



Essex Climate Action Commission  
**Powering positive change**

# Special Interest Group Updates to ECAC

March 14th, 2024



Essex County Council

# Updates

- Land Use and Green Infrastructure
- Energy
- Waste
- Built Environment
- Transport
- Community Engagement
- Just Transition





# Land Use and Green Infrastructure

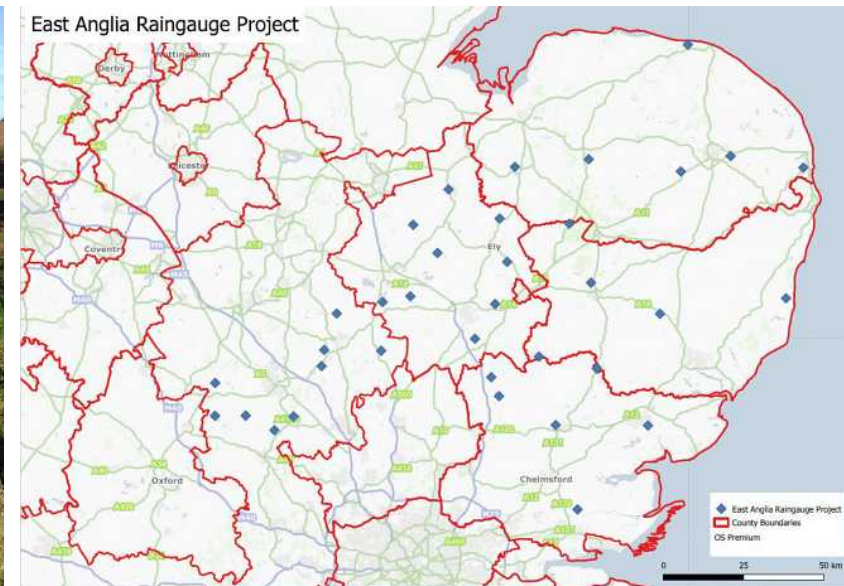




# ECC Rain gauge Project

Rain gauges installed through this project will complement the limited number of existing rain gauges by increasing the coverage across the region. Higher quality and increased quantity data collection can inform investigations of flooding events and flood risk assets, calibration and validation of flood risk models, and flood alleviation scheme delivery.

- **Total Value of Project:** £427,912 which is 100% EA funded
- 35 rain gauges
- ECC Managed project
- 7 partner authorities
  - Bedford Borough Council
  - Buckinghamshire County Council
  - Central Bedfordshire Council
  - Cambridgeshire County Council
  - Essex County Council
  - Norfolk County Council
  - Suffolk County Council



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# Essex Forest Initiative Update

- Essex Forest Initiative (EFI) has planted 138,000 trees for this year so far
- The total for 4 years is 375,000 trees which exceeds the 5 years target of 375,000 trees for the EFI project.
- Potentially EFI may plant another 30,000 trees before the end of the financial year!
- EFI has planted 75 hectares of woodland
- EFI has planted 23,664 metres of hedges
- ECC Tree Statements for ECC estate were approved in December 2023





# Hockley Woods NFM bid

ECC have been awarded £91,000 from the Environment Agency's Natural Flood Management programme.

- The project is to install and monitor eight leaky dams in Hockley, which are designed to slow the flow of water and reduce surface water flood risk. In addition, they also boost biodiversity through wetland creation and improve water quality through sediment settlement.
- We will use heavy horses to move and position the logs to avoid the use of heavy machinery, therefore reducing the carbon footprint, cost, and disruption to Hockley Woods.
- Hockley is located within a critical drainage area, which means 127 properties are at risk from surface water during a large storm event. This increases to 232 properties when factoring in climate change.





# Energy and Waste







## Energy: Community energy

- ECC providing support to communities in response to growing demand for local community led energy projects.
- ECC now working with 15 emerging and established community energy groups and 12 Parish Councils – this number continues to grow
- Community energy “Pathways programme” being commissioned to extend for a further 12 months providing mentoring and support to new and established groups
- Positive conversations on-going to set up new groups in Uttlesford, Harlow, Basildon including a **youth led** community energy group and Maldon







## Energy: Community energy

- Providing support for communities interested in local energy to undertake **Community-led Energy Planning** - place-based, community-centred approach to building knowledge, understanding and confidence to enable them to shape and benefit from the energy transition.
- Supporting lower-income communities - e.g. a recent community energy event in Jaywick (pictured) was very well attended by local residents - confident a community group will emerge looking at a range of opportunities put forward by the community (incl. an energy hub advice centre, solar / onshore wind to supply power to the local community)
- Officers joined a very well attended Parliamentary reception on community energy – Essex very well represented – awaiting the Government’s promised consultation on the barriers blocking the growth of community-run renewable energy schemes





## Energy efficiency: Retrofit

- Retrofit: Government funding for retrofit in low income households - Home Upgrade Grant 2 runs to March 2025 – funding allocation of £18.7m for Essex - programme now live
- Retrofit: mobilising Ofgem Energy Company Obligation (ECO) 4 retrofit programme funding to unlock further energy efficiency grants for low income households – go live planned for May 2024 – will be a County wide offer working closely with Districts
- CommuniPower - a “whole village” approach to decarbonising heat and power - is mobilising work with several clusters across Essex including Littlebury in Uttlesford working with Community Energy South

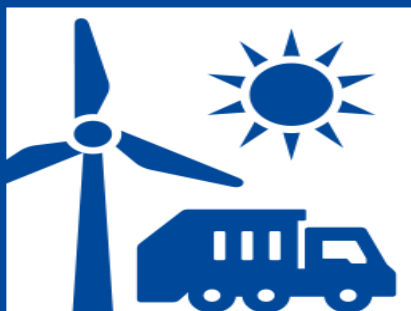




## Local Energy

- Local energy - Innovate UK “Pathfinder Places” fund - EssNet – removing multiple “non-technical” barriers to enable local communities to bring forward local renewable energy projects at scale – successful bid to the Pathfinders programme to extend existing work to create a “virtual community power station” using rooftop solar and storage across multiple Parishes
- Solar Installations
  - Exploring options for roll out of solar across the schools estate in Essex working with community groups
  - Feasibility work undertaken with Local Partnerships to look at the viability of solar farm developments on 2 sites owned by ECC with options for private wire connections – positive outcome and further feasibility now being taken forward. Exploring options for those developments to be financed and owned by communities.
  - Solar Together 2024 underway; over 3,600 residents registered to date





# Waste



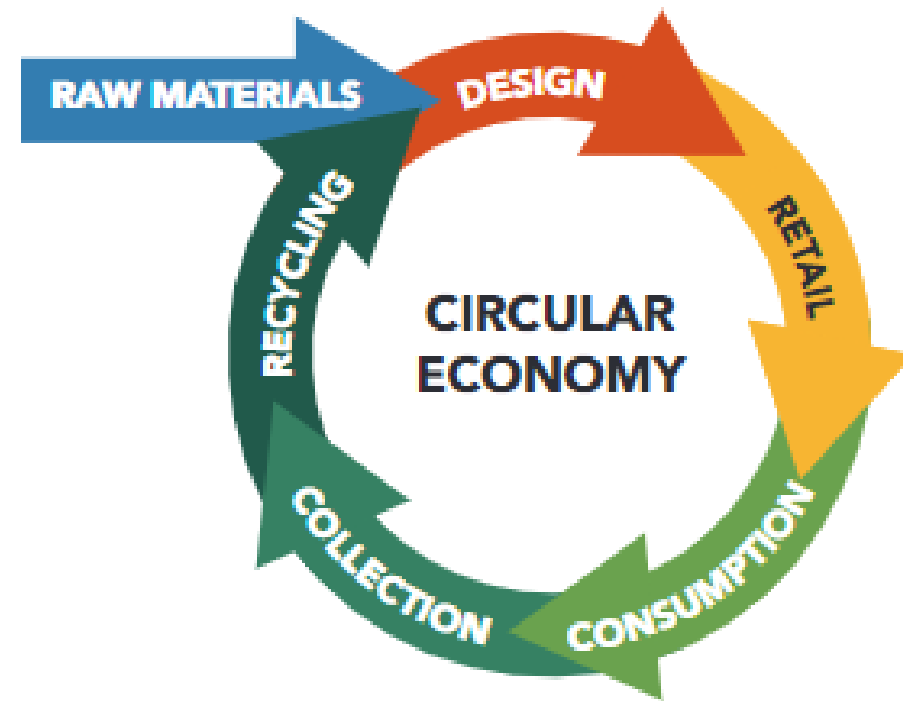


# Waste Strategy for Essex

- Circular economy waste vision for Essex
- Decarbonisation focus on waste activity
- Alignment with ECAC recommendations
- Good public support – c.70% agreement
- Action planning and adoption - summer 2024

## Strategy Priorities

- Accessible recycling for all by 2026
- Stop landfilling waste by 2030
- 65% minimum recycling rate by 2035 (70% aspiration)
- Halving residual waste by 2042







# Project Highlights

## Behaviour Change Programme:

- £2.4 million investment approved by Essex County Council
- 18-month programme to understand actions needed to achieve a step change in waste reduction and recycling
- Evidence gathering and testing of actions and approaches:
  - waste composition analysis
  - securing developer investment in waste infrastructure
  - bulky waste recycling
  - fly-tipping
  - food recycling
  - partnership website enrichment





# Project Highlights



## Food Waste:

- Focus on reducing food waste, and increasing recycling
- 390,000 households targeted throughout Essex
- Mixed-media approach used, coupled with nudge techniques to influence behaviours
- Supply of liners and containers, information, support and guidance
- Positive maintained impact seen from early analysis
- 20%+ increase in food waste recycling in targeted areas
- Planning underway to refine and expand





# Project Highlights

## Flexible Plastic Recycling:

- Understanding barriers to collecting difficult materials
- Trial operated by Maldon DC as part of national programme
- Targeting 6000 properties
- Positive early feedback
- Lessons learnt being shared across the partnership
- Best practice framework being developed for service deployment





# Built Environment



# Built Environment

## New build

### Net Zero Carbon New Homes

(March 2024)



Graham Thomas - Head of Planning and Sustainable Development



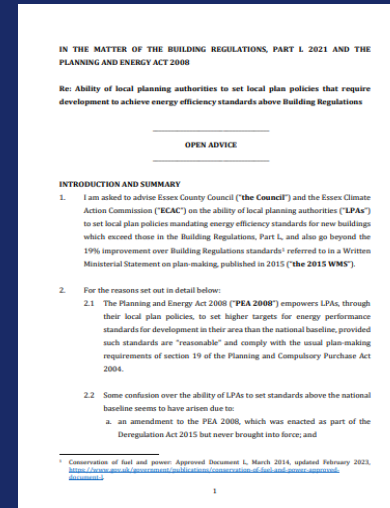


# Developing NZ carbon housing policy & Evidence

- Viability Evidence



- Legal Evidence



- Net Zero Policy Evidence



Consistent  
Policy

Support for  
LPAs



# Outcomes Achieved – Sustainability Leadership

- Wrote the response to Governments Future Homes Standard consultation for the East of England LGA and ADEPT.
- Updated the Legal Evidence for local authorities in response to Governments December Written Ministerial Statement.
- Working with pilot Net Zero housing schemes.
- Shortlisted in the category of Net Zero Strategy of the Year in the Edie Awards.





# Transport







# Sustainable Transport update

## Active Travel

- Active Travel 2 schemes completed expect for Colchester
- Bunnies Walk, Chelmsford walking and cycling route completed
- Harlow 9 walking and cycling route contract awarded
- Theatre in education tour of Harlow primary schools concluded
- Cycle Strategy to Scrutiny in March, and public consultation after District elections
- Harlow Sustainable Transport Corridor work has begun
- Garden Communities Travel Planning guidance to be published in April
- New cycling storage compounds at Benfleet station

## EV

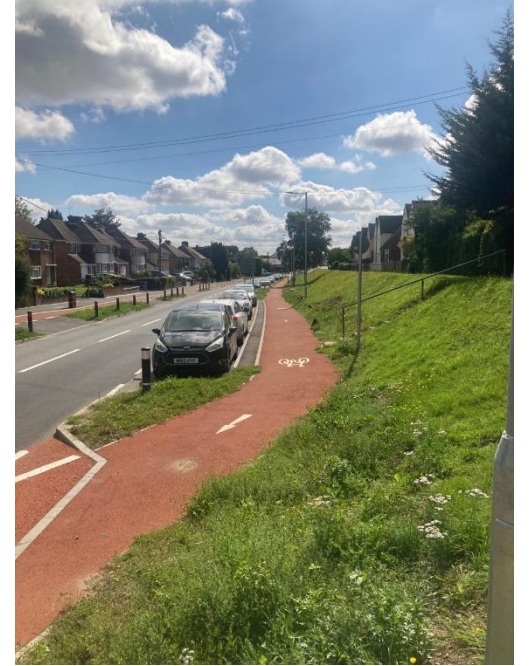
- Telematics installed in 16 out of 45 ECC large vehicles

## Policy

- Future transport strategies in Maldon nearly complete, and beginning in Tendring
- Speed Management Strategy refresh begins – putting safety first

## Major projects

- Tender awarded for Chelmsford Northeast by-pass
- Greener road surfacing maintenance solutions being explored



Panfield Lane,  
Braintree



Bunny Walks,  
Chelmsford



# Cycling strategy outcomes

- **Outcome 1:** People and businesses consider cycling as a normal, everyday choice and are empowered to cycle
- **Outcome 2:** The existing and future cycle network is fit for purpose, so people are able to cycle for more of their daily trips
- **Outcome 3:** Cycling has a positive role in connecting communities and tackling poverty, improving health and reducing inequalities
- **Outcome 4:** Cycling contributes to continued and inclusive economic success and dynamic local communities
- **Outcome 5:** The environment in Essex is improved as a result of an increased uptake in cycling, including air quality, noise, carbon and 'reduced' congestion
- **Outcome 6:** Essex is considered a desirable destination for leisure cycling







# Community Engagement



# Events

## Where we've been:

- Manifesto for Essex Youth Summit, Colchester (13/01)
- Climate Crisis event, Halsted (17/01)
- Mental Health Partnership Forum virtual event (18/01)
- Creative Techfest, Basildon (08/02)
- Sustainability in Schools event, University of Bedfordshire (14/02)
- University of Essex Sustainability Awareness Week (W/C March 4)
- South Essex Business expo, Brentwood (14/03)

## Upcoming events:

- Multi Schools Council awards, Colchester (15/03)
- Spring Climate Summit, Chelmsford (20/03)
- EYFS Conference 2024, Anglia Ruskin University (18/05)
- Chambers Essex Global Summit, Chelmsford (22/05)



# Climate Czar visits

- Recycling centers and property development sites, Canvey Island, South Woodham Ferrers and Maldon
- Writtle Farmers Club Annual Conference (07/02)
- GreenTech Festival, Basildon (08/02)
- Local Nature Recovery Strategy meeting (12/01)
- East of England Energy Group, University of Essex (21/02)
- Hatfield Peveral Recreation Ground (24/02)
- All Party Parliamentary Group – ‘Empowering Community Energy’, Westminster (27/02)





# Projects

- The Essex Climate Focus Area
- The Essex Forest Initiative
- Waste Strategy for Essex
- Essex Water Strategy
- Climate animations



**Essex Climate  
Focus Area**



Working together  
to achieve net zero



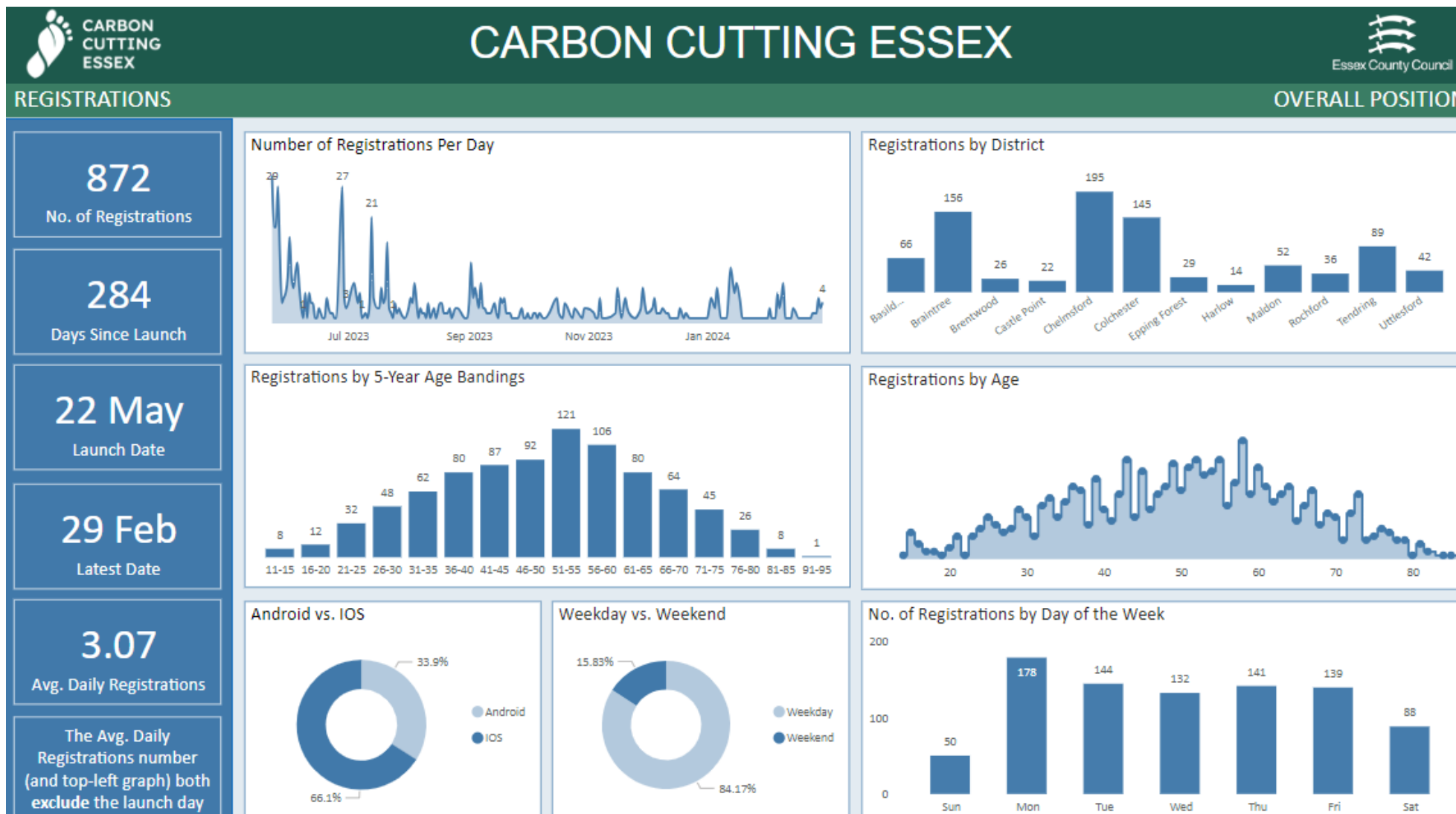
## Essex Forest Initiative

1.3K followers • 78 following

The Essex Forest Initiative is committed to planting 375,000 new trees across Essex over five years.

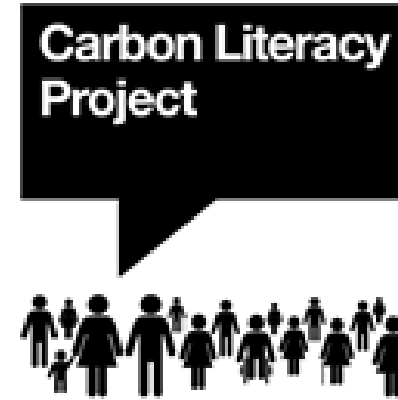


# Carbon Cutting Essex





# Carbon Literacy Training



- 335 Carbon Literacy accredited employees at Essex County Council
- The training has resulted in the creation of the Essex County Council employee Climate Network with over 200 members – One year anniversary event this month
- ECC received Carbon Literacy Bronze award at the Carbon Literacy Awards in June 2023
- Progress started towards Silver award



## Just Transition to a Green Economy

March 2024 update

# Green Entrepreneurs



**Green Entrepreneurs Programme:** A Green Start Up Programme



3 winners last year – all won £5k seed funding to start and support their business.



Designed to support new and novice green entrepreneurs with structured workshops and learning and an opportunity to pitch for seed funding.



Experienced business and green tutors support the programme where content is available online and is saved for future watching/learning to enable as wide a reach for candidates.



Delivery of next cohort by Summer 24



Transform your green  
idea into a successful  
business



# Great Start



**Great Start** : A green business support and accreditation scheme.



It will provide sustainability self-serve content, guidance and support in the form of video/podcasts and template documents.



The content is aimed to support businesses in understanding the complexity of sustainability and help them start or continue to make tangible steps towards their sustainability plan.



It also assists businesses in gaining market advantage by articulating green credentials and their sustainability journey. This will be supported through digitally badging the scheme.



Launching March 24 – Watch this space!



# We Rise - Decrypthut Pilot



**We Rise:** Canvey Youth movement



**Decrypthut:** Provides physical, interactive space for youth programming education



**Digital inclusion:** Sponsorship from business to prevent exclusion



**The idea:** Free workshops for youth tech experience

Pilot of two half-day courses  
Potential expansion to full-day or four-week programs based on interest



Opportunity aligns with We Rise's expansion into Basildon

