



We are Colchester



Colchester
City Council

We Are Colchester Board Meeting

16 December 2025

Decisions & Actions

Board Present:

Simon Blaxill - Chair, Simon Mead – Colbea, Kate Heslegrave – St Helena, Cllr David King – Colchester City Council (CCC), Pam Donnelly - CCC, Alison Andreas – Colchester Institute, Alison Jennings – Homes England, Adam Fox (on behalf of Pam Cox MP).

Board Apologies:

Cllr Lee Scott – Essex County Council (ECC), Andy Burgess – ECC, Pam Cox MP, Lucy Johnson - University of Essex, Cristina Huddleston – Community360, Laura Eardley - Hiscox.

Others Attending:

Lindsay Barker – Deputy Chief Executive CCC, Matthew Brown – Economic Regeneration Manager CCC, Michelle Tarbun – Head of Health Partnerships and Well Being CCC, Rory Doyle –Strategic Director CCC, Jason Lowe – North Essex Heritage, Alex Jeremy – Place Regeneration Lead ECC, Ellen Clark-Romain – Project Sponsor ECC, Daniel Barton – City Centre Programmes Manager – CCC, Simon Thorp – Programme Manager CCC.

1. **Apologies, Declarations of Interest**

- a. **Apologies** were noted from Cllr Lee Scott, Andy Burgess, Pam Cox MP, Lucy Johnson, Cristina Huddleston and Laura Eardley.
- b. 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** an update on Programme-wide progress and planned activities, including project completion status and upcoming milestones. This included photos and film focused on St Nicholas Square, Townhouse Youth Centre and Essex Pedal Power. An advance Board Report had also been circulated.
- b. Board **noted** a comms and engagement update, with online views and engagement for St Nicholas Square highlighted.
- c. Board **noted** that 16 weeks of exhibition space was planned at the newly refurbished city centre library, including a new visual focused on city centre parking capacity.
- d. Cllr King commented that details of the exhibition space and schedule would be helpful for forthcoming CCC Member briefings.
- e. Pam Donnelly suggested widening the scope of projects and activities in the exhibition space.
- f. It was **agreed** that Officers would pass on these requests to the CCC Comms Team for further action.

3. Project Spotlight - Heart of Greenstead Hub

- a. Board **noted** an update on the purpose, timeline and key milestones of the project.
- b. Board **noted** that CCC Cabinet had resolved on 10 December 2025 that a [contract be awarded](#) to the Recommended Bidder to undertake the design and build works for the Heart of Greenstead project Phase 1. Pre-commencement work is expected to take place from February 2026 with on site construction starting in Summer 2026 with a one-year construction phase.
- c. Board **noted** that funding had been secured to meet the £2.5m budget shortfall. This was from a combination of CCC (£500k) and ECC (£500k) contributions, Town Deal in-programme redistributions and £1m underwritten by CCC pending other funding (Pride in Place Fund) becoming available to the project.
- d. Board **agreed** that Overall, Time and Cost RAG ratings for the project should be reduced from Red to Amber.

4. Project Spotlight – Walking and Cycling Route LCWIP 4

- a. Board **noted** an advance update circulated, outlining the intention to appoint a contractor for the East Hill route sections (1-3), cost pressures, mitigations and funder communications.
- b. Board **noted** that ECC's Cabinet Member and Leader had been briefed and, subject to resolution of traffic regulation order objections, ECC Cabinet will be invited to approve the contractor appointment in January 2026.
- c. Board **noted** that, subject to this ECC Cabinet approval, mobilisation would commence in February 2026 with main construction works starting in Summer 2026 and continuing into 2027.
- d. Board **noted** that all remaining available Town Deal budget and other confirmed funds would now be focused on delivery of East Hill route sections 1-3. Route section 8 (Colne Causeway) was completed in October 2023.
- e. Board **noted** mitigation plans to bridge the funding gap required to fully complete route sections 4-5 (Moors/Haddon Park) with new Active Travel Fund and confirmed £100k Safer Streets funding, and route section 6 (Hythe Station Bridge) and 7 (Greenstead Road) with Tendring Colchester Garden Community section 106 funding.
- f. Board **noted** that communication was planned with MHCLG and Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner to inform both key funders of current prioritisation of route sections 1-3, successful completion of route section 8 and plans for additional funding to complete route sections 4-7 by March 2028.
- g. Board confirmed that it **agreed** with this approach.
- h. Board **noted** that transport for male asylum seekers accommodated at Wethersfield was currently stopping on East Hill. Alternative arrangements are being investigated.

5. Project Spotlight – Holy Trinity Church

- a. Board **noted** an update on progress with repairs to Holy Trinity Church which will see all remaining Town Deal budget spent (expected to be completed by February 2026).
- b. Board **noted** that St Helena had withdrawn as managing tenant, with alternative options being explored including with Colchester Amphora, part of the council's group of wholly-owned commercial entities. A revised business case is being prepared.
- c. Kate Heslegrave commented in more detail on the challenging operational circumstances leading to St Helena's decision to withdraw from the project.
- d. Board **noted** that with the Town Deal-funded phase concluding, funding for the construction phase is currently largely unsecured.
- e. Board **noted** that whilst Heritage Fund are supportive of the project and have offered a development grant of £32.5k to support business plan work, the funding application will not now go to Heritage Fund committee until February 2026, with any award decision unlikely to be announced before June 2026.
- f. Board **noted** that the consequence of this is that the delivery plan for completion of post-Town Deal phase construction phase works will have to be revised.
- g. Board **commended** Officers for their work to date on the project.

6. Risks, Issues and Mitigations – ‘You Said, We Did’

- a. Board **noted** an update on progress against previously agreed actions for Heart of Greenstead Hub, Holy Trinity Church, Trinity Square, St Nicholas Square, Lexden Gardens, Jumbo and Balkerne Gate, Walking and Cycling, Digital Forum, 5G and Transformed Youth Facilities.

7. Levelling Up programme

- a. Board **noted** an update on the programme which forms part of the recently combined 'Local Regeneration Fund' alongside Town Deal. Projects summarised were Shopfront Grants, St Botolphs Circus, St Botolphs Quarter and Bike Hub.
- b. Board **noted** an update on the proposed Transport Interchange, with options and messaging under review, together with City Centre parking – where repairs to St Johns and St Marys car parks are due to be completed by March 2026 with a phased plan for widening parking bays.

8. Decisions and Items Noted

- a. Board **directed** that invitations to future project completion events and other key project milestones should be shared, including Digital Forum.
- b. Board **directed** that the timetable for the planned 16-week exhibition at Colchester Library be refined and shared.
- c. Board **noted** Programme-wide progress and planned activities (advance Board Report circulated).
- d. Board **noted** an update on Greenstead Hub design and build contractor award, cost pressure mitigation and delivery plan, **confirming** that it remained assured that cost pressures continue to be mitigated.
- e. Board **noted** an 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) and **confirmed** that it supported the approach set out.
- f. Board **noted** an update on Holy Trinity Church managing tenant position, alternative options and status of Heritage Fund application and **confirmed** that it supported the approach being taken to mitigate post-Town Deal phase budget and operational risks.
- g. Board **noted** a Levelling Up programme progress update.
- h. Board **noted** current project timelines, milestones and risk management (including any specific 'you said, we did' actions arising from the last Board meeting).
- i. Board **commended** Officers for the comprehensive advance information provided to enable effective oversight and decision making.
- j. Board **directed** that future Board Meetings should be scheduled on a quarterly basis throughout 2026, to be held on MS Teams by default and in person by exception, with invitations to in person project completion and other milestone events to be shared.

8. Next meeting

- a. The next Board Meeting is on 25 February 2026 (MS Teams).
- b. Dates of future meetings thereafter on a quarterly basis to be confirmed (May 2026, August 2026, November 2026 – MS Teams).
- c. Dates of in person project completion and milestone events to be circulated on a case-by-case basis.