

# The Future of Essex

User Manual



# Contents

This is our vision for the future of Essex. The purpose of this manual is to act as a physical reference point for the people involved. And to help you inspire others in shaping The Future of Essex.

**We can** sets out our vision and ambitions for Essex. It is the product of 9 months of research, investigation and collaborative working. It's the local truths and ambitions on which success is pinned.

**I can** is an opportunity to interpret this vision as you wish. **I can** is a chance to understand your role in this new future.



**We  
can**



*It is this clash of East End pub and medieval barn that I love about it. A quintessential Essex road would feature a tumbledown Elizabethan Manor house, a used car lot, a terrace of dignified Edwardian worker's homes, a gaudy bungalow, scrubby field with a horse and an ancient over-restored pub with a karaoke speed dating night.*

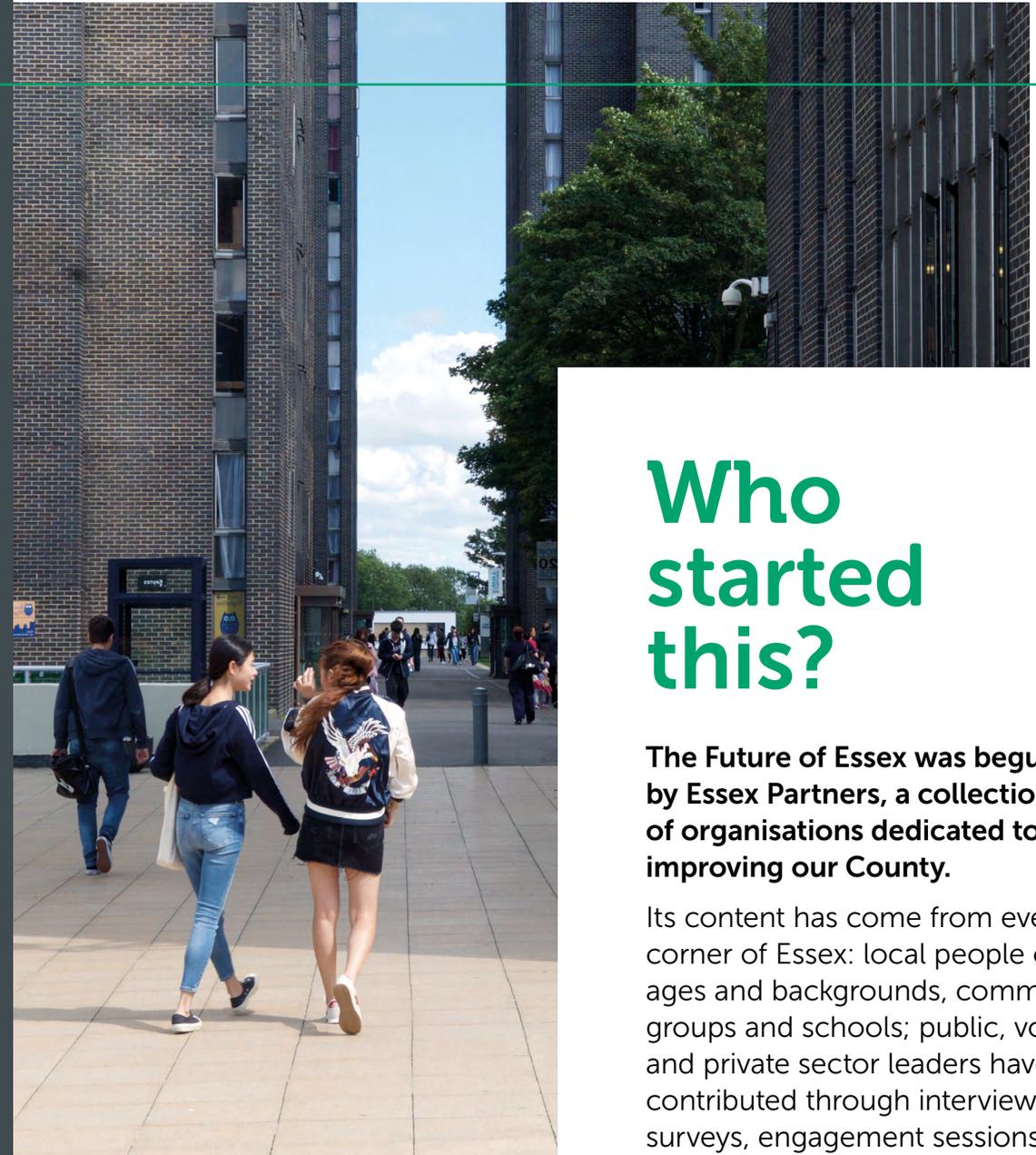
*It is this unprecious cheek by jowl existence of crass modernity that I love about Essex, its endless miles of marshy coast and new-town roundabouts, pebble-dashed estates and bowered sunken lanes. The quaint market town of Chelmsford that I grew up in has been paved over and Americanised, yet criss-crossing the County you will find surprising antique monuments, chocolate box high streets but always with a pylon in the background to stop it becoming kitsch and lose its Essex soul.*



Grayson Perry



# Part 1: Background & Purpose



## Who started this?

**The Future of Essex was begun by Essex Partners, a collection of organisations dedicated to improving our County.**

Its content has come from every corner of Essex: local people of all ages and backgrounds, community groups and schools; public, voluntary and private sector leaders have all contributed through interviews, surveys, engagement sessions, conversations and activities.

The 'we' in this document includes those contributors, everyone working towards better social outcomes in Essex – and every other person making their life here in Essex.

## What is its purpose?

The purpose of The Future of Essex is to give all the many different communities, groups and businesses of Essex a way to collaborate in planning our future. To unite us. To set out the kind of Essex we want to live in. To transcend short-term agendas and move us towards the big things that matter to all of us. To take our pride in our County, and channel it for the good of everyone.



*"Essex has masses of culture, innovation, and character."*



## Why?

Because change is always coming, and we want to make sure it's positive and that it happens on our terms. We want to direct it, and seize the opportunities it presents. And the only way to do that is to work together.

# Part 2: Ambitions



## Our ambitions

These ambitions set out the fundamental things we want to achieve for Essex in the next 20 years, and the things we'll focus on to make them happen. Together they provide a shared start and end point.



***"Things happen in Essex.  
We are doers."***

## 1

## Unite behind a sense of identity

**Essex is many places. A haven for wildlife, self-made millionaires, social housing and everything in between. Complicated, surprising, eccentric – there's no single way to describe who we are.**

Our ambition is to find a way to capture our many local characteristics, the things that make Essex unique and special, to inspire pride in ourselves and so bring visitors, investment, opportunities and new people to Essex.

***"Essex is a contradiction."***

### Our priority...

Busting stereotypes, celebrating achievement and building pride.

## 2

## Enjoy life long into old age

**Essex is full of people who have enjoyed a long, fruitful life here – the people who built our County. And it has the potential to offer everyone the same excellent quality of life as they live and grow old here.**

Our ambition is to ensure more people get the chance to achieve that quality of life: to enjoy independent, healthy, safer lives by using new technologies to deliver new forms of care, supporting individuals and families to care for each other, encouraging healthy and active lifestyles and by addressing the many needs of an ageing population that will continue to have a higher average age than the rest of the country.

***"The biggest challenge facing Essex is its increasing population and the increasing age of its citizens."***

### Our priority...

Reducing the gap in life expectancy, tackling avoidable physical and mental illnesses, and promoting independence wherever possible.

# 3

## Provide an equal foundation for every child

**Over three quarters of Essex’s schools are good or outstanding, and as our County and our communities grow, so will the opportunities for every young person.**

Our ambition is to make sure every child has the chance of a great future by eradicating the gap in outcomes for disadvantaged children, giving every child the knowledge and support they need to seize every chance of success and happiness.

***“Children and young people are our future and we need to make sure they want to stay in Essex.”***

### Our priority...

Improving school readiness, supporting safe and secure relationships, and making sure every child can go to a great Essex school.

# 4

## Strengthen communities through participation

**The strength of Essex is its people. We are home to many tight-knit communities, with an incredible voluntary sector and community spirit.**

Our ambition is to spread that spirit everywhere. To foster the bonds that hold us together, celebrate differences and show the importance of personal participation so that we have safe and cohesive communities. Because communities grow from individual participation and a sense of purpose, not from top-down action.

***“Essex is many small, strong communities – not a single community.”***

### Our priority...

Nurturing a safer, better connected society by giving people more ways to control and contribute to their communities.

## 5

## Develop our County sustainably

**Essex is unique. Historic market towns next to radical new towns. The longest wild coastline in Britain dotted with working port communities. Ancient, beautiful, modern, challenging.**

Our ambition is to use the need for 140,000 new homes over the next 20 years as an opportunity to enhance the County – with infrastructure development, healthier places, safer communities, more schools and amenities and greater opportunity. Not preserving nor building over – but rather adding to the beauty, diversity and uniqueness in a considered, sensitive way.

***“Essex is full of hidden gems.”***

### Our priority...

Enhancing the things that make Essex a great place to live – our countryside, our coastline, our heritage – and working with local people and communities to build homes not houses, places not developments, communities not estates.

## 6

## Connect us to each other and the world

**Essex has an unbeatable location – close proximity to London, a gateway to Europe and links to the rest of the world.**

Our ambition is to amplify the possibilities our location offers, by unshackling us from cars and congestion with efficient, modern and sustainable networks and digitally connected homes and businesses.

***“We have become prisoners of the commute.”***

### Our priority...

Tackling congestion on our roads and railways, securing large-scale investment in low carbon modes of transport and delivering superfast broadband to every part of Essex.

# 7

## Share prosperity with everyone

**Essex is home to some exciting organisations and more entrepreneurs for the size of our economy than anywhere else in the UK. We're known for our confidence, smile and swagger.**

Our ambition is to harness our can-do attitude with skills and support, unlocking personal potential across Essex. To attract and grow big businesses that will provide the growth, investment, and job opportunities we all need to prosper, and for our County to compete in a changing global economy.

***"Essex people are always ready to do business."***

### Our priority...

Giving more people the chance to achieve the highest qualifications in key growth industries, providing the space for big businesses to grow, and developing a united and relentless focus on attracting and maximising investment in Essex.

# Part 3: Statement of Intent

**Change is unstoppable. So, we will make it happen on our terms. We will amplify all that is good and unique about Essex and its people – our boldness, our cheek, our loyalty and fierce independence. We will harness this spirit, and make it contagious. Embrace the new and celebrate our differences. We will create a county where every single person has the support, the opportunity, the self-belief to fulfil the promise of their potential. And we will do it together.**

**Change is  
unstoppable.  
And so are we.**



I  
can

**For new  
results,  
try new  
methods.**

**Organisations effect lasting change only when individuals take personal responsibility for that change.**

**The Future of Essex isn't a top-down directive. It's a guidebook for change with the people of Essex placed firmly at it's core.**

**It's up to you how that change is made. Every individual has a unique set of skills that combined will bring about a positive future. Every individual has a role to play.**

**Every person living, working and guiding Essex will interpret this vision differently. Knowing where you fit in the plan is vital to achieving collective success.**

**The Future of Essex is your starting point. Where now?**



We will amplify all that is good and unique about Essex and its people – our boldness, our cheek, our loyalty and fierce independence.

# Your ideas

There are many big, long-term ambitions in this manual. To get things done, we need everyone to interpret what they mean at a personal and local level. So, we've created space for you to think, take notes and come up with ideas.

*NOTE: The thinking points below are purely there as a guide. Use them, or cross them out and write your own.*

## Thinking points

How do you feel about The Future of Essex?

What do you think it means for you, your local area and your organisation?

Which ambition resonates most with you and why?

How do you think you and your organisation can contribute to realising this – or any – ambition?

What do you think isn't represented in the plan?

## Your ideas for change



We will create a county where every single person has the support, the opportunity, the self-belief to fulfil the promise of their potential.

# What can I do?

The ambitions set out in The Future of Essex focus on long-term success across sectors like health, transport and employment.

However, achieving those ambitions will need contributions from across the County.

That means each of us stepping out of our silos, and seeing how the things we work on every day can contribute to the bigger picture.

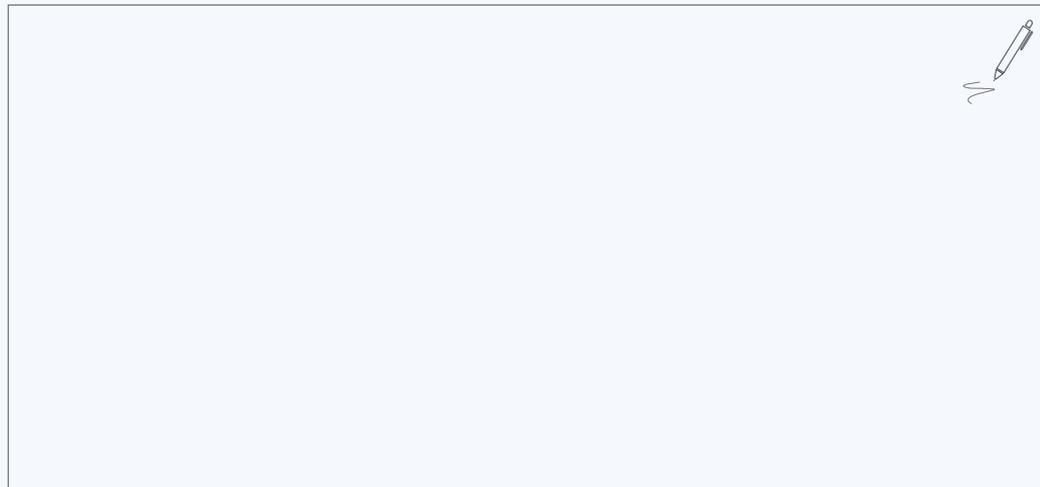


# What can I do?

Use this tear-out section to tell us your area of expertise, how you think you can contribute to goals outside of your usual sector, and to write or draw any ideas you want to share.

**My area of expertise:**

**How I can help achieve our ambitions:**





**Make  
your energy  
contagious.**

The collaborative energy that came out of The Future of Essex project galvanised everyone involved. Now, one of the most important contributions anyone can make is to pass that spirit on – motivating and inspiring others to make the vision a reality.

## Here are six simple things to return to, time after time, to help that happen.

1. Remind yourself and others who this is all for: you, your family, your community, the people of Essex.
2. Be open about your work – share, talk, blog and present new ideas and ways of thinking. Your enthusiasm will be infectious.
3. Never be afraid to ask for help.
4. Don't ignore your failures, learn from them.
5. Celebrate every little win because they all add up.
6. Remember, change is unstoppable. And together, so are we.

