

# Team Colchester Regeneration Board Meeting

22 January 2026

(MS Teams meeting)

Decisions and Actions



Councillors present:

Colchester City Council (CCC) - Cllr David King (Chair), Cllr Julie Young, Cllr Paul Dundas, Cllr Chris Pearson

Essex County Council (ECC) – none.

Others present:

CCC – Lindsay Barker (part), Matthew Sterling, Daniel Barton, Scott Gray-Chick, Simon Cairns, Simon Thorp (notes)

ECC - Robert Willis, Ian Turner, Alex Jeremy, Ashley Heller

Jacobs – Graham Dean

Apologies:

CCC – Cllr Andrew Ellis, Pam Donnelly

ECC – Cllr Kevin Bentley, Cllr Lee Scott, Deborah Toseland



## 1. Apologies and Declarations of Interest

1.1 **Apologies** were noted from Cllr Andrew Ellis, Pam Donnelly, Cllr Kevin Bentley, Cllr Lee Scott and Deborah Toseland.

1.2 There were no **Declarations of Interest**.

1.3 The Register of Interests will be updated periodically and published to the CCC website.

## 2. Terms of Reference

2.1 Context. The Board met, in accord with the Terms of Reference, to monitor progress and give feedback and direction to Team Colchester officers, from Essex County Council and Colchester City Council.



### 3. Minutes of meetings

3.1 Board **approved** the minutes of the meeting on 27 November 2025.

3.2 Board **noted** an update on the status of decisions made at the last meeting.

3.3 Cllr David King commented that with reference to item 10.3 in the minutes (Jumbo and Balcerne Gate phase 2 project), Cllr Lee Scott will communicate directly with North Essex Heritage.

#### 4. City Centre Programme Update (including communication and marketing)

4.1 Board **noted** an advance update covering City Centre Programme Overview, Delivery of Essex Highway Schemes, Transportation Interchange Feasibility and Comms and Marketing.

4.2 Shopfront Grants - Board **noted with thanks** a detailed update from Our Colchester (Business Improvement District) on grant beneficiaries, purpose of grants, values and status of improvements should be provided at the next meeting, with an invitation to the issued to Vincent Geaves of Our Colchester to attend.

4.3 Cllr Julie Young commented that in some cases it was difficult to tell whether improvements to certain premises met minimum quality requirements. Simon Thorp explained that performance data is gathered and reported to key funder the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) in line with government requirements. Updated guidance on MHCLG performance reporting expectations is expected. Regular internal progress reports are also completed by CCC project managers to document project status, comparing actual performance against the original plan, track progress on deliverables, milestones, budget, and schedule, while identifying risks and issues to facilitate informed decision-making.

4.4 Board **agreed** that further updates on Shopfront Grants progress – including photographs for a potential competition – would be helpful.

4.5 Cllr Chris Pearson commented that signage at the new Digital Forum could be improved and also requested that invitations to the Digital Forum launch events on 30 January 2026 be circulated to councillors as appropriate. Scott Gray-Chick noted this feedback, explaining budget constraints, also advising that an invitation list had been agreed with Colbea, the managing tenant of the Digital Forum, and this will be reviewed.

4.6 Board **noted** that work is ongoing to deliver a Heritage Fund application and revised business case for Holy Trinity Church which ensures the building has a similar use and complies with relevant covenants.

4.7 Cllr David King, Cllr Paul Dundas and Cllr Chris Pearson commented on the lack of signage at Holy Trinity Church to promote this project. Scott Gray-Chick noted this feedback, explaining that planning permission, shelf life of signage and limited budget were influencing factors.

4.8 Board **noted** that agreement on a high-level delivery plan for publication was required for Britannia Yard, along with a more detailed plan for internal management.

4.9 Cllr Paul Dundas commented on signage issues for various highway works. Ian Turner noted this feedback, confirming that this would be investigated. Scott Gray-Chick also confirmed that further public and councillor communications would be delivered after the St Botolphs Circus contract had been signed.

4.10 Board **noted** that an update on City Centre Parking Strategy, timeline and costs for information will follow at a later date. Lindsay Barker explained that an update from CCC Corporate Landlord Service would also be obtained. Appropriate public communications to be maintained in the meantime.

4.11 Board **noted** updates on key city centre communication strategy, tone of voice and activities, including new city centre tenants (Escape Hunt) and car park capacity.

## 5. Horizon Scan of 2026, Projects and Priorities

5.1 Board **noted** an advance update.

5.2 Board **noted** a 2026 Timeline describing key project delivery, consultation and governance milestones. It was also **noted** that the timeline would be updated.

5.3 Matthew Sterling commented that the challenge for councillors, with significant construction work and potential disruption in 2026, is to maintain cross-party unity in the interests of delivering positive project outcomes for Colchester. Board **noted** this guidance.

5.4 Cllr Julie Young commented that due to the various highways schemes it was important to ensure emergency bus travel remained a viable option for residents. Cllr Paul Dundas commented that highway works were already having an impact on timetable reliability, with the need to ensure both bus and car travel remain viable. Daniel Barton explained that regular meetings take place between city and county council officers to ensure co-ordination of information to reduce the risk of pinch points during delivery of projects.

5.5 Scott Gray-Chick requested that councillors send questions and comments by 30 January 2026 so that benefits and challenges can be fully collated and reviewed with Cllr David King for the purpose of future public and councillor communications.

## 6. Levelling Up Programme Update

6.1 Board **noted** an advance update.

6.2 Simon Thorp highlighted headlines, milestones and risk management items in the update, explaining that the 'hard deadline' for spending all remaining Local Regeneration Fund (Levelling Up and Town Deal) budget was now March 2028. Unless cost pressures or potential delivery pinch points justified delaying completion of projects, continued efforts would be made to complete projects as early as possible. Whilst St Botolphs Circus and St Botolphs Quarter projects were progressing towards contracts and on-site mobilisation, there are risks being managed, particularly consultation with Historic England, archaeology and resolution of a basic asset protection agreement for St Botolphs Quarter.

## 10. Decisions, Recommendations and Points Noted

10.1 Shopfront grants. An invitation to the next meeting to be issued to Vincent Geaves to provide an update on completion of all improvements, to include photographs for a potential competition. **[Action: Daniel Barton, Vincent Geaves]**

**10.2** Shopfront grants. An update to be provided on internal and external performance monitoring and reporting. **[Action: Simon Thorp]**

10.3 Digital Forum launch. A review of signage to be carried out and the invitation list to launch events on 30 January 2026 to be reviewed and updated. **[Scott Gray-Chick]**

10.4 Holy Trinity Church. A review of signage to be carried out. **[Scott Gray-Chick]**

10.5 Highways signage. Legacy signage to be removed. **[Ian Turner]**

10.6 St Botolphs Quarter/Britannia Yard. Further details of delivery plan to be shared. **[Daniel Barton]**

10. St Botolphs Circus public and councillor comms. To be issued after signing of construction contract. **[Scott Gray-Chick]**

10.8 Board members to share questions and comments on project benefits and challenges with Scott Gray-Chick by 30 January 2026 for the purpose of planning future public and councillor communications. **[Board Members]**

10.9 Transport Interchange Feasibility. An update on options, messaging and decisions required. **[Action: Ian Turner, Ashley Heller]**

10.10 Parking Strategy. An update on city centre parking strategy, timeline and costs to be shared for information. **[Richard Walker]**

## 11. Next meetings

25 March 2026 (in person)

14 May 2026

23 July 2026

10 September 2026

19 November 2026

