**The Essex Climate Action Commission**

**Who we are**

The Essex Climate Action Commission was set up in 2020 to advise on what Essex could do to tackle climate change.

The Commission has over 30 members. They include a Lord, local councillors, academics, business people and two members of the [Young Essex Assembly](https://www.essex.gov.uk/news/this-is-our-chance-to-make-a-difference-on-climate-change). Find out more about the [commissioners from their biographies](https://cmis.essex.gov.uk/essexcmis5/Document.ashx?czJKcaeAi5tUFL1DTL2UE4zNRBcoShgo=4eSkfoEPRdaqXmNERVZvokY77U9%2fKuAOAK8PrRWyMW1NHJWfC%2bYKSg%3d%3d&rUzwRPf%2bZ3zd4E7Ikn8Lyw%3d%3d=pwRE6AGJFLDNlh225F5QMaQWCtPHwdhUfCZ%2fLUQzgA2uL5jNRG4jdQ%3d%3d&mCTIbCubSFfXsDGW9IXnlg%3d%3d=hFflUdN3100%3d&kCx1AnS9%2fpWZQ40DXFvdEw%3d%3d=hFflUdN3100%3d&uJovDxwdjMPoYv%2bAJvYtyA%3d%3d=ctNJFf55vVA%3d&FgPlIEJYlotS%2bYGoBi5olA%3d%3d=NHdURQburHA%3d&d9Qjj0ag1Pd993jsyOJqFvmyB7X0CSQK=ctNJFf55vVA%3d&WGewmoAfeNR9xqBux0r1Q8Za60lavYmz=ctNJFf55vVA%3d&WGewmoAfeNQ16B2MHuCpMRKZMwaG1PaO=ctNJFf55vVA%3d).

The Commission is chaired by Lord Randall and two co-chairs from the Young Essex Assembly.

The Commission will run for two years initially and make recommendations about how the environment and the economy of Essex can be improved.

The UK climate has already changed, the sea level is rising, and further change by 2050 is inevitable. Essex, along with other parts of East Anglia, will see hotter summers, water shortages and the degradation of agricultural land unless large-scale, ambitious interventions are introduced.

The Commission will make recommendations on how best the county can reach the government’s target of net zero by 2050.

Net-zero greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions can often be confused with net-zero carbon emissions, but when accurately used, means all anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions are reduced to as near to zero as possible.

Net-zero carbonis calculated in the same way as net zero GHGs, however only includes anthropogenic CO2.

**Role of the Commission**

The [Essex Climate Action Commission](https://cmis.essex.gov.uk/essexcmis5/Committees/tabid/161/ctl/ViewCMIS_CommitteeDetails/mid/679/id/171/Default.aspx) will:

* identify ways where we can reduce our greenhouse gas emissions, make sure that we are able to deal with the effects of climate change, improve air quality, reduce waste across Essex and increase the amount of green spaces and biodiversity in the county
* explore how we attract investment in our environment and low carbon growth

The Commission has looked at six different subject areas in relation to climate change:

1. Adapting to an already changing climate
2. Transport
3. Built Environment
4. Energy and Waste
5. Land Use and Green Infrastructure
6. Community Engagement

Special Interest Groups were established for each of the subject areas. These were made up of small groups of between six and ten commissioners with a specific interest in each subject area. Each group met on a number of occasions to collate and review evidence in each area and develop recommendations for changes in Essex. These recommendations were then presented back to the full Commission at a series of meetings over the last year. Recordings of these meetings are available on the Commission’s [webpage](https://cmis.essex.gov.uk/essexcmis5/Committees/tabid/161/ctl/ViewCMIS_CommitteeDetails/mid/679/id/171/Default.aspx).

In November 2020 the Commission published its [Interim Report (PDF, 8.04MB)](https://assets.ctfassets.net/knkzaf64jx5x/1TOTb9iUfSKxVY6Wghgq7b/1fd6e9ad57c3bb5cdc17be9da4dee481/Essex_Climate_Action_Commission_Interim_Report_2020.pdf), with the final report due to be published in the summer of 2021.

You can find further information on the Commission's terms of [reference and workplan](https://cmis.essex.gov.uk/essexcmis5/Document.ashx?czJKcaeAi5tUFL1DTL2UE4zNRBcoShgo=Aay9IY2x7gRjxxmEmJvvH0KvLxM3RrjFu6uKwL7A%2f%2b8jBDMfDCBDZw%3d%3d&rUzwRPf%2bZ3zd4E7Ikn8Lyw%3d%3d=pwRE6AGJFLDNlh225F5QMaQWCtPHwdhUfCZ%2fLUQzgA2uL5jNRG4jdQ%3d%3d&mCTIbCubSFfXsDGW9IXnlg%3d%3d=hFflUdN3100%3d&kCx1AnS9%2fpWZQ40DXFvdEw%3d%3d=hFflUdN3100%3d&uJovDxwdjMPoYv%2bAJvYtyA%3d%3d=ctNJFf55vVA%3d&FgPlIEJYlotS%2bYGoBi5olA%3d%3d=NHdURQburHA%3d&d9Qjj0ag1Pd993jsyOJqFvmyB7X0CSQK=ctNJFf55vVA%3d&WGewmoAfeNR9xqBux0r1Q8Za60lavYmz=ctNJFf55vVA%3d&WGewmoAfeNQ16B2MHuCpMRKZMwaG1PaO=ctNJFf55vVA%3d) on the website.

**How you can help us**

We would like to understand the views of Essex residents on a selection of the recommendations the Commission will make to help Essex become better able to deal with increased climate risks such as flooding and overheating and reduce greenhouse gas emissions to become a net-zero county by 2050

***Please read the summary of the Commission’s recommendations before completing the consultation survey****.*

The feedback received from the survey will be independently analysed and summarised in the Commission’s Final Report, due to be published in the summer.

The consultation report will be made available on ECC’s consultation portal at consultations.essex.gov.uk and in accessible formats on request.

**Staying up to date with the work of the Commission**

The final set of recommendations from the Commission will be published in its Final Report in summer 2021. To register to receive an electronic copy of the Final Report once it is published please email climate.commission@essex.gov.uk

If you would like to be kept up to date with the work of the Commission through its monthly e-newsletter please [sign up](https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/UKESSEX/subscriber/new?topic_id=UKESSEX_606) to receive a copy.

You can also follow the ‘Essex is Green’ accounts on social media to keep up to date with the work of the Commission.

Twitter: @EssexisGreen

Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/greenessex](http://www.facebook.com/greenessex)

Facebook Discussion Group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/352211185796724>

Facebook Changemakers: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/eigchangemakers>

Instagram: www.instagram.com/essexisgreen

**The recommendations**

The recommendations from the Essex Climate Action Commission have been grouped by the subject areas of the six Special Interest Groups:

1. Adapting to an already changing climate
2. Transport
3. Built Environment
4. Energy and Waste
5. Land Use and Green Infrastructure
6. Community Engagement

In making the recommendations, the Essex Climate Action Commission recognises that addressing climate change will require changes in actions and behaviours by everyone in Essex - local and national governments and public agencies, by businesses, and by individual people and households.

Where appropriate additional information has been provided to give further detail on the recommendation.

**Adapting to an already changing climate**

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| **Recommendation: Incorporate national green infrastructure requirements from the government’s 25 Year Environment Plan into local planning**Green infrastructure requirements are about enhancing and creating more green spaces and other natural and semi-natural features (including 'blue infrastructure' such as rivers) in our towns, cities and villages to deliver multiple functions and benefits in terms of capturing carbon, reducing air pollution, flood and water management and improving health and wellbeing.For more information on the Government's plan please see A Green Future: Our 25-year plan to improve the Environment for further information on the <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/25-year-environment-plan>  |
| **Recommendation: Develop action plans to manage and adapt specific shorelines over the coming century that are realistic and sustainable in economic, social and environmental terms****Recommendation: Coastal flood resilience schemes in critical areas to be implemented by 2023****Recommendation: Set goals for managing overheating and reversing the national decline in urban greenspace and include greenspace ‘retrofit’ programmes in Local Plans**Local plans set out the vision for future development in a local area. They are used as a local guide to help determine what can be built and where. |
| **Recommendation: Include water efficiency in energy efficiency retrofit plans**Retrofitting is the improving of existing buildings with new technology and energy efficiency measures such as insulation or replacing old gas boilers with new technology such as heat pumps. |
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| **Recommendation: Stronger policy on sustainable urban drainage systems to ensure it is included as the default for new developments** SuDS are sustainable drainage systems which mimic nature and manage rainwater close to where it falls. Further information can be found here: <https://www.susdrain.org/delivering-suds/using-suds/background/sustainable-drainage.html>  |

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| **Recommendation: Diversify land use to build in resilience. Diversifying agricultural land, afforestation, peatland restoration and catchment management have positive impacts on the condition of natural habitats, and habitat creation. Support should be provided to help land managers transition to alternative land uses. This includes help with skills, training and information to implement new uses of land, and support with high up-front costs and long-term pay-backs of investing in alternative uses.** Climate resilience is the ability to anticipate, prepare for, and respond to adverse weather conditions such as heavy rain which causes flooding.Alternative land uses include natural or wilderness areas including woodland, marshes, meadows and it could also be sustainable land practices such as organic farming, regenerative farming, agro-forestry or re-wilding. |
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**Transport**



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| **Recommendation: ECC to publicly state its commitment and funding to rebuild passenger transport services hit by market failure since the pandemic** |
| **Recommendation: Introduce dedicated, well-planned cycling and walking routes across all urban and rural locations, and to all rail stations** |
| **Recommendation: Introduce emissions charging and/or parking charges in town centres**Emissions charging is a financial charge set by the emissions of your car to enter a certain place or use a certain road. Emissions parking is the same – parking rates set by the emissions of your car e.g. electric cars cost less to park as they are less damaging to the environment. |
| **Recommendation: Introduce additional school streets for 25 schools by 2022 and an additional 20 per year to 2050**School streets can be a variety of interventions designed to make streets outside schools safer and encourage active travel. Interventions include temporary closures, reduced parking, reducing speed, park and stride etc. |
| **Recommendation: Ringfence funding from car disincentives to invest in a good quality bus offer**An example of funding from car disincentives would be profits from emissions charging or parking fees which would be used to improve bus transport. Bus services are currently not considered to be high quality uniformly across the county. |
| **Recommendation: Introduce 20 Walkable Neighbourhoods per annum from 2022 to 2030**Walkability occurs when cities and neighbourhoods provide easy access to non-motorised transportation. In other words, a walkable neighbourhood is friendly to walkers, yielding its inhabitants several health, environmental, and even economic benefits. Everything a resident may need should be within walking distance. Walkable neighbourhoods can also be called 20-minute neighbourhoods. |
| **Recommendation: Introduce five workplace levy schemes** A Workplace Parking Levy (WPL) is a charge on employers who provide workplace parking, typically passed onto the employee. i.e. pay to use work car park. |
| **Recommendation: Reduce town centre/city centre parking**This refers to both reducing the supply/availability of parking and reducing the number of people who choose to park in towns/city centres (e.g. which might then imply increased park and ride) - but primarily this would mean reduced supply. |
| **Recommendation: Kickstart innovative solutions such as electric demand responsive transport with a clear pathway to commerciality**Demand responsive transport means passenger transport that doesn't follow a timetable but is booked on demand. This would be similar to Uber but for the minibus or bus. It would be electric as opposed to petrol or diesel. This could be an alternative to traditional buses which are not already appropriate in rural areas. |
| **Recommendation: Expand charging network beyond UK national average, focusing particularly on rural locations**This means expanding the network of charging points for electric vehicles. |

**Built Environment**



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| **Recommendation: All new schools commissioned to be Carbon Zero by 2022**Some new schools have already been designed and are entering the construction phase and so cannot commit to being net-zero carbon. The term 'commissioned' refers to the School Organisation Service confirming that a net-zero carbon design is mandatory for the new building and must be part of the specification to ensure contractors design and price accordingly. |
| **Recommendation: All new homes consented to be Carbon Zero by 2025**Consented refers to the planning applications for new homes and non-domestic buildings that will be given planning permission post-2025. Site which are granted permission before 2025 but are built post-2025 may not have been required to be built to Net-Zero standards. |
| **Recommendation: All new commercial buildings to be Carbon Zero by 2025** |
| **Recommendation: All new schools commissioned to be Carbon Positive by 2030** |
| **Recommendation: All new homes and non-domestic buildings consented to be Carbon Positive by 2030**Consented refers to the planning applications for new homes and non-domestic buildings that will be given planning permission post-2030. Sites which are granted planning permission before 2030 but are built post-2030 may not have been required to be built to Carbon Positive standards. According to the World Green Building Council, the definition of a net zero carbon building is “a building that is highly energy efficient and fully powered from on-site and/or off-site renewable energy sources.” Carbon positive is where the building or development is beyond zero carbon and contributes more that the development itself to carbon reduction – therefore it can offset the carbon of other development. |
| **Recommendation: 50% of Essex schools to be retrofitted to net zero standards by 2025, 100% by 2030** |
| **Recommendation: All Anchor Institutions and ECC estate assets to be retrofitted to net zero carbon standards by 2030**The term ‘anchor institutions’ is used to refer to large public sector organisations which: have an important presence in a place, usually through a combination of: being largescale employers, the largest purchasers of goods and services in the locality, controlling large areas of land and/or having relatively ﬁxed assets. (CLES, 2021). Examples of anchor institutions are local authorities, local hospitals or universities. |
| **Recommendation: One third of commercial buildings to be retrofitted as far as possible with renewable energy systems by 2030**Retrofitting should start with improving energy efficiency and the thermal performance of the buildings as well as installing onsite renewable energy generation. |
| **Recommendation: Two thirds of all dwellings to be retrofitted as far as possible to net zero carbon standards by 2030**Please see Retrofit Academy for good definition of 'retrofitting' <https://www.retrofitacademy.org/what-does-whole-house-retrofit-mean-to-me/>  |
| **Recommendation: Existing residential buildings - carbon emissions reduction of 50% by 2030. Carbon Zero by 2040.** |

**Energy and Waste**



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| **Recommendation: 100% of fuel poor households retrofitted and supplied with affordable renewable energy by 2030** Retrofitting is the improving of existing buildings with new technology and energy efficiency measures such as installing insulation or heat pumps instead of gas boilers. |
| **Recommendation: Essex produces enough renewable energy within the county to meet its own needs by 2040**Renewable energy is energy which is produced sustainably such as that produced by wind farms or solar power. |
| **Recommendation: Installing solar panels on every available roof on domestic, industrial and commercial properties by 2050, 25% of rooftops by 2030** |
| **Recommendation: Retrofit across the whole housing stock by 2040, introduce an incentive to accelerate the shift to low carbon heating solutions**Retrofitting is the improving of existing buildings with new technology and energy efficiency measures |
| **Recommendation: Build a network of community energy neighbourhoods across every district in Essex, to generate, store, share and use energy local by 2035**Community energy networks are a way in which local communities can work together to reduce their energy consumption, take collective action to improve buildings or use collective purchasing or switching of power supplier to get a better deal. |
| **Recommendation: Accelerate recycling activity to achieve a minimum 70% recycling rate by 2030**The current recycling rate in Essex is 54%. The aim is that 70% of all waste is recycled by 2030. |
| **Recommendation: Reduce per capita waste by at least 10% by 2030**This means reducing the amount of waste each person produces by 10%. |
| **Recommendation: Zero waste to landfill by 2030**This means no more waste would be disposed of to landfill after 2030 and other disposal methods should be used instead. |
| **Recommendation: All Essex residents and businesses to have access to kerbside recycling services by 2025**As waste collection is the responsibility of the local city, district or borough council, the service varies within Essex. There are currently pockets of properties (mainly flats) which have limited or no kerbside collection.  The service to businesses from the local authority is limited and in the case of some non-existent.  This recommendation is trying to ensure a minimum standard of kerbside collection is available to all properties by 2025 collecting the core materials as detailed in the DEFRA consistency consultation. |
| **Recommendation: Establish a network of community-based reuse and repair hubs in Essex by 2024**A reuse and repair hub is a place you can take household items that would otherwise be thrown away to be fixed or reused. |

**Land Use and Green Infrastructure**



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| **Recommendation: Farmland in Essex adopts Sustainable Land Stewardship practices: 50% by 2030; 75% by 2040 and 100% by 2050**Sustainable land stewardship practices include:* Use of efficient crop and animal varieties lessening the need for fertiliser and pesticides
* The limiting of external inputs
* The exploitation of natural biological processes to increase fertility or beneficial pest control
* Minimising physical and chemical technologies that have adverse impacts on the environment and human health
* Use of local human resources and knowledge
* Lowering the use of valuable resources and production of damaging resources
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| **Recommendation: 30% of all land in Essex will enhance biodiversity and the natural environment by creating Natural Green Infrastructure: 25% by 2030 and 30% by 2040**Green Infrastructure (GI) is a strategically planned network of natural areas with other environmental features designed and managed to deliver a wide range of ecosystem services such as water purification, air quality, space for recreation and climate mitigation and adaptation. This network of green spaces can improve environmental conditions and therefore citizens' health and quality of life. It also supports a green economy, creates job opportunities and enhances biodiversity. The current % of GI in Essex is 13%.Green infrastructure can include all living plants and trees and for example:* parks, playgrounds, and gardens
* patches of grass
* hedges
* allotments
* farms
* churchyards

It can also include rivers, streams, lakes, and ponds (also called blue Infrastructure). All these can join together to create a network that can connect towns to a park and to your house. When these all join together they can provide lots of benefits such as: * areas for sports and play
* education
* habitats for wildlife
* creating jobs
* stopping flooding or clear the air

Our Green Infrastructure is important for a healthy environment and for our health and wellbeing. |
| **Recommendation: For those properties still at risk of flooding (currently 75,000), where we develop schemes to increase their flood resilience, we will aim for 3/4 of the schemes developed by 2050 to include Integrated Water Management and Natural Flood Management techniques**Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) is a process which promotes the coordinated development and management of water, land and related resources in order to maximise economic and social welfare in an equitable manner without compromising the sustainability of vital ecosystems and the environment. Natural flood management is when natural processes are used to reduce the risk of flooding and coastal erosion. Examples include: building leaky dams from logs, restoring bends in rivers, changing the way land is managed so soil can absorb more water and creating saltmarshes on the coast to absorb wave energy. |
| **Recommendation: 30% greening of our town, villages and new developments by: increased greenspace creation, naturalising existing green space, greening the public realm and developing sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDS)**Green spaces such as urban parks and woodlands can be heavily managed through the removal of deadwood, cutting down trees, trimming undergrowth etc which makes it less natural. Naturalising existing green space means less interference which will allow those green spaces towards being more like our ancient woodlands which are much richer in terms of species diversity and ecosystem complexity.  Greening the public realm means creating or improving green spaces that are accessible to the public. |
| **Recommendation: Create a Climate Focus Area to accelerate action and provide exemplars: adopting Sustainable Land stewardship practices: 100% by 2030 and Natural Green Infrastructure: 30% by 2030**The Essex Climate Focus Area aims to converge all efforts to improve the natural and urban environment in face of climate change. It provides a hotspot for learning and innovation of sustainable practices within the council. It comprises the Blackwater and Colne river catchments (area 930km2) which provide natural corridors linking Essex hinterland with the coast. It includes coastal and inland areas, rural as well as urban. It has diverse landscapes ranging from ancient woods to open arable areas, Essex heathlands and areas of urbanisation throughout; it includes coastland of shallow creeks, drowned estuaries, low-lying islands, mudflats and broad tracts of tidal salt marsh and reclaimed grazing marsh; it includes part of the five boroughs and districts of Uttlesford, Braintree, Colchester, Maldon and Tendring. |
| **Recommendation: Ensure collaboration and engagement by carrying out a participatory community process, catalysing communities, farmers, landowners and individuals, encouraging personal and community action in the Climate Focus Area and the whole of Essex**'Participatory community process' comprises a combination of direct consultation, workshops and a social media consultation building on the Essex is Green Facebook conversations and potentially utilising a host of other media such as Twitter, Instagram and other social media platforms such as Tik Tok, YouTube etc. Direct consultation will include “Consultation Roadshow and Workshop” events visiting the principle towns and communities in the Climate Focus Area. |
| **Recommendation: Developing Effective Monitoring and Evaluation, an integrated Sustainability Appraisal Framework, an Essex Climate Observatory, and a Knowledge and Decision Support Framework**A framework will be designed with local communities and made available to all for local decision-making and progress monitoring. This will enable everyone to understand the biodiversity gains and the potential changes needed to land to make this happen. This will help inform Climate Focus Area (CFA) actions and wider rollout to Greater Essex. The underlying data and information for the CFA will be held by ECC. |
| **Recommendation: Developing a Funding and Partnership development programme**ECC and partners should collaborate to seek funding from a wide variety of potential sources, including grant, carbon credits, biodiversity net gain credits, corporates, etc for delivering the Climate Action programme and its recommendations. In addition to funding, partners will be delivering land use improvement for capturing and lessening carbon from funds they have sourced to become pilot projects for the Essex Climate Action Commission's work. The Funding and Partnership development programme will help ECC demonstrate and convene partners' work, using ECC funds as seed-capital, whilst participating in world-class activities. |

**Community Engagement**



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| **Recommendation: Provide an online resource that provides key information to enable action for individuals and households with associated carbon impacts; amplified by social media and other communications tools; signposting to apps and good advice that already exists**This resource such as an app or website would provide residents with information about their carbon footprint and how they can reduce it. |
| **Recommendation: Public bodies and local authorities across Essex - city, district and borough, parish and town councils - should align on key public messaging around climate** |
| **Recommendation: Provide additional toolkits to enable effective action at a local level whilst providing links to possible funding opportunities**These communications toolkits would contain information to enable local town and district councils to communicate effectively about climate change and ensure consistency across the county. This would support the delivery of the above recommendation for councils to align on key public messaging. Information about funding opportunities for town and district councils will be shared with them. |
| **Recommendation: Establish Essex as a centre of excellence for innovation in addressing the climate crisis. A net zero innovation network should build on excellent networks across the County to deliver this ambition.**Such a network would bring together leaders from businesses and educational establishments from across the county to create partnerships and the appetite for innovation in Essex focusing on achieving net zero outcomes for the county. |
| **Recommendation: A climate recognition scheme for businesses should be developed where businesses are awarded a logo or badge in recognition of climate action taken. Anchor institutions should investigate if this could support green procurement practices.**The term 'anchor institutions' refers to organisations which have a significant presence in the area. This may be because they are a significant employer or the greatest purchasers of goods and services in the area. Examples of anchor institutions are local hospitals or universities. |
| **Recommendation: The business and green growth opportunities arising from Commission recommendations should be modelled and communicated to Essex businesses and investors both inside and outside the county** |
| **Recommendation: Essex is Green should continue to be supported. Essex is Green should be used as an overarching brand for climate action in Essex, widely seen across the County. Essex is Green awards for community action should be developed.**Essex is Green is a campaign identity currently only used on social media accounts on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to communicate to Essex residents about climate change related matters. Essex is Green is a collaboration between Essex County Council, The Essex Climate Action Commission and local social media admins. |
| **Recommendation: An annual report on progress against the Commission recommendations, to celebrate progress and show how far Essex is on track towards a net zero, climate resilient county** |
| **Recommendation: Develop an online dashboard that brings together annual carbon figures alongside more readily available proxies for progress e.g. numbers of trees planted, air pollution levels, numbers of car-free streets, numbers of electric vehicles, traffic volumes, renewables capacity, tonnes of waste etc.** |
| **Recommendation: A regular review of the communications approach to ensure it is responsive and relevant** |