



We are Colchester



Colchester  
City Council

# We Are Colchester Board Meeting

22 May 2025, 1130

Microsoft Teams

# Agenda

1. **Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interest - Simon Blaxill**
2. **Progress Report, Engagement & Communications Update - Simon Thorp, Clare Ratcliffe, Scott Gray-Chick**
3. **Levelling Up Programme Update – Matt Sterling**
4. **Project Spotlight – Heart of Greenstead – Richard Kendrew**
5. **Issues, Risks & Mitigations - 'You said, we did'**
6. **Decisions and points to note - Simon Blaxill**
7. **Next meeting**



We are Colchester



Colchester  
City Council

# Welcome, Apologies & Declarations of Interest

Simon Blaxill

Chair



We are Colchester



Colchester  
City Council

# Progress Report & Engagement Update

Simon Thorp  
Programme Manager

Clare Ratcliffe  
Engagement Specialist

# Headlines

- Good delivery progress across the programme.
- Benefits being realised – Digital Skills Hub, Essex Pedal Power, public realm (Balkerne Gate), Transformed Youth Facilities (Stanway, Highwoods), Walking and Cycling (route section 8 Colne Causeway).
- Cost escalation and project complexity being closely managed.
- Biggest risks: Greenstead Hub - additional ICB health funding has been confirmed and resources allocated from CCC Corporate Landlord for to ensure delivery is on time.
- Walking and Cycling Route - re-procurement of East Hill meaning on site works unlikely to start until autumn - close liaison with ECC regarding delivery plan for East Hill and possible impact on project milestones. Safer Streets bid (£500k) submitted to increase funding for cctv, lighting and mobile wi fi on off road route sections through the Moors.

# Headlines

- Partnering arrangements for Digital Forum and Holy Trinity Church addressed
- Jumbo - ongoing risk associated with peregrine nesting continues to be managed.
- Confident that all outstanding projects will be completed or contractually committed within time envelope of March 2026.
- Preparation for next MHCLG monitoring return (end year 2024-25) underway – deadline 27 May.

# RAG overview



## **Overall programme RAG – AMBER**

Time and cost issues are being managed across the programme.

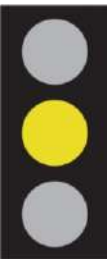


## **Cost RAG - AMBER**

Heart of Greenstead final hub costs to be confirmed.

Walking and Cycling route LCWIP 4 costs uncertain until re-tender for East Hill and Safer Streets bid to increase off road sections budget are confirmed.

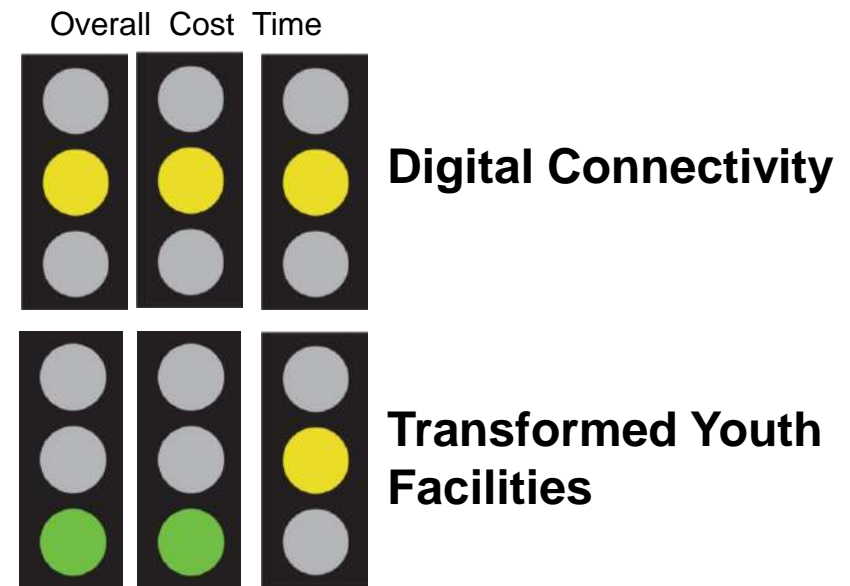
Town Centre & Gateways cost issues have affected various projects (St Nicholas Square).



## **Time RAG - AMBER**

Heart of Greenstead Hub project has a challenging timetable.

# RAG by theme

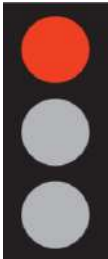


(Based on April 2025 progress reports)

Red/Amber Time + Cost RAG together = project features will be affected unless mitigated.



# Risk Register



**Greenstead Hub** – delivery to time and budget (financial)  
**Walking and Cycling** – East Hill re-tender impact on costs (financial)



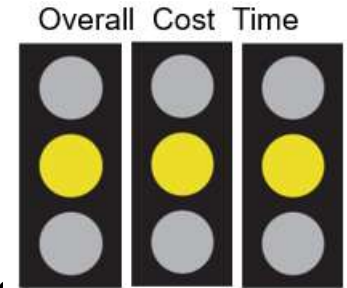
**Cost inflation** – St Nicholas Square etc cost volatility, value engineering, CCC risk (financial)  
**Holy Trinity Church** – cost pressures (strategic)  
**Trinity Square** – drainage issues and potential delays (operational)  
**Jumbo** – peregrines and delivery plan impact (strategic)



**Engagement** – implementation, monitoring and updating of engagement plans (strategic)

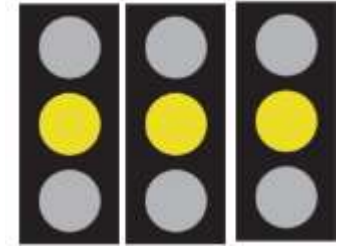
# Progress highlights

## Heart of Greenstead



- Procurement exercise - Design & Build contractor – from April 2025
- Financial viability draft model shared, RIBA Stage 3 design approved by Stakeholders
- Cost pressures eased due to additional funding accessed by the scheme.
- Final cost plan reviews ongoing.
- Consultants developing model and discussions re HRA contributions ongoing to derisk.
- Updated programme sets out how March 2026 funding deadline will be achieved, contingencies built in.
- High level of confidence the scheme can be contractually committed by March 2026.
- Support to Greenstead Community Association (GCA) re business planning continues. Active Essex on board to assist GCA and derisk the concerns re future management of community centre.
- The Active Wellbeing Society continue to deliver community engagement. Reporting structure agreed, to ensure outcomes achieved.

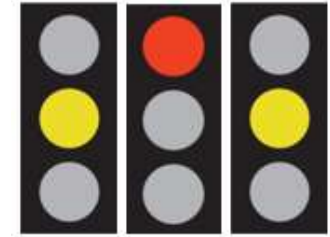
# Progress highlights



## Town Centre & Gateways

- St Nicholas Square – now due to complete **June 2025** - weather/archaeology/utilities delays
- Jumbo and Balcerne Gate - £8m Heritage Fund award; remaining Town Deal enabling budget will be spent in 2025. Planning consent granted. Balcerne Gate public realm works to align with Jumbo plan.
- Holy Trinity Church and Square - Heritage Fund application pushed back to August
- St Helena appointed as managing operator
- Remaining £400k Town Deal budget used to carry out repairs by September 2025.
- Work on Trinity Square starts September - completion by January 2026.
- Lexden Gardens/Essex County Hospital – site visit 19 March. On track for public realm works start in autumn. Further visit to be scheduled.
- Cost issues have affected various projects.

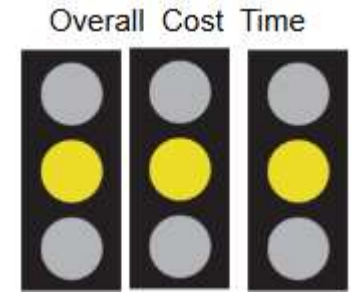
# Progress highlights



## Physical Connectivity - Walking and Cycling route

- Route sections 1-3 (East Hill). TRO advert closed 9 May.
- Cost RAG remains Red (as assigned by ECC).
- Progressing to tender by July, award, then construction on site start September.
- Floating bus stops removed from revised design, replaced with wide shared areas, bus stops on the south side consolidated and moved away from the junction with Queen Street. Route alignment straightened, improving intervisibility for all. Junction table at Roman Road has been removed due to drainage and safety concerns, tourist coaches relocated, natural stone paving intended to be used inside the city walls and the old paving reused to repair the footway to the east.
- Route sections 4-7 (the Moors). £500k Safer Streets bid for cctv, lighting and mobile wi fi submitted.
- Section 8 (Colne Causeway) completed.

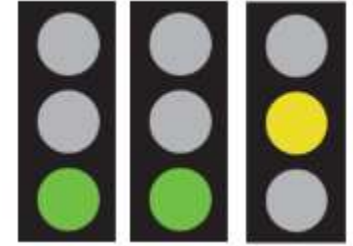
# Progress highlights



## Digital Connectivity

- 5G: CIMS have now prepared the invitation to tender for the detailed design ('experience') side of the project for Colchester Castle which will now go out to the market. Installation (hardware) - no substantial issues.
- Digital Forum: Main construction phase continues, practical completion projected July 2025. Colbea continue to work with onboarding and marketing and are beginning to identify how the new centre will be resourced and staffed. Opening scheduled for September 2025.
- Digital Skills Hub: Benefits realisation is ongoing.

# Progress highlights



## Transformed Youth Facilities

- Townhouse Youth Centre – floor plan and interior designs fixed, contractors (ReGen) on site.
- Enhancements include - sports hall climbing wall, soundproofing, teaching kitchen, recording and performance space, IT/lighting upgrades (contractors also committed to out-of-scope exterior improvements – resurfacing etc – corporate social responsibility).
- Colchester Fibre – offer of fibre broadband connectivity (faster/cheaper/buy local).
- Completion by October (possibly earlier through weekend working etc of contractor)
- Re-launch date and potential VIP visits under discussion with comms involvement.
- Stanway and Highwoods - completed.

# Key upcoming milestones

Projects in delivery	2025-26 Q1 (APR/JUN)	2025-26 Q2 (JUL/SEP)	2025-26 Q3 (OCT/DEC)	2025-26 Q4 (JAN/MAR) – end of Town Deal funding	2026-27	2027-28
St Nicholas Square	Complete works Jun 25					
Lexden Gardens public realm			Start public realm works Autumn 25	Complete public realm Spring 26		
Digital Forum		Practical completion Jul 25 / Opening Sept 25				
Holy Trinity Church		Heritage Fund application Aug 25. Town Deal funded repairs completed Sep 25		Heritage Fund start of works Apr 26		Heritage Funded completed works estimated March 28
Trinity Square		Contractor appointment Spring 25	Start works Sep 25	Complete works Jan 26		
Jumbo and Balcerne Gate phase 2		Town Deal funded work completed Sep 25	Heritage Fund delivery plan (Balcerne Gate aligned with wider programme)		Heritage Fund completed works Summer 27	
Greenstead Hub	Contractor procurement Apr 25	Planning consent July 25	Contractual commitment Oct 25	Start works Dec 25	Complete works Dec 26	
Townhouse youth centre			Complete works Oct 25			
5G	Build phase completed Apr 25		VR/AR creative tourism pilot completed			
Walking and Cycling		Tender Jul 25/award Sept 25	East Hill On site start Oct 25	Target Completion of all route sections Mar 26		
Monitoring returns	Half year return Jun 25		End year return Dec 25			
Comms and engagement						

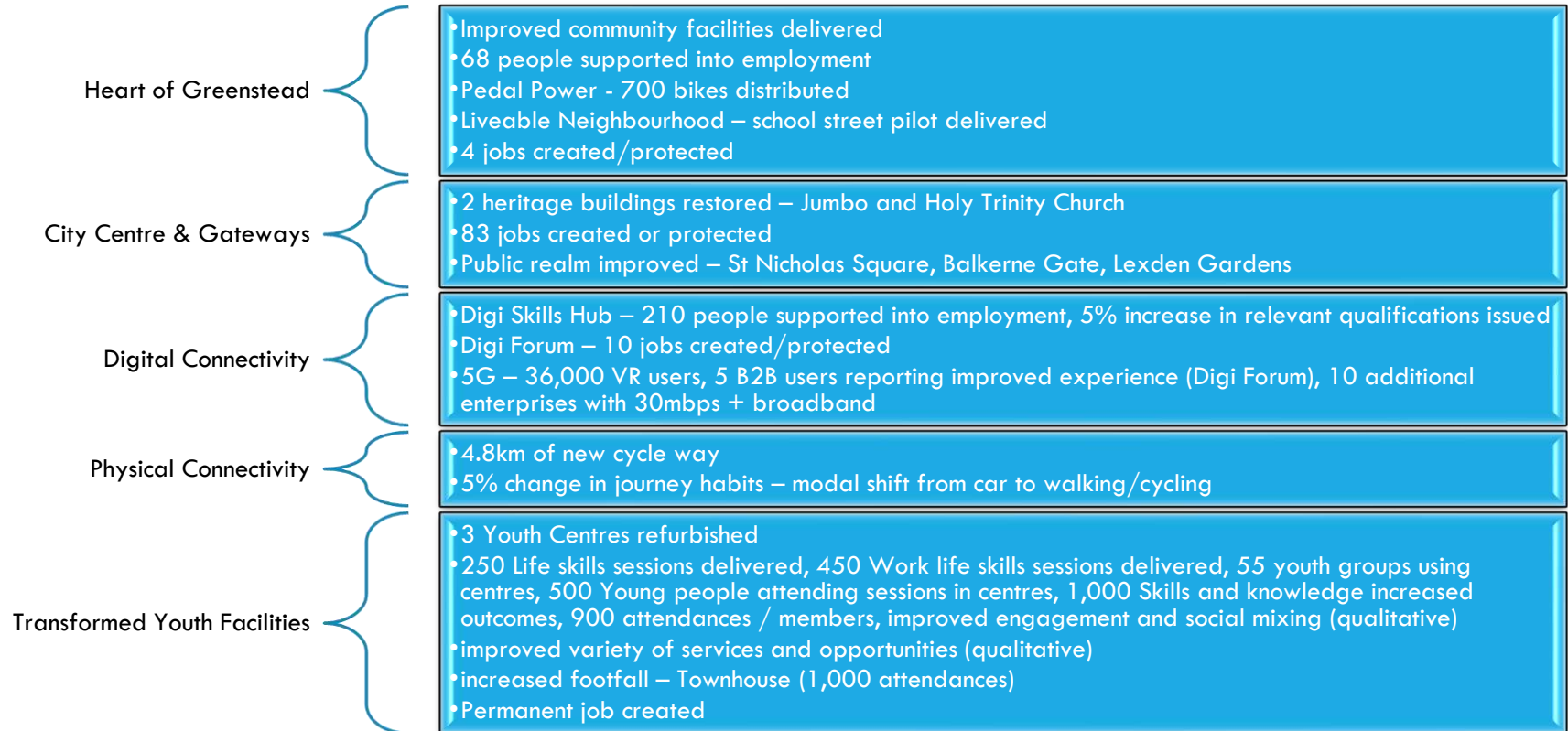
Total project budgets, Town Deal funding elements and unmitigated overspend position	Project	Project Total	Budget	Town Deal Funding	Unmitigated Overspend
Heart of Greenstead	Multi-agency Community Hub	£5.9M	£5.9M	£5.9M	Being calculated
	Essex Pedal Power	£320K	£320K	£320K	£0
	Liveable Neighbourhoods	£300K	£300k	£300k	£0
City Centre Schemes	St Nicholas Square	£1.6M	£1.6M	£1.25M	£0
	Trinity Square	£600K	£600K	£600k	£0
	Essex County Hospital Public Realm	£488K	£488K	£488k	£0
	Holy Trinity Church	£2.8M	£2.8M	£500k	£0
	Jumbo / Balcerne Gate Phase 2	£1.781M	£1.781M	£1.781M	£0
Transformed Youth Facilities	Townhouse	£1M	£1M	£1M	£0
	Stanway	£120K	£120K	£120K	£0
	Highwoods	£170K	£170K	£170K	£0
Physical Connectivity	LCWIP4	Being calculated	£4.6M	£2.88M	Being calculated
Digital Connectivity	Digital Forum/Working Hub	£6.25M	£6.3M (full budget TD and other funding)	£879K	-£50K
	Digital Skills Hub	£879K	£879K	£879K	£0
	5G	£977K	£977K	£977K	£0

As reported to CCC Scrutiny Panel at annual Town Deal review – February 2025 – to be updated.



# RECAP – WHY V WHAT?

## OUTCOMES/BENEFITS REALISATION



# Examples of fantastic engagement work from the project teams:

- Holy Trinity Church
  - Residents Panel
  - Civic Society visit
- Heart of Greenstead
  - Dr's Surgery
- Jumbo
  - Ongoing



# City Centre Promotion

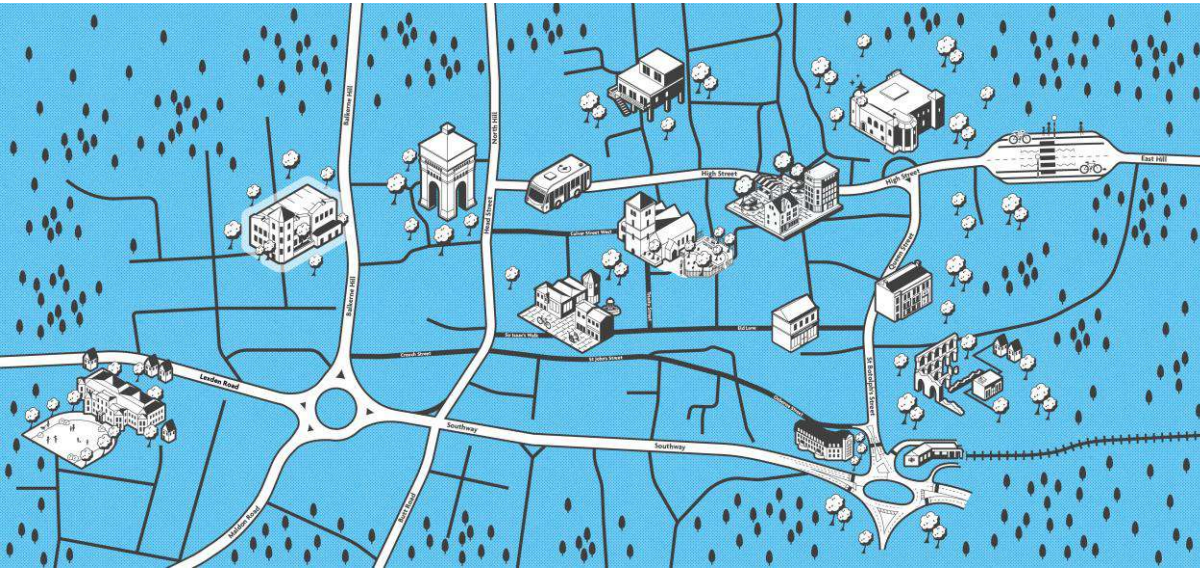
Scott Gray-Chick

City Centre Public Relations & Marketing Manager

# Communication objectives

- Establish a clear connection between all City Centre projects to ensure understanding of the full scope of investment among residents, visitors, and businesses
- Promote individual regeneration projects across the City Centre
- Highlight the unique business and digital sector offering of Colchester, positioning it as a destination of regional importance
- Leverage the regeneration of the City Centre to foster a sense of pride among residents, visitors, and businesses; knowing that can help employee retention
- Promote and protect the image of Essex County Council, Colchester City Council, We Are Colchester and Colchester in the eyes of the public through the careful dissemination of important news, communication with the media, and by putting a positive spin on events
- Supporting and amplifying City Centre businesses and groups (so far, we've reached approx. 6million people with over 700k meaningful engagements!)

# Where are we



- 46% of people are aware that regeneration is underway; 25% are unsure
- 69% of people are aware of St Nicholas Square
- 69% Lexden Gardens
- 67% The Jumbo Project
- 46% East Hill Walking & Cycling
- 43% are aware of the Digital Forum
- 26% Trinity Square
- 12% Town House
- 15% aware of private investment



# What's next



- Place setting with partners
- Celebrating completed projects
- Working with the media
- Learning from the City Centre survey
- Thank you! Any questions?



We are Colchester



Colchester  
City Council

# Levelling Up Programme Update

Matt Sterling

Head of Economic Growth



We are Colchester



Colchester  
City Council

# Project Spotlight: Heart of Greenstead Hub

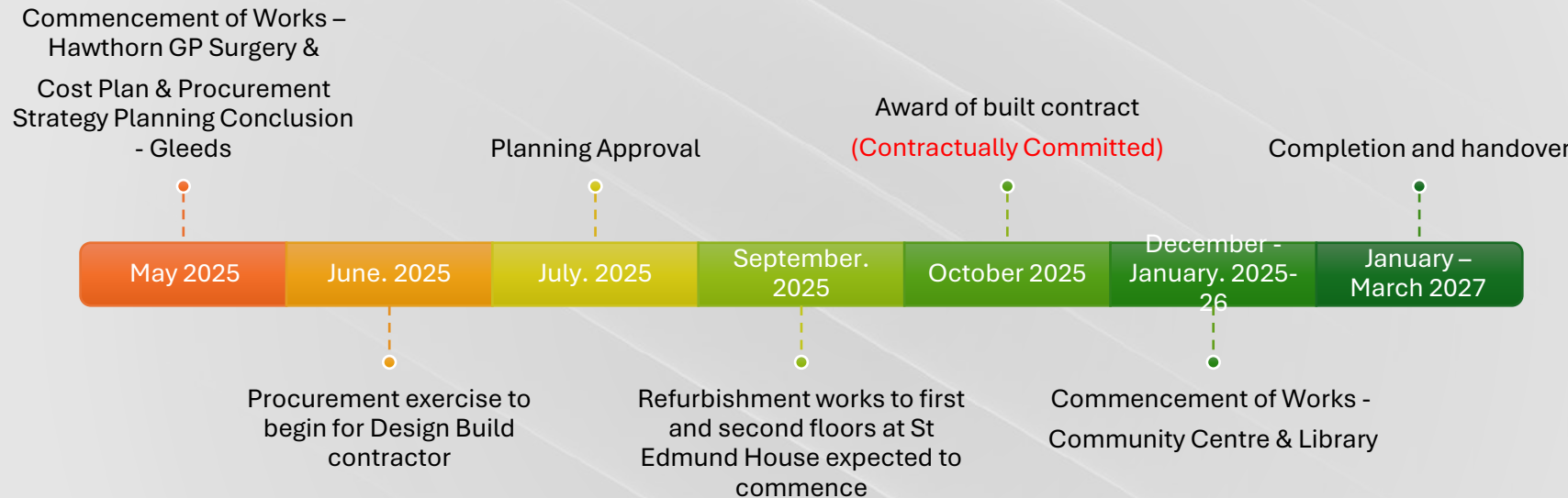
Richard Kendrew  
Project Manager



An aerial photograph of a city neighborhood, likely Greenstead, showing a mix of residential and commercial buildings, streets, and green spaces. The text "Heart of Greenstead" is overlaid in white. The image has a dark, semi-transparent overlay at the top and bottom, creating a vignette effect.

# Heart of Greenstead

# Heart of Greenstead Phase 1– Program Key Dates



## Heart of Greenstead Phase 1 – Site Plan Proposals

### REFURBISHMENT

#### REPURPOSING GREENSTEAD LIBRARY

Refurbishment of the existing building to provide improved facilities for:

- Little Explorer's Nursery
- HCRG Care Group



### LANDSCAPING

#### CREATION OF PRIVATE GREEN SPACES

Relocation of the nursery and HCRG services to support a 'childrens hub' and offer increased facilities, including better green space and new learning opportunities.

### REFURBISHMENT

#### ST EDMUNDS HOUSE & HAWTHORN SURGERY

Potential refurbishment of St Edmunds House to provide improved facilities for:

- Hawthorn GP Surgery
  - Colchester Borough Homes (Staff)
- Above ground floor, St Edmunds House provides office space, with potential for further services or offices to be incorporated in the future.



### OPPORTUNITY

#### NEW COMMUNITY SQUARE

Future opportunity for a multi-use flexible outdoor space to improve the public realm.



### DEMOLITION

#### RELOCATION OF FAMILY & HOUSING OFFICES

Family Solutions and Colchester Borough Homes to be integrated into the new community centre, with additional offices at St Edmunds House.



### LANDSCAPING

#### PUBLIC REALM

Landscaping improvements around the community centre enhance the public realm and better integrate the building into the community.

### REFURB. & EXTENSION

#### COMMUNITY CENTRE

Proposed extension to better integrate services into the community, providing improved facilities for:

- Greenstead Library
  - Kelly's Kafe
  - Signpost Resource Centre
- Proposed refurbishment to improve access, flexibility and spatial quality, supporting the practical needs of:
- Greenstead Community Centre
  - Colchester Borough Homes
  - Family Solutions

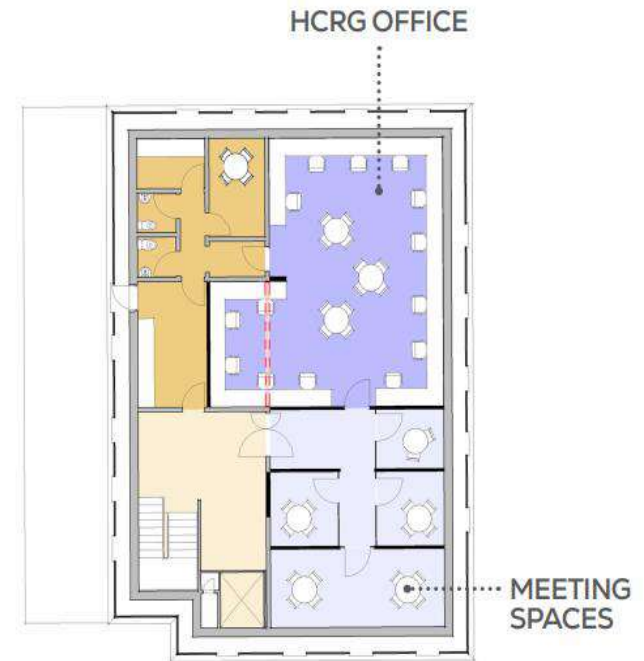




## Heart of Greenstead Phase 1 –Community Centre Proposals



## Heart of Greenstead Phase 1 – Library Building Proposals





## Heart of Greenstead Phase 1 – Concept





We are Colchester



Colchester  
City Council

# Issues, Risks & Mitigations – you said, we did

# **Recap on decisions to be actioned from 27 February 2025 meeting**



# Heart of Greenstead

Action	Lead	Update
<p>Because of the risks reported, detailed monthly updates should be provided on this project.</p> <p>Regular updates should be provided, including the position on financial contingencies, to Cllr King as Leader of the Council (the Accountable Body) and Portfolio Holder for Strategy.</p> <p>A site visit for Pam Cox MP should be arranged.</p>	Rory Doyle	<p>An update on timeline, highlights, headlines, key risks, RAG status (overall/time/cost), budget (committed spend/unmitigated overspend), upcoming milestones, community engagement and benefits realisation has been provided to the Leader and Portfolio Holder for Strategy and shared with the Board.</p> <p>Such updates will now be shared monthly.</p> <p>A site visit for Pam Cox MP is being arranged by Michelle Tarbun (project owner).</p>

# Holy Trinity Church

Action	Lead	Update
<p>Update on progress towards Heritage Fund application in August 2025.</p> <p>Assurance that remaining Town Deal budget will be spent by September 2025 on outstanding repairs.</p> <p>Assurance that re-opening is on track for February 2028.</p>	Matt Sterling	<p>The Heritage Fund bid is on track for submission. Costs are being reviewed as these are higher than originally expected – to ensure the bid is under the threshold requiring national committee decision.</p> <p>Town Deal budget is on track to be used by September 2025, with procurement delays being managed.</p> <p>Re-opening of Holy Trinity Church is expected to take place by February 2028 subject to Heritage Fund award.</p>

# Holy Trinity Square

Action	Lead	Update
<p>Assurance that on site works will start by September 2025.</p> <p>Assurance that these works will be completed by December 2025/January 2026.</p>	<p>Matt Sterling</p>	<p>Drainage plans have been passed to Anglian Water for approval and being proactively managed. The construction tender can then be issued.</p> <p>On site works are still expected to start by September 2025 and complete by January 2026.</p>

# St Nicholas Square

Action	Lead	Update
<p>Confirmation that the project was closed in April 2025.</p> <p>Assurance that lessons learned have been shared.</p>	<p>Matt Sterling</p>	<p>Due to further unforeseen archaeology and construction requirements this project is now expected to complete by end of June 2025.</p> <p>Lessons are being actively shared across other Town Deal projects.</p>

# Lexden Gardens (Essex County Hospital)

Action	Lead	Update
<p>Feedback received from the site visit on 19 March 2025.</p> <p>Assurance that Town Deal-funded public realm works will be completed by late 2025/early 2026.</p>	<p>Matt Sterling</p>	<p>Positive feedback has been received from the site visit. A further visit is being arranged to enable a more detailed exploration of internal and external works on the housing scheme.</p> <p>Contractors are on track to complete Town Deal funded public realm works by early 2026 and regular updates are provided by Essex Housing.</p>

# Jumbo & Balkerne Gate

Action	Lead	Update
<p>Assurance that outstanding Town Deal enabling funding for repairs, design and planning would be spent by September 2025.</p> <p>Details of public realm ambitions which will be enabled by Balkerne Gate phase 2 budget (£500k).</p>	<p>Matt Sterling</p>	<p>All remaining Town Deal enabling funding will be available to North Essex Heritage for drawdown via purchase order.</p> <p>Planning is underway for Balkerne Gate phase 2 public realm which now forms part of the Jumbo project, with due consideration for highways and other permissions which will be required to complete this element of the works.</p>

# Walking and Cycling route

Action	Lead	Update
<p>Assurance that route sections 1-3 (East Hill) are on track- in including confirmation of any new TRO, tender and on site start in June/July 2025.</p> <p>Confirmation that Safer Streets bid (£500k) has been submitted for route sections 4-7 (the Moors) with any decision received – enabling CCTV, improved lighting and mobile wi-fi provision.</p> <p>Assurance that all route sections 1-8 will be completed by March 2026.</p>	Ellen Clark-Romain	<p>Route sections 1-3 (East Hill) – a new traffic regulation order has been advertised with a deadline for comments of 9 May 2025. Tender is expected to be issued by July 2025. On site works are due to commence by September 2025. Works are expected to take place for 7 months, with a decision required by ECC on extended working hours, review of Christmas embargo or a slippage in final completion to May 2026.</p> <p>Route sections 4-7 (The Moors) – Safer Streets bid for £500k has been submitted to enable safety measures of cctv, improved lighting and mobile wi fi provision.</p> <p>Route section 8 (Colne Causeway) is complete.</p> <p>Subject to TRO and procurement, full route completion is expected by Spring 2026.</p>

# Digital Forum

Action	Lead	Update
Assurance that handover of the forum to Colbea will take place in July 2025.	Matthew Brown	Handover of the building to Colbea is on track for July 2025.
Assurance that fit out will be completed in August 2025.		Fit out is on track for August 2025.
Assurance that opening with anchor tenants will take place on 1 September 2025.		Opening with anchor tenants is on track for September 2025.
		Wider land use is also being assessed and proactively managed.
		Potential for a summer We Are Colchester Board meeting being investigated.



# 5G

Action	Lead	Update
<p>Assurance that 5G infrastructure works were completed by April 2025.</p> <p>Assurance that the AR/VR tourism visitor experience creative focused on animating the Castle and Roman Wall will be completed and go live by December 2025.</p>	Matthew Brown	<p>Infrastructure works completed in April 2025.</p> <p>AR/VR tourism experience brief developed by Colchester and Ipswich Museums Service and Colchester Fibre. Procurement expected soon.</p> <p>On track for completion by December 2025.</p>

# Transformed youth facilities

Action	Lead	Update
<p>Assurance that on site works at the Townhouse youth centre commenced in March 2025 and will be completed by July 2025.</p> <p>An update on planned comms and re-opening.</p>	Glenn Crickmore	<p>Townhouse works have started. July 2025 completion may not be possible though Essex Youth Service are working with contractors to manage potential slippage to September/October 2025.</p> <p>Comms are on hold until a firm date for re-opening is confirmed.</p>

# Transformed youth facilities

• Mist coat applied to ceiling



External colour on windows completed





We are Colchester



Colchester  
City Council

# Decisions & Next Meeting

Simon Blaxill

# Decisions

Board are invited to make decisions or note the following:

## Decisions:

1. Approve submission of the Performance Monitoring Return to MHCLG for the period October 2024-March 2025.

## To note:

1. Programme-wide progress and planned activities.
2. Key risks including cost mitigations and contingencies.
3. Heart of Greenstead project spotlight.
4. Levelling Up programme progress update.
5. Current project timelines, milestones and risk management (including any specific 'you said, we did' actions arising from the last Board meeting).

# Next meeting

**21 August 2025** – venue to be confirmed

## Future meetings

26 November 2025

25 February 2026