

# Equality Impact Assessment

Section 1: Executive Summary	
1.1	<p><b>Title of policy (or decision)</b></p> <p>Economic Recovery Programme – October 2020</p>
1.2	<p><b>Describe the main aims, objectives and purpose of the policy (or decision)</b></p> <p>To support Essex residents and businesses impacted by the economic outcomes of Covid-19 through a suite of initiatives to accelerate new employment, training and development opportunities and stimulate the conditions to enable economic recovery and growth</p> <p><b>What outcome(s) are you hoping to achieve? <i>Refer to strategic aims / strategic priorities in Organisation Strategy</i></b></p> <p>The impact of Covid-19 on the Essex economy is likely to be deep and enduring, with significant numbers of unemployed residents requiring additional support. Unemployment is at its highest level for 30 years and is expected to increase, exacerbated by the ending or re-focussing of the central government temporary fiscal support schemes in place</p> <p>In the immediate response to this economic shock, Essex County Council responded quickly by delivering direct support and advice to businesses to help them access financial assistance; securing £35m from the Getting Building Fund to support the construction industry; promoting Essex as a great place for outdoor activities through the “Great Adventures Close to Home” marketing campaign; making a firm commitment to new entry levels roles at Essex County Council to support young people into employment; promoting new standards through the supply chain to enhance investment in the county and establishing a new Nightingale Social Care Bursary and Nursing Apprenticeship Scheme.</p> <p>The cycle of social and economic restrictions being imposed and eased means that the economic future for Essex is hard to predict, but sectors that are key to the Essex economy, especially in coastal communities and town centres continue to be significantly impacted. Travel, hospitality, retail and leisure businesses in particular are reporting significant falls in output, affecting the employment opportunities and economic prosperity of all working age adults within these sectors, A disproportionate impact is however being seen by Essex residents aged 16-24, who are more likely to work within Covid impacted sectors and are more likely to be furloughed as per August 2020 reporting</p>

	<p>It is therefore essential for ECC to take action now to support Essex jobs and businesses and also focus on the medium-term to create the conditions that will build a greener, more productive and fairer economy and a sustainable future</p> <p>To this end, an Economic Recovery Programme has been developed to support the council's ambitions to deliver "inclusive Economic Growth," as set out in the Council's Organisation Strategy (2017-2021) and aims to create or sustain up to 3000 jobs in Essex up to December 2021 whilst also ensuring plans are in place to support longer-term economic growth beyond this period and up to 2025. The implementation of this programme of work will be a significant step in improving the outcomes and prosperity of Essex businesses and residents, who are being hard hit by the economic impacts of Covid-19</p>
1.3	<p><b>Is this a new policy (or decision) or a change to an existing policy, practice or project?</b></p> <p>Whilst a number of economic growth initiatives already exist within ECC, the Economic Recovery Programme of work has been developed to expand, re-deploy and refocus resource in order to accelerate and amplify sustainable economic growth and employment opportunities, at speed and scale</p>

## Section 2: Assessing the Equality Impact

Communities across the UK are being significantly impacted by the profound economic shock created by Covid-19. The economy is now in recession, contracting by 20.4% between the first and second quarter of the year and the Bank of England is forecasting the national economy to shrink by 9.5% overall this year. Communities across Essex are also being significantly impacted with key indicators reporting:

- An unprecedented surge in unemployment in Essex, with the claimant count for August of 71,290 still at its highest since the 1990s recession
- An estimated 108,000 residents currently furloughed. In total, this amounts to 22% of Essex receiving some form of government fiscal support
- Unemployment is disproportionately impacting young people aged 16-24, with 12.4% of the under 25 workforce having made a jobseekers claim, compared to 9.0% of the 25 – 34s, 6.9% of the 35 – 49s, and 5.3% of the over 50s in July 2020
- Areas in deprivation are less resilient to economic shocks, but Covid-19 is impacting all parts of the county, even those previously well known for their economic prosperity. Four districts within Essex (Harlow, Braintree, Epping Forest and Tendring) are among the local authorities with the highest proportion of furloughed workers in England and are seeing the number of furloughed employees significantly above the national and regional averages at 32%
- Essex is now starting to see these impacts at an economic level with dramatic reductions in GDP and record falls in national output for production and services reported between March and July 2020. An easing of social restrictions has enabled monthly gross domestic product (GDP) to rise by 6.6% during July 2020 but still remains 11.7% below February 2020 levels, with 72% of national businesses reporting a large revenue drop
- The current cycle of restrictions being imposed and eased means that the economic future for Essex is hard to predict, but sectors that are key to the Essex economy, especially in our coastal communities, continue to be significantly impacted. Travel, hospitality, retail, construction and leisure sectors generate between 15-40% GVA and have reported falls in output between 40-92% between March and July 2020. The risk of economic scarring is a real challenge with significant numbers of businesses within these sectors predicting that their turnover will still be lower in 3 years' time

**Does or will the policy or decision affect:**

Service users	Y <input type="checkbox"/>	N <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Employees	Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N <input type="checkbox"/>

The wider community or groups of people, particularly where there are areas of known inequalities		Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N <input type="checkbox"/>
Which geographical areas of Essex does or will the policy or decision affect (e.g. Borough/City/District/All Essex)			
All Essex Basildon Braintree Brentwood Castle Point Chelmsford	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Colchester Epping Forest Harlow Maldon Rochford Tendring Uttlesford	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Will the policy or decision influence how organisations operate?		Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N <input type="checkbox"/>
Will the policy or decision involve substantial changes in resources?		Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N <input type="checkbox"/>
Is the new or revised policy linked to a digital service (website, system or application)?		Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N <input type="checkbox"/>
Please describe the steps you have taken to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• meet the digital accessibility requirements</li> <li>• test the accessibility of the website, system or application</li> <li>• maintain accessibility once it has gone live</li> </ul> <p>A full programme of User, Systems, Operational and Accessibility testing will be conducted as part of the implementation of digital hubs and portals for information and guidance. The websites will be fully compliant with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines version 2.1 AA standard, including a full Accessibility Statement. The products will be cloud based with supplier led updates, and as such would be expected to evolve to meet any changes in accessibility legislation</p> <p>The web-based nature of the digital hubs and portals will enable access from multiple devices supporting user accessibility and where more in-depth accessibility testing is required with expert users, this service will be procured via ECC's accessibility partner. This is the standard approach that is taken by ECC Technology Services and the accessibility project team</p>			

### Section 3: Description of Impact

Description of impact	Nature of impact Positive, neutral, adverse (please explain your reasons)	Extent of impact Low, Medium, High (please explain your reasons)
Age	<p>Positive Impact – supporting training and employment opportunities across all age ranges. The Programme also includes an urgent set of initiatives aimed specifically at Essex residents aged 16-24. This is in response to the disproportionate impact this cohort is facing from the economic impacts of Covid-19 – seen through an unprecedented lack of development, training and employment opportunities</p>	<p>High - the scheme aims to create or sustain up to 3000 jobs in Essex up to December 2021 whilst also ensuring plans are in place to support longer-term economic growth beyond this period and up to 2025</p> <p>In addition, ECC will directly employ a minimum of 210 Essex residents aged 16-24 within the next 12 months as a response to the disproportionate impacts being faced by this cohort. The scheme is in line with ECC's aims of respecting employees, creating an inclusive environment in everything we do and recognising the inequalities in our communities and ensuring that our work reduces this, giving support to the most vulnerable groups. The positive impact on these particular individuals will be high, although it is recognised that this opportunity cannot be extended to the whole population of Essex residents</p> <p>To support this wider cohort, the programme will stimulate additional apprenticeship, traineeship and graduate opportunities within businesses across the County. Significant</p>

		<p>investment in new retraining, reskilling and development opportunities are also being made available to support all age groups into work, such as funded training to provide skills that support the green economy, modern methods of construction and digital sectors.</p> <p>Significant investment is also proposed to support a job matching service that identifies transferrable skills that can be utilised in more buoyant employment sectors – such as health and social care and delivery logistics</p>
Disability – Learning Disability	<p>Positive Impact – ECC, in its role as a significant Anchor Institution for Essex, will promote and stimulate inclusive training and employment opportunities for people with all protected characteristics. ECC will seek to influence by example and the sharing of best practice, protocols and processes that can be easily adopted by all Essex businesses</p> <p>Where ECC offers new entry level direct employment opportunities, the council expects everyone who works at ECC to be treated and to treat everyone else with dignity and respect. ECC is a Disability Confident employer and Inclusive apprenticeships have been specifically included within the entry level employment initiatives within the Economic Recovery Programme to ensure opportunities are accessible to all. The Employee Experience</p>	<p>Low– provision for direct employment at ECC via new inclusive apprenticeships is included within the Economic Recovery Programme. Modest and achievable targets have been set in order to provide optimal flexibility and meet the needs of the business and potential candidates</p> <p>ECC seeks also to influence Essex public sector institutions and key business partners across the county to provide similar. This ambition will be stimulated via a formalised Anchor Institution programme with partner agencies and through the potential to encourage suppliers to provide inclusive opportunities for Essex residents through ECC's</p>

	<p>lead will ensure the user voice and accessibility requirements are heard overall as expert input.</p> <p>ECC has a range of networks for employees that provide confidential support and these will be accessible to all entry level employees. These groups include:</p> <p>Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Network Group  Black and Minority Ethnic Employees Network  Disabled Employees' Network Group  Young Person and Apprentice Network  Carers' Forum  Christian Fellowship  Prayer space is available at County Hall and arrangements can be made at our other hubs.</p>	supply chain value of over £1.2bn per annum
Disability – mental health issues	See response to Disability – learning disability	Low
Disability – physical impairment	See response to Disability – learning disability	Low
Disability – sensory impairment	See response to Disability – learning disability	Low
Gender / Sex	<p>Neutral Impact - The council expects everyone who works at ECC to be treated and to treat everyone else with dignity and respect. ECC monitors workforce diversity annually to track data, identify improvement actions, and carry out equal pay/Gender Pay Gap audits and the programme's entry level employment initiatives will follow the same guidelines</p>	Low

Gender reassignment	See response to Gender / Sex	Low
Marriage / civil partnership	See response to Gender / Sex	Low
Pregnancy / maternity	See response to Gender / Sex	Low
Race	See response to Gender / Sex	Low
Religion / belief	See response to Gender / Sex	Low
Sexual orientation	See response to Gender / Sex	Low
I confirm that I have considered the potential impact on all of the protected characteristics Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Describe any actions that have already been taken to mitigate negative impacts on any of the protected characteristics.		
NA		



## Section 4: Action plan to address and monitor adverse impacts

Does your EqlA indicate that the policy or decision would have a medium or high adverse impact on one or more equality groups?

Y ☐ N ☒

If 'YES', use the space below to describe what mitigating actions you could put in place to address any adverse impacts identified

**What are the mitigating actions?**

**Date they will be achieved?**

NA

## Section 5: Sign off

**I confirm that this initial analysis has been completed appropriately.  
(A typed signature is sufficient.)**

Signature of person completing the EqlA:  
Sarah Read

Date: 08 Oct 2020

Names and contact details:  
Sarah Read, Project Manager  
[sarah.read@essex.gov.uk](mailto:sarah.read@essex.gov.uk)

Your function, service area and team:  
Corporate and Customer Services, Delivery and Business Support, Transformation Delivery and Support

If you are submitting the EqlA on behalf of another function, service area or team, specify the originating function, service or team area

Place & Public Health, Sustainable Growth  
Finance & Technology, Procurement  
Organisation, Development & People

Signature of Economic Recovery Programme Sponsor: Nicole Wood, Executive Director Finance & Procurement	Date: 10 Sep 2020
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