

Levelling Up Essex: Update for Corporate Scrutiny

Cllr Louise McKinlay

26th March 2024

Levelling Up Essex

Introduction and agenda

- 1. What is Levelling Up**
- 2. Levelling Up Essex - Two Years on**
- 3. Ask of Partners**

- Levelling Up in Essex means creating opportunities for everyone to enable them to succeed in life. Over the past two years we have introduced new projects aimed at supporting our residents and communities and making sure that:
- children at key stages of development receive the support they need to learn and succeed
- parents have access to free childcare to enable them to access work more easily
- businesses are able to best support their workforce
- community supermarkets are set up in the areas that will benefit the most
- we make it easier than ever before to be able to retrain and gain new skills
- young people who may not be in employment, education or training are offered targeted support

Why Does Levelling Up Matter for Essex?

Essex has some of the most deprived and disadvantaged places in the whole of the UK.

- There are more than 123,000 people in Essex, 40,000 of whom are children, that live in areas that are in the 20% most deprived of the whole UK. This is a figure that has doubled since 2007.
- At Key Stage 4 there is a 30% gap in educational attainment between the most and least deprived areas in the county.
- There is on average a 12 year life expectancy gap between the most and least deprived areas of the county.
- Health outcomes among the residents of the most deprived areas of the county are significantly worse: 87% higher instance of Respiratory progressive diseases (COPD); 69% increase of mental health conditions; and adult obesity is 53% higher.

Levelling Up Essex

A targeted approach for places and people

Priority Places:



- Tendring (Clacton, Harwich & Jaywick)
- Basildon housing estates
- Colchester housing estates
- Harlow
- Rural Braintree
- Canvey Island

Priority Cohorts

(Essex wide)



- Children and adults with SEND, learning disabilities, or **mental health conditions** (taking an all age approach)
- Children on free school meals
- Working families
- Young adults (16-25) who have not been in education, training or employment for around 6-12 months.

Levelling Up Year Two Impact Report



LU Essex Webpage

Levelling Up Essex Year 2

A small snapshot of the work so far...

£10 million committed up to 2025 to support economic growth and skills in Essex
£11 million of additional Levelling Up funding made available by Essex County Council

Increasing Literacy Levels

Built on the success of the Essex Year of Reading with the **£1.5m Essex Year of NUMBERS**

£337,500

Secured for a new **Children's Imagination and Literacy Centre**

Launched the **£7.5m Multiply** Programme, offering free maths courses

Access to employment

Creating sustainable jobs by supporting the **Retrofit Academy** to train 200,000 retrofiters by 2030

20,000 job applications through our **Essex Opportunities Portal**, a virtual one stop shop for information on employment, skills and training.

New **Apprenticeship Hubs** in Harlow and Colchester and delivered **Get Sorted** events in Basildon and Canvey supporting young people to meet local employers.

Essex ACTIVE

Helps those who most need it, in 2023 we provided **172,412 free spaces** to children from low-income families providing **250k nutritious meals** and helping deliver **310 clubs**

Healthy lifestyles

Re-launched the **Essex Wellbeing Service**

a one-stop shop for health and wellbeing and hosted our first

Wellbeing and Mental Health Conference

Strong & safe communities

10 years of our **Family Solutions Service** Supporting over 8,000 families

Recognised by the 2023 **Community Energy Awards** as most **Supportive Local Authority**

Over £300k invested in **Community Supermarkets** by Spring 2024 there will be one in every district!

Skills & Lifelong Learning

Partnered with business to launch the **South Essex Advanced Technical Skills initiative**.

our **Adult Community Learning Hubs** delivered 16,000+ training opportunities including over 900 apprenticeships and placements through our **Kickstart & Apprenticeship Levy Transfer schemes**

£100k invested in a new **electric vehicle training centre**

over 150 residents have applied for or completed a course so far!

Raising aspirations

Supported the extension of the **Youth Work in Hospital Project** with Levelling Up funding

Improved employment opportunities through our new **Get Set for Work** support service for adults with learning disabilities and/or neurodiversity.

Trained **360 Disadvantage Champions** who will support delivery of the **Essex Disadvantage Strategy**

Infrastructure, growth & innovation

Secured £120m from the government Levelling Up and Towns Funds to support long term regeneration around the county.

Celebrated the **opening of The Sunspot** after investing more than £2m building the landmark business centre.

Continued investment in cycling infrastructure through **Essex Pedal Power** projects.

Digital

Over £20m in external investment secured to bring superfast Broadband to Essex premises.

6,000 digital devices to schools, refugees, residents, and community voluntary services

Levelling Up Essex Priority Cohorts

A programme of interventions designed to widen access to opportunity

As part of the £21m invested - over £3m has been invested so far in 20 projects aimed to deliver:

- An increase in the number of people with learning disabilities and autism in paid employment.
- An increase in those from a Free School Meals cohort background with understanding and access to paid employment and 'good jobs', narrowing the gap on average income from those from FSM cohort and non-FSM peers and lowering NEETs rates.
- An increased awareness of those in KS3 of skills required in school to align to different career paths and supporting students to feel more 'career ready'.
- An increase in those recovering from mental health conditions in voluntary work, education or employment, supporting the aim of Levelling up the economy through retaining staff in employment.
- An increase in Good Level of Development / confidence in managing mental health and wellbeing as a child or young person so that they are on a pathway and building foundations for good jobs and wider determinants of health.
- An increase in the number of children, young people and adults receiving the support and resources required to meet their needs (in Speech, Language and Communication, Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and families)
- A reduction in the number of young people becoming NEET and reduction in post 16 dropout rates
- Increase the number of apprenticeships pathways into jobs in the early years sector.



Progress so far

67,747

The number of people who have been directly impacted so far (by the end of November 2023).

138,090

The number of people we expect to be directly impacted by Levelling Up projects over the life of the programme (by July 2025).

We've already seen since the start of the programme:

- **an increase in literacy levels**
- **more provision of free childcare (through the Essex ActiVate programme)**
- **more support for the Early Years sector (with the launch of a new £1.4 million Poppins bursary to support career development)**
- **provision of much more support for and from businesses e.g. Ford, HSBC, Essex Construction Alliance**
- **Opened up more community supermarkets, with 7 now up and running – there will be one in every district by summer 2024**
- **new support for skills e.g. Essex opportunities, entry to work programmes**
- **new investment in children's mental health and wellbeing, such as the Harlow Futures mental health projects being delivered in primary and secondary schools**
- **distributed over 6,500 digital devices to residents, schools, refugees and community groups, along with digital inclusion support**

What's next?

- Targeted literacy work
- Skills development work by sector
- Growing and deepening links with businesses and the private sector
- Finalising the roll out of community supermarkets
- Supporting the provision of affordable childcare through the Poppins Bursary to grow the early years workforce.
- Supporting mental health and wellbeing through volunteering and supporting access to employment
- Supporting transition; identifying pathways of need and empowering young people and their families to aspire for more