

Essex Climate Action Commission (ECAC) Meeting

12/09/2023 11:00-13:00 Via Zoom

Attendees:

Adam Derham
Adam Scott
Andrew Impey
Becky Jones
Claire Williamson
Cllr Ivan Henderson
Cllr Louise McKinlay
Cllr Peter Schwier
Craig Bourne
Daniel Barry
Dr. Simon Lyster
Ellis Shelton
Emma Hall
Graham Thomas (speaker)
Heather Hilburn
Jason Searles (speaker)
Jerry Stokes
John Meehan (speaker)
Juliette Raison (speaker)
Kerry Burgess (speaker)
Loretta Hoy (speaker)
Louise Tennekoon
Matthew Thomas
Pamela Cox
Phil Oldershaw
Poone Yazdanpanah
Prajwal Pandey
Prof. Jacquie McGlade
Prof. Jules Pretty (chair)
Rebecca Gipp (speaker)
Renata Lins
Richard Wood
Rob Wise
Rosalyn Murphy
Rt Revd Roger Morris
Sam Kennedy
Samantha Jones
Sarah Gill
Sarah Howard
Simon Walsh
Sukhi Binns
Tom Day (speaker)
Tracey Vickers (speaker)
Yarema Ronish

Apologies:

Adam Read
Cllr David King
Cllr Mike Bush
Cllr Paul Thorogood
Cllr Sue Lissimore
Ian Davidson
Julia Crear
Laura Mansel Thomas
Mark Ash
Mark Doran
Mark Nowers
Peter Davey
Ruth Kent
Toddington Harper

1. Welcome and Opening

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

2. Updates from SIG leads

Land Use and Green Infrastructure

- Essex County Council Biodiversity Duty:
 - This means that, as a public authority, ECC must: (1) consider what we can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity; (2) agree policies and specific objectives based on our consideration; and (3) act to deliver our policies and achieve our objectives.
 - Local authorities and LPAs must publish a biodiversity report Programme by January 2026, before that ECC needs to produce a “Consideration” by January 2024.
 - The Report will be focussed on: ECC land biodiversity opportunities, biodiversity comms and messages to public and partners, and biodiversity policies in all the functional areas from highway to parks.
- Wilder Blackwater Landscape Recovery Scheme bid (CFA), part of ELMS (Environmental Land Management Scheme):
 - Includes 1,600 hectares of protected land and large areas of private farmland. Partners have been talking to about 20 private landowners to turn some of the farmland into nature areas.
 - Bid for 2 development periods (2024-2026), which sets out a 20-year+ implementation period (2046+).
 - Bid capped at £750,000 for 2 years, ECC proposed as the Single Legal Entity for the development period. Our partners (Essex Wildlife Trust, RSPB, National Trust) own a large amount of protected land in that area. This is about improving that protected land and creating more nature areas.
- Updates:
 - ECC Green Infrastructure Standards (launched in August 2023) won the Building with Nature accreditation 2023.
 - Three further ECC sites being considered for BNG.
 - ECC Water Strategy: First draft due in October 2023.

Energy

- Local energy and Communities: we are working with Community Energy South to deliver CommuniPower, a “whole village” approach to decarbonising heat and power. Successful £1m bid to DESNZ to fund local energy champions in three locations, currently developing bid to National Lottery (Energy and Climate action fund).
- Retrofit: Home Upgrade Grant which runs to March 2025, funding allocation of £18.7m for Essex to deliver retrofit measures in low-income households. Expected to go live end of September. Working with Districts to agree a mechanism for administering OFGEM Energy Company Obligation (ECO) 4 funding, to unlock £20-40 million in energy efficiency grants for low-income households.
- Local energy: Innovate UK – “Pathfinder Places” fund:
 - EssNet – removing multiple non-technical barriers to net zero. Phase 1 feasibility completed, now bidding for £3m in phase 2.
 - Shift to Net Zero – scaling up investment in getting our schools to net zero. Bid for £3.4 million for phase 2 submitted.
- OFGEM Strategic Innovation Fund (Project “SHIELD”) low-cost heat and power for low-income households, 3-month feasibility work completed, UKPN submitted £0.5m Alpha bid to pilot technology. If successful will lead to Beta bid for £10m+ to fund roll-out.

- Community energy: Support to community groups extended to March 26, to include (1) supporting the set-up of 4 new community energy groups; (2) developing 4 community-led local area energy plans in Levelling Up areas, and a project pipeline of local energy investment opportunities in those areas; and (3) expanding the pipeline of community energy opportunities through engaging with an additional 20 community groups.
- Solar Installations: £5.85 million community fund from Longfield Solar Farm confirmed following Sec of State's decision on planning application. £50K grant from Net Zero Hub to begin process of assessing feasibility of installing solar at park and ride sites. Updating financial models to reassess solar farms on ECC land at two locations, with support from Net Zero Hub.

Waste

- Waste Strategy for Essex: consultation on the strategy is being launched, draft strategy prepared by ECC and 12 LAs. Setting a framework for the delivery of high performing waste operations within Essex aligning with ECAC recommendations. The priorities are: (1) moving to a circular economy, (2) decarbonisation of waste systems, (3) achieving zero waste, (4) waste reduction & recycling services, and (5) behavioural change.
- Kerbside Recycling Services: comprehensive service reviews taking place across 40% of the County to increase range of materials captured for recycling and service access.
- Influencing Behaviour & Education:
 - food recycling project launched countywide.
 - Partnership food waste reduction campaign moving into final phase.
 - Behaviour change innovation research programme, initial data being collated and further investment proposed to fully scope opportunities.
- Engagement with businesses: development of 'great start' guidance progressing, exploring launch in Braintree and Uttlesford, considering integrating into the Great Start Guide.
- Reducing bio-waste to landfill/ Putting biodegradable waste to beneficial use: developing plans for procurement of medium-term residual waste treatment services, the procurement process will award higher quality scores to solutions that guarantee recycling and/or recovery, will contain mechanisms to manage carbon emissions from the proposed solutions.

Built Environment

- Objective - Net Zero New Homes by 2025:
 - Policy formation is based on evidence, good progress has been made on two critically important areas of work: (1) Development Viability, [Three Dragons report](#) published; and (2) clarifying the legal position, [KC Advice](#) published (May 2023).
 - [Net Zero Policy Study](#) – Introba report published (July 2023), which gives us all the information we need to prepare the policy framework in our local plans.
- Net Zero Homes – Stamp Duty Exemption: the focus has been on launching the campaign to influence the chancellor to exempt Stamp Duty on all Net Zero new build homes. Activities include: letters submitted to the Chancellor, securing support at the regional level (EELGA has this as one of their key priorities), and working with ECAC Built Environment Commissioners to raise the profile at the national level.
- Next Steps (2023/24):
 - Net Zero House Blueprint: a costed specification, materials and technologies needed to create a net zero carbon dwelling, part one of a staged approach to understand the delivery of net zero carbon dwellings.
 - Embodied carbon model policy Study: to develop the evidence base to support a model policy for local plans.

- Essex Developers Guide: additional guide on the design and aesthetics of net zero carbon dwellings including designing in battery storage, air source and ground source heat pumps and infrastructure.

Transport

- Electric Vehicles (EV): On street residential chargepoint (~60 chargers) contract awarded to Qwello. EV charger strategy public consultation complete. Local EV Infrastructure Fund (LEVI) £500K revenue awarded. Escooter tender being evaluated.
- Cycling: Cycling Strategy being refreshed. Tranche 1 (3/12 districts) Local Walking & Cycling Infrastructure consultation open. Jaywick to Clacton route dedicated ATE webinar.
- School Streets: Strategy commissioned via Jacobs. Active Travel Fund 4 (ATF4) Healthy School Streets schemes, detailed design to commence later this month.
- Active Travel: Exploring new engagement platform used by Oxfordshire, Cornwall and Kent.
- Major projects: Army & Navy still awaiting funding decision from Central Government. Beaulieu Park railway station and Chelmsford NE bypass contracts agreed.
- Community Rail: 5 event trains ran this summer with nearly 500 passengers enjoying sustainable trips.
- Why is an Air Quality (AQ) Strategy needed for Essex? Environment Act 2021 introduced specific requirements for county councils to develop measures to improve AQ in AQ Management Areas. NO₂ is heavily influenced by road traffic emissions, which can be more readily influenced by ECC than by district/borough councils. PM_{2.5} is a regional pollutant influenced by lots of different sources over a wider area. AQ has a significant impact on the health of the people of Essex.
- Scope of Air Quality Strategy: improve air quality, improve how we measure it and develop a working plan for activities.
- Latest progress and next steps: Public consultation on the strategy expected to start in late October/November, focus on getting people's input on our AQ strategy and the interventions we want to introduce.

Community Engagement

- We will have attended over 25 events by the end of the year. They range from local festivals to school events to business shows.
- Upcoming events: No Waste Walden library event (16/09), East of England net zero event (20/09), Building Business For Your Future Fair (21/09), RCCE Webinar Village Hall's Conference (23/09), Launch of Early Years Advice Pack (05/09), Climate Awareness Train (08/10), East Anglian Coast and Estuaries Conference (12/10), CPD for school settings (12/10), Design for Planet Festival (17-18/10), Dengie Climate Action Partnership launch (19/10), Healthy Schools Festival (19/10), Autumn Climate Conference (31/10).
- Projects:
 - The Essex Climate Focus Area: working with Genesis PR agency to promote the area and develop materials;
 - Local Climate Engagement Programme: working with Involve to support three Town/Parish Councils in engaging with the public to develop their local nature plan;
 - Design, Differently: working with the Design Council and our Co-Chair Prajwal to support schools in Essex to develop a network of climate ambassadors;
 - The Essex Green Infrastructure Standards video; and
 - Arts and Culture & Climate Action film.
- Carbon Cutting Essex: launched May this year, now has over 500 registrations. Good level of engagement, with Colchester, Chelmsford and Braintree having the most users.

- Carbon Literacy Training: over 300 employees have become accredited, in June we went to Manchester to collect our bronze Carbon Literacy Award, celebration event in the Council Chamber tomorrow to celebrate all those who have achieved accreditation.

Just Transition

- Green Entrepreneurs Programme: Support programme for budding entrepreneurs aged 18 to 30, which ran for 6 weeks during July and August. Eight budding entrepreneurs saw the programme all the way through. Three of pitched for seed funding and have won £5k each. We will be holding an event shortly to showcase the winners and for marketing purposes. We will run another programme going forward, in the process of commissioning that for the next two years.
- Great Start Scheme: A Green business support and accreditation scheme. Supporting businesses to maintain viability with changing consumer preferences and changes in legislation. The pilot focus is looking and establishing business Carbon Footprints and waste minimisation. Conversations now being held to discuss utilising Cutting Carbon Essex App as an engagement tool. Pilot will launch January 2024 in Braintree and Uttlesford.
- We Rise Programme: Youth Movement for Essex. We have a core group of 4 young people who are working with a consultant who have developed the branding and the name (previously Shujaaz). Currently running two social media pages on Instagram and Facebook. We are beginning the matching up of young people with business mentors. After evaluating the World Café we have identified areas of need and we looking to have another event in October half term around employability.

3. Exploring the links between Climate and Place-based Levelling Up: how climate action can improve the lives of people in Essex

Introduction: Cllr Louise McKinlay (speaker), Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Levelling Up and the Economy, ECC

We have a very ambitious agenda in Essex when it comes to levelling up. What can be done about disadvantage and the growing complexities of the system? How can we help people have more opportunities?

We are working with partners both in the private and public sector, communities, and charities. We identified 6 priority places across Essex and 4 cohorts of people that face additional barriers to opportunity. The drive is to spread that opportunity and to give people the tools so they can have more decisions over their lives.

We are looking at how we can measure the impact that different initiatives are having. Our one-year Impact Report tells how we are starting to achieve that in practice. From a levelling up perspective, we need to take into account the social, economic and environmental context when driving forward this work, so that we can combine our levelling up and our climate change goals.

Essex Pedal Power: Juliette Raison (speaker), Relationship Manager, Active Essex

Some statistics: 60% of car journeys are under 5 miles, 3% of all trips are made on a bike. 77% of residents from a lower socioeconomic group never cycle but 31% of them would like to start. This is why Essex Pedal Power (EPP) was designed and why it has become a leading flagship programme.

What is EPP? A community-based cycling scheme piloted in Jaywick Sands and Clacton. Aim is to overcome the barriers to sustainable travel by increasing cycling and active travel. We have so far

distributed over 800 bikes, aim is to give away 5,000 bikes by 2025 across all the 6 levelling up areas. This year we have also launched in Colchester, Harwich, Dovercourt and Basildon.

Individuals are assessed against deprivation and residential status, and loaned a bike for free. Each bike is fitted with a GPS tracker to provide intelligence and monitoring. If regular use is identified after 12 months, the bike is gifted. Training packages to increase confidence, learn to ride a bike and basic bike maintenance, as well as bike helmet, lock and light are also provided.

Key impacts: fewer car journeys, CO² savings, distance travelled by bike recipients equated to them travelling 1.5 times around the Earth; and increase in life satisfaction, community trust, volunteering, access to supermarkets, education, training and employment.

Coastal Communities & the Blue Economy: Samantha Jones (speaker), Localities Lead, ECC

Blue economy, in Essex encompasses all economic activity relating to our coasts. It's about using their natural and cultural capital to generate economic value and contribute to the environment, e.g. renewable energy generation.

Socio-economic challenges: (1) lack of economic opportunity, (2) low skills base, (3) poor transport infrastructure and limited connectivity, (4) lack of digital infrastructure and affordability, (5) declining town centres, (6) residents have poor health and wellbeing, with high demand on services, (7) aging population, and (8) climate change.

Coastal opportunities: offshore wind (part of the government's 50GW by 2030); ports & logistics (freight and passenger supporting trade and tourism); green hydrogen (potential to support innovation, the transport sector, and the wider farming); sustainable tourism.

Freeport East: good case study that encompasses both the blue economy and the levelling up agenda. Approved at the beginning of the year, first year of full activity as a freeport. Freeports are government backed hubs for investment and trade, they have tax incentives on certain sites which encourage investment. They are part of a broader government agenda about driving clean growth through a low carbon economy.

- planned to create 13,500 new jobs and generate a Gross Value Added (GVA) of £5.5 billion over 10 years.
- will support an area that has historically struggled to support dense levels of employment, and has low productivity; catalysing new skills and employment opportunities; and generating future investment and economic growth.
- Priorities: (1) Access to higher paid jobs, (2) Skills & Employability, (3) Innovation & Productivity, (4) Trade & Investment, (5) Net Zero & Decarbonisation, (6) Infrastructure, Regeneration and Levelling Up.
- Skills Escalator Approach: supports multiple points of job entry and facilitates in-work progression.

Housing / Retrofit: Rebecca Gipp (speaker), Head of Levelling Up Co-ordination, ECC

Retrofitting is the process of making alterations to an existing building to improve its energy efficiency and reduce energy consumption. Retrofit delivers across our climate goals and levelling up goals. It can transform lives and deliver economic growth. More energy efficient homes help boost residents' outcomes in their lives.

Barriers to delivering at scale: low demand and low supply.

The 'business case' for retrofit is often thought of as purely economic or environmental, but there is a strong social case for retrofit as well. Poor housing has negative impacts on people's health, it leads to missed education, poorly insulated homes mean increased costs that have an impact on low-income households. When looking at the socioeconomic outcomes, the return on investment starts to stack up.

Levelling up priorities in Essex: access to employment, raising aspirations, business growth and innovation, increasing literacy, improving health, skills and lifelong learning, and improving educational outcomes.

Retrofit in action across Essex: unlocking maximum grant funding for fuel disadvantaged residents, growing green skills, and empowering communities.

4. Short update on Essex Renewal Project – Prof Jules Pretty (speaker), Chair ERP

What is the [Essex Renewal Project](#)?

- Commissioned by Essex Partners,
- Independent from national and local government structures,
- Aim is to identify practices and policies to support Essex Renewal in the long term,
- System level, collaborative approach to change.

Model – Five Regenerative Capital Assets for Renewal: natural capital, social capital, human capital, cultural capital and sustainable physical capital. These can all be built up at specific places if we have that support and resources, they can supply us with a range of services that can further improve the other capital assets. Framework for renewal and for sustainable/regenerative change within the county.

15 recommendations, 3 for each of the 5 areas being worked on:

- Social Justice: (1) Trust between Public Services and Essex's Minority Communities, (2) The Digital Divide, (3) Protect and Enhance Public and Community Assets,
- Young people: (4) Giving Young People a Voice, (5) Improving Careers' Advice, (6) Tackling and Reducing Attainment Gaps,
- Community Well-being: (7) Growing capability in the voluntary sector, (8) Facilitating a New System for Social Prescribing, (9) New Models for Ageing Communities and Social Care,
- Climate and nature crises: (10) Frameworks for Action and Implementation, (11) Access and Participation in Natural and Green Spaces, (12) Community Engagement, Co-Production and Education,
- Green economy: (13) Demonstrating the opportunities to innovate, (14) The New Opportunities from the Green Economy, (15) Coastal Community and Seaside Economic Revival.

Discussion: The presentations prompted a discussion around housing, food security and water scarcity.

5. AOB and Chair's closing remarks

The next meeting will be held on **Tuesday 04 December 2023**.

6. Items from the Chat

Tracey Vickers 11:59



Important to note that EVs will help AQ to an extent - but they still emit particular matter.

Philip Oldershaw 11:59



Many thanks Jules

Tracey Vickers 12:13



EPP just nominated for 3 awards - National Transport, Highways and Active awards

clairew 12:15



Hi all, is there any update on the ECC EV Charging Working Group?

Collapse All ^

Tracey Vickers 12:19



We are recruiting to the team to provide capacity for this. We now have a team of 5 so this should kick off soon.

JerryStokes 12:19



I think you will find the Government Offshore wind target is 50GW not MW by 2030

Tracey Vickers 12:39



We have definitely linked Jaywick EPP to Jaywick community supermarket re food

Samantha Jones 12:43



Not community food growing as such, but good connection between people furthest from the job market learning through horticulture:
<https://seeds4growth.org.uk/what-abberton-rural-training-offers/>

[What Abberton Rural Training Offers – Seeds4Growth](#)

Catherine Cameron - Agulhas Applied ...



Its cross cutting??

Philip Oldershaw 12:44



Through last year's LU Community Challenge Fund a number of the projects funded were for community garden projects, to grow food for their local area.

Simon Walsh 12:50



Red, Fallow, Roe Deer for charging points?

graham.thomas 12:51



The Beaver would be an ideal replacement for one of the EV charge point names.

Heather Hilburn 12:28

HH Thank you to Samantha for your presentation, very exciting to see the blue economy featured in our ECAC discussions and your very relevant case study. I have to leave at 12:45 but will forward my comments/queries in due course. Many thanks! Heather Hilburn CE of Thames Estuary Partnership

Cllr. Peter Schwier - Essex CC- Climate Czar 12:51

CP thanks - leaving for another meeting

Andrew Impey 12:51

AI and water vole for the small one


Catherine Cameron - Agulhas Applied ...

CC Thank you, Jules, very helpful

Louise Tennekoon, Climate Action Enga...

LT we will send out Jules' full pack with the minutes

Tracey Vickers 12:58

 I'm glad it has prompted so much debate

Catherine Cameron - Agulhas Applied ...

CC relevant for JT to a green economy as ever