

Essex Climate Action Commission (ECAC) Meeting

26/09/2022 11:00-13:00 Via Zoom

Attendees:

Abiola Sule
Adam Scott
Catherine Cameron
Claire Williamson
Clare Perkins
Cllr Holly Whitbread
Cllr Paul Thorogood
Cllr Peter Schwier
Daphne White (speaker)
Dr Andrew Impey
Dr Poone Yazdanpanah
Dr Simon Lyster
Emma Hall
Emma Hunter
Heather Hilburn (speaker)
Iulia Apostoiu
Julia Crear
Kerry Burgess
Liam Ashford
Louise Tennekoon
Lyn Mowforth (speaker)
Mark Nowers
Matt Butcher
Prajwal Pandey (speaker)
Prof. Aled Jones
Prof. Graham Underwood
Prof. Jacqueline McGlade (speaker)
Prof. Jules Pretty (Chair)
Prof. Peter Hobson
Renata Lins
Richard Davidson (speaker)
Robert Mitchell
Roselyn Murphy
Sam Kennedy
Sean Chenery (speaker)
Simon Walsh
Sukhi Binns
Thomas Day
Tom Yiangou
Tracey Vickers
Yarema Ronish

Apologies:

Bishop Roger
Chris Howlett
Cllr Ivan Henderson
Cllr Sue Lissimore
John Lippe
Jonathan Stephenson
Laura Mansel-Thomas
Rob Wise
Michelle Wood
Toddington Harper
Victoria Hills

1. Welcome and Opening

The chair (Prof. Jules Pretty) welcomed everyone to the meeting and outlined the agenda.

The chair announced that an annual report reviewing action against the Commission's recommendations will be produced in November.

2. Youth Participation and Engagement - Prajwal Pandey (speaker)

- The Make Your Mark 2022 Survey (national consultation of young people) shows that young people in Essex care about the environment. It remains a priority, despite the pandemic and other more immediate term issues.
- There are a lot of school engagement initiatives (Hopes Sustainability energy pilot, Let's Go Zero, 2Imprezs), but these tend to be led by adults. Comms most effective when it's led by young people.
- Eco-schools programme: information provision for schools to embed sustainable practices into everyday school life.
- Essex Schools Green Day: over 60 schools across Essex took part in 2022. Organised by a Multi-Schools Council.
- Proposal: a network of environment ambassadors from schools, sixth forms and colleges across Essex supported by ECAC/ECC.

The chair thanked Prajwal for his proposal and called for it to be discussed in greater depth at the next ECAC meeting in November 2022. Questions to be addressed: how to make this network a reality? How to scale it up?

3. Updates on Progress against the ECAC Recommendations

The chair presented a summary of progress since the last meeting in each of the SIG areas.

Land Use and Green Infrastructure

- Essex Forest Initiative (EFI) has made two successful bids for external funding (Urban Tree Challenge Fund and Local Authority Treescape Fund), totalling £805,877.78. This will be used to support urban planting of standard sized trees and to fund their establishment costs. Over 1000 street trees will be planted.
- EFI has won the international Green Apple Environment Award in the Local Authority and Climate Change category.
- Climate Focus Area (CFA) stakeholder workshops have generated 19 strategies and 38 work packages across various themes. A new collaboration platform (Moodle) is to be set up for new and existing stakeholders to exchange knowledge and collaborate on delivery of WPs. Training packages for communities and parish councils will also be developed.
- CFA has secured funding from the Natural Environment Investment Readiness Fund to help unlock investment in natural capital assets and ecosystem services in four sites. Initial mapping to be completed by the end of November.
- CFA is addressing ECAC recommendation for sustainable farming through the creation of the North Essex Farm Cluster. This brings together 40+ farmers and landowners and covers around 56,000 hectares.
- Ursuline School (Brentwood) has taken part in a scheme that has been designed to reduce surface water flood risk to residential properties downstream of the school.

Energy

- Solar Together Essex – first 2022 installs delivered in June, over 1100 offers accepted, expect c.660 installations.
- Pathways Project – mentoring support to new community energy groups extended to March 2023.
- Community Climate Action Challenge fund - £250k of grants now awarded to 21 organisations for community-led climate action initiatives.
- Working with Community Energy South and UKPN on CommuniPower; the first “whole village” project to decarbonise heat and power - bid to Ofgem Network Innovation Fund now submitted.
- Next phase of Green Homes Grant, now “Sustainable Warmth / Home Upgrade Grant”, targeting E, F and G households is about to launch.
- Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (£2.6m) in delivery.
- Detailed analysis of housing stock and pathways to net zero complete.
- Seeking funding to roll out the Retrofit Academy following successful pilot.
- Bid to MCS Charitable Foundation to develop business plan for retrofit for self-funded sector and to Ofgem Strategic Innovation Fund to support access to cheap renewable energy using smart technology for low-income households.
- Looking at options for energy efficiency advice and support to small and medium sized enterprises

Waste

- Waste Strategy:
 - Collaboration between 13 Essex Councils.
 - Vision to reduce waste and greenhouse gas emissions.
 - Future delivery options are being modelled.
 - Public consultation is scheduled for 2023.
- Procurement launched to secure future organic waste treatment capacity for Essex.
- Recycling and composting services are being enhanced to improve service accessibility.
- Reuse, repair & refurbishment service opportunities at recycling centres are under development for launch in 2022 and 2023.
- The Love Essex micro-grant programme is being refreshed for 2023 to focus on community-based reuse and repair activity.
- Essex is leading the development of the BLUEPRINT model. This aims to support local authorities and others to transition to a more Circular Economy approach.
- ‘Library of Things’ initiative is now embedded into core Library Service offer.
- 41 Essex schools have rolled out materials to students and 121 Essex learners have now completed Circular Economy learning modules.
- Tackling Food Waste:
 - A 12,000 household trial testing various operational changes and approaches to increase participation has been completed.
 - Kitch, a food reduction app, to help residents reduce food waste now has over 800 downloads.
 - A trial mentoring programme ‘Food For Thought’ is being launched to help residents tackle both the impact and cost of food waste.

Built Environment

- Developing Consistent Policy: recruited help to draft climate change policies and commissioned Viability Evidence. This shows that Net Zero Homes are viable in most parts of Essex and across most types of home.
- The additional cost of achieving NZ (as opposed to meeting the Future Homes Standard) is £2-3,000.
- 2021 survey identified huge demand for climate change training for town planners. Support is needed for policy development and planning appeals.
- The Essex Design Guide provides planners with guidance on NZ best practice.
- The next step is to commission advice on how to justify policy that goes beyond building regulations.
- Providing choice for and informing the Customer through Net Zero Show Homes.

Transport

- School Streets: Phase 1 implemented in Sawyers Hall Lane (Brentwood), Winstree Road (Colchester) and Gilchrist Way and Lancaster Way (Braintree.) This involves steps such as footway widening, bollards and speed reduction measures.
- Cycling: Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIP) begun for Witham & Brentwood and refresh underway for Braintree, Chelmsford & Colchester. These set out a long-term approach to developing the infrastructure needed for active travel.
- Construction of the Jaywick to Clacton cycle route is due to begin in October 2022.
- Essex Pedal Power (EPP) Colchester soft launch in October. This scheme provides free bikes to residents in the county's most disadvantaged communities. The scheme originally started in Jaywick and Clacton and the plan is to give away a total of 5000 bikes by 2025.
- Electric Vehicles (EV): Mitie commissioned to plan / install EVCP at ECC properties. Bid to the Office for Zero Emission Vehicles to fund on-street residential charging points will go in this month.
- Passenger Transport: Community Rail shortlisted for 4 awards; plus 5 new event trains. Bus Shelter Transformation project due to launch by end of month.
- Procurement of TravelEssex digital information portal is underway. This will be a single digital portal supporting ALL bus information in Essex from information about commercial services to links to ticket prices for school services as well as links to downloading the TravelEssex app.

Community Engagement

- Recent events include Heybridge Basin Regatta, Networking Essex, Chelmsford Green City and Colchester Eco Festival.
- Update on Climate Action Challenge Fund:
 - 48 applications received
 - 22 applications approved
 - £267,498 awarded to date
- Essex is one of 5 councils selected to join Involve's Local Climate Engagement project. Involve and their partner organisations will work with us to deliver high quality local public engagement focused on co-producing Climate & Biodiversity Action Plans with local communities in the Climate Focus Area, as a pilot to then roll out to the rest of Essex.

- Carbon Literacy training: Available to all ECC members and employees. Provides understanding of what those at ECC can do to fight climate change both as an individual and in a group setting. 350+ have registered so far.

4. Updates on Key Themes relating to Growing the Green Economy.

Intro: Daphne White (speaker), Head of Sector Development Business and Innovation, Sustainable Growth, ECC.

Green Growth for the Future: Looking at ways in which we can embrace a greener economy, unlocking new opportunities for businesses and residents in the form of sustainable jobs.

Construction and the Green Economy – Richard Davidson (speaker), Willmott Dixon.

- Housing continues to dominate construction in Essex (54%). Business confidence is low and that is holding back investment. Major infrastructure projects not coming through yet.
- There are five growth sectors in Essex: Construction, Energy, Digitech, Life Sciences and Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering.
- Only 15% of businesses have a target date for reaching zero emissions.
- Consumers are nearly ready for green homes with over 70% of people likely to consider a green home.
- The size of the challenge is big. Despite UK emissions being nearly 50% below 1990 levels, the journey to Net Zero is far from half done.
- The percentage changes in territorial carbon dioxide emissions by section between 2019 and 2022 show that the built environment is the only one whose emissions are not improving.
- The risks of doing nothing are:
 - Investors go elsewhere
 - Property and Estates become worthless after 2030
 - Water and Energy shortages become a reality in East Anglia
- Future opportunities:
 - T-Levels, Apprenticeships and continued investment in MMC
 - Solar Together Essex
 - Retrofit Coordinators
 - New Public Sector procurement rules could unlock coordinated decarbonisation of public buildings
- Introduction of the Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPS) could see a shift in training and investment. More training needed for planners, planning committees and officials.

Green Energy, Green Jobs – Sean Chenery (speaker), Galloper Wind Farm.

- There are 17 RWE offshore wind assets in operation, 9 of which are located in the UK.
- East Anglia is a hot spot for Offshore Wind with a large number of wind farms in operation, under construction or in development stages.
- Galloper is located on the coast of Suffolk. Jobs and investment benefits are shared all along the East coast through its different bases.
- Local extension projects: North Falls and Five Estuaries.

- In 2022 the Sector Deal increased the target to 50GW of Offshore Wind by 2030, quadrupling the planned capacity in the next 8 years. By 2030 offshore wind is forecast to employ 97,465 workers, three times more than it does now.
- The cost of building a wind farm has come down dramatically. The main barrier is now skills: can't find engineers within 1 hour of the site. Galloper has an apprentice scheme which attracts 100 applicants for each place. Within 5 years, this scheme will help them to 'grow their own' engineers.

Progress of the Green Economy Working Group - Lyn Mowforth (speaker), Workplace Health Improvement Manager, Essex Wellbeing Service. Prof. Jaqueline McGlade (speaker), Institute for Global Prosperity, UCL. Heather Hilburn (speaker), CEO Thames Estuary Partnership. Daphne White (speaker).

- Working Well holistic health and wellbeing for your business
 - Working Well offers: Mental Health Awareness, Small Business HR Support and Accreditation.
 - Workplace Wellbeing Accreditation Award scheme: incentivises organisations to make small changes that are beneficial to the environment.
- Our Vision – Transforming Today's Reality
 - During the next 12 months, will support green growth through the creation of green jobs and opportunities for Essex businesses.
 - Tackling the areas of Essex that have the most deprivation. How to give young people a different sense of self-identity so that they see themselves as part of the green economy.
 - Approach: through a youth movement modelled on Shujaaz (a multi-media programme to improve the lives and livelihoods of young people in East Africa.)
 - Introduce Fast Forward 2030: bringing young entrepreneurs together, doing visioning workshops to see themselves as the leaders of new ideas.
 - Change the narrative of what prosperity looks like.
- Just Transition – 'Time to Deliver'
 - Working within a consortium of funders and investors who are working on G7 taskforce
 - 'Time to Deliver' objectives:
 - create robust blended finance models,
 - address delivery 'at scale' and risks,
 - bring together social and climate investment which are currently siloed,
 - tackle the complexity of financial models.
 - The three Just Transition Elements:
 - advance climate and environmental action,
 - improve socio-economic distribution and equity,
 - and increase community voice.
- What is Green Economy?
 - Creating a stronger, more resilient economy through harnessing our environmental challenges and turning them into opportunities for all – a just transition.
 - Challenges:
 - Women unrepresented in growth sectors
 - Old housing stock,

- Under-skilled workforce,
- Declining business investment in R&D.
- Transitioning to a green economy means:
 - Improving the energy efficiency of our homes,
 - Getting our residents into good, green jobs,
 - Boosting our economy through innovation.
- By 2030, Essex is projected to need 18,000 green jobs. These are new jobs, in addition to thousands that will need to pivot as part of the transition to a green economy.
- For Essex to successfully shift towards a green economy we need to ensure:
 - We spend our money in ways that make a difference;
 - Businesses are prepared for future opportunities;
 - Residents are aware and can access the skills and training needed for new jobs.

5. Chair's closing remarks

Quote from Paul Polman's *Net Positive*: "The two priorities that businesses should be addressing are 1) climate and 2) inequality." Business have got to change fundamentally. Being less bad is not enough, being good is what we are about. Businesses need to think how they can create good. Just transition is the key to it all.

The next meeting will be held on: **Monday 14 November 2022.**

6. Items from the Chat

simon l... to Hosts and panelists 11:22 AM

SL

Just to say I support Prajwal's proposal

Heather... to Hosts and panelists 11:23 AM



I also support the proposal

peter h... to Hosts and panelists 11:24 AM

PH

yup! support this. Will be doing something similar in parts of Suffolk

Markno... to Hosts and panelists 11:52 AM

M-

Re demand for Green Homes Richard, what about the wider estate setting such as good Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)?

Thomas... to Hosts and panelists 11:58 AM

TD

We were oversubscribed in the last Solar Together scheme- we are planning the next one to allow for more installer capacity

clairew to Hosts and panelists 11:24 AM

C

I support this and looks forward to discussing it at the next meeting. Thank you Prajwal.

Graham... to Hosts and panelists 11:24 AM

GU

needs some thought about links to other Essex groupings and similar outreach, but yes, supportive in principle.

peter h... to Hosts and panelists 11:28 AM

PH

on the board for North Essex Cluster Farms - we will be inviting start-up clusters in other parts of county

Markno... to Hosts and panelists 11:44 AM

M-

Further to Simon and Peter's points re ELMS/nature-friendly farming and food production - results of a 10 year study here: <https://twitter.com/RichDGregory3/status/1554901482851418113>

Tracey Vickers to Hosts and panelists

TV

There was an accompanying sheet for transport!. ATF - active travel fund; LCWIP is Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure plans; EPP is Essex Pedal Power; OZEV is Office of Zero Emission Vehicles; ECC is Essex County Council

CLlr Pet... to Hosts and panelists 11:58 AM



Fabric first - insulate- insulate- insulate for all buildings

Markno... to Hosts and panelists 12:08 PM

M-

Thanks for your answer Richard. For anyone who wants a bit more reading..<https://www.rspb.org.uk/globalassets/downloads/documents/positions/planning/sustainable-drainage-systems.pdf>

([sustainable-drainage-systems.pdf \(rspb.org.uk\)](https://www.rspb.org.uk/globalassets/downloads/documents/positions/planning/sustainable-drainage-systems.pdf))

Thomas... to Hosts and panelists 12:12 PM

TD

We have had similar challenge spending Govt Sust Warmth retrofit funds in Essex due to timescales and some funds will likely have to be handed back to Govt. We are lobbying Govt on this issue.

Heather... to Hosts and panelists 01:02 PM



look at the just transition report - invest in good good and better, not less harm

Graham Underw... to Hosts and panelists

GU

Could we get a breakdown of the Climate Action Challenge Fund awards sent around, interesting to see what people are asking for.