

**Forward Plan reference number: FP/209/11/21**

## **APPENDIX 2: Overview of ECC-led Projects**

### **1. Essex County Hospital**

- 1.1. The Essex County Hospital redevelopment is being managed by Essex Housing and is located on Lexden Road. The scheme will provide 120 residential units, for private and affordable sale, as well as offering enhanced public realm features. The development will result in the conversion and preservation of the main listed hospital building, the locally listed nurses' home and other heritage assets. Alongside this, there will be sympathetic new build construction that will be an attractive addition to the local housing market supply. The public realm aspects will benefit both residents and passers-by, thus providing a further enjoyable, attractive and safe space for Colchester, complementing its other existing and award-winning green infrastructure. Full occupancy of the homes will generate additional local footfall and spending, potentially bringing new skills to the area to access jobs and due to the location's close proximity to the town centre it is anticipated that walking and cycling will increase, supported by a number of sustainable transport measures that will be embedded into the scheme.
- 1.2. The Town Deal funding would provide £500,000 of the estimated £740,000 required to enable the delivery of very high-quality public realm throughout the scheme, most notably on the Lexden Road frontage, which will be publicly accessible, as well as enhance the recent nearby improvements to Crouch Street. Together, and with planned wider, longer-term investment in this vicinity, this funding enables the Hospital scheme to become a prominent feature of this gateway into the town centre, which in turn strengthens the overall sense of arrival into this historic part of the town.
- 1.3. The development of the Essex County Hospital is a prime example of historic market failure to bring the site forward for development. It illustrates how the innovative approach undertaken by Essex Housing and grant funding opportunities such as Town Deal can come together to help to address this and prevent this site remaining derelict and failing to deliver its full potential.

### **2. ACL Wilson Marriage Digital Skills Hub**

- 2.1. The currently underutilised gym building in ACL's Wilson Marriage centre will be redeveloped to provide space for residents to improve their digital skills, access IT equipment and improve job prospects. Digital skills will include a range of courses from beginner through to level 3 – this supports residents of all abilities and provides opportunity for career entry and progression; for example, how to access online services, Microsoft Office, computer science. digitally creative courses and apprenticeships will also be delivered from here such as digital marketing and photography. Maths and English courses will also be offered and include digital delivery.
- 2.2. Accredited online courses can also be delivered from the Hub, enabling people wishing to undertake one of these courses the opportunity to do so in a flexible

way within a facilitated setting with tutor support. The refurbishment will allow for a state-of-the-art IT suite that will enable specialist IT facilities, the ability to 'pop-up' two additional IT suites in the main hall using laptops, rentable space for business and community groups, e.g. meetings, conferences and exhibitions; a small café facility, new toilets and space for careers guidance and interviews.

- 2.3. Additionally, electric car charging points, bike racks, blinds, a new alarm system and automatic doors at the entrance will be added. New modular furniture and the ability to partition the redeveloped space would also be part of this project. The main hall would be equipped with multiple interactive screens for teaching and conference purposes, but also to provide a small community cinema for local groups and residents to access for film nights.
- 2.4. The Town Deal would provide £900,000 towards the project and due to cost inflation, this budget will need to be managed effectively to ensure the development provides the right facilities to increase the number of learners and provide key skills to residents. Additionally, the impact to current users of the space will need to be adequately managed to ensure as little disruption as possible occurs for the groups and events that take place in the building.

### **3. Transformed Youth Facilities**

- 3.1. Utilising the Town Deal funding contribution of £1.32m and supported by local demographic data that highlights key levelling up issues, this investment will be used to significantly develop facilities and service provision for young people in Colchester, including the Townhouse in East Stockwell Street, and existing youth centre assets in Highwoods and Stanway, which are used by a range of local organisations as well as the ECC Youth Service itself. These facilities will support the delivery of further outreach services carried out by the youth service and partner organisations in communities such as Greenstead and other identified areas of need. This will transform current youth provision by linking the social aspects of youth provision with skills development and improved access to employment opportunities, inspiring and better supporting our most deprived and vulnerable young people, which in turn will help address social, health, learning and employment inequalities. This improved provision will be bold and transformative and informed by what the young people have told us they want; building on and complementing existing and established local youth provision whilst addressing the challenges around population growth in the area and the added pressures that Covid-19 has placed on young people in particular.
- 3.2. The business case proposes focusing on existing youth services and assets and broadening community outreach in the Town Deal area. While there was initially consideration by partners of delivering a completely new facility (such as a Youth Zone), this option was ultimately discounted due to significant concerns about the long-term revenue and sustainability of a completely new facility (especially in the light of the broader public sector financial position). In addition, due to the reduced funding offered by Government (compared to the original ask of £2.42m) the We Are Colchester Board took the decision to focus on enhancing existing facilities in order to maximise impact across the Town Deal geography. This option aims to better harness working relationships with existing services and providers to ensure

improvements are more accessible to a greater number of young people across the town. The outcomes referenced in the TIP will be a focus of engagement with young people and are a key component of developing and delivering this project.

- 3.3. Cost inflation, as with other asset-based redevelopment projects, is a key issue here but is being managed through close working with Property Services and the Infrastructure Delivery Team. Additionally, due to the local interest in youth service provision in and around the town centre (as well as across the wider Colchester borough), engagement with stakeholders, optimisation of the opportunities offered by wider project dependencies and the management of expectations is fundamental to the success of this project.

#### **4. Heart of Greenstead (Liveable Neighbourhoods, Essex Pedal Power and Library)**

- 4.1. The overall Heart of Greenstead project contains many complex elements and CBC is receiving total funding of £6m from the Towns Fund (plus an additional £2.3m from the Estates Regeneration Fund announced in the Government's Autumn Budget Statement on 27 October 2021). ECC is leading on two key active travel projects as part of this estate-wide regeneration scheme. Firstly, the expansion of Essex Pedal Power to bring circa 700 bikes to residents on a bike-loan-to-give-away scheme. The overall number of bikes allocated to this project will largely be driven by the agreed eligibility criteria and will therefore depend on the mix of bikes selected; for example, adults, children's, e-bikes and adapted bikes. The eligibility criteria will aim to target those who lack access to a bike or would most benefit from increased physical activity. The Town Deal funding of £327,200 will enable the purchase of bikes and further funding of at least £300,000 from Sport England Local Delivery Pilot is being sought to finance activation costs. Discussions between ECC, CBC and Sport England are currently underway in order to access this funding from an indicative allocation of up to £1.6m, which is a ringfenced budget that has already been allocated to Colchester Borough Council from the Local Delivery Pilot. This LDP funding could increase subject to the broadening of the scope in order to meet the Heart of Greenstead and LDP objectives.
- 4.2. A risk to note is that the increased global demand for bikes has led to increased costs and limited availability. However, ECC will work closely with their preferred supplier to ensure this is managed appropriately and that the bikes are ordered in good time for deployment.
- 4.3. The Liveable Neighbourhoods project will be an opportunity to develop a long-term vision for Greenstead and is a key part of how the estate regeneration plans can promote active lifestyles and ultimately address the wider determinants of health inequalities in this community of high deprivation. The key opportunity of this funding is to set out a blueprint that can be delivered in phases with interested parties and key partners, including initiatives promoting a safer, healthier environment that can be delivered in the short-term. It will define a range of measures to promote walking, cycling and sustainable transport as the first choice for local trips. It is also an opportunity to create an exemplar scheme in Essex that can act as a model to retrofit other estates and neighbourhoods in a manner

that advances the county's Climate Action Commission and Local Transport Plan's ambition. Given that only £300,000 is available from the Town Deal it has been agreed that the funding would be split approximately 50/50 between scoping a blueprint for implementation, including community engagement and outline designs; and some "quick wins", like traffic calming measures. This will be a project co-designed with the residents and stakeholders to ensure the scheme suitably meets the needs of the local community and supports the long-term vision for Greenstead.

- 4.4. The Heart of Greenstead project also includes a significant focus on redeveloping the land and assets within Tamarisk Way and the Library currently falls within the scope of the planned works. Whilst exact details of how the library services will be delivered have not yet been confirmed, the business case recognises it is fundamental that Greenstead retains the library service in this area and at its current size. As work on these plans to integrate the library with the envisioned public services hub progresses, community consultation and participation will be essential. Colleagues from Library Services are working closely with the CBC project team to ensure that the business case is informed by ECC's future strategy for the service and once a way forward has been agreed by all parties, the relevant decision-making processes will be progressed directly by the Libraries Service.

## **5. Physical Connectivity – Walking and Cycling Route (Town Centre – Greenstead – University of Essex)**

- 5.1. Since the adoption of the Essex Cycling Strategy in 2016 and The Walking Strategy in 2021, comprehensive local cycling/walking plans (LCWIPs and CAPs) have been developed for Essex's key urban centres. The LCWIPs and cycling action plans advocate not only priority routes for investment but will herald a new standard of infrastructure provision based on continental experience and the best design standards (Local Transport Note 1/20).
- 5.2. The introduction of LCWIP improvements have already commenced within Colchester and the Town Deal funding provides an opportunity to secure further investment towards progression of the key east-west corridor kickstarted under the successful bid for Active Travel Fund 2 (ATF2), which is currently programmed to deliver a corridor from Lexden in the west of Colchester to the High Street in 2022. The Town Deal funding will develop the east-west corridor further under the designation of LCWIP4, providing a new upgraded corridor running from the town centre High Street, via East Hill, National Cycle route 51 on through the Hythe to the University of Essex Campus. Additionally, the proposal will provide connectivity to the Greenstead area and vital new infrastructure to link the proposed new Tendering Colchester Borders Garden Community (TCBGC). The route will also complement the Rapid Transit System being delivered under the Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF).
- 5.3. The Town Deal funding will provide £2.95m towards the LCWIP4 project. The overall LCWIP4 estimate is circa £4.6m. In addition to the Town Deal funding, a bid has also been made for the next round of ATF funding (ATF3) for £1.317m; ECC is expecting to receive confirmation of the results of this bid by early 2022. The remaining balance will be secured through s106 funding (circa £260,000) and

some ECC advanced scheme design funding utilised in the 2021/22 financial year. Although it is anticipated that the ATF3 funding bid will be successful, should this not be the case the LCWIP4 is deliverable in phases and the Town Deal funding will provide significant proportion of funding to enable a large part of the works to be undertaken, and will be further progressed and built as other funding opportunities are forthcoming.

## 6. Project Delivery & Funding Terms

6.1. A requirement of the Town Deal fund is that these projects will have been delivered by the end of the 2025/26 financial year. The estimated completion dates for the ECC-led projects are detailed in Table 1. If the projects identified for funding do not progress, DLUHC cannot guarantee that funding can be assigned to alternative projects, or if it is reassigned, the funding will be to the same value. This may result in an overall reduction in the amount of funding received by ECC for the delivery of these projects.

Table 1

Project	Estimated date of delivery
ACL Wilson Marriage	October 2022
Essex Pedal Power (Greenstead)	April 2023
Transformed Youth Facilities	2023/24
Essex County Hospital Redevelopment	March 2024
Liveable Neighbourhoods (Greenstead)	March 2024
Physical Connectivity	2025/26

6.2 In June project confirmations were sent to DLUHC reflecting that CBC will take a proportion of the overall TD award (£18.2m) to cover programme overhead costs, e.g. Project Management. This will impact the overall money awarded to the individual projects as a proportion will be taken to cover this. The detail is included in Table 2. This may alter slightly as overall programme costs become clearer.

Table 2

Project	Total Award	Total Award (- Programme Office Cost)
Essex County Hospital	£500,000	£488,707
ACL Wilson Marriage Digital Skills Hub	£900,000	£879,672
Transforming Youth Services	£1,320,000	£1,290,187
Liveable Neighbourhoods	£300,000	£293,224
Essex Pedal Power	£327,200	£319,810
LCWIP4	£2,950,000	£2,883,369

6.3 Additionally, ECC officers have reviewed the Heads of Terms in respect of any particular clauses, such as clawback of the funding in the event that project outcomes are not fully realised or other punitive measures, but as the project business cases are required to demonstrate financial sustainability, such conditions have not been stipulated. All projects are required to develop monitoring

and evaluation processes to ensure demonstration of the longer-term benefits. The *We Are Colchester* Board will continue to have a role to play in monitoring this delivery activity and benefits realisation.