

Report title: Green Essex Strategy Update	
Report to: Essex Flood Partnership Board	
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County Divisions affected: 'All Essex'	

1. Introduction

- 1.1 To provide an update on the progress of the development of a Green Essex Strategy and introduce the active projects that are aligned to Place and Public Health Business plan, such as the Essex Forest Initiative.

2. Action required

- 2.1 For information and support in working in partnership to implement the Green Essex Strategy.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Green Essex Strategy was originally presented to the Essex Flood Partnership Board in January 2019.
- 3.2 In 2017, Councillor John Spence at Political Leadership Team (PLT) raised the importance of developing quality green spaces across Essex to accompany planned growth in the county over the next twenty years. In the absence of a Green Infrastructure (GI) Strategy, PLT agreed for the development of a Strategy for Essex.
- 3.3 The strategy was mentioned by the Leader of the Council, Councillor David Finch in the executive statement at Full Council on 8 October 2019, as part of our current action towards tackling climate change. The Council has not declared a climate emergency – but a Climate Action Plan, recognising action is more important than words. Climate Change is the biggest single issue facing not just Essex, but the entire world. More needs to be done to make a difference and by working with staff, partners, businesses, residents and communities, the council will lead on reducing emissions, energy usage and waste across Essex, including protecting and enhancing our GI.

4. Green Essex Strategy

- 4.1 The purpose of the strategy is to understand the values our current green infrastructure provides and its potential to provide in the future in terms of environmental, social and economic benefits. The aim is to guide and shape planning and other services through setting principles that can inform plans and strategies to enhance, protect and create an integrated network of high-quality GI in Essex. These will enable a coherent approach and partner collaboration and maximise funding opportunities in the delivery of multi-functional natural assets.
- 4.2 The strategy is accompanied by an action plan which sets out priority actions which is also the basis of the Place & Public Health Business actions over the next 15 years.

5. Update and Next Steps

- 5.1 The strategy went out to public consultation in May 2019 for a period of 9 weeks.
- 5.2 The strategy is in final draft.
- 5.3 Begin the governance process, seek support and sign-off by the Executive Director and Portfolio Holder, Councillor Simon Walsh and put on the Forward Plan in order to present to Cabinet for 17 March 2020.
- 5.4 Once the strategy has been adopted the action plan, which sets out a programme of actions for implementation of the Green Essex Strategy will be further developed and formalised to achieve GI objectives.
- 5.5 Establish a Green Essex Network with partners and stakeholders (building upon the current online Knowledge Hub partnership), that will oversee the operations and delivery of the strategy and partner GI actions.
- 5.6 Through this network we will aim to establish a Green Essex charitable foundation to raise funds that support the delivery of GI across Essex.
- 5.7 Start to implement projects from phase one of the Green Essex Strategy Action Plan prioritised for years one and two of the strategy, which include the following:
- Greening town centres – air pollution amelioration
 - Green Essex Network
 - The ECC Roof Garden project – Greening County Hall
- 5.8 Continue creating green spaces which also function as Natural Flood Management and SuDs schemes Develop the Coast Path - “Path to Prosperity”
- 5.9 The Essex Forest Project – planting of 375,000 trees 2019-2025.

6. List of Appendices

- 6.1 Power Point presentation on the update of the Green Essex Strategy.