

ECC Report January 2025

Extraordinary Full Council meeting



We will be holding an extraordinary Full Council meeting on Friday 10th January 2025, when councillors will discuss whether we should take part in the Government's devolution priority programme. As well as this, they will discuss whether we should commit to local government reorganisation.

The Government recently notified us that if we wish to be part of the programme, we must write to them to confirm by 10 January. This would be a joint letter from Essex County Council, Southend-on-Sea City Council and Thurrock Council.

The letter can also request permission to postpone the 2025 local elections.

All 75 Essex County Councillors are invited to take part in the debate. Our Leader, Councillor Kevin Bentley, will make the final decision for Essex County Council following this.

Councillor Bentley said:

"I have been very clear that there is a road to a better Essex for all who live here, and the way we will get there is through devolution. This presents us with an opportunity for growth and productivity across the county like no other. Linked to this is the proposed reorganisation of council structures which, as the White Paper sets out, is intended to drive greater efficiencies, help deliver better outcomes for people and strengthen accountability to the public."

“This decision is a momentous point in our history and a once in a lifetime chance to improve outcomes for Essex. I look forward to discussing this in January and continuing to engage positively with our partners.”

At this stage, no decisions have been made. Southend-on-Sea City Council and Thurrock Council will hold their own meetings during the week commencing Monday 6th January 2025.

Read more about [our response to the Government's English Devolution White Paper](#).

You can watch our Full Council meeting live at 10am on 10th January on the [‘ECC democracy’ YouTube channel](#).

I will report back soon after the meeting with its outcome.

Welcome to our Extraordinary Essex



**EXTRAORDINARY
ESSEX**

It's people that make us

Essex is an extraordinary county for many reasons. We're proud to serve the people and communities that live, work and study here. They are what make our county truly unique.

Over the past three years, we've achieved many successes.

In the coming months we'll demonstrate the real impact we've had on residents and communities through the commitments outlined in [Everyone's Essex](#) – our plan for improving the county.

We'll shine a spotlight on the breadth of work we do including the lesser-known areas that make a real difference to people's lives every day.

Spotlight on: Inclusive Dementia Communities

[Inclusive Dementia Communities, Extraordinary Essex - Essex County Council](#)

Extraordinary Essex features Inclusive Dementia Communities. We recently spoke to Melanie the Integrated Dementia Commissioner at Essex County Council at the launch of the Inclusive Dementia Communities. The event brought together people that are living with dementia, families of people that are affected by dementia and organisations and businesses that have made changes to support people with dementia and enable them to continue living their lives.

Lisa a Community Development Coordinator at Alzheimer's Society, summarised the aims for the Inclusive Dementia Communities:

Part of the scheme is to ensure that all the awareness is out there for different organisations and services so that we can ensure we're offering those safe environments for people"

Watch the full [video on Inclusive Dementia Communities](#) on our Extraordinary Essex channels.

We're commissioning a documentary spotlighting what makes Essex extraordinary

Marley Karazimba has been granted £15,000 to produce a [documentary about what makes Essex extraordinary](#), with an exhibition and screenings planned across the county. He received the funding from Essex County Council's [Extraordinary Essex Art Commission](#) for his documentary Don't Fight The Land That Feeds You. The film will focus on the importance of community-supported agriculture in Essex, showing the journey from soil to kitchen as residents cook with locally grown ingredients.

The Extraordinary Essex Art Commission saw artists apply for funding towards projects expressing why they feel Essex is an extraordinary place. The commission is part of the Extraordinary Essex campaign.

Would you like to be a part of a new short film about 'the people of Essex'?

[Short film by Marley Karazimba, call out to Essex residents - Essex County Council](#)

Artist and filmmaker Marley Karazimba is looking to represent the diversity of Essex and feature as many different growing projects as possible in the film, from families growing a few tomatoes in their garden, to multi-acre regenerative farms feeding hundreds of people each week and anything in between!

Do you live, work, or stay in Essex? Do you consider yourself 'connected to the land beneath your feet'? Do you grow food for yourself or your community, or simply use local produce to create recipes in the kitchen? Maybe you're into fermentation and preserving seasonal produce for use all year round?

If any of these sound like you and you'd be happy to talk about this land-connection on camera and feature as part of Marley's film, please contact culture@essex.gov.uk. To read more about the project visit: <https://culture-essex.co.uk/>

Essex Apprenticeship Hub

The apprenticeship hub supports school leaders in Essex to find and secure apprenticeship opportunities. They offers sessions on completing apprenticeship job applications and learning interview techniques.

Apprenticeships are a great way for businesses to boost their performance and efficiency by developing their employees' skills and knowledge. The Essex Apprenticeship Levy Transfer Service helps large businesses to transfer up to 50% of their unspent apprenticeship levy to support other businesses, to cover their apprenticeship training costs.

Hannah is an Employment & Skills Advisor at Essex County Council. She describes apprenticeships as:

A fantastic way for individuals to earn while they learn, gaining valuable skills and knowledge in a specific job role."

Watch the [full video on Essex Apprenticeship Hub](#) on our Extraordinary Essex channels.

Care Tech and our Adult Social Care Team

Extraordinary Essex includes the Adult Social Care Team. Part of the team's role is to find technology and equipment that can help people with care needs stay independent. Care technology can help you stay in your own home. Types include wearable alarms, medication alerts, video calls, and mobile apps.

Kay, an Essex resident wanted help and support to be more able to be independent with cooking her own meals and to give herself medication prompts. Kay said:

I can do things more for myself instead of asking my Jo to help me. I tell her (Alexa device) the time I take my tablets and she reminds me... that's helping me a lot."

Watch the [full video on Care Tech](#) on our Extraordinary Essex channels.

We Rise – A youth movement supporting young people with skills and employment

Extraordinary Essex includes the Apprenticeship Hub team. The team run the We Rise youth movement that helps young people aged 16 to 25-years-old remove barriers that are preventing them from reaching their career goals and raise aspirations.

Louise Fry, Commissioner for Skills Development explained why the We Rise event is extraordinary, "seeing that, you know you're making a difference to young people lives and some of the lovely things, people have said 'thanks for your help', 'I couldn't have done it without you' and things like that. You just feel like you're making a real difference to somebody that can then go on and do some wonderful things."

Watch the [full video about the We Rise event](#) and how it's helping young people achieve their career goals.

Essex Social Care - It's My Life Festival

Extraordinary Essex includes Essex Social Care. The team has been running It's My Life Festival for over 25 years. It brings together young people in care from similar backgrounds so they can create lifelong memories.

The festival comes from our [Children in Care Council](#) and offers a range of activities for different age groups. This includes archery, arts, crafts, football, high ropes and much more.

Sheila Woodwood, Service Manager, explained why It's My Life Festival is extraordinary:

The young people are extraordinary because they have faced and overcome challenges in their lives. They are extraordinary because we learn from them constantly. The energy they bring to things like this make it enjoyable for everyone."

Watch the [full video about It's My Life Festival](#).

Infrastructure Delivery Team

We're proud to shine a spotlight on our Infrastructure Delivery Team as they share details about the new eco-friendly Limebrook Way Primary School and Nursery. This project incorporates solar panel arrays, air source heat pumps, and thermal walls, just a few of the many features designed to significantly reduce carbon emissions.

Adding to its green credentials, a wildflower meadow has been planted next to the sports field, enhancing the school's natural surroundings.

Ella Shuttleworth, Sustainability Manager at Morgan Sindall, emphasised the importance of these efforts, "The sustainable initiatives at Limebrook are more than just meeting a target—they reflect our commitment to building a greener future for Essex. The team's dedication to sustainability and their impressive results have been nothing short of extraordinary."

[Watch the Infrastructure Delivery Team video](#) to hear more about the eco-friendly Limebrook Way Primary School and Nursery.

Essex Music Service

This month we're shining a spotlight on the Essex Music Service. This service provides a wide range of music education opportunities across schools and communities within Essex, supporting young people to enjoy and progress on an instrument, make music within a group or vocally.

Carla Mulholland is Head of Music at Mark Hall Academy. She wants the students at her school to have the same opportunities she had growing up. She said:

I wanted them to be able to play an orchestral instrument free of charge. To have this project then be able to play with a professional orchestra was just incredible.”

Watch the [Essex Music Service video](#) to hear more about how the service help young students learn instruments and thrive making music.

Independent Visitor Service

This month we're shining a spotlight on our Independent Visitor Service. Independent Visitors are volunteers from local communities who support young people and children in care from ages five to 18. They meet once a month with the young people they support to be consistent and supportive role models in their lives.

Craig is an Independent Visitor, he said “It is a big reward to see young people grow, develop, choose the right choices and go down the right path. I’d like to think I’m there as a listening ear if they ever found themselves in a situation they couldn’t cope with.”

[Watch the Independent Visitor Service video](#) to hear more about how the service support young people and children in care from ages five to 18.

Stay up to date on what’s happening across Essex

The Your Essex e-newsletter provides a snapshot of news, events and activities from across the county on a monthly basis. The newsletter includes the latest updates on the economy, health, families and children, the environment and much more. [Sign up to Your Essex](#) today.

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ECC Stock Division by-election result



A by-election took place on 12 December for the Essex County Council Stock division, following the sad death of Cllr Ian Grundy

Susan Melanie Dobson, the Conservative Party Candidate, was elected to represent the division.

The full result was as follows:

- Michael Thomas Allison, Reform UK, **977** votes
- Stephen Edward Capper, Labour Party, **127** votes
- Paul Hayden Clark, Independent, **160** votes
- Susan Melanie Dobson, The Conservative Party Candidate, **1304** votes (Elected)
- Edward Paul George Massey, The Green Party Candidate, **89** votes
- Christine Margaret Shaw, Liberal Democrats, **156** votes

Charitable trust offered long term lease on Shire Hall



We have offered the Essex Shire Hall Trust a long-term lease for Shire Hall.

Shire Hall is a Grade II* listed building. It fronts Tindal Square in the heart of Chelmsford City Centre.

The building was last used as a Magistrates' Court and venue for council events.

The HM Courts and Tribunals Service left the building in 2011. Since then, the building has remained largely unused, but it was used last year to shoot the very popular documentary of Mr Bates against the Post Office

If the trust is successful in obtaining planning permission and funding, Shire Hall will open its doors to the public once more.

Watch more about this exciting development in Shire Hall's future.

[Essex Shire Hall Trust, Cllr Kevin Bentley - Essex County Council](#)

Details of next steps will be shared soon.

