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We Are Colchester Board Meeting

25 February 2026

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 – Holy Trinity Church managing tenant arrangements and construction phase funding – Matthew Brown**
- 4. Other updates - Greenstead Hub contract award and delivery plan, Digital Forum opening, Transformed Youth Facilities project closure, Walking and Cycling route LCWIP 4 - East Hill contract award and delivery plan**
- 5. Issues, Risks & Mitigations - 'You said, we did'**
- 6. Decisions and points to note**
- 7. 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

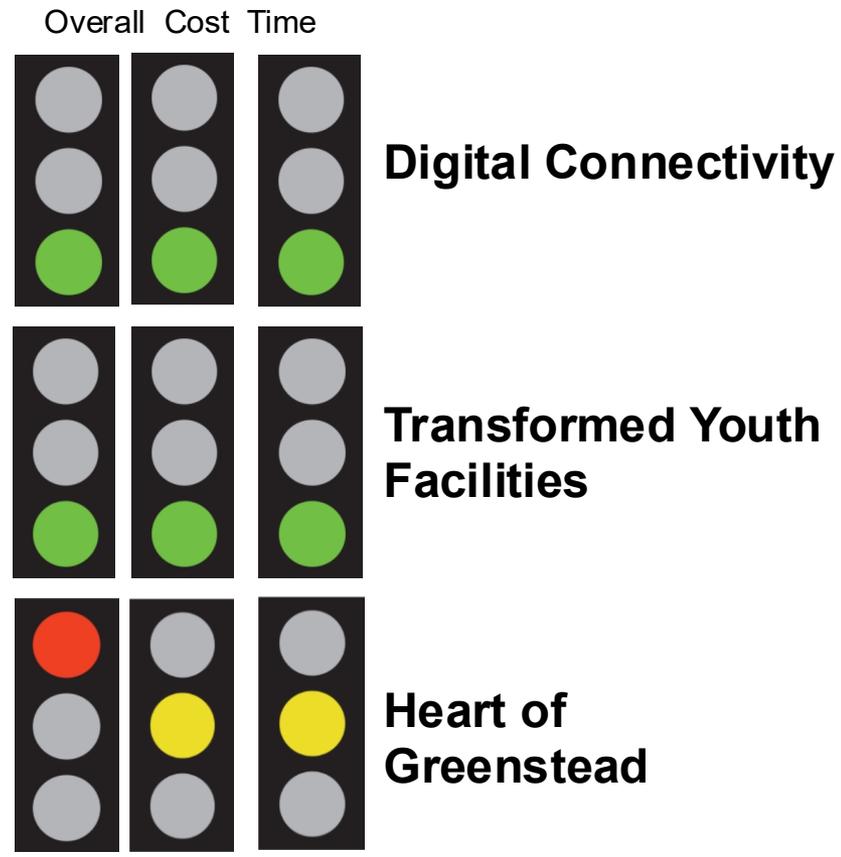
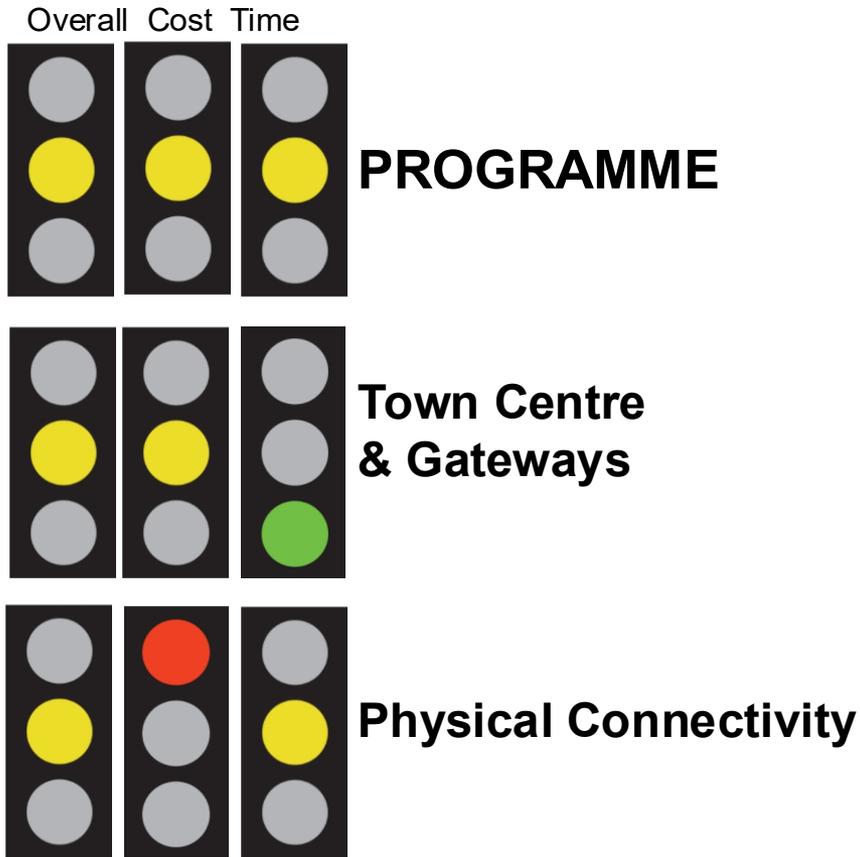
Project completion status & upcoming milestones

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/early 2028
12	BALKERNE GATE PHASE 2	VE/scope review underway – completion possibly late 2027/early 2028
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

Headlines

- 70%+ Programme completion.
- Digital Forum - completed with launch events.
- Townhouse Youth Centre – VIP launch event planned.
- Holy Trinity Church – Town Deal-funded repairs completed.
- Trinity Square – contractor appointed.
- Greenstead Hub design and build contractor appointed.
- St Nicholas Square – completed, programme of animation underway.
- Walking and Cycling route LCWIP 4 East Hill contractor appointment by ECC imminent.
- Lexden Gardens – site visits booked – 11 and 18 March.
- Jumbo/Balkerne Gate phase 2 – post-Town Deal enabling phase construction scope review ongoing.
- Hard deadline to spend remaining Local Regeneration Fund budget - March 2028.
- MHCLG content with progress and risk management.
- Preparation underway for annual Town Deal update to CCC Scrutiny Panel - 24 March 2026.

Dashboard - RAG status



(Based on January 2026 progress reports)
 Red/Amber Time + Cost RAG together = project features will be affected unless mitigated.

Budgets and forecast spend

- Total programme spend within budget and forecasts under regular review.
- 2025-26 spend broadly in line with forecast. Exceptions: £112k overspend (Digital Forum). Work underway to mitigate by redirecting funding. £493k accelerated spend (Jumbo). No budget pressure.

RECAP – WHY V WHAT? OUTCOMES/BENEFITS REALISATION

Heart of Greenstead

- Improved community facilities delivered
- 68 people supported into employment
- Pedal Power - 700 bikes distributed
- Liveable Neighbourhood – school street pilot delivered
- 4 jobs created/protected

City Centre & Gateways

- 2 heritage buildings restored – Jumbo and Holy Trinity Church
- 83 jobs created or protected
- Public realm improved – St Nicholas Square, Balkerne Gate, Lexden Gardens

Digital Connectivity

- Digi Skills Hub – 210 people supported into employment, 5% increase in relevant qualifications issued
- Digi Forum – 10 jobs created/protected
- 5G – 36,000 VR users, 5 B2B users reporting improved experience (Digi Forum), 10 additional enterprises with 30mbps + broadband

Physical Connectivity

- 4.8km of new cycle way
- 5% change in journey habits – modal shift from car to walking/cycling

Transformed Youth Facilities

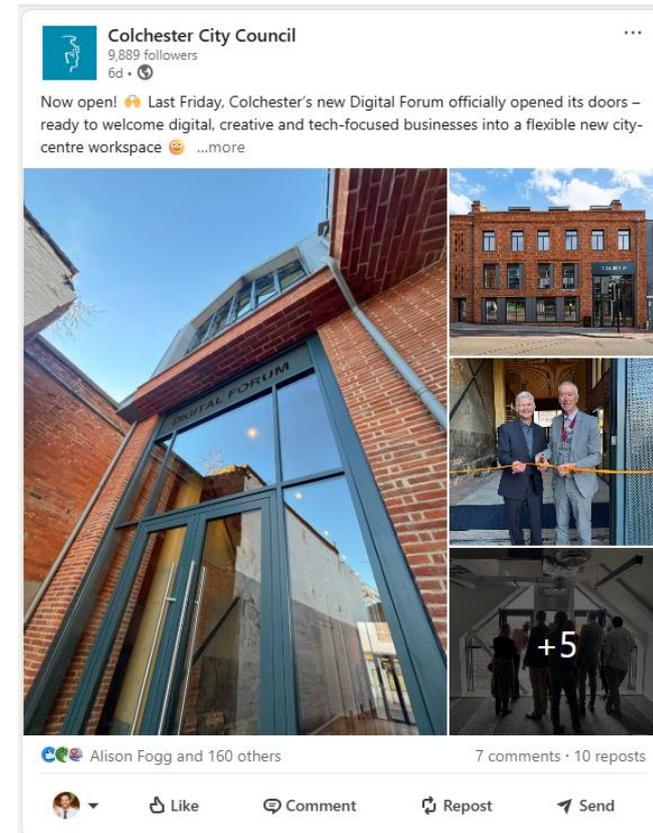
- 3 Youth Centres refurbished
- 250 Life skills sessions delivered, 450 Work life skills sessions delivered, 55 youth groups using centres, 500 Young people attending sessions in centres, 1,000 Skills and knowledge increased outcomes, 900 attendances / members, improved engagement and social mixing (qualitative)
- improved variety of services and opportunities (qualitative)
- increased footfall – Townhouse (1,000 attendances)
- Permanent job created

Engagement Update

- 7/1 Heart of Greenstead Board voted not to renew the TAWS/ Healthwatch Essex Engagement Contract which expires at end of March
- Art competition (launched with schools) and Skills & Opportunities Event (in March) to promote Heart of Greenstead community awareness and involvement.
- 30/1 Digi Forum officially launched
- Civic Society tour planned for 3/3
- Lexden Gardens site visit for Cllrs
- Presentations to colleagues from ICB, Thomas Pocklington Trust (Essex Site Loss Council) and the CCC SUN group (staff representation committee) to promote Town Deal
- Regular communications with members of CCC Residents Panel and Civic Society to answer questions and concerns

Comms Update

- We promoted St Nicholas Square twice in January. As part of the archaeological finds which enjoyed BBC coverage, and again to announce the Sunday Markets. These posts were viewed 341k on our channels, with 34.9k meaningful engagements. The last remaining perception challenge concerns the bins at the back of the hotel.
- Posters/ signage and more comms will be happening for Trinity Square in the coming months after the call-in period
- B2B comms for the Digital Forum went well. Comms aimed at our residents didn't do well –we've learnt some algorithm learnings to ensure future opportunities are well received
- 6 week slot at library to promote our projects is booked for the summer





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Project Spotlight: Holy Trinity Church – update

Matthew Brown

Economic Regeneration Manager

Colchester City Council

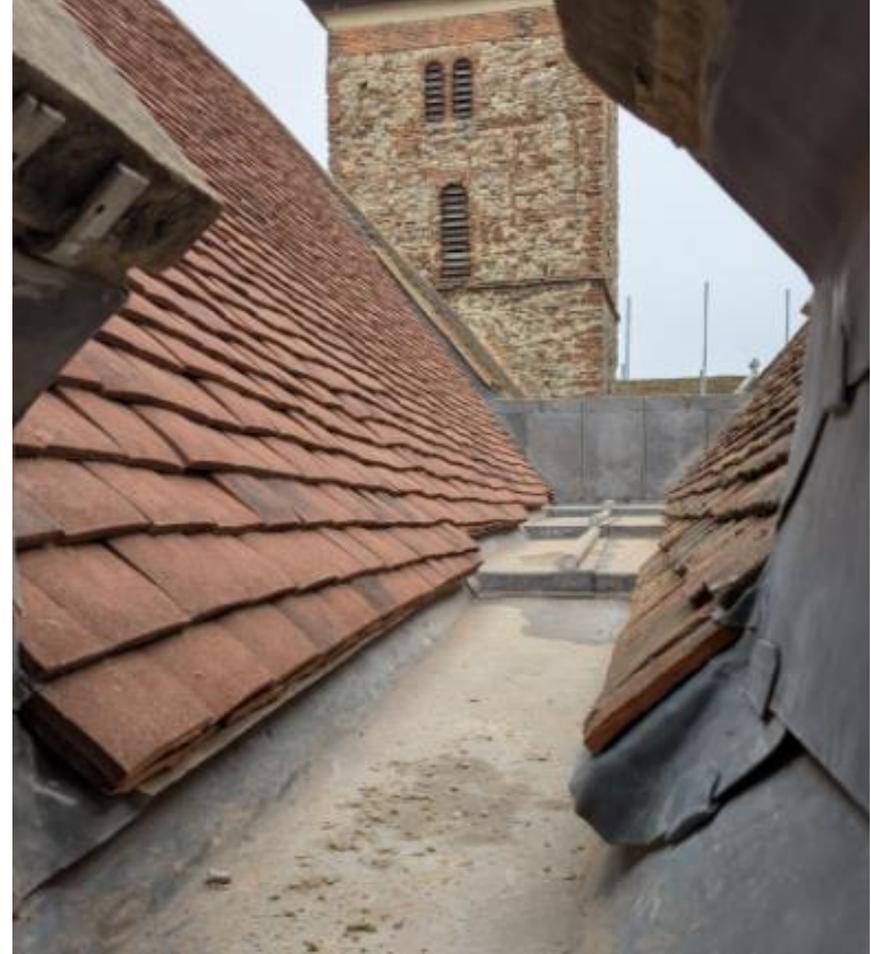


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amphora



Holy Trinity Church update. 1 – TD funded works



Holy Trinity Church update. 1 – TD funded works

Town Deal funded phase (£500k) now fully **completed**:

- On time ✓
- On budget ✓

This comprised of:

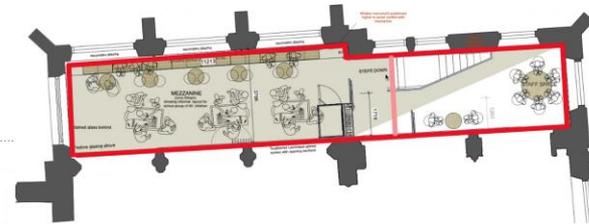
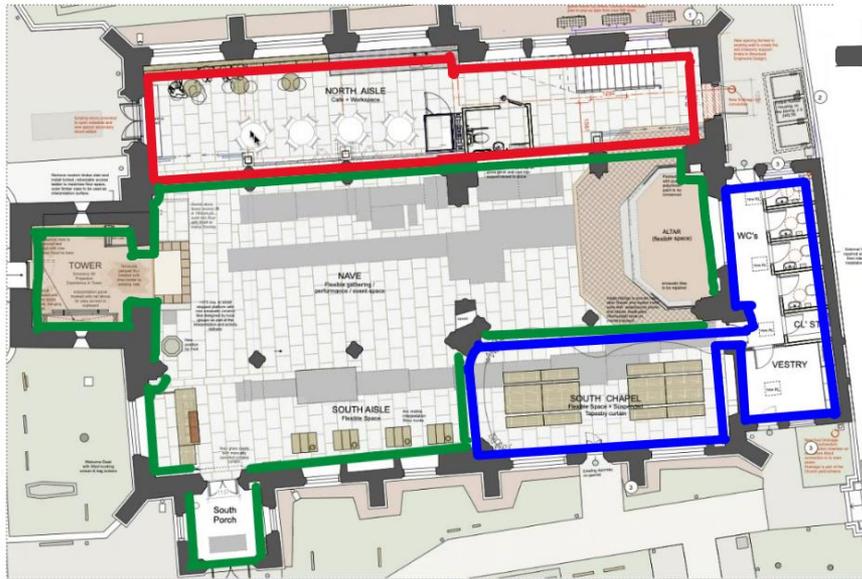
- c. £400k of roof repairs, rainwater goods, stone repairs.
- c. £100k was deployed as match funding to the Heritage Fund development stage, and related professional fees.
- Project can now be formally closed.

Project is fully aligned with Trinity Square scheme.

Holy Trinity Church 2 – Managing partner (Amphora)

Key milestones achieved:

- Portfolio Holder decision to appoint Amphora – approved 11/02/26.
- Business plan & project basis – approved 11/02/26.
- Agreement with CLT on basis of operation – achieved 10/02/26.



Holy Trinity Church: New Community Hub
Activity Plan



Holy Trinity Church, Trinity Square, Colchester. Image: Joanne Locke

Activity Plan Consultants Laura Davison and Joanne Locke
11 February 2026



Holy Trinity Church, Colchester Business Plan

2026 – 2036

Heritage Fund submission: NL-22 00194



Holy Trinity Church 3. Cost plan & Funding strategy

Phase	Cost	Notes
1	£3,408,394	Funded by core funding (see next table).
2	c. £300,000	Fundraising by new charitable company limited by Guarantee (under Amphora).

Value £	Source	Status
£2.65m	Heritage Fund	This application; committee decision June '26
£350k	Historic England	Secured (repair grant)
£200k	CCC Borrowing	Confirmed in capital programme (27-28)
£30k	Pilgrim Trust	Secured
£24k	S106	Secured
£5k	Essex Heritage Trust	Secured

Holy Trinity Church 3. Cost plan & Funding strategy

Synopsis:

- £609k or **80% of phase 1 budget match funding now secured** at application.

Of remaining £150k needed:

- £50k bid to National Churches Trust, AND £50k bid to Community Assets Fund - were submitted in 2025, and both are currently **pending decisions**.
- Further £100k bid to Arts Council (project grants) to submit March 2026.
- Very good prospect of securing all Ph 1 funding needed by September 2026.
- Capital Phase 1 covers all historic fabric repairs, core fit-out, readiness for operation: and enables business & activity plans to be delivered.
- Subject to further planning & LBC applications.

Capital Phase 2 and the new charity registered Company limited by Guarantee (CLG):

- £600k of relevant prospects identified (grant-making trusts).
- CLG can be mobilised quite rapidly. Sits within Amphora group.
- The final c. £300k is for furniture, final fixtures & fittings, Solar PV.

Holy Trinity Church 4. Risk manageme

Risk	Baseline RAG	Mitigated RAG	Impact	Mitigation
Funding gap / match under-delivery	● Amber	● Green	Potential pressure on cashflow or scope if major bids do not land.	Maintain multi-track funder pipeline; early re-scoping options; ongoing NLHF dialogue. More bids....
Inflation / market volatility	● Amber	● Green	Possible tender pressure on key packages.	Early market testing; realistic allowances; secure long-lead items early.
Heritage discovery risk	● Amber	● Amber/ ● Gr.	Some potential for additional works upon opening-up of fabric.	Pre-award investigations; conservation oversight; quick change-control.
Contractor procurement risk	● Amber	● Green	Risk of lower market interest could affect programme.	Two-stage tender; bidder engagement; balanced risk profile.
Business Plan & Activity Plan under-performance	● Amber	● Green	Risk to participation, income, or outcomes if engagement under-delivers.	Co-design; adaptive programming; quarterly performance monitoring.

Holy Trinity Church 5. High-level timeline

Phase	Milestone	Indicative Timing
Project Mobilisation	Permission to Start (PTS) & appoint core team.	Sept 2026
Design & Procurement	Final design freeze, consents confirmed, main contractor procurement.	Sep 2026 – Mar 2027
Capital Delivery	Main works on site (tower, fabric, accessibility, services).	Apr 2027– Mar 2028
Fit-Out & Commissioning	Internal works, interpretation install, testing, handover.	Apr-2028 for opening in late June 2028
Activity Plan Delivery	Full programme of engagement, learning, volunteering.	Jan 2027–Dec 2030
Evaluation & Close-Out	Summative evaluation, final reporting, project completion.	Dec 2030



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Other updates

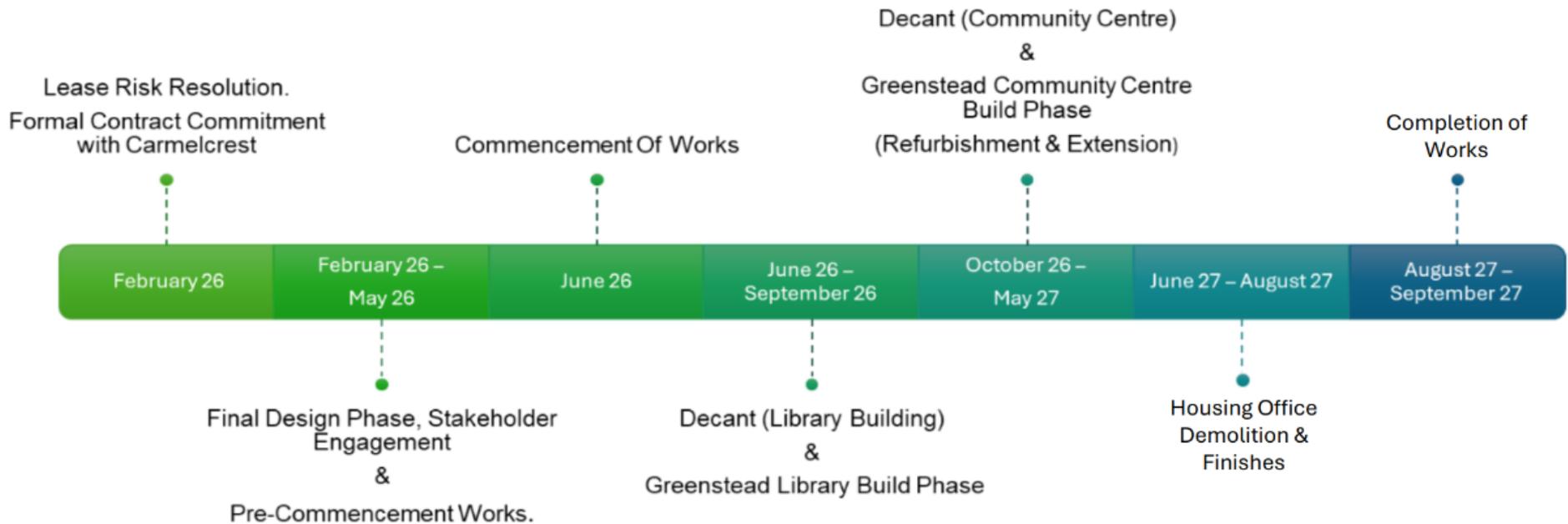
Heart of Greenstead – contract award and delivery plan

Walking and Cycling Route LCWIP 4 – East Hill contract
award and delivery plan

Digital Forum – launch event photos

Townhouse Youth Centre – launch event photos

Heart of Greenstead Phase 1 – Program Key Dates



Planning Committee Approval – November 2025
Scrutiny Panel Approval – November 2025
Cabinet Approval - December 2025





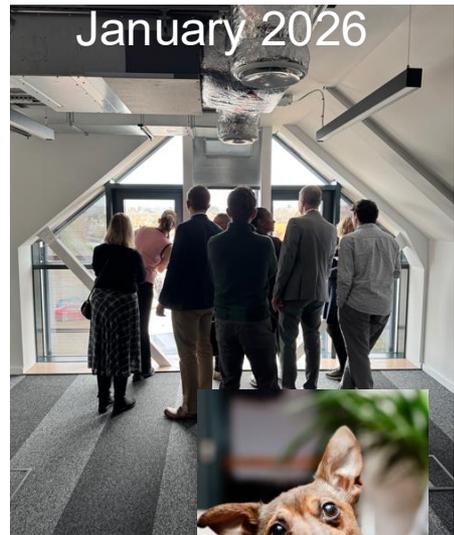
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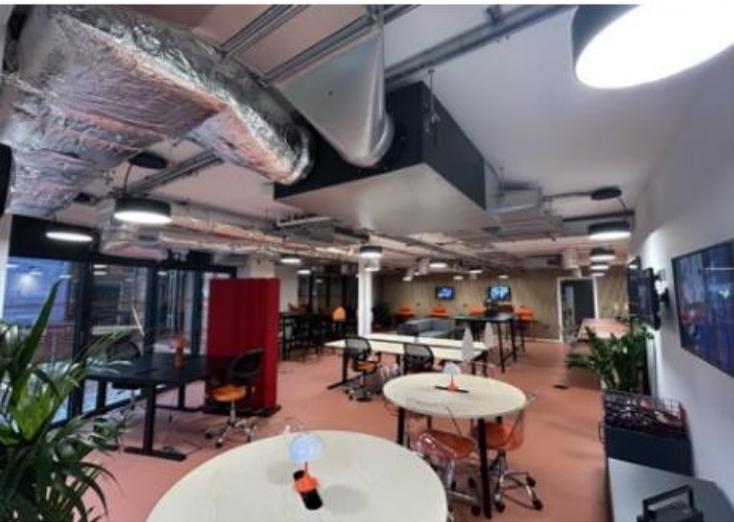

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January 2026



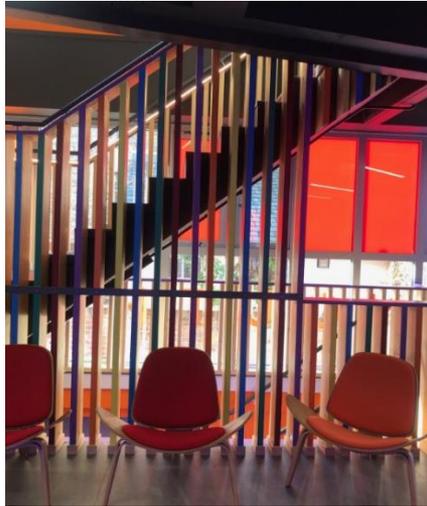


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Issues, Risks & Mitigations – ‘you said, we did’

General	<p>Invitations to all future in person launch and project milestone events to be shared with Board.</p> <p>8-week summer 2026 Library exhibition timetable to be refined and shared.</p> <p>All Board meetings to be held on MS Teams.</p>
Heart of Greenstead Hub	<p>Timeline, milestones, cost plan, delivery model update, planning application status and procurement status provided.</p> <p>Budget shortfall options including Colchester City Council contribution have been addressed.</p> <p>Trust operating model under review due to viability concerns.</p> <p>Site visit with MP completed.</p>
Holy Trinity Church	<p>Repairs completed.</p> <p>Permission granted to appoint Amphora as managing partner.</p> <p>Heritage Fund application decision expected by June 2026.</p>
Trinity Square	<p>Permission granted to appoint contractor.</p> <p>Works expected to complete by Summer 2026.</p>
St Nicholas Square	<p>Project completed, final costs confirmed and overspend covered in-programme.</p> <p>Lessons learned ongoing.</p> <p>Square animated during festive season with full calendar of events planned.</p>
Lexden Gardens	<p>Topping out ceremony completed.</p> <p>Further site visits planned and invites issued – 11 and 18 March.</p> <p>Project completion for public realm expected Winter 2026.</p>
Jumbo and Balcerne Gate	<p>Town Deal-funded enabling phase concluding.</p> <p>Heritage Fund construction phase commencing.</p> <p>Value engineering and scope review underway.</p>

Walking and Cycling	ECC contract award expected soon for East Hill route sections. Route sections the Moors/Hythe Station Road/Greenstead Road paused pending Active Travel Fund and S106 funding. Key funders informed.
Digital Forum	Project completed and launch events held.
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 dignitary launch event completed. Project closure underway pending completion of recording studio. VIP launch planned. Stanway and Highwoods youth centres completed.



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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.Project Spotlight – Holy Trinity Church managing tenant arrangements and construction phase funding.
- 3.Other updates - Greenstead Hub contract award and delivery plan, Digital Forum opening, Transformed Youth Facilities project closure, Walking and Cycling route LCWIP
- 4 (East Hill) contract award and delivery plan.
- 4.Issues, Risks & Mitigations - 'You said, we did' update.

Next meeting

13 May 2026

Future meetings

18 August 2026

17 November 2026

All Board meetings are on MS Teams unless otherwise agreed.

Additional meetings

Invitations to project completion and key milestone events will be shared by exception.

All additional meetings are in person unless otherwise agreed.