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# We Are Colchester Board Meeting

16 December 2025

MS Teams

# Agenda

1. **Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interest – Simon Blaxill**
2. **Progress Report, Engagement & Communications Update (advance Board Report circulated) – Simon Thorp**
3. **Project Spotlight 1: Greenstead Hub - update (planning permission, contractor appointment, delivery plan and key milestones) – Rory Doyle**
4. **Project Spotlight 2: Walking and Cycling route – update (East Hill funding prioritisation and contract award, approach to other route sections, timeline, risk management) – Ellen Clark-Romain**
5. **Project Spotlight 3: Holy Trinity Church – update (funding and management options) – Matthew Brown**
6. **Issues, Risks & Mitigations - 'You said, we did'**
7. **Levelling Up Programme Update - Simon Thorp**
8. **Decisions and points to note**
9. **Next meeting**



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# Welcome, Apologies & Declarations of Interest

Simon Blaxill

Chair



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# Progress Report, Engagement & Communications Update

Simon Thorp  
Programme Manager

# Headlines

- Over 70% of programme now delivered or close to Town Deal-funded completion.
- Local Regeneration Fund combines Town Deal and Levelling Up with a new final deadline to spend all funds – March 2028. Next performance return Spring 2026.
- Greenstead Hub design and build contractor appointment approved - £2.5m budget gap underwritten by councils pending confirmation of other funding sources.
- Walking and Cycling route LCWIP 4 East Hill contractor appointment to be approved by ECC with budget prioritisation of route sections 1-3.
- Mitigations in place where overspend is forecast.
- Holy Trinity Church – managing tenant issue and unsecured 'post Town Deal' funding options being explored.
- 5G project stopped and funds redirected to Greenstead Hub.
- Jumbo and Balcerne Gate phase 2 – post-Town Deal construction phase cost pressures, with value engineering and scope reduction review underway.
- Townhouse Youth Centre – completed, with dignitary soft opening ceremony.
- Digital Forum – completed.
- Lexden Gardens – topping out ceremony completed.
- Holy Trinity Square – out to tender, award expected February 2026.

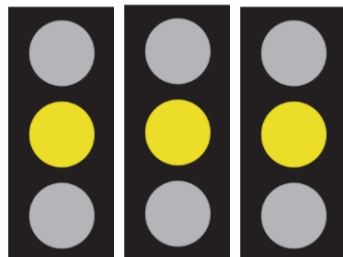
# Project Completion Status, RAG and Timeline

Project	Project Name	Status
1	BALKERNE GATE PHASE 1 (ACCELERATED)	Completed
2	ST NICHOLAS SQUARE (ACCELERATED)	Completed – final costs awaited
3	DIGITAL SKILLS HUB	Completed
4	ESSEX PEDAL POWER GREENSTEAD	Completed
5	LIVEABLE NEIGHBOURHOOD/SCHOOL STREET GREENSTEAD	Completed
6	5G	Phase 1 infrastructure completed, phase 2 AR/VR tourism experience cancelled
7	TRANSFORMED YOUTH FACILITIES – TOWNHOUSE, STANWAY, HIGHWOODS	Completed
8	DIGITAL FORUM	Practical completion - opening early 2026
9	TRINITY SQUARE	On Track – completion summer 2026
10	LEXDEN GARDENS	On Track – completion winter 2026
11	JUMBO	On Track – moving from Town Deal to Heritage Fund construction phase – VE/scope review underway - completion late 2027
12	BALKERNE GATE PHASE 2	VE/scope review underway – completion possibly late 2027
13	HOLY TRINITY CHURCH	In Progress – Risks Managed – completion Spring 2028
14	GREENSTEAD HUB	In Progress – Significant cost pressures – completion Summer 2027
15	WALKING & CYCLING ROUTE CITY CENTRE-GREENSTEAD-UNIVERSITY	In Progress – Significant cost pressures - East Hill – completion Spring 2027 (the Moors/Hythe/Greenstead Road by Spring 2028)
16	KERBLESS STREET	Cancelled

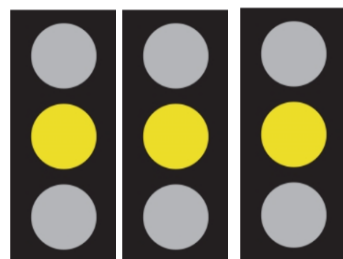
Date	Key Milestone
Nov 2025	St Nics Square final costs
Nov 2025	Trinity Square procurement
Nov 2025	Townhouse Youth Centre works completed and soft opening
Nov 2025	Greenstead Hub planning approval
Dec 2025	Digital Forum opening and confirm final costs
Dec 2025	LCWIP4 East Hill ECC contract award
Dec 2025	Greenstead Hub CCC Cabinet approval for contract award and assurance on funding package
Jan 2026	Greenstead Hub contractual commitment
Jan 2026	LCWIP4 East Hill on site start
Feb 2026	Holy Trinity Church repairs completed
Feb 2026	Holy Trinity Church embargoed Heritage Fund award decision
Feb 2026	Trinity Square governance completed for contractor appointment
Mar 2026	Greenstead Hub pre-commencement and detailed designs
Apr 2026	MHCLG performance monitoring return
Summer 2026	Greenstead Hub on site start
Jul 2026	Trinity Square works completed
Dec 2026	Lexden Gardens public realm completion
Mar 2027	LCWIP4 East Hill sections 1-3 completed
Summer 2027	Greenstead Hub completion
Dec 2027	Jumbo opens
Mar 2028	Holy Trinity Church opens
Mar 2028	All Local Regeneration Fund (Town Deal/LUF) projects completed and transition to BAU

# Dashboard - RAG status

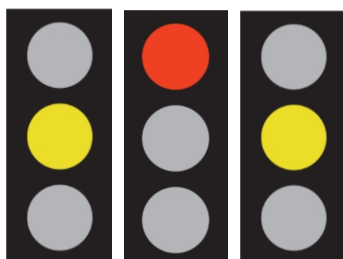
Overall Cost Time



**PROGRAMME**



**Town Centre  
& Gateways**

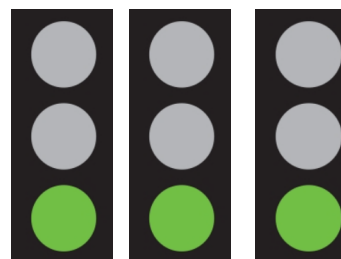


**Physical Connectivity**

Overall Cost Time



**Digital Connectivity**



**Transformed Youth  
Facilities**



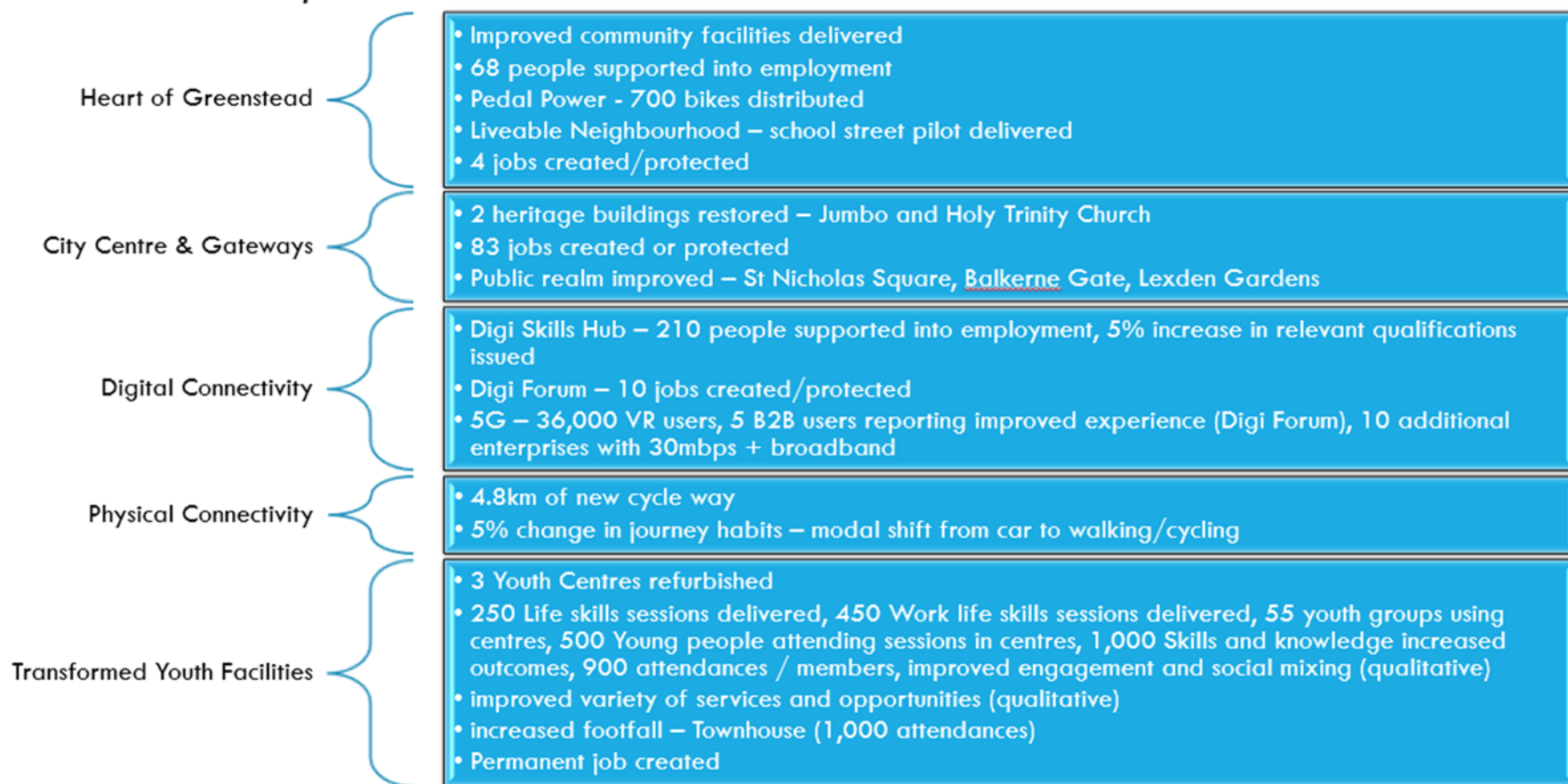
**Heart of  
Greenstead**

(Based on November progress reports)

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



# Benefits objectives





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SQUARE  
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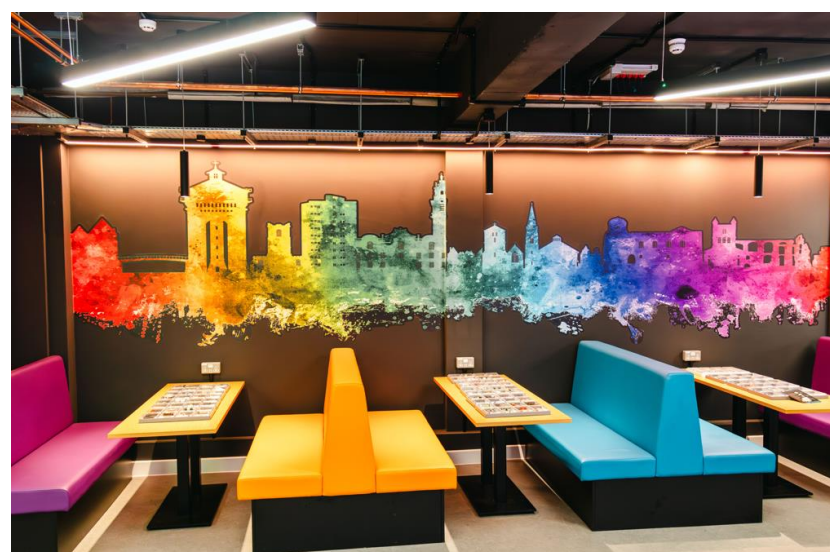
  
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# Comms & Engagement Update

- Series of drop-in sessions held at Rowan House and Town Hall to update CCC staff on project developments
- Civic Society – regular updates
- Thomas Pilkington Trust (Essex Sight Loss Council) - new Engagement Lead
- Heart of Greenstead – new phase of Engagement now planning permission granted
- \*Worked with Essex Youth Service colleagues to promote The Townhouse 'soft launch' – 27th November
- \*(stats will be provided to the We Are Colchester board in January).



# Comms & Engagement Update

- Promoted the activation of St Nicholas Square. With over 290k trackable views and 21.5k trackable meaningful engagements when promoting the Christmas Wheel; and 112k trackable views and 17.4k trackable meaningful engagements for the newly installed lights.
- We continue to promote new businesses in the city centre, including:

Twana Fruit and Veg (75k trackable views and 7.7k trackable engagement),  
Emmaus Decorating Hub (114k t. views and 8.7k t. engagement),  
The reopening of Tymperleys (101k t. views and 7.5k t. eng-),  
Promoting the newly refurbished library (61k t. views and 7.8k t. eng-),  
late night shopping (105k t. views and 10.1k t. eng-),  
and approval to display Red Lion Yard Roman mosaic  
(398k trackable views and 24.3k trackable engagement).



# Comms & Engagement – What's Next?

- We've scheduled 16 weeks of exhibition space at the newly refurbished city centre library. This will include visuals to illustrate changes happening to our city centre, officers to assist the public and to answer questions, and even a dedicated 'break out' room for difficult and private conversations.
- We've created a visual to reinforce that the city centre has, typically, 500+ parking spaces at peak times. The visual shows the location of the car parks and their capacity. The visual will be used ahead of the closure of Britannia car park and will be tested with residents to ensure that it is helpful, easily digestible, and informative. Here's a sneak peak of a work in progress!

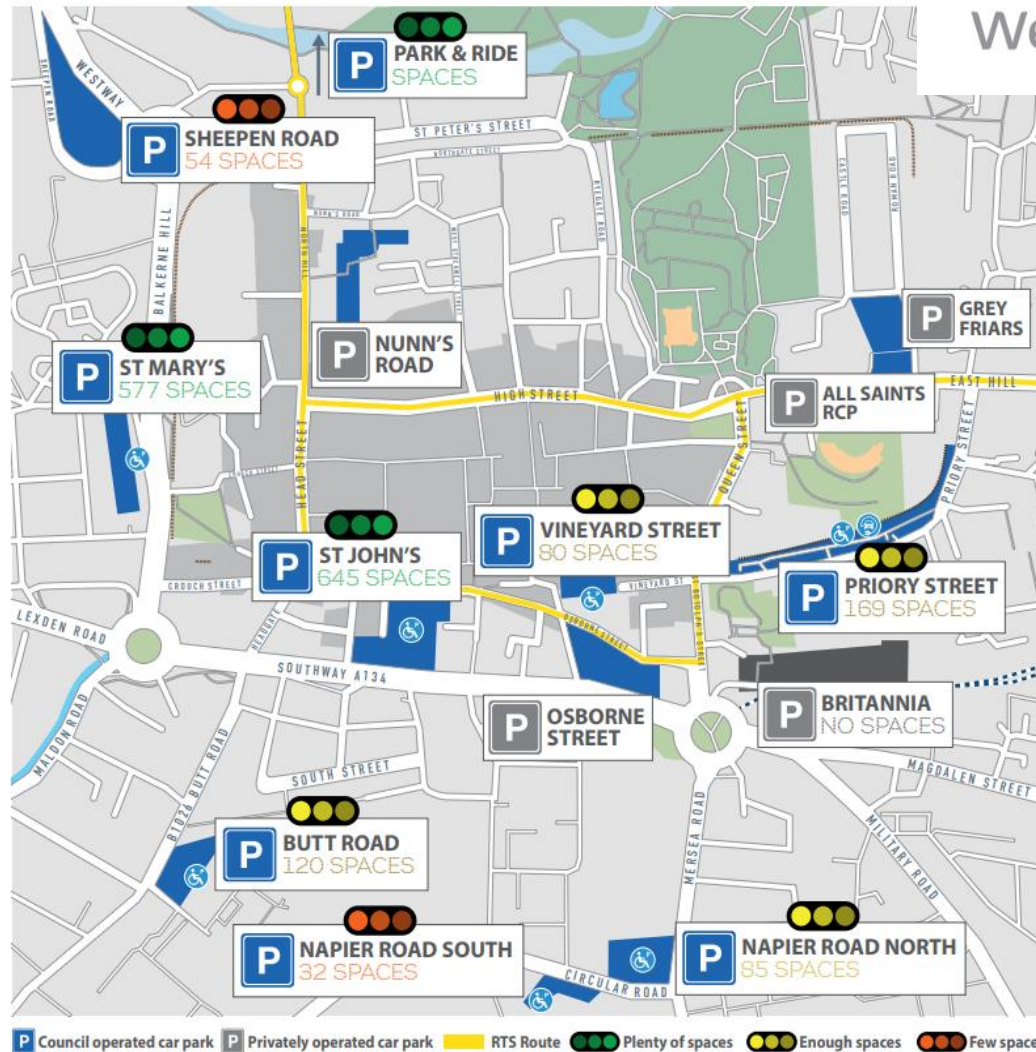




## TYPICALLY 500+ SPACES FREE AT PEAK TIMES



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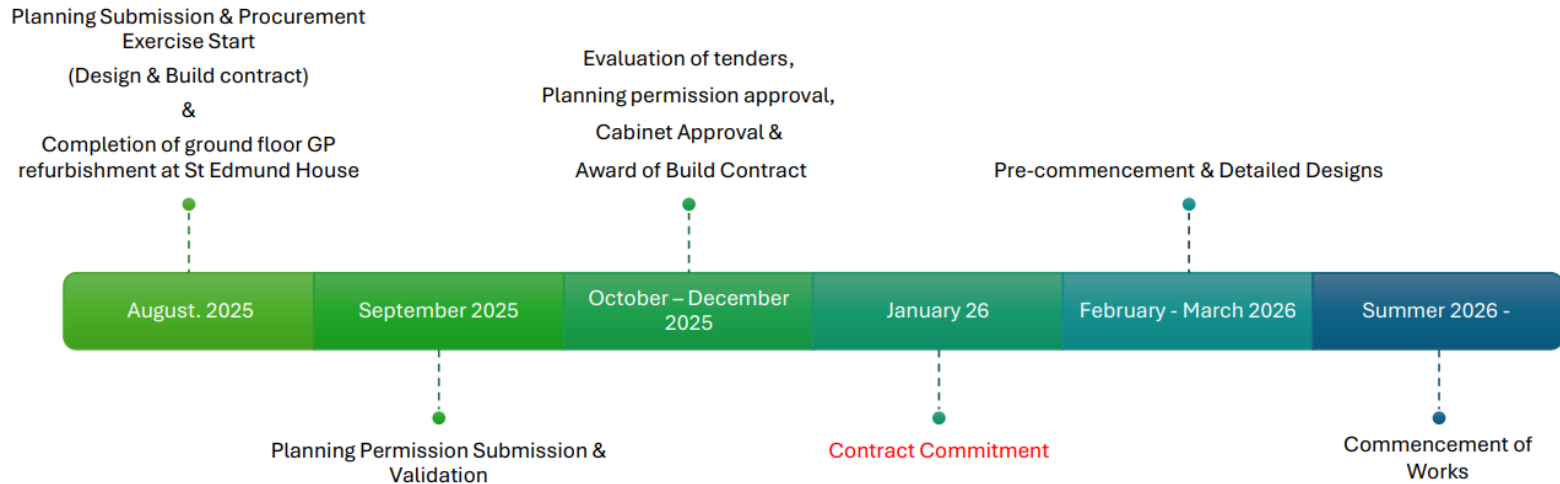
# Project Spotlight 1: Greenstead Hub - update

Rory Doyle

Strategic Director

Colchester City Council

## Heart of Greenstead Phase 1– Program Key Dates



Time contingency of two months to ensure contract committed, before Town Deal deadline of 31 March 2026.

Cabinet meeting Date – 3<sup>rd</sup> December  
Planning Committee – TBC (Expected late November)



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# Project Spotlight 2: Walking and Cycling route – update

Ellen Clark-Romain

Project Sponsor

Essex County Council

## Funding Summary by Route Section:

Route Section	Currently Funded?	Funding Source(s)	Funding Gap	Plan to Close Gap
1-3 (East Hill)	Yes	ATF3 + Town Deal + ECC	Shortfalls have/will be covered by	Contractor identified, pending

			ECC, and use of all currently available funding	approval of governance
4-5 (Moors/Haddon Park)	Partially	PFCC (£100k)	Remaining gap £1m+	Future Active Travel bids- The Moors is the next priority for delivery given external funding from PFCC (£100k)

6 (Hythe Station Bridge)	No	Unknown	Unknown	Existing walking/cycling infrastructure already in situ. No further investment <u>planned</u> . Further improvements may be possible utilising- Identified s.106 from Tendering Garden Community
7 (Greenstead Rd)	No	Unknown	Unknown	Existing walking/cycling infrastructure already in situ. No further investment <u>planned</u> . Further improvements may be possible utilising- Identified s.106 from Tendering Garden Community
8 (Colne Causeway)	Delivered	ATF4	None	Completed Oct 2023



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# Project Spotlight 3: Holy Trinity Church – update

Matthew Brown

Economic Regeneration Manager  
Colchester City Council



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

Heart of Greenstead Hub	Progress reports to CCC Leader continue. Timeline, milestones, cost plan, delivery model update, planning application status and procurement status provided. Budget shortfall options including potential Colchester City Council contribution actively being addressed. The Trust operating model is under review due to viability concerns. Site visit with MP completed.
Holy Trinity Church	Heritage Fund Bid submitted 5 August (£2.5m). St Helena withdrawal as managing tenant. Delay to Heritage Fund committee decision (February 2026). Historic England bid submitted 27 August (£350k). Architectural Heritage Fund bid to follow (£350k). Delivery stage budget £3.8m. £400k remaining Town Deal repairs budget committed. Procurement for repairs completed. Delivery stage procurement is not scheduled until Heritage Fund permission to start (revised date to be confirmed). Construction phase and reopening delivery plan to be reconfirmed.
Trinity Square	Drainage attenuation issue resolved. Planning approved. Tender issued. On site works delayed due to church repairs – completion may be delayed to early summer 2026.
St Nicholas Square	Main elements completed and re-opened. Final costs and budget overrun to be confirmed (covered by programme budget. Lessons continue to be shared. Animation of the square through Observation Wheel with full programme to be confirmed.
Lexden Gardens	Topping out ceremony completed. Further all-site to follow. Public realm on track for completion in line with wider housing development.
Jumbo and Balkerne Gate	Purchase order for balance of Town Deal funding issued. Main contractor appointed – Sir Robert McAlpine. Managing operator selection process ongoing. Working towards RIBA 4 detailed design. Discussions with Highways commenced. Value engineering, scope review, Fundraising and mitigation of peregrine nest site issue ongoing.



Walking and Cycling	ECC proceeding with governance for contractor appointment (East Hill route sections 1-3). This will utilise all remaining budget including additional £1.1m ECC contribution. On site mobilisation now expected to be January 2026, with construction from Summer 2026 to Summer 2027. Beth Chatto asked to remove topsoil from site compound location. Route sections 4-7 paused pending additional funding. Comms with MHCLG and PFCC underway. Route section 8 completed.
Digital Forum	Concession agreement between Colchester City Council and Colbea signed in July. Practical completion confirmed in December. Hoarding off land to rear of site pending Painters' Yard development as either housing-led regeneration, or a transport interchange.
5G	The 'network build' has been completed by Colchester Fibre. Phase 2 (visitor experience) paused with redirection of remaining budget to Greenstead Hub. Achievement of outcomes objectives (AR/VR user numbers) being explored with other projects (e.g. Jumbo) – to be covered in performance reporting to MHCLG.
Transformed Youth Facilities	Townhouse soft opening November. All features delivered within budget. Grand opening to be scheduled in early 2026. Stanway and Highwoods also completed. Commencement of project closure, reflections, looking forward and lessons learned.



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# Levelling Up Programme update

Simon Thorp

- **Shopfront grants** – nearing completion of phase 2 improvements – review of grant beneficiaries, purpose of grants, values and status of improvements underway.
- **St Botolphs Circus** – ECC progressing governance to award contract - £1.4m redirected from Kerbless Street and Vineyard Street archaeology budgets increasing total budget to £13.2m.
- **St Botolphs Quarter** – landscape planning application approved.
- **Bike Hub** - on budget, temporary location for bike kitchen and BID confirmed, detailed delivery plan being prepared – completion by Spring 2026.

Other updates:

- Transport interchange – options and messaging under review.
- City Centre parking – repairs to St Johns and St Marys car parks to be completed by March 2026 with phased plan for widening parking bays.



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# Decisions & Next Meeting

Simon Blaxill

# Decisions

Board are invited to make decisions on or note the following:

## DECISIONS:

1. No decisions are sought.

## TO NOTE:

1. Programme-wide progress and planned activities (advance Board Report circulated)
2. Update on Greenstead Hub design and build contractor award, cost pressure mitigation and delivery plan.
3. Update on Walking and Cycling route LCWIP 4 East Hill sections ECC contractor appointment, cost pressures, mitigations and funder communications (advance Board briefing note circulated)
4. Update on Holy Trinity Church managing tenant position, alternative options and status of Heritage Fund application.
5. Levelling Up programme progress update.
6. Current project timelines, milestones and risk management (including any specific 'you said, we did' actions arising from the last Board meeting).

# Next meeting

**25 February 2026 (MS Teams)**

**Future meetings**

For Board discussion and agreement.