



Essex County Council

# Place Services and Economic Growth Policy and Scrutiny Committee

10:30	Thursday, 21 April 2022	Council Chamber County Hall, Chelmsford, CM1 1QH
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**For information about the meeting please ask for:**

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**Email:** democratic.services@essex.gov.uk

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		<b>Pages</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Membership, Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations of Interest</b>	<b>4 - 4</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Minutes: 24.03.22</b> To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 24 March 2022.	<b>5 - 8</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Questions from the Public</b> 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 this meeting, please email <a href="#">Democratic Services</a> by 12 noon the day before (Wednesday 20 April).	
<b>4</b>	<b>Work Programme</b> To receive an update ( <b>PSEG/11/22</b> ) on the current Committee Work Programme.	<b>9 - 13</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Country Parks</b> To receive a report and presentation ( <b>PSEG/12/22</b> ) from Councillor Butland, Cabinet Member for Devolution, the Arts, Heritage and Culture, Louise Fitton, Head of Essex Culture and Green Spaces, and Mark Rowley Commercial Operations Manager.	<b>14 - 31</b>

**6 Date of Next Meeting**

To note that the next meeting will be held on Thursday 19 May 2022 at County Hall.

**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:** Justin Long, 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 A Goggin	Chairman
Councillor D Blackwell	Vice-Chairman
Councillor S Crow	
Councillor P Honeywood	
Councillor D Land	
Councillor R Moore	
Councillor J Newport	
Councillor L Scordis	
Councillor L Shaw	Vice-Chairman
Councillor M Skeels	
Councillor M Steel	
Councillor M Stephenson	
Councillor M Vance	
Councillor H Whitbread	

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**Minutes of the meeting of the Place Services and Economic Growth Policy and Scrutiny Committee, that was held in the Council Chamber, County Hall, Chelmsford on Thursday, 23 March 2022**

[A YouTube recording of the meeting is to be found online.](#)

**Present:**

**Members:**

Councillor A Goggin	Chairman
Councillor D Blackwell	Vice-Chairman
Councillor S Crow	
Councillor P Honeywood	
Councillor D Land	
Councillor R Moore	
Councillor L Shaw	Vice-Chairman
Councillor M Vance	

**ECC Officers:**

Stephanie Mitchener	Director Finance
Tina French	Head of Finance Commercial Insight
Ricky Thakrar	Principal Economic Growth Officer
Helen Morris	Head of Integrated Public Transport Unit
Justin Long	Senior Democratic Services Officer (clerk to the meeting)
Lisa Siggins	Democratic Services Officer
Gemma Bint	Democratic Services Officer

**Members of the Corporate Policy and Scrutiny Committee:**

Councillor C Pond  
Councillor M Mackrory  
Councillor C Siddall

**Also in attendance were:**

Councillor C Whitbread, Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Corporate Affairs  
Councillor L Wagland, Cabinet Member for Economic Renewal, Infrastructure and Planning  
Councillor T Cunningham, Deputy Cabinet Member for Economic Renewal, Infrastructure and Planning  
Councillor L Scott, Cabinet Member for Highways Maintenance and Sustainable Transport

**Joining Remotely:**

Councillor M Steel

## **Welcome and Introduction**

Councillor Goggin, the Chairman of the Place Services and Economic Growth Policy and Scrutiny Committee, welcomed those in attendance.

### **1. Membership, Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations of Interest**

The report on Membership, Apologies and Declarations was received, and it was noted that:

1. The membership of the Place Services and Economic Growth Policy and Scrutiny Committee was as shown in the report.
2. Apologies had been received from Councillors Skeels and Whitbread, and it was noted that Councillor Steel was joining the meeting remotely.
3. No Declarations of interests were made.

The Chairman, Councillor Goggin, reminded members that any interests must be declared during the meeting if the need to do so arose.

### **2. Minutes and Matters Arising**

The Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 20 January 2022 were approved as a correct record and were signed by the Chairman.

### **3. Questions from the Public**

It was noted that no questions had been received from the public.

### **4. Work Programme**

The updated Work Programme was noted.

### **5. Economic Infrastructure Renewal Fund (ERIF)**

Councillor C Whitbread, Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Corporate Affairs and Councillor L Wagland, Cabinet Member for Economic Renewal, Infrastructure and Planning introduced the presentation on the ERIF. They were joined by Councillor T Cunningham, Deputy Cabinet Member for Economic Renewal, Infrastructure and Planning

The presentation can be found [here](#).

Following the presentation, members were invited to ask questions and provide comment.

Key points raised during this discussion included:

- The aims of the Fund were to resolve market failures, diversify the Council's capital programme and deliver tangible benefits for residents and local businesses.
- Evidence suggests that the ERIP could help to create at least 1500 jobs over the next 20 years.
- Members were pleased that previous scrutiny work had helped to develop the strategy for the ERIF.
- A scheme of work would be developed by the Committee and the Corporate Policy and Scrutiny Committee to scrutinise the ERIF going forward.
- Delivering and then monitoring net-zero targets and environmental benefits would be a key focus.
- Cabinet Members were confident that the targets and the timeline of the ERIF were correct and would be kept under review to ensure this remained the case.
- The aim of the strategy was not to replicate the private sector but to address market failures, focus on areas with the Council can act as an exemplar, and deliver wider (non-commercial) benefits.
- The recent presentation to the Development and Regulation Committee '*Climate Action Committee: Planning and Climate Change, an update on the Built Environment Work Stream*' would be circulated to Members.

## **6. Bus Service Improvement Plan**

The Head of the Integrated Passenger Transport Unit gave a six-month update on the Bus Service Improvement Plan.

Councillor Scott, Cabinet for Highways, Maintenance and Sustainable Transport, outlined that the Council was supporting bus companies who were facing a perfect storm of decreasing footfall and rising costs.

Key points raised during this discussion included:

- The current market conditions meant it was very challenging for bus companies to upgrade their fleet with Government funding only covering 75% of the gap in costs between a Euro VI diesel bus and replacement bus.
- The project to improve bus shelters was currently at the procurement stage and this was due to be completed in the autumn.

- It was confirmed that buses should not be 'idling' (running the engine when the bus is not moving) and any examples should be reported to the Council or operators whilst preventing taxi 'idling' was the responsibility of district/borough/city councils.
- A new on-demand electric mini-bus scheme was being launched which it was hoped lead to a greater diversification of bus operating models.

In response to queries raised at the 20 January meeting, it was noted that bus companies were not currently making major investments in new fleet; however, the biggest 'carbon-gain' in transport terms remained the modal shift from cars to buses (whatever their fuel source). It was further noted that commercial bus operators did not have a legal duty to consult on route changes.

## **7. Local Highway Panels Task and Finish Group**

Councillor Steel, Chairman of the LHP Task and Finish Group gave a presentation on the work and recommendations of the Group. The presentation can be found [here](#).

Members debated the merits of having non-Essex County Council councillors at the LHP meetings, how a Super LHP would work, and the proposal to introduce a £50,000 cap on schemes at LHPs.

### **Resolved**

To endorse the report and recommendations from the Task and Finish Group.

It was further agreed that the Cabinet Member for Highways Maintenance and Sustainable Transport would formally respond to the recommendations at the Committee's 19 May meeting.

## **8. Date of Next Meeting**

It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would take place on Thursday 21 April 2022 at County Hall.

## **9. Urgent Business**

No items were raised.

**Chairman**



## Work Programme

### Agenda Item 4

Reference Number: PSEG/11/22

<b>Report title:</b> Work Programme	
<b>Report to:</b> Place Services and Economic Growth Policy and Scrutiny Committee	
<b>Report author:</b> Justin Long, Senior Democratic Services Officer	
<b>Date:</b> 21 April 2022	<b>For:</b> Discussion
<b>Enquiries to:</b> Justin Long, Senior Democratic Services Officer at justin.long@essex.gov.uk.	
<b>County Divisions affected:</b> Not applicable	

#### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The work programme is a standard agenda item.

#### 2. Action required

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to consider the work programme in the Appendix and suggest any additional items.

#### 3. Background

##### 3.1 Developing a work programme

Work has continued on identifying priorities and future agenda items. This has included discussions with Committee Members, Cabinet Members and Officers as well as the other Policy and Scrutiny Committees.

This work has reflected the adoption of the *Everyone's Essex – Our Plan for Levelling Up the County: 2021-2025* organisation strategy at Council on 12 October 2021.

The current work programme is attached in the **Appendix**.

#### 4. Everyone's Essex

The Committee should take account of the *Everyone's Essex – Our Plan for Levelling Up the County: 2021-2025* strategy when considering the work programme and future items.

Particular attention should be paid to the strategic ambitions (and associated commitments and performance measures) most relevant to the work of the Committee: 'Strong, Inclusive and Sustainable Economy', and 'High Quality Environment'.

## **Work Programme**

### **5. Update and Next Steps**

See Appendix.

### **6. Appendix – Current work programme**

### PSEG Work Programme (April 2022)

Provisional Dates (2022)	Topic Title	Lead Contact / Cabinet Member	Purpose and Target Outcomes	Relevance to Scrutiny Theme (where applicable)	Cross-Committee Work Identified (where applicable)
21 April	Country Parks	Councillor Butland, Cabinet Member for Devolution, the Arts, Heritage and Culture, Samantha Kennedy, Director Environment and Climate Action	To consider the activity, performance, and strategic direction of the Country Parks service	Scrutiny of the Corporate Strategy (High Quality Environment)	Consider any links to Active Essex/People and Families (PAF) Policy and Scrutiny Committee/Health
19 May	Local Highway Panels – Task and Finish Group	Councillor Steel, Chairman of the Task and Finish Group / Justin Long Senior Democratic Services Officer	To receive a response to the recommendations from the Cabinet Member for Highways Maintenance and Sustainable Transport		
19 May (TBC)	Freeport East	Councillor Wagland, Cabinet Member for Economic Renewal, Infrastructure and Planning	To consider the proposals and specifically the option for a Company Limited by Guarantee		Possible joint session with CPSC

### PSEG Work Programme (April 2022)

19 May (TBC)	Surface Water Flooding / Partnership work with Water Companies	Councillor Scott, Cabinet Member for Highways Maintenance and Sustainable Transport	To provide an update following a request at the meeting on 20 January 2022		
21 July	Culture and the Arts	Councillor Butland, Cabinet Member for Devolution, the Arts, Heritage and Culture	To consider plans to support the arts and culture in Essex		
TBC	Highways Maintenance Update	Councillor Scott, Cabinet Member for Highways Maintenance and Sustainable Transport	To receive a quarterly performance report on Highways Maintenance including the latest budget situation		Link to the performance/budget monitoring work of the CPSC
TBC	Climate Change Update	Sam Kennedy, Director, Environment and Climate Action / Councillor Peter Schwier, Climate Tsar	To receive an update on Climate Change work across ECC and response to Essex Climate Action Commission	Climate Change	Link to the performance monitoring work of the CPSC

### PSEG Work Programme (April 2022)

TBC	Minerals Local Plan Update	Richard Greaves, Chief Planning Officer/ Cllr Wagland, Cabinet Member for Economic Renewal, Infrastructure and Planning	To consider the latest developments with the Minerals Local Plan including feedback on the public consultation and 'call for sites' engagement		
TBC	Essex Enhanced Partnership	Councillor Scott, Cabinet Member for Highways Maintenance and Sustainable Transport, Helen Morris, Head of ITPU	To consider the Essex Enhanced Bus Partnership	Scrutiny of the Corporate Strategy (modal shift from cars into bus/bike/foot) and Climate Change	Link to the performance monitoring work of the CPSC

<b>Report title:</b> Country Parks	
<b>Report to:</b> Place Services and Economic Growth Policy and Scrutiny Committee	
<b>Report author:</b> Samantha Kennedy, Director Environment and Climate Action	
<b>Date:</b> 21 April 2022	<b>For:</b> Discussion
<b>Enquiries to:</b> Mark Rowley, Commercial Operations Manager, at <a href="mailto:mark.rowley@essex.gov.uk">mark.rowley@essex.gov.uk</a>	
<b>County Divisions affected:</b> All Essex	

## 1. Purpose of Report

To update the Committee on activity, performance, and strategic direction of the Country Parks service, within the wider Culture, Heritage and Green Spaces service, in the Environment and Climate Action directorate.

A presentation will be given at the meeting, with the information provided in this report to accompany the presentation.

## 2. Background

The Country Parks service is responsible for managing eight Country Parks, along with a number of former railway line trails. ECC owns five of the Country Parks and has management agreements in place for the remaining three, with a variety of statutory designations as detailed:

- **ECC owned:**
  - **Cudmore Grove Country Park (Colchester)**
    - 44.5 hectares / 110 acres
    - Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI - *habitats / species of national importance for wildlife and geology, irreplaceable parts of national heritage, protected to preserve and prevent damage and development*)
    - Special Areas of Conservation (Essex Estuaries - SACs *support internationally important habitats*)
    - Special Protection Area (Colne Estuary - SPAs *are of international importance for breeding, feeding, wintering or the migration of rare and vulnerable species*)
    - Ramsar site (Colne Estuary - *a Ramsar site is a wetland site of international importance*)
    - National Nature Reserve (Colne Estuary - *intertidal mudflats at East Mersea*)
    - Scheduled Monument (Tudor Blockhouse – *SMs are archaeological sites of national importance*)

- Local Wildlife Site (*substantive nature conservation value, identified for nature conservation value, important, distinctive, and threatened habitats and species*)
- 35 hectares Priority Habitat (*coastal and floodplain grazing marsh, coastal saltmarsh, deciduous woodland, mudflats*)
- **Danbury Country Park (Chelmsford)**
  - 21.5 hectares / 53 acres
  - Scheduled Monument (*Icehouse*)
  - Grade II Registered Park and Garden (*designed landscape of historic significance, requiring appropriate protection*)
  - Local Wildlife Site
  - Priority Habitat (*deciduous woodland, wood pasture*)
- **Marsh Farm Country Park (Chelmsford)**
  - 160 hectares / 395 acres
  - SSSI
  - Special Areas of Conservation (*Essex Estuaries*)
  - Special Protection Area (*Crouch & Roach Estuaries*)
  - Ramsar site (*Crouch & Roach Estuaries*)
  - Scheduled Monument (*Medieval Saltern*)
  - Local Nature Reserve (*important for wildlife, geology, education, or public enjoyment*)
  - Local Wildlife Site
  - 103 hectares Priority Habitat (*coastal and floodplain grazing marsh, coastal saltmarsh, deciduous woodland, mudflats*)
- **Thorndon Country Park (Brentwood)**
  - 223 hectares / 552 acres
  - SSSI
  - Scheduled Monuments (*Old Thorndon Hall and Gardens, Former Parish Church and Churchyard of St Nicholas*)
  - Grade II Registered Park and Garden
  - Conservation Area (*area of notable environmental or historical interest or importance which is protected by law against undesirable changes*)
  - Local Wildlife Sites (*multiple*)
  - Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Site (*locally designated sites of local, national, and regional importance for geodiversity*)
  - Ancient Woodlands (*multiple - a woodland that has existed continuously since 1600 or before*)
  - Priority Habitat (*deciduous woodland, good quality semi-improved grassland, lowland dry acid grassland, wood pasture*)
- **Weald Country Park (Brentwood)**
  - 212 hectares / 523 acres
  - Scheduled Monument (*Iron Age Hillfort*)
  - Grade II Registered Park and Garden
  - Conservation Area
  - Local Wildlife Site

- Priority Habitat (*deciduous woodland, good quality semi-improved grassland, lowland dry acid grassland, wood pasture*)
- **Agreements with 3<sup>rd</sup> parties:**
  - **Belhus Woods Country Park (Thurrock)**
    - 88 hectares / 218 acres
    - Grade II Registered Park and Garden
    - Grade II Listed Building / Feature (*Stench Pipe*)
    - Site of Metropolitan Importance (*a site of importance for nature conservation within London*)
    - Local Wildlife Sites (*multiple*)
    - Ancient Woodlands (*multiple*)
    - 40 hectares Priority Habitat (*deciduous woodland*)
  - **Great Notley Country Park (Braintree)**
    - 42.5 hectares / 105 acres
    - 0.5 hectares Priority Habitat (*deciduous woodland*)
  - **Hadleigh Country Park (Castle Point)**
    - 188 hectares / 465 acres
    - SSSI
    - Special Protection Area (*Benfleet and Southend Marshes*)
    - Ramsar site (*Benfleet and Southend Marshes*)
    - Scheduled Monument (*Heavy Anti-Aircraft Gunsite*)
    - Local Wildlife Sites (*multiple*)
    - Local Geological Site (*safeguarding some of the best local sites for geology*)
    - Ancient Woodland
    - 127 hectares Priority Habitat (*coastal and floodplain grazing marsh, coastal saltmarsh, deciduous woodland, good quality semi-improved grassland, lowland meadows, mudflats, reedbeds*)
- **Trails:**
  - **Blackwater Rail Trail (Maldon)**
    - 14.5 hectares / 36 acres
    - Scheduled Monument (*Wickham Bishops Timber Trestle Railway Viaduct*)
    - Conservation Area
    - Local Wildlife Site
    - 8 hectares Priority Habitat (*deciduous woodland*)
  - **Colne Valley Rail Trail (Braintree)**
    - 2 hectares / 5.5 acres
    - Local Nature Reserve
  - **Flitch Way (Braintree)**
    - 39 hectares / 97 acres
    - Conservation Area
    - Local Nature Reserve
    - Local Wildlife Site (*multiple*)
    - Ancient Woodlands (*multiple*)
    - 14 hectares Priority Habitat (*deciduous woodland*)



### 3. Links to our Strategic Ambitions

- a. The service links to the following strategic priorities in the emerging Organisational Strategy 'Everyone's Essex':
  - A high-quality environment
- b. The Country Parks service links to the following aims in the 'Essex Vision':
  - Enjoy life into old age
  - Strengthen communities through participation
  - Connect us to each other and the world
- c. The service links to the following Organisational Strategy objectives:
  - Improve the health of the people in Essex County Council
  - Help to secure sustainable development and protect the environment
- d. Feedback from Essex Residents' Survey:
  - Parks and Open Spaces are the highest scoring (60%) response to the question 'What makes your area a good place to live?'
- e. Essex's Local Nature Recovery Strategy:
  - ECC has a statutory obligation to create a LNRS and an officer has been recruited to coordinate this work
  - The strategy will identify areas of nature value and a Nature Recovery Network will be identified to connect these
  - Country Parks have a critical role as areas of high value for nature and as "stepping stones" to connect adjacent areas of nature
  - The Trails are critical "wildlife corridors" across the county creating important parts of the Nature Recovery Network
- f. Essex Local Nature Partnership:
  - The newly formed and independent Local Nature Partnership is setting targets to deliver the independent Climate Action Commission targets of creating wildlife areas to cover 30% of Essex
  - Country Parks will be exemplar wildlife areas and have the potential to also work on adjacent land to extend these wildlife areas
  - Country Park visitor numbers and visitor centres offer opportunities for the LNP and other Climate Action initiatives to promote their important work to interested parties

#### 4. Visitor numbers

Across Country Parks, 1,433,608 visited in 2020/21, which was 53% higher than 3-year average due to the impact of COVID-19 lockdowns and associated restrictions. In 2021/22 the Country Parks attracted 1,043,510 visitors, 11% higher than 3-year average (excl. 20/21).

Visitor number figures are calculated based on car parking tickets sold, multiplied by a factor of 2.7. This calibration seeks to adjust visitor numbers to allow for more than one person in some cars, non-compliance, season ticket holders paying once annually, and people accessing by other transport means.

	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2019/20</b>	<b>2018/19</b>
Belhus Woods	140,797	180,913	104,522	116,076
Cudmore Grove	123,814	143,411	102,373	120,871
Danbury	60,353	109,860	50,452	54,524
Great Notley	136,320	149,707	152,129	175,943
Hadleigh	97,235	118,541	82,382	81,929
Thorndon	283,171	415,757	236,579	235,159
Weald	201,820	315,419	163,995	186,770
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,043,510</b>	<b>1,433,608</b>	<b>892,432</b>	<b>971,272</b>

**Note** - Visitor numbers are not captured for Marsh Farm Country Park as there is no charge for car parking at this site, due to a lack of visitor facilities.

#### 5. Financial

The breakdown of the financial performance across Country Parks is set out in the tables below. Please note this covers all Country Parks, central Country Parks management, and a management agreement for The Woodland Trust to manage Hainault Forest. Excluded are service-wide Marketing, Events and Business Development functions, as well as ECC central overheads.

2020/21 income performance was heavily affected due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Visitors had a vastly reduced choice in where they were able to go due to COVID-19 restrictions, and as a result car parking income outperformed the norm by a significant amount. In addition, there was a substantial amount of one-off grant funding received from both the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (furlough) and the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) income guarantee scheme.

It is considered that 2020/21 performance cannot be replicated and represents an anomalous position for comparison purposes of both visitor numbers and income generation. In addition, significant work has been undertaken in the past two years to unpick unrealistic targets that the Country Parks service had assigned to it, and 2021/22 and 2022/23's budgets represent a more accurate picture of the base funding requirements for the service.

There is an ongoing financial challenge in resourcing maintenance. There is currently little capital assigned directly to Country Parks in 2022/23 and beyond. Traditionally it has been difficult to secure funding from the Core Estate Capital Maintenance Programme, and so work is ongoing to identify funding for an appropriate programme of investment for this area. Beyond basic upkeep from revenue budgets, maintenance and lifecycle costs are required for car parks, play areas, pathways, toilet blocks, plant equipment, visitor centres, cafés, and mountain bike trails. Lack of revenue or capital investment over a prolonged period is now visible at most locations, which has a detrimental impact on visitor experience and visitor numbers, as well as Health and Safety.

	<b>2021/22</b> (*P11 forecast)	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2019/20</b>	<b>2018/19</b>
Expenditure - Staffing	1,205,118	1,348,405	1,308,158	1,178,711
Expenditure – Non-staff	2,326,438	1,121,852	940,364	1,031,696
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>3,531,556</b>	<b>2,470,257</b>	<b>2,248,522</b>	<b>2,210,407</b>
<b>Income</b>	<b>(3,148,990)</b>	<b>(3,567,371)</b>	<b>(2,082,065)</b>	<b>(2,277,353)</b>
<b>Net Cost</b>	<b>382,566</b>	<b>(1,097,113)</b>	<b>166,457</b>	<b>(66,946)</b>

A more detailed breakdown by category of spend is set out in the table below.

	<b>2021/22</b> (*P11 forecast)	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2019/20</b>	<b>2018/19</b>
Expenditure - Staffing	1,205,118	1,348,405	1,308,158	1,178,711
Expenditure - Premises	1,320,980	392,626	276,156	266,802
Expenditure - Supplies and Services	678,824	430,336	359,435	528,966
Expenditure - Transport	107,164	97,284	96,464	104,932
Expenditure - Miscellaneous	219,470	201,606	208,308	130,996
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>3,531,556</b>	<b>2,470,257</b>	<b>2,248,522</b>	<b>2,210,407</b>
Income	(2,053,699)	(2,342,768)	(1,994,045)	(2,175,487)
Grants Inc.	(1,095,291)	(1,224,603)	(88,020)	(101,866)
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>(3,148,990)</b>	<b>(3,567,371)</b>	<b>(2,082,065)</b>	<b>(2,277,353)</b>
<b>Net Cost</b>	<b>382,566</b>	<b>(1,097,113)</b>	<b>166,457</b>	<b>(66,946)</b>

## Appendix – Presentation about Country Parks

**Culture, Heritage and Green Spaces Service**

# **Essex Country Parks**



# Strategic Links

## Everyone's Essex:

- A high quality environment

## Essex Vision:

- Enjoy life into old age
- Strengthen communities through participation
- Connect us to each other and the world

## Organisational Strategy:

- Improve the health of the people in Essex
- Help to secure sustainable development and protect the environment

## Residents' Survey:

- Parks / Open Spaces highest scoring option (60%) in 'What makes your area a good place to live?'

## Local Nature Recovery Strategy:

- Country Parks play critical role as 'stepping stones' to connect areas of nature
- Connection with Local Nature Partnership as exemplar sites and promotional opportunities

# Our Vision

- Establish ECC as an **exemplar in parklands management**
- Position Green Spaces to **influence positive change** in climate action behaviours
- Use the **natural environment to enrich lives**
- Create opportunities for Green Spaces to **contribute to the economic growth of the county**

# Locations

## ECC owned:

- Cudmore Grove Country Park, Colchester
- Danbury Country Park, Chelmsford
- Marsh Farm Country Park, Chelmsford
- Thorndon Country Park, Brentwood
- Weald Country Park, Brentwood

## 3<sup>rd</sup> party agreements:

- Belhus Woods Country Park, Thurrock
- Great Notley Country Park, Braintree
- Hadleigh Country Park, Castle Point

## Trails:

- The Flitch Way
- Blackwater Rail Trail
- Colne Valley Rail Trail



# Essex Country Parks in 2021-22

- **Regionally, nationally and internationally important sites:** 4 x SSSIs, 2 x Special Areas of Conservation, 3 x Special Protection Areas, 3 x Ramsar sites, 8 x Scheduled Monuments, 4 x Grade II Registered Park and Gardens
- **10,002 trees planted** as part of Essex Forest Initiative
- **1.4m visitors** in 2020/21, **53% higher** than 3-year average, due to COVID-19 restrictions affecting public choice
- **1.04m visitors** in 2021/22, **11% higher** than 3-year average (excl. 20/21)
- Retained **7 Green Flag awards**, the quality benchmark for open spaces
- Root and branch review of staffing service leading to **major restructure**
- Following extensive restructure, internal ECC recognition as a **‘High Performing Team’**



# Essex Country Parks in 2021-22

	2021/22 (P11 forecast)	2021/22 Budget
Expenditure – Staffing	£1,205,118	£1,268,021
Expenditure – Non-staff	£2,326,438	£1,262,474
Income	(£3,148,990)	(£2,076,791)
<b>Net Cost</b>	<b>£382,566</b>	<b>£453,704</b>

# Plans for Country Parks



- Developing strategic management plans to ensure highest standards for biodiversity, heritage protection and amenity value
- Recognition of green spaces in the wider system for residents and visitors, both for health and wellbeing and Nature Recovery. Country Parks are 'keystones' as we develop Essex's Nature Recovery Strategy
- Continue to accommodate events, taking care not to damage or compromise Country Parks
- Country Parks have proved popular locations for film and TV, and we see this as a potential income stream in the future

# Essex Country Parks in 2022-23

## Short term...

- Prepare all 8 Country Parks for enrolment in new **Countryside Stewardship Scheme**
- **Finalise Parkland Management Plans** for 4 x Registered Parks and Gardens
- Retain **7 Green Flag awards**, the quality benchmark for open spaces
- Continued focus on **H&S and legislative obligations**, including securing appropriate short-term **investment in asset maintenance**
- **Review operating models** for car parking and Food & Beverage

# Essex Country Parks in 2023-29

## Medium term...

- **Culture change** across service
- Deliver against **Countryside Stewardship Scheme** agreements
- Secure sustainable **funding for proactive maintenance** programme
- **De-carbonisation** of operations
- Influence 'Environment' objectives from **Everyone's Essex**
- Monitor and measure **positive wellbeing impacts** from green spaces

# Essex Country Parks in 2023-50

## Long term...

- Realise the benefits of green spaces on the **wellbeing of communities**
- Establish Essex as a **leading county in providing green spaces**
- Enhance the **biodiversity** of the county, and country
- Enhance and increase the footprint and connectivity of **green and blue infrastructure**

# Marketing

- Ensuring residents are **connected with green spaces** available to them
- **Keeping visiting affordable** - Explorer Passes are still the most cost effective way for residents to regularly access the Country Parks
- Key theme in 2022 to **connect residents with the world around them** and the wealth of **biodiversity**
- **Essex Explorer Magazine** launched in 2021, promoting **health and wellbeing** in the Country Parks and starts a conversation around **climate change** - can be picked up in libraries and connects other complimentary campaigns such as the annual Reading Challenge and the Summer of Culture



# Key Challenges and Pressures – *Wicked Issues*

- Balancing **commercial and non-commercial** priorities
- Maintenance funding – very limited capital or revenue provision despite significant assets requiring **maintenance and lifecycle funding** (car parks, play areas, pathways, toilet blocks, plant equipment, visitor centres, cafés, MTB trails)
- Developing and improving offer and **visitor numbers sustainably**
- Long standing **management and tenancy agreements**
- Joining up more effectively with **Districts and Boroughs**
- Access to Country Parks for **non-car users**