



WE ARE COLCHESTER

BOARD MEETING

18 August 2022

DECISIONS & ACTION POINTS

Present:

Simon Blaxill, Kent Blaxill (Chair)

Adam Bryan, SELEP

Simon Mead, COLBEA

Cllr Tom Cunningham, Essex County Council

Steve Evison, Essex County Council

Alison Jennings, Homes England

Mark Jarman-Howe, NE Essex Alliance

Phoebe Butcher (for Will Quince MP, Conservative Party)

Cllr David King, Colchester Borough Council

Shona Johnstone, Homes England

Tracy Rudling, Community360

Alison Andreas, Colchester Institute

Apologies:

Pam Donnelly, Colchester Borough Council

Chris Rhodes, Hiscox

Lucy Johnson, University of Essex

Others attending:

Gwyn Owen (Essex Housing), Ana Santini (We Made That), Lindsay Barker (CBC), Matthew Brown (CBC), Clare Ratcliffe (CBC), Amie Hall (ECC), Simon Thorp (CBC).

DECISIONS AND ITEMS NOTED

1. Apologies & declarations of interest. Apologies were noted from Chris Rhodes, Pam Donnelly and Lucy Johnson. The Chair thanked Chris Rhodes for his contribution, welcoming Simon Mead and Alison Andreas to the Board. There were no declarations of interest.

2. Progress report. The Board noted a Programme Progress Report which had been circulated in advance. There have also been many achievements to celebrate including the levels of project manager collaboration and synergy development.

3. Funding. The Board noted that Grant Determination Letters and confirmation of budgets had been received from DLUHC. Overall life of programme Town Deal budget from DLUHC is £18.2m (plus £1m accelerated funds). For 2022/23, £5.8m has been paid (in addition to which the unspent balance of £920k already advanced is also available to projects). Project managers have been notified and are aware of budget drawdown arrangements.

4. Service Level Agreements (SLAs). 6 projects are CBC-led and 8 projects are partner-led. The Board noted that SLAs have been agreed by Colchester Borough Council with Essex County Council and North Essex Heritage for externally-led projects, enabling a positive framework for partnership working – funding, reporting, collaboration and issue resolution (this covers 7 of the 8 partner-led projects). An SLA with Community360 has still to be agreed for Holy Trinity Church.

5. Risks. The Board noted that the programme is currently RAG rated Amber overall, with spend is in line with budget.

The programme is made up of 5 umbrella themes. The umbrella themes of Town Centre & Gateways and Digital Connectivity are currently RAG rated Red overall. The Board noted key risks at programme and umbrella project theme level currently being actively managed: Programme level cost volatility (a universal issue shared with other towns); Heart of Greenstead resolution of land ownership; Town Centre & Gateways Resolution of Holy Trinity Church repair issues to enable transfer under lease to Community360; St Nicholas Square (accelerated project) time and cost overruns; Digital Connectivity Digital Working Hub (Queen Street) land ownership and demolition cost liabilities. The Board also noted that a number of projects plan to commence delivery early and incur high levels of spend which would be closely monitored, in particular Digital Working Hub, 5G, Jumbo, Essex County Hospital, Transformed Youth Facilities and St Nicholas Square.

It was agreed that project level detail would be presented at the next Board Meeting for further consideration and discussion.

6. Engagement. Engagement plans for all projects are in place and continually under review to maximise positive outcomes. The Board noted an update on recent activities and those planned before the next meeting.

7. Levelling Up Fund and UK Shared Prosperity Fund. The Board noted a presentation outlining the key elements of both bids, which the Board had contributed to in an advisory capacity. The Board also noted that Levelling Up Fund was a competitive and heavily oversubscribed process, therefore there were no guarantees of success.

8. Town Centre Masterplan. The Board noted a presentation by We Made That on progress to date and future activity on the masterplan. The Board confirmed that it welcomed being consulted on such matters, regarding the masterplan as a key activity. Individual Board feedback was also noted. It was confirmed that the masterplan would be completed by November 2022.

9. Essex County Hospital project spotlight. The Board noted a presentation by Essex Housing on one of the ‘public realm’ projects which will be delivered earliest.

10. Future meetings.

Thursday 17 November 2022 – 12 noon (in person)

Thursday 23 February 2023 – 12 noon

Thursday 25 May 2023 – 12 noon