

	Agenda Item 5
	ES/055/11
Committee:	Executive Scrutiny Committee
Date:	29 November 2011
Essex County Council Corporate Vision and Values	
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Developing Essex County Council's Corporate Vision – consultation results and revised EssexWorks Commitment 2012-2017

Background and context

At its meeting of 23 June 2011, Executive Scrutiny Committee received an overview of the consultation process for refreshing the corporate vision. At that meeting, it was also agreed that a draft of the revised vision would be brought to its meeting on 29th November. This paper provides the Committee with that draft, attached as Annex A to this report.

Cabinet will meet on 6th December to consider the consultation responses and to agree and refer on to Full Council *The EssexWorks Commitment 2012-2017*, Essex County Council's new corporate vision. It should be noted that the vision represents a high-level direction for, and commitment from, the local authority. It does not, however, set out the operational detail of how this will be achieved. These details will be articulated through directorate plans, in conjunction with the annual budget which will be submitted to Cabinet and then subsequently to Council in February 2012 as usual.

Executive Scrutiny is asked to consider the draft corporate vision and to determine whether it wishes to make any recommendations for Cabinet to consider when it debates this item on 6th December.

The process to date

The development of a new corporate vision began in June 2011. An extensive programme of analysis and engagement identified key challenges likely to impact on Essex communities over the next ten years. Over 800 individuals shared their views in this first phase, helping inform the development of a draft corporate vision which was then published for consultation.

In October and November, Essex County Council consulted on its proposed vision. To get the most benefit from the consultation process, rather than posing simple 'yes/no' questions, each consultation question asked for comments from respondents. What follows is a qualitative analysis of those responses.

395 responses have been received from a range of stakeholders, including residents, employees, elected members and the wider public and voluntary sector across Essex. An overview of the consultation responses is set out below.

Results

Feedback showed widespread support for the general strategic message that the document presents. Some specific feedback around each of the consultation questions is included below.

Do you agree with the proposed Vision statement?

The vision statement was broadly endorsed by respondents.

There was some confusion, however, as to whether the vision articulated something ECC sought to achieve and whether it was future-focused enough. One summarised it thus: '*a description of Essex [now] rather than a punchy statement describing the organisations [sic] [future] aims*'. Based on consultation responses, the tense of this element of the corporate vision has been changed to make clear that this is the future vision for the authority.

Whilst a number of respondents liked the dual meaning implicit within the phrase '*Essex means business*' seeing it as taking EssexWorks one step further and indicative of a focus on results, others took a more literal reading of the phrase and saw it as business-centric. A minority of respondents felt the focus on economic growth meant that inevitably other areas – social and environmental issues in particular – got less of a look in.

Have we identified the right key priorities? If not, what would you expect to see as a priority and why?

The vast majority of responses are in support of the ethos of the priorities as set out in the draft vision document, for example: '*I particularly like change of emphasis from customers to residents.*'

The focus on education and skills was warmly welcomed by many. Some respondents urged caution when committing to '*world class*' given the current economic climate. Others suggested that the idea of '*providing*' infrastructure jarred with the organisation's move toward commissioning services and queried whether '*securing*' might be more in keeping with a local authority's role as shaper, broker and commissioner of services.

There were a range of proposed priorities – those that were frequently mentioned included: extending work opportunities for those out of work or in low paid positions; adding specific commitments about the Essex environment and promoting sustainability; and including a more explicit priority around Essex's aging population. The Children and Young people's Scrutiny Committee would particularly like to see children specifically referenced within the priorities instead of 'vulnerable people'.

Are these the right principles; how would you expect to see these demonstrated?

The majority of respondents felt that the right principles had been identified in terms of how we at ECC go about conducting our business.

It's worth noting that a number of respondents who agreed that the principles are appropriate at this strategic level proceeded to comment on how the principles would be achieved in reality: '*Technically yes these are the right principles; how they will appear in practice is difficult to say*'. There was a recurring desire to see these principles evidenced by the authority in its day-to-day operations.

Some respondents understood the principles to be a means of changing how the organisation works in terms of becoming more commissioner based.

The devolution of decision-making was welcomed, with caveats. Some respondents questioned whether the majority of Essex residents would have the time or inclination to engage, while a further group of respondents called for increased support to enable more representative community-based structures to emerge.

Do you think the challenges that we have identified are the key ones that are likely to impact on Essex over the coming years?

Much work has gone into identifying the challenges for Essex in the future and there was general agreement that the correct ones had been identified. Some respondents questioned how unique these challenges were to Essex and others queried how much influence the local authority could bring to bear on macro-economic issues and external events.

The importance of economic growth was recognised as being of critical importance by many respondents. '*Austerity*' as a theme was mentioned on a number of occasions.

However, the environment was viewed as an omission by some.

Supporting the youth of Essex was another theme that was identified as a challenge for the future by a minority of people, as well as the changing health landscape.

Does our delivery commitment identify the outcomes you would expect to see by 2017?

The vast majority of those who commented did so positively. One common cause for concern was how outcomes could be achieved given the pressures on budgets resulting from the national focus on deficit reduction.

Additional outcomes included improved external perceptions of Essex and improved environmental sustainability.

Respondents were keen to see how progress would be reported – with some arguing for specific outcomes rather than broad aspirations and others calling for the

inclusion of clear performance metrics. This level of detail will be contained within supporting service plans.

Do you think that there are any specific equality and diversity implications arising from this vision document?

Consultees feel that generally the document is inclusive and that considerations of equality and diversity issues have been met. Specific comments have been considered as part of the Equality Impact Assessment which is submitted as Annex B to this paper.

Specific comments from ECC Policy and Scrutiny Committees

Each Scrutiny Committee was invited to consider the draft vision document and to determine whether it wished to make a collective response. The following responses have been received:

- 2nd November - Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee – the Committee would particularly like to see children specifically referenced within the priorities instead of ‘vulnerable people’.
- 9th November - Community and Older People Policy and Scrutiny Committee – the Committee was keen to see a focus on residents rather than citizens.
- 17th November - Economic Development, Environment and Highways Policy and Scrutiny Committee - the Committee were particularly keen to ensure that the vision document was realistic so that its ambitions could and would be achieved

Conclusions

The consultation period for the draft vision has now closed. Cabinet will be considering the consultation responses and the new corporate vision at its meeting on 6th December. Executive Scrutiny is therefore asked to consider the draft corporate vision attached as annex A to this paper and to determine whether it wishes to make any recommendations to Cabinet.

Background papers

- *The EssexWorks Commitment 2012-2017* consultation draft

**The
EssexWorks
Commitment**

2012 - 2017

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Foreword

Essex is a vibrant and successful county and we want to build on that potential. This publication sets out our vision for Essex, articulates our commitment to the county, and marks the first step in a new partnership bringing together public bodies and Essex's citizens and communities.

Based on an extensive programme of analysis and engagement we have identified the key trends and challenges that will face our communities and our public services over the next ten years. We have consulted elected Members and our partners, we have heard from our staff and we have listened to our residents. Based on these contributions, this document articulates our vision for Essex, our commitment to the county and our priorities for change over the next five years.

At the heart of this vision is our commitment to the economic success of our county. We make this commitment to Essex at a time of economic uncertainty – whilst we hope the recession is firmly behind us, our county can only grow through the efforts of the businessmen and women whose hard work underpins our prosperity. Their entrepreneurialism is all the more important given the severe strain on public finances. We expect to see the financial resources available across local government reduce by around 27% to 2014-15. We must recognise that, while publicly funded services will continue to play a key role, the social, economic and cultural success of our towns and villages will depend more than ever on the contributions of individuals, families, businesses and local communities.

If we are to build on the success that Essex has enjoyed in the past, we need to forge a new partnership that brings together the county council, the wider public sector, civil society and the citizens, businesses and communities of Essex. We can deliver local success in the face of global uncertainty, but we can only do this by working more closely together.

Cllr Peter Martin
Leader, Essex County Council

Joanna Killian
Chief Executive, Essex County Council

Our vision statement

Essex means business. We want to be a vibrant county where every individual and community plays a part in Essex's success and where we all have the opportunity and support to grow and reach our potential.

Our key priorities

Over the next five years, our key priorities for Essex are:

- enabling each individual to achieve their ambitions by supporting a world-class education and skills offer in the county;
- securing the infrastructure and environment to enable businesses to grow;
- improving public health and wellbeing;
- protecting and safeguarding vulnerable people; and
- giving people a greater say and a greater role in building safer and stronger communities.

We want people across Essex to have the skills and opportunities that will allow them to succeed in a changing global economy, realising that education doesn't stop when people leave school, college or university. We want to see families, communities and partners work together to keep our neighbourhoods safe, strong and healthy. We want to see our businesses drive the economic growth on which our well-being depends. We want to look after our elderly and our most vulnerable children, ensuring that they have the protection, support and care they need so that they too have the choices to determine their own future, achieve their ambitions, and play a meaningful role in society.

The work of public services can help make this happen. As one part of a vibrant civil society, Essex County Council will enable Essex citizens and communities to realise their ambitions and aspirations – this is our commitment to Essex. We will always spend taxpayers' money wisely, we will prioritise the interests of Essex above all

others and, in partnership with people and places, we will maintain the physical, social and service infrastructure that allows our citizens to live full and independent lives.

But the work of the public services can never be enough – citizens across Essex have a critical role to play in improving their neighbourhoods, securing opportunities for themselves, their families and their communities and realising their aspirations. Business, charities, voluntary groups and community associations have an equally valuable contribution to make.

Our principles

To support our work to deliver these priorities, we want to build a new partnership with public bodies, Essex citizens, private businesses, civil society and local communities: a partnership based on Essex's long-term interests and on our shared responsibility for improving local quality of life. We want to see citizens play an active role in their communities – responsible, engaged and empowered; consuming services over which they have control and helping to shape the communities in which they live. As we work together in this new partnership, we will ground our actions in the following principles:

- **Putting our residents first:** Our commitment to putting our residents first underpins all our activity. Essex County Council exists to represent the interests of local communities and to serve its residents, customers and clients. We will always strive to champion Essex residents and communities, ensure they have access to high quality and innovative public services and make the best use of taxpayers' money.
- **Increasing choice:** We make informed choices about almost every aspect of our lives. Market forces and advanced technologies allow us to tailor the services we consume to fit our increasingly diverse demands. Local public services will have to be equally responsive if they are to retain the trust of taxpayers and citizens. Essex County Council will put more choice and control in the hands of citizens and communities, whether through direct payments, personal budgets, or by giving people direct choice over the services they receive.
- **Promoting local decision-making:** Not all services can allow for individual choice. Where services are provided collectively and for the benefit of the community as a whole rather than for individuals, we will look to promote decision-making at the most locally appropriate level. For many services, decision-making could be decentralised to local forums, community groups or District, Borough, Town or Parish councils. Our approach will transfer power to

those who have greatest interest in getting decisions right and allow Essex's diverse communities to shape local services to meet local needs.

- **Improving outcomes:** We will ensure that citizens and communities get the services they need at best value for the taxpayer. This will mean working in partnership with a diverse range of service providers across the public, private and voluntary sectors. It will also mean working with public sector staff, with local businesses and with social entrepreneurs to develop new types of public service provider (such as free schools and public service mutuals). We will see a shift from a system where the council provides services directly, to one where it commissions innovative services from a diverse range of providers. From a system where public service professionals 'know best' to one where our partners seek out new, improved ways of delivering services that help citizens and communities to help themselves.

- **Taking action early:** We will work ever more closely with our partners to integrate services and to use our collective resources to address intractable issues, such as poor educational performance, dependency, crime and reoffending, that can undermine local quality of life. It is vital that the public services tackle these problems before they become difficult, costly to address, and blight people's lives. Individuals, families, and communities have an important role to play in taking responsibility for what happens in their area. For example, evidence suggests that if communities simply accept the first acts of anti-social behaviour and low level crime they can quickly attract escalating problems and decay.

- **Delivering value for money:** We will never forget that we are stewards of taxpayers' money. We will deliver the best possible value for money by improving efficiency, getting a better deal when we buy goods and services, making better use of our property, trading our services within Essex and beyond, and sharing costs and integrating services with other parts of the public sector. We will live within our means and we will keep council tax low.

We are confident that Essex citizens and communities will welcome this new partnership. Some 87% of residents feel that, on the right issues, they would like more influence over what happens in their area. In many cases Essex citizens, families and communities are already shaping both their neighbourhoods and the services they receive. The work of District, Borough, Town and Parish councils; businesses; community groups; service clubs; faith groups; sports clubs and voluntary associations, for instance, provide a solid foundation on which to build this new partnership. They provide a basis upon which citizens and communities can lead our joint work to make Essex economically, socially, and culturally successful and prosperous.

The challenges we face

Essex is one of the largest, most populous and most multifaceted counties in the UK – it faces challenges to match its scale.

In 2011 many of our citizens enjoy high living standards and high incomes but persistent pockets of deprivation and disadvantage remain. Essex has some of the best schools in the country yet too many of our young people leave education without the skills demanded by businesses. Our communities are safe and healthy, but lifestyle choices continue to place services under strain. Our residents have access to some of England's most beautiful countryside and coastlines but the pressures of development and a changing climate are taking their toll.

Over the coming years, we need to recognise that:

- **Essex cannot take economic growth for granted** – job growth over the past decade has been in areas such as construction, financial services and the public sector – these areas may not deliver future jobs.
- **Social capital and community cohesion will be critical to the county's future** – as public services look to devolve more responsibility, we will need to ensure that individuals, families and communities have the appetite and capacity to play an even greater role.
- **Our county's rich variety poses challenges for public services** – Essex is a place where rich and poor and young and old live side-by-side. As resources diminish, community leaders may need to balance differing demands and conflicting interests.
- **Essex has an ageing population** – the over-85 age group is growing faster than any other, placing strain on health and care services. Furthermore, the burden of financing services is falling increasingly on the relatively small working-age group.

Delivering our commitment

Our vision is for a vibrant county in which every individual and every community has a part to play in its success. We will do everything we can to realise this through a new partnership involving the public sector, Essex citizens, private businesses, civil society and local communities. We have retained the name EssexWorks to acknowledge the aspirations, ambitions and contributions that, taken together, will achieve this.

We will continue to use our EssexWorks programme to communicate with our citizens and communities, staff and partners, and to state clear objectives that focus on areas where we can make a real difference to people's opportunities.

This is a long-term commitment to Essex citizens and communities. In five years time we want to see:

- A buoyant local economy: where prosperity is secured by improving life-long education and skills, enhancing the transport network, attracting investment and stimulating growth both in vibrant town centres and key business sectors such as renewable energy, advanced manufacturing and logistics.
- People-oriented public services: where Essex public services work effectively together, commissioning services, sharing resources and collaborating on projects that deliver value for money and benefit all our citizens.
- A strong, cohesive Essex: where civil society at large recognises that protecting our most vulnerable citizens is important to us all, and where individuals, families and communities look out for each other.
- Improved outcomes: where Essex is recognised as a great place to live, with services and wider society working together to improve the health, wellbeing and quality of life of our adults, children and families.

- Increased independence: where individuals, families and strong communities take responsibility for the quality of life in their area and play an active role in influencing local decisions.

Title of service being assessed	Corporate vision (all ECC)
Directorate	Strategic Services
Name and role of officer completing this assessment	Alison Anderson, Senior Policy Manager
Contact Telephone Number	01245 430090 (EDnet 20090)
Date Assessment Completed	21 November 2011

1. What are the aims and objectives of this service, policy or function? (e.g. what is the likely impact and the relevance?- State whether this EIA relates to an existing, to a proposed change or new service, policy or function and include whether any changes are linked to an efficiency programme)

The Corporate vision project refreshes and renews the overall corporate vision for Essex County Council for the next 4-5 years. It therefore seeks to provide a broad context and overarching framework within which the County Council operates. It does not in itself provide services or policies on how those services should be provided.

While a high level EIA will therefore be considered as part of this project, many of the more detailed impacts (if any) will fall within the scope of individual services where their role or emphasis may change to deliver a revised overarching vision.

2a. Which strategic objective does this service support? Please state

This project seeks to refresh the overall strategic objectives of the council and therefore sits outside the existing strategic objectives.

2b. Is this service provided under a statutory or discretionary duty? Please state

A corporate vision is not a statutory requirement, but many of the services provided in response to the vision may be.

2c Please state whether this EIA will:

- support a business case development,
- provide evidence for scrutiny decisions,
- provide evidence to support policy, functions or service reviews and efficiency programmes

***Note all papers for presented for scrutiny and business case development require, as a minimum, a supporting Section One EIA form. (screening)**

This EIA will provide evidence to support a review of the council's new vision for the period of 4/5 years from 2012-13.

3. Describe which policies and/or guidelines control how you deliver the service and who is eligible to receive it?

The corporate vision is a high-level overarching framework and does not contain detail on how services are delivered or who is eligible to receive them.

4. Now think about how you actually deliver the service, for example how do people find out

about your service? How do they access or use it? Most teams have developed processes to allow them to deliver their service efficiently. Describe all processes here:

The corporate vision does not in itself deliver services; it provides an overall direction for the authority.

5. Could anything in the existing/ proposed policy, service or function mean that any group could be excluded or disadvantaged (albeit inadvertently)? To help you make this decision think about the governance and delivery of your service in respect of each of the equality protected characteristics (groups), list below brief notes outlining the negative impacts that the service may have on each group. Determine how detrimental these impacts are in accessing services and/or engaging with ECC. High, Medium or Low impact? E.g. High relevance may allude to Discriminatory actions such as inability to access service or undue difficulty in accessing services.

The draft vision articulates six overarching principles: putting our residents first; increasing choice; promoting local decision making; improving outcomes; taking action early and delivering value for money, and five priorities: enabling each individual to achieve their ambitions by supporting a world-class education and skills offer in the county; providing the infrastructure and environment to enable businesses to grow; improving public health and wellbeing; protecting and safeguarding vulnerable people; and giving people a greater say and a greater role in building safer and stronger communities.

While the vision document itself does not contain details of how services will be delivered, it nevertheless provides a direction of travel for the authority and thus equality implications for this overall direction must be considered at this stage. Many of the implications are generic rather than specific to groups or individuals with protected characteristics, hence these are discussed here prior to specific considerations outlined below.

The Equality Act 2010 places a duty on public authorities to make reasonable adjustments, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not. These duties extend to non-public authorities who nevertheless exercise public functions and provide services. The overarching principles of 'increasing choice' and 'focusing on outcomes' could potentially lead to a multiplicity of service providers ranging from major corporations through to social enterprises, volunteering or staff mutuals.

While in itself this does not automatically result in negative impacts, the Council will need to be cognisant of these duties both directly and for those who provide services on its behalf. It will need to ensure that every service provider is able to fulfil these duties, regardless of whether the service or function is provide for profit, non-profit or by volunteers. Research to support the Council's single equality scheme identified that many minority groups wanted to see more third sector service providers; they were seen to be trusted and to understand specific needs. Nevertheless, the Council will need to ensure that all service providers have the capacity and knowledge to ensure that there is equality in their service provision and that groups with protected characteristics are not unlawfully disadvantaged either through individual service providers or through alternative methods of service provision generally.

In addition, local choice and the devolution of powers and responsibilities could potentially result in communities prioritising or de-prioritising certain functions or services. The Council will need to satisfy itself that devolving such responsibilities will not result in inequality or disadvantage for groups

with protected characteristics. In particular, the Council will need to ensure that all voices are heard and all views are listened to prior to decisions being taken locally. It is vital that decisions and priorities are not based solely on the views of 'those who shout the loudest'.

In order to consider potential impacts, disadvantage or exclusion during the development of the overall vision rather than retrospectively, broad consultation and gathering of existing intelligence and evidence has taken place, and a range of Diversity and Equality groups have been invited to attend workshops to give their views. This engagement continued through phase 2 of the process, with widespread consultation, again including a range of Diversity & Equality groups. All respondents asked respondents to highlight any equality and diversity concerns, or potential impacts that they could see, with the draft vision. Overall, responses tended to focus on the need to consult and engage, and to ensure that all voices are heard and actively listened to, as outlined above. Responses from specific groups, together with information on how these views have been taken into account in the drafting of the document, are outlined below.

a. **Race and Culture-** Black, Asian and Minority ethnic groups including Gypsies, Roma and Travellers

Citizens' panels and young people's workshops have taken place, both of which have included BME residents. The council's internal BME network was consulted during the scenario planning and prioritising phase of the project, and no specific issues were raised. Staff workshops have also included practitioners who support, or advocate on behalf of, BME residents (including Gypsies and Travellers). Providing education and skills support which meets the needs of BME residents was raised as an issue, and 'supporting a world-class education and skills offer' has subsequently been included as a key priority, although as with many of these issues, the details and consequential impacts will be considered through service plans. One specific comment was also made about ensuring that the needs of all communities are met where decision-making is devolved, and this will need to be considered in more detail as devolution proposals develop.

b. **Age-** including older and younger people

Citizens' panels included adult residents across the age spectrum, both working age and retired. Additional workshops were also held with young people from ages 11-25 and views were gathered from the older people's planning group, ensuring that the views of younger and older people have also been taken into account. Groups supporting older people were represented at the partner workshop. Past research reports and documentation from these groups has also been reviewed to ensure that concerns and key themes are fed into the review. Young people in particular were concerned about: public health, education, unemployment, families and things for young people to do, while older people were more concerned about healthcare and affordable housing. Where these concerns relate to ECC services, or services over which ECC has some influence, these have been included within the key priorities. In particular, priorities on education, the economy, public health and wellbeing and building stronger communities are all included.

c. **Sexual Orientation-** Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual People

A specific session on the development of the vision was held with the Essex County Council LGBT network, and information from past research, such as that held to support the council's single equality scheme, has also fed into the review, as well as the widespread consultation on the draft vision document. Few specific issues pertaining to sexuality were raised as potential impacts; most of the comments related to the need to increase awareness and to ensure that the behaviour of individuals and organisations is respectful and sensitive. Community cohesion was seen as key both to ensuring this, and to minimising the risk of hate crimes and fear of crime, and this is a theme which runs throughout the vision document.

d. Disabled people

The citizens' panels and young people's consultation included residents with disabilities, as did the staff workshops. The Partnership Network Forum (representing a coalition of disabled people's groups) were also represented at the partner workshop, and the draft consultation was also widely circulated. It was noted that local decision-making needs to be accompanied with consultation, to ensure that the needs of all local residents, and not just those who are able to travel to meetings or articulate their needs clearly, are met.

e. Carers

5% of the young people consulted in the 'future Essex' young people's consultation identified themselves as young carers, and Carers groups were also specifically included in the draft vision consultation. No specific equality impacts have been raised in this respect.

f. Gender- Men and Women

The vision document does not operate at a level of granularity likely to impact on this group, and indeed no such comments were raised throughout the consultation.

g Gender reassignment – including transgendered people

A specific session on the development of the vision was held with the Essex County Council LGBT network, information from past research, such as that held to support the council's single equality scheme has also fed into the review, as well as the widespread consultation on the draft vision. Fear of crime was particularly noted to be an issue, especially in relation to the use of public transport. Community cohesion is a theme which runs throughout the vision document, as is ensuring that local residents have a greater say and role in building safer and stronger communities.

h. Pregnancy and maternity

The vision document does not operate at a level of detail likely to impact on this group, and no specific issues were raised during the consultation period.

i. Marital Status and Civil Partnership

The vision document does not operate at a level of detail likely to impact on individuals on the grounds of their marital/civil partnership status, and no specific issues were raised during the consultation period.

j. Religion and Belief

Faith groups were represented at a partner workshop and faith issues including how faith groups can support the vision were also raised during staff workshops. No specific issues relating to religion and faith were raised in the consultation.

k. Addressing Socio- economic and / or health inequalities

The vision seeks a county in which 'every individual and every community should has a part to play in its success'. Underpinning everything it seeks to do, therefore, is the desire to reduce inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage.

Having said this, the council will need to balance its investment between areas of greatest need and areas where it will get the greatest return on investment. The latter is particularly the case if the government's proposals for localisation of business rates takes effect; however investing in areas with greatest return will result in a greater revenue stream which can subsequently be reinvested to tackle socio-economic disadvantage.

6. Your Service may already be meeting the needs of the equality strands in some areas. Please list, group by group, the positive actions you have already taken to address possible inequality.

The vision is an overarching framework, and the meeting of these needs hence takes place within the services provided. However, the vision document itself has already taken into account a number of the comments throughout the consultation. Where issues relating to a specific group have been raised in the consultation, the council's response to this has been included within the assessment above.

As with the previous discussion, many of the potential impacts relate to all groups with protected characteristics and not with any one group in particular. These existing positive actions are therefore outlined here.

The vision statement articulates a desire that every individual and community should be given the opportunity and support to grow and reach their potential. The vision statement itself is therefore inclusive and aims to ensure that all Essex residents, regardless of their own individual characteristics, have equal access to the support and opportunity they need. Similarly, giving people a greater say and a greater role in building safer and stronger communities will help to tackle crimes such as hate crime, helping to ensure that cohesive communities support and understand the individuals therein.

The priority of 'protecting and safeguarding vulnerable people' also addresses potential disadvantage. When coupled with our principles of increasing choice and promoting local decision-making, our most vulnerable residents – of whatever age – will not only be protected and safe, but will also have increased opportunity to have their say in shaping their own care, priorities and future.

Taking action early is a broad principle which recognises that prevention is better than cure, and that emerging problems are best tackled at an early stage before they become embedded and escalate. This covers a broad range of topics, whether social disadvantage and its knock-on effects throughout residents' lives, health and wellbeing and the factors which affect it, or crime, fear of crime and hate crime. Taking action early should therefore help to prevent problems affecting residents before the issues escalate.



**Essex County Council Equality Impact Assessment Form Section 1
(Screening)**

Anne
ECC
Cr. 07