



Essex

# Green Essex Strategy

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Essex County Council



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## Essex Green Infrastructure Strategy Partnership

This group is for members of the Green Infrastructure Subgroup and Steering Group (invitation only) formed of key stakeholders, representing a diverse range of interests, all with an aim to enhance the natural environment, whilst encompassing sustainability, health and wellbeing and the economy.

The purpose of the group is to engage stakeholders expertise, share good practice and collaboration in the development of a Green Infrastructure Strategy for Essex. To partake in the consultation of the strategy as it develops.

The aim of the strategy is to take a positive and coherent approach to enhance, protect and create an integrated network of high quality green infrastructure in the delivery of multi-functional natural assets which will provide environmental, social and economic benefits for Essex.

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### Facilitators

Aleksandar Bogdanov , Paul Hinsley , Jayne Rogers



# WHAT IS GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE?

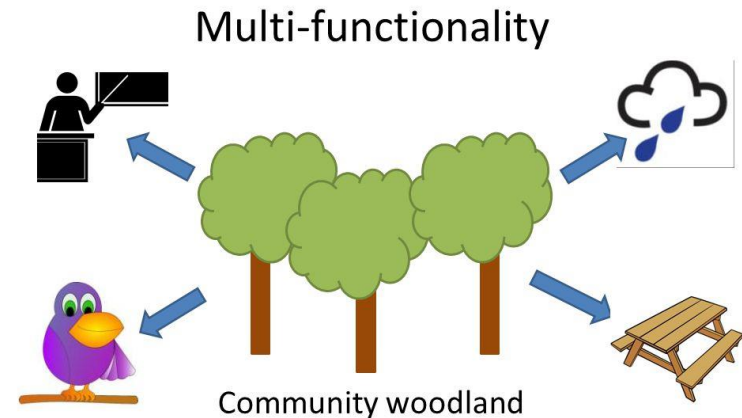
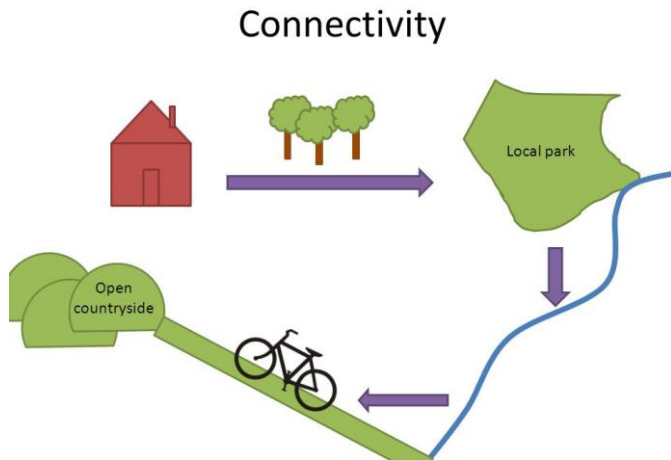
**Green infrastructure is made up of natural and semi-natural assets and habitat types of green and blue spaces and other environmental features that maintains and enhances ecosystem services. It provides multi-functional benefits integral to the health and wellbeing of our communities and to the ecology and economy of the county. Green infrastructure is often referred to as a network of these natural and semi-natural assets and spaces which are joined together connecting urban and rural areas and are habitually strategically planned.**

**Green spaces & features identified as Green infrastructure includes for example:**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Parks and gardens</li><li>○ Natural and semi-natural open spaces</li><li>○ Reservoirs, lakes and Pond</li><li>○ Coastal features</li><li>○ Green corridors (verges)</li><li>○ Waterways (watercourses)</li><li>○ Greenways (Public Rights of Way, footpaths, cycleways and tracks, bridleways)</li><li>○ Outdoor Sport Facilities (Sport pitches)</li><li>○ Amenity green space (provision for play facilities etc.)</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Open spaces around premises (Educational premises open space and sport pitches)</li><li>○ Cemeteries and churchyards</li><li>○ Allotments, community gardens and city farms</li><li>○ Productive spaces (agricultural land, nursery, disuse landfill etc.)</li><li>○ Public Realm/Civic spaces (urban greening – Urban and street trees, road verges, green walls, Sustainable Urban Drainage and Natural Flood Management)</li></ul> |
|--|---|

# Why we need a GI Strategy?

- To understand our green assets and the benefits they provide.
- As the population of Essex grows it is vital that quality places are provided, where people want to live and work, now and in the future.
- To take a positive approach to enhance, protect and create an integrated network of high quality green infrastructure in Essex
- For a coherent approach and partner collaboration in the delivery of multi-functional natural assets which will provide environmental, social and economic benefits for Essex.



# Vision & Objectives

## The Vision

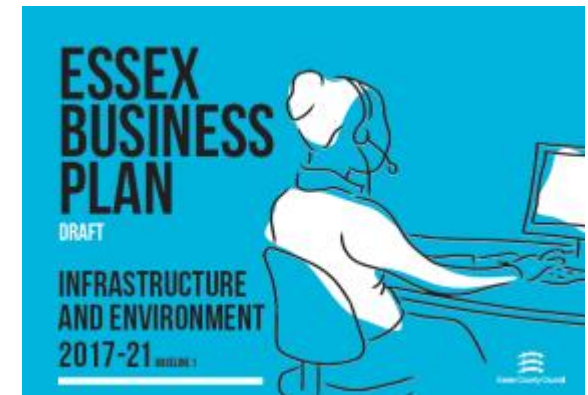
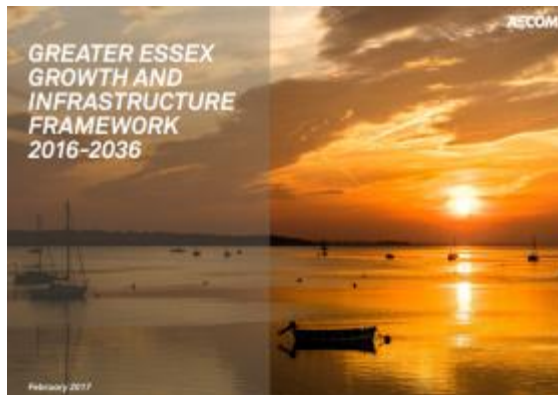
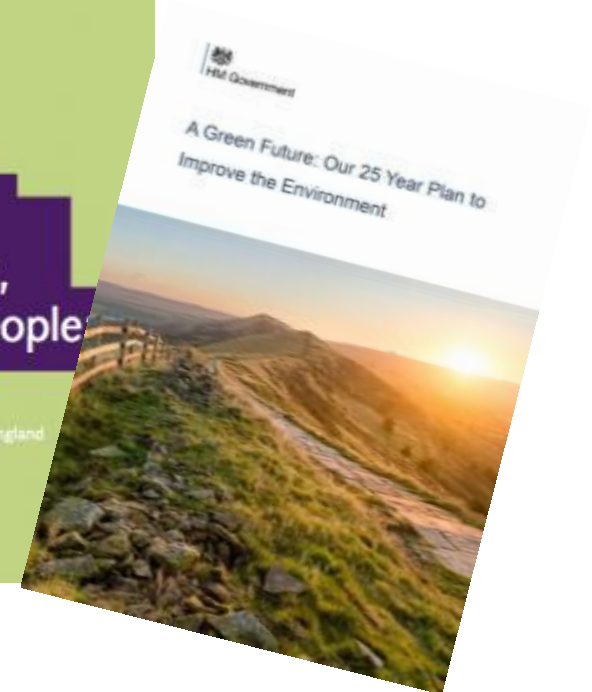
We will protect and grow a high quality connected Green Infrastructure network which extends from our City and town centres to the countryside and coast which is designed for people and wildlife whilst being self-sustaining.

## Objectives:

#	Focus	Objective
	Place	<b>Protect</b> existing green infrastructure, especially the most valuable
	Place	<b>Improve</b> existing green infrastructure so it is better functioning
	Place	<b>Create</b> more high-quality green infrastructure, especially in areas of deficiency
	Place	<b>Connectivity</b> improvements connecting green infrastructure, people and wildlife.
	People	Increase use and <b>inclusivity</b> of green infrastructure across all social groups and abilities
	People	Provide green infrastructure facilities to promote <b>health</b> and wellbeing
	Economy	Secure funding for new and existing green infrastructure to ensure their <b>sustainability</b> .

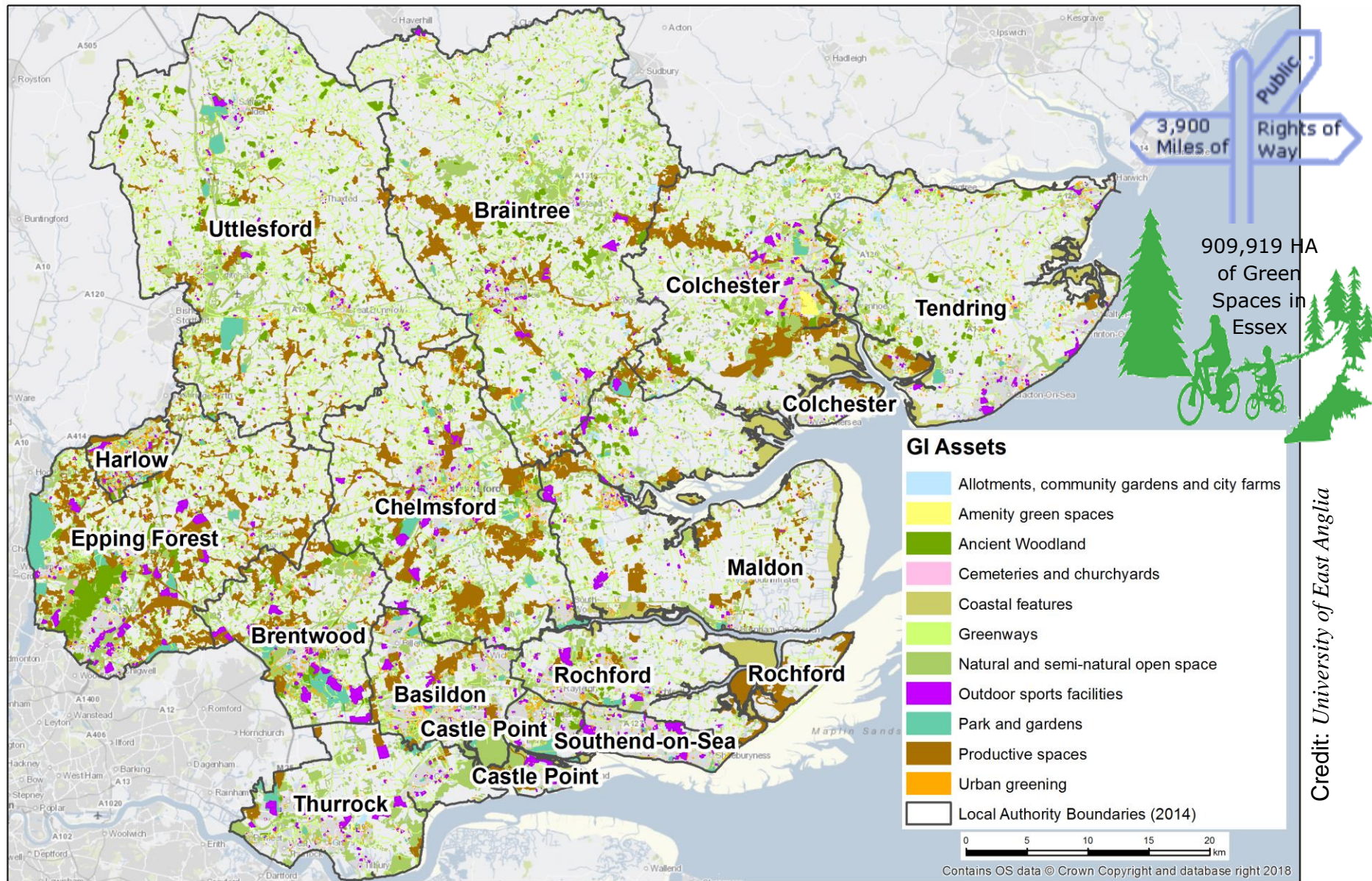


# Drivers





# Green Infrastructure Assets of Essex



# Context: Economic & Social



## PEOPLE

1,801,400 people in 2016 for Greater Essex. The county's population is expected to increase to 2,100,100 by 2036.



## DEVELOPMENT GROWTH

179,657 homes needed across Greater Essex. (136,363 homes excl. Southend and Thurrock) by 2036.

137,663 homes planned (121,210 excl. Southend & Thurrock) between.

Walking and cycling infrastructure across Greater Essex varies with a good level of provision in the larger settlements but fewer formal facilities in the smaller towns and villages.



## ECONOMY GROWTH

79,000 additional jobs needed forecasted by the East of England Forecasting model (2016 run).



## SOCIAL AND HEALTH

In Essex, two-thirds (66.5%) of adults are either overweight or obese.

Some of the most deprived one per cent of nearly 33,000 areas in England, are within Essex: six in Tendring and two in Basildon.

In Essex in 2014, 57.9% of people had the recommended amount of physical activity

## CLIMATE CHANGE

Essex can generally expect more frequent extreme weather events (such as storms, extreme cold weather); milder and wetter winters; and hotter drier summers by 2080 (UCKP, 2009).

**Essex is one of the top 10 areas at risk of surface water flooding in UK.**





# Why invest? - The Benefits of GI

- **Health and well-being:** Increasing life expectancy and reducing health inequality; Improving levels of physical activity and health; Improving psychological health and mental well-being, Education
- **Economic growth and investment:** Inward investment; Land and property values; Local economic regeneration, improved transport links.
- **Land regeneration:** Regeneration of previously developed land; Improving quality of place; Heritage preservation; increasing environmental quality and aesthetics



- **Climate change adaptation and Mitigation,** reduce Heat, Reducing flood risk; Improving water quality; Improving air quality, reduce pollution
- **Flood alleviation and water management,**
- **Wildlife and habitats:** Increasing habitat area; Increasing populations of some protected species; Increasing species movement
- **Stronger communities:** Social interaction, inclusion and cohesion
- **Tourism; Recreation and Leisure**

# Delivering the Strategy's Objectives

Focus	Objective	Proposals
Place	Protect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Highlight the most valuable green infrastructure in Essex – through rebranding Essex as Green Essex with 1,809 designations.</li> <li>Re-designate the new green infrastructure as new reserves e.g. Wallasea, Thames Chase etc.</li> <li>Embed an 'environmental net gain' principle for development, including housing and infrastructure.</li> <li>Protect coastal green infrastructure through the Recreational Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS) scheme.</li> </ul>
	Improve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create a green Essex network to develop, improve and promote Green Essex.</li> <li>Support the development of new Visitor Centres and facilities</li> <li>Better marketing &amp; promotion of green infrastructure to increase use and income.</li> <li>Public realm green infrastructure improved to reduce pollution and improve character and sense of place.</li> <li>Create water gardens, green roofs and bio retention areas to absorb urban water.</li> <li>Continue creating green spaces which also function as natural flood management and SuDs schemes.</li> </ul>
	Create	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop the coast path in Essex.</li> <li>Increased access to the Outdoor Pursuits Centres.</li> <li>Create green infrastructure in new developments such as Garden Communities.</li> <li>Develop green infrastructure as part of Minerals and Waste restorations e.g. Pitsea Landfill.</li> <li>Create town or village circular walks especially in areas of green infrastructure deficiency.</li> </ul>
	Connectivity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop the coast path in Essex.</li> <li>Develop inter connecting paths between green infrastructure.</li> <li>Restore and Promote Essex promoted paths, such as Flitch Way, Essex Way</li> </ul>
People	Inclusivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore environmental therapies and challenges aimed at developing young people.</li> <li>Promote youth orientated activities in Green spaces e.g. mountain biking, Go Ape, Geocaching, etc.</li> </ul>
	Health and wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore environmental therapies delivered through mental health services.</li> <li>Develop and promote Healthcare and wellbeing through Green Infrastructure activities.</li> </ul>
Economy	Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop new facilities that will generate revenues.</li> </ul>





# DELIVERING THE PROPOSALS

Broadly, these proposals can be categorised into the following key project themes:

- 🍃 Marketing, branding and promotion (MBP).
- 🍃 Re-designation of Green Infrastructure (Rd).
- 🍃 Environment net gain and offsetting (ENG).
- 🍃 Improve, repurpose and create new multi-functional green infrastructure (IRC).
- 🍃 Natural flood management techniques (NFM).
- 🍃 Connect people and wildlife to green infrastructure through active travel (CPW).
- 🍃 Delivering environmental therapies and activities (ETA).

# Examples of actions for each Theme

Themes	Objective	Actions (Examples of some of the actions within the action plan)
Marketing, branding & promotion	Protect, Improve, Create, Inclusivity, Health and Wellbeing	Working with Visit Essex, Essex Communications and partners to develop a pan Essex Marketing Strategy to create a brand for Green Essex.
Re-designation of Green Infrastructure	Protect	Discuss with Local Planning Authorities, Natural England and Place Services regarding re-designating the new green infrastructure as new designations e.g. Wallasea, South Essex Marshes, Thames Chase etc.
Environment net gain & offsetting	Protect	Work with EPOA, Place Services and partners to develop the 'environmental net gain' methodology.
Improve, repurpose and create new multi-functional green infrastructure	Protect, Improve, Create, Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working with health and flood partners to seek funding to create a Green Infrastructure Pilot project to support people to lead healthier lives.</li> <li>Reviewing the highways policy and maintenance plans</li> <li>Development and coordination of cycling and walking strategies to delivery green infrastructure with its projects.</li> <li>Explore and Implement an Essex Green Permit Scheme, allowing locals to adopt and green up areas within the public realm.</li> </ul>
Natural Flood Management techniques	Improve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Liaise with Essex Highways and Floods teams to seek funding for the provision of green infrastructure and SuDS (Sustainable Drainage Systems).</li> <li>Seek funding from partners to address flooding but also create green spaces with multiple benefits and provide environment net gains.</li> </ul>
Connect people and wildlife to green infrastructure through active travel	Create, Connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve access to the coast path in Essex using sustainable transport, signage etc. utilising innovative funding such as the Coastal Communities Fund.</li> <li>Seek funding from various benefit funders to create inter connecting paths.</li> </ul>
Delivering environmental therapies and activities	Inclusivity, Health and Wellbeing	Liaise with Education service, Children's services, health partners, Mental Health Agencies, community voluntary sector, Outdoor pursuits and Country Park to build upon existing programs and develop Green Activities such as green gym, eco-therapies, guided walks.



# Implementation by Sector: Planning

## ❖ Supporting Large and Small Developments

Through:

- Garden Communities
- Business Parks and large employment Sites
- Local Development Plans and supporting documents
- Essex Design Guide & Developer Guides
- Growth Infrastructure Framework
- Existing Green Infrastructure strategies and projects in Essex i.e. the Green Arc, the Eastern Claylands Treescape project (Woodland Trust)
- Natural Capital and Angst (Assessment of Access to Natural Green space)



In Chicago they have been discussing ideas of how to link isolated parks and the river separated by its express freeway through green infrastructure - [www.chiriverlab.com/ideas/green-graft](http://www.chiriverlab.com/ideas/green-graft)



Water Square Benthemplein -

<http://www.urbanisten.nl/wp/?portfolio=waterplein-benthemplein>

## ❖ Retrofitting in Cities, Towns and Villages Through

- Strategic links and green corridors to all green spaces and paths etc.
- Informal recreation spaces
- The improvement of Green City Business areas eg Victoria,
- The Copenhagen model,
- Green roofs and walls
- Sustainable Urban Drainage cities,

## ❖ Minerals and Waste

- ❖ Green infrastructure through the restoration programme and delivery

# Implementation by Sector: Others

## ❖ Improve Highways and Greenways

- Enhance PRow,
- Reduce Pollution

## ❖ Coastal

- ❖ Living shoreline – reclaim land for GI
- ❖ RAMS

## ❖ Flooding

- ❖ GI as part of SUDs
- ❖ Natural Flood Management
- ❖ Leaky Dams

## ❖ Energy

- ❖ BIO-Solar Farms
- ❖ BIO fuels

## ❖ Health

- ❖ Social Prescribing
- ❖ Active Essex programmes and Projects

## ❖ Education

- ❖ Outdoor classrooms – living laboratories
- ❖ Forest Schools
- ❖ Ensure access to GI on school grounds.



# IMPLEMENTATION AND DELIVERY

## I. Stakeholder engagement

- Internal & External partners
- Green Infrastructure Steering Group
- Virtual Subgroup through online Collaboration Platform

## II. Funding

Explore funding from a variety of sources

- S106
- National Lottery
- EU Funds
- Others

## III. Timelines for Delivery

- Cabinet Sign off
- Launch Consultation

- **Action Plan**



Community Garden, Paris on small public plots, granted by the local authorities.  
<http://www.urbangreenbluegrids.com/projects/community-gardens-paris>

# What can you do?

- Remember the Green Infrastructure strategy when discussing other subjects, in case it is relevant
- Inform internal and external partners of the Strategy
- Keep abreast of its development and so have an active role in its development through:
  - Providing feedback and comments
  - Signing up to the Knowledge Hub Group



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- John Meehan, Head of Sustainability & Resilience [john.meehan@essex.gov.uk](mailto:john.meehan@essex.gov.uk); 07827 976397

A red pen with a silver tip is shown writing the words "Thank you" in a black, cursive script on a white background. The pen is positioned at the end of the word "you", with its tip touching the final stroke. The text is written diagonally across the frame, starting from the bottom left and moving towards the top right.

Thank you