

Annex C

People in Essex experience a high quality and sustainable environment

The story behind the strategy

Essex County Council (ECC) is committed to ensuring a better quality of life by conserving, developing and promoting a healthy, safe, diverse, clean and attractive environment. We will work directly through our commissioning decisions or indirectly through working with other public, private and voluntary sector partners to influence, lobby and lead communities to ensure that people in Essex experience a high quality and sustainable environment.

A high quality environment is important as it contributes to so many of ECCs other outcomes and is key to economic growth and improving public health. In 2013 ECCs survey of resident opinions showed that 81% of residents are satisfied with their local areas as a place to live. Over the coming years we need to develop a more detailed and localised understanding of the view of Essex residents towards services relating to the environment and how they contribute to overall satisfaction levels.

Delivering statutory duties – First and foremost we must discharge our statutory responsibilities. Legislation at the European and UK level sets much of the context in which our local approach to the environment is set. However, within this there is still a great deal of scope to create innovative solutions that are fit for Essex.

1) Residual Waste Volumes

ECC is the Waste Disposal Authority and has agreed in partnership with local councils in Essex an approach to the future of waste management in Essex.

2) Cost of Energy to Households

Over recent years energy prices¹ have increased consistently, whilst crucially for households' incomes, wage growth has been well below the rate of inflation. We know that the cost of energy to households is a significant component to a household's general cost of living and has a large impact on Essex households and businesses.

3) Preventable Flooding Incidents

Extreme weather, existing buildings located in floodplains and a limited amount of funding means that we cannot stop flooding incidents in Essex. However, we can coordinate our services so that flood risk and localised flooding is reduced, and the aftermath of flood incidents is minimised. Landowners, communities at risk and businesses have a strong role to play in taking actions to minimise the risk of flooding as well as helping in the collective response when flooding does occur.

4) Conditions of Roads and Footways

Our highways and transportation infrastructure represents one of ECCs largest assets and provides the connectivity needed by businesses, communities and individuals alike. Increasingly this network is coming under strain from extreme weather, natural ageing, increased demand and the effect of historic underinvestment.

¹ As measured by the Consumer Prices Index

5) Level of Pollution

A good quality environment free from pollution – be that air and water pollutants or noise, waste, chemical and light pollutants – is vital for our health and quality of life. We share delivery of this indicator along with our partners.

6) Access to Valuable Open Spaces

Essex is a county of immense contrasts. It has a population of 1.6million and a series of large urban settlements, but with 72% of its land area devoted to agriculture the county is still significantly rural in character. If parks and green spaces are well managed, research has shown that communities use their local spaces more, have better relationships with other local residents and take pride in the area where they live.

7) Perception of the quality of the environment on Essex's cities, towns and villages

The Essex Tracker Survey² results published in May 2013 has seen some gains compared with 2011/12 such as in people's overall sense of belonging (69% compared with 64%). We need to understand what people think about their natural, built and historic environment better, and then decide what we can achieve with our limited resources for our residents.

² The Tracker Surveys are a series of public opinion postal surveys designed to monitor the public's perception on a range of key issues and services. Results are used to help inform and improve services delivery. The 2013 survey was sent to 23,868 residents with a response rate of 22% (5,321 valid responses).

Residual Waste Volumes		
What are the issues we need to consider?	What is our ambition?	What are our plans for achieving this ambition?
<p>As a society we will always consume resources and produce waste that will require treatment and disposal.</p> <p>In 2013/14, Essex produced approximately 706,000 tonnes of Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste. This untreated waste releases harmful gases. Landfill is also an expensive method of waste disposal, with Essex County Council paying over £24million in landfill tax in 2013/14.</p> <p>This will rise over the coming years if ECC continues to rely on landfill and levels of residual waste do not fall.</p>	<p>So that we manage waste in a way that is cost effective and minimises the impact on the environment, our ambition is:</p> <p><u>Almost Zero Landfill</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> By the end of 2015/16 the amount of waste the County Council will send to landfill in Essex will almost be zero. Meaning a reduction in methane released into the atmosphere and less money wasted on landfill tax. <p><u>Better use of environmental resources</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Essex will aspire to be a place where the environmental, social and economic value of waste resources are fully realised, to ensure a better service and value for money for the tax payer. <p><u>Reduce impact of waste volumes</u></p>	<p>We will implement the Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy for Essex including:</p> <p><u>Almost Zero Landfill</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Mechanical Biological Treatment (MBT) plant in Basildon will treat residual waste and heavily reduce the amount of waste going to landfill sites. The letting of a long term contract for the provision of in-County biowaste treatment infrastructure, will enable greater opportunities for waste to be biologically treated and reduce levels going to landfill <p><u>Better use of environmental resources</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Output of the MBT plant will be a refused derived fuel (RDF) which can be used to produce energy. Review of the Recycle Centre Household Waste estate will enable us to use the sites more effectively to deliver a more streamlined and efficient service to the public The development of a network of Transfer Stations will allow waste to be packed up and moved more easily in the future from various locations across the county to the new MBT plant, demonstrating better use of resources.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 10 years' time Essex residents will fully understand the impact of waste volumes upon the local environment and economy. It will be normal practice to minimise, reuse, recycle and compost. • By the end of 2014/15, Essex will have established a Waste Prevention Plan, becoming a local leader in preventing waste and forging partnerships to raise awareness and access to waste prevention services. • Achievement of recycling and reuse targets of 60% by 2020 across Essex. ³ 	<u>Reduce Impact of Waste Volumes</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Press campaigns and advertisements on reuse, recycle and composting to get the message out to residents • Develop a much more coordinated approach with partners to reduce waste by focusing on education and behavioural change. • Review of partnership arrangements will allow us to deliver better value for money to the tax payer through greater emphasis on more efficient joined up working with partners.
Cost of Energy to Households		
What are the issues we need to consider?	What is our ambition?	What are our plans for achieving this ambition?
<p>The increasing cost of energy is placing pressure on Essex households, businesses and public sector bodies.</p> <p>Households – Over recent years prices have been going up consistently, whilst crucially for household incomes, wage growth has been well below the rate of inflation. The latest data available from the Department of Energy and Climate Change (2011 figures) shows that approximately 70,000 Essex households (9.6%) including Southend</p>	<p>ECC will have a clear approach to energy.</p> <p>We will clearly state how it will work to address its own energy costs as well as how it can help local businesses and households to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buy Better, • Use Less, • Generate More. <p>In doing so, not only should Essex communities be more resilient to energy cost increases, but we will also see more use of renewable energy and the associated</p>	<p>We will develop and agree an Energy Commissioning plan to realise our ambitions.</p> <p><u>Buy Better & Use less</u></p> <p>To ensure we can 'buy better' and 'use less' we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate further Energy Switching Schemes for Essex households to make sure they get the best possible deals from their energy provider; <p>Build on outcomes of initial Community Energy Seminar, to help communities identify energy</p>

³ The MBT facility once fully operational will enable a step change in this figure with 15% of waste received being recycled.

<p>and Thurrock are classed as fuel poor with particular problems in Uttlesford (11.1%) and Tendring (11.9%).</p> <p>Essex County Council – Is a large consumer of energy and is alert to its energy costs with annual energy bills across the ECC property portfolio totaling approximately £20m, with approximately £1.2m of this annual bill arising from the Carbon Efficiency Commitment Scheme which requires all non-energy intensive organisations to monitor use and surrender allowances to offset their emissions.</p>	<p>environmental benefits.</p> <p>Working with partners we will have in place schemes to raise awareness of initiatives to support all Essex households to get the best possible deal through switching providers and more energy efficient energy consumption behaviours.</p> <p>By 2020 ECC will be substantially immune to energy cost increases matching its energy production and consumption.</p>	<p>generation opportunities that are most appropriate and cost effective, and start an Essex network of community groups involved in energy projects and promote knowledge sharing and collaboration.</p> <p><u>Generate More</u></p> <p>To ‘generate more’ we will take the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of detailed strategy, plan, and, if appropriate business case for the long term use of the fuel produced by the residual waste Mechanical Biological Treatment plant; • Explore extending landfill gas extraction and develop a business case to support the investment of this. • Investigate solar farms at ECC closed landfill sites and, if viable, develop a business case to support the investment of it. • Explore the installation of solar photovoltaics on schools (and other public buildings); • Research opportunities presented by Bio-Energy • Determine if we should take solar beyond the schools and landfill initiatives identified above. • Determine the viability of district heating and heat take off schemes.
Preventable Flooding Incidents		
What are the issues we need to consider?	What is our ambition?	What are our plans for achieving this ambition?

<p>Essex has an extensive coastline and network of rivers and canals, combined with a large number of towns and urbanised areas, which means it is at risk of flooding from a range of different sources.</p> <p>Responsibility for managing these risks is split across a range of agencies. Based on the evidence available we estimate that 50,000 properties are at risk of flooding in Essex.⁴</p> <p>Government departments are starting to understand the economic impact of flood incidents, alongside impacts on people's properties and wellbeing. The Environment Agency calculates that for every £1 spent on flood defences, this reduces expected damage by £8.</p> <p>From early 2015, ECC will become a Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) Approving Body (SAB). The role is significant and will see ECC approve and adopt sustainable drainage in new developments meeting certain criteria.</p>	<p>Our primary objective is to reduce the numbers of properties at risk.</p> <p>To help us achieve this we will work to establish baseline data and targets for the following indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of properties at risk of flooding, • Number of properties flooded as a result of significant incidents, as captured in statutory flooding reports • Flooding hotspots • Economic impact of flood alleviation schemes • Number of sustainable drainage applications processed per year within 12 weeks of receipt (once legislation is commenced). <p>ECC will maximise the opportunities for collaboration with partners so that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents benefit from a single point of communications between risk management authorities • The combined resources of risk management authorities give us greater reach and deliver multiple benefits. <p>We will achieve a fair share of funding from national sources.</p>	<p>To achieve this ambition we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an integrated partnership approach to flood risk management to maximise opportunities for data sharing, pooled funding and fundraising, enforcement, shared public messages and collaborative delivery models. • Develop collaboration with parish councils and community groups to increase resilience. • Refresh the 2012 Essex local flood risk management strategy. This will reflect legislation on sustainable drainage approving once it is commenced. In doing so, we will give clear guidance to local planning authorities and developers. • Plan for operation of the Sustainable Drainage Approving Body (SDAB), which will help to reduce the risk of flooding and water pollution from new developments. • Deliver our role as a Category 1 Responder on emergency flood incidents. This is so that the aftermath of flood incidents is minimised. We will also take an increasingly preventative approach to flood incidents. • Maximise opportunities presented by an additional £500,000 capital/revenue investment. To include Essex Flood Hub as potential precursor to a single communications interface, which will enable greater efficiency in responding to flood incidents.
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⁴ Based on data in relation to surface water, groundwater and ordinary watercourses only.

	<p>The Lead Local Authority role will mature and increasingly focus on preventable flood incidents.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply the new framework developed by Defra and Frontier Economics, and piloted in Clacton-on-Sea, to assess the economic impact flood alleviation. This is to help lever partner funding. • We will work towards the transfer of resources, skills and strategies between ECC 'flood management' services. As a result they will be more flexible and it will enable improved delivery achievement of multiple benefits.
Conditions of Roads and Footways		
What are the issues we need to consider?	What is our ambition?	What are our plans for achieving this ambition?
<p>ECC is responsible for 5,100 miles of roads and 3,688 miles of footways. Much of the roads network has evolved over time and is not to modern construction standards. These roads are more prone to potholes.</p> <p>Increasingly this asset is coming under strain from extreme weather, natural ageing and increased demand. At the current state the whole highways asset is depreciating by approximately £65m annually.</p> <p>Our roads are key to the achievement of sustainable economic growth. They carry large volumes of traffic through and around Essex and are essential for</p>	<p>We will achieve the best possible road and footway conditions with the resources available (targets to be determined once funding confirmed).</p> <p>The best low cost and effective waste treatments will be used, exploiting existing and new innovative materials.</p> <p>We will enable economic growth to support the Economic Growth outcome and maximise opportunities to integrate new developments / growth hubs.</p> <p>We will adhere to the following principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevention is better than cure - so we will intervene at the right time to reduce the number of potholes forming and 	<p>To achieve this ambition we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lobby Central Government to raise awareness of pressures on local government road maintenance budgets, highlighting linkages with road safety and economic growth agendas. • Explore alternative funding sources for road and footway maintenance. • In recognition of the number of resident complaints and compensation claims for this area, develop a communications plan which clearly articulates the rationale for prioritisation and streamlines customer service element. • Carry out routine safety inspections monthly on the PR1* network, every four months on the PR2** network, and every twelve months on 'Local Roads'. SCANNER surveys will be

the flow of commerce as well as the flow of other resources and services across the County. It is essential that the current road condition is safeguarded so that traffic remains free flowing, in order to encourage economic developments which will draw corresponding employment resources and other services to support the Councils objectives for growth.	<p>prevent the problem from getting bigger,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Right first time – so we address issues once and get it right, rather than face extra costs through repeat visits, and • Clarity for the public – so we are open with the public about our approach to maintaining the road and footway network. 	<p>undertaken 100% in both directions on the PR1 and PR2 network ('County Route' network) so that we have a full understanding of where the issues with our network are and can shape our response accordingly.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through the Materials Working Group, monitor and explore the palette of treatments used so that existing as well as new and innovative materials can be exploited to best affect to ensure materials withstand the pressures they are put under by vehicles. • Explore the drivers behind public perception of road condition, using and building on National Highways and Transport Network (NHT) data. <p>*PR1 = Priority 1 Roads – largely 'A' class roads **PR2 =Priority 2 Roads – largely 'B' road</p>
Level of Pollution		
What are the issues we need to consider?	What is our ambition?	What are our plans for achieving this ambition?
<p>Pollution – be that air, water, noise, chemical, waste or light is an issue that has significant interdependencies with our other outcomes. The decisions we take as a council have an impact on the environment including levels of pollution.</p> <p>The relationship between a high quality natural environment, prosperity and positive wellbeing are well evidenced. However the relationship between</p>	<p>So that we can make informed decisions going forward it is our ambition in the short term that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will have a clear understanding of pollution issues facing Essex and the implications of our activities. • We will have a clear understanding of the relationship between pollution and our other outcomes. In particular the impact on residents health and wellbeing, and the relationship with economic growth. 	<p>So that we can better understand the pollution issues facing Essex and the implications of our activities, we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish an accurate picture of key pollution levels in Essex. Analyse data with our partners and identify priorities. • Decide what action we need to take as a local authority and significant employer. • Deliver Trading Standards programmes; for example, ensure 100% of petroleum and explosives is stored properly in Essex. • Collect and analyse data on air quality

<p>economic growth and the environment is often seen as being at odds.</p> <p>We do not have an accurate picture of past pollution trends in Essex or what we and our local partners do to mitigate it.</p>		<p>monitoring areas and produce a map of declared and possible undeclared areas and plan for catering for areas of high pollution from traffic emissions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce noise contour maps as per EU directive.
Access to Valuable Open Spaces		
What are the issues we need to consider?	What is our ambition?	What are our plans for achieving this ambition?
<p>Open spaces can add 'value' in a number of ways. It is in our open spaces that we find recreation, health and solace, and in which our culture finds its roots and sense of place.</p> <p>It is important that we remember that only a very small part of open space in Essex is owned by ECC. This indicator looks to address the value of open space in its entirety.</p>	<p>The values of open spaces across Essex will be maximised, be that value:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Economic, - Physical and mental health, - Crime and fear of crime, - Communities and a sense of place, and - Bio-diversity and nature. <p>ECC country parks will be small net income generators.</p>	<p>We will take the following actions to achieve this ambition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver the ambition for ECC country parks to be small net income generators by 2017. • Explore options to maximise the value of ECC owned open spaces • Plan commissioning activity once data is updated, strategies refreshed; and a fundraising and marketing strategy for the Commissioning Strategy (Environment) is prepared.
Perception of the quality of the environment in Essex's cities, towns and villages		
What are the issues we need to consider?	What is our ambition?	What are our plans for achieving this ambition?
<p>The quality of the environment – be that the built, natural or historical – is an important determinant on peoples wellbeing and contributor to the success of many of ECCs other</p>	<p>We will have a better understanding of the views of Essex residents as well as potential visitors or investors in the county regarding the quality of the environment.</p>	<p>So that we have a better understanding of perception and can use this to inform decision making we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor perception and views. • Apply steps including marketing ourselves

outcomes. It is important that we understand people's perceptions of the Essex environment, be they Essex residents and businesses or people who may wish to visit or invest in the Essex economy.		better, developing our collaborations, finding different funding solutions.
Crosscutting		
What are the issues we need to consider?	What are our plans for achieving this ambition?	
A number of cross cutting actions have also been identified which support multiple indicators within this strategy and will help us to work well with relevant public, private and voluntary organisations as well as Essex residents, so that people in Essex experience a high quality and sustainable environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop links between our environment, economy and health and wellbeing objectives. • Seek to establish relationships with key private, public, voluntary and community sector partners. • Develop a fundraising strategy with innovative funding solutions • Market ourselves better and target our messages to reflect each community's specific needs and wants. • Review how we can better use behavioural insight to bring about a difference to residents to support this goal. • Develop our approach to enforcement. 	