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Future of

Essex



“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 workers homes, a gaudy bungalow, scrubby field with a horse and an ancient over-restored pub with a karaoke speed dating night.

It is this un-precious 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.”

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Grayson Perry



Part 1:

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**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.

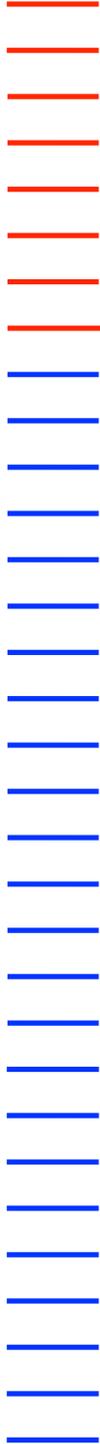


# What is its purpose?



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?

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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

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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 do-ers.”*

## 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, building pride.

## 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, safe lives. By using new technologies to deliver new forms of care, supporting individuals and families in caring 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.

## Provide an equal start 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, support and security they need to seize every chance at 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.

## 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.

## Develop our county sustainably

Essex is unique. Historic market towns and radical new towns. The longest coastline in Britain and working ports 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 school 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.

## 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 transport 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 super-fast broadband to every part of Essex.

## 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 back our can-do attitude with skills and support, unlocking personal potential across Essex – attracting and growing big businesses that will provide the growth, investment, and 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 businesses to grow and relocate, and developing a united and relentless focus on attracting and maximising investment in Essex.



Part 3:

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**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.**