

Essex Organisation Strategy 2017-21

Foreword

This document sets out Essex County Council's (ECC's) Organisation Strategy for the four year period 2017-21.

Essex is a great county, from towns inside the M25 to coastal villages looking out to Suffolk. We have vibrant urban centres, international ports and airports, universities and world class firms, alongside beautiful rural countryside and the longest coastline in England.

At ECC we are passionate about better lives for people in Essex. We believe prosperity is the best route to achieve that - so people can help each other, and themselves. We are also ready to step in - to protect vulnerable children, to help care for older people - and to support our economy to flourish.

As a public body it is important we spend taxpayers' money wisely, on the issues that matter to our residents. To offset reductions in government funding, we must constantly manage demand, reshape and reimagine services and look for opportunities to generate income. It is also important we work tirelessly to secure investment into the county that can help make Essex an even better place to live and work.

Our role is changing. The digital revolution opens up new opportunities for how services are delivered and how residents access information and choices. Increasingly our job is to create opportunities for people and communities to choose and act themselves, rather than to simply deliver services over which the public has no say.

This Organisation Strategy sets out our areas of focus over the next four years. It articulates how we will achieve better outcomes for Essex and secure the ambitions set out in the Vision for Essex.

To do that, we will need to change the way we work as an organisation. Our ambition, at the end of this period is for Essex to be the best local authority in the country – because that is what the people of Essex deserve.



Cllr David Finch, Leader



Gavin Jones, Chief Executive

Essex Organisation Strategy

Our Strategic Aims

Enable inclusive economic growth

Help people get the best start and age well

Help create great places to grow up, live and work

Transform the council to achieve more with less

Our Strategic Priorities

Help people in Essex to prosper by increasing their **skills**

Enable Essex to attract and grow large **firms** in high growth industries

Target economic development to **areas** of opportunity

Help keep vulnerable **children** safer and enable them to fulfil their potential

Enable more vulnerable **adults** to live independent of social care

Improve the **health** of people in Essex

Help to secure stronger, safer and more neighbourly **communities**

Help secure sustainable development and protect the **environment**

Facilitate growing communities and new **homes**

Limit cost and drive growth in **revenue**

Develop the capability, performance and engagement of our **people**

Re-imagine how residents' needs can be met in a **digital** world

Equality Objectives

1. Strategic aim: Enable inclusive economic growth

Equality objective: We will tackle the causes of disadvantage, ensuring that all Essex residents can access good jobs and an excellent education, regardless of their background.

2. Strategic aim: Help people get the best start and age well

Equality objective: We will remove the obstacles that hold Essex residents back, tackling inequalities between children and supporting older people to live independently with dignity.

3. Strategic aim: Help create great places for people to grow up, live & work

Equality objective: We will help make it easier for people to travel across Essex, bringing communities together and connecting people to services, employment and learning opportunities.

4. Strategic aim: Transform the council to achieve more with less

Equality objective: We will employ a diverse workforce, drawing on the different values and experiences that reflect the communities we serve.

Strategic Aim - Enable Inclusive Economic Growth

Faster economic growth will improve not only the living standards of people in Essex but also their health and wellbeing, opportunities and life chances. Securing economic prosperity is the best means of helping people help themselves; and an inclusive economy is one where the benefits of growth are shared by all. In 2015 Essex contributed more than £31bn to the national economy. Essex has international gateways in Stansted and Southend Airports and Harwich Port as well as major economic engines in Chelmsford, Harlow, Basildon and Colchester. We host some of the world's best companies, creating world-leading technologies, including Raytheon, E2V and Arrow, as well as being the best place in the UK to start a new business with an average of 235 start-ups for each £1bn of GVA (gross value added) – a rate that is higher than London's.

We also have a strong small and medium enterprises market and Essex is well-known as one of the most entrepreneurial counties in the UK. However, we must strive to grow our economy in order to meet the aspirations and aims of the future. We have had a growth rate of 0.9% a year over the last decade and while growth is good this currently sits below the UK average. The gap between our wealthiest and most deprived places is too wide, with economic inactivity remaining particularly high in Tendring (26.5%) and Maldon (25.1%) compared to Essex as a whole (19.8%). Ninety-four per cent of schools in Essex have an Ofsted rating of 'good' or 'outstanding' and progress has been made in raising qualification levels. However only 29% of residents have at least a level 4 qualification compared to 37% for the rest of the UK. We are working with our education colleagues to ensure this level is increased and opportunities in growth sectors are offered, particularly in the digital economy, Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) and Care. Longer term the lack of appropriate skills for a digitally driven economy will be a critical gap if not addressed. Already we are seeing how the internet is changing industries; delivering a new type of competition, which provides both opportunities and challenges to the jobs market. Over the next 20 years it is estimated that artificial intelligence will take 35% of existing jobs, leading to a longer term impact on the job market.

There is enormous untapped opportunity in the economy of Essex and an entrepreneurial spirit that is hard-wired into our DNA – which is why we can be confident in asserting an overarching ambition not only to accelerate the pace of growth in the economy compared to similar areas but also to ensure the growth we do achieve benefits local people and places.

Strategic Priorities

We have set three Strategic Priorities for this strategic aim: help people in Essex to prosper by increasing their skills; enable Essex to attract and grow large firms in high growth industries; and target economic development to areas of opportunity.

1. Help people in Essex to prosper by increasing their skills

While the number of well qualified people in Essex has increased, the workforce is less well qualified than the UK as a whole, certain parts of our population are significantly less skilled and can face other barriers to economic inclusion, and there is a mismatch between the courses offered to learners after the age of 16, and the skills our employers need.

2. Enable Essex to attract and grow large firms in high growth industries

We need to attract more large firms, given the size of our economy, and more firms in the sectors that are growing fastest. Many of our roads are congested at rush hour and commuters to London travel on crowded trains, making some people in Essex wary of further development.

3. Target economic development to areas of opportunity

Essex has significant untapped economic potential compared to the rest of the South East. We need to focus our economic activity on those areas with significant development opportunities whilst at the same time making sure we secure the benefits of economic growth for local people.

Strategic Aim - Enable Inclusive Economic Growth

Priority One	To do this we will:
<p>Help people in Essex prosper by increasing their skills</p>	<p>a. Offer children good economic prospects, by providing an outstanding education in Essex, in particular for disadvantaged children and in lower performing places</p>
	<p>b. Improve the skills of young people and adults in occupations that Essex firms require, by ensuring skills providers reflect local employers' needs now and in the future</p>
	<p>c. Raise the aspirations of young people for careers in growth sectors by ensuring better career information, advice and guidance is available to them</p>
	<p>d. Support people with learning disabilities and those using mental health services to access sustainable and meaningful employment opportunities</p>
Priority Two	To do this we will:
<p>Enable Essex to attract and grow large firms in high growth industries</p>	<p>a. Attract new large firms, and improve Essex's reputation beyond the county by providing an outstanding investment offer</p>
	<p>b. Enable Essex firms in high-growth sectors to consolidate and expand, by providing advice and increasing business space</p>
	<p>c. Support trade, by better connecting key economic centres, especially along major transport corridors, and helping people to travel by public transport, bike and on foot</p>
	<p>d. Increase the number of businesses with access to good broadband by rolling out the broad band programme</p>
Priority Three	To do this we will:
<p>Target economic development to areas of opportunity</p>	<p>a. Optimise the potential for economic growth, by targeting places with strong development opportunities</p>
	<p>b. Optimise the benefit of economic growth for Essex residents, by linking new investment to areas with lower employment</p>
	<p>c. Deliver economic growth in partnership, by building strong relationships with partners in opportunity areas</p>

Strategic Aim - Help people get the Best Start and Age Well

ECC has a critical role to safeguard and support the most vulnerable people in the county. Our focus is on ensuring that children get the best start in life, and that everyone can enjoy health and well-being and is enabled to fulfil their potential.

One fifth of Essex's population (20%) is over 65 and this is projected to increase to almost one third (32%) by 2030. With demand for services growing faster than income, especially in adult social care, we need to help people to help themselves and make the best choices. We will work with communities and the NHS to achieve this change. Technology offers significant opportunities for residents to manage their own care more effectively. From monitoring at home, to online social networks facilitating care support, ECC and partners will ensure services are designed to always take advantage of the benefits technology brings.

ECC also has a critical role to play in safeguarding and supporting the most vulnerable people in the county and currently supports more than 6,500 children and young people, including 1,000 who are in care, and 17,000 adults with social care needs. We want to ensure the most vulnerable children and young people are supported to have every opportunity of achieving the same social, educational, health and economic outcomes as their peers.

While the overall life expectancy in Essex for both men and women is higher than the England average, there is a significant gap (7.2 years for men and 5.5 years for women) between our wealthiest and most deprived places. Our focus is on ensuring everyone can enjoy health and wellbeing and is able to prosper.

We will never compromise on our paramount responsibilities to keep vulnerable children safer and enable them to fulfil their full potential and to ensure as people enter old age they can live the lives they choose for themselves.

Strategic Priorities

We have set three Strategic Priorities for this strategic aim: help keep vulnerable children safer and help them to fulfil their potential; enable more vulnerable adults to live independent of social care; and improve the health of the people of Essex.

1. Help keep vulnerable children safer and enable them to fulfill their potential

The council's innovative approach has helped make it safer for children to live at home, reducing the number of children who live in care. We face new challenges that include dealing with sexual exploitation and gangs but it is our priority to improve outcomes for the most vulnerable children, young people and families in Essex.

2. Enable more vulnerable adults to live independent of social care

Essex has a growing and ageing population and demand for care is growing. But 13% of over 65s are in work and this figure is increasing. Satisfaction with adult social care is rising but is lower than our peers.

3. Improve the health of the people in Essex

Life expectancy is higher than national averages but varies by geography within Essex and is lower for vulnerable and socially excluded groups due to deprivation. Lifestyle choices can exacerbate these inequalities. Avoidable deaths from heart disease and mental health remain key issues. Obesity, diabetes and dementia are growing problems.

Strategic Aim - Help people get the Best Start and Age Well

Priority One	To do this we will:
<p>Help keep vulnerable children safer and enable them to fulfill their potential</p>	<p>a. Protect the most vulnerable - including through tackling sexual exploitation, domestic abuse, youth violence and e-safety - by strengthening safeguarding across the children's partnership and putting things right when they go wrong</p>
	<p>b. Close the gap in outcomes for the most vulnerable children, young people and families by improving school attendance and attainment, embedding national programmes of reform and increasing access to preventive health care as well as support for emotional well-being and mental health</p>
	<p>c. Build resilience by providing practical advice that enables children, young people and families to make positive choices and resolve their own difficulties before accessing services</p>
	<p>d. Achieve better outcomes by innovating, collaborating with partners and using our resources efficiently to increase our collective focus on the needs of young people through early help and the mobilisation of community assets, and an increased focus on young people's needs through the Community Grant Programme</p>
	<p>e. Help children, young people and families achieve better outcomes by developing a well-trained and supported workforce across the system, with the right culture and capability to deliver effective interventions</p>
Priority Two	To do this we will:
<p>Enable more vulnerable adults to live independent of social care</p>	<p>a. Reduce the need for hospital admissions or formal care services, by delivering community based solutions</p>
	<p>b. Support elderly people and those with learning disabilities to live independently by working with the market and community to make sure there are high quality solutions available and providing extra care where needed</p>
	<p>c. Fully engage service users and carers in the design and delivery of our support offer, by coproducing it with them where possible</p>
	<p>d. Support people to support themselves, where appropriate, by innovating, including through digital and community solutions</p>
	<p>e. Ensure people can plan for, source and pay for their care, by accessing information and digital infrastructure</p>
Priority Three	To do this we will:
<p>Improve the health of people in Essex</p>	<p>a. Reduce health inequalities and improve levels of health, by reducing economic inequality between more affluent and deprived communities</p>
	<p>b. Give all children the best chance of an outstanding education, by offering targeted parenting and school readiness initiatives</p>
	<p>c. Enable people to make healthier choices, by facilitating community programmes and enabling access to good, appropriate health and dental care services for children in care</p>
	<p>d. Improve mental health and the life chances of people with mental health issues, by prevention, early intervention and enabling better lifestyle choices, social inclusion and economic opportunities</p>
	<p>e. Help people live longer, by ensuring that targeted health checks and health programmes are available to those most at risk of heart disease, stroke and diabetes</p>

Strategic Aim - Help to create great places to grow up, live and work

Essex is a county of immense contrasts with a combination of rural, urban and coastal communities. It has a total population of 1.44 million and a series of large urban settlements, however, at almost 1,500 square miles in size, almost three quarters (72%) of the county is considered to be rural. More than a third of the population in Essex (36%) call these rural areas home. Residents enjoy a high quality of life in the county and 82% have indicated that they are either 'very satisfied' or 'fairly satisfied' with their local area. But they are also concerned about the pace of change and the character of development the county will need to accommodate – 136,000 new homes over the next 20 years - and don't want to see the characteristics of the county they cherish compromised by these changes. Great places are the products of their people and communities, supported by good public services and private enterprise. City, district and borough councils, and the emergency services in Essex, have important roles to play in shaping our communities as places to live. We are also keen to work with the thousands of voluntary and community groups we have across Essex to make sure they can continue to play a key role in supporting the communities they serve.

People live their lives in places. We recognise the key role we have to play in ensuring our communities are safe, neighbourly and linked to opportunities. That is why, in addressing our housing challenge, our key concern is the quality of the communities that will be created, not just the number of houses that will be built – ensuring house building is led by the needs of the economy and always supported by the provision of social infrastructure.

Strategic Priorities

We have set three Strategic Priorities for this strategic aim: help to secure stronger, safer and more neighbourly communities; help to secure sustainable development and protect the environment; and facilitate growing communities and new homes.

1. Help to secure stronger, safer and more neighbourly communities

Individuals, families and communities are the best guardians of their own interests. Where it is appropriate to do so, we should support communities to help themselves by seeking to foster and build community capacity and capability. But we also recognise there are times when public services need to step in – we will continue to work with communities and partners to address crime and the fear of crime.

2. Help to secure sustainable development and protect the environment

Essex is 72% rural with 350 miles of coastline. Resident satisfaction with Essex as a place to live is high. Housing growth needs to be linked to economic growth and supported by appropriate infrastructure to ensure jobs are available and communities are sustainable. Essex also has areas of flood risk that need protecting.

3. Facilitate growing communities and new homes

Essex's residents recognise the importance of high quality homes. As a county, we need a flexible housing market that reflects changing needs and affordability at various stages of life. At the same time our residents value the diversity of the county's landscape and question what the consequences of housing growth will do to the county they love. Essex will need to build 136,000 new homes over the next 20 years. That is an increase of 24% on the existing housing stock. We are committed to facilitating that housing growth and we will do so, working with partners, in such a way that the characteristics of the county that we cherish are protected and enhanced, not undermined. We are not just building new homes, we are building communities.

Strategic Aim - Help to create great places to grow up, live and work

Priority One	To do this we will:
<p>Help to secure stronger, safer and more neighbourly communities</p>	<p>a. Realise the strength of our communities, by enabling residents to develop their independence</p>
	<p>b. Enable local communities to identify their own local issues and tackle them, by using their own assets</p>
	<p>c. Improve the well-being of residents, by working with the voluntary and community sector to address local social issues</p>
	<p>d. Make communities in Essex safer, in particular for our most vulnerable residents, by working collaboratively with partners</p>
Priority Two	To do this we will:
<p>Help to secure sustainable development and protect the environment.</p>	<p>a. Reduce the impact of flooding, by working with local communities to increase their resilience to flooding</p>
	<p>b. Improve the quality of life for Essex residents, by continuing to improve our open green space and making the most of the Essex countryside for the wider benefit of all</p>
	<p>c. Reduce the environmental impact and cost to the taxpayer of dealing with waste, by operating efficient waste management services and working effectively with partners and communities</p>
	<p>d. Improve the image of the county, by enhancing our cultural offer and promoting the very best of Essex</p>
	<p>e. Reduce carbon emissions and energy costs for the public and businesses, by developing new strategies that promote clean growth and affordable energy</p>
Priority Three	To do this we will:
<p>Facilitate growing communities and new homes</p>	<p>a. Protect and enhance the quality of places, by promoting high quality, forward-thinking design of communities and homes</p>
	<p>b. Deliver new homes, by working with partners to develop new settlements on garden community principles, and releasing public land</p>
	<p>c. Deliver sustainable new communities, by effectively identifying and securing sufficient investment in infrastructure for new development</p>
	<p>d. Ensure growing communities are sustainable, by offering quality opportunities for work and leisure that people can access, alongside new homes</p>

Strategic Aim - Transform the Council to achieve more with less

We are fortunate to have some of the best public employees in the country. To deliver our priorities and maximise our positive contribution to the lives of people and businesses in Essex we need to continue to develop as a proactive, efficient and effective organisation.

Over the last five years we have saved £597 million and during the course of this Organisation Strategy we will need to identify a further £186 million through savings or income generation. Given the commitments we have made in the strategy, that means we will need to think very differently about how we operate. We will need to be more innovative, more open to risk and risk mitigation, more entrepreneurial and more commercially-minded than ever before. But we are building on a solid platform for change.

Almost three-quarters (72%) of our residents are open to new technological innovations and more than half (57%) of all Essex households are prepared to contact ECC through online channels. To deliver our priorities and maximise our positive contribution to the lives of people and businesses in Essex we need to seize the opportunity that new digital technologies provide to both lower costs and improve customer experience.

Just as our county is changing, so too must the organisation that serves it. We are already a long way down that path – having run local government’s largest transformation programme. But the pace will accelerate during the life of this Strategy. We will invest in our employees to make sure they can drive the transformation our communities need and we will embrace the opportunities created by new technology to make ECC the leading local authority for digital transformation in the country.

Strategic Priorities

We have set three Strategic Priorities for this strategic aim: limit cost and drive growth in revenue; develop the capability, performance and engagement of our people; and re-imagine how residents’ needs can be met in a digital world.

1. Limit cost and drive growth in revenue

During the course of this Organisation Strategy, the County Council will transition to becoming more or less fully self-financing – through Council Tax and possible changes to Business Rates retention. That means we must continue to ensure we operate as efficiently as possible and maximise the value of every pound of taxpayers’ money we spend while seeking out new opportunities to grow our income streams.

2. Develop the capability, performance and engagement of our people

We employ approximately 7,500 people. They are our greatest asset. All public services are at heart people services. We are building an organisation that values doing the right thing for the people we serve above everything else. And we will continue to invest in our people to make sure they have the skills and capabilities to serve the people of Essex as they deserve.

3. Re-imagine how residents’ needs can be met in a digital world

The digital revolution is transforming the way we live our lives. Over the next decade artificial intelligence and big data will reshape the possibilities that are open to us. Right now we are living through an age when products are dissolving into services, and services are being recreated on shared platforms. We must reimagine our role and the services we enable, to better meet people’s needs and expectations in the internet age.

Strategic Aim - Transform the Council to achieve more with less

Priority One	To do this we will:
Limit cost and drive growth in revenue	a. Maximise income for us and the districts, by facilitating appropriate housing and business growth to create sustainable communities
	b. Optimise revenue from services, by charging appropriately and realising commercial benefit
	c. Drive out inefficiency, by reducing costs, increasing productivity including through lean methods and better tools for sharing, collaboration and flexible working
	d. Get maximum value out of every pound of taxpayers' money spent in Essex, by working collaboratively with partners
	e. Reduce the financial burden on taxpayers and enhance facilities, by the targeted use of capital investment
Priority Two	To do this we will:
Develop the capability, performance and engagement of our people	a. Promote high performance and new, effective ways of working across the organisation and with partners, by driving a shift in our culture
	b. Better understand and develop the skills and capabilities the organisation needs, by working with employees and partners in the private and community sectors
	c. Ensure everyone understands how their work contributes to the delivery of our mission and operating strategies, by engaging appropriately
	d. Enable employees to work effectively and feel valued, by providing a good working environment and fit for purpose tools
	e. Have the right people in place to meet changing requirements, by understanding the people we have and the people we need
	f. Have employees who understand the need for and deliver change, by creating a highly engaged and forward thinking workforce
Priority Three	To do this we will:
Re-imagine how residents' needs can be met in a digital world	a. Deliver successful services designed around the user, by providing appropriate access to information as an enabler
	b. Design services in collaboration with partners, driven by the needs of users
	c. Drive cheaper, better, faster service delivery, by embracing technology
	d. Use digital as the engine to drive whole system change, by building digital skills into our core capability in our workforce

Making it Happen: Building Blocks

This Organisation Strategy represents the most ambitious and comprehensive statement of our medium-term priorities the County Council has published. It is based on a realistic assessment of where we currently are, the challenges we face, and the opportunities we must seize.

Everything we are seeking to achieve in this Organisation Strategy is built on four key building blocks and it is important this Strategy is understood in relation to these key elements.

Building Block	Why it's Important	Key Strategy	Content
People	We are a people business. Our people are our most important asset. We will be demanding a lot from our employees over the next few years as we shift the culture in the ways described in this Strategy and it is important that we make the investment that will be required to ensure we can continue to secure the best employees in local government.	Workforce Strategy	The Workforce Strategy will transform the way in which we work, to enable us to achieve our strategic priorities. It will clearly define and prioritise our approach to building the critical people capabilities and culture the organisation needs. It will set out our framework for attracting, retaining and developing talent, and the way our people are led, engaged and deployed.
Digital	Our transformation will be underpinned by service design approaches to outcome improvements. We will not just redesign current provision, but will fundamentally re-imagine what we do and how we do it.	Essex Service Standards	The Essex Service Standards set out below will underpin how we drive transformation in ECC. We will start with the user, take an agile approach, manage performance and run excellent systems.
Commissioning	Commissioning is a key capability for the organisation. Our redesign process has focused on ensuring commissioning as a capability is built into our DNA. We will not be able to secure the aspirations set out in this Strategy if we do not get right our approach to commissioning.	Re-imagining Commissioning	The Re-imagining Commissioning Report has helped us re-think our approach to commissioning as a capability, and how the organisation, with partners, can equip itself to be a truly great commissioner for the outcomes our communities need.
Partners	ECC is not an island entire to itself. We operate in one of the most complex public policy systems in the country. We have a large number of partners who are critical to our ability to secure the outcomes set out in this Strategy. It is therefore important that we have an agreed sense of where we need to go with our key partners.	Vision	We have many strategies agreed with our partners but the one that sets out comprehensively our collective sense of long-term ambition is the Vision for Essex. The Vision for Essex sets out our long-term aspirations for the county to 2035.

People: Our Workforce Strategy

The new workforce strategy will clearly define how we will build the capability, skills and culture our employees need for the future and will ensure the organisation has the right workforce and workplace environment. The Strategy has four key themes:

Creating the right conditions

When our employees come to work we want them to have the best possible experience with nothing stopping them from giving their all each day. We want employees to feel a personal commitment to our organisational objectives and behaviours, but equally importantly to also enjoy a sense of satisfaction and wellbeing.

Keeping ahead of the curve

We want Essex to stay ahead of the curve. We will achieve this by harnessing the power of people analytics to determine and influence what our workforce will look like in four years' time. We already have a good foundation to do this with the data we collect. We will maximise the value of our people data and deliver robust action plans to ensure we create the future workforce we need.

Transforming passion into impact

We want the best people working for ECC. We will work hard to strengthen our attraction as an employer and develop a strong brand for Essex. We want to be a desirable place to work that is diverse and promotes equality.

Enabling growth and development

We have identified the need to develop new skills and ways of working. We are very conscious of the challenging times we are living in – staying still is not an option, the skills we currently have are not the ones we will need in the future. This means that as an organisation we need to become better at supporting employees to renew their skills, and this needs to be done at a faster pace.

Organisational Behaviours that underpin the culture of an organisation and its success.

Inspires	Passionate and enthusiastic about making a difference. Motivates self and others to see exciting possibilities for the future of Essex.
Innovates	Thinks creatively, takes calculated risks and learns from mistakes . Is curious and challenges the status quo , seeking opportunities for original solutions .
Enables	Supports and encourages others to experiment with new ways of working in an atmosphere of trust, respect and dignity . Accountable for own development and sharing best practice with others.
Collaborates	Contributes to teams and networks and involves others to deliver shared solutions and services for our customers. Works effectively with partners to join together in a common purpose.
Delivers	Provides a quality service by displaying professional excellence and expertise taking into account diverse customer needs . Seeking best value for money and pursuing commercial opportunities as they arise.

Digital: Using the Essex Service Standards to drive our approach to Transformation

Essex County Council is committed to use the government's digital service standards to develop and deliver services.

The 18 standards transformed central government digital services. Our new digital services will be tested against the 18 standards before they go live, in order to ensure their quality and value for money.

Like central government, we are also exploring how the standards might be applied on a wider basis to support end-to-end service transformation. The majority of services will use the internet at some point during the customer journey, and many of the standards can help us to develop services beyond the online world; the heart of the method works for all services: it expects us to continually engage with service users, learn from them, and change our services in response to feedback.

We will test and learn how the standards can be most effectively applied to support organisational transformation and the development of effective, sustainable services.

Essex Service Standards	
Start with the user	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand user need • Make sure users succeed first time • Encourage everyone to use digital • Ensure a consistent online user experience • Test end to end service
Deliver agile projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use agile methods • Have a multidisciplinary team • Iterate and improve frequently • Do ongoing research
Manage performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify performance indicators • Collect performance data • Report performance data • Test with Cabinet lead
Run excellent systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use open standards and common platforms • Make all new source code open • Understand security and privacy issues • Evaluate tools and systems • Make a plan for being offline

Commissioning: Commissioning as a capability

Commissioning well is a key capability for our organisation - it goes beyond the delivery of outcomes through the provision of services. We have reviewed our approach to commissioning over the last twelve months and agreed a new definition:

‘Commissioning: using all the levers at your disposal to bring about change in a place, in order to improve citizen outcomes long-term’

Commissioning is about more than procurement – it is, more broadly, about establishing the conditions in which outcomes can be achieved.

We are now seeking to ensure that through our workforce strategy and our approach to digital we are mainstreaming the approach to commissioning in to everything we do. In particular we will:

- **Shine a light on great work** and show what it looks like: capture and and tell some compelling stories.
- **Address the implications for our organisation’s culture** at a senior level: understand what would have to change for ECC **to be an organisation** that achieves this approach to commissioning; by delivering this we will demonstrate our commitment to change.
- **Provide support to a more formal community of practice** – for example, for strategic leaders of commissioning teams. Review, reflect and learn as an organisation because we understand the importance of building learning in to the DNA of the organisation both at an individual and enterprise level. Deliberate and systematic reflection on what has worked well and what has not is the key to future improvement.
- **Incubate innovation in plain sight.** We will focus on priority issues, with open real-time learning conversations built around them by senior leaders who can change the system conditions.

Partners: Shared Vision

ECC operates in one of the most complex public policy systems in the country. We have a large number of partners who are critical to our ability to secure the outcomes set out in this Strategy. It is therefore important we have an agreed sense of where we need to go with our partners. To ensure that exists we have been working with partners across Essex to agree a joint long-term Vision for the County. The Future of Essex was agreed by an Assembly of Essex Partners on 19th September 2017.

It sets out seven key ambitions that we have agreed we will focus on to secure the long-term well-being of the county. They are:

Ambition	Priority
Unite behind a sense of identity	Busting stereotypes, celebrating achievement, building pride
Enjoy life long into old age	Reducing the gap in life expectancy, tackling avoidable physical and mental illnesses and promoting independence wherever possible
Provide an equal start for every child	Improving school readiness, supporting safe and secure relationships, and making sure every child can go to a great school
Strengthen communities through participation	Nurturing a safer, better connected society by giving people more ways to control and contribute to their communities
Develop our county sustainably	Enhancing the things that make Essex a great place to live – our countryside, our coastline, our heritage – and working with local people and communities, to build homes not houses, places not developments, communities not estates
Connect us to each other and the world	Tackling congestion on our roads and railways, securing large scale investment in low carbon modes of transport and delivering super-fast broadband to every part of Essex
Share prosperity with everyone	Giving more people the chance to achieve the highest qualifications in key growth industries, providing the space for businesses to grow and relocate, and developing a united and relentless focus on attracting and maximising investment in Essex

We have ensured the aims and priorities of our Organisation Strategy align to these areas and we are now working with partners to understand what actions we need to take to support the delivery of the Vision and how we will measure progress towards its achievement.

Making it Happen: Assessing our Impact



Strategic Planning Framework and the Golden Thread

Through the publication of this Organisation Strategy we are strengthening our business planning framework. The Organisation Strategy is driven by the Vision – what it is that we, with partners, want to achieve for Essex over the long-term. Our specific contribution to that is set out in this Organisation Strategy and in our annual Organisation Plan which provides more detail of the specific actions we will take over the next twelve months to progress the delivery of our aims and priorities. These strategic documents are underpinned by business and service plans through which our functions plan their activity. Ultimately every individual in the organisation, through their individual performance plans, should be able to link their daily work back to the organisation’s strategic aims and priorities and ultimately to the Vision for Essex.

Success Statements

Success statements for the Organisation Strategy have been developed through the Business Plan process alongside our medium-term resource planning. These statements set out what we aim to achieve for Essex by 2021 and will be translated into measures and targets. On an annual basis those measures and targets will be published as part of our Organisation Plan and we will report on our success in delivering against the targets each year.

Enable inclusive economic growth		
By helping people in Essex increase their skills we will have a greater skilled workforce that meets the needs of the local economy now and in the future	By enabling Essex to attract large firms in high growth industries, we will generate more employment opportunities for Essex residents, strengthen our economic base and raise our growth rate	By targeting economic interventions to areas of opportunity, we will prioritise the Council’s activities to strengthen our economic base, whilst ensuring the benefits of growth are experienced more widely, including economically disadvantaged communities
Help people to get the best start and age well		
By helping to keep vulnerable children safer and enabling them to fulfil their potential we will narrow the gap in economic and educational outcomes	By enabling more vulnerable adults to live independent of social care, more people in Essex will enjoy healthy lives in their own homes for as long as possible	By improving the health of people in Essex we will tackle deprivation and reduce variances in life expectancy

Help create great places to grow up, live and work

By helping to secure stronger, safer and more neighbourly communities our residents will feel safer, have greater independence and volunteering in the community will be the norm

By helping to secure sustainable development and protecting the environment residents can enjoy a good quality of life and can access more of Essex's open green space and countryside

By facilitating growing communities and new homes more people will be able to live in good quality homes and work in thriving communities in Essex

Transform the council to achieve more with less

By limiting costs and driving growth and in revenue the authority will deliver efficient services and where possible run them commercially

By transforming our workplace conditions to attract and continuously develop skills, new capabilities, high performance and motivation our people will deliver excellent services for our residents

By re-imagining how residents needs can be met in a digital world we will increase satisfaction with our services by putting the user first