

# Green Essex Strategy

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GREEN  
ESSEX



Essex County Council



# What is Green Infrastructure?

Green infrastructure is made up of natural and semi-natural assets and habitat types of green and blue spaces and other environmental features that maintains and enhances ecosystem services. It provides multi-functional benefits integral to the health and wellbeing of our communities and to the ecology and economy of the county. Green infrastructure is often referred to as a network of these natural and semi-natural assets and spaces which are joined together connecting urban and rural areas and are habitually strategically planned.

## **Green spaces & features identified as Green Infrastructure includes for example:**

- Parks and gardens
- Natural and semi-natural open spaces
- Ancient Woodlands
- Reservoirs, lakes and Pond
- Coastal features
- Waterways (watercourses)
- Greenways (Public Rights of Way, footpaths, cycleways and tracks, bridleways, byways)
- Outdoor Sport Facilities (Sport pitches)
- Amenity green space (provision for play facilities etc.)
- Open spaces around premises (Educational premises open space and sport pitches)
- Cemeteries and churchyards
- Allotments, community gardens and city farms
- Productive spaces (agricultural land, meadows)
- Public Realm/Civic spaces (urban greening – Urban and street trees, road verges, green walls, Sustainable Urban Drainage and Natural Flood Management)
- Green corridors (verges)



# Vision & Objectives

## The Vision

We will protect and grow a high quality connected green infrastructure network that extends from our city and town centres to the countryside and coast and which; is designed for people and wildlife, whilst being self-sustaining.

### Place



#### Protect

**Protect** existing green infrastructure, especially the most valuable



#### Improve

**Improve** existing green infrastructure so it is better functioning



#### Create

**Create** more high-quality green infrastructure, especially in areas of deficiency



#### Connectivity

Improve the **connectivity** of green infrastructure for people and wildlife.

### People



#### Inclusivity

Increase use and **inclusivity** of green infrastructure across all social groups and abilities



#### Health

Provide green infrastructure facilities to promote **health** and wellbeing

### Economy

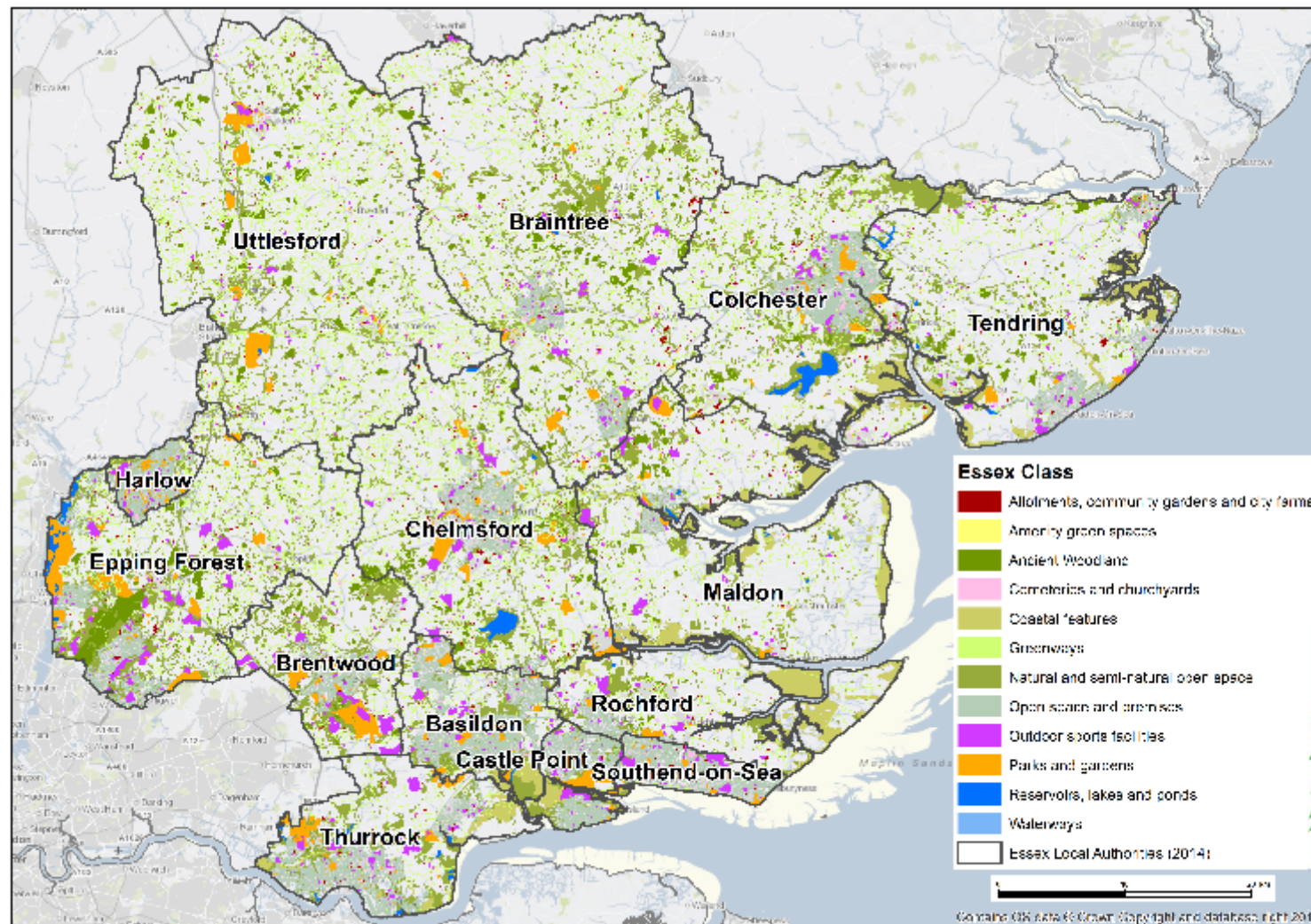


#### Sustainability

Secure funding for new and existing green infrastructure to ensure their **sustainability**



# Green Infrastructure Assets of Essex



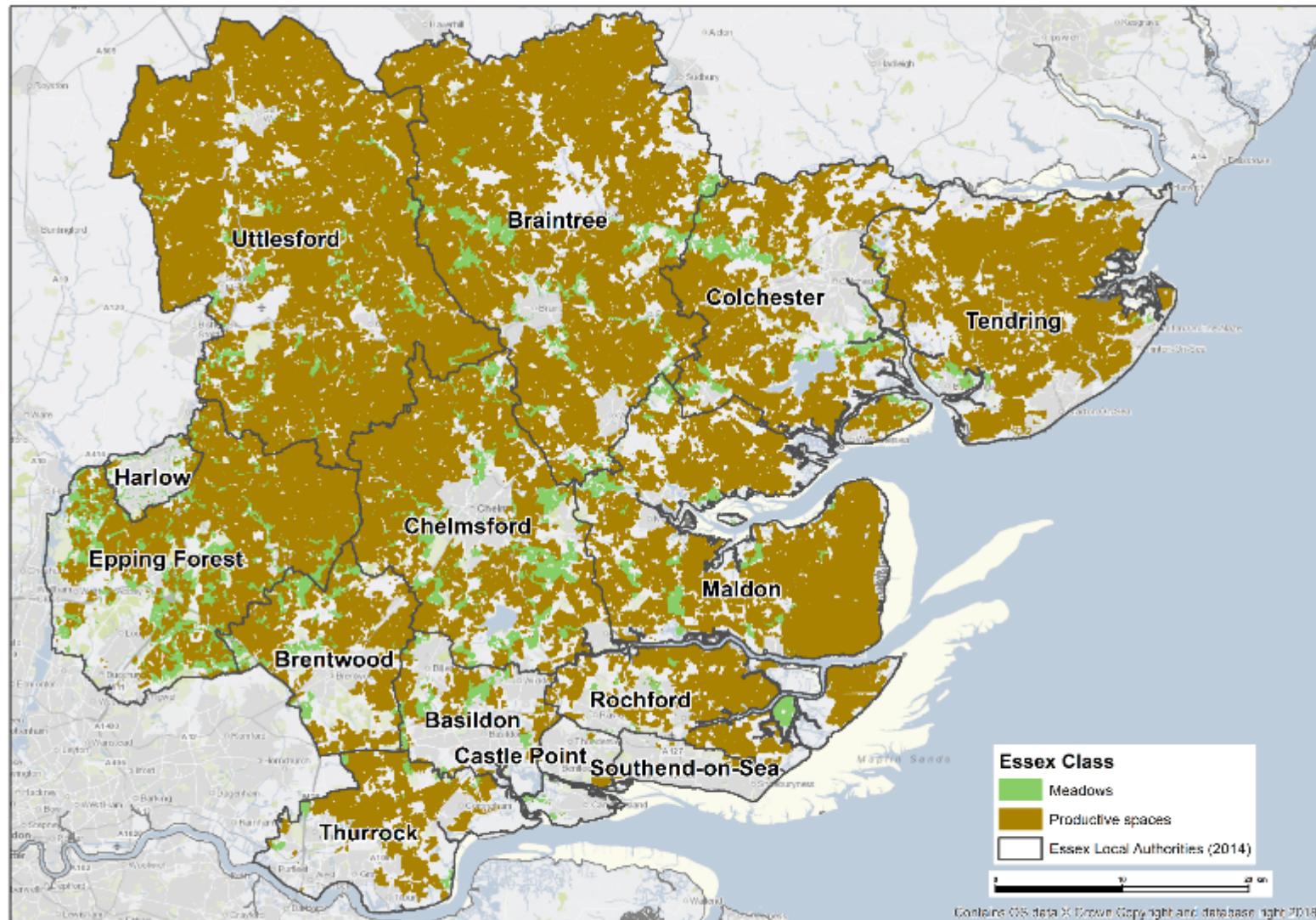
3,900  
Miles of  
Public  
Rights of  
Way

79,859 HA  
of Green  
Spaces in  
Essex





# Green Infrastructure Assets of Essex - Productive Spaces





# Context: Economic & Social



## PEOPLE

1,801,400 people in 2016 for Greater Essex. The county's population is expected to increase to 2,100,100 by 2036.



## DEVELOPMENT GROWTH

179,657 homes needed across Greater Essex. (136,363 homes excl. Southend and Thurrock) by 2036.

137,663 homes planned (121,210 excl. Southend & Thurrock).

Walking and cycling infrastructure across Greater Essex varies with a good level of provision in the larger settlements but fewer formal facilities in the smaller towns and villages.



## ECONOMIC GROWTH

79,000 additional jobs needed forecasted by the East of England Forecasting model (2016 run).



## SOCIAL AND HEALTH

In Essex, two-thirds (66.5%) of adults are either overweight or obese.

Some of the most deprived one per cent of nearly 33,000 areas in England, are within Essex: six in Tendring and two in Basildon.

In Essex in 2014, 57.9% of people had the recommended amount of physical activity

## CLIMATE CHANGE

Essex can generally expect more frequent extreme weather events (such as storms, extreme cold weather); milder and wetter winters; and hotter drier summers by 2080 (UCKP, 2009). Essex is one of the top 10 areas at risk of surface water flooding in UK.





# Why Invest? The Benefits of GI

**Health and well-being:** Increasing life expectancy and reducing health inequality; Improving levels of physical activity and health; Improving psychological health and mental well-being, Education

**Economic growth and investment:** Inward investment; Land and property values; Local economic regeneration, improved transport links.

**Land regeneration:** Regeneration of previously developed land; Improving quality of place; Heritage preservation; increasing environmental quality and aesthetics

**Climate change adaptation and Mitigation:** reduce Heat, Reducing flood risk; Improving water quality; Improving air quality, reduce pollution

**Flood alleviation and water management,**

**Wildlife and habitats:** Increasing habitat area; Increasing populations of some protected species; Increasing species movement

**Stronger communities:** Social interaction, inclusion and cohesion

**Tourism; Recreation and Leisure**



# Delivering the Strategy's Objectives

FOCUS	OBJECTIVE	PROPOSALS
PLACE	PROTECT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Highlight the most valuable green infrastructure in Essex in terms of their multi-functionality and benefits – through rebranding Essex as Green Essex with 1,909 designations.</li> <li>• Encourage and support the review of existing designations to ensure their currency and maintain the accuracy of site information.</li> <li>• Support the recognition and appropriate designation of new green infrastructure, e.g. Local Wildlife Site, Local Nature Reserve.</li> <li>• Embed an 'environmental net gain' principle for development, including housing and infrastructure.</li> <li>• Coordinate the protection of internationally designated green infrastructure through the Essex Coast Recreational disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS).</li> </ul>
	IMPROVE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a green Essex network to develop, improve and promote Green Essex.</li> <li>• Support the development of new Visitor Centres and facilities</li> <li>• Better marketing &amp; promotion of green infrastructure to increase use and income.</li> <li>• Public realm green infrastructure improved to reduce pollution and improve character and sense of place.</li> <li>• Create water gardens, green roofs and bio retention areas to absorb urban water.</li> <li>• Continue creating green spaces which also function as natural flood management and SuDs schemes.</li> <li>• Encourage better management of green infrastructure to benefit locally native species, focussing on recognised nature conservation priorities.</li> </ul>



# Delivering the Strategy's Objectives

FOCUS	OBJECTIVE	PROPOSALS
PLACE	CREATE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develop the coast path in Essex.</li><li>• Increased access to the Outdoor Pursuits Centres.</li><li>• Create green infrastructure in new developments such as Garden Communities.</li><li>• Develop green infrastructure as part of Minerals and Waste restorations e.g. Pitsea Landfill.</li><li>• Create town or village circular walks especially in areas of green infrastructure deficiency.</li></ul>
	CONNECTIVITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develop the coast path in Essex.</li><li>• Develop inter connecting paths between green infrastructure.</li><li>• Restore and Promote Essex promoted paths, such as Flich Way, Essex Way</li></ul>
PEOPLE	INCLUSIVITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Explore environmental therapies and challenges aimed at developing young people.</li><li>• Promote youth orientated activities in Green spaces e.g. mountain biking, Go Ape, Geocaching, etc.</li></ul>
	HEALTH AND WELLBEING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Explore environmental therapies delivered through mental health services.</li><li>• Develop and promote Healthcare and wellbeing through Green Infrastructure activities.</li></ul>
ECONOMY	SUSTAINABILITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develop new facilities that will generate revenues</li><li>• Create a Green Essex Fund for endowments, fund raising bids, donations etc.</li></ul>



# Some examples of actions for each Theme

Themes	Objective	Actions (Examples of some of the actions within the action plan)
Marketing, branding & promotion	Protect, Improve, Create, Inclusivity, Health and Wellbeing	Working with Visit Essex, Essex Communications and partners to develop a pan Essex Marketing Strategy to create a brand for Green Essex.
Re-designation of Green Infrastructure	Protect	Discuss with Local Planning Authorities, Natural England and Place Services regarding re-designating the new green infrastructure as new designations e.g. Wallasea, South Essex Marshes, Thames Chase etc.
Environment net gain & offsetting	Protect	Work with EPOA, Place Services and partners to develop the 'environmental net gain' methodology.
Improve, repurpose and create new multi-functional green infrastructure	Protect, Improve, Create, Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working with health and flood partners to seek funding to create a green infrastructure Pilot project to support people to lead healthier lives.</li> <li>Seek funding to improve the public realm for pollution and other benefits.</li> <li>Development and coordination of cycling and walking strategies to delivery green infrastructure with its projects.</li> <li>Explore and Implement an Essex Green Permit Scheme, allowing locals to adopt and green up areas within the public realm.</li> <li>Continue to consult on green infrastructure on key documents, such as: - Highways Plans, Local Plans, Neighbourhood Plans</li> </ul>
Natural Flood Management techniques	Improve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Liaise with Essex Highways and Floods teams to seek funding for the provision of green infrastructure and SuDS (Sustainable Drainage Systems).</li> <li>Seek funding from partners to address flooding but also create green spaces with multiple benefits and provide environment net gains.</li> </ul>
Connect people and wildlife to green infrastructure through active travel	Create, Connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Liaise with Highways about the opening of the first section of the Coast Path in Essex.</li> <li>Seek funding from various benefit funders to create inter connecting paths.</li> <li>Seek sponsorship for a pilot circular village walk(s) competition. Liaise with Parish Councils, District, City and Borough Councils, Active Essex, Local Health and Wellbeing teams and/ or Village group to deliver circular walk.</li> <li>Liaise with Public Rights of Way team and Country Parks to assess condition and prioritise promotion of promoted paths.</li> </ul>
Delivering environmental therapies and activities	Inclusivity, Health and Wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Liaise with Education service, Children's services, health partners, Outdoor pursuits and Country Park to build upon existing programmes.</li> <li>Promote activities in Country Parks, Outdoor Pursuits centres, Active Essex and partner sites to develop youth orientated activities.</li> <li>Liaise with Mental Health Agencies, wider health partners and community voluntary sector to develop Green Activities such as green gym, eco-therapies, guided walks.</li> <li>Better promoted and tailor Green Therapies to mental health service users.</li> <li>Liaise with Public Health and Health and Wellbeing Boards in District, Borough and City to assess health deficiency areas and propose green activities such as walking and other physical activities.</li> <li>Work with Active Essex on their projects to better use green spaces to encourage more people to be active.</li> </ul>

# Implementation by Sector

## Planning

- Supporting Large & Small Developments
- Retrofitting in our Towns and Villages
- Minerals & Waste Restoration

## IMPROVE HIGHWAYS AND GREENWAYS

- Enhance PRow
- Reduce Pollution

## COASTAL

- Living shoreline - reclaim land for GI
- RAMS

## FLOODING

- GI as part of SuDS
- Natural Flood Management
- Leaky Dams

## ENERGY

- BIO-Solar Farms
- BIO Fuels

## HEALTH

- Social Prescribing
- Active Essex Programmes and Projects

## EDUCATION

- Outdoor Classrooms: Living laboratories
- Forest schools
- Ensure access to GI on school grounds

## Agriculture

- Opportunities through the emerging new Agricultural bill & Environment Bill



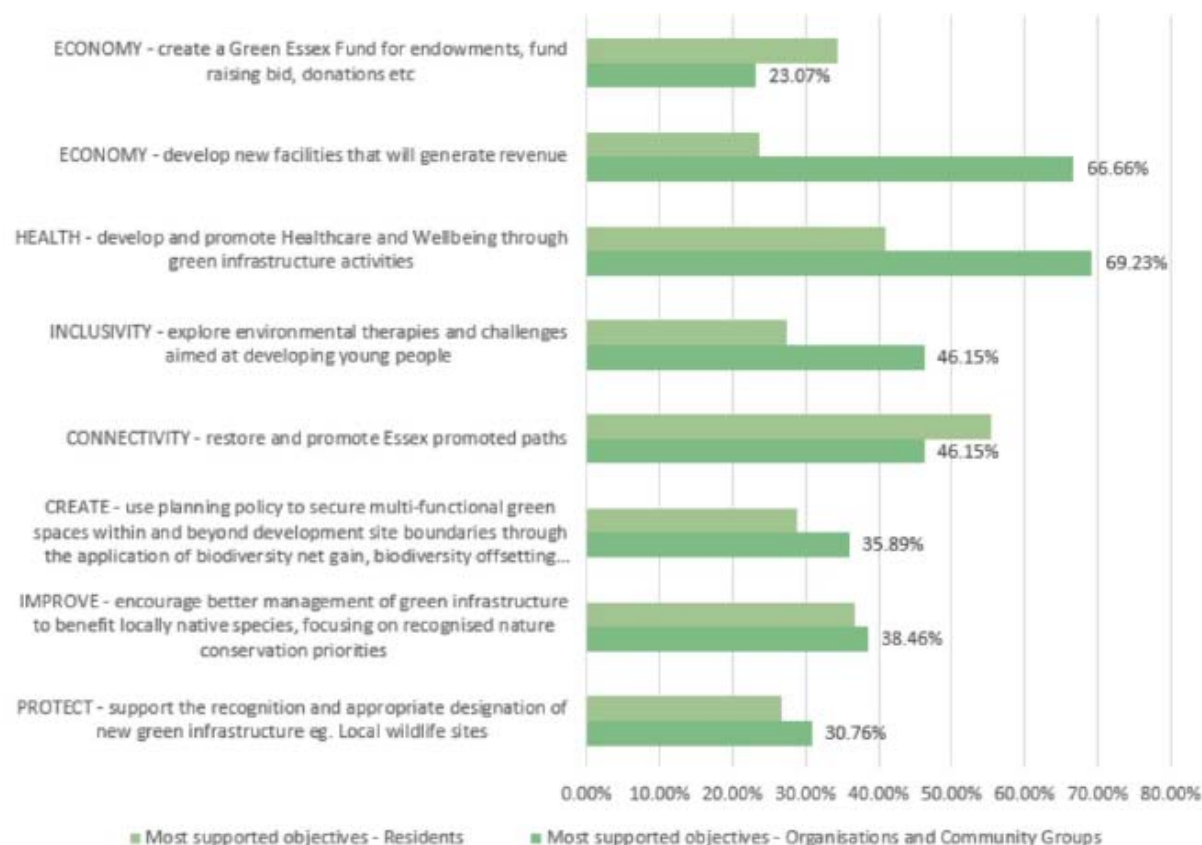
## Green Essex Strategy



- 931 people & 39 organisations and community groups responded to the online questionnaire
- Further 9 organisational detailed written responses
- Key headline conclusions from the online questionnaire:
  - Leisure time popular uses
  - Fragmentation & development growth – areas of concern

Of the respondents	People	Organisation & Community Groups
Agreed with both vision and objectives	53%	90%
Easier access would increase use of green space	58%	72%
Feeling safe is an important factor in using green space more	49%	51%
Agreed that objectives and proposals were deliverable	41%	72%

# Proposals identified as most important for each Objective



## Residents Where are they From?



10.02% of respondents did not state where they live

Residents felt that setting up a Green Essex Fund would be the preferred objective under "Economy", Organisations and Community Groups were more in favour of developing new facilities to generate revenue.



# Implementation and Delivery

## **STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

Internal & External partners  
Green Infrastructure Steering Group  
Virtual Subgroup through online Collaboration Platform

## **FUNDING**

Explore Funding from a variety of sources:

S106  
National Lottery  
EU Funds  
Meeting Objectives of other sectors

- Future High Street Fund
- Active Essex

Others

## **TIMELINES FOR DELIVERY**

Consultation - Undertaken May – July 2019  
Update Strategy - September/ November 2019  
Cabinet Sign Off - February/March 2020  
Action Plan: Focus Groups for delivery



Community Garden, Paris on small public plots, granted by the local authorities.  
<http://www.urbangreenbluegrids.com/projects/community-gardens-paris>



# Green Essex Projects

## Active Projects

- The Essex Forest Project – 375,000 trees 2019-2025
- The ECC Roof Garden project
- Green Essex Strategy Policy Workshop
- Green Infrastructure: “Path to Prosperity” in Tendring
- Greening town centres – air pollution amelioration
- Canvey Make Rainwater Happy – Flood prevention

## Imminent Projects

- Green Infrastructure Garden Communities and Development consultation service
- Develop the coast path in Essex.
- Create town or village circular routes especially in areas of green infrastructure deficiency.
- Restore and Promote Essex promoted paths.



# Thank you

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