



We are Colchester



Colchester
City Council

We Are Colchester Board Meeting

3 September 2026

MS Teams

Agenda

- 1. Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interest – Simon Blaxill**
- 2. Progress Report, Engagement & Communications Update (advance September 2026 Board Report circulated) – Simon Thorp**
- 3. Project Spotlight – Holy Trinity Church – Matthew Brown**
- 4. Project Spotlight – Jumbo – Jason Lowe**
- 5. Updates – Walking and Cycling Project, Transformed Youth Facilities - Ellen Clark-Romain and Glenn Crickmore**
- 6. Issues, Risks & Mitigations - 'You said, we did' checklist – Simon Thorp**
- 7. Decisions and points to note – Simon Blaxill**
- 8. 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
Colchester City Council

Headlines

- Overall Programme RAG Amber.
- Positive progress for many projects (11 projects effectively completed).
- Government performance report (April 2025-March 2026) completed.
- Strong cross-programme evidence of benefits realisation emerging
- Iran conflict causing materials cost and supply chain volatility - likely to worsen as the year progresses.
- Greenstead Hub Overall RAG remains Red with issues still to be resolved.
- ECC-led Walking and Cycling route East Hill construction started, wider project cost pressures. Cost RAG Amber.
- Jumbo/Balkerne Gate 'post-Town Deal' construction phase Heritage Fund total grant £11.3m . £350k local authority contributions confirmed.
- Trinity Square - on site work underway – completion November 2026.
- Holy Trinity Church - Heritage Fund grant £2.65m.
- Lexden Gardens public realm – completion winter 2026.

Project completion status & upcoming milestones

Project	Project Name	Status
1	BALKERNE GATE PHASE 1 (ACCELERATED)	Completed
2	ST NICHOLAS SQUARE (ACCELERATED)	Completed
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, benefits via other projects
7	TRANSFORMED YOUTH FACILITIES – TOWNHOUSE, STANWAY, HIGHWOODS	Completed
8	DIGITAL FORUM	Completed
9	TRINITY SQUARE	On Track – completion November 2026
10	LEXDEN GARDENS	On Track – completion January-March 2027
11	JUMBO	On Track – moving from Town Deal to Heritage Fund construction phase with £11.3m Heritage Fund grant - completion Spring 2028
12	BALKERNE GATE PHASE 2	See Jumbo Project
13	HOLY TRINITY CHURCH	Town Deal funded work completed – Heritage Fund construction phase grant £2.65m - completion Spring 2028
14	GREENSTEAD HUB	In Progress – Significant cost pressures and project complexities – completion Summer 2027
15	WALKING & CYCLING ROUTE CITY CENTRE-GREENSTEAD-UNIVERSITY	In Progress – ECC East Hill works in progress July 2026 -Summer 2027, Moors/Hythe/Greenstead Road subject to ECC funding – target completion Spring 2028
16	KERBLESS STREET	Cancelled



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Dashboard – RAG Status

Overall Cost Time



PROGRAMME



**Town Centre
& Gateways**



Physical Connectivity

Overall Cost Time



Digital Connectivity



**Transformed Youth
Facilities**



**Heart of
Greenstead**

Spend Forecast v Budget

Local Regeneration Fund – Town Deal projects								
Active Projects – Budget/Forecast/Variance								
Projects	Budgets		Forecast remaining spend					Forecast outturn
Project Name	Total Budget	Town Deal Budget contribution	Total Capital Programme 2026/31	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	Total	Variance
Trinity Square	862,000	600,000	676,780	676,780	-	-	676,780	(0)
ECC City Centre to Greenstead and University Cycle Path	2,880,000	2,880,000	1,598,420	1,598,420	-	-	1,598,420	(0)
Greenstead Multi Use Hub	8,066,000	5,900,000	7,390,204	3,734,594	3,655,610	-	7,390,204	(0)
St Nicholas Square	2,300,000	1,250,000	87,510	87,510	-	-	87,510	(0)
Digital Forum	6,300,000	879,000	90,175	78,738	-	-	78,738	(11,437)
NEH Jumbo & Balkeine Gate phase 2	1,781,000	1,781,000	249,511 (+ additional 100,000)	200,191	49,320	-	249,511	(0)
Completed projects								
5G	656,000	656,000	N/A				656,000	
ECC Digital Skills Hub	879,000	879,000	N/A				879,000	
ECC Transformed Youth Facilities	1,320,000	1,320,000	N/A				1,320,000	
ECC Liveable Neighbourhood School Street pilot	300,000	300,000	N/A				300,000	
ECC Lexden Gardens public realm	488,000	488,000	N/A				488,000	
Holy Trinity Church roof repairs	500,000	500,000	N/A				500,000	

RECAP – WHY V WHAT? OUTCOMES/BENEFITS REALISATION

Heart of Greenstead	City Centre & Gateways	Digital Connectivity	Physical Connectivity	Transformed Youth Facilities
• Improved community facilities delivered • 68 people supported into employment • Pedal Power - 700 bikes distributed • Liveable Neighbourhood – school street pilot delivered • 4 jobs created/protected	• 2 heritage buildings restored – Jumbo and Holy Trinity Church • 83 jobs created or protected • Public realm improved – St Nicholas Square, Balmerne Gate, Lexden Gardens	• 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	• 4.8km of new cycle way • 5% change in journey habits – modal shift from car to walking/cycling	• 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 & Comms update

Library display throughout the summer promoting City Centre projects

Heart of Greenstead

Family Fun Day

Ongoing community engagement, working closely with the Community Centre and ECC colleagues

Trinity Square

Responding to regular media enquiries and perceptions

St Nicholas Square

Businesses celebrated the 1st anniversary

Civic Society working with Colchester and Ipswich Museums Service on new Interpretation Boards

East Hill LCWIP4

Octavius - successful Meet the Contractor event

Stakeholder Manager engagement programme

Levelling Up Fund

St Botolph's Circus Comms and Engagement - joined up approach between Octavius and Jacksons Civil

Worth shouting about:

Colchester - 39th city centre ranking... Colchester's rise in national rankings shows regeneration is being noticed | Colchester City Council



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Project Spotlight – Holy Trinity Church

Matthew Brown, Economic Regeneration Manager
Colchester City Council



HOLY TRINITY CHURCH

“From Heritage at Risk to Community Asset”

3rd September 2026

We are Colchester Board



Why Holy Trinity Matters

- **Grade 1 Listed**
- **Colchester's oldest standing building**
- **Historic England Heritage at Risk Register**



Seven Years of Development

- **2018** Previous tenant (Go4 Community Café) vacates
- **2019** Project begins; Initial concept development work
- **2021** Town Deal secured
- **2023** Development Funding (NLHF) secured
- **2024-2025** Design, consultations, partnership, permissions
- **2026** **Funding package secured**
- **2027-2028** Restoration and sensitive adaptation
- **2028** Opening.



What Town Deal Has Unlocked

- **Town Deal Investment** -> Design Development -> Planning & Listed Building Consent -> Community Engagement -> National Lottery, Historic England and other funders' confidence -> £2.65m NLHF Award & £350k HE Repair Grant (etc) -> Fully Funded and de-risked Delivery Phase. -> First c. £400k of Capital Repairs completed.



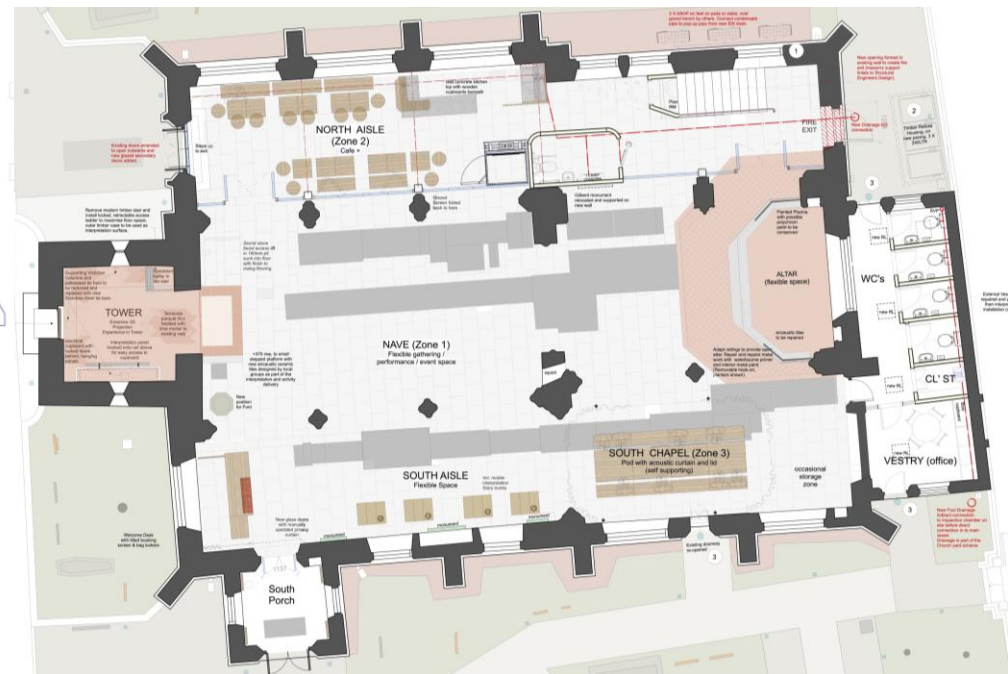
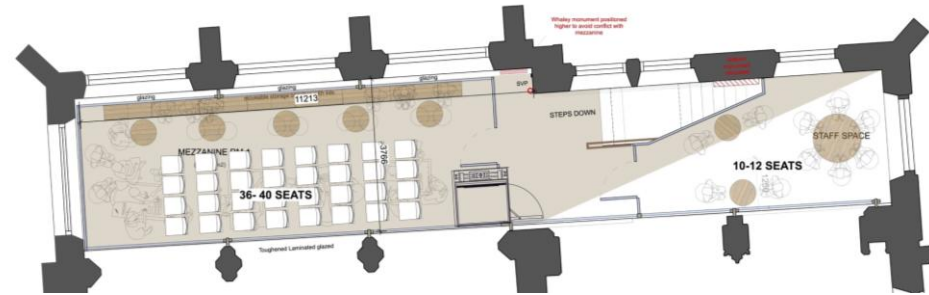
Funding Package Secured

- National Lottery Heritage Fund £2.65m
- Historic England £350k
- Pilgrim Trust £30k
- Essex Heritage Trust £5k
- S106 £24k
- Community Assets Fund £50k
- Council Contribution £200k plus underwriting.



What We Are Delivering

- Heritage - Community
- Learning - Culture



Community Impact (4-year activity plan):

28,416 planned participant
engagements

25 volunteers recruited

2,000 learners engaged

3,500 heritage event participants

60 heritage / public events annually



The Trinity Centre Vision

INSPIRE

Overarching
Experience / Vision
(USPs)

EVENT SEEKERS



Creative / Music /
Comedy
Venue

TIME TRAVELLERS



Church
Heritage & History
Experience

EMERGING PERFORMERS



Talent Developer
& Content Creator
Incubator

SUPPORT

Hub

WELL-BEING / PREVENTION LED



Health
Hub

CURRICULUM LED



Education
Hub

PRACTITIONER LED



Community
Support Hub

CONNECT

Underpinning
Foundations

RETAIL



Marketplace
Church & Cemetery ('Pocket Park')

Marketplace
Trinity Square

FOOD & DRINK



Café / Kitchen

Bar

MEETING SPACE



Conferencing
Facility & Consulting
Rooms

Digitally Enabled

... realising and founding on the power of the Trinity

Capability to deliver:

- Proven venue and events expertise
- Established operational, commercial and financial resources
- Capacity to support Holy Trinity from opening day and beyond.



Simon Coward
Strategic Support



Alistair Wilson
Commercial Guidance



James Young
Events & Operations
Strategy



Megan Pullen
Operations Management



Gina Westby
Events & Activities
Coordination



Louise Biggins
Financial Support



Georgi Agov
Digital Marketing Support



David Marsh
Events Strategy Support



Melissa Faux
Weddings / Events
Strategy Support

Planning and delivery milestones:

- **August 2026** Historic England support received
- **September 2026** Planning Committee (updated LBC)
- **September 2026** Permission to Start
- **Winter 2026** Final technical design, procurement
- **2027** Construction
- **2028** Opening.



Thank-you!

- **Town Deal Board**
- **National Lottery Heritage Fund – and the players**
- **Historic England**
- **Other Funders**
- **Amphora**
- **Design Team & Consultants**
- **Community Partners.**





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Project Spotlight Jumbo Water Tower

Jason Lowe
North Essex Heritage



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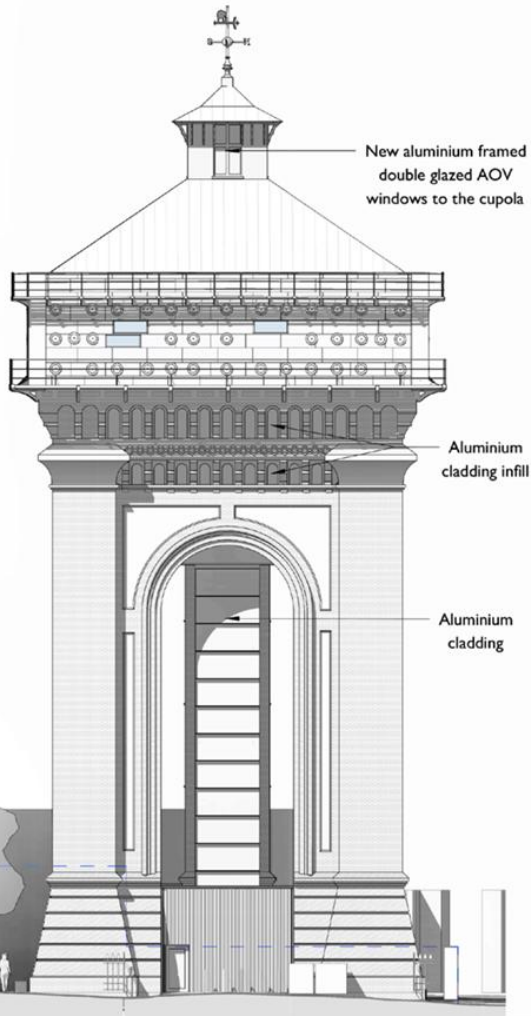


Project Vision

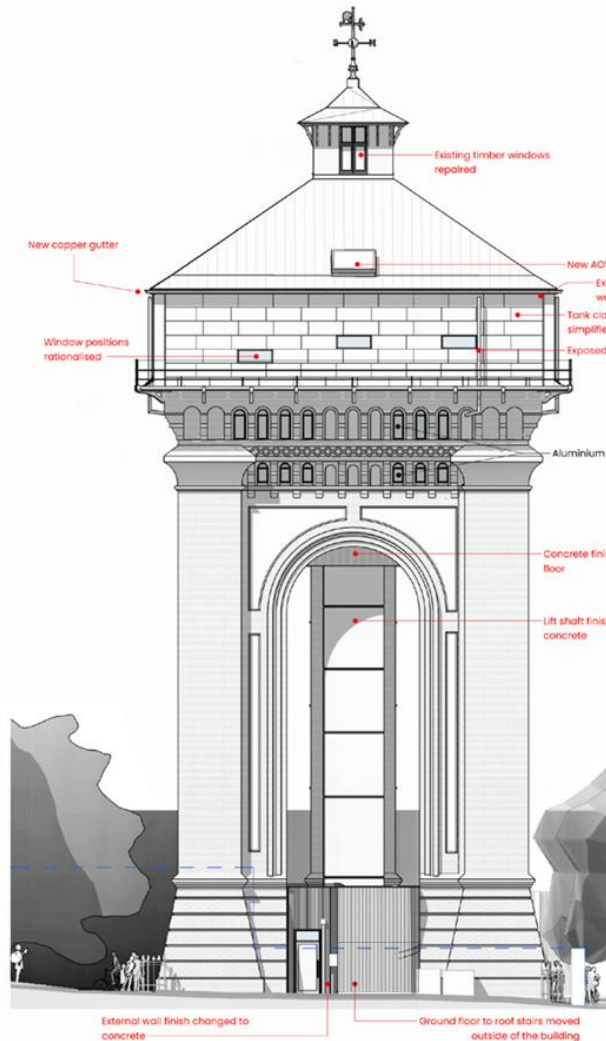
- Save the iconic Jumbo Water Tower, a Grade II* listed building, and remove it from the Heritage 'At Risk' register, where it has been listed for the last 33 years as a heritage asset with the greatest level of need and vulnerability;
- Through a bold but conservation driven range of interventions and repairs, open the Water Tower to the public for the first time in its history to create a new heritage and visitor attraction for Colchester;
- Offer a truly unique events and cultural arts venue (wedding hire, banquets, parties, private events, music, comedy, theatre etc);
- The fully operational Jumbo Tower is expected to sustain circa 15 FTE jobs and generate over £400,000 in additional expenditure in the local economy;
- To build and consolidate partnerships within the community for the delivery of activities, learning and wellbeing;
- Transformed, Jumbo will stand as a testimony to Colchester's rich history, contributing to economic regeneration, fostering civic pride, and serving as an exemplar of creative heritage reuse.

Where are we now

- Planning consent and LBC were granted in February 2025 (based on RIBA 3 Design)
- RIBA Stage 4 design undertaken in partnership with specialist heritage contractor, Sir Robert McAlpine, using a traditional 2-stage JCT contract.
- Contract strategy reflects complexities of the project, the physical constraints of the tower and its location; approach designed to embed buildability within the design, maximise specialist contractor knowledge and mitigate unforeseen issues arising during onsite stage.
- Despite best practice approach, the proposed Stage 2 contract value significantly exceeded budget and resulted in an extended period of Value Engineering, contractor / subcontractor negotiation and additional fundraising.
- Key changes:
 - greater adoption of in-situ concrete as primary structure in lieu of glazing and cladding systems
 - lift shaft constructed from fairfaced concrete
 - reduction in high-end expressed finishes in favour of greater visibility of historic pipework and masonry / solid partition walls
 - viewing windows in the walls of the tank retained but repositioned to reduce complexity in execution
 - simplification of the modern external cladding and insulation system to the cast iron tank panels
 - significant heritage benefits within the tank with intervention to the historic fabric reduced including retention of the original A frames and reduction in new infrastructure to maintain legibility of the original plan form.



Consented Scheme

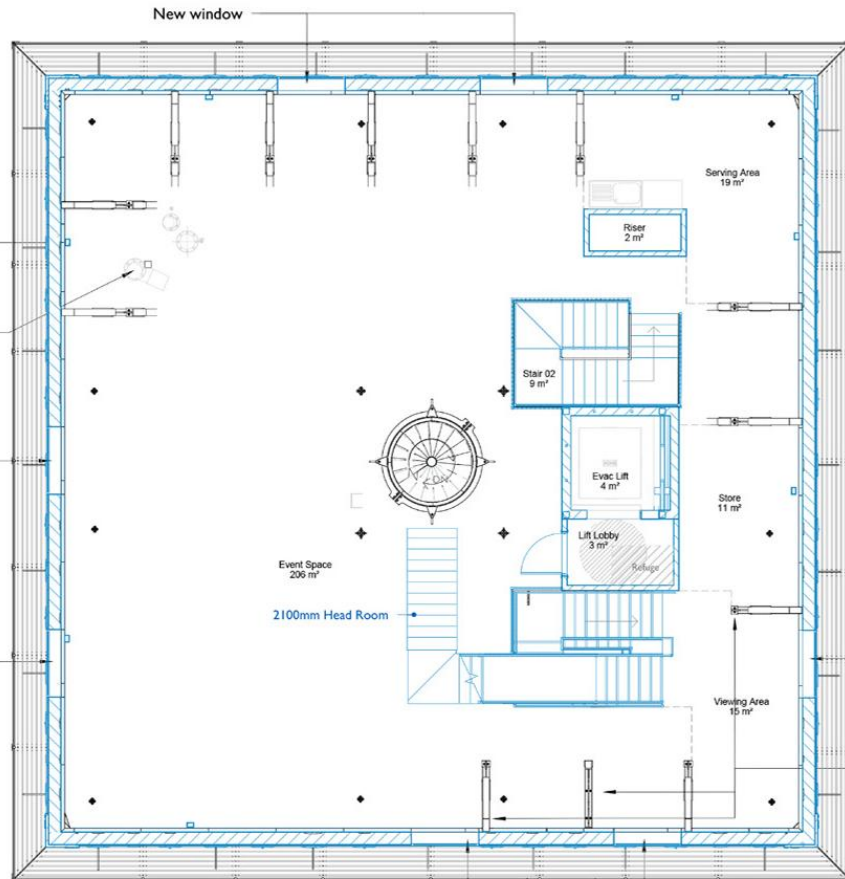


Current Scheme

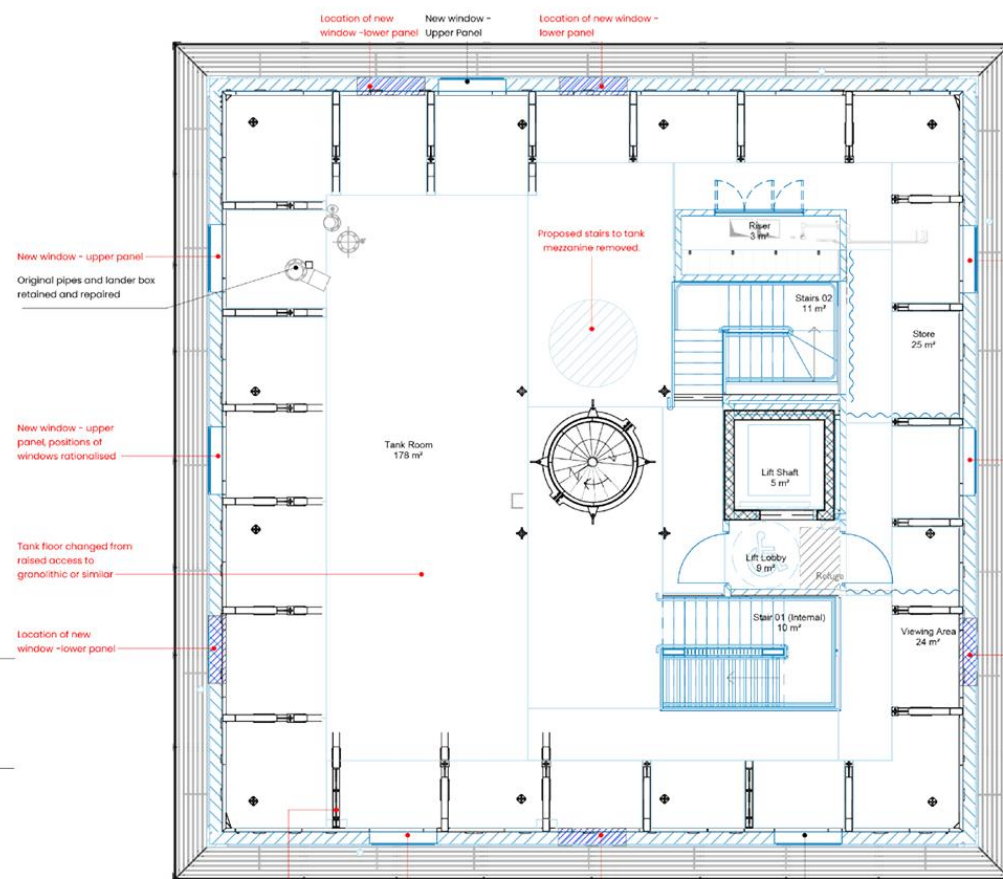
East Elevation

Tank Floor Plan

Consented Scheme



Current Scheme





Next steps

- Revised position agreed with The National Lottery Heritage Fund and £11.3m delivery phase grant secured.
- Licence to Use the land next to Jumbo, Balkerne Gardens signed July 2026 and now progressing official land transfer to NEH.
- Complete RIBA Stage 4 redesign to achieve VE contract sum.
- Submit Section 73 planning application as VE design changes not accepted as a non-material amendment by Planning Authority.
- Enter into build contract with principal contractor (subject to securing planning consent).
- Ongoing fundraising: targeting a further £700,000 to achieve the optimal outcome of the conservation, repurposing and long-term sustainable operation of Jumbo.

The Jumbo Activity Team

Highlights of 2026 include:

- Completion of the Jumbo Hoardings Project: 12 week project in partnership with The Minories Art Gallery working with young people to create Jumbo Inspired street artworks which will be displayed at around the town before being installed at the Jumbo construction hoardings.
- Engagement with over 2,000 people through the Jumbo Community Activity Day in June, Tendering Show, Colchester Carnival, Colchester Pride, Essex Archaeology & Heritage Festival.
- Ongoing public and private tours of Jumbo still available into September (book now!). Booking and more information available at [Jumbo Water Tower | Colchester](#) or please contact the Jumbo Programme Manager - joseph.rawlings@northessexheritage.org





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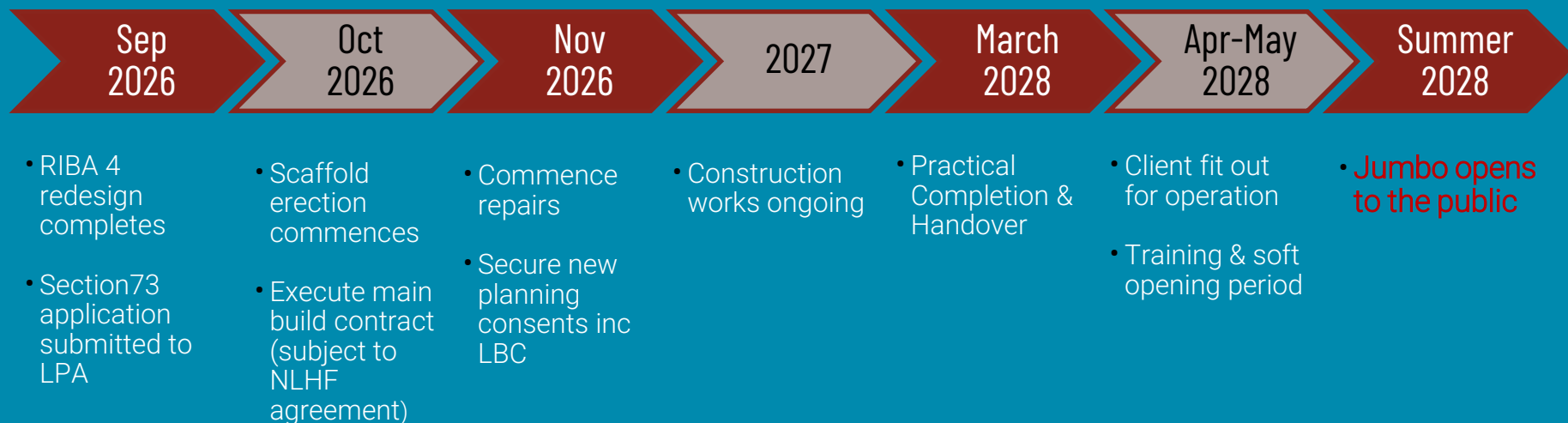
Forthcoming events / projects include:

- Heritage Open Day, Sunday 13 September
- My Jumbo Project – an oral history and storytelling initiative exploring what Jumbo means to people of Colchester.
- Water Stories - co-creation film project with young people acting as researchers, interpreters and creative authors to explore water through local heritage, Jumbo's history and personal experience.
- Public Talks Programme and Education Programme.





Timeline





Key Risks

- Planning process delays NEH being able to execute build contract and/or increases costs due to inflationary impact as contractor/subcontractor unable to hold prices.
- Due to need for a new planning application, Heritage Fund does not consent to NEH executing build contract.
- Condition of Jumbo will continue to deteriorate, could lead to increased work, costs and time (and risk to the heritage).





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Thank you



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Project Updates – Walking and Cycling and Transformed Youth Facilities

Ellen Clark-Romain, Project Sponsor

Essex County Council

Glenn Crickmore, Youth Service Lead

Essex County Council







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

General	Invitations to all future in person launch and project milestone events to be shared with Board. 8-week summer 2026 Library exhibition underway with timetable shared. All Board meetings to be held on MS Teams. Potential support for shovel ready projects by new Mayoral Authority to be explored.
Heart of Greenstead Hub	Timeline, milestones, cost plan, delivery model update, planning application status and procurement status provided. Budget shortfall options including Colchester City Council contribution have been addressed. Trust operating model under review due to viability concerns. Site visit with MP completed.
Essex Pedal Power	Shared independent evaluation data with Board.
Holy Trinity Church	Repairs completed. Site visits delivered. Permission granted to appoint Amphora as managing partner, with charitable operating model and associated governance being progressed. Heritage Fund application decision made to award £2.65m.
Trinity Square	Contractor now on site, with issues including Diocese permissions resolved. Works expected to complete November 2026.
St Nicholas Square	Project completed, final costs confirmed and overspend covered in-programme. Lessons learned ongoing. Square full calendar of events ongoing.
Lexden Gardens	Topping out ceremony completed. Further site visits delivered – 11 and 18 March. Project completion for public realm expected Q4 2026-27, possibly earlier.
Jumbo and Balcerne Gate	Town Deal-funded enabling phase concluded. Construction phase commencing - £11.3m total Heritage Fund award and £350k local authority contributions.

Walking and Cycling	East Hill construction underway, completion summer 2027. Route sections the Moors/Hythe Station Road/Greenstead Road paused pending other ECC funding. Hythe Station Bridge to be de-commissioned. Key funders updated.
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 and transition to business as usual underway. Stanway and Highwoods youth centres also completed.



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Decisions & Next Meeting

Simon Blaxill

Decisions

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

DECISIONS:

1. None.

TO NOTE:

1. Progress Report, Engagement & Communications Update, with advance September 2026 Board Report circulated.
2. Project Spotlight – Holy Trinity Church
3. Project Spotlight – Jumbo and Balkerne Gate phase 2
4. Updates – Walking and Cycling Project, Transformed Youth Facilities
5. Issues, Risks & Mitigations - 'You said, we did' checklist update

Next meeting

17 November 2026

Future meetings

25 February 2027

27 May 2027

26 August 2027

25 November 2027

24 February 2028

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.