	Apr 2025	Ongoing	0	£80,000	 	 		
Build a Lasting Legacy programme	Building a Lasting Legacy is a five-year partnership programme launched in 2025 to inspire young people in Essex to pursue careers in construction. It connects schools, colleges, universities, and industry to challenge perceptions and diversify talent in the sector.	Apr 2025	Ongoing	Staff time supporting project (Reserve funded)	Staff time supporting project (Reserve funded)	 	 		

Initiative	Description	Start	End	Finance (£)		Alignment to Everyone's Essex			
				2021/22 to 2024/25	2025/26 to 2027/28	Econ	Env	Health	Place
Innovation funding finder	Creation of new innovation funding finder, hosted on Ambitious Essex Growth Hub supporting and promoting innovation, research and development opportunities.	Apr 2025	Ongoing	0	£22,000	 			
Research	Essex Green Skills Infrastructure Review, which informed the development of the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) and further support for green skills.		May 2025	£71,000	£26,000	 	 		

Key Achievements delivered:

- Created the first national training course in non-domestic retrofit for PAS2038 British Standards – training the first 30 individuals nationally.
- Signed a new **Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Virginia Beach** in the United States, with colleagues from Norfolk County Council and Suffolk County Council in relation to the offshore wind sector. Offshore wind has a significant role to play in our future prosperity with the huge windfarms being developed off our coast. The agreement with Virginia Beach will help to boost transatlantic trade and cooperation in significant growth sectors.
- Secured over £798,000 to deliver retrofit training to residents in levels 2,3,4 and 5 for professional retrofit skills and continue to deliver training through the establishment of provision at ACL Essex.
- Showcased the retrofit opportunities available in the county and the economic opportunity arising from nationally funded retrofit projects at our Retrofit for Business Success event. Over 100 businesses engaged in the event, with over 90% providing positive feedback. Link to the video from the event is available [here](#).
- The work and PhD research committed to the Net Zero Innovation Network has strengthened relationships with academic institutions and resulted in the Net Zero Innovation Network being incorporated into a new service function of the Essex Growth Agency and the production of a county wide funding finder available at the following link: [Funding - Ambitious Essex](#).



Retrofit works being undertaken, Clacton



Braxted Park

5. Land Use and Green Infrastructure

Essex is one of the driest counties in the UK – the East Anglia region has the lowest average rainfall and highest average temperatures in England; climate change will only make summers hotter and drier.

Only three-fifths of the drinking water consumed here comes from the county itself. Apart from domestic use, water is needed by business sectors, such as agriculture and horticulture, food processing, power and leisure. However, water companies do not have a statutory obligation to supply water for non-domestic purposes and requests for new non-domestic connections are increasingly being declined due to water supply being squeezed by abstraction reduction, climate change and a fast-growing population. It is estimated that by 2050, the East of England will experience a public water supply shortage of around 730 million litres of water per day, equal to over a third of the predicted future need, if action is not taken. Essex County Council published a **Water Strategy** setting out recommendations for public, private and communities to improve water resilience.

Essex has a significant number of properties and assets at risk of flooding. The Environment Agency updated its flood risk information in 2025 and this indicates some 200,000 properties in Essex are at risk of some form of flooding. ECC leads on developing the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy and will be revising the current strategy to respond to the increasing risk profile. The strategy will adopt an integrated water management

approach, holistically addressing flood risk, water availability and water quality. ECC has spent £11.4m on flood resilience over 2021/22 – 2024/25 and is committed to continuing this programme, alongside a grant for individual home protections against flooding. We work closely with the Environment Agency, which leads on coastal and river flooding responses.

By changing the way we use and manage land, and increasing the cover of natural green infrastructure (currently around 14%), we can reduce the risks of flooding, overheating, drought/water scarcity and soil loss, while providing multiple environmental, social and economic benefits. For example, by installing leaky dams and reconnecting floodplains to rivers, we can reduce flood risk and also help to store water and recharge groundwater aquifers, whilst providing wider benefits for nature recovery and water quality.

We have also sought to engage directly with residents on ways to make their homes more flood resilient through initiatives such as **Weather Wise Gardens**. The campaign includes a leaflet distributed at garden centres, outlining 12 simple measures that can be made to home gardens to mitigate against flooding while benefitting nature. Each feature includes guidance for installation, approximate cost and time needed to install each measure and added benefits.

ECC has worked with all District, Borough and City councils, Southend-on-Sea City Council, Thurrock Council and Natural England, alongside the Essex Nature Partnership, to develop the **Essex Local Nature Recovery Strategy**, which was formally adopted in June 2025. This sets out our ambition and delivery plan to recover nature and deliver wider benefits such as capturing carbon, reduced flood risk, support for farming pollinators, and improved public health and wellbeing through improved access to green space and nature. We have set out ambitions to achieve 30% natural green infrastructure cover by 2040, with a target of achieving at least 25% by 2030.



ECC has spent **£11.4m on flood resilience** over 2021/22 – 2024/25

We have set out to achieve **30% natural green infrastructure cover** by 2040



Essex County Council has planted **476,200 trees** since 2019

Launch of the Essex Local Nature Recovery Strategy, September 2025, Cressing Temple Barns, Braintree



Delivery of the strategy will build on a range of habitat creation work already completed by ECC. For example, Essex County Council has planted 476,200 trees since 2019. The Essex Forest Partnership is made up of other local authorities. This includes district, city and borough councils. It planted a total of 623,095 trees since 2020, with over a third in 2024/25. Together, we have planted over one million trees across Essex.

ECC is establishing new habitat sites for Biodiversity Net Gain and has worked with landowners to support investment in regenerative farming and green infrastructure. And our work engaging with developers and planning officers in the planning process is delivering better outcomes in terms of onsite greenspace and green infrastructure, including streets trees and sustainable drainage measures.

ECC will continue to work with partners, such as Natural England, the Essex Local Nature Partnership, Supporting Authorities, farmers, landowners and environmental NGOs, to deliver the ambition set out in the **Local Nature Recovery Strategy**. ECC parks, woodlands and community tree nurseries provide opportunities for public engagement and raising awareness of the contribution of green infrastructure to climate resilience. Our ongoing work with partners on flood risk and environmental enhancements will provide further opportunities.

ECC has been working since 2023 in a partnership, led by the Zoological Society of London, and with many other partners in Essex and Kent, to develop the Endangered Living Seascapes Programme called **'Transforming the Thames'**. This proposes an ambitious restoration project in the Greater Thames Estuary which aims to re-connect the currently fragmented landscape through habitat protection, repair and restoration. The project has recently been awarded US\$5 million (over £3.7 million) which will be used to fund widespread action over the next five years, including the restoration of over 320 hectares of intertidal seagrass meadows, saltmarsh, native oyster reef, coastal brazing marsh, sand and shingle, and saline lagoon habitat. The project aims to build local capacity to protect and enhance coastal habitats and to inspire the local community to get involved through volunteering. The long-term aim is to develop a rolling programme of additional shovel-ready projects, including beyond the five-year funded period. ECC will not be receiving funding directly but is supporting the project with officer time.

Ongoing Initiatives (March 2025 – 2027/28)

Initiative	Description	Start	End	Finance (£)		Alignment to Everyone's Essex			
				2021/22 to 2024/25	2025/26 to 2027/28	Econ	Env	Health	Place
Capital Flood Programme	The Flood Prevention Capital Programme aims to reduce the level of surface water flood risk to properties. ECC funding is matched by external grants, largely the Environment Agency.	Ongoing	- ECC funding to 2025/26	£11.4m	£13.4m				
Property Flood Resilience (PFR)	The PFR scheme gives eligible residents that have been flooded internally access to a one-off £8,000 grant to protect their homes through the installation of property flood resilience measures. 100% grant funded from the Environment Agency.	Ongoing		£739,000	£205,000				
Green Streets	Maintenance programme for ECC street trees. The total funding commitment is out to March 2028.	Apr 2022	Mar 2028	£1.037m	£888,000				

Initiative	Description	Start	End	Finance (£)		Alignment to Everyone's Essex			
				2021/22 to 2024/25	2025/26 to 2027/28	Econ	Env	Health	Place
Sustainable Drainage (SuDS) in Schools	Sustainable drainage systems delivered to 12 selected Essex schools in Basildon, identified as at high flood risk.	Mar 2025	Mar 2026	£478,000	£300,000				
	Grant funded from Dept for Education (£315k) and Anglia Water (£55k) & ECC (£211k), plus ECC staff time (£69k).								
	Sustainable drainage systems to be delivered to five selected Essex schools across Essex (Braintree, Rayleigh, Loughton, Shenfield, and Manuden), identified as at high flood risk.								
Grant funded from Dept for Education (DfE) (£150k) and a potential ask from Anglian Water not yet confirmed & ECC (£150k), plus ECC staff time included in the DfE funding ask (£24k).									

Initiative	Description	Start	End	Finance (£)		Alignment to Everyone's Essex			
				2021/22 to 2024/25	2025/26 to 2027/28	Econ	Env	Health	Place
Thames RFCC PROSPER Fund (Upshire School)	To deliver sustainable drainage systems and green infrastructure at Upshire Primary Foundation School in Waltham Abbey, after being identified at high flood risk.	Mar 2025	Mar 2027		£73,000				
	Grant funded from the Environment Agency (over £73k) with potential for match funding from ECC or Private Water Companies, included £6k in ECC project management costs.								
Local Nature Recovery Strategy & Local Nature Partnership	Essex County Council is the lead authority for producing the Essex Local Nature Recovery Strategy and delivering its targets. The independent Local Nature Partnership chaired by Dr Simon Lyster has representatives from a wide range of sectors and supports the aims of the LNRS. ECC provides secretariat support to 2027.	Mar 2022	Mar 2027	£300,000	£503,000				

Initiative	Description	Start	End	Finance (£)		Alignment to Everyone's Essex			
				2021/22 to 2024/25	2025/26 to 2027/28	Econ	Env	Health	Place
Biodiversity Net Gain Pilots	Two pilot Biodiversity Net Gain sites on the ECC estate. Upgrading land for the benefit of nature and unlocking BNG credits to maintain this nature rich landscape out to 2053.	Apr 2023	Ongoing	£68,000	£174,000				
Biodiversity Net Gain	To support planning authorities with planning oversight to manage mandatory BNG requirements.	Jun 2023	Ongoing	£68,000	£30,000				
Essex Forest Initiative	Part of a five year project (now completed) to plant 375,000 trees across Essex. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 476,200 trees planted to date. 2023/24 planting target of 100,000 trees. 2024/25 planting target of 125,000 trees. Grant funding of £3.0m from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and private sector support.	2021	2025	£3.0m	£969,000				

Initiative	Description	Start	End	Finance (£)		Alignment to Everyone's Essex			
				2021/22 to 2024/25	2025/26 to 2027/28	Econ	Env	Health	Place
Maintenance of existing woodland	ECC owns 26 mature woodlands which total 140 hectares. These are managed annually for safety and to maintain biodiversity. Two new woodlands (12 hectares) have been registered for woodland carbon credits.	2025	Ongoing	0	£297,000				

Select key achievements:

- Publication of the **Local Nature Recovery Strategy** in July 2025.
- In 2025, we surpassed our target of planting 375,000 trees over five years by planting 476,200 trees in total. We have planted 120 hectares of woodland area, 57km of hedgerows and 4,243 urban trees, capturing and storing tonnes of carbon, improving air quality and increasing our climate resilience.
- Developed a Biodiversity Plan, a strategic document designed to address the need for biodiversity conservation and enhancement within the county. This plan aligns with the strengthened biodiversity duty introduced by the Environment Act 2021. By identifying actions ECC can take to conserve and enhance biodiversity, we contribute to better functioning ecosystems, thus increasing our climate resilience.
- Together with partners, we funded the establishing of two farm clusters in Essex, currently covering tens of thousands of hectares of farmland, aiming to move to more sustainable and nature-friendly farming practices.
- ECC established two community tree nurseries that will focus on growing native, drought resilient trees such as wild service, crab apple and hornbeam. Further to this, we will also be growing fruit and nut trees in the future to plant in agroforestry and orchard projects, increasing food security as well as tree cover.

You can find out more about completed and ongoing initiatives in the **Essex Climate Action Annual Report**.

6. Energy

Essex is well placed to benefit from the Government's commitment to deliver clean power by 2030.

We are committed to increasing investment in renewable energy to help grow the economy sustainably and enable local communities to generate their own renewable energy in order to benefit directly from the transition to clean power.

We are collaborating with public and private sector partners to enable investment in and delivery of sustainable growth, strong communities and clean power.

During 2021-24, ECC helped over 2,700 households source solar panels, batteries and EV chargers through a bulk buying scheme – Solar Together – adding 11MW of local renewable energy and avoiding 2,432 tonnes of CO₂ annually. The 2025 scheme is now underway, and we hope to deliver a further 500 installations. Following the success of that scheme, we have trialled Switch Together, the first collective heat pump purchasing scheme in the country, which is currently delivering some 100 new heat pumps in homes in Essex.

ECC has supported the establishment of a network of 27 community energy groups across Essex, with eight having become Community Benefit Societies, helping communities to develop and benefit from local renewable energy projects. We have been recognised nationally by Community Energy

England and DESNZ for our achievements in scaling up community energy through collaboration between local government, communities and the private sector. We have supported communities in developing their own renewables projects, helping them to access grant funding through schemes such as the Community Energy Fund (now the Great British Energy Community Fund), totalling £1.14 million.

The government has made a commitment to scale up local energy and create 8GW of municipally and community owned renewable generation as part of its **Clean Power Plan**. We are building on our community energy programme to work with residents and local groups to develop a pipeline of small and medium sized renewable generation projects that are ready for investment.

We are also working closely with developers to secure community benefits funds and community ownership shares of solar and onshore wind farm projects in Essex to secure more of the value of these projects for local communities. We have already secured a £5.72million community benefit fund and £2.1m for education supply chain, skills and employment funding in connection with development of Longfield Solar Farm.

In 2024, Essex County Council, District, City and Borough councils worked together to launch the first county wide Energy Company Obligation (ECO) scheme. This provides support from energy companies to low income and vulnerable households with grants for low carbon heating and energy efficiency measures to keep homes warm, reduce energy costs and reduce carbon emissions. Already, this scheme has helped over 175 households.

Additionally, in 2025, ECC secured £6 million from the Government's Warm Homes Local Grant scheme. This new scheme will provide further additional support in 2025 for low-income households to improve their heating and energy efficiency. This scheme runs until March 2028.

Turncole Wind Farm, Southminster, Maldon

Solar Together scheme participant (2024), Basildon



Community-Led Energy Planning Workshop, Maldon

ECC works with partners in the private and community sectors and a consortium has secured £201,220 in funding from Innovate UK's Net Zero Living programme, to investigate scaling up investment in local energy projects. The project partners have created a new Community Interest Company (CIC), Essex Community Energy CIC (ECE CIC), that is working on community led solar and storage. ECE CIC has secured £10m in private finance to support place-based energy generation and storage projects. One of ECE CIC's main objectives is to enable a just transition via a business model that allows for PV and battery installation at no up-front cost to householders. ECC is also exploring options for community led solar on schools enabling schools to benefit from low-cost clean power whilst generating a return for reinvestment in community initiatives.

ECC has also partnered with the private and community sectors and a consortium has secured over £6m grant funding from the Ofgem Strategic Innovation Fund (SIF), alongside £4.5m match funding from private sector partners. SHIELD (Smart Heat and Intelligent Energy in Low Income Districts) is rolling out low carbon heat and power solutions to fuel poor households in social housing, using technology and business model innovations. The project combines renewable energy generation – solar and storage – with heat from distributed data centre units, cutting the cost of energy in homes, whilst boosting local digital capacity.

ECC is developing the first Local Area Energy Plan for Essex (LAEP) for Essex. The LAEP looks at how energy is used, supplied and managed in Essex and what investment is needed to enable clean heat, power and transport systems in the county. The LAEP will help local communities understand the opportunities for local energy in their parish and support the National Energy System Operator's (NESO) with their development of Regional System Energy Planning (RESP), which will shape investment in energy generation and distribution. In addition, ECC is working with partners on Community Led Energy Planning (CLEP), to support communities to identify opportunities for local energy projects and develop a plan for clean power at the neighbourhood level.

Ongoing Initiatives (March 2025 – 2027/28)

Initiative	Description	Start	End	Finance (£)		Alignment to Everyone's Essex			
				2021/22 to 2024/25	2025/26 to 2027/28	Econ	Env	Health	Place
Annual Solar Together Essex scheme	Collective purchasing scheme for solar panels, battery storage and home EV charging for Essex residents. This is cost neutral.	Ongoing	Ongoing	0	0	  	 		
Essex Energy Switch	Collective group switching on energy supply contracts for homeowners. This is cost neutral.	Ongoing	Ongoing	0	0		 		
Switch Together	Collective purchasing scheme for heat pumps for Essex residents.	Sep 2024	Aug 2025	£10,000	£10,000	 	 		
Solar Farm on ECC owned land	Grant funding from Greater South East Net Zero Hub (Investment Readiness Fund) to develop solar farm proposals on ECC land.	Apr 2025	Mar 2026		£75,000	 	 		

Initiative	Description	Start	End	Finance (£)		Alignment to Everyone's Essex				
				2021/22 to 2024/25	2025/26 to 2027/28	Econ	Env	Health	Place	
ESSNET – Innovate UK Net Zero Living Phase 2	Local energy innovation project developing propositions that tackle non-technical barriers to local energy projects led by the community, grant funded by Innovate UK. Phase 1 (April 2023 – June 2023) £60,353 (total awarded to all partners). Phase 2 – (Feb 2024 – June 25) £149,118 (total awarded to all partners). A portion of this funding and activity is delivered by ECC.	Phase 1 Apr 2023	Phase 1 Jun 2023	Phase 1 £23,783		   	 			
		Phase 2 Feb 2024	Phase 2 Jun 2025	Phase 2 £35,913	Phase 2: £7,697					

Initiative	Description	Start	End	Finance (£)		Alignment to Everyone's Essex			
				2021/22 to 2024/25	2025/26 to 2027/28	Econ	Env	Health	Place
Project SHIELD	Ofgem Strategic Innovation Funding for low carbon energy and heat in low income homes partnering with social housing providers.	Discovery Apr 2023	Discovery May 2023	Discovery £3,498		   	 		
	Discovery (April 2023 – May 2023) £90,742 (total awarded to all partners).	Alpha Oct 2023	Alpha Mar 2024	Alpha £10,471					
	Alpha (October 2023 – March 2024) £556,276 (total awarded to all partners).	Beta Dec 2024	Beta Oct 2028		Beta £7,292				
	Beta (December 2024 – October 2028) £5,401,332 (total awarded to all partners).								
Local Area Energy Planning	Strategic plan for Essex for pathway to net zero for heat, energy and transport.	Oct 2024	Jul 2025	£40,000	£48,950	   	 		

Initiative	Description	Start	End	Finance (£)		Alignment to Everyone's Essex			
				2021/22 to 2024/25	2025/26 to 2027/28	Econ	Env	Health	Place
Regional Energy System Planning (RESP)	Engaging with National Energy System Operator on development of RESP for East of England to coordinate development of energy system in Essex. MTRS funded staff costs.	Ongoing	Ongoing	Staff time supporting project (MTRS funded)	Staff time supporting project (MTRS funded)	   	 		
Community Benefit Funds & Community ownership of renewables	Secured community benefit fund of £5.72m and £2.1m skills funding on Longfield Solar Farm and developing further opportunities for community benefits and ownership. MTRS funded staff costs.	Ongoing	Ongoing	Staff time supporting project (MTRS funded)	Staff time supporting project (MTRS funded), plus £30,000 grant	  	  		

Initiative	Description	Start	End	Finance (£)		Alignment to Everyone's Essex			
				2021/22 to 2024/25	2025/26 to 2027/28	Econ	Env	Health	Place
Community energy support programme – Pathways and Community Led Energy Planning	Support programme to grow network of community energy groups in Essex and enable local energy projects as part of Clean Power Plan. Eight community benefit groups and 19 further groups now established and engaged with support. Community led approach to developing local energy plans and development of energy statements in Neighbourhood Plans.	Jul 2024	Mar 2027	£216,027	£199,466	   	  		
Supplementing community energy within neighbourhood / local plans	Developing energy statements with communities for Neighbourhood Plans. MTRS staff costs.	Ongoing	Ongoing	Staff time supporting project (MTRS funded)	Staff time supporting project (MTRS funded)	   	  		

Initiative	Description	Start	End	Finance (£)		Alignment to Everyone's Essex			
				2021/22 to 2024/25	2025/26 to 2027/28	Econ	Env	Health	Place
Solar on schools	Developing an approach to enable more schools to benefit from solar panels on roofs working with the community energy sector.	Ongoing	Ongoing	Staff time supporting project (MTRS funded)	Staff time supporting project (MTRS funded)				

Select key achievements:

- Secured with partners £5.4m of innovation grant funding from the Ofgem Strategic Innovation Fund with £4.5m match funding from private sector partners, creating £9.9m of investment to develop new innovative solutions for low carbon heat and power for vulnerable households in Essex via the “SHIELD” project.
- With partners, delivered the flagship Innovate UK Net Zero Living programme with our EssNet project, to create a new Essex Community Energy Community Interest Company, bringing innovative solutions to solar and storage across whole neighbourhoods to develop ‘virtual community power stations’.
- Delivered four rounds of the Solar Together scheme, which has enabled 2,752 solar installs, adding 11MW of renewable energy generation on houses in Essex, battery storage and EV charging.
- Delivery ongoing of collective heat pump purchasing scheme, Switch Together. As a pilot, this is the first scheme of its kind in the country. To date, Switch Together has enabled the installation of some 100 heat pumps. A second round of the scheme launched in September 2025.
- Delivery ongoing of the first Local Area Energy Plan for Essex, setting out the pathway to net zero 2050 for heat, power and transport in Essex and supporting the National Energy System Operator’s (NESO) with its development of Regional System Energy Planning (RESP).
- Delivered Community Led Energy Planning in three communities, identifying opportunities for local energy projects and extended the Community Energy network in Essex through the ongoing Pathways support. There are 27 community energy groups, which we are actively supporting to develop their local energy projects. Of these, we have supported eight to become new formally constituted community benefit societies, which are actively seeking investment in their community energy projects.
- Secured a £5.72m community benefit fund and £2.1m for education supply chain, skills and employment funding from Longfield Solar Farm to benefit local communities.

You can find out more about completed and ongoing initiatives in the [Essex Climate Action Annual Report](#).



Community-Led Energy Plan Workshop, Colchester



Net Zero Homes under construction, Tendring

7. Built Environment

The average Essex home has a low to mid energy performance rating of D, with A being the best. Energy efficient, healthy homes have significantly cheaper energy bills, as well as lower carbon emissions.

We have a huge opportunity to drive improvement across Essex. We are ambitiously working towards sustainable development with housing targets, expected to bring forward some 300,000 new homes by 2055.

Essex County Council (ECC) is actively supporting low carbon, climate resilient new development, and the retrofit of existing buildings across the county. ECC continues to work with planning authorities to develop new garden communities that are low carbon, climate resilient, and high-quality, healthy developments.

ECC collaborates with local planning authorities to generate clear design guidance through the **Essex Design Guide** on net zero, climate-resilient and nature-friendly design principles and policies. This guide provides comprehensive advice and resources for delivering sustainable homes and buildings in Greater Essex, ensuring that both operational and embodied carbon reduction is optimised. Alongside this, there is extensive build guidance on creating climate resilient homes including risks, such as flooding and overheating, to building guidance on building with nature.

District, Borough and City councils' local plans set the planning policies for new development. ECC continues to work with all councils across Essex to support the move to resilient, sustainable new development, feeding into local plans, and ensuring that we are working together as a county to progress towards both local and national climate goals. So far, four local plans and one area plan (Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community) have included the adoption of absolute energy targets for net zero in operation, based on the recommended policies in the Essex Design Guide. Three of these local plans have also adopted policies with upfront embodied carbon limits based on evidence and is available on the Essex Design Guide. All councils are working towards delivering warm, comfortable, healthy homes while keeping energy bills low – a win for residents and the environment.

The information on achieving resilient, sustainable, healthy homes and buildings found in the Essex Design Guide has the potential to influence every new home set to be built by 2050, with its policies and guidance supporting low carbon development. In local authorities, where these policies are already adopted in local plans, it is expected circa 85,000 homes will be built to net zero in operation standards by 2055, 72% of which will also meet standards for better embodied carbon targets. Lowering these embodied emissions will encourage the optimisation of construction materials to achieve more with less and present opportunities to develop supply chains for locally sourced low embodied carbon materials.

Essex Housing is rolling out a pilot project (Hargraves House) that seeks to be net zero both in operation and construction (zero embodied carbon), driving further innovation in housing development. This pilot project serves as a potential model for future developments, showcasing the feasibility and benefits of using low carbon building materials, alongside ensuring low carbon heating and high energy efficiency standards.



ECC is supporting both **low carbon new development** and retrofitting our existing buildings

It is expected circa **85,000 homes will be built to net zero** in operation standards by 2055



Essex Housing is rolling out a pilot project that seeks to be net zero both in **operation and construction**



Birketts Builders' Breakfast event held at Anglia Ruskin University, Writtle, providing information and guidance to those in the construction industry on building healthy, net zero homes in Essex

Retrofit and Upgrading Essex Homes

Upgrading our homes has the potential to drive significant economic growth with new jobs, skills training and opportunities for construction companies in Essex. It also offers residents the chance to tackle cold homes, cut energy bills and live in warm, comfortable and healthy homes.

ECC has worked with our District, Borough, City and unitary authorities to secure £6m grant funding in 2025 from central Government in order to support the upgrading of our most fuel poor households. We will be delivering these grant funded upgrades over the next three years. We have also led on establishing county wide advice, support and funding provision through the Energy Company Obligation (ECO 4 flex) offer, providing further grant support for low-income households, with over 175 households accessing grant funding of c.£1.6m through ECC's ECO4 Flex scheme. Schemes such as Solar Together, Switch Together and partnerships with organisations such as Essex Community Energy CIC, will also drive forward the scale and pace of retrofit activities within the county.

We will continue to explore how we can maximise support for all households across Essex to improve their properties, reduce their carbon emissions and live in healthy, warm homes.

We have also collaborated with a feasibility study undertaken by the University of Essex to explore the potential for a heat network at the campus and connected to the locality including proposals for a neighbouring housing development.

Ongoing Initiatives (March 2025 – 2027/28)

Initiative	Description	Start	End	Finance (£)		Alignment to Everyone's Essex			
				2021/22 to 2024/25	2025/26 to 2027/28	Econ	Env	Health	Place
Essex Housing	Net zero housing pilot of ten homes, net zero in construction and in use. The figures reflect the full development cost.	Sep 2021	Dec 2027	£660,000	£4.7m				
									
									
									
									
Climate and Planning Unit (CAPU)	The unit continues to provide climate planning advice, training and support to planning officers in Essex authorities to support the delivery of net zero carbon new build development. It also helps to ensure the built environment mitigates and adapts to climate change through local plans and the development management process.	Apr 2022	Apr 2027	£234,403	£500,597				
									
									

Initiative	Description	Start	End	Finance (£)		Alignment to Everyone's Essex			
				2021/22 to 2024/25	2025/26 to 2027/28	Econ	Env	Health	Place
Revising Transport Planning Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parking Strategy for New Garden Communities and Walkable Neighbourhoods TRACC Accessibility Mapping Tool Well Designed Neighbourhood Public Realm Design Net Zero Carbon Travel Planning Guidance & Toolkit Pan-Essex Net Zero Carbon Transport Planner Guide Net Zero Transport Assessment & Modelling 	Apr 2023		£580,000	£95,000	  	 		
Energy Company Obligation 4 (ECO4) Flex	ECC has coordinated an Essex-wide ECO4 flex and GBIS Flex offer to attract funding to install energy saving measures. This is in order to improve the efficiency of the lowest rated homes where households are living in fuel poverty, on a low income or vulnerable to the effects of living in a cold home.	May 2024	Mar 2026	Staff time supporting project (Reserve funded)	Staff time supporting project (Reserve funded)	   	    	  	

Initiative	Description	Start	End	Finance (£)		Alignment to Everyone's Essex			
				2021/22 to 2024/25	2025/26 to 2027/28	Econ	Env	Health	Place
Government Grant-aided Retrofit	<p>ECC has provided officer support to secure government grant funded programmes for retrofit.</p> <p>Warm Homes: Local Grant (WHLG)ECC is leading a consortium of all Essex Local Authorities (excluding Basildon, which bid independently) which was awarded £6m grant funding to deliver energy performance and low carbon heating upgrades to low-income homes in the county.</p>	Apr 2021	Mar 2028	£143,595	£6,061,486	   	    	  	



Promotion of the Home Upgrade Grant 2, Jaywick Energy Hub

Select key achievements:

- Essex Housing's Net Zero housing development at Hargraves House secured planning permission in May 2025.
- Publication of the **Planning Policy Position for Net Zero Homes and Buildings** in November 2023. This provides a consistent policy and approach towards net zero carbon in operation for new homes and non-residential development. This is supported by the required evidence published on the Essex Design Guide website. Currently aligned 85,000 new homes in Essex to the net zero carbon in operation policy.
- Publication of **The Embodied Carbon Study** in June 2024. This study provides the technical evidence base and cost analysis to support a recommended policy approach towards minimising carbon emissions embodied in the materials and construction of new homes and buildings.
- Launch of a county-wide Energy Company Obligation (ECO4) flex scheme, offering grant funding for low income and fuel poor households for energy efficiency measures. ECO 4 enables wider access for residents, including health eligibility to government funding. To date, 164 declarations have been approved for energy efficiency improvements to Essex homes, installing 435 energy efficiency measures, saving 3,424,678kgs CO₂ lifetime savings (2024/25).
- Delivered £4.5 million from the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund for energy efficient upgrades to 258 low-income households.
- Promoted the Sustainable Warmth Fund and Home Upgrade Grant 2, with £13.6m funding enhancing energy-efficiency and low carbon heating for 1,049 low-income homes, working closely with the Greater South East Net Zero Hub, which led delivery of those schemes.

You can find out more about completed and ongoing initiatives in the **Essex Climate Action Annual Report**.



Net Zero Homes under construction, Tendring



8. Transport

Transport is often considered in isolation, but it is really an enabler of almost everything we do. Whether it is children walking to school, adults accessing services, or businesses moving goods.

In 2023, domestic transport was the largest emitting sector, responsible for 29% of all UK emissions¹, so how we design, build and use our transport network is material. Whether it is the run-off from flooded roads ending up in our water courses; or our dependence on road-based freight vs rail, adding to our carbon emissions; transport has the potential to significantly impact our environment. In Essex, we are changing how we think about transport. ‘Avoid, Shift, Improve’, is central to Transport East in its **Transport Strategy** and to our emerging draft Local Transport Plan **“A Better Connected Essex”**.

A **“Better Connected Essex”** – our draft transport strategy – is “outcome led” and proposals stress the role travel and transport plays as an enabler of other activity, including the delivery of environmental improvements.

¹ **2023 UK Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Final Figures**, Department for Energy Security & Net Zero, February 2025

The draft strategy is supported by a suite of more specific documents, such as the **Bus Service Improvement Plan**, our new **Cycling Strategy**, and the **Electric Vehicle Charge Point Strategy**. The draft strategy also proposes to include a carbon reduction policy in line with government policy through our approach to planning transport, and new development. The draft Transport Strategy aims to protect and enhance the Essex environment and support healthy communities.

The ‘Avoid, Shift and Improve’ principles are central to the draft strategy “A Better Connected Essex” and underpin our proposed approach to the planning of transport and new development:

- ‘Avoid’ – avoid or reduce unnecessary journeys by all modes of transport, particularly over short distances;
- ‘Shift’ – support change so that residents shift to more sustainable modes, such as walking, cycling, public transport; and
- ‘Improve’ – where road journeys are essential, we should improve vehicle efficiency and vehicle quality, by reducing the reliance on fossil fuelled vehicles and encouraging electric vehicles and other alternative fuels.

Digitisation

We are seeking to reduce the need to travel by looking at where development and services are located, and considering new ways to deliver services, such as by encouraging remote meetings or medical consultations via video calls.

Digital technology is already changing transport services, and its impact is expected to grow. It is already impacting daily journeys, with digital train tickets or travel apps which can plan journeys, or how we operate our **DigiGo** demand responsive travel services. DigiGo provides electric minibuses funded by the Rural Mobility Fund, for a trial in rural Essex. Our DigiGo service has delivered over 125,000 passenger journeys, increasing connectivity to healthcare, employment, education and social opportunities.

Our DigiGo service has delivered over **125,000 passenger journeys**



Provided training to **over 13,500 individuals** to promote safe cycling behaviours

There have been **over 3.2m journeys** made on a trial e-scooter



Over £8million in grants to introduce over **5,000+ charge point sockets** across Essex

Public Transport

Bus transport is a vital way to meet our climate aspirations. Each bus has the potential to take cars off our network, reducing congestion and carbon, as well as improving air quality. Transitioning to alternative fuels reduces their reliance on fossil fuels and we are introducing 55 new electric buses with First Essex in Basildon in 2025. Buses connect rural locations with urban centres, allowing those who live out of town access to work, services and education. Around 39.6 million journeys a year were made on the bus network in Essex in 2024.

The Bus Service Improvement Plan encompasses a number of initiatives:

- Bus Priority Revenue Works
- Enhanced Partnership Network Improvement Capital Investment Programme
- Accelerated Bus Shelters Transformation Programme
- Bus Stop Improvements
- Realtime Passenger Information Strategy
- Survey of Every Bus Stop (detailed physical infrastructure survey of every bus stop in Essex)
- Chelmsford Park and Ride Services
- Improved Data Analysis and Network Planning (enhanced data analysis to provide better network planning and service provision options)
- Harlow Enhanced Partnership Network Improvements
- Local Bus Network Community Engagement
- Love Your Bus
- Sustaining Local Bus Services until 2026
- Tending Enhanced Partnership Network Improvements
- Thrive (1 & 2) (locally based pilot projects to develop a better understanding of what measures are best at growing bus services)
- Travel Essex Integrated Services
- Transformative Enhanced Partnership Network Improvements
- DigiGo Consultation and Extension
- Improved Ticketing and Fares
- Smart Timetables at Bus Stops (digital timetables)
- Essex Zebra

Rail Infrastructure

Beaulieu Park Station in Chelmsford opened in October 2025 and is the first new railway station to be built on the Great Eastern Main Line in over 100 years. This is significant new infrastructure which will materially impact carbon emissions from transport in Essex, including by:

- Reducing overall emissions for private vehicles by promoting the use of train travel
- Removing unnecessary journeys into Chelmsford City Centre, thereby reducing emissions
- The new station will have a large bus interchange, taxi stop area and a large number of cycle racks to promote the use of sustainable modes to travel to the train station
- There will be a large number of EV charging points which will promote cleaner vehicles if other sustainable modes are not an option

Community Rail

The Essex and South Suffolk Community Rail Partnership has been working diligently to promote train travel on the six branch lines within Essex and South Suffolk. By highlighting places to visit by train and hosting dedicated train events, over 900 people (through event ticket sales) elected to take a specific journey by train rather than another mode. Looking ahead to 2025/26, the team has 14 planned events aimed at encouraging even more people to use the train. We are encouraging residents, who are not regular train users, to consider the railways by providing them with a great experience.



Beaulieu Park Station, Chelmsford - ©Mullholland Media



Cyclist on Head Street, Colchester

Active Travel

Essex County Council has secured £5.49 million in 2025/26 from Active Travel England tranche 6 to improve walking, wheeling and cycling across the county. This is in addition to the £19.76 million we have received since 2020. The funding is invested in designing and building active travel networks across Essex, and has delivered new routes or supporting infrastructure in Braintree, Brentwood, Chelmsford, Clacton, Colchester, Harlow and Wickford.

We have completed Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans for all towns and cities with a population of 50,000 or more and are finalising a rural plan, which will link these routes together and connect rural areas. Central government funding is standardly contingent on these local plans, so it is crucial ECC supports their development. We also provide advice on travel plans for new housing developments.

We also received £731,427 funding towards Bikeability, the national cycle training programme for school children and their families, training over 13,500 individuals to promote safe riding behaviours to keep everybody safe. ECC also provides the Essex Cycle Grant to community organisations to encourage cycling.

ECC supports schools to develop and implement travel plans. We are using the HomeRun STEP (School Travel Evaluation Platform), funded by Innovate UK, to predict and support changes to school travel patterns. STEP has modelled school travel for over 210,000 pupils across all 520 public schools. Previously, we only had capacity to work with approximately 35 schools a year. Now, we can provide every school (except SEN) in the county with data-led insight. STEP provides us with the evidence base and enables us to prioritise and design support for schools, and safer school streets to help improve journeys to and from school.

Encouraging people to take some journeys using active modes such as walking, cycling and scooting, not only helps residents become healthier both physically and mentally, but also reduces road congestion and the associated air pollution. Creating networks where it is safe to walk and cycle improves our communities.

We adopted a new **Cycling Strategy** in September 2025, which supports more people of all abilities, ages and backgrounds, to cycle more often. It dovetails with our **Walking Strategy** (adopted in 2021) and both strategies serve as a starting point in encouraging active travel.

Essex Pedal Power

Now in its fourth year, Essex Pedal Power is a community cycling initiative which operates in Clacton & Jaywick Sands, Harwich & Dovercourt, Colchester, Basildon, Canvey Island and Harlow. In addition to over 4,000 bikes provided for eligible residents, the programme provides volunteer opportunities and training sessions to increase health and wellbeing, improve access to training, jobs and employment and to create resilience and connectedness in some of the county's most disadvantaged communities. According to an independent evaluation carried out by socio-economic consultants Volterra, free bike schemes (including Essex Pedal Power) deliver economic, social, and environmental benefits worth £11.80 for every £1 invested, including saving the NHS more than £1 million per year through reduced cases of premature death and non-communicable diseases.

The future of Essex Pedal Power will involve additional bike giveaways in Colchester, Harlow and Canvey Island. Meanwhile, other areas will focus on working closely with our local communities to sustain and enhance activity levels. Additionally, we are introducing more recycled bikes into the programme. This will help to: connect communities; provide opportunities; improve physical and mental health; reduce isolation; and improve access to health, education and employment.

Electric Vehicle Infrastructure

As the UK moves towards all new car sales being electric vehicles (EVs) from 2035 (80% by 2030), we will plan for residents, visitors, and businesses to have access to a reliable, convenient, and fairly priced network of charging points. ECC adopted the **Essex Electric Vehicle Charge Point Strategy** in September 2024, focusing on "The Right Charger in the Right Place". ECC has secured over £8m in grants¹ to introduce over 5,000+ charge point sockets across Essex, primarily for the focus of residents without off-street parking, with 31 locations planned to be completed by the end of 2025.

¹ The £8m stated here goes beyond the life of the Climate Action Plan. The planned grant spend of £1m in 2026/27 and £1.6m in 2027/28 are reflected in the financial summary (please see annex).

Cyclists taking part in the Essex Pedal Power scheme on the Jaywick to Clacton Cycle Route





E-scooter user, Colchester

Electric Scooters

We operate electric scooter trials across Essex and as of May 2025, there have been over 3.2m e-scooter journeys made on a trial e-scooter.

Highways

The **Essex Highways Strategy for Climate Adaptation**, along with the **Essex Highways Strategy for Managing its Green Estate** and **Essex Highways Decarbonisation Strategy**, are at the heart of Essex County Council’s environmental planning for its Highways assets. We are continuing to deliver our Green Streets programme, maintaining and increasing numbers of street trees across Essex.

Army and Navy Junction

The Army and Navy junction in Chelmsford **is being redeveloped** and will include a programme to improve the junction, with the expansion of two Park & Ride sites and bus priority and active travel measures.

Ongoing Initiatives (March 2025 – 2027/28)

Initiative	Description	Start	End	Finance (£)		Alignment to Everyone’s Essex			
				2021/22 to 2024/25	2025/26 to 2027/28	Econ	Env	Health	Place
Active Travel	Active Travel work includes the design and construction, and upgrades of walking, wheeling and cycling networks (or LCWIPs), walkable neighbourhoods and school streets, with the objective of increasing walking and cycling for everyday journeys. We have worked with 28 schools to complete 16 Safer Street programmes.	Apr 2021	Ongoing	£18.8m	£13.3m		  	  	

Initiative	Description	Start	End	Finance (£)		Alignment to Everyone's Essex			
				2021/22 to 2024/25	2025/26 to 2027/28	Econ	Env	Health	Place
Active Travel Capability Building	<p>Developing infrastructure plans and designs, public consultation and evidence collection.</p> <p>Carrying out community engagement activities, such as school programmes, training and promotion.</p> <p>Examples include: giving fleet bikes to children who cannot participate in Bikeability training because they don't have a roadworthy bike; or our Living Streets/WOW Walk to School Challenge encouraging children to walk and cycle to school.</p> <p>Thanks to Active Travel England funding, Living Streets was able to launch WOW in 30 primary schools across Essex. As part of the challenge, pupils record how they get to school on the WOW Travel Tracker, with badges for those who walk, wheel, cycle or scoot to school. This motivates children to become more active, while reducing congestion at the school gates.</p>	Apr 2021	Mar 2026	£3.0m	£1.2m	 	   	  	

Initiative	Description	Start	End	Finance (£)		Alignment to Everyone's Essex			
				2021/22 to 2024/25	2025/26 to 2027/28	Econ	Env	Health	Place
Bus Service Improvement Plan	<p>Essex County Council published its Bus Service Improvement Plan. This set out how buses can help deliver safer, greener and healthier travel in Essex. The plan outlines specific measures where Essex County Council (ECC) will work with the bus industry and other partners to deliver safer, greener and healthier travel. ECC received the following bus grant funding: £9.8m of BSIP+ funding to be spent by March 2026; £9.2m of Bus Grant Capital to be spent by March 2027; £7.3m of Bus Grant revenue to be spent by March 2027. This complements the £2.5m Rural Mobility Funding to support DigiGo.</p>	Apr 2023	Mar 2034	£3.7m	£25.1m		 	 	
Electric Buses in Basildon	<p>55 electric buses, with £30m total spend, of which £4.9m is DfT grant funded, with the remainder being funded by First Essex. Successful ECC bid into Zerba 2. Has been in development for 18 months and delivers in November 2025.</p>	2024	Ongoing	£1.8m	£3.1m		  		

Initiative	Description	Start	End	Finance (£)		Alignment to Everyone's Essex			
				2021/22 to 2024/25	2025/26 to 2027/28	Econ	Env	Health	Place
Essex Cycle Grant	£120,000 set aside for grassroots organisations, designed to increase local, inclusive cycling opportunities and target those who aren't regular cyclists, or are new to cycling, to regularly take part. The money can be used to start up new activities or increase the numbers attending existing activities and is secured through an application process.	Apr 2025	Mar 2028	£495,000	£360,000		   	  	 
School Travel Plans/ Residential Travel Plans and Travel Information Packs	A Plan owned by the school and full of bespoke initiatives to support more journeys to school by walking, scooting, cycling, public transport and car sharing. Decreasing the number of cars on the road can make the environment around the school safer and the air cleaner. We currently have 27 Approved, 15 Good, 1 Very Good and 1 Excellent, so 44 in total. The Sustainable Travel Planning team has also evaluated 27 Travel Plans submitted for new housing developments between August 2024 and July 2025.		Ongoing	Staff time supporting project (MTRS funded)	Staff time supporting project (MTRS funded)		   	  	  

Initiative	Description	Start	End	Finance (£)		Alignment to Everyone's Essex				
				2021/22 to 2024/25	2025/26 to 2027/28	Econ	Env	Health	Place	
	These plans, which are required for developments of more than 80 dwellings, include targets to reduce car use, as well as site-specific measures to support active travel to and from the site, and implementation is monitored annually. Residential Travel Plans help to mitigate the impact of new developments on the highway network by encouraging residents to use more active and sustainable ways to travel. In addition, the Plans are supported by Residential Travel Information Packs, which developers are required to provide to new residents. The packs provide information for residents on popular cycling routes within the area, bus timetables, benefits of owning an electric vehicle and details of car sharing clubs. ECC can provide district-specific Residential Travel Information Packs for new developments, showcasing the travel options in their local area, helping to make Essex Safer, Greener and Healthier by providing information on travel choice.									

Initiative	Description	Start	End	Finance (£)		Alignment to Everyone's Essex			
				2021/22 to 2024/25	2025/26 to 2027/28	Econ	Env	Health	Place
Bikeability	<p>Bikeability: Cycle training provided in schools and during holidays for children.</p> <p>Aiming to deliver to below:</p> <p>Level 1 & 2: 11,842 places</p> <p>Level 1: 1,000 places</p> <p>Level 3: 300 places</p> <p>Learn to Ride: 500 places</p> <p>Funded Cycle Training: Available for adults in Essex</p>	Mar 2026	Ongoing	£1.6m	£731,427		  	 	 
Electric Vehicle Strategy – Phase 2	<p>Development of the Electric Vehicle Strategy – Phase 2. Focussing on alternative vehicles, including heavy goods vehicles, taxis and buses.</p> <p>Please note, these funds were or are part of the reserve drawdown lines in the financial table</p> <p>Continue to deliver the action plan for Phase 1.</p>	Sep 2025	Sep 2026		£75,000		 		
		Ongoing							

Initiative	Description	Start	End	Finance (£)		Alignment to Everyone's Essex			
				2021/22 to 2024/25	2025/26 to 2027/28	Econ	Env	Health	Place
Electric Vehicle Charging Network	<p>Grant funding from Office of Zero Emission Vehicles for two related projects:</p> <p>On-street Residential Charging Point (ORCS) grant to install ~66 residential on-street charging points across Essex.</p> <p>And Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) Fund grant to install at least 5,000 residential charging points in on street and off-street locations across Essex, over a five-year period.</p>	Mar 2023	Sep 2025	£36,000	£2.8m		 		
Electric Vehicle Charging Network	<p>Exploring options for cross pavement charging solutions with the intent to trialling suitable solutions. This will enable eligible residents without off-street parking to be able to safely charge electric vehicles on-street using their home energy supply.</p>	Jul 2025	Jun 2026		Resident covers cost		 		

Initiative	Description	Start	End	Finance (£)		Alignment to Everyone's Essex				
				2021/22 to 2024/25	2025/26 to 2027/28	Econ	Env	Health	Place	
Essex Pedal Power	<p>Essex Pedal Power is a community-based project giving free quality bikes to qualifying residents to encourage them to become more active and enable them to travel to work, school, college, shopping and/or leisure.</p> <p>Upgrade of cycle route from Jaywick to Clacton. Getting Building Fund EPP Grant funded from the Department for Levelling Up.</p>	Nov 2021	Ongoing	£6.601m	£790,000		 	  		
E-Scooter Trials	<p>Continuing to participate in the Department for Transport's e-scooter trials. We have awarded a new contract for a Service Provider to operate the service until the end of May 2026.</p> <p>As of May 2025, there have been over 3.2m e-scooter journeys made on a trial e-scooter.</p>	Dec 2020	May 2026 (or later if govt legislation not introduced) legislation not introduced)	Costs prior to original Climate Action Plan (2020/21)	£2,000		  			

Initiative	Description	Start	End	Finance (£)		Alignment to Everyone's Essex					
				2021/22 to 2024/25	2025/26 to 2027/28	Econ	Env	Health	Place		
Beaulieu Park rail station	<p>Construction of the first new railway station on the Great Eastern Main Line in over 100 years opened in October 2025.</p> <p>There are pedestrian and cycle access routes to the station with 500 spaces for cycle parking and storage. There is also a bus interchange, including bus stands for local services.</p> <p>Three platforms with a central loop line and new tracks to enable stopping services to call at the station, while allowing fast trains to pass through unimpeded.</p>		2025	£164.4m	£14.4m		   				

Initiative	Description	Start	End	Finance (£)		Alignment to Everyone's Essex				
				2021/22 to 2024/25	2025/26 to 2027/28	Econ	Env	Health	Place	
Smarter Travel for Essex Network (STEN)	Free business travel planning support is provided to organisations through the Smarter Travel for Essex Network (STEN). This now has 26 member organisations. This includes: borough, district, and city councils, healthcare providers and business sites and 17 (since first implementation) of its members have achieved Modeshift STARS accreditation. This is a national award that recognises excellence in promoting walking, cycling and other sustainable modes of transport. letstalkessexsustainabletravel.co.uk/hub-page/businesses	Apr 2025	Mar 2028	Staff time supporting project (MTRS funded)	Staff time supporting project (MTRS funded)		   			

Select key achievements:

- Completed our LED streetlight installation programme, which is expected to save around 80% in energy costs.
- Improved walking and cycling facilities in 16 school streets.
- Delivered Harlow cycling route 9. This includes: new crossings, streetlighting, new wayfinding signs, resurfacing, drainage improvements and vegetation clearance.
- Essex Pedal Power and Clacton to Jaywick cycle route – removing barriers in our most deprived communities linking 4,000 free bikes being given out with new infrastructure including solar/wind lighting for 24-hour access.
- Construction and the opening of new Beaulieu Park rail station.

You can find out more about completed and ongoing initiatives in the [Essex Climate Action Annual Report](#).



Cyclists taking part in the Essex Pedal Power scheme, Jaywick



Tendring Reuse Scheme, Clacton

9. Waste

Waste generation is often viewed as an inevitability of modern living which we have little influence over. However, the decisions we take every day as consumers in what we buy, where we buy it from and the actions we take when we throw things away, all have significant impacts on the amount of waste produced, the systems required to manage it, and the climate and environment impacts.

Dealing with the rubbish and recycling produced by homes and businesses is responsible for 5% of greenhouse gas emissions nationally.¹ It is important we do not forget this is only the end-point of product manufacture, transport, and consumption of all the things we buy and use. The things we throw away quickly or are difficult to reuse, repair or recycle, have significant climate change impacts.

¹ **2023 UK Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Final Figures**, Department for Energy Security & Net Zero, February 2025

The creation of a zero-waste economy is a core priority, with a particular commitment to embedding the circular economy into how we treat resources and manage waste. This means working in collaboration across sectors to embed approaches where materials never become waste through the efficient use of natural resources in the manufacture of the products we buy, and by processes such as maintenance, reuse, refurbishment, remanufacture, recycling and composting.

We remain a top performing county. However, recycling rates have stagnated in recent years, and we continue to produce more waste than other parts of the country. A reset is needed where manufacturers design waste out of products, services are established to collect more waste for reuse and recycling, and residents are supported, so we can all reduce our impact.

The management of household waste in Essex is the responsibility of the county council and the 12 borough, city, and district councils. Essex County Council and the 12 councils are working collaboratively as the Essex Waste Partnership (EWP) to reduce waste and increase the opportunity for everyone to reduce, reuse and recycle.

Waste Strategy for Essex – Action Plan 2025

In the last 12 months, the **Waste Strategy for Essex** was adopted by all 13 councils in the **Essex Waste Partnership**. The waste strategy sets out how we will manage the recycling and waste that is produced by homes and businesses for the next 30 years. The partnership identified four key priorities for Essex: move to a circular economy; apply the waste hierarchy; collaborate and innovate; and to educate and engage. The action plan sets out what we will do in 2025 to help deliver the Waste Strategy for Essex. To find out more about our plans for 2025, **read the full action plan**.

Four key priorities for Essex:

-  Move to a circular economy
-  Apply the waste hierarchy
-  Collaborate and innovate
-  Educate and engage

In target areas, increased the amount of food waste collected for recycling by **21%** and reduced CO₂e emissions by **over 90%**



500 electrical items collected for repair and reuse



The Love Essex Fund has supported over **400 projects** that inspire a reduction in household waste



Tackling food waste

In Essex, all 12 borough, city and district councils provide a food recycling service. Despite this, around 25% of waste thrown away in the general rubbish bin is still food. Starting in 2023, ECC rolled out a project to galvanise residents into recycling their food waste. Phase 1 of the project targeted 375,000 households across nine districts and boroughs. Phase 2 started in 2024 and targeted 131,000 households across the three remaining districts, providing support to residents, along with targeted communications and an education campaign. Overall, this has increased the amount of food waste collected for recycling in the targeted areas by 21% and reduced CO₂e emissions by over 90%. We are always looking for new opportunities to increase food recycling, including trials in blocks of flats, and piloting food recycling participation campaigns.

ECC continues to support those wishing to compost their food and garden waste at home through the provision of online resources, courses and subsidised home compost bins. Over the last 12 months, just over 1,000 residents have taken up these offers.

Through extensive partnership working, underpinned by inter-authority agreements with the borough, city and district councils, ECC has provided on-going funding of around £12 million per year to develop and secure the delivery of food and garden waste recycling services from homes across Essex.

Public engagement and education

The Essex Waste Partnership has adopted a shared approach to communicating reuse, recycling, and anti-littering messages. Through a series of digital platforms, we aim to inspire Essex residents to reduce the amount of waste they throw away, reuse and repair items more, and increase the amount of waste recycled. Over the last 12 months we have engaged with over 85,000 residents across our social media platforms and now have over 20,000 followers in total. We've also had over 500,000 users on the new **Love Essex website** over the last year.

In January 2025, we also launched a partnership campaign with ten local authorities in Essex, with the aim of reducing fly-tipping incidents across the county. This focused on educating residents on what the impacts of fly tipping are, how to book a responsible waste carrier and alternative methods of disposing of waste. The campaign was promoted across all Love Essex digital channels and was widely shared by partners.

Supporting reuse and recycling

Working with a range of providers, ECC aims to maximise the refurbishment and reuse of end of use items.

ECC has worked with the **Lighthouse Project** to collect over 500 electrical items for repair and reuse. In addition, a partnership has been established with a further seven local charities to give a new lease of life to items taken by residents to Clacton and Lawford Recycling Centre, which would otherwise have been thrown away. At least 200 Essex households have been helped to date with furniture donations, saving over £11,000 and more than 3,290kg of CO₂.

ECC has worked in partnership with Essex councils to divert large items from landfill to be recycled, and rolled out new recycling services for Essex residents, including: the expansion of plastic recycling; the introduction of coffee pod recycling collection points; trialling the collection of electrical items; as well as paint reuse trials at Clacton and Witham recycling centres.

Our work with the online community platform **Freagle** has ensured unwanted items have a new lease of life, rather than being thrown away. Over the last year, over 11,000 items have been given away by Essex residents.

Our work with over 170 'Love Essex Champions' has now been completed, enabling waste and recycling expertise to be embedded into communities across Essex.

Love Essex Fund

The Love Essex Fund provides £500 micro-grants to local organisations, individuals, and schools with projects that create or inspire a reduction in household waste. In the last 12 months, a further 41 projects across Essex have been supported, bringing the total number of projects supported to over 400. These include projects such as the Radwinter Repair Café (which is run by volunteers in Saffron Walden) and was helped with set-up costs. Over 75% of items bought to them have been repaired. Baby Basics in Billericay was another successful applicant. The funding has allowed them to provide 36 Moses basket starter packs, which include donated baby clothes for vulnerable families and mothers referred to their service.



Ongoing Initiatives (March 2025 – 2027/28)

Initiative	Description	Start	End	Finance (£)		Alignment to Everyone's Essex				
				2021/22 to 2024/25	2025/26 to 2027/28	Econ	Env	Health	Place	
Behaviour Change	Delivery of educational and behaviour change projects by the Essex Waste Partnership that aim to reduce household waste, improve recycling and tackle waste crime.		Ongoing	£2.1m	£2.2m		 			
Biowaste Treatment	Secured Biowaste treatment to ensure future treatment capacity of garden waste and food waste collected by Essex councils for recycling.	Apr 2023	Apr 2028	£8.9m	£12.2m		 			
Waste Strategy for Essex (Delivery)	Development and delivery of a 30-year framework strategy to deliver the Essex Waste Partnership vision for a low waste, low carbon future for waste management in Essex.	Jan 2025	Mar 2028	£507,000			 			

Select key achievements:

- ECC is setting a new standard for measuring and reducing fossil carbon emissions in its new waste contracts. As part of the tender selection process, bidders were required to calculate the carbon emissions from their waste treatment solution. The evaluation process favoured those solutions with lower emissions. The successful contractor is required to keep their emissions below their submitted level. Financial deductions apply for any exceedances and will be used by ECC to offset any harm caused.
- The **Waste Strategy for Essex** has been developed, consulted on and adopted by the 13 Essex councils of the Essex Waste Partnership. This 30-year strategy sets a framework for waste management in Essex with the delivery of a more Circular Economy and carbon efficiency at its core.
- ECC designed and delivered a county-wide activity to 400,000 properties, increasing the capture of food waste for recycling by around 21% and reducing carbon emission by over 90%.
- ECC has insourced the operation of core waste management infrastructure such as recycling centres, waste transfer stations and haulage fleet. Through investment in new plant and fleet, as well as operational changes, ECC has been able to tackle carbon inefficiency and reduce waste miles.
- Provided micro grants to over 400 Essex organisations focussed on delivering community-based waste reduction, reuse and recycling initiatives.

You can find out more about completed and ongoing initiatives in the **Essex Climate Action Annual Report**.



Tending Reuse Scheme, Lawford

10. Community Engagement

We are working with communities and businesses, providing advice and support to enable and empower local action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and build climate resilience.

We have a comprehensive communications and engagement strategy and delivery plan, based on extensive resident research and updated in line with annual resident surveys.

In July 2021, Essex County Council launched the £500,000 Climate Action Challenge Fund to kickstart community action across the county. Running to 2023, the fund supported over 40 community groups with small grants of up to £20,000, unlocking a raft of local action. Some of the projects which received funding included:

- Groundwork East provided climate crew club workshops in schools through the funding it received.
- Several schools received funding to rewild school grounds and create a forest school area.
- Sea Change Sailing Trust provides opportunities for young people and vulnerable adults. It received funding for an engineless wind-powered barge that transports cargo to and from ports in Essex. Each load takes a delivery vehicle off Essex roads and highlights the environmental benefits of using local waterways to transport low-emission coastal cargo.
- Chelmsford Cathedral was awarded funding to bring Gaia, the climate-inspired artwork, to Essex. Gaia is a replica of the Earth's globe (created from detailed NASA imagery), measuring six metres in diameter. It was suspended in the Cathedral building and provided visitors with an awe-inspiring encounter with planet Earth. A programme of events ran alongside the artwork, encouraging people to reflect on their role in protecting and caring for Earth. Over 40,000 people saw the exhibition over three weeks and a total of 1,000 pledges were made by visitors.



Total financial commitments: **£1.2m over the next three year**



£500,000 has been awarded to over 40 local projects

Several schools received funding to **rewild school grounds**



- Wilderness Foundation UK received funding to help young people and adults reconnect to nature, society and themselves through outdoor facilitation workshops, immersion therapy and mentoring. The project involved a collection of interactive workshops that informed young people about climate change and sustainability, empowering them to make active change in their schools and local communities.

We introduced Carbon Literacy Training to Essex County Council in 2022. We specially adapted the training materials from the Carbon Literacy Project for Essex County Council staff and councillors. Over 470 staff and councillors have now been accredited and Essex County Council has been awarded Bronze status as a Carbon Literate Organisation. As part of the training, delegates must pledge to take action. An annual competition has been established which encourages those accredited to detail how they have implemented their pledges, and an annual award ceremony allows delegates to receive a framed certificate and prizes for the competition winners. Initially, the training was conducted by an external training provider, but an annual Train-the-Trainer programme means that the Council now has a number of trained facilitators in-house, who can deliver the training to fellow colleagues going forward. Several district and borough councils have also used the training materials which were specially adapted for Essex to deliver the training.

The council is also rolling out a programme of Water Literacy Training, with a number of staff and councillors already achieving accreditation. The Council is also exploring opportunities to run a Train-the-Trainer programme for Water Literacy, in the same way it has done for Carbon Literacy, so that we have a number of trained facilitators for that too.

Cllr Peter Schwier, Cabinet Member for Environment, Waste Reduction and Recycling, at the Gaia Exhibition, Chelmsford Cathedral





Community-Led Energy Plan Workshop, Colchester

In September 2024, the **Essex Schools' Climate Action Network** (ESCAN) was established to champion climate action. To date, 18 schools have engaged with the network. The idea came from a young co-chair of the Essex Climate Action Commission, who wanted to find a way to support young people in their sustainability journey and encourage them to lead climate action in schools. The network meets on a termly basis to support young people. ESCAN is supported by officers from across Essex County Council.

In 2025/26, the Council will be providing 25 primary and nursery schools in Essex with a Sustainable Urban Drainage System planter. These planters will help reduce surface water flooding on school grounds. The planters can also be used to help students learn about the water cycle and the importance of sustainable drainage systems. To complement this, Essex County Council has created educational posters for schools and leaflets for residents, illustrating the positive impact of having a sustainable garden. Children in the schools will be encouraged to take these home to share with their parents. The leaflet provides practical solutions for Essex residents to make their gardens more sustainable and flood resilient.

In addition, a new climate and sustainability page on **Essex Schools Infolink** has been established, supporting teachers and schools in appointing a sustainability lead and developing a climate action plan as the Department for Education's **Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy for Education** states: "By 2025, all education settings will have nominated a sustainability lead and put in place a climate action plan". The Infolink page will continue to be developed over 2025/26.

We attend a wide range of outreach events throughout the year, engaging with diverse audiences, including schools, businesses and residents on climate action and the 2025/26 programme is now well underway. We have also organised climate conferences for local city, district and borough councils and will continue to do so.

We launched the Jaywick Energy Hub in summer 2024 in partnership with Tendring District Council and Citizens Advice Tendring. The Hub is the result of a year-long community engagement process, which we led with grant funding from the EU-funded Shared Green Deal Project. The Hub provides trusted face-to-face advice on home energy efficiency, grant funding, and income maximisation. The Hub also offers in-home energy efficiency visits from Green Doctors and Community Energy Colchester, providing practical advice and installing small, energy-saving measures. It has delivered advice to more than 200 residents and helped more than 30 clients apply for >£230,000 in unclaimed benefits.

ECC continues to support community energy groups across the county, as outlined in the Energy chapter (see **page 44**). Community groups have secured funding from Government for the Local Energy Advice Demonstrator to develop a network of energy champions. ECC is working with communities to explore ways to further develop community-led energy advice and retrofit.

Total financial commitment (revenue) for Engagement and Communications is £1.2m over the next three years, building on the £1.4m invested since 2021.

10.1 Advice and Information

The climate advice packs for residents, schools and businesses, were first launched in May 2022 and are regularly reviewed to ensure advice is up-to-date. Further advice packs have been developed for early years settings, as well as an easy read version for residents.

More support and resources were developed and launched for early years settings, such as a checklist and template plans to help settings develop their climate action plans, as required by the Department for Education by 2025. A suite of seven A5 posters was also developed for early years settings on a range of themes, such as energy, waste and outdoor spaces.



Opening of the Jaywick Energy Hub



The Essex Climate website received **14,177 page views** in 12 months



4,840 views associated with the climate advice packs in 12 months

The ECAC social media accounts have had **77,885 impressions** in 12 months



Post reactions are up **13%** and shares are up **7.3%** in the last 12 months

Advice on greening school grounds is in development.

10.2 Digital Support and Social Media

The Essex Climate Action Commission [website](#) continues to host information on climate action in Essex.

In the two and a half years since Google Analytics was added in mid-September 2022, the website has achieved 49,800 page views. 11,700 of those page views are associated with pages containing the advice packs. Over the last twelve months only, there have been 14,177 page views. 4,840 associated with the advice packs. The webpage on which the climate advice packs are hosted, the 'what can I do' page, is the most viewed page (other than the homepage) with 4,549 views.

The social media accounts for Essex Climate Action on Facebook, Instagram, X and LinkedIn are used to post and share information on climate action, ECC and partner activity, as well as to direct people to various web pages and events. Over the last 12 months, there have been 77,885 impressions, which are all organic as there have been no paid ad campaigns. The post engagement rate is 6.75%. Post reactions are up 13% and shares are up 7.3% on the prior year. These are combined figures for Facebook, Instagram, X and LinkedIn. (Data comparing 1 August 2023 to 31 July 2024 with 1 August 2024 to 31 July 2025).

A new website and social media channels are currently also being developed to act as a one stop shop for all things climate action across the whole county. The new Sustainable Essex will have its own identity and be a new one stop shop for all things climate in Essex. The new channels will act as a hub for everyone in Essex to showcase their climate action and are due to go live in 2025/26.

The [Carbon Cutting Essex app](#) supports residents in understanding simple ways they can reduce their carbon footprint. It focuses on a different theme each month, across a range of climate action related areas, such as energy and waste. New themes for the app have been established for the 2025/26 period. Users of the app can earn points which can be used to win prizes or donate to charity. Top features of the app include:

- A community wall which allows users to share best practice with others
- Weekly fun activities such as quizzes, videos and blogs

- Prize draws, donations and discounts in the app's Eco Store
- Pledges that residents can take to make positive changes to their lifestyles

An exciting new development in the app will be coming in late 2025/26, when a new competition for schools to win a schools' sustainability kit will be launched. Schools will be able to join the app and parents will be able to donate the points they win for taking climate action to their child's school, for it to be in with a chance of winning a kit each term.

Through the Talking About Nature project, working with Involve (the public participation organisation), we developed a resource to help local town and parish councils to engage with their local communities and to support them to develop their own local nature plans. This is now available on the [ECAC website](#).

A separate website has been developed for the [Essex Local Nature Partnership](#). As the Essex Forest Initiative has now come to the end of its five-year life, the Facebook page will transition to a page for the Local Nature Partnership and the Local Nature Recovery Strategy. Thanks to the promotion of volunteering opportunities with the Essex Forest Initiative through its Facebook page and on other channels, there have been over 1,100 volunteer registrations for planting with the Essex Forest Initiative since 2021, which has led to over 5,500 volunteering hours.



Ongoing Initiatives (March 2025 – 2027/28)

Initiative	Description	Initiative Start Date	Projected Delivery Date	Alignment to Everyone's Essex			
				Econ	Env	Health	Place
Climate Advice Packs	<p>We have produced advice packs for residents, schools and businesses, explaining the impact of climate change to these different audiences, what they can do about it and how to get involved. Packs were launched in May 2022 and refreshed in summer 2024. They will be further updated in 2025/26.</p> <p>An additional advice pack for early years settings is also now available, as well as other resources, to support settings in developing a climate action plan.</p> <p>An easy read version of the residents' advice pack has also been developed for those with learning difficulties.</p> <p>Over 3,300 copies of our climate advice packs have been downloaded from the website, with the breakdown as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resident pack: 1,181 • Business pack: 874 • Schools' pack: 684 • Early Years' pack: 615 • Easy Read pack: 33 	2022/23	Ongoing		   		

Initiative	Description	Initiative Start Date	Projected Delivery Date	Alignment to Everyone's Essex			
				Econ	Env	Health	Place
	A new climate and sustainability page on Essex Schools Infolink has been established to host information to support schools in establishing a sustainability lead and developing their climate action plan as mandated by the DfE.						
Annual Climate Conferences	Annual climate conferences, hosted by ECC, attended by local authority members and officers from across Essex.	Apr 2022	Ongoing		   		

Initiative	Description	Initiative Start Date	Projected Delivery Date	Alignment to Everyone's Essex			
				Econ	Env	Health	Place
Online Activity	<p>Website and Digital Channels</p> <p>The essexclimate.org website has been developed and the Essex Climate Commission social media channels continue to amplify climate messaging. The Carbon Cutting Essex app has been developed (at a cost of £112,007).</p> <p>Through the Carbon Cutting Essex app, over 27,000 actions have been taken by app users, including taking climate themed quizzes, watching videos about climate change and pledging to take action.</p> <p>The new Sustainable Essex channels are in development and will be launched in 2025/26 (estimated to cost £60,000).</p>	Apr 2022	Ongoing		    		
Events	Programme of events for 2025/26, to continue face-to-face engagement with residents, businesses, and schools.	2021	Ongoing		  		

Initiative	Description	Initiative Start Date	Projected Delivery Date	Alignment to Everyone's Essex			
				Econ	Env	Health	Place
Essex Schools' Climate Action Network	Network to support young people/schools in taking climate action.	2024	Ongoing		 		
Schools' sustainability kits	In 2025/26, a new competition will be launched for schools and early years settings to have the opportunity to win a schools' sustainability kit via the Carbon Cutting Essex app . Estimated cost is £35,000.	2025	2026		 		
Water Butt Giveaway	Hosted via Facebook. Competition held whereby people could enter a prize draw for approximately ten water butts. This typically runs once a year. £13,142 2021/22 – 2024/25, £1,738 remaining to be spent in 2025/26.	2020	Ongoing				
Reduced cost water butts	50% off 100L and 200L water butts from GetComposting.	2020	Ongoing				
SuDS Planters for Schools	Supply of SuDS planter to over 100 schools and community spaces.	2025	Ongoing				

Initiative	Description	Initiative Start Date	Projected Delivery Date	Alignment to Everyone's Essex			
				Econ	Env	Health	Place
Carbon Literacy and Water Literacy training	Following the successful rollout of carbon literacy training and a train-the-trainer (TTT) programme, the Council plans to run further TTT sessions and roll out Water Literacy training in 2026/27. £97,021 spent on Carbon Literacy Training.	2026/27	Ongoing		 		
Jaywick Community Energy Hub – Horizon 2020 Shared Green Deal	Energy advice centre which has supported more than 200 residents and helped more than 30 clients apply for >£230,000 in unclaimed benefit. Set up and operations grant funded through the H2020 Shared Green Deal Fund. Seeking additional funding to extend service. Grant funding received is £18,310.	Apr 2023	Ongoing		   		
Weather Wise Gardens	Programme to highlight the important role of gardens in flood risk reduction, nature conservation and improved health.		Ongoing		  		

Initiative	Description	Initiative Start Date	Projected Delivery Date	Alignment to Everyone's Essex			
				Econ	Env	Health	Place
Carbon Cutting Essex App	In May 2023, Essex County Council launched a new Carbon Cutting Essex App to support residents, schools and businesses in taking action on climate. You can download the free app through: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• GooglePlay• App Store• Greenredeem website	Apr 2022	Apr 2026		   		

You can find out more about completed and ongoing initiatives in the [Essex Climate Action Annual Report](#).

11. Evaluation and Monitoring

Essex County Council (ECC) has an organisational ambition to reach net zero on its core estate by 2030 and is committed to publishing its own greenhouse gas emissions annually.

We are also working to reduce the impact of the goods and services we purchase (scope 3) and have baselined our greenhouse gas emissions for our supply chain (see [page 99](#)).

Definitions

Under the Green House Gas protocol to measure the greenhouse gas emissions for an organisation, the scopes can be defined as:

- **Scope 1 emissions (direct emissions)** are those from activities owned or controlled by your organisation. Examples of Scope 1 emissions include emissions from combustion in owned or controlled boilers, furnaces and vehicles, as well as emissions from chemical production in owned or controlled process equipment.

- **Scope 2 emissions (energy indirect)** are those released into the atmosphere that are associated with your consumption of purchased electricity, heat, steam, and cooling. These indirect emissions are a consequence of your organisation's energy use but occur at sources you do not own or control.

- **Scope 3 emissions (other indirect)** are a consequence of your actions that occur at sources you do not own or control and are not classed as Scope 2 emissions. Scope 3 emissions can be from activities that are upstream or downstream of your organisation.

This greenhouse gas analysis is conducted on an annual basis and utilises the latest emissions intensity factors published by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy/the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and follows the standard methodology to classify and quantify the appropriate emissions for each sector i.e., multiplying activity data by the emissions intensity factor.

ECC Green House Gas Emissions (Scope 1 & 2)

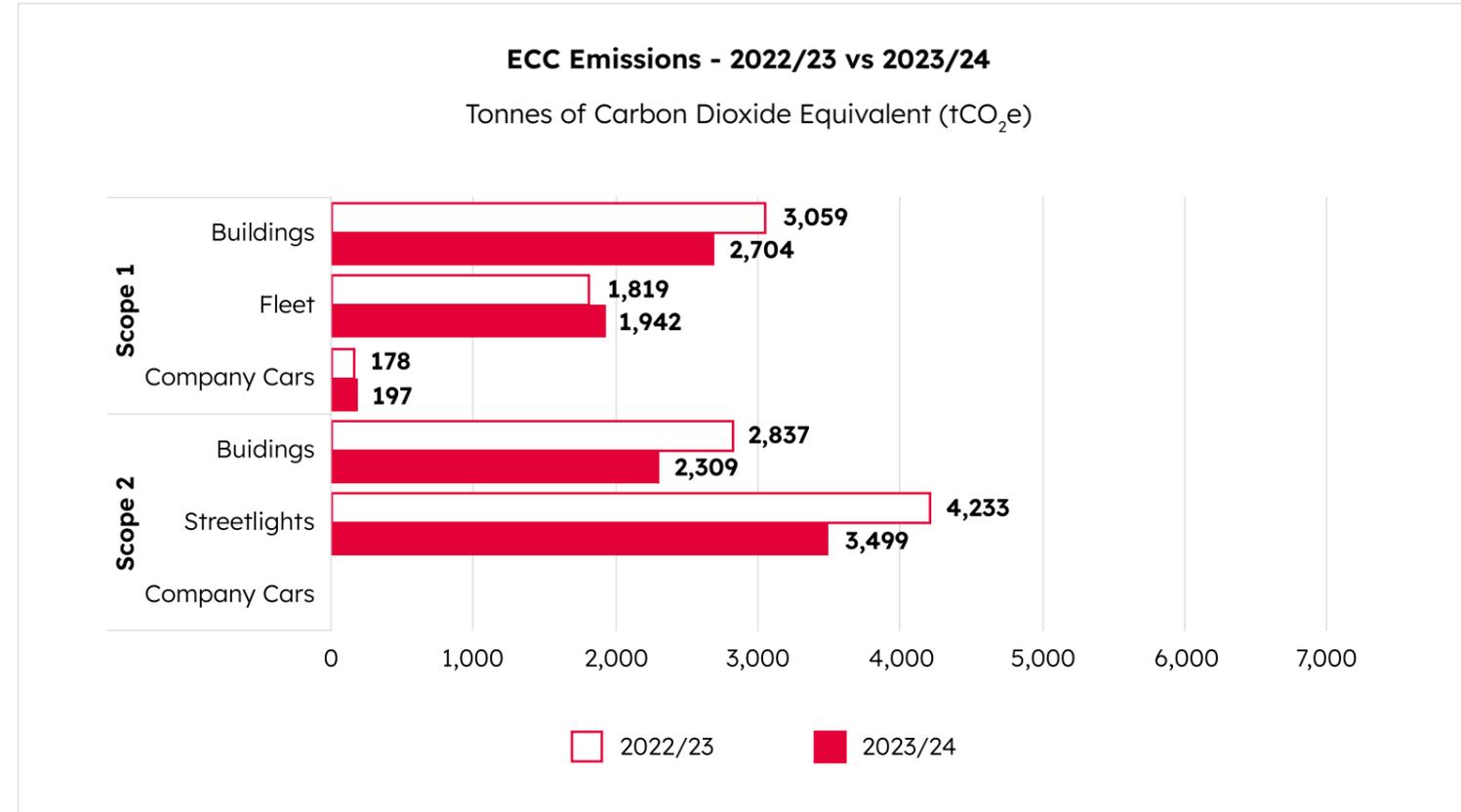
The following table and graph show the breakdown of scope 1 and 2 emissions for the financial years of 2018/19 through to 2023/24 across ECC owned buildings, ECC fleet vehicles and company car mileage.

Financial Year	Scope 1 (tCO ₂ e)	Scope 2 (tCO ₂ e)	Total (tCO ₂ e)
2018/19	5,031	14,415	19,446
2019/20	4,845	14,149	18,994
2020/21	4,058	11,648	15,707
2021/22	5,282	9,822	15,103
2022/23	5,506	7,070	12,126
2023/24	4,843	5,808	10,651



Epping Forest

Overall, greenhouse gas emissions (carbon dioxide equivalent) have fallen by 42.2% over the six years between 2018/19 and 2023/24, helped by numerous initiatives such as the LED Streetlight replacement scheme.



Scope 3 Baseline

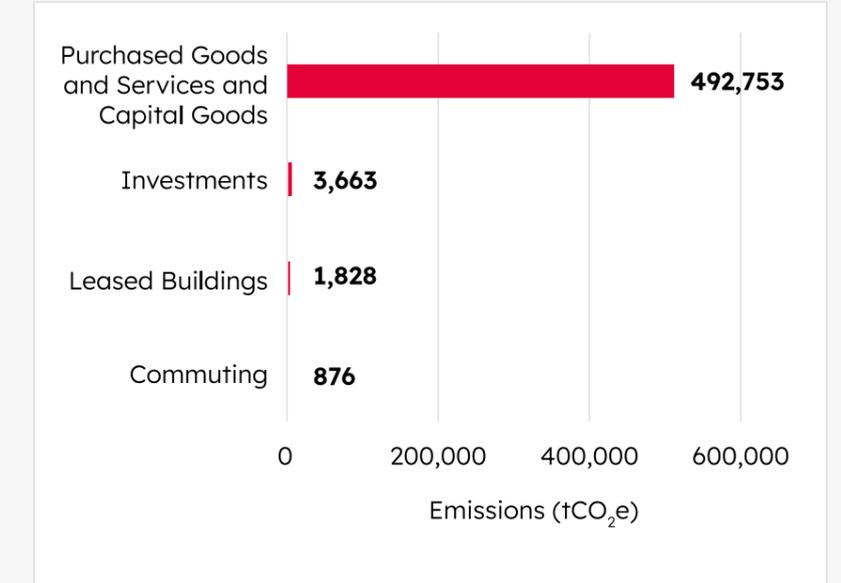
Whilst ECC is directly addressing the above scope 1 and 2 emissions via a rollout of energy efficiency and renewable energy generation measures across the estate, scope 3 emissions are typically outside ECC’s direct influence. As a result, The Carbon Trust was commissioned to produce a scope 3 baseline for the 2020/21 financial year (FY), which provides a foundation so that the council can track these emissions year on year, as they are typically the largest share of an organisation’s carbon footprint.

The sectors considered for the scope 3 baseline are as follows in FY20/21:

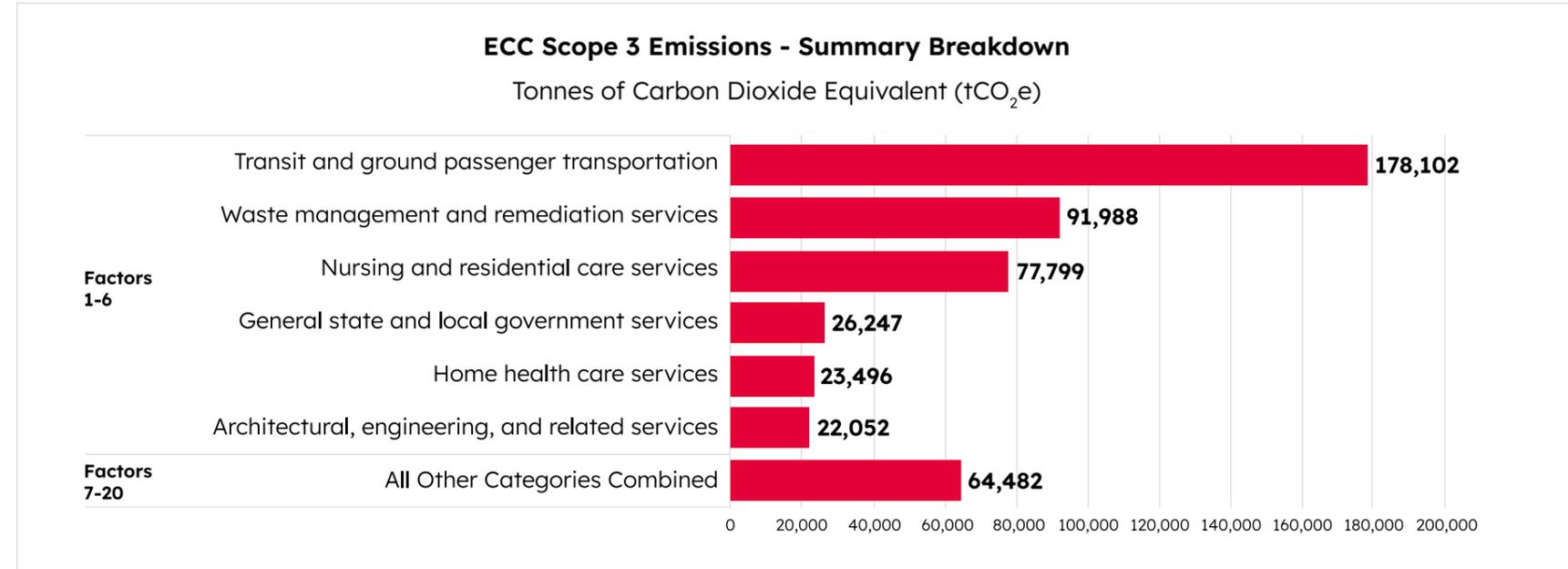
- Purchased goods and services
- Capital Goods
- Investments
- Leased Buildings
- Commuting

Due to the complexity of ascertaining activity data outside organisational boundaries, the accepted methodology is to use Carbon Trust’s Environmentally Friendly Input Output Factors or otherwise known as “EEIO” to derive the cradle to grave emissions, utilising spend data from ECC’s procurement system. Whilst this provides a reasonable estimate across the categories, more specific work is being undertaken to address high emitting suppliers i.e., using the supplier’s primary activity data.

It was found that the total across these sectors was estimated to be 499,120 tCO₂e, with the following breakdown:



As can be seen, purchased goods and services/capital goods are responsible for approximately 99% of the scope 3 carbon footprint. These emissions arise from activities to create products and deliver services that ECC requires to run its operations and the top highest emitting categories are shown in the below chart:



This type of analysis is incredibly useful as these Factors 1-6 represent 83% of the purchased goods and services/capital goods emissions and therefore forms the basis as to which ECC can prioritise tackling and reducing these supply chain emissions. Furthermore, this can be done by initially leveraging the ECC procurement system and engaging with the top ten highest emitting suppliers, getting access to activity data and information to track and evaluate yearly performance.

Essex Green House Gas Emissions

ECC is also committed to publishing an annual report on climate action and greenhouse gas emissions for the county as a whole. The first annual **Essex Climate Action Report** was published in November 2022 and the next one is due in November 2025.

12. Summary Finance Schedule

The Summary Finance Schedule provides detailed financial information in relation to the initiatives included in the Climate Action Plan.

You can view the Summary Finance Schedule in full [here](#).



Solar Farm, Birch, Colchester

13. Completed Initiatives

Essex County Council Estate and School Estate Initiatives

Initiative	Description	Start	End	Finance (£) (Total Spend for Initiative)	Alignment to Everyone's Essex			
					Econ	Env	Health	Place
School Energy Campaign	Campaign for children across ten schools to support energy saving. Grant funded by the EU (2IMPRESZS: Energy Challenges Essex).	Jan 2022	Jun 2023	£30,575		 		
Highways Street Lighting	Completed the replacement of over 130,000 streetlights with energy efficient, low maintenance LEDs, saving around 30 million Kwh of energy each year.	2020/21	Mar 2025	£22.8m				

Initiative	Description	Start	End	Finance (£) (Total Spend for Initiative)	Alignment to Everyone's Essex			
					Econ	Env	Health	Place
Develop Low Carbon Plans for School Estate	ECC team which works with schools to undertake energy audits, develop low-carbon plans, and improve energy efficiency. The team supports securing grant funding for decarbonisation and low-carbon retrofit and serves as key contacts and facilitators for all aspects of funding, including applications, payment claims, monthly monitoring, and carbon reporting. ECC reserve funding.	May 2022	Mar 2025	£187,000	 	  		

A Just Transition to a Green Economy

Initiative	Description	Start	End	Finance (£) (Total Spend for Initiative)	Alignment to Everyone's Essex			
					Econ	Env	Health	Place
Skills and Development	Retrofit Academy The Retrofit Academy Community Interest Company (CIC) – in partnership with Essex County Council – ran a project to support residents and businesses to create jobs and growth from making private properties more energy efficient. The project targeted Harlow and Tendring, Basildon, Colchester and Castlepoint as priority areas. Funded by Government grants from Community Renewal Fund (£733,000) and Home Decarbonisation Training Skills Competition (£95,000).		Dec 2022	£798,000	   	   		
Skills Plan	Green Skills Summit.	Jan 2023	Mar 2023	£34,000	  	 		

Initiative	Description	Start	End	Finance (£) (Total Spend for Initiative)	Alignment to Everyone's Essex			
					Econ	Env	Health	Place
Green Growth	Development of evidence base and match funding to support the business cases/ test cases needed. ECC demonstrated the opportunity to business via leveraging its purchasing power, and that of fellow anchor institutions. to facilitate Green Business Growth within Essex.	Dec 2021	Mar 2025	£860,000				
Net Zero Innovation Network NZIN	Net Zero Innovation Network (NZIN) brings together individuals from a wide range of education and business sectors across Essex. The aim is to support partnerships and drive innovation around net zero and included the funding of two PhD students to support research. This work has now evolved and is being supported by our funding finder.	Mar 2021	2025	£43,000	    	    		

Initiative	Description	Start	End	Finance (£) (Total Spend for Initiative)	Alignment to Everyone's Essex			
					Econ	Env	Health	Place
Great Start Launch and promotional campaign	Launch and online promotional campaign for our Great Start Programme – supporting businesses to adopt resilient climate focused practices.	Mar 2024	Mar 2025	£11,000	  	 		
One 2 one Business support - Lean2Green	1-2-1 support for businesses to support their transition to climate focused process and practices.	Mar 2024	Mar 2025	£10,000	  			
Retrofit for Business Success Event	Business engagement event with retrofit and construction businesses to showcase the opportunities for those in local supply chain in the retrofit sector.	Mar 2024	Mar 2025	£12,000	   			

Initiative	Description	Start	End	Finance (£) (Total Spend for Initiative)	Alignment to Everyone's Essex			
					Econ	Env	Health	Place
Retrofit licenses	License agreements to deliver Retrofit Academy Training at ACL and STC training centres in Essex and Infrastructure partnership licenses to support supply chain development.	Apr 2022	Mar 2025	£50,000	   			
Data analytics	Funding to support data collation and data analysis for targeted interventions in key green growth sectors.	Apr 2024	Mar 2025	£45,000	  			

Land Use and Green Infrastructure

Initiative	Description	Start	End	Finance (£) (Total Spend for Initiative)	Alignment to Everyone's Essex			
					Econ	Env	Health	Place
Building Resilience in Communities (BRIC)	A community engagement project ECC undertook with Thames21 in Canvey Island. BRIC was a two-year pilot project funded by the EU, which aimed to empower residents to shape solutions to flood risk. Deliverables include raingardens on Springfield Rd, Canvey.	Mar 2021	Mar 2023	£24,000				
Water Strategy	The Essex Water Strategy project provides a more integrated view of the water challenge and collective action needed in the county to improve our water quality and protect water resources. Please note, these funds were or are part of the reserve drawdown lines in the financial tables in the Summary Financial Schedule.	Apr 2022	Apr 2024	£105,000				
Essex Net Zero Innovation Futures (NEIRF)	Essex Net Zero Innovation Futures 100% funded by EA: Natural Environment Investment Readiness Fund. ECC worked with Downforce Technologies, Finance Earth and four Essex landowners to unlock investment in natural capital assets at four pilot sites (total 1,560 ha).	Oct 2022	Oct 2023	£98,000				

Initiative	Description	Start	End	Finance (£) (Total Spend for Initiative)	Alignment to Everyone's Essex			
					Econ	Env	Health	Place
Sustainable Land Use	<p>Sustainable Land Use</p> <p>This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Climate Focus Area (CFA), which acts as a demonstration site for best practice in sustainable land use management (£300,000) North Essex Farm Cluster Green Infrastructure Standards used to assess local planning policy and new developments, published on the Essex Design Guide <p>Key impacts include: Landowners – £3 million for investment in green infrastructure and regenerative farming, of which £2.54 million was private sector funding, impacting 500 hectares new natural green infrastructure being delivered and approximately 200 hectares of agricultural land being brought into sustainable farming in the medium term.</p> <p>This includes ECC contribution to support the setting up of the North Essex Farm Cluster. Also includes award of £40,000 to the Local Nature Partnership and the Essex Wildlife Trust to deliver a community-led programme, benefitting the climate and nature.</p>	Apr 2022	Mar 2025	£601,000				

Energy

Initiative	Description	Start	End	Finance (£) (Total Spend for Initiative)	Alignment to Everyone's Essex			
					Econ	Env	Health	Place
Local Energy Programme (South East New Energy)	South East New Energy (SENE) was a European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) grant to fund and enable local renewable energy projects across the South East through feasibility. Supported eight local community groups, progress 15 projects with feasibility creating a pipeline of £22.8m investment. Overall project budget of £3.8m was distributed across partners in SE England. Total award for Essex was £134,000 with some spend prior to Nov 2021. Project pipeline will be taken forward by work coming out of ESSNET.	Oct 2021	Jun 2023	£47,000				
Community Energy Programme	Supported by Local Energy Communities across the 2 Seas Region (LECSEA) – a grant funded programme to support and grow a network of community energy groups in Essex and develop local energy projects. Grant of £207,398 received was matched by ECC staff time (£168,000), plus £24,000 cash contribution to extend into March 2024. Grant was spent on developing a road map for local energy communities and feasibility studies for local energy projects.	Mar 2021	Mar 2024	£231,000				

Initiative	Description	Start	End	Finance (£) (Total Spend for Initiative)	Alignment to Everyone's Essex			
					Econ	Env	Health	Place
Local Energy – Innovate UK Pathfinder Places 2: SHIFT To Net Zero Communities	Innovate UK grant funding to accelerate investment in net zero projects in schools, support for SMEs, and decarbonising heat. ECC was a partner in this scheme, which was led by EnergyPro. The total budget was £86,000, of which £69,000 was grant funded, of which ECC share was £7,466. The balance was funded by private sector investment. Project funded research and design work into options for investing in retrofit and energy generation in schools at scale. ECC has continued this work to explore options for solar on schools through community finance.	Apr 2023	Mar 2024	£7,466				
EMPOWER EU funding for local energy communities	EU grant funding to support local energy communities. Delivered solar at Danbury Primary School. The work undertaken in EMPOWER was built upon by LECSEA funded programme.	Jan 2019	Mar 2025	£269,000				
LoCASE	Low Carbon Across the South East (LoCASE) energy efficiency grants for SMEs. Delivered support to over 500 businesses, with over £3m of grant funding, saving circa 5,700 tonnes CO ₂ e annually and creating 351 jobs.	Aug 2016	Aug 2023	£168,575				

Initiative	Description	Start	End	Finance (£) (Total Spend for Initiative)	Alignment to Everyone's Essex			
					Econ	Env	Health	Place
LEAD – developing network of community energy champions	Local Energy Advice Demonstrator, 15 trained energy champions, 3,387 residents provided with energy advice, 150 community events attended over the year.	Apr 2024	Mar 2025	£58,271	 			
Warm Homes Essex Advice Service	Warm Homes Essex is an advice service delivered by Citizens Advice Essex that provides bespoke support for residents whose health is impacted by living in a cold home. Funded by a grant from Affordable Warm Solutions CIC for £1.1m. ECC further supports Citizens Advice Essex to provide the website and online energy efficiency advice and signposting to government grant schemes.	Jun 2021	Mar 2024	£1.1m		 		 

Built Environment

Initiative	Description	Start	End	Finance (£) (Total Spend for Initiative)	Alignment to Everyone's Essex			
					Econ	Env	Health	Place
Essex Design Guide Development & Support	Working with the Essex Planning Officers Association (EPOA) to support development of best practise guidance to inform local plan development across Essex.	Nov 2021	Apr 2023	£175,000		  	 	
	Net Zero Carbon Viability and Toolkit Study Essex Design Guide	Aug 2020	Oct 2022					
	Essex Open Legal Advice – Energy Policy and Building Regulations Essex Design Guide	Jan 2023	Feb 2024					
	Well Designed Neighbourhoods Guidance Essex Design Guide climate change net zero update Training for Planning Members & Officers Please note, these funds were or are part of the reserve drawdown lines in the financial tables in the Summary Financial Schedule	Feb 2022	Jul 2023					

Initiative	Description	Start	End	Finance (£) (Total Spend for Initiative)	Alignment to Everyone's Essex			
					Econ	Env	Health	Place
Developers Charter	ECC supported the Essex Developers to develop their Developers Charter and signatories commit to being carbon neutral in respect of building by 2030. (Staff time).		Mar 2022	Staff time supporting project (MTRS funded)		  	 	
Housing Stock Analysis	Detailed modelling analysis of the energy efficiency of every domestic property in Essex and the potential costs of retrofitting to net zero. This was supported with a grant from the Community Renewal Fund.		Mar 2022	£50,000				
Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) Wave 1	Grant funded programme to retrofit social housing stock, working with registered housing providers Sanctuary Housing and Eastlight Community Homes. 258 social homes were retrofitted with energy efficiency measures and low carbon heating. Total funding £4.5m, of which £2.9m was co-funded by partners.	Apr 2022	Jun 2023	£1.6m	  	 		

Initiative	Description	Start	End	Finance (£) (Total Spend for Initiative)	Alignment to Everyone's Essex			
					Econ	Env	Health	Place
Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery (GHGLAD) Phase 1a	Grant funding to support low income, low energy performing homes in Essex – 82 homes retrofitted with energy efficiency measures and low carbon heating.	Oct 2020	Sep 2021	£776,000	  	 		

Delivered by South East Net Zero Hub

Greater South East Net Zero Hub (GSENZH) delivered projects in partnership with ECC and district, borough and city authorities in Essex.

Initiative	Description	Start	End	Finance (£) (Total Spend for Initiative)	Alignment to Everyone's Essex			
					Econ	Env	Health	Place
Grants for Fuel Poor Houses	Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery Phase 2 – 81 homes retrofitted.		Oct 2022	£1,585,933				
	Sustainable Warmth – 574 homes retrofitted.		Mar 2023	£7,385,705				
Retrofit grants from fuel poor homes	Home Upgrade Grant (HUG) 2 – 439 homes retrofitted.	Apr 2023	Mar 2025	£6,208,607				

Waste

Initiative	Description	Start	End	Finance (£) (Total Spend for Initiative)	Alignment to Everyone's Essex			
					Econ	Env	Health	Place
BLUEPRINT to a Circular Economy	Supporting councils and other institutions to deliver a more circular economy through the development and delivery of training, education, solution testing and a self-assessment toolkit. The total project cost over three years was c.£4.9m, of which c.£3.4m was provided by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).	Apr 2020	Apr 2023	£2.9m ¹				
Waste Strategy for Essex	Development of a 30-year framework strategy to deliver the Essex Waste Partnership vision for a low waste, low carbon future for waste management in Essex.	Nov 2021	Mid 2024 (Strategy Adoption)	£551,000				
Booking Trial	Trialling a booking system at the recycling centres across Essex to improve customer experience, reduce congestion, vehicle idling, and to increase recycling.	Nov 2021	Dec 2023	£86,800				

¹ Ongoing website hosting costs in 2024/25 of £102,000 and 2025/26 – 2027/28 of £37,000 per annum.

Initiative	Description	Start	End	Finance (£) (Total Spend for Initiative)	Alignment to Everyone's Essex			
					Econ	Env	Health	Place
Biowaste Project	Targeted countywide campaign to drive up participation in household food recycling.	Jun 2023	Aug 2024	£602,000		 		
Stopping Landfill	Secured alternate arrangement to landfill from 2025, which is estimated to reduce the CO ₂ e emissions from dealing with non-recyclable waste by 30% compared to landfill.	Oct 2025	-	£139,000				

Community Engagement

Initiative	Description	Start	End	Finance (£) (Total Spend for Initiative)	Alignment to Everyone's Essex			
					Econ	Env	Health	Place
Essex Climate Action Challenge Fund	The £500,000 Climate Action Challenge Fund was launched in July 2021 and was established in response to the Essex Climate Action Commission's Net Zero: Making Essex Carbon Neutral report.	Jul 2021	Mar 2023	£500,000		    		
Love Your Library Day	<p>A climate and environment-themed Love Your Library Day was held on 8 October 2022 in 73 Essex libraries.</p> <p>The day provided opportunities for visitors to learn about the environment in their local area from speakers and partner organisations.</p>	Oct 2022	Oct 2022	Staff time supporting pro-ject (Reserve funded)		 		

Initiative	Description	Start	End	Finance (£) (Total Spend for Initiative)	Alignment to Everyone's Essex			
					Econ	Env	Health	Place
RCCE Webinar	Essex County Council facilitated and helped organise a bespoke webinar for the Rural Community Council of Essex (RCCE), titled "Moving towards Carbon Zero". This initiative offered RCCE members an opportunity to learn more about what actions to take in order to tackle climate change and also how they can help the county achieve net zero by 2050.	May 2022	Jan 2023	Staff time supporting pro-ject (Reserve funded)		   		 
Grow Your Own Campaign	The Active Essex Grow Your Own project engaged Essex residents who were at risk of food insecurity or social isolation to grow their own fruit and vegetables across the Spring and Summer months in 2022.	Mar 2022	Mar 2023	£15,000		 		

Initiative	Description	Start	End	Finance (£) (Total Spend for Initiative)	Alignment to Everyone's Essex			
					Econ	Env	Health	Place
Involve Project	ECC was chosen to work with Involve on its Leading Climate Engagement programme to deliver three community workshops. Residents from Wivenhoe, Stisted and Tiptree had the chance to attend these workshops and provide recommendations to their local town/parish council, which will be used in the development of a Local Nature Plan. As a legacy from the project, resources to support other town and parish councils in developing their own plans have been shared and published online.	Feb 2023	Sept 2023	Staff time supporting pro-ject (Reserve funded)		 		

This information is issued by:
Essex County Council

Contact us:
environment@essex.gov.uk

Essex County Council
County Hall, Chelmsford
Essex CM1 1QH

www.essex.gov.uk

 [essexcountycouncil](https://www.facebook.com/essexcountycouncil)

 [essex_cc](https://www.instagram.com/essex_cc)

 [Essex County Council](https://www.linkedin.com/company/essex-county-council)

 [essex_cc](https://twitter.com/essex_cc)

 [Essex County Council](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC8v31111111111111111111)

Stay up to date with the Your Essex e-newsletter.
For a monthly snapshot of news, events and
activities across the county, sign up at:

www.essex.gov.uk/youressex

The information contained in this document
can be translated and/or made available in
alternative formats, on request.