



We are Colchester



Colchester  
City Council

# We Are Colchester Board Meeting

22 August 2024

## Decisions & Actions

**Board Present:**

Simon Blaxill (Chair), Alison Andreas – Colchester Institute, Cllr David King - CCC, Lucy Johnson – University of Essex, Mark Jarman-Howe - North-East Essex Alliance, Cllr Lee Scott – ECC, Laura Eardley – Hiscox.

**Board Apologies:**

Pam Donnelly – CCC, Alison Jennings – Homes England, Steve Evison - ECC, Helen Russell - SELEP, Shona Johnstone – Homes England, Tracy Rudling – Community360, Pam Cox MP, Simon Mead – COLBEA.

**Others Attending:**

Lindsay Barker – CCC, Matt Sterling – CCC, Julian Sanchez – ECC, Ellen Clark-Romain – ECC, Scott Gray-Chick – CCC, Michelle Tarbun – CCC, Richard Kendrew – CCC, Samantha Edwards – St Helena Hospices, Emma Taylor – MHCLG, Greg Wilkinson – MHCLG, Simon Thorp – CCC.

1. **Apologies, Declarations of Interest**

- a. **Apologies** were noted from Pam Cox MP, Simon Mead, Helen Russell, Tracy Rudling and Alison Jennings.
- b. There were no **declarations of interest**.

## 2. Progress Report & Engagement Update

- a. Board **noted** a programme report and additional papers on Heart of Greenstead circulated in advance of the meeting. No questions were raised.
- b. Board **noted** a progress report covering headlines, progress highlights, delivery plan, budget overview, risk management, RAG statuses and recent/planned engagement activities.

### 3. Project Spotlight – Essex Pedal Power impact evidence

- a. Board **noted** with thanks a presentation on the impact to date of the Essex Pedal Power project in Colchester. 522 bikes have so far been given away, with reduced car journeys, increased community trust, increased access, increased volunteering, increased life satisfaction and reduced inactivity as a result. Positive stories about family cycling, employment creation and strengthened communities were also shared.
- b. Board **noted** an update on plans to take forward the Liveable Neighbourhood project through ECC's Green Infrastructure team and Hazelmere Infant and Junior School.
- c. Board **noted** that a community engagement event organised in partnership with the Active Well Being Society and Greater Anglia Community Rail Partnership to take residents in Greenstead to Clacton for a free beach day out has also taken place to help build strong relations between the community and the Heart of Greenstead projects.

#### 4. Risk Management – Heart of Greenstead

Board **noted** an update on progress towards delivering a viable on time/on budget ‘campus style’ approach for the Heart of Greenstead Multi-Use Hub. This involves refurbishing existing facilities rather than demolition, an approach endorsed by the Heart of Greenstead Board and supported by We Are Colchester Board. Consultation with stakeholders is ongoing, working closely with architects and other specialists. Negotiations with the Integrated Care Board are also in progress with a view to increasing available project budget.

Board **noted** that the risk RAG for this project remains at Amber overall and Red for cost until a final delivery plan and costs are confirmed.

## 5. Risk Management – City Centre to Greenstead and University walking and cycling route LCWIP4

Board **noted** that route section 8 (Colne Causeway) has been completed and progress was being made towards ECC highway adoption for sections 4-7 to enable permitted development without planning application.

For route sections 1-3 (East Hill – a conservation area), issues related to the road safety audit, redesign of elements of the scheme, and associated tender costs which have exceeded budget have been escalated within ECC. A Safer Streets bid is also in progress. However, it remains likely that value engineering will be required, alongside which the delivery plan must continue to ensure that the entire route is within the Town Deal funding window of March 2026. Meanwhile, Town Deal funding has been confirmed by MHCLG for 2024-25 and CCC as accountable body has ensured such funds are available to ECC to progress delivery.

## 6. Risk Management – other projects

The Board also **noted** the following updates:

- a. Jumbo and Balkerne Gate phase 2. North Essex Heritage have submitted a stage 2 application to National Lottery Heritage Fund with any announcement expected to be made at the end of 2024. Meanwhile, Town Deal funding continues to enable repairs, design and planning work in preparation for the works required to bring the tower back into full public use as a visitor experience. Partners will be briefed accordingly.
- b. St Nicholas Square. Good progress has been made with phase 1 works and associated permissions, with archaeology necessitating a review of phase 2 delivery timetable and possible completion slippage to early 2025.
- c. Transformed Youth Facilities. Highwoods youth centre works have been completed, Stanway youth centre works are due to be completed in the summer school holidays and works at Townhouse youth centre are expected to commence shortly. Contractor cost review means soundproofing for Townhouse gym may not be brought into scope. Out of scope 'should haves' were itemised and discussed with Board for potential additional funding.
- d. Holy Trinity Church. Work is progressing on the stage 2 National Lottery Heritage Fund bid alongside development of the operating business model.
- e. Programme wide costs. Cost inflation continues to be closely monitored and managed. Some projects have been subject to delayed 2024-25 payments from MHCLG due to reported risk/underspend to date. This is considered unlikely to have major impact on cashflow or delivery due to these projects already being in funds.



## 7. Spotlight – Colchester City Centre regeneration map

The Board **noted** with thanks a presentation highlighting some of the city council's communication objectives and information about a new interactive 'regeneration map' featuring various key locations. Key statistics were shared evidencing the level of digital engagement with the regeneration map and St Botolph's Circus (a Levelling Up project) video fly-through. Further details of Linked In engagement and tracked city centre media articles was provided. An update on UK Government branding was also shared.

## 8. Levelling Up Programme

- a. An update on Colchester's Levelling Up programme will be provided at the next meeting.



## 9. Decisions and points noted

- a. Heart of Greenstead. Board **agreed** that the approach adopted to refurbish rather than demolish and rebuild multi-use community facilities through value engineering was appropriate in order to ensure this project can be delivered on time and budget. Board also **directed** that a detailed delivery timetable with costs and details of any additional secured Integrated Care Board funding be presented at the next meeting.
- b. City Centre to Greenstead and University Walking and Cycling Route LCWIP4. Board **agreed** that value engineering should focus on route sections 4-7 (off road) and not sections 1-3 (East Hill).
- c. St Nicholas Square. Board **directed** that a complete picture on progress and project completion be presented at the next meeting, including lessons learned to date.
- d. City Centre projects. Board **agreed** that evidence gathered of positive impact, including increased footfall and spend at visitor attractions, should be incorporated as appropriate into future public communications, as well as being reflected quantitatively and qualitatively in programme monitoring returns.
- e. Essex Pedal Power. Board **noted** that Essex Pedal Power demonstrated strong impact evidence as a case study for learning and sharing. It was also **agreed** that Alison Andreas would explore opportunities to promote Essex Pedal Power to Colchester Institute students.
- f. Transformed Youth Facilities. Board **noted** a request for support and advice on sponsorship opportunities to cover items which are out of scope due to budget constraints. Councillor King and Councillor Scott highlighted grant funding opportunities to be shared with Essex Youth Service. It was **agreed** that a costed list of requirements would also be presented.

## **10. Next meeting - 28 November 2024**

Future meetings:

27 February 2025

22 May 2025