



We are Colchester



Colchester
City Council

We Are Colchester Board Meeting

3 September 2026

Decisions & Actions

Board Present:

Simon Blaxill
Pam Donnelly – Colchester City Council (CCC)
Simon Mead - Colbea
Cllr David King - CCC
Cllr Jeff Bray – Essex County Council (ECC)
Lucy Johnson – University of Essex

Board Apologies/Absent:

Alison Andreas – Colchester Institute
Pam Cox MP
Cristina Huddleston – Community360
Kate Heslegrave – St Helena
Alison Jennings – Homes England
Andrew Burgess - ECC

Others Attending:

Matthew Sterling, Matthew Brown, Clare Ratcliffe, Jo Porter, Rory Doyle, Simon Thorp (CCC)
Alex Jeremy, Robert Willis, Glenn Crickmore, Ellen Clark-Romain (ECC)
Jason Lowe (North Essex Heritage)

1. Welcome, Apologies, Declarations of Interest

- a. The Chair **welcomed** all attendees.
- b. **Apologies and absences** were noted for Alison Andreas, Pam Cox MP, Cristina Huddleston, Kate Heslegrave, Alison Jennings and Andrew Burgess.
- a. 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 advance Board Report and a brief summary of programme headlines, project completion status, upcoming milestones, spend forecast, engagement and communications activity.
- b. Pam Donnelly **commented** on the positive contribution of Officers delivering the programme and this was **endorsed** with thanks by other Board members.

3. Holy Trinity Church project spotlight

- a. Board **noted** a presentation setting out why the building matters, its development history and what Town Deal funding has unlocked. A summary of what will be delivered and its expected impact 'post-Town Deal' funding was also shared. Key planning and delivery milestones through to planned opening in 2028 were also summarised.
- b. Simon Blaxill asked whether the main contractor for the construction works had been selected. It was confirmed that a procurement process was still to take place.

4. Jumbo project spotlight

- a. Board **noted** a presentation summarising the 'post-Town Deal' funded vision for the project, current status, key design elements and next steps. An overview of activities and forthcoming events was provided. A high-level timeline through to planned opening to the public in 2028 was shared, along with the key project risks including the need for section 73 planning consent.
- b. Cllr King **commented** that he loved the ideas shared of design simplicity, noting the importance of speedily securing planning permission to reduce the risk of materials cost inflation. He added that the project demonstrated a vote of confidence in Colchester from investors and funders.
- c. Pam Donnelly **confirmed** that a Section 73 planning application had still to be received by CCC planning department and urged the Jumbo team to do so quickly. She added that the timing of the completion of the project coincided well with the inception of the new North-East Essex Unitary Authority inception in 2028. In response, Jason Lowe thanked Pam Donnelly for her comments and confirmed that the application would be progressed promptly.
- d. Simon Thorp **commented** that he had been privileged to have been involved in the Jumbo project since inception, praising the partnership working between individuals and organisations, adding that the planning challenges would be overcome as all other project hurdles had so far been navigated.
- e. Cllr Bray **requested confirmation** of the level of confidence in securing permissions. In response, Jason Lowe said that the Jumbo team had a high degree of confidence that the planning application and listed building consent would be approved.

5. Walking and Cycling project progress – East Hill

- a. Board **noted** a high-level delivery update accompanied by recent photographs of route sections 1-3 (East Hill) along with an update on progress towards ECC Active Travel Fund capital funding and completion of route sections 4-7 (the Moors). Board also noted other potential funding including Section 106, together with the status of decommissioning Hythe Station Bridge and associated key utilities.
- b. Cllr King **commented** on the importance of traffic management to avoid high levels of avoidable congestion, having regard also for other high profile projects like St Botolph's Circus which are also in construction. In response, Ellen Clark-Romain confirmed that contractors were being closely managed with strong communication between the various teams.
- c. Cllr Bray **commended** the work of Officers to date on this project, adding that inevitably 'eggs had to be cracked' to make an omelette, albeit in the relatively short term.

6. Transformed Youth Facilities – project closure

- a. Board **noted** an update on completion of work at the Townhouse Youth Centre accompanied by photographs of some of the improvements, along with details of some of the users of the centre including Jamie Oliver's Food Ministry which is directly supporting young unpaid family carers. The project is not moving towards formal closure and transition to 'business as usual'.
- b. Pam Donnelly **commented** that prior to becoming Chief Executive of CCC, she had been Sponsor of this project. She suggested potential new organisations who may be interested in using the Townhouse in future. In response, Glenn Crickmore thanked Pam Donnelly for her comments and confirmed he would follow up her suggestions.
- c. Simon Thorp **commented** that ECC and CCC Officers had worked very well together and were currently preparing a reflections, lessons learned and looking forward report aimed at sharing with various audiences to ensure the best ingredients of good practice could be embedded in other projects. In response, Glenn Crickmore endorsed these comments and said that the Townhouse was now considered the Youth Service's flagship centre.
- d. Cllr Bray **commented** that he had visited the Townhouse, congratulating Officers on the management of the project and supporting the view that the improvements were significant.
- e. Pam Donnelly **suggested** that Colchester Ambassadors may be interested in receiving an update on this and other projects. In response, Simon Mead and Clare Ratcliffe agreed that they would progress this.

7. 'You Said, We Did' – update on project issues, risks and mitigations

- a. Board **noted** a summary overview of progress, activity and risk management at programme and project level as previously discussed and requested. This encompassed Greenstead Hub, Essex Pedal Power, Holy Trinity Church, Trinity Square, St Nicholas Square, Lexden Gardens, Jumbo/Balkerne Gate phase 2, Walking and Cycling, Digital Forum, 5G and Transformed Youth Facilities.
- b. Simon Thorp **commented** that Officers expected to bring an update on progress with the Greenstead Hub to the next meeting. He added that there were several positive examples of progress across the programme – Holy Trinity Church transitioning to Heritage Fund construction phase, Trinity Square completion by November 2026, Lexden Gardens completing by March 2027, Jumbo transitioning to Heritage Fund construction phase, Walking and Cycling route East Hill construction well underway and Transformed Youth Facilities closing and transitioning to 'business as usual' led by Essex Youth Service.
- c. Cllr King **commented** that the timeline and milestones for the Greenstead Hub project should be prioritised. In response, Cllr Bray confirmed that ECC agreed with Cllr King's view and were progressing decisions accordingly.

8. Decisions and Items Noted

- a. No decisions were sought from Board.
- b. Board **noted** the Progress Report, Engagement & Communications Update, along with an advance September 2026 Board Report circulated.
- c. Board **noted** Project Spotlights on Holy Trinity Church and Jumbo projects.
- d. Board **noted** updates on Walking and Cycling and Transformed Youth Facilities projects.
- e. Board **noted** an update on Issues, Risks & Mitigations ('You said, we did') items raised at previous meetings at programme and project level.

9. Next meeting

- a. The next Board Meeting is on 17 November 2026.
- b. Subsequent Board Meetings have been scheduled and invitations issued to Board on a quarterly basis in 2027 and 2028.
- c. Board meetings will as previously agreed take place on MS Teams.
- d. Invitations to project completion and key milestone events will be shared with Board by exception. All additional meetings will be in person unless otherwise agreed.