



# Draft Waste Strategy for Essex

Business Webinar Addendum  
Report

May 2024

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## Background

The Essex Waste Partnership (EWP) is made up of Essex County Council, and the 12 district, city and borough councils in Essex. On behalf of the EWP, Essex County Council (ECC) facilitated a public consultation on a new joint draft Waste Strategy for Essex in autumn 2023.

Businesses in Essex were invited to take part in the public consultation and a number provided a response. To further strengthen engagement with businesses during the post-consultation consideration phase and to develop opportunities for future engagement, local businesses were invited to attend a webinar hosted by Essex County Council via Ambitious Essex. The purpose of the webinar was to support businesses to learn more about the draft strategy, explore how businesses can drive change, and as an opportunity to ask questions and to provide feedback.

To ensure independent and impartial analysis, ECC commissioned Enventure Research to analyse and evaluate the feedback and questions raised during the webinar and prepare this report.

## Approach and participation

The 60-minute webinar was hosted by Essex County Council on Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2023. Essex County Council advertised the webinar using the following:

- [The Essex County Council website](#)
- [The Public Sector Network, Environment Journal](#)
- [The Waste Management Industry Network – Materials Recycling World \(MRW\) Reporter](#)
- News coverage
- Ambitious Essex [LinkedIn](#) and [Twitter](#)
- [Ambitious Women in Essex Community](#)
- Essex Economic Development Officers' network
- Essex Business Intermediaries Forum
- ECC Providers Bulletin
- Essex Construction Alliance
- Essex Training Providers and Colleges Network
- [Backing Essex Business social media](#)
- ECC social media
- [Federation of Small Businesses newsletter](#)
- [Harlow Business](#)

The webinar began with an introduction to the draft waste strategy provided by Essex County Council officers, exploring the following:

- Waste in Essex and the long term waste vision and ambition
- How businesses can help drive change and what their responsibilities are
- How everyone in Essex can work together to better support each other

Following the presentation, participants were asked four questions via interactive polls. Results from each question were captured in real-time and displayed live for participants. It should be noted that



three of the poll questions invited participants to submit freetext comments and participants could submit more than one response.

Following the poll, participants had the opportunity to ask questions about the draft strategy and the implications for businesses. These questions were responded to by a panel of council officers.

A researcher from Enventure Research attended the webinar to take notes for analysis and the recording of the video was made public on [YouTube by Love Essex](#). Enventure Research subsequently analysed the responses to the poll questions and the questions participants raised.

In total, 27 participants from businesses and other organisations attended the webinar, alongside officers from Essex County Council and a researcher from Enventure Research. Participants were from a wide range of sectors, which included the following:

- Cleaning
- Construction
- Digital and Data
- Education and Training
- Government (Local)
- Health, Care and Social Work
- Professional Services
- Professional, Scientific and Technical Activities
- Transport and Logistics
- Waste Management

Those from businesses who attended the webinar are referred to as ‘participants’. It should also be noted that wording in the feedback reflects the language and terminology used by participants, rather than that used by the EWP.

## Poll findings

### **Q1. How much do you think of your local council when dealing with business waste?**

Participants could respond to this question with *Very often*, *Sometimes* or *Never*. In total, 24 responses were received, and the most common response was *Never* (45%). This means that over half (55%) think about their local council at least *sometimes* when dealing with business waste.

### **Q2. How do we work with you to design services that meet your needs?**

In total, 52 responses were submitted to this question. *Cost* was the most common theme and *collaboration* and *communication* were also common. The responses emphasised the importance of:

- Providing resources and education on recycling practices for businesses and residents.
- Ensuring cost-effectiveness in service design and keeping costs for businesses to a minimum
- Building partnerships and working collaboratively with businesses.
- Conducting regular surveys and ensuring direct feedback channels are in place.
- Addressing a range of waste streams and improving waste services.
- Promoting circularity and improving recycling capabilities.
- Improving communication and providing information updates, particularly those related to legislation and compliance.
- Offering flexible and adaptable services, which consider specific business requirements and needs.



### **Q3. How can we support businesses to reduce packaging and develop reuse and repair services?**

In total, 30 responses were received. Responses commonly referred to packaging including responsibility, and the need for legislation. The following suggestions were also made:

- Create a directory of local businesses for reuse, repair and recycling services.
- Provide training and education on sustainable practices.
- Establish partnerships and work collaboratively.
- Encourage producer responsibility for packaging and products.
- Use technology for communication and reduce paper usage wherever possible.
- Conduct lifecycle analysis and understand business requirements.
- Share best practices and promote refill services.

### **Q4. How can you help reach your customers and/or supply chain to deliver education and engagement on reuse, repair and recycling?**

In total, 49 responses were submitted, with *waste permits*, *disclosure obligations* and “*carbon tax*” the most frequent suggestions. The feedback suggested the following things that business could do:

- Simplify procurement processes and tender requirements.
- Use marketing strategies, clear signage, and social media.
- Offer training and education programmes.
- Provide resources and regular communication.
- Conduct workshops, networking and outreach events.
- Ensure transparency and enforce disclosure obligations.
- Engage with local resident groups including through the use of social media.
- Offer incentives.

Some participants also highlighted things that the EWP can do to support businesses and their supply chain:

- Implement a “carbon tax”.
- Provision of waste permits.
- Regular communication and updates.
- Improving recycling services for residents.

### **Summary of findings**

Similarly to comments provided during the public consultation, feedback from webinar participants emphasised the importance of collaboration, support such as education, guidance and training for residents and businesses, regular communication and updates, and measures to promote sustainability and waste management initiatives among businesses and stakeholders.

## **Participant questions**

A number of questions were raised by participants in the Q&A session. Some were answered by the panel, and some were answered following the webinar due to time constraints. The questions raised were as follows:

- Could you give us an update on POPs (Persistent Organic Pollutants)?



- Is there a public document available anywhere for businesses to find other businesses that specialise in waste management?
- How will the strategy help a business?
- Due to the works we carry out, some of our recycling would be classed as contaminated. Is there anything we can do as a business to make this more environmentally friendly?
- We are a care home and we are currently having to put our green waste into a separate bin as our local council doesn't offer garden waste. Is this something Essex County Council are looking into?
- What happens as single use plastic gets banned? I always worry businesses will throw their polystyrene or their plastic cutlery into the bin as they cannot use it. Is there an amnesty?
- How do I find out if I need to take action about packaging produced or used by my business?
- Are there any thoughts on the increase in Lithium batteries, especially from vapes, and cost effective recycling solutions?
- Is there any additional legislation that ECC can implement above government legislation to reduce sales of items like single use vapes?

These questions reflect a range of topics of interest related to waste management, environmental sustainability, regulatory compliance, and the responsibilities of businesses in supporting the waste strategy.

In the course of the webinar, participants were signposted to various resources to help their businesses manage their waste, such as support from Essex County Council through Ambitious Essex [LinkedIn](#) and [Twitter](#), the [Love Essex website](#) and DEFRA's (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) forum for businesses.

