



Essex County Council

Place Services and Economic Growth Policy and Scrutiny Committee

10:30	Thursday, 26 November 2020	Online Meeting
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The meeting will be open to the public via telephone or online. Details about this are on the next page. Please do not attend County Hall as no one connected with this meeting will be present.

For information about the meeting please ask for:

Lisa Siggins, Democratic Services Officer

Telephone: 033301 34594

Email: democratic.services@essex.gov.uk

Essex County Council and Committees Information

All Council and Committee Meetings are held in public unless the business is exempt in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government Act 1972.

In accordance with the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020, this meeting will be held via online video conferencing.

Members of the public will be able to view and listen to any items on the agenda unless the Committee has resolved to exclude the press and public from the meeting as a result of the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

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Please note that an audio recording may be made of the meeting – at the start of the meeting the Chairman will confirm if all or part of the meeting is being recorded.

		Pages
1	Membership, Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations of Interest	5 - 5
2	Minutes of the Previous Meeting To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 29 October 2020.	6 - 10

- 3 Questions from the public**
 A period of up to 15 minutes will be allowed for members of the public to ask questions or make representations on any item on the agenda for this meeting. No statement or question shall be longer than three minutes and speakers will be timed.
- If you would like to ask a question at the meeting, please email democratic.services@essex.gov.uk before 12 Noon the day before the meeting (Wednesday 25 November).
- 4 Covid Update Passenger Transport** **11 - 17**
 Members to receive and note report **(PSEG/13/20)**. A formal item regarding the new ECC passenger transport strategy is scheduled for the January meeting of the Place Services and Economic Growth Policy and Scrutiny Committee.
- 5 ECC Economic Recovery Programme** **18 - 60**
 Members to receive report **(PSEG/14/20)** alongside a presentation from Cllr Tony Ball, Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Steve Evison, Director for Sustainable Growth, Mark Doran, Director for Sustainable Growth, and Andy Burgess, Head of Economic Growth.
- 6 Date of next meeting**
 To note that the next Committee meeting will be on Thursday 17th December. It is expected that the meeting will be held online, via Zoom.
- 7 Urgent Business**
 To consider any matter which in the opinion of the Chairman should be considered in public by reason of special circumstances (to be specified) as a matter of urgency.

Exempt Items

(During consideration of these items the meeting is not likely to be open to the press and public)

The following items of business have not been published on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information falling within Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972. Members are asked to consider whether or not the

press and public should be excluded during the consideration of these items. If so it will be necessary for the meeting to pass a formal resolution:

That the press and public are excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the remaining items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information falling within Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, the specific paragraph(s) of Schedule 12A engaged being set out in the report or appendix relating to that item of business.

8 Urgent Exempt Business

To consider in private any other matter which in the opinion of the Chairman should be considered by reason of special circumstances (to be specified) as a matter of urgency.

Agenda item 1

Committee: Place Services and Economic Growth Policy and Scrutiny Committee

Enquiries to: Peter Randall, Senior Democratic Services Officer

Membership, Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations of Interest

Recommendations:

To note

1. Membership as shown below
2. Apologies and substitutions
3. Declarations of interest to be made by Members in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct

Membership

(Quorum: 5)

Councillor I Grundy	Chairman
Councillor A Erskine	
Councillor I Henderson	
Councillor S Hillier	
Councillor P Honeywood	
Councillor D Kendall	
Councillor S Lissimore	
Councillor B Massey	
Councillor R Moore	
Councillor C Pond	
Councillor R Pratt	
Councillor W Schmitt	
Councillor C Weston	
Councillor A Wood	

Minutes of the meeting of the Place Services and Economic Growth Policy and Scrutiny Committee, held digitally on Thursday, 29 October 2020

Present:

Councillor I Grundy (Chairman)	Councillor S Lissimore
Councillor A Wood	Councillor C Pond
Councillor R Moore	Councillor R Pratt
Councillor A Erskine	Councillor W Schmitt
Councillor S Hillier	Councillor C Weston
Councillor P Honeywood	Councillor D Kendall

1. Membership, Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations of Interest

There were no changes to the membership of the committee since the last meeting.

Apologies were received from Councillor Henderson

2. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 24th September were approved.

3. Questions from the Public

There were no requests to speak from members of the public.

4. Essex Country Parks and Essex Outdoors – Update

The panel for this item was:

Cllr Simon Walsh, Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Action
Sam Kennedy, Director, Environment and Climate Action
Dee O'Rourke, Head of Essex Culture and Green Spaces
Mark Rowley, Commercial Operations Manager
Erica Gilson, Marketing and Business Development Manager

Members received report PSEG/12/20 providing an update on how Essex country parks and Essex Outdoors have fared throughout the pandemic and future proposals to develop the service.

Members received a presentation from officers, key points raised included:

Background:

- ECC manages 8 Country Parks, and 30 woodlands across the county.
- ECC also maintains multiple heritage sites including Crossing Temple Barns, the Jaywick Martello Tower and 5 Mills.
- In a normal year, ECC would see 900,000 visitors annually to the parks, monitored via car parking (note: ECC is unable to record walking visitors, nor is it possible to record visitors to woodlands).
- Country parks deliver a variety of educational and outdoor activities such as Wild Wednesday at Danbury Country Park as well as themed walking trails at Thorndon and Weald Country Parks.
- Crossing Temple Barns ECC's main event site it plays host to a variety of seasonal events, as well as weddings and conferences.

Essex Country Parks - Impact of Covid-19:

- On 22 March 2020 all ECC owned or managed Country Parks were closed. They remained closed for 8 weeks. Containing the spread of the virus and the safety of our staff and volunteers was our top priority.
- Public Rights of Way remained open throughout the lockdown for people to walk and run through the parks.
- Reopening the parks when it was safe to do so was uppermost in our planning. On 21 May 2020 - when COVID safe measures had been put into place for our visitors and staff, all 8 Country Parks were reopened.
- Additional cleaning was undertaken of toilet facilities, car parking machines and high touch areas. Signage was displayed throughout the parks and on social media.
- Access to play equipment was restricted and facilities closed off in order to support social distancing guidelines. On 4 July 2020 play areas in the Country Parks were reopened in line with wider government guidance on play equipment.
- In-park cafes and snack kiosks remained closed until mid-July when a COVID safe operating procedure could be put in place. Cafes are currently offering a take-away service only – this has impacted park income.
- Explorer Pass car parking season tickets were suspended, and an additional 8 weeks given to permit holders to compensate for the time for which the parks were closed.
- Public reaction was positive to the parks re-opening. Many residents had been commenting on social media and messaging us to request that the parks be re-opened to them for exercise and leisure.
- Car parking income from the parks was lost due to the 8-week closure but has been mitigated in part by the exceptionally high number of visitors over the late summer months.
- No Country Park staff were furloughed during the height of the pandemic. Rangers and on-site staff continued to undertake their roles, carrying out maintenance work on buildings and the woodlands.

Marketing and communications:

- The marketing team took a proactive approach to ensure that the public were kept up to date regarding park closures and how ECC was abiding to national restrictions. This information was updated frequently.
- Upon reopening, messaging was carefully crafted to highlight new and incoming restrictions to ensure the safety of visitors to Essex Country Parks.

Essex Outdoors:

- The four Essex Outdoors centres offer high quality outdoor learning opportunities and activities for children and young people across the county and beyond, supporting mental and physical wellbeing.
- The service is mainly used by Essex schools, many of whom come every year, valuing the experiences and skills that Essex Outdoors can offer. Last year the service was used by 129,961 visitors.
- All the centres are accessible to, and well used by, children with disabilities and special educational needs; we also provide opportunities through ECC's Short Breaks for Disabled Children (SBDC) scheme.
- Throughout the year Essex Outdoors also delivers Forest School sessions, First Aid courses, and various professional and technical courses on behalf of national governing bodies including the Royal Yachting Association, British Canoeing, Mountain Leader Training, National Indoor Climbing Award Scheme.

Essex Outdoors – Impact of Covid-19:

- On 20 March 2020 all Essex Outdoors activity centres and The Lock Climbing Wall were closed. Unlike some other activity day suppliers, Essex Outdoors offered those groups or individuals who had to cancel due to COVID-19 with a full refund or option to postpone their booking. Approx. 70 staff were furloughed from June.
- From 25 July 2020 and following advice from Public Health colleagues the activity centres began to re-open to the general public for school holiday activity club bookings and to schools for educational activity days. However, activity levels were low across the summer. Bradwell, which focuses on sailing has remained closed throughout as it is not possible to offer socially distanced sailing.
- Residential stays are still restricted under government guidance and day activities only are being offered until further notice. COVID-safe measures around social distancing and additional cleaning of equipment have been put into place and a groups/ pods system introduced to limit numbers. Signage was displayed throughout the activity centres and a handwashing regime enforced. Three sites have successfully hosted schools in September and October though access to some activities is restricted.
- The peak season for Essex Outdoors runs between May-July so that loss of these weeks has had a significant financial impact this year. We are seeking lost fees and charges under the government's reimbursement scheme.
- School and education bookings are being taken for Summer 2021 for residential trips.

- Summer holiday options such as camping for the general public will be offered during August 2021 for residents as an affordable and low travel option for holidays and short breaks.
- Bookings for next year are currently about the same as previous years but we are awaiting guidance from DfE to confirm whether these will all be able to go ahead.
- Essex Outdoors continue to offer the *Book with Confidence COVID-19 cancellation guarantee*.

Cllr Andy Wood left the meeting at 10:54.

Following the presentation, members of the committee were invited to discuss the item with officers. Key points raised included:

- Uptake of ECC holiday club programmes – this has improved due to Covid cancellation guarantee and assured postponement to next year’s programme
- Poor facilities and under-investment at Marsh Farm – like all of ECC’s country parks, site improvements will be subject to a bespoke business case once a new commercial strategy for the sites is finalised.
- Frustration around closure of parks throughout the pandemic- This was in line with Govt Guidance to prevent unnecessary car journeys. This was communicated effectively, and rights of way were maintained throughout.
- Reopening of cafes – ECC is cautiously reopening in line with Govt and public health guidance.
- Potential expansion of facilities at Thorndon Park South to generate revenue – members were assured that all options would be explored in the upcoming business case development. Members were invited to be part of this process as it moves forward.
- Second lockdown contingency plan – Members were assured that officers were keeping abreast of emerging guidance and would ensure that parks remained open as long as it was possible and safe to do so.
- Estimated loss of income – around £2.5m from Essex outdoors and £500k from Country Parks – this is unlikely to change significantly through to the end of the year as peak season has come to an end.
- Long term sustainability – Officers discussed the potential to fit solar panels in appropriate spaces and proposals to adapt accessibility to ensure that members of the public did not have to rely on unsustainable forms of transport to access country parks.

5. Date of Next Meeting

The next full committee day was confirmed as Thursday 26th November. This would be a joint meeting with members of the Corporate Policy and Scrutiny Committee, looking at Economic recovery following the Covid-19 pandemic.

6. Urgent Business

None received

7. Urgent exempt Business

None received

Close of meeting

The formal meeting finished at 11.45

Report title: Covid Update: Passenger Transport	PSEG/13/20
Report to: Place Services and Economic Growth Policy and Scrutiny Committee	
Date: 26 November 2020	For: Discussion
Report authors: Helen Morris, Integrated Passenger Transport Unit	
Enquiries to: helen.morris@essex.gov.uk	
County Divisions affected: All Essex	

Purpose of Report

1. To provide the Place Services and Economic Growth Policy and Scrutiny Committee with an update on the passenger transport network during the current pandemic and to highlight issues and risks.

Background

2. Passenger Transport has been significantly impacted by the ongoing Covid pandemic. It has also operated as a key service, enabling key workers to get to work; children to get to school; people to access healthcare, to shop and to exercise and to socialise within social distancing rules.
3. Both central and local government have put significant resource into supporting the network and there is an in-principle commitment to continue to do so while social distancing requirements remain in place.

Update of current issues

4. This section of the report provides updates on the key services.

Commercial and supported bus network including registration and information

5. The first period of national lockdown from end March to end May saw an extremely challenging period for the bus network with stringent 2m social distancing requirements on services and a strong 'avoid public transport' message from central Government. This was followed by a slight relaxation in social distancing requirements which provided further capacity for the re-opening of non-essential retail in June and introduced the mandatory wearing of face coverings.
6. Due to social distancing and other Covid restrictions the bus network remains in a state of wholesale market failure with no prospect of a return to commercial operation while social distancing remains in place. In order to ensure continued running of the network Central Government put in place Covid Bus Services Support Grant (CBSSG) for both commercial and supported services. They also continued to pay Bus Service Operator Grant (BSOG) at pre-Covid rates and asked that local government continued to pay Concessionary Fares, supported local bus; and home to school contracted rates at pre-Covid contractual levels. ECC took a series of decisions to meet these commitments. ECC has also administered the local authority element of CBSSG and undertook a liaison and network approval role with operators to ensure appropriate service

coverage within the operating constraints.

7. Ensuring that existing payments have continued to be made in an appropriate way; and that new payments are also made appropriately and from the correct budget have meant additional work in the Delivery Unit. Ensuring that financial information is as up to date as possible, so we have visibility of emerging Covid pressures or falls in income has been critical. Work included delivering financial returns for year-end whilst working from home during the first lockdown, unexpectedly using systems and networks and working with colleagues in ways that had not been originally envisaged. The team also worked to ensure that providers could be paid promptly to support businesses during the turbulent early lockdown period. This has included managing payments of £3.4m of Central Government Funding to support local bus, the return to school, the commercial market and additional capacity.
8. Due to the level of service change, ECC suspended its Realtime information services because of the high number of errors that would have occurred and directed bus users to operator’s websites where the most up to date information was available. The screens were also used to remind bus passengers about wearing face coverings and to thank key workers.
9. Between April 2020 and September 2020 ECC extended the hours of operation of the Essex bus pass scheme were extended from the usual times of 09:00 to 23:00 Mondays to Friday and all times at weekends and on public holidays to 24/7 operation. This was to allow older people and people with disabilities to make use of dedicated opening hours in supermarkets and other shops. Following the relaxation of the initial lockdown restrictions and the return to school and work, passenger numbers began to grow. Operators began to be concerned that with continued restrictions on the number of people who can be carried on buses, they would not be able to cope peak period travel demand. This would risk students and key workers being left at the roadside. As a result, it was agreed that bus pass times would revert to normal from 1st September 2020
10. In recent weeks ECC has worked with operators as they increase network provision and the Realtime system has been reactivated as information has become more robust. Bus passenger numbers across the network are back up to around 50% of what they were pre-Covid from a low of around 23% at the start of lockdown.

Report:	Normal Running	May	June	July	August	September	October
Item:							
Services running as normal	N/A	18%	20%	28%	36%	46%	49%
Services currently closed to public		41%	40%	35%	31%	26% (19% closed school and 7% suspended)	23% (19% closed school and 4% suspended)
Services running to special arrangements	N/A	39%	38%	35%	32%	26%	25%
DaRT services operating as/when needed	N/A	2%	2%	2%	1%	1%	2%
		% of network operational					
Mileage (miles)	671,656	331,446 49%	455,912 68%	522,520 78%	550,972 82%	582,295 87%	594,459 89%
Trips	58,365	29,401 50%	40,035 69%	45,839 79%	48,622 83%	51,888 89%	53,124 91%

11. The main issue for the future of the network is how ongoing financial support is provided once social distancing requirements are removed; but while there is a lag in passengers returning to bus use. ECC continue to work closely with Daft and have emphasised this point. A large-scale withdrawal of funding before passenger numbers have returned to pre-Covid levels would leave many (and probably most) services unable to operate commercially.

12. ECC is looking at setting a new strategy to support the bus network through a period of recovery, refresh and re-shaping.

Home to School Transport

13. The lockdown requirements, including the position for schools, were announced nationally on the evening of Thursday 19 March for introduction on Monday 23 March. This included the provision for vulnerable children and the children of key workers to continue to be able to access schools. ECC worked urgently with operators to agree an approach which could guarantee ongoing provision of transport for entitled children attending school. This included liaising with schools and operators on individual requirements.
14. The return to school in September posed a huge challenge for the bus network and home to school transport. In August local authorities were asked by DfE to take on an additional role to ensure there was sufficient capacity on the commercial bus network to ensure children could get to school. Given social distancing requirements reduce the capacity of a bus by over 50% this was a significant challenge. DfE grant funded ECC £1.2m to enable sufficient additional capacity to support those existing journeys. ECC worked closely with operators to deliver a range of solutions including 'closing' certain journeys so they are available to school children only; adding duplicate vehicles; and/or replacing single deckers with double deckers. Additionally, ECC has worked across transport, education and public health to ensure children with specialist health conditions have been supported to access school where the school can accommodate them. ECC's operators and the drivers, passenger assistants and office staff who work for them have been fundamental to the success of this approach and their commitment to transporting children, working quickly to resolve issues and manage uncertainty have been critical. This was supported by a communications campaign regarding government guidance on face coverings, social distancing and travel. The guidance was also included with 11,000 letters sent to eligible passengers.
15. A second significant risk was a large-scale switch to car away from bus as parents chose to drop their children at school. Through the Stop.Swap.GO! digital behavioural change campaign, ECC launched a '[Getting to School or College Information Service](#)' that provided a one stop shop for information on walking, cycling and bus use. This included all the advice on travelling by bus and bespoke Park and Stride maps for schools. Overall, the initial return to bus for school journeys appears to have been around 70% which is a significant achievement in very challenging circumstances.

Park and Ride

16. Park and Ride services were shut shortly after full national lockdown was introduced and passenger numbers dropped significantly. ECC worked with suppliers to ensure the work to site a temporary mortuary there was able to proceed successfully. The ECC P&R manager re-deployed to the wellbeing service to support vulnerable people through the lockdown.
17. With the easing of restrictions on social distancing and the re-opening of non-essential retail requests for P&R services to resume started to come in and the sites re-opened in August running to reduced services. The re-opening also saw a first step towards a Park and Pedal service with the provision of quality bike storage. Further work is

planned to seek funding for good quality routes and wayfinding. Passenger numbers are currently at 20% of pre-Covid levels but have been growing steadily since re-opening. P&R services have also been used by school children for the journey to school as there is a £1 day fare for children up to 18 years. Diversification opportunities continue to be delivered within Covid rules and have included high performance car meets, car boot sales, a temporary COVID testing clinics and an outdoor church service.

Ugobus, Adult Social Care and Community Transport

18. Ugobus are ECC's in-house fleet and primarily deliver adult social care transport but also some local bus and home to school transport. Reductions in demand from these core transport services during Covid has seen Ugo bus deployed to support other activities. This has included supporting the distribution of food parcels; distribution of PPE, distribution of IT and sports equipment and supporting the movement of deceased. This involved Ugobus drivers working significantly outside of their normal working patterns and arrangements.
19. As the demand for adult social care transport has increased, Ugobus has upgraded the vehicles with safety screens to protect the drivers and has reverted to delivering its core services, working closely with the day care centres to ensure passengers only travel within their 'bubble'. The service again stands ready for requests as we move into the next phase of the tiered lockdown.
20. Additionally, there have been complex needs for transporting adult social care clients over the last seven months. This has included various moves for individuals, obviously at a time of high risk, including moving Covid positive passengers, those in at risk groups but also more challenging issues such as needing to move all residents from a closing care home. There has also been the challenge of understanding novel transport issues such as PPE requirements and ensuring providers are able to access appropriate provision.
21. Our Community Transport schemes across Essex have been unable to carry out their usual essential services for our most vulnerable members of the community. They have however continued to make a valuable contribution from the start of lockdown. This includes providing deliveries of hot meals, click and collect shopping, medications, parcels and making important welfare phone calls to prevent isolation. Some funding has been made available from Parish Councils to maintain essential shopper buses and the schemes have supported both ECC and the NHS to provide transport for key workers. Vehicle adaptations to include Perspex screens, PPE, hand sanitising on buses, and deep cleaning vehicles via "fogging" has ensured the services are safe to use during this time. Inevitably there have been some redundancies and a difficulty to retain volunteers along with some staff being furloughed.

Travel Training

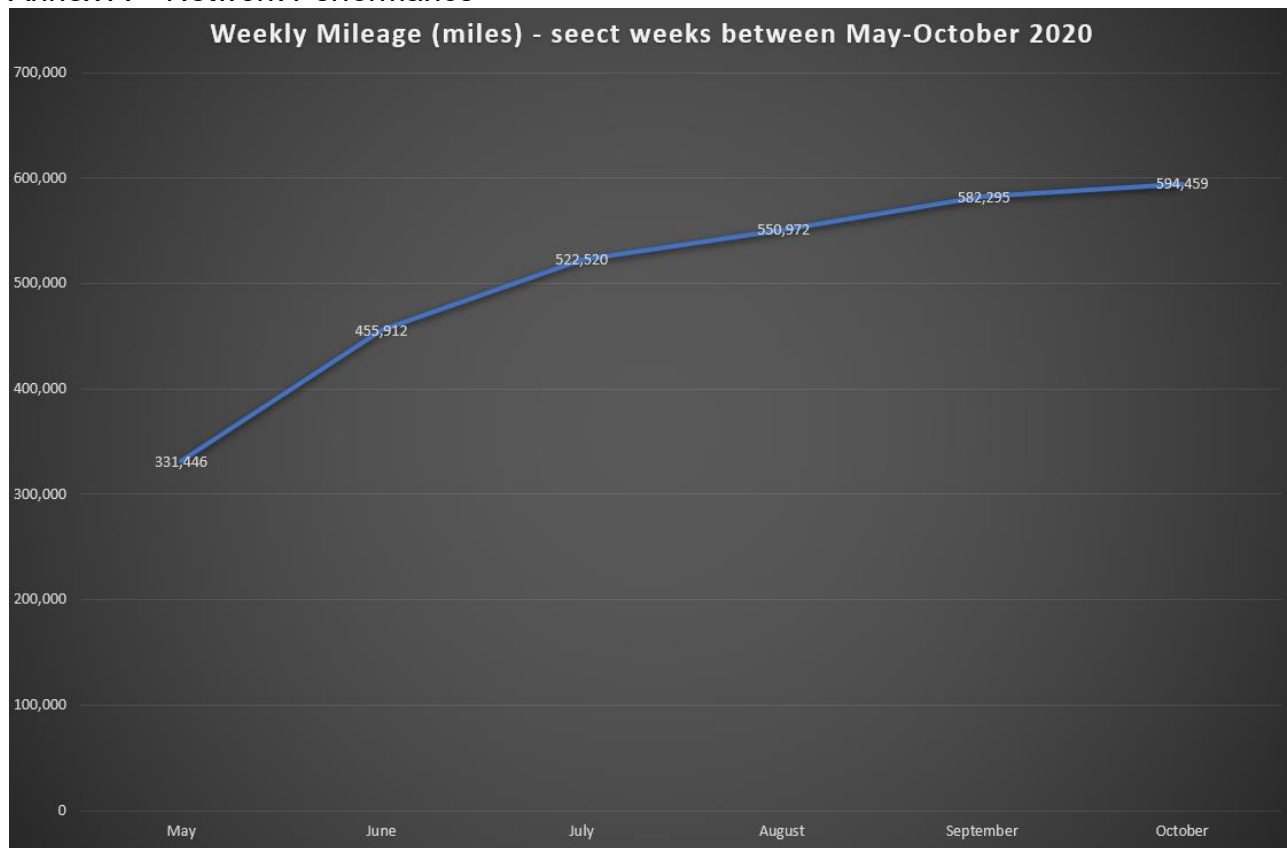
22. Travel Trainers provide training mostly, but not exclusively, for children with special education needs giving them the skills and confidence to travel safely on the bus network or in another sustainable way, such as walking. This gives them key life skills and is often a transformative experience for them and their families. In the first phase of national lockdown Travel Trainers re-deployed to support the death registration process.

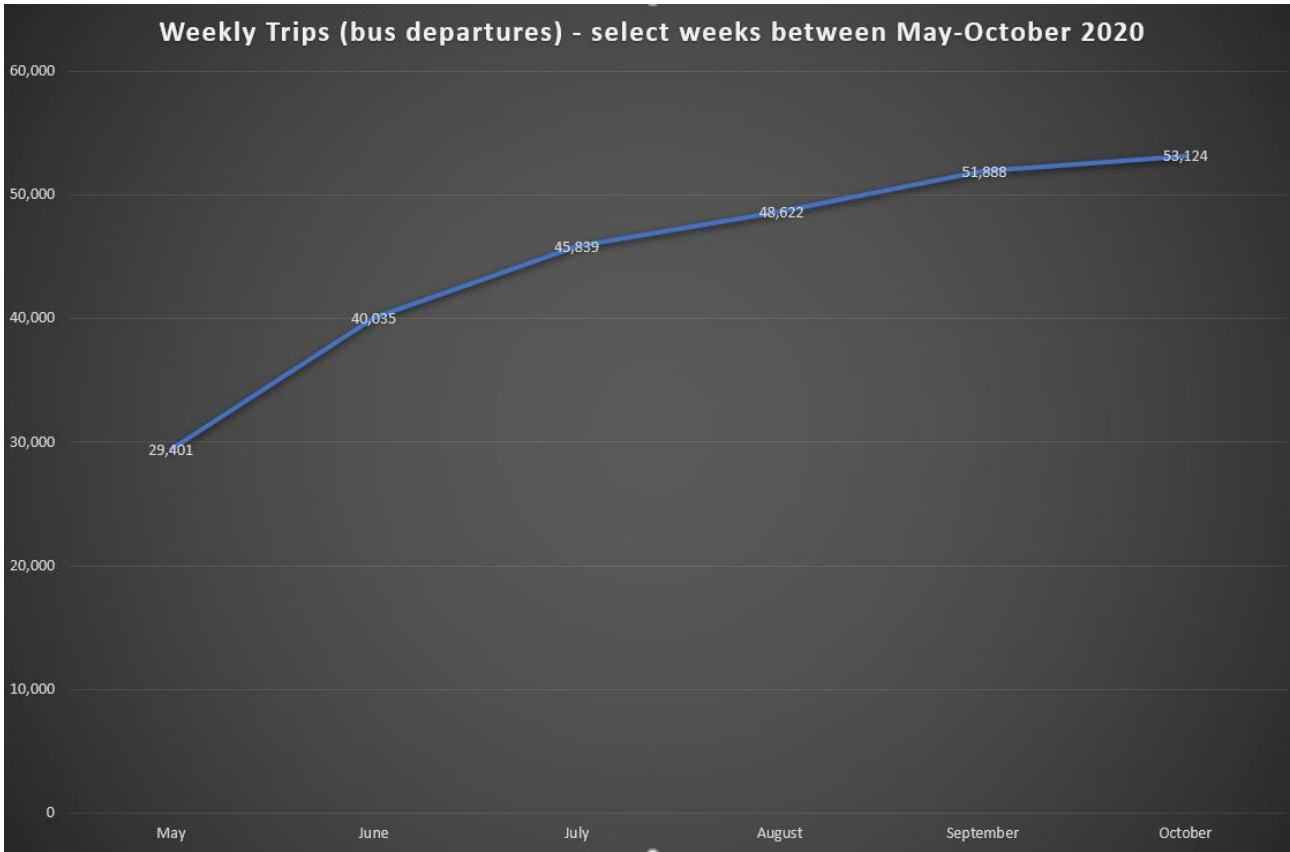
With the re-opening of schools and the expansion of the bus network, they have largely returned to delivering their core service.

Next Steps and future issues

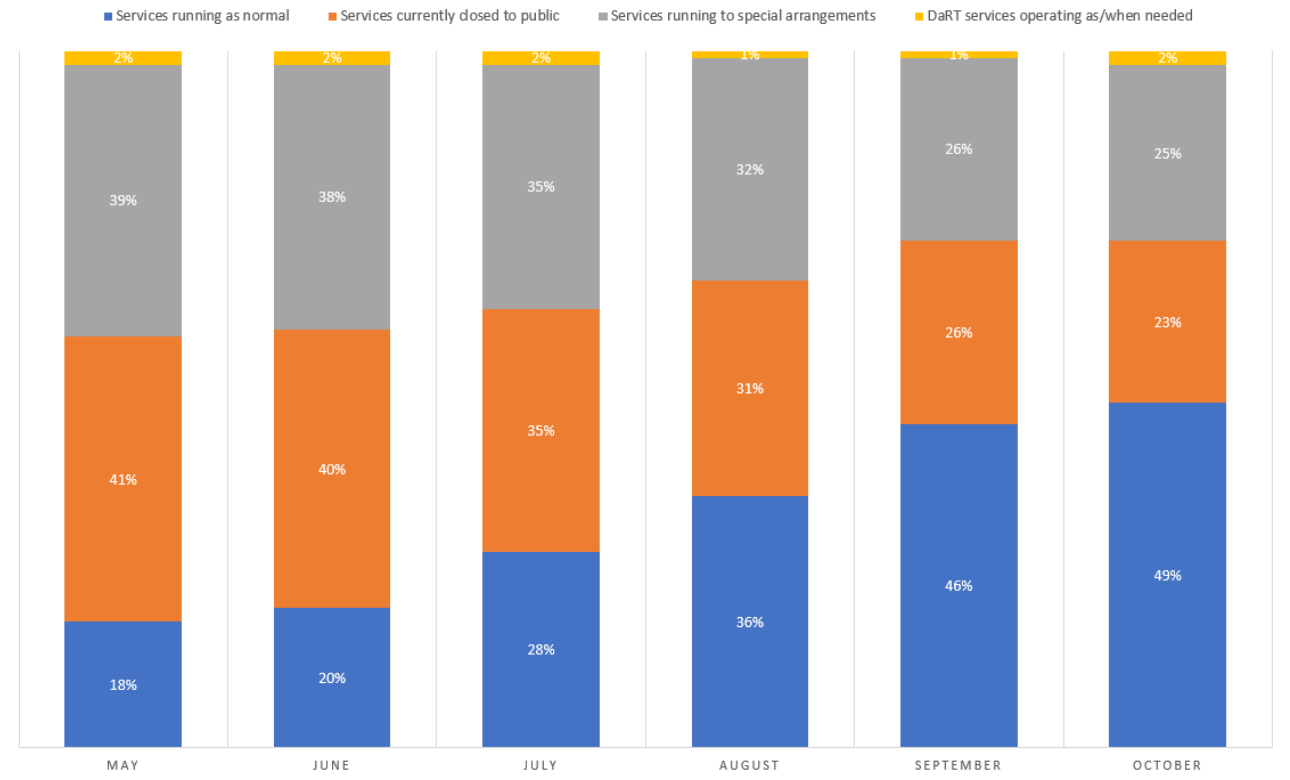
23. Given the uncertainty over future demands on services, ECC are seeking to remain as flexible as possible – supporting additional Covid work and addressing Covid specific issues while seeking to run as much ‘normal service’ as possible shaped around demand. The key risks ahead are:
- Significant long-term damage to the bus network and a slow return to pre-Covid patronage
 - A significant financial pressure across the commercial network resulting in service curtailment or withdrawal

Annex A – Network Performance





ESSEX BUS NETWORK OPERATIONS - MAY-OCTOBER 2020



Report title: ECC Economic Recovery Programme	
Report to: Place Services and Economic Growth Policy and Scrutiny Committee	
Report author: Andy Burgess, Head of Economic Development	
Date: 26 November 2020	For: Discussion
Enquiries to: Andy.burgess@essex.gov.uk	
County Divisions affected: All Essex	

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to present and provide commentary to FP/844/10/20 Drawdown from Recovery Reserve: Economic Recovery Programme

2. Background

- 2.1. Attached is Appendix A - FP/844/10/20 Drawdown from Recovery Reserve: Economic Recovery Programme
- 2.2. The decision was taken by Cllr Chris Whitbread on the 20 October 2020

3. Session Aims

- 3.1. Members are asked to discuss the report and provide feedback/recommendations to officers. Members are also asked to explore potential future scrutiny topics that might arise from discussions.

4. List of appendices

- **Appendix A:** FP/844/10/20 Drawdown from Recovery Reserve: Economic Recovery Programme
- **Appendix B:** FP/844/10/20 EqIA
- **Appendix C:** Supporting information – Coronavirus: Claimants Count and Furlough.

Forward Plan Reference number: Not Applicable

Report title: Drawdown from Recovery Reserve: Economic Recovery Programme	
Report to: Cllr Chris Whitbread – Cabinet Member for Finance	
Report author: Mark Carroll – Executive Director for Place and Public Health	
Date: 12 October 2020	For: Decision
Enquiries to: Andrew Burgess, Head of Economic Growth Andrew.Burgess@Essex.gov.uk	
County Divisions affected: All Essex	

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 This report asks the Cabinet Member to agree to the draw down of funds from the Recovery Reserve to develop a Programme of work to support the recovery of the Essex economy in response to rapidly increasing rates of unemployment caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Agree to the drawdown of £2,800,000 from the Recovery Reserve for the purposes of implementing a Programme to respond to the ongoing economic recovery where £2.218m relates to the Economic Development portfolio, £442,000 for project management in Customer, Communities, Culture and Corporate portfolio and £140,000 for communication activities in the Leader portfolio. The Programme will develop new approaches to support long-term economic growth as per the profile below:

2020/21 £000	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	Total
691	1,884	225	2,800

3. Summary of issue

- 3.1 The Council proposes to develop an Economic Recovery Programme in response to the ongoing unemployment crisis in Essex
- 3.2 This Programme is in response to the significant concerns regarding the future of the Essex economy, as indicated by:
- 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%
- We are 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, have been and continue to be significantly impacted. Travel, hospitality, retail, construction and leisure sectors generate between 15-40% GVA and have reported falls in output of 40-92% between March and July 2020. The risk of economic scarring is a challenge with significant numbers of businesses within these sectors predicting that their turnover will still be lower in 3 years' time

3.3 As a response to these challenges, the Economic Recovery Programme will consist of the following initiatives:

Recovery Priority	Key Initiatives	Impact Summary	Delivery Date	Additional Investment
Direct Support for Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New ECC Business Support Function (go live April 21) providing prompt access to 5 pillars of bespoke advice and support around: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 - Finance & Risk 2 - Customer 3 - Supply Chain 4 - Workplace 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1500 engagements with Businesses (year 1) providing customised advice & support • Further impact of business support service subject to cabinet member agreement on procurement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Business Support Service Go Live - Apr 21 to Mar 22 	£350,000

Recovery Priority	Key Initiatives	Impact Summary	Delivery Date	Additional Investment
	<p>Operations & Digital Transformation 5 – Human Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing New Business investment propositions in emerging sectors and start-ups (separate business case to follow) 	<p>specification (Dec 20)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business Investment Impacts (TBC via separate business case) 		
Enabling Residents to Access Work and Skills Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kickstart Essex Information & Guidance Portal Apprenticeship Levy Transfer Hub & Portal Development work for longer-term skills strategy (green jobs/digitally enabled roles/high productivity) Unemployment support service (those less than 13 weeks unemployed) Unemployed to Self Employed Pilot 	<p>Minimum Target of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 500 Kickstart Essex Jobs 500 Anchor Jobs 300 Apprenticeships + 30 Nursing Apprenticeships 900 Essex Residents Skills Matched to New Jobs 960,000 IAG Portal Hits S106 Skills Funding For 282 Apprenticeships 329 School / College Outreach Days 569 Work Placements 8 Supported Employments 30 Self-Employment Trainees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Entry Level Gov Funded Schemes - Nov 20 to Dec 21 IAG Portal Launch - Feb 21 (additional enhancements from Feb 21) Apprenticeship Hub Established - Nov 20 (enhanced offer from Jan 21) Newly Unemployed Pilot Launch - Nov 20 Increasing S106 Developer Skills Contributions – Dec 20 Business Accelerator Scheme – Oct 20 	£738,000
Supporting Green Growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting Green Growth via ECC capital Investments Developing a Sector Growth Plan Securing initial funds to support green growth ambitions (Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund, Green Homes Grant, Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme, Public Sector Low Carbon 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> External funding secured to support green growth Developing a Sector Growth Strategy to inform Phase 2 - Existing initiatives requiring resource for delivery include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Net Zero Innovation Network bring together key Essex Partners & Business to explore sustainable energy for new build homes in Essex £30m total investment in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Green Sector Plan – March 21 (incorporated into longer-term Inward Investment Strategy) New Schools Carbon Neutral by 22/23 Commission for Local Green Skills Infrastructure – Jan to May 21 	£216,000

Recovery Priority	Key Initiatives	Impact Summary	Delivery Date	Additional Investment
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skills Fund Equipping Essex residents with skills For the green economy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Colchester Rapid Transport System for sustainable travel £2.7m Low Carbon Across the South East (LoCASE) grant funding scheme to reduce carbon emissions through energy efficiency / generation/ electric vehicles £3.1m South East New Energy (SENE) grant funding to develop a new zero housing scheme via Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) Braintree Electric Forecourt Project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Green Homes Grant Skills Training Bid – Oct 20 Further £20m Secured for Colchester Rapid Transport System – Nov 20 Funding Bid Net Zero Innovation Network – Feb 21 LoCASE Scheme Delivery – Launches Dec 20 SENE Scheme Delivery – Launches Jan 21 Braintree Electric Forecourt - Go Live Nov 20 	
Securing Investment for Town Centre Regeneration & Housing Growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Getting Building Fund Scheme delivery Future High Streets Scheme delivery Colchester Town Centre regeneration delivery Clacton Town Centre Future Schemes planning Ensuring that ECC is supporting town centres to transition in response to changing trading conditions Harlow Town Centre Regeneration and Partnership Investments Housing Infrastructure Funds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Industry estimate of new jobs created via: £200m Town Centres Investments equates To 2,000 Jobs £35m Getting Building Fund equates To 350 Jobs £2m Towns Fund equates To 20 Jobs £50m Future High Streets Fund equates To 50 Jobs 385 new homes through Garden Communities Investment equates To 2475 Jobs Completion of 19 replacement classrooms Investment of up to £6m in school projects from S106 reserves by Dec 2021 Essex Housing delivery of 70 private homes, 70 independent living homes with a GDV 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New Homes Delivery – By Jul 22 External Funding Scheme Delivery (GBF, FHSF, Towns Fund) - Dec 20 to Mar 22 Inward Investment Strategy – Launch Jan 21 Housing Infrastructure Bids – Submit Oct 20 Harlow Gilston Sustainable Transport Corridor – Commence Delivery Jul 22 Replacement School Classroom Delivery – Sep 21 to Mar 22 	£317,000

Recovery Priority	Key Initiatives	Impact Summary	Delivery Date	Additional Investment
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> of £37.66m, supporting 433 new jobs Housing Infrastructure Bids 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New S106 School Improvements – by Dec 21 Essex Housing LLPs – by Jul 20 	
Essex Open for Business Campaigns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Campaign 1 - Visiting key retail, cultural and tourism sites in Essex Campaign 2 - Tourism Recovery – Encourage people to visit and book vacations & short breaks in Essex 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Target Reach Local Residents - 600,000 Target Reach Visitors – 5m ECC Facebook Reach - up to 25m people ECC Twitter Reach – up to 65m people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Campaign 1 - Autumn & Winter 20 Campaign 2 – Spring 21 	£150,000
Developing an Inward Investment Strategy & Capital Pipeline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Short-term capacity to respond to Inward Investment queries via DIT Establishing an economic growth pipeline and investment fund (decision to be taken as part of Phase 2) Developing a long-term Inward Investment Strategy For Essex 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> £100m Economic Recovery & Growth Fund for Essex (jobs impact to be agreed at fund decision point but potential to support 3,500 jobs and 11,000 new homes over 20 years) Developing a strategy to inform Phase 2 (alignment of Essex business promotional activity) Impact of Inward Investment Strategy to be agreed on business case agreement. Work to establish strategy and investment case 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economic Recovery & Growth Fund Approved - Feb 21 Economic Growth Pipeline Established – March 21 Essex Inward Investment Strategy and business case for investment – March 21 	£277,000
Anchors Programme: Securing Investment Into Essex	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing an evidence base to support the Anchors Programme Working across public sector and private organisation on re-design of policy and approaches Harnessing ECC's supply chain value of over £1.2bn pa to bring further investment to Essex businesses and residents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact summary to be developed on publication of Anchors Strategy via the Essex Partners Board Potential for significant job generation and training opportunities TBC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scoping & Initial Stakeholder Engagement Complete – Oct 20 Anchor Charter - Nov 20 TBC 	£170,000

Recovery Priority	Key Initiatives	Impact Summary	Delivery Date	Additional Investment
Additional Programme Delivery Costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communications Officers to deliver proactive recovery communications campaigns and impact monitoring Project Management capacity (1 Prog. Manager, 3.0 Project Managers, 1.0 Assistant Project Manager) Finance Business Partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communications plan with a proactive pipeline of initiatives An audience segment and channel strategy with evaluation measures Strong partnership networks Programme Delivery Planning & Rigour Programme Risk, Dependencies & Budget Management Benefits Realisation Governance, Progress Reporting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comms Support - Oct 20 to Apr 22 Delivery Support & Prog Management – Dec 20 to April 22 Evidence Base Established – Oct 20 	<p>£140,000 Comms Resource</p> <p>£442,000 PM Resource</p>
Subtotal				£2,800,000
Maximising ECC's Role as an Anchor Institution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New Kickstart Placements Creation of entry level roles Nightingale Bursary Social Value Standards in Procurement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Min of 210 new entry level roles including inclusive apprenticeships and care leaver opportunities £3.6m of Social Value Investment and 210 additional Entry Level Roles across Essex 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ECC Entry Level Employment via Gov Funded Schemes - Nov 20 to Dec 21 Social Value Weighting in Procurement Contracts – Dec 20 Ongoing 	£315,000 (Separate CMA in place)
Digital Connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Digital Connectivity strategy in development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Essex has world class Digital Infrastructure as a firm foundation for future economic growth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Digital Connectivity Strategy for Essex – Feb 21 	£200,000 (Separate CMA in place)

3.4 The development and implementation of this Programme requires the procurement of a Business Support services contract. The current contract expires on 31.03.21 and will be re-procured, with a new specification that responds to needs arising from the Covid-19 pandemic for a 12-month period

3.5 This Programme is designed 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

3.6 The main driver for this Programme is the high unemployment rate in Essex as a direct consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic. Given the potential for both macro-economic and micro-economic change as a result of further social or economic restrictions, an evidence base will be continuously maintained to enable an agile basis for Programme decision making.

- 3.7 The Programme will also respond to any forthcoming national fiscal policies in relation to economic recovery and will deliver the Council's contribution to the Future High Street Fund (Harlow and Clacton-on-Sea), Town Deal (Harlow and Colchester) and Getting Building Fund (pan-Essex) schemes as key levers for economic growth.
- 3.8 Consultation with Essex leaders and chief executives on the areas of focus for economic recovery was undertaken in Sep 2020 and a series of discussions with Essex businesses is also planned to take place in Oct 2020.

4. Options

- 4.1 **Option 1:** Although it is an option not to take any action, economic recovery and employment opportunities are key priority areas, so as the key priority areas of focus over the next 24 months, the consequences of not responding to the profound economic effects of Covid-19 would increase the significant adverse impacts on the residents of Essex. Thus, this option is not recommended
- 4.2 **Option 2:** (Recommended) Approve the requested investment of £2,800,000 for additional resource for 18 months to deliver the ECC Economic Recovery Programme as set out in 3.3 above.

5. Issues for consideration

- 5.1 **Financial implications:** The 2020/21 budgets for Economic Growth have been reviewed and where possible, reprioritised onto Economic Growth Recovery activities including COVID response at the start of the financial year. This totals £2.4m of existing budget which has been reprioritised for 2020/21. Ambitions for further Economic Growth Recovery activity totalling £2.8m as detailed in 3.3 have been identified in addition to the work currently underway which is funded from existing budgets. This additional work is requested to be drawn down from the Recovery Reserve. The programme of work is planned to span 2020/21-2023/24, with the majority of activity occurring in 2021/22, as per the table below (staffing will be on fixed term contracts of 12-18 months in length). £2.218m relates to Economic Development portfolio, £442,000 for project management in Customer, Communities, Culture and Corporate portfolio and £140,000 for communication activities in the Leader portfolio

Programme of work	Portfolio		2020/21 £000	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	Total
Direct Support for Business	Economic Development	Staffing	-	-	-	-
		Non Staffing	-	350	-	350
		Total	-	350	-	350
Enabling Residents to Access Work and Skills Opportunities	Economic Development	Staffing	115	244	29	388
		Non Staffing	240	110	-	350
		Total	355	354	29	738
Supporting Green Growth	Economic Development	Staffing	36	144	36	216
		Non Staffing	-	-	-	-
		Total	36	144	36	216
Securing Investment for Town Centre Regeneration & Housing Growth	Economic Development	Staffing	53	211	53	317
		Non Staffing	-	-	-	-
		Total	53	211	53	317
Essex Open for Business Campaigns	Economic Development	Staffing	-	-	-	-
		Non Staffing	50	100	-	150
		Total	50	100	-	150
Developing an Inward Investment Strategy & Capital Pipeline	Economic Development	Staffing	29	103	15	147
		Non Staffing	10	120	-	130
		Total	39	223	15	277
Anchors Programme: Securing Investment into Essex	Economic Development	Staffing	23	94	23	140
		Non Staffing	20	10	-	30
		Total	43	104	23	170
Additional Programme Delivery Costs: Programme support	Customer, Communities, Culture and	Staffing	92	304	46	442
		Non Staffing	-	-	-	-
		Total	92	304	46	442
Additional Programme Delivery Costs: Communications	Leader of the Council	Staffing	23	94	23	140
		Non Staffing	-	-	-	-
		Total	23	94	23	140
TOTAL			691	1,884	225	2,800

5.2 Legal implications

5.2.1 The Council's financial regulations state that all drawdowns from reserves must be approved by the Cabinet Member for Resources. Drawing down of money from reserves does not authorise any expenditure that is a key decision or any significant changes to ECC services or funding which must be authorised by the relevant Cabinet Member.

6. Equality and Diversity implications

6.1 The Public Sector Equality Duty applies to the Council when it makes decisions. The duty requires us to have regard to the need to:

- (a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act. In summary, the Act makes discrimination etc on the grounds of a protected characteristic unlawful
- (b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- (c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

6.2 The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, gender, and sexual orientation. The Act states that 'marriage and civil

partnership' is not a relevant protected characteristic for (b) or (c) although it is relevant for (a).

- 6.3 The equality impact assessment indicates that the proposals in this report will not have a disproportionately adverse impact on any people with a particular characteristic.

6. List of appendices

- 7.1 Equality Impact Assessment

7. List of Background papers

Coronavirus, Claimant Counts and Furlough Data Pack (September 20)
ECC Organisation Strategy

I approve the above recommendations set out above for the reasons set out in the report.	Date 20 October 2020
Councillor Chris Whitbread, Cabinet Member for Finance	

In consultation with:

Role	Date
Leader of the Council	20 October 2020
Cllr David Finch Cabinet Member for Economic Development	15 October 2020
Cllr Tony Ball Cabinet Member for Customer, Communities, Culture and Corporate	19 October 2020
Cllr Susan Barker Executive Director for Place and Public Health	12 October 2020
Mark Carroll Executive Director, Finance and Technology (S151 Officer)	12 October 2020
Nicole Wood	

Director, Legal and Assurance (Monitoring Officer)	13 October 2020
Paul Turner	

Equality Impact Assessment

Section 1: Executive Summary	
1.1	<p>Title of policy (or decision)</p> <p>Economic Recovery Programme – October 2020</p>
1.2	<p>Describe the main aims, objectives and purpose of the policy (or decision)</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>What outcome(s) are you hoping to achieve? Refer to strategic aims / strategic priorities in Organisation Strategy</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>
<p>1.3</p>	<p>Is this a new policy (or decision) or a change to an existing policy, practice or project?</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"/>																												
<p>Which geographical areas of Essex does or will the policy or decision affect (e.g. Borough/City/District/All Essex)</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="129 405 847 728"> <tr> <td data-bbox="129 405 375 456">All Essex</td> <td data-bbox="375 405 549 456"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> <td data-bbox="549 405 794 456">Colchester</td> <td data-bbox="794 405 847 456"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="129 456 375 495">Basildon</td> <td data-bbox="375 456 549 495"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td data-bbox="549 456 794 495">Epping Forest</td> <td data-bbox="794 456 847 495"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="129 495 375 533">Braintree</td> <td data-bbox="375 495 549 533"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td data-bbox="549 495 794 533">Harlow</td> <td data-bbox="794 495 847 533"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="129 533 375 571">Brentwood</td> <td data-bbox="375 533 549 571"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td data-bbox="549 533 794 571">Maldon</td> <td data-bbox="794 533 847 571"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="129 571 375 609">Castle Point</td> <td data-bbox="375 571 549 609"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td data-bbox="549 571 794 609">Rochford</td> <td data-bbox="794 571 847 609"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="129 609 375 647">Chelmsford</td> <td data-bbox="375 609 549 647"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td data-bbox="549 609 794 647">Tendring</td> <td data-bbox="794 609 847 647"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td data-bbox="549 647 794 685">Uttlesford</td> <td data-bbox="794 647 847 685"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table>			All Essex	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Colchester	<input type="checkbox"/>	Basildon	<input type="checkbox"/>	Epping Forest	<input type="checkbox"/>	Braintree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Harlow	<input type="checkbox"/>	Brentwood	<input type="checkbox"/>	Maldon	<input type="checkbox"/>	Castle Point	<input type="checkbox"/>	Rochford	<input type="checkbox"/>	Chelmsford	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tendring	<input type="checkbox"/>			Uttlesford	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Chelmsford	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tendring	<input type="checkbox"/>																											
		Uttlesford	<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"/>																												
<p>Please describe the steps you have taken to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • meet the digital accessibility requirements • test the accessibility of the website, system or application • maintain accessibility once it has gone live <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>
<p>Disability – Learning Disability</p>	<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	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	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 EqIA 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 EqIA:
Sarah Read

Date: 08 Oct 2020

Names and contact details:
Sarah Read, Project Manager
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 EqIA 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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Essex County Council

Coronavirus, claimant counts and furlough

28th September 2020

Purpose

These slides set out an analysis of Claimant Count data and the [Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme \(CJRS\)](#). Both data sets cover the period to the end of August 2020. The data provides an insight into the differential economic impact of the COVID-19 outbreak across Essex Communities.

Claimant count data provides a timeseries measure of the number of people that are claiming benefits principally for the reason of being unemployed, such as Job Seeker's Allowance (JSA) and Universal Credit.

The CJRS, announced by the Government on 20 March 2020, aims to support employers who have been unable to undertake their normal activities through COVID-19 and had to furlough staff. Employers are able to claim support from the period starting 1 March 2020, where employees have already been furloughed from that date. The scheme currently provides employers with financial support up to 80% of salary, up to a maximum of £2,500 per month per employee, plus the associated Employer National Insurance contributions and pension contributions on that subsidised furlough pay

This report covers Greater Essex and explores:

- Surges in claimant numbers, and rates of new claims among the working age population
- The demographics (age and sex) of claimants, and how this has changed
- The geographical distribution of new claimants across Greater Essex
- The extent of furlough by the following break-downs: geography, at a national and local, Essex level; employer size; and employer sector

Note that data included in the claimant counts have changed over time:

- From April 2015: JSA claimants, plus all Universal Credit claimants who are required to seek work and be available for work.
- Between May 2013 - March 2015: JSA claimants, the plus all out of work Universal Credit claimants.
- Between October 1996 - April 2013: JSA claimants.
- Between January 1971 - September 1996: estimated number of people who would have claimed unemployment-related benefit if Jobseeker's Allowance had existed at that time.

The Claimant Count also includes people claiming unemployment-related benefits but do not receive payment, such as claimants who have had their benefits stopped for a period of time.

Source: ONS NOMIS, <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/query/select/getdatasetbytheme.asp?theme=72>

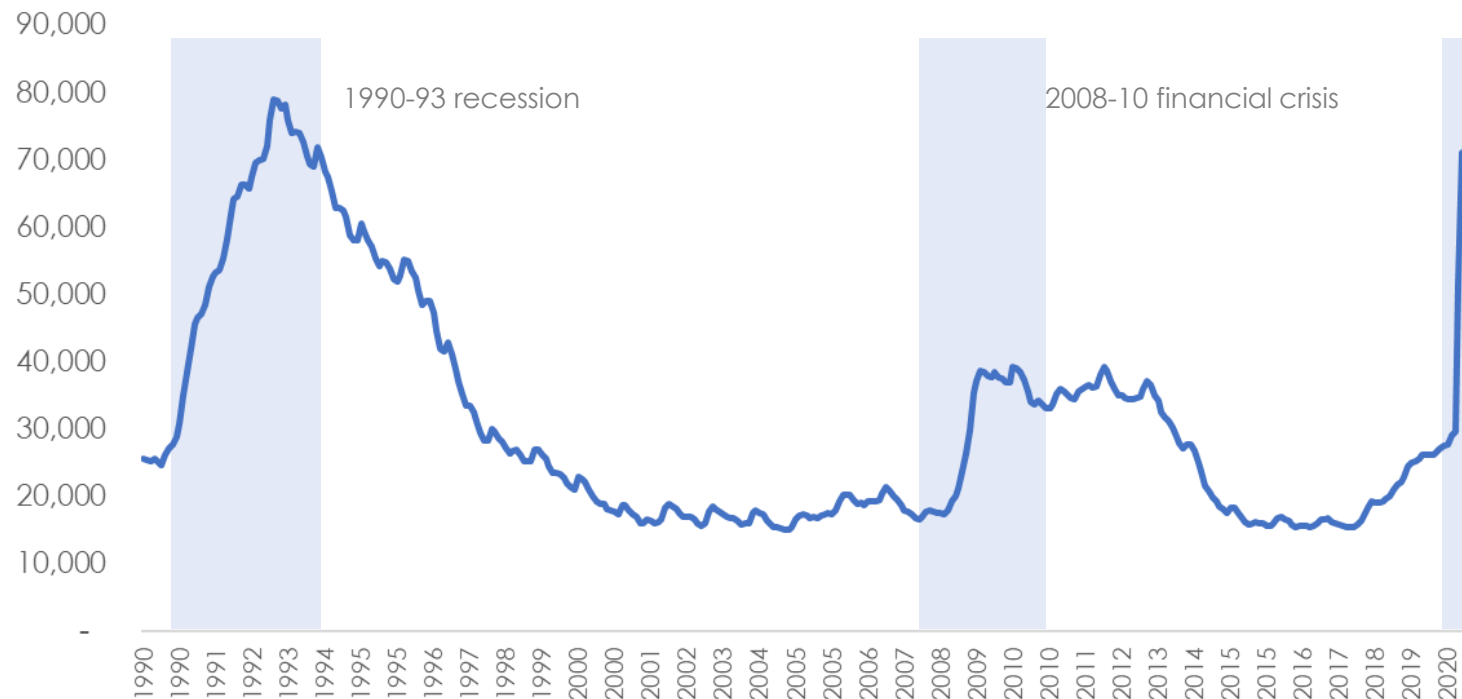
Summary

- Unemployment claims increased in August – the number of JSA claims in August is higher than it was in April, and it currently at the highest level since the pandemic began
- We estimate 108,000 Essex residents are receiving support through the job retention scheme, as of July 31st. Employers start paying part of furloughed staff wages from August. This is likely to reduce the number of people receiving support
- 22% of Essex's working age residents are receiving some form of support – either through the furlough scheme or unemployment claims
- Younger people are more likely to be unemployed and more likely to be furloughed
- The initial surge of new unemployment claimants in April 2020 was driven by workers in Essex's most deprived communities. We have seen a further wave in May 2020, similar in scale, from communities right across Essex. Few Essex communities have escaped increases in unemployment cumulatively.
- The most deprived communities in Essex continue are the worst hit. At the start of the pandemic these areas saw the sharpest increases in furloughs & unemployment. Several months on, this continues to be the case
- The Government have announced a new 'job support scheme' which comes into effect when the job retention scheme ends on November 1st. Employers using this scheme will pay 22% of any staff member receiving support – more than they ever had to pay through the job retention scheme. The job support scheme is only available for 'viable jobs', and it is unknown how many Essex residents will be supported through the new scheme
- We should expect the upcoming support changes to affect all parts of Essex

Headline numbers

Unemployment remains at its highest level for almost 30 years, following an unprecedented surge. There are more people currently unemployed than at any other time in the pandemic

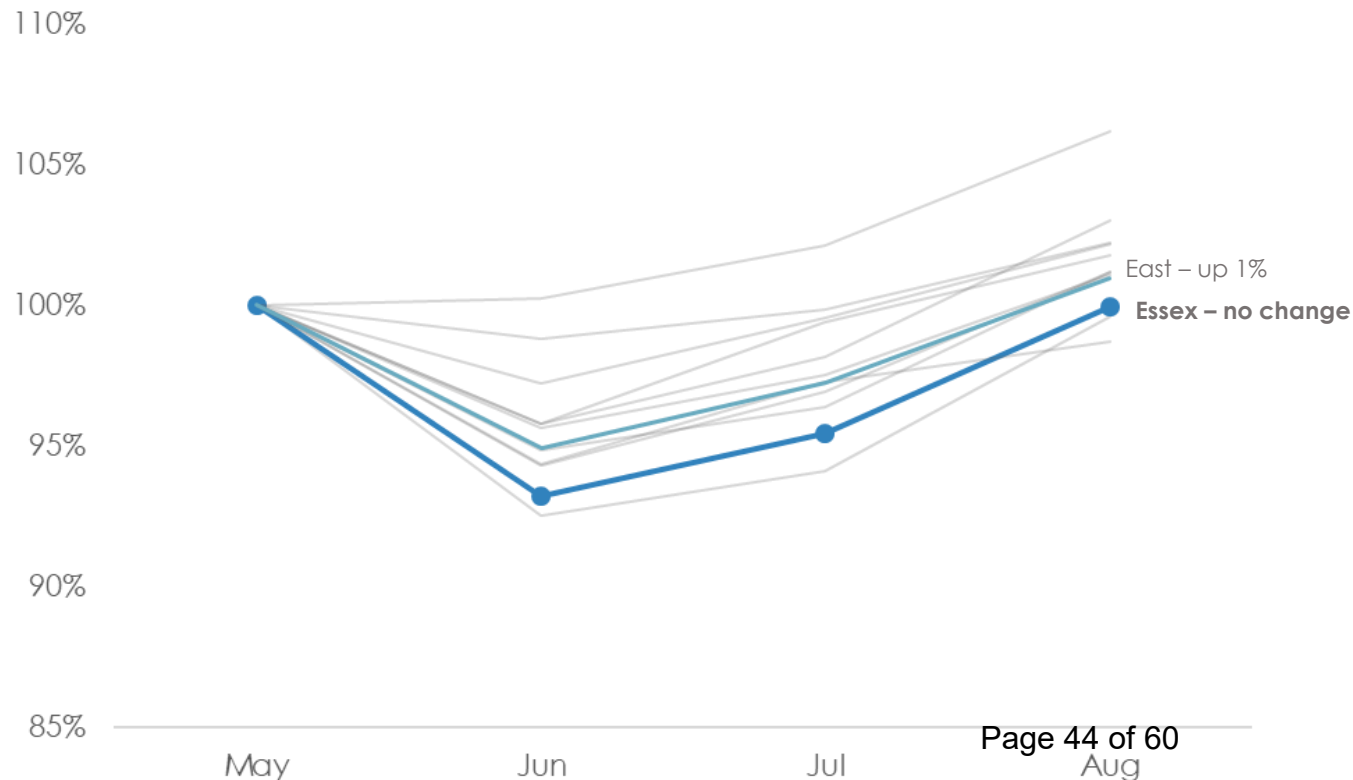
Monthly claimant count, Greater Essex, 1990 – August 2020



- August 2020 saw an increase in the number of unemployment claimants. There was a total of 71,290 claims across greater Essex in August, slightly higher than the number of claims in the May peak (71,170)
- Since the pandemic first hit, there has been little change in overall unemployment. There have been slight decreases in June & July (down by 6.5% and 4% from the peak, respectively), but it is unlikely Essex will 'bounce back' to pre-covid unemployment levels. Levels of unemployment are likely to be high for a long time
- Across greater Essex there were 71,170 claims in August 2020, with:
 - 54,125 (75.9%) in Essex
 - 9,095 (12.8%) in Southend
 - 8,070 (11.3%) in Thurrock

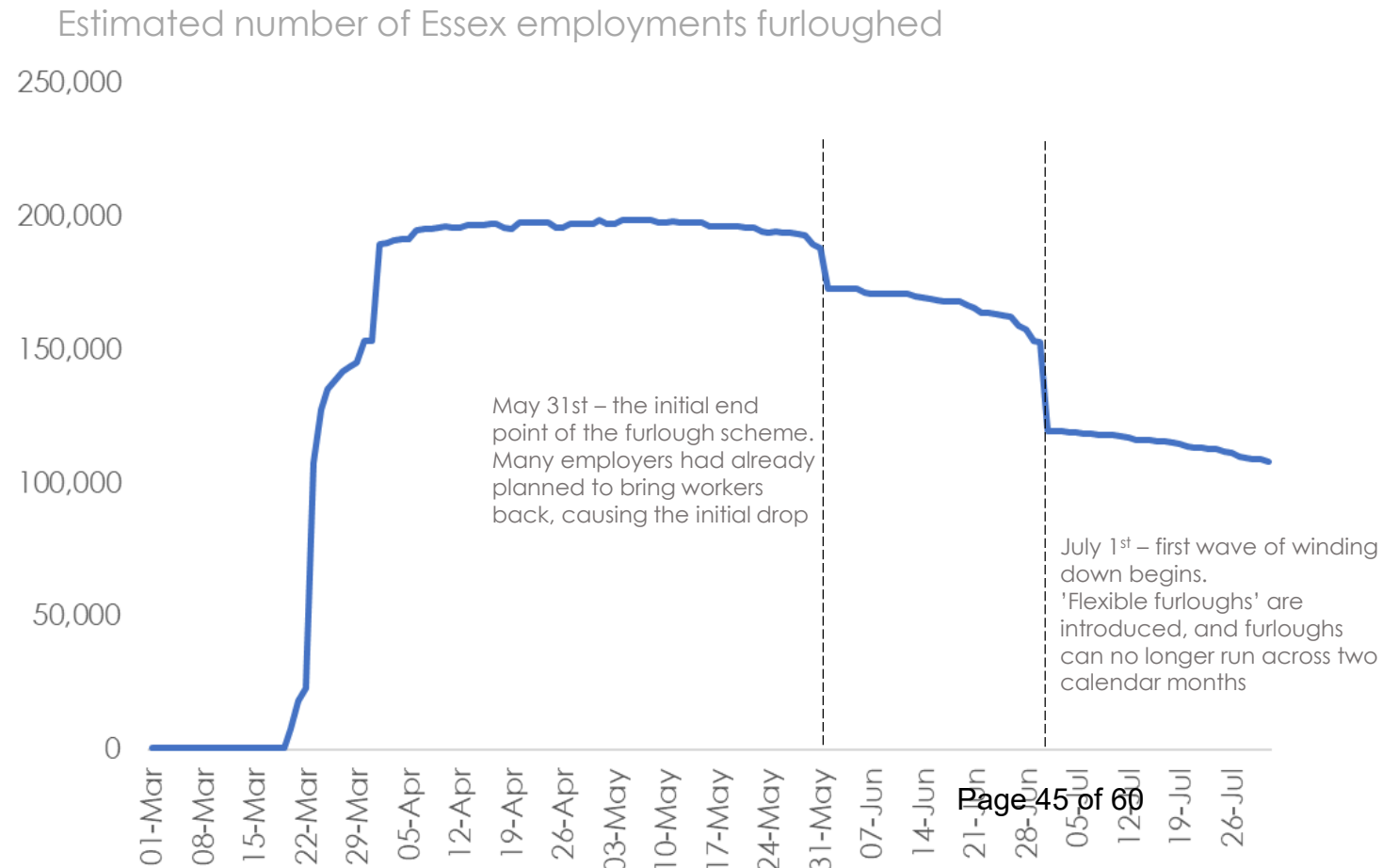
Back to square one – Unemployment started to drop in June & July, potentially showing the start of Essex’s recovery. This did not continue in August

Change in the number of JSA claims since the peak



- Up until August, the direction of travel for unemployment was positive. Levels of unemployment in Essex were consistently down from the May peak, and Essex had one of the fastest decreases in unemployment in the East of England.
- This did not continue into August. Unemployment increased across the region, and Essex's unemployment returned to May's levels.
- Despite this increase, Essex is still doing relatively well. Almost every other upper tier local authority has had a larger increase in unemployment than Essex (with only C.Bedfordshire and Norfolk doing better), and the change in unemployment in Essex is slightly below the change in unemployment seen in the region.

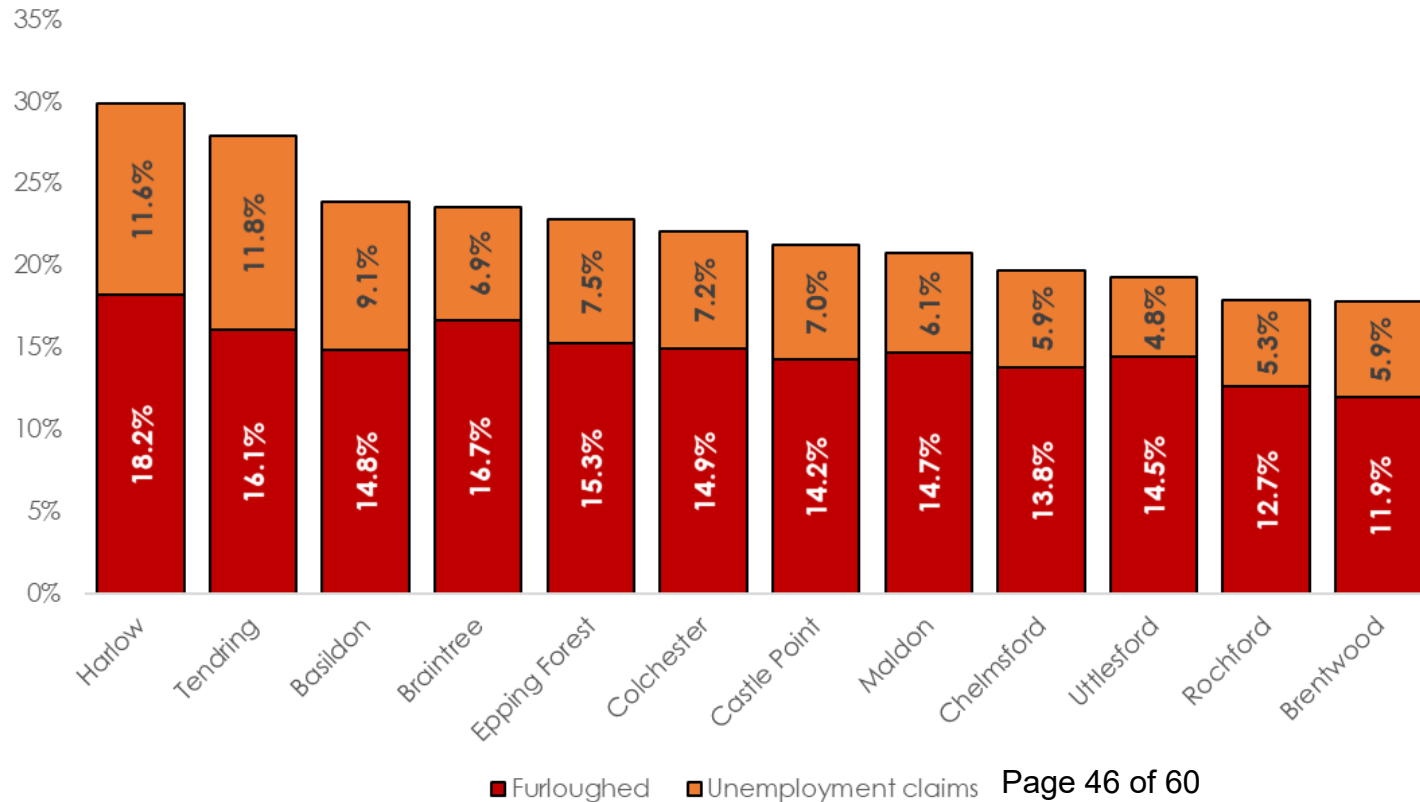
Large numbers still rely on government support, and the scheme is winding down



- We estimate that there are currently 108,000 Essex residents furloughed.
- The furlough scheme is ending. From August 1st employers will start paying national insurance & pension contributions. From September 1st employers will need to pay 10% of furloughed staff's wages. From October 1st this increases to 20%. All support ends on November 1st.
- The first wave of winding down has begun. From July 1st new restrictions have been put in place around furloughs. This has already caused a sharp drop in the number of Essex residents supported.
- There is significant uncertainty around what will happen when the support is removed. The Chancellor has introduced a new 'winter support plan' which starts on November 1st. The plan allows employers to put staff on shorter hours instead of making them redundant. How many jobs this will save remains to be seen.

Everywhere in Essex relies on the support scheme. There is a risk of increasing unemployment as the support starts to end

Total number of Essex employees receiving support (est.)

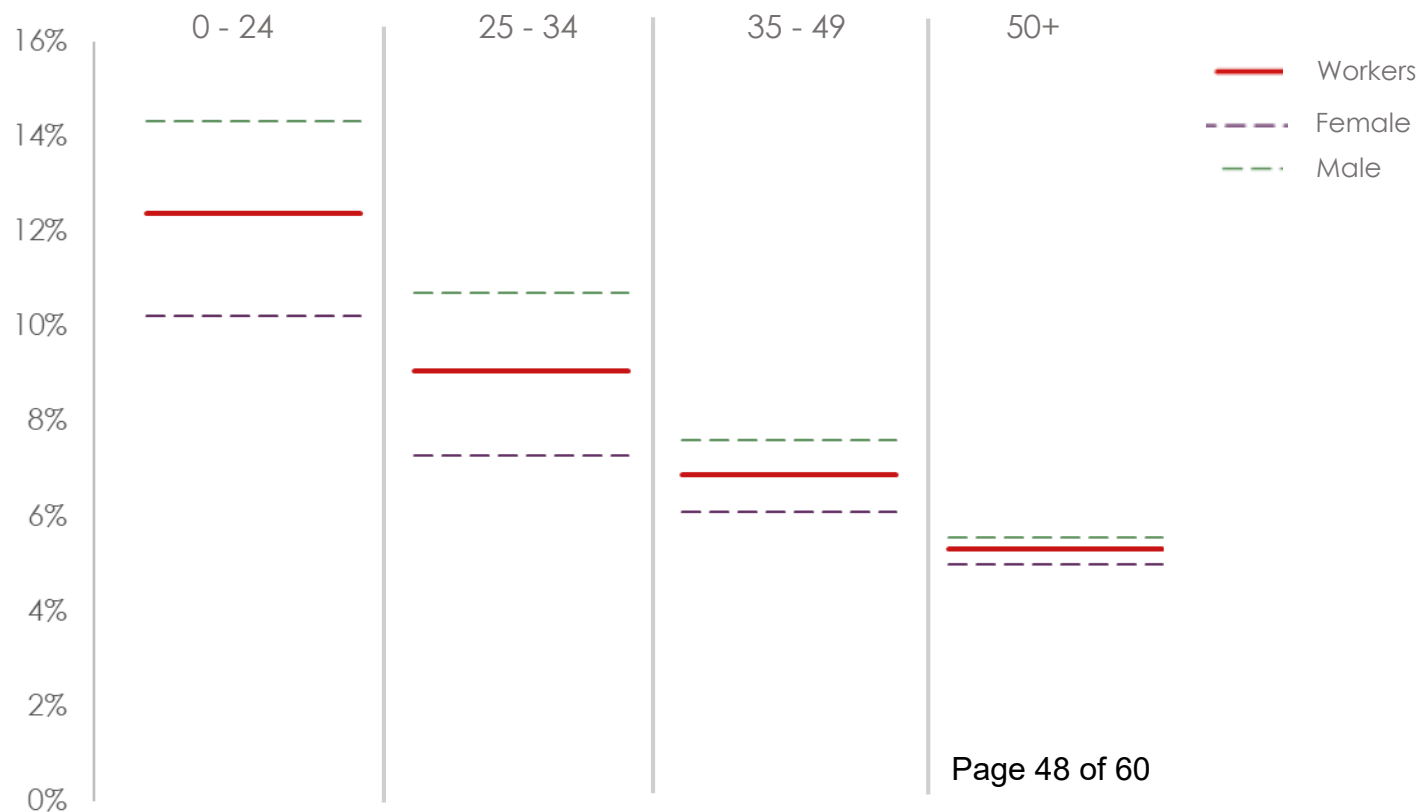


- In addition to the 54,125 unemployed Essex residents, we estimate there are 108,000 residents currently furloughed. In total, this amounts to 22% of Essex receiving some form of government support
- There is variation in the levels of support across Essex, but every area has been affected. In Brentwood we estimate that 1 in every 5 workers is currently unemployed or furloughed, In Harlow this rises to almost 1 in 3
- Furloughs make up the bulk of support. It is unknown how many employers will be able to pay the increasing cost of furloughing staff, and how many jobs will be available for the furloughed staff to return to. There is a risk of high levels of unemployment as the scheme closes

Analysis by age and sex

Younger people are more likely to be unemployed...

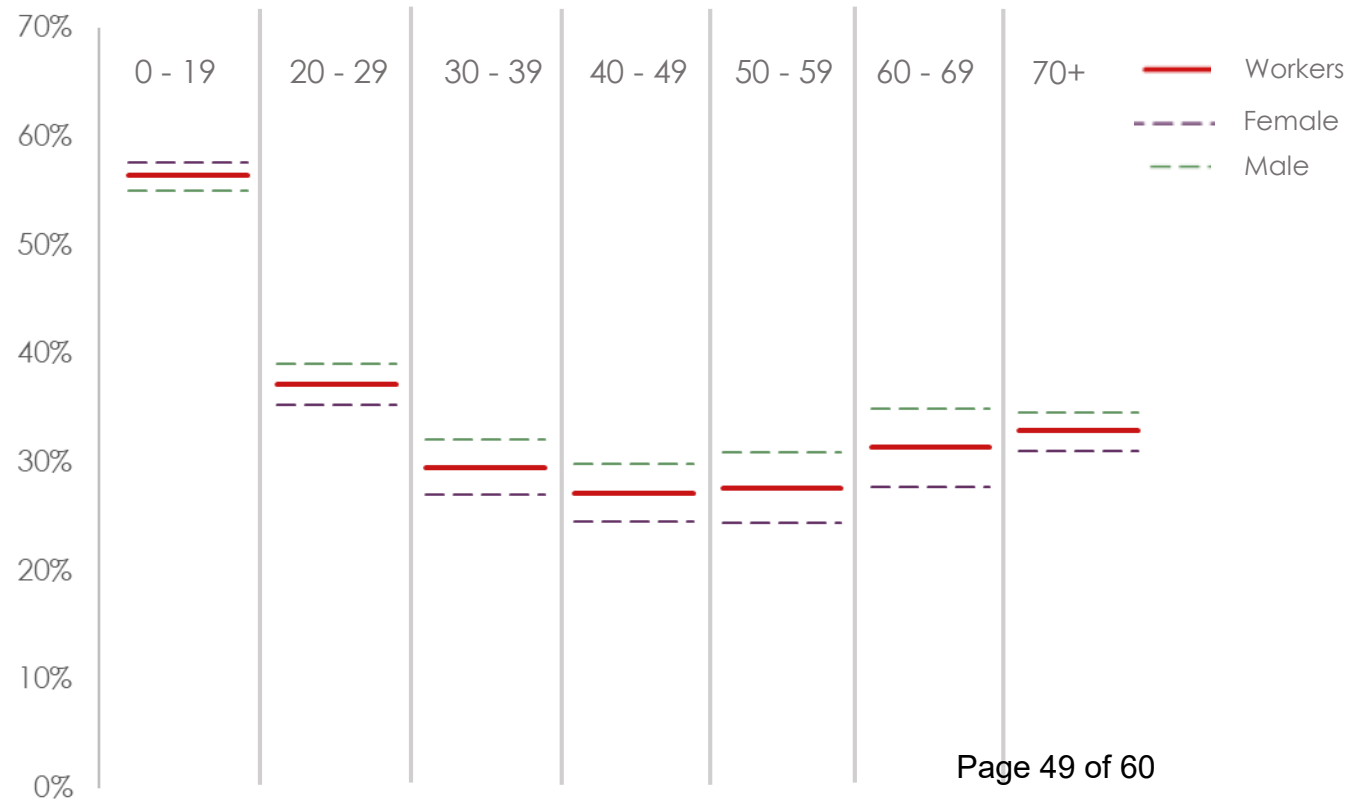
Claims as a proportion of employed residents, by age group



- The bulk (80%) of Julys claims come from the middle aged groups. This is because middle aged residents make up the bulk of the Essex workforce
- Young people are much more likely to be unemployed, compared to any other age group. 12.4% of the under 25 work force have 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
- Young males are the most likely group to be unemployed. Males across all age groups are more likely to be unemployed compared to females, but this gap closes as age increases

...And more likely to be furloughed

Proportion of employees furloughed by age band



- Younger people are more likely to be furloughed than any other age band. Young women are more likely to be furloughed compared to young men – this is the only age group where females are more likely to be furloughed
- The proportion of employees furloughed falls sharply, with the lowest proportions occurring in the 40 – 49 age group
- The proportion of furloughs rises as people get towards retirement age

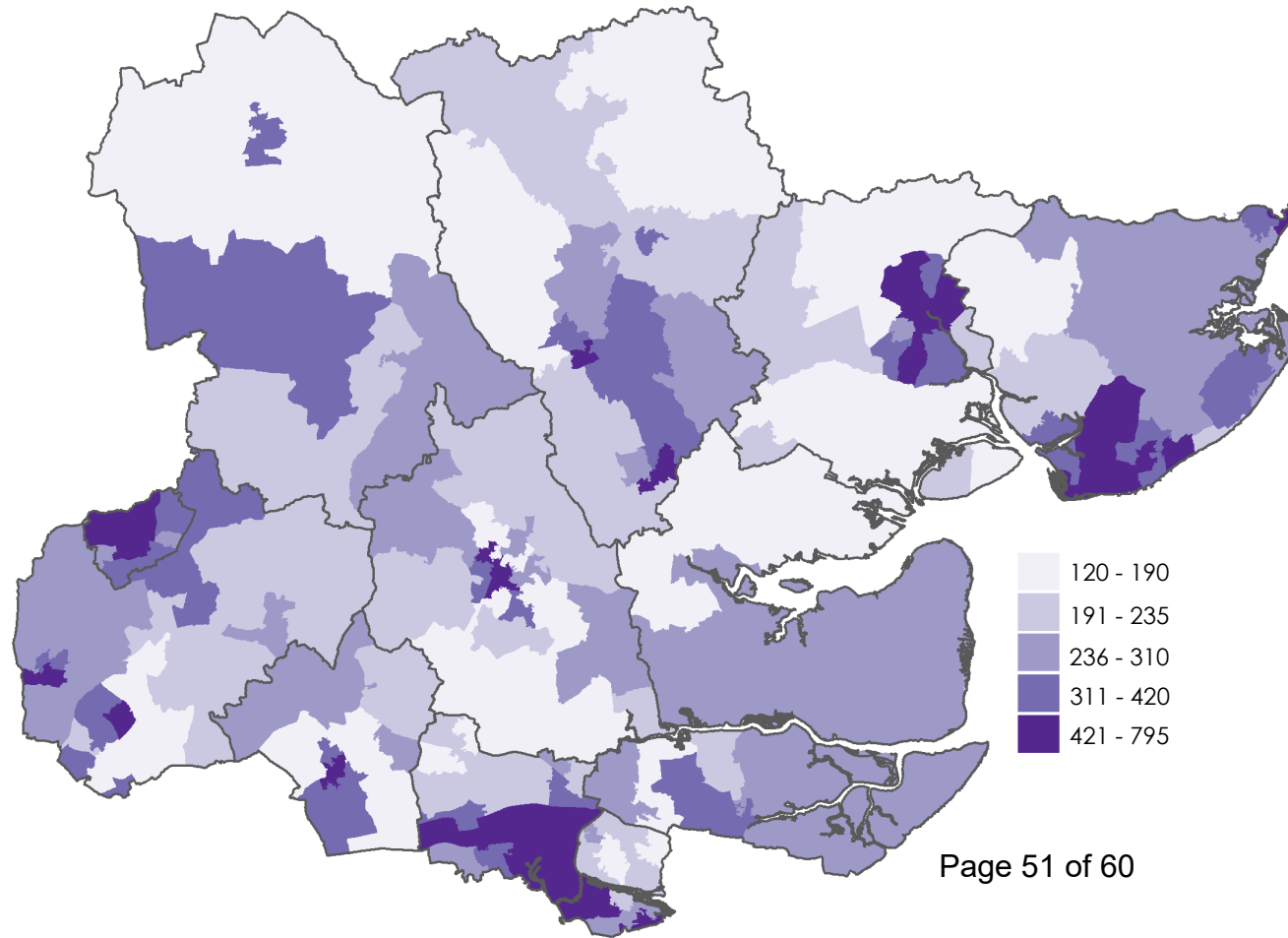


Essex County Council

Impacts on places

Unemployment claims are highest in deprived areas

August JSA claimants

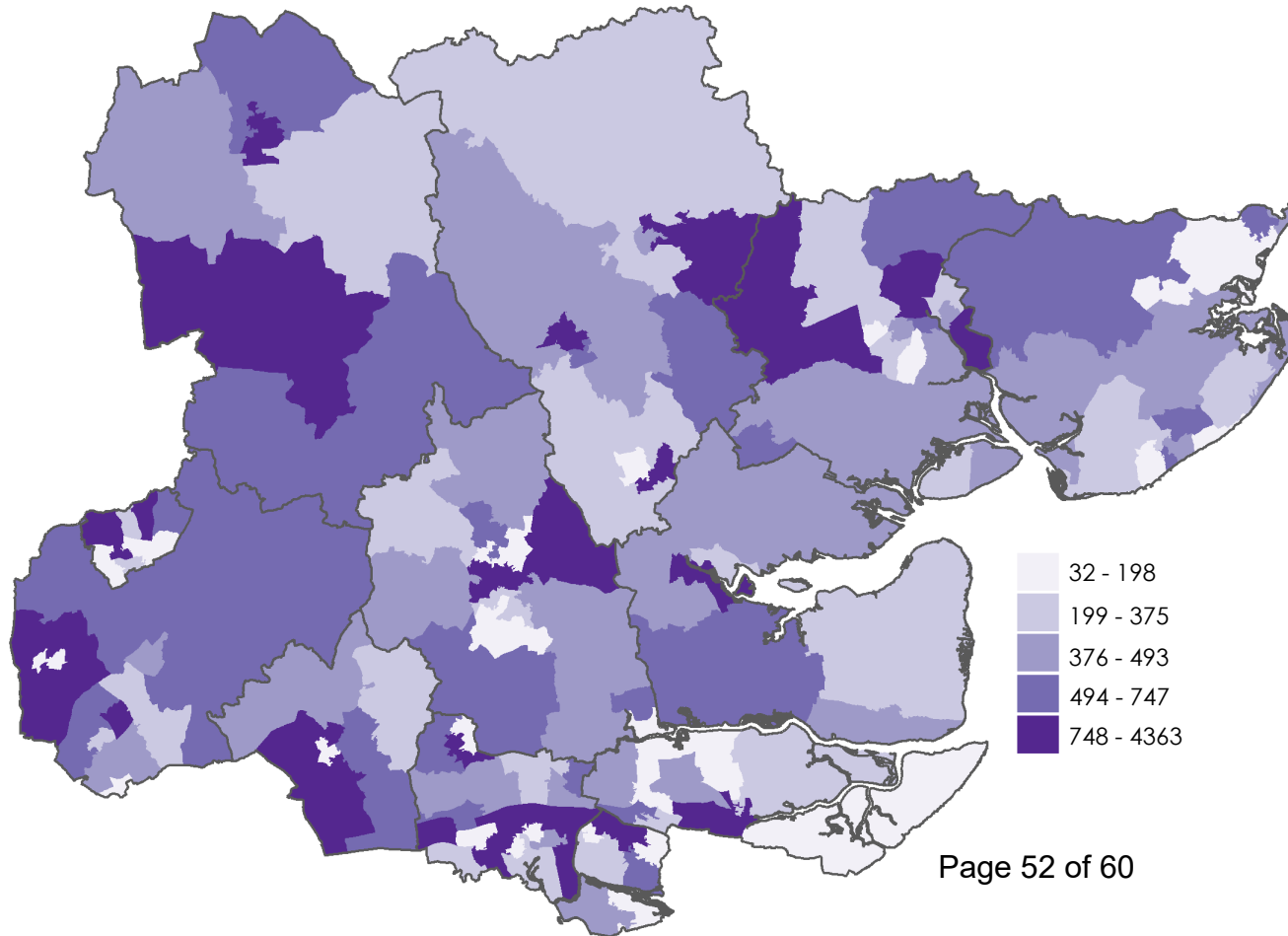


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- At the start of the pandemic, deprived areas were the hardest hit. Several months on, this continues to be the case
- Areas in Harlow, Tendring (particularly Clacton & the Pier), and parts of south Essex have the highest levels of unemployment claims
- As the pandemic moved on, more areas began to feel the impact – parts of central Chelmsford & Colchester started to see high levels of unemployment

And furloughs are high everywhere

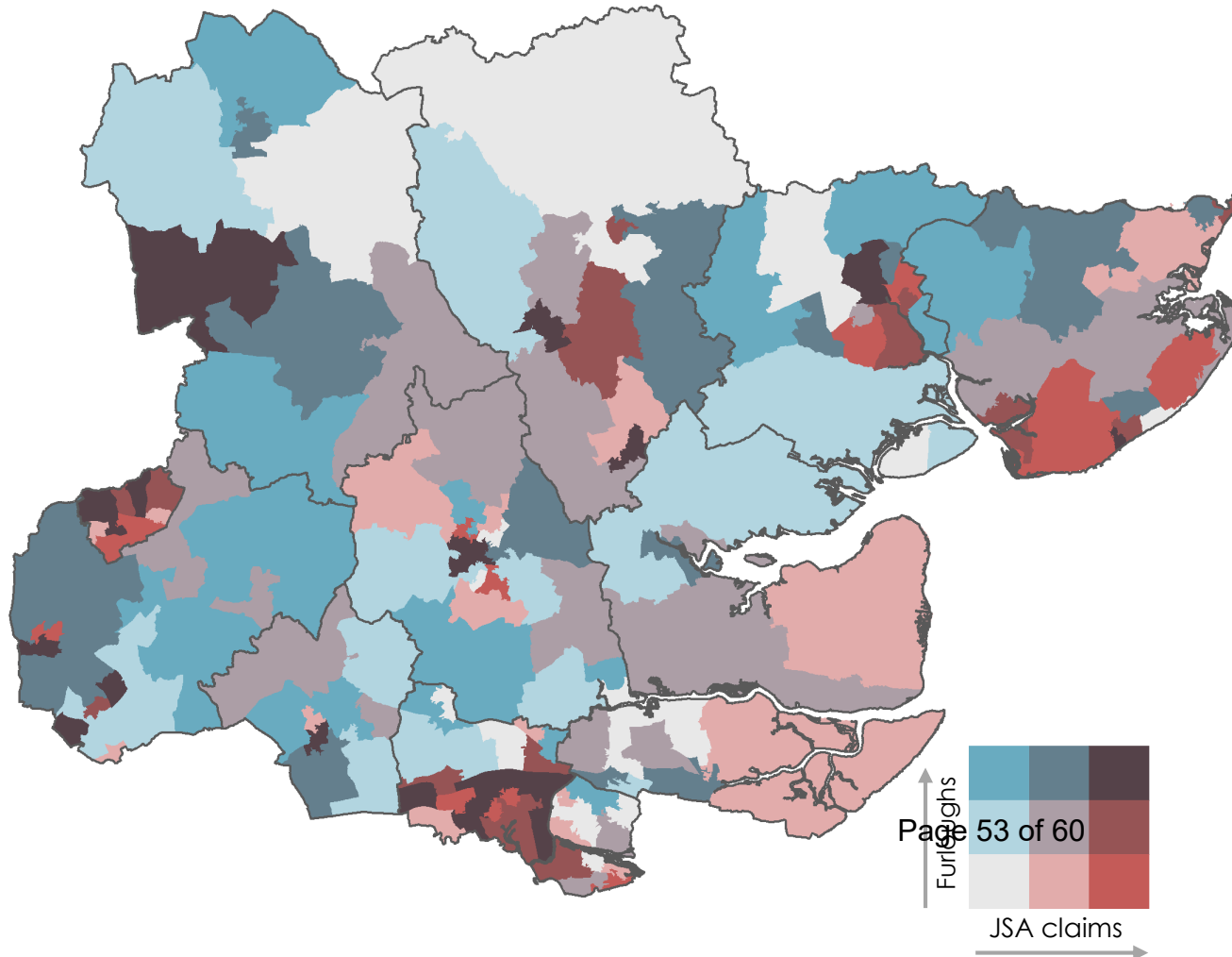
Estimated number of furloughed employees



- The number of furloughs are much more evenly spread, with almost every area in Essex having high numbers of furloughed employees
- The highest levels of furlough are from Central Chelmsford (4,363), Central Colchester (3,870), Takeley & Mountfitchet South (2,983), and Basildon Central & Pippis Hill (2,967)
- Parts of Braintree (Witham West) and Clacton (Clacton Rush Green) have some of the lowest levels of estimated furloughs

Almost everywhere in Essex depends on government support

Current job support across Essex (est.)



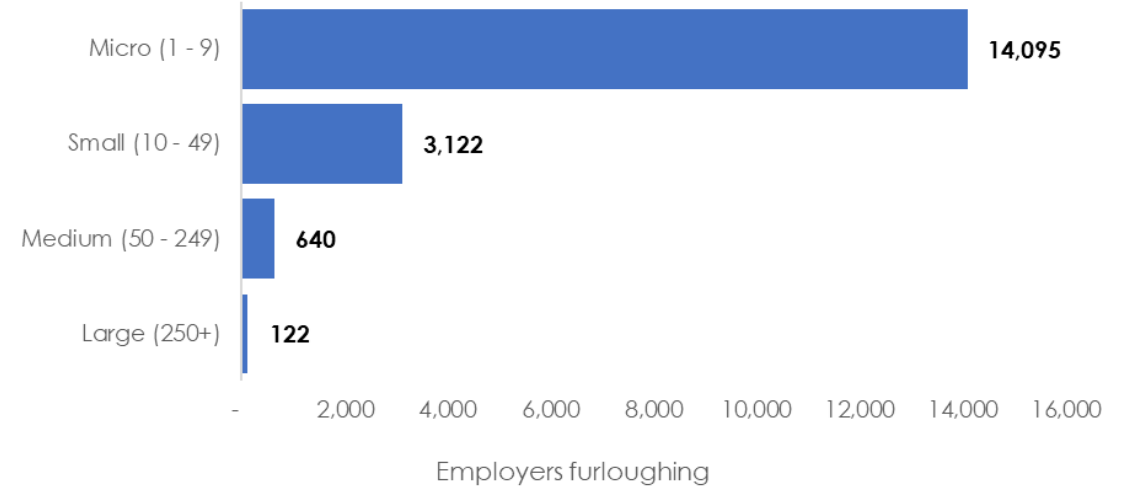
- Areas in South Basildon and almost all of Harlow have particularly high levels of furloughed employees & unemployment claims
- There are high levels of furlough & low levels of unemployment in parts of Epping Forest, Colchester, and Uttlesford
- There are areas with high levels of unemployment & low levels of furlough in Tendring, Basildon, and Harlow
- Some areas in the North of Essex have got away relatively unscathed – areas near the top of Braintree, Uttlesford, and Colchester are among the least affected

Which sectors and employers have furloughed workers?

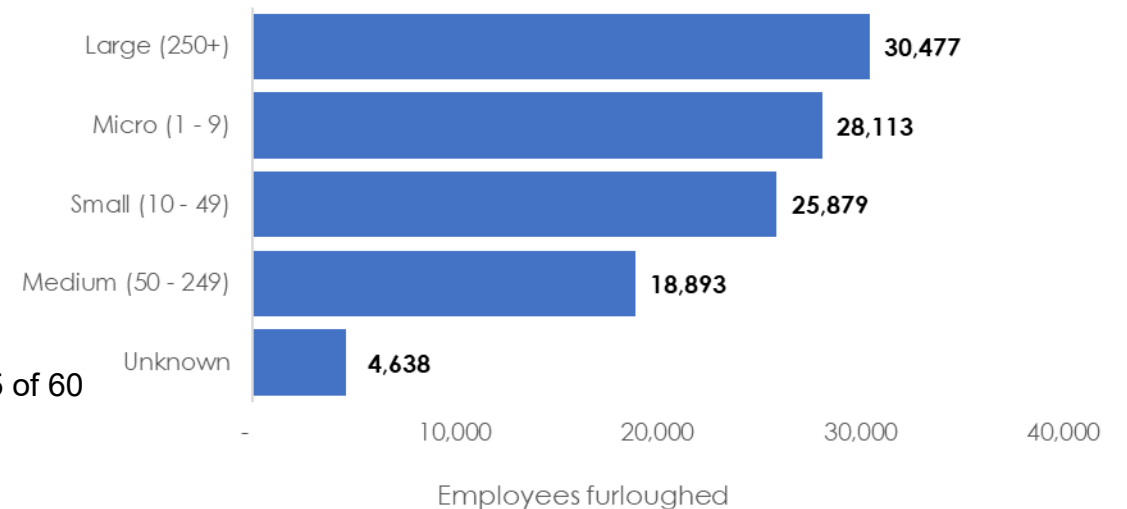
Furlough and business size

- Nationally, Smaller employers (with less than 50 employees) make up the bulk of furloughing employers. **For every 10 employers furloughing, 9 have less than 50 employees.** Most employees furloughed work at large (250+) employers.
- Applying the national figures to the number of Essex businesses allows us to estimate the impact of COVID-19 on the Essex economy. We estimate that **18 thousand employers are furloughing** (27% of all Essex employers), and **108 thousand employees are currently furloughed** (12.8% of all Essex employees)

Estimated number of Essex employers furloughing



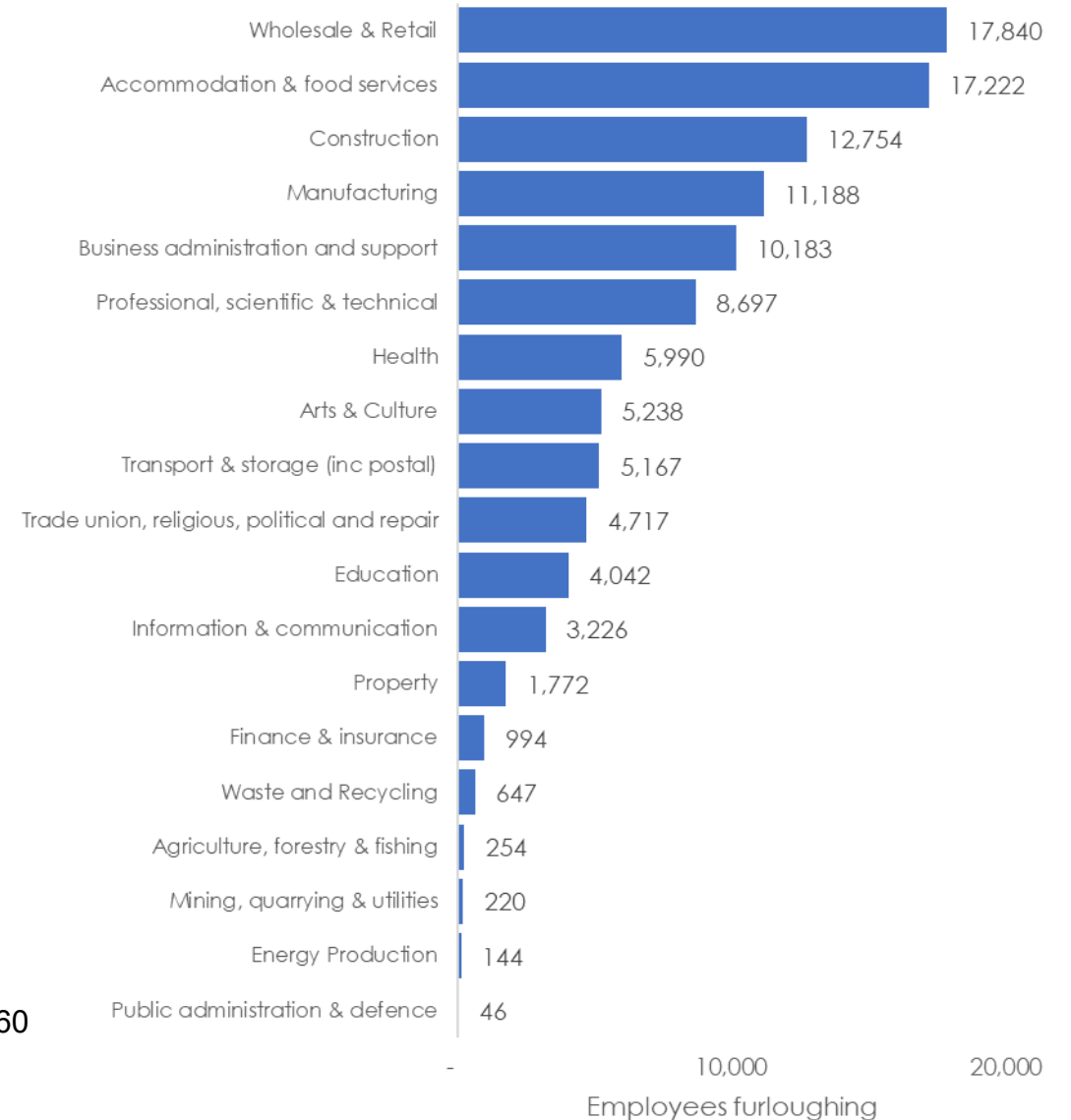
Estimated number of Essex employees furloughed



Furlough and sector

- The retail, construction, and professional sectors make up the bulk of furloughing employers in the UK. Currently, around 311 thousand employers from these sectors are furloughing almost 1.45 million employees, accounting for 30% of all employers furloughing
- We estimate that Essex employees from **retail, accommodation & food services, and constructions sectors** make up the bulk of furloughed residents. A total of **c48 thousand employees** from these sectors have been furloughed, accounting for **43% of all Essex furloughs**
- These are all sectors which were most impacted by social distancing & lockdown measures, with most employees unable to work from home & most employers shut by government

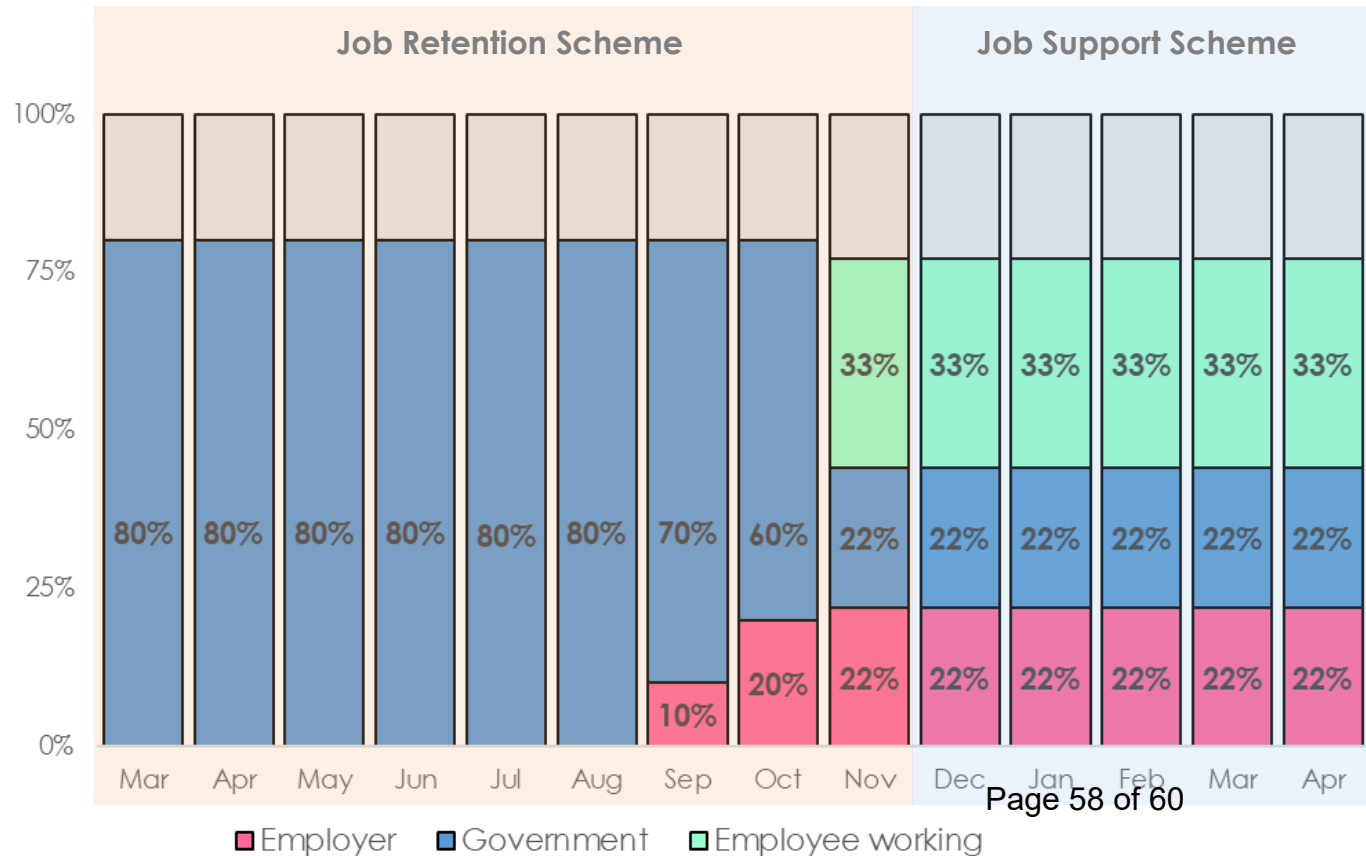
Estimated number of Essex employees furloughed



What comes next – the Job Support Scheme

The job support scheme will provide similar levels of support to the job retention scheme. The government will contribute significantly less

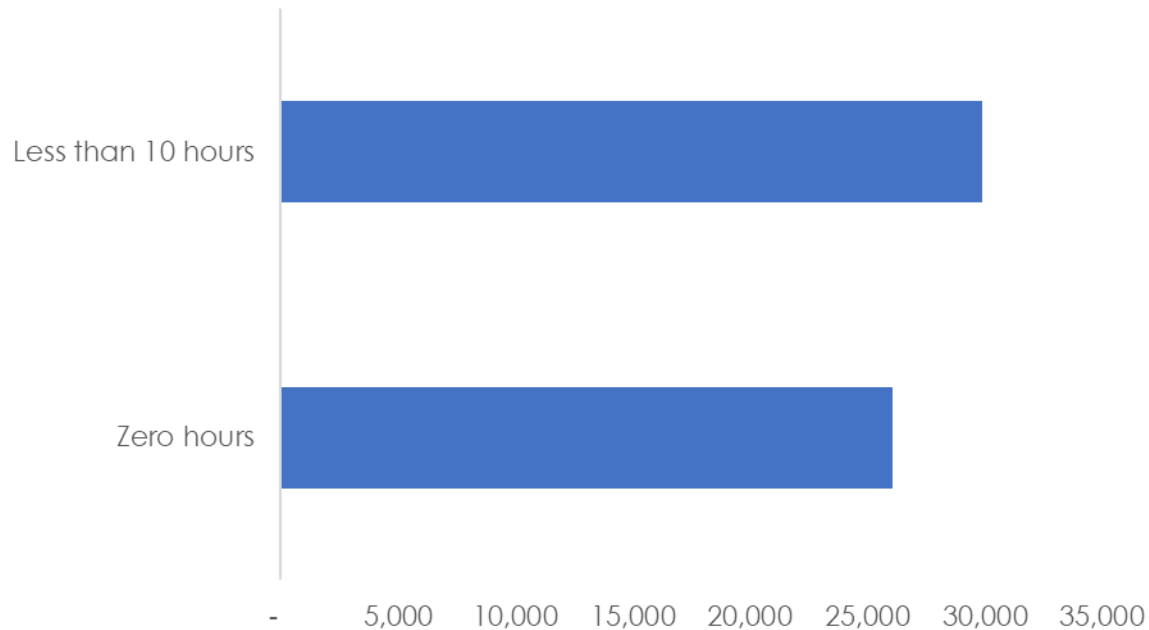
Monthly support, split by source



- People supported through the job retention scheme received 80% of their monthly salary. Initially this was entirely paid by government. By October, employers have to pay 20% of all furloughed staff wages. There have been concerns over how many employers will keep staff furloughed once they have to start paying
- People supported through the job support scheme will receive 77% of their wages. Employees work 33% of their contracted hours, 22% will be paid by the employer, and 22% by government – employers pay more, employees receive less
- Employers are unable to make any staff redundant if the staff member is receiving support through the new scheme

The job support scheme will only support 'viable' jobs – not everyone currently receiving support will be eligible

Number of Essex residents on low / zero hour contracts (est.)



- The job support scheme aims to support businesses experiencing reduced demand. Rather than making employees redundant, employers are able to reduce the employees hours to 1/3 of their contract
- Support will only be available to 'viable' jobs. There is no definition about what a viable job is. Jobs which are viable in the long term but are currently unviable – for example jobs in nightclubs – will not be supported through the scheme
- It is currently not clear what support will be given to people on zero hour contracts. There is also concern around incentives for employers – employers pay any employee on the scheme 55% of wages for them to work 33% of their hours. Some employers will choose to cut employees hours

This summary has been prepared by Essex County Council's Strategy, Insight and Engagement function.

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