



We are Colchester



Colchester
City Council

We Are Colchester Board Meeting

16 July 2026

Decisions & Actions

Board Present:

Simon Blaxill - Chair, Cllr Jeff Bray – Essex County Council (ECC), Cristina Huddleston – Community360, Cllr David King – Colchester City Council (CCC), Alison Andreas – Colchester Institute, Simon Mead – Colbea.

Board Apologies/Absent:

Lucy Johnson – University of Essex, Kate Heslegrave – St Helena, Pam Donnelly – CCC, Pam Cox MP, Alison Jennings – Homes England, Andrew Burgess – ECC.

Others Attending:

Lindsay Barker – CCC, Matthew Sterling – CCC, Alex Jeremy – ECC, Michelle Tarbun – CCC, Richard Kendrew – CCC, Ellen Clark-Romain – ECC, Matthew Brown – CCC, Jason Lowe – North Essex Heritage, Jo Porter – CCC, Simon Thorp – CCC.

1. Welcome, Apologies, Declarations of Interest

- a. The Chair **welcomed** Cllr Jeff Bray, ECC Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning and Heritage who has been appointed to this outside body. Cllr David King continues to represent CCC in his new role of Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Communities and Public Protection.
- b. **Apologies and absences** were noted for Lucy Johnson, Kate Heslegrave, Pam Donnelly, Pam Cox MP, Alison Jennings and Andrew Burgess.
- c. There were no **declarations of interest**. The Register of Interests is updated periodically and published to the CCC website in line with government requirements.

2. Progress Report, Comms and Engagement update

- a. Board **noted** a brief update focused on key milestones, progress since last meeting and programme risks.
- b. The majority of projects have now been completed or are close to completion, with Trinity Square and Lexden Gardens currently on track to be completed in the coming months. The Programme Overall RAG status remains Amber, with the Iran conflict causing significant cost and supply chain pressures and a long tail impact likely to continue into Q3 and Q4 2026-27.
- c. Greenstead Hub project continues to report an Overall Red RAG status and Walking and Cycling project Cost RAG status remains Amber.
- d. Updates on Jumbo and Holy Trinity Church projects will be provided at a future meeting.
- e. Programme-wide forecast spend is in line with budget, with a minor variance for Digital Forum covered in-programme.
- f. Board **noted** a recap of benefits realisation objectives across the projects.
- g. Board **noted** an update on recent and forthcoming comms and engagement activity.
- h. No questions or comments were raised.

3. Heart of Greenstead Hub update

- a. Board **noted** an update on the purpose of the project, design and mobilisation phase progress and planned activities, risks/issues/mitigations and RAG statuses and were encouraged to promote or attend the forthcoming Greenstead Community Fun Day on 1 August 2026.
- b. Board **noted** that CCC was now in contract with Carmelcrest with the associated cost risk now Green.
- c. Board **noted** that whilst the Overall RAG Status of the project is under review, the recommendation is that it remains Red.
- d. Simon Mead asked whether there were plans to save and relocate the murals at the housing office. This was thought to be unlikely but Officers will investigate realistic options.

4. Walking and Cycling route LCWIP 4

- a. Board **noted** that ECC had sealed the contract with Octavius for construction works on East Hill (route sections 1-3), with planned completion of works in Summer 2027. Utilities diversion work has already been undertaken in June 2026. Interactions with other city centre works will be closely monitored and managed, including the St Botolphs Circus regeneration project (which falls outside the scope of We Are Colchester Board's governance). Public engagement events are also ongoing, with Board encouraged to promote or attend such events.
- b. Board **noted** that because East Hill has been prioritised as previously agreed, additional funding is being sought by ECC alongside value engineering options to complete route sections 4-7 (the Moors, Hythe Station Road, Greenstead Road). Safer Streets funding of £100k from Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner is linked to delivery of these route sections. ECC are also examining options to decommission Hythe Station Bridge.
- c. Board **noted** that Colne Causeway crossing improvements have been completed (route section 8).
- d. Cllr Bray raised a comment about imagery in documentation for the project. Officers will clarify details and address any issues.

5. Digital Forum

- a. Board **noted** a comprehensive update on timeline, events and activities to date. Café Connect now operate the café, studios 2 and 3 have been let and studios 5 and 6 are under offer. Advertising consent is also been sought to add signage to the front of the building. Social media engagement has been positive and the range of key partners involved acknowledged.

6. Transformed Youth Facilities

- a. Board **noted** that following investment of £1.3m, Townhouse/Stanway/Highwoods youth centre improvements have been completed, with a workshop scheduled to reflect and look forward to benefits realisation prior to formal project closure and transition to business as usual.
- b. Board **noted** that some of the key improvements to the Townhouse included a climbing wall and other enhancements to the gym, a VR space, new recording studio and performance space and teaching kitchen designed to support groups including young family carers.

7. Levelling Up Programme

- a. Board **noted** an update on St Botolphs Circus, St Botolphs Quarter, Bike Hub and Shopfront Improvement projects. Whilst this programme is not governed by We Are Colchester the projects are closely aligned with city centre projects that are governed by this Board.
- b. Board **noted** that potential traffic management and congestion risks were being closely managed.
- c. Cllr King commented on the importance of continuing to ensure that contractual commitment was secured for all projects including St Botolphs Quarter with required contingencies factored in and actively managed.

8. 'You Said, We Did'

- a. Board **noted** an update encompassing 11 projects and overall programme level, which confirmed that all agreed actions from previous meetings had been completed or were in progress and on track.
- b. No questions or comments were raised.

9. Decisions and Items Noted

- a. Board **directed** that the Overall RAG Status for the Greenstead Hub project should remain Red.
- b. Board **directed** that the Cost RAG Status for the Walking and Cycling project should remain Amber.
- c. Board **noted** the update on Programme-wide progress and planned activities (with an advance Board Report circulated).
- d. Board **noted** updates on Digital Forum and Transformed Youth Facilities projects, and Levelling Up programme.
- e. Board **noted** an update on 'You said, we did' items raised at the last meeting.

10. Next meeting

- a. The next Board Meeting is on 18 August 2026 (MS Teams), subject to re-confirmation.
- b. The subsequent Board Meeting is on 17 November 2026.
- c. Board meetings will as previously agreed take place on MS Teams, with invitations to project completion and key milestone events shared by exception. All additional meetings will be in person unless otherwise agreed.