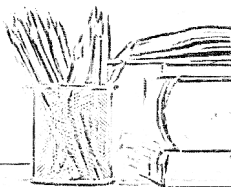
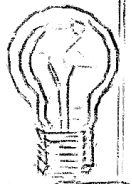


# The Future of Essex

**Strengthening Communities  
- Ideas Book**



# Welcome

Hello,

As sponsor of the Essex Communities Mission Network, it is my great privilege to introduce the latest in a series of 'Ideas Books' that uphold the Essex Partnership Board commitment to bringing the Future of Essex vision to life.

With a focus on 'Strengthening Communities through Participation' this book provides an inspiring series of case studies and ideas to help share good practice and encourage us all to think about the relationships we have with our communities and those relationships we are seeking to establish.

The pandemic has left us all a little jaded and has placed incredible stress on individuals, families, communities and businesses across Essex, but one of the absolute highlights of the past eighteen months has been the show of strength from individual communities across the Country, and none more so than in Essex.

Whether supporting our Community Hubs to disseminating food and medication, working in Food Banks to provide vital free food and drinks to those most vulnerable, or supporting the biggest vaccination programme in British history, the number of people who have given up their time to volunteer has been incredible.

It is our collective responsibility to create the right conditions for communities across Essex to establish what is right for them, and to enable local people to build on what's strong and respond to the needs of their friends, families, peers, to look after themselves, support each other and enjoy the opportunities living in Essex brings.

This Ideas Book seeks to share some of the work that Essex Partners have done to encourage and support communities across Essex, and I would uphold that the most important contribution we can make is to create the space and provide the support to drive local, grass roots activity, so that the specific needs of communities can be met.



**Roger Morris**  
**Bishop of Colchester**

# Strengthening Communities Ideas Book

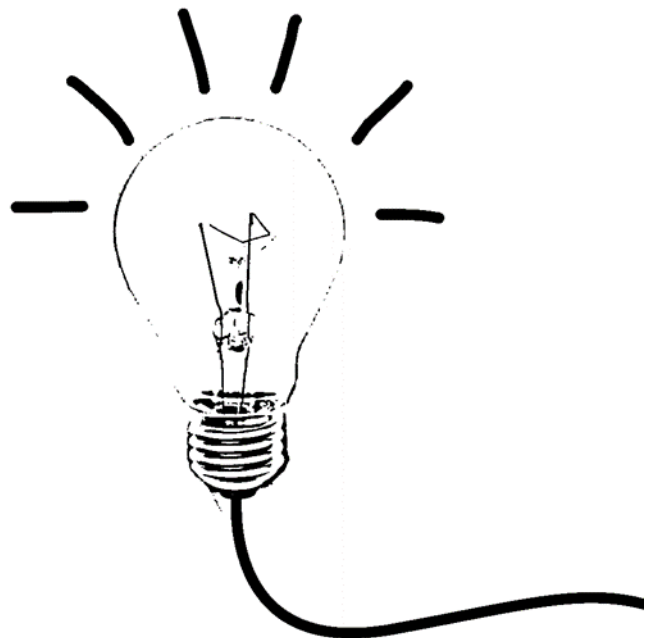
## **Purpose:**

To showcase the work and good practice taking place across Essex and to share examples of local partnership work that places the community and the philosophy of Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) at their heart.

This Ideas Book draws on local, regional and national best practice to share a series of examples and provocations for inspiration and discussion.

The book has been developed with input from Essex Partners to include some of the activities that individual organisations across the County have identified as priorities to further progress this agenda.

We can learn so much from each other and we would like to thank everyone for the contribution they have made to this work.



# Strengthening Communities Through Participation

Essex Partners Board (EPB) has developed a system approach to progressing and embedding the [Strengthening Communities through participation](#) ambition of the Future of Essex Vision.

A decision was taken in 2020 that an Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) approach to working with communities would be the most effective way to progress the ambition based on successful ABCD models in Essex and Nationally. This approach makes use of existing local assets as the building blocks for working with local people and drawing on community strengths to enable sustainable community development.

To drive the ambition a **Communities Mission Network** has been created to bring together a cross section of system leaders from public sector, voluntary sector, NHS and community backgrounds. The aim, to utilise the collective power of partnership to add value to, and strengthen existing work being undertaken across the County.

Chaired, supported and sponsored by Bishop Roger Morris the group seeks to remove barriers to opportunities, and apply its combined expertise to create system-opportunities.

# Strengthening Communities Through Participation

## The Grand Challenge

The overarching and long-term goal:

*Essex has strong, resilient communities of active citizens who are willing and able to take responsibility for themselves, each other and the places they live.*

## The Mission

The grand challenge will be delivered through work on that has been identified by system partners as a priority. The network will deliver on this clear mission over coming months\*

*'To improve and develop the cooperation and collaboration between statutory agencies and the voluntary sector'*

## The Projects

Over coming months, the Communities Network will prioritise a series of projects that best utilise the collaborative resources and expertise of the group to deliver system change and create opportunities in the communities' space.

*\* The Communities Mission Network will also lead on a second mission concentrating on addressing Domestic Abuse. This will form the focus of a second Ideas Book to follow.*

# Communities Mission Network

## How system partners can enable local communities:

It is important that the work led by Essex Partners Board, through the Communities Mission Network Team, adds value to what is already happening across the County and beyond.

Rather than duplicating efforts or slowing existing progress, the work seeks to identify a clear space where system leadership can review, unblock or speed up progress.

To inform the focus of the Communities Network, a series of system interviews took place with a broad range of stakeholders, that set out the context for the work and helped to frame the ongoing conversations.

Based on the interviews, a series of five *pillars* have been developed that set out the key roles of individual organisations and the Communities Network.



1

# Building System Capacity

.....

Working collaboratively to make the best use of our joint resources. Overlaying our organisational aims and ambitions to truly enable communities.

## **Home Start Essex - Utilising partnerships to support families**

Building strong relationships with families through trust and support, to improve family outcomes.

[For more information click here](#)

## **The Essex Map**

Supporting Essex to access help, advice and activities through a virtual network and platform .

[For more information click here](#)

## **Essex Mutual Aid Group**

Enabling individuals find the right support at the right time.

[For more information click here](#)

## **Creating Environmental Sustainability in the Community**

Holding community meetings to inform others about the importance of sustainable living to make Braintree town and the world a better place.

[For more information click here](#)



## Business and Community - Two sides of the same coin

The Knowledge Gateway research and technology park is transforming the relationship between the regional business community and the University of Essex. It's at the centre of the Government-designated University Enterprise Zone which has pioneered innovative business support programmes, exemplifying the University's focus on transforming businesses by helping them access space, funding, expertise, and talent.

Despite launching in the middle of a national lockdown, new business investment platform Angels@Essex had a phenomenal first year with over £7.7 million pledged to develop innovative business ideas. Angels@Essex, which matches investors with those needing funding, launched in May 2020, and so far 11 businesses have shared £4.9 million. A further £2.8 million has been committed.

The platform's success shows the huge potential of the Knowledge Gateway to drive growth in the East of England and demonstrates the University's role as an anchor institution - making an important contribution to the local economy and local communities.

The biggest beneficiary has been Conigital, whose founder has a vision to create cleaner, greener and safer public transport by developing driverless vehicles, available on demand. Within six months he had raised £1.5 million, with more on the horizon.

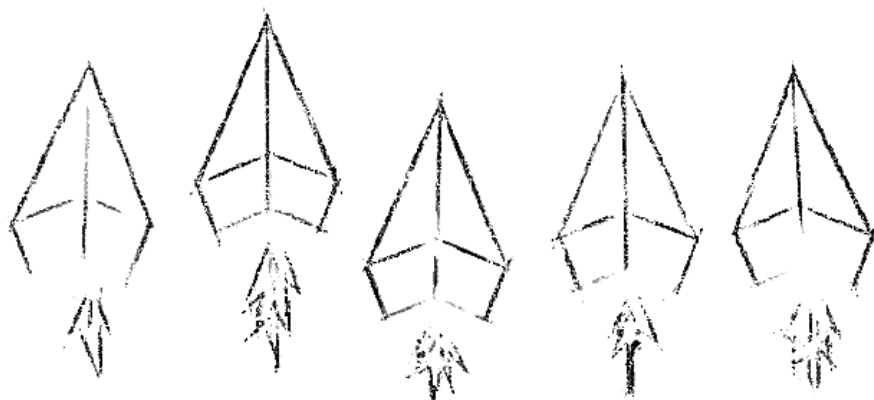


The University invested over £60 million in the 43-acre Knowledge Gateway, which includes Essex Business School as well as Parkside Office Village and the Innovation Centre - which together provide 71,000 square feet of office space.

The Innovation Centre provides space, plus hands-on support, to up to 50 start-ups and businesses looking to grow. The University is involved in nearly 40 Knowledge Transfer Partnership projects, allowing companies to access University expertise to develop innovative new services and products.

The UEZ has unlocked millions of pounds of investment through Angels@Essex and the Space to Grow programme has delivered hundreds of one-to-one sessions and webinars providing support to budding entrepreneurs.

[For more information please click here.](#)



## Asset Mapping in North and Mid Essex

In 2019, the North Essex Health and Wellbeing Alliance commissioned partners Community360, Community Voluntary Services Tending (CVST) and Health Watch Essex to undertake a community asset mapping exercise aligned to the principles of Asset Based Community Development and building on the existing strengths of a place.

This work takes a 'neighbourhood view' of what exists in terms of community assets, mapping Primary Care Network (PCN) geographies against the five Live Well domains; Start Well, Be Well, Stay Well, Age Well and Die well. There was encouraging feedback from community leaders who saw the value of using the ABCD model for the community rather than an audit which could be overlaid with demographic data and locality-based information.

The Mid Essex Health and Wellbeing Alliance soon built on the work of North Essex to shine the same light on Mid Essex and support system clarity and partnership. They were keen to highlight that the mapping was about interaction and relevance to the community and not about the volume of assets. There was also a focus on what they can invest in and build on, rather than focusing on current shortcomings.

This project and way of working has led to better communication and collaboration with the community and an increase in the neighbourhoods working together towards a common goal. It showed that the phrase 'community leaders' means front line groups and individuals working with the communities day to day. Through this there is a shared responsibility and ownership and a shared understanding of the needs of the community which is incredibly important to ensure that their need comes first.

However, it is crucial to remember that the opportunities must align to the resources within the community and that there isn't a 'over promise' within the local area which can damage trust and relationships that have been built.

Monthly meetings were established, led by a multi-agency steering group, to ensure this didn't happen and to progress the project whilst all factors were considered. The steering group included CVS', Council members, staff from Active Essex and CCG Leads, all of whom then report back to the Health and Wellbeing Alliance to ensure there is continuity throughout the work being carried out.

This project has been a great success, with positive feedback from community partners. It has stimulated a collective focus on how to support community members through an asset based and early intervention and prevention approach, building on the strengths of neighbourhood level assets, aligning resources and developing partnership working which enables communities to do more for themselves.

[For more information please click here.](#)

## Understanding How Physical Activity Can Strengthen Communities - An ABCD Approach

Chair Jason Fergus (Active Essex) leads a discussion alongside Cormac Russell (CEO of Nurture Development) and Dr William Bird (CEO, Intelligent Health) into the importance connection between physical activity and the Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) model.

Watch the conversation.

### [Physical Health & The ABCD Model](#)

Cormac Russel speaks about starting discussions with what is strong within a community, rather than what is wrong and how the connection between people within the community can lead to incredible strengths.

William Bird highlights how, as humans, we are designed to be active and how activity can be a gateway to living life and citizens empowerment.

Dr Bird also discusses the shift from '**what's the matter with you?**' to '**What matters to you?**', highlighting the strength of the ABCD model in allowing the citizens to become agents of their future and empowering the community to get going.



## Young Entrepreneurs Scheme - Braintree District Council

The Young Entrepreneur Programme aims to help new start-up businesses incubate and grow and was developed as part of a wider drive to grow the local economy and create jobs. It is no surprise that starting a new business is difficult for anyone and even more so for young individuals which is why this programme is so important in order to release the potential of aspiring young individuals.

The scheme is open to those aged between 16 - 30 and aims to inspire young individuals, who may be underachieving in mainstream education or are working in low-skilled jobs, to use their talents for enterprise.

*"This programme will not only create jobs, but it will also give young people not in education or employment other ways of reaching their potential."*

*"Starting a business from scratch can be a challenging undertaking at any age. The ability to raise finance is a key factor in setting up any new business which is why this grant scheme is so important. This programme will not only create jobs, but it will also give young people not in education or employment other ways of reaching their potential. I'm delighted that Lee is now able to follow his passion and wish him every success with his new venture."*

**Cllr Tom Cunningham, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Infrastructure at Braintree District Council**

[For more information please click here.](#)





2

# Communities Leading

.....

Being prepared to step back and allow those with the greatest understanding and experience to determine what happens in their own community and how.

## **DNA - Dance and the Community**

Using dance as a way to encourage happy and healthy lifestyles within their community.

[For more information click here](#)

## **Connecting Isolated Residents**

Delivering 5,000 Video Carephone devices to vulnerable people during the pandemic.

[For more information click here](#)

## **Essex Cultural Diversity Projects**

Helping individuals to explore their community and be curious. Introducing a wide variety of art and heritage projects organised to champion diversity and promote cultural harmony in Essex.

[For more information click here](#)

## **Teen Talk in Tendring**

Helping young people gain new skills, have fun and meet new people in their community.

[For more information click here](#)

## **EXTRA-Support for Families**

Working in the heart of vulnerable communities to supporting parents/carers in through workshops and peer support groups.

[For more information click here](#)



## **Accuro - Adult Friendship Scheme**

Growing support in West Essex for children, young people and adults with a disability across .

[For more information click here](#)

## **Tendring Mental Health Hub**

Developing support within a community. Supporting mental health and wellbeing through A Community Clothing Project.

[For more information click here](#)

## **Essex Connects**

Delivering wellness through being part of a community. A network of voluntary or community organisations supporting Social Prescribing.

[For more information click here](#)

## **Basildon - More in Common**

A one stop shop for community support in Basildon.

[For more information click here](#)

## The Community Hub Model in Rochford

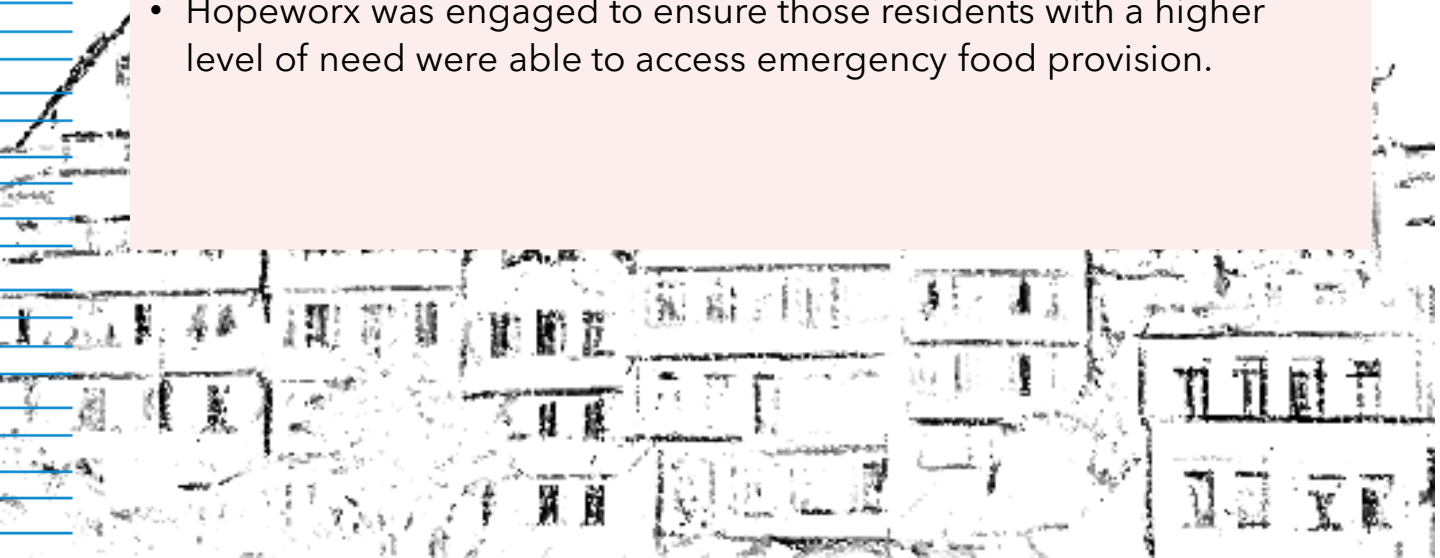
The pandemic and the need to create a community response to support residents quickly led to the creation of a core group of local organisations who shared a keen passion to help in this unprecedented time in the local community of Rochford.

The core group included the church network, the Megacentre, voluntary sector partners RRAVS and Hopeworx. Through the strength of local partnership, the hub was quickly able to build a simple but effective community response, creating resilience in the local area.

Through this partnership, with the Council, working side by side with these organisations and the community, were able to resource, promote and add value to the hub operations.

Working together in a strength-based way they were able to utilise their knowledge to optimise the input needed from each organisation:

- Their church networks enabled us to quickly identify those that could volunteer and help and those that would potentially need support
- The Megacentre enabled us to develop the single point of contact telephone system and to recruit and manage the volunteers needed for this process as well as develop a physical base for the hub.
- RRAVS provided key information about local groups and networks and provided support to community volunteers that were engaged.
- Hopeworx was engaged to ensure those residents with a higher level of need were able to access emergency food provision.



The council provided overall support to the hub partners by managing the information from government and Essex County Council, sharing the funding appropriately and transparently between partners to activate the hub work. This supported the development of formalising the volunteer process, recording the data from the work and ensuring that where needed council staff were able to support the hub model.

At times the hub model and partner responsibilities shifted to ensure that the hub changed and continued to meet residents needs as those changed. These transitions enabled hub partners to step up to meet those needs as demonstrated by the wide partners response to meet the needs of the Clinically Extremely Vulnerable residents in the district.

All partners took responsibility for communication, sharing the contact details and support available for the hub, ensuring a strong social media presence and communicating with other key partners to develop system wide awareness of the offer through the Castle Point & Rochford Clinical Commissioning Group and Health & Wellbeing Board and other key networks,

The Rochford Community Response Hub is a success for Rochford because of the strong partnership working. Throughout this journey they have been able to discover more about their community, their organisations and how they can work together. They have explored their strengths as well as their weaknesses and identified where they can all strive to improve.

[For more information please click here.](#)



3

# Making Safer Communities

....

Communities with the confidence and resilience to call out and seek support to challenge behaviours that have the potential to escalate into acute and damaging offences.

## **Building Back Fairer: The Covid-19 Marmot Review**

Detailing the, '*Pandemic, Socioeconomic and Health Inequalities in England*'.

[For more information click here](#)

## **Essex Police and Anti-Social Behaviour**

Committing to combat anti-social behaviour in the communities within Essex.

[For more information click here](#)

## **Bystander Intervention Training - University of Essex**

Delivering training through a community responsibility approach to support bystanders in how they can safely intervene in instances where sexual violence, relationship violence or stalking may be occurring.

[For more information click here](#)

## **Zero Suicide Alliance - Training**

Excellent and accessible, bitesize free training that comes with the ask of all partners to cascade this to their teams.

Learn how to approach and help someone who you think may be considering taking their own life.

[For more information click here](#)

## Street Weeks - Essex Police

A high visibility multi-agency initiative, Street Weeks encourages partners to come together at 'Street Level' to support Essex Communities.

Its priority is face to face community and public engagement, tackling local issues for neighbourhoods and empowering communities. Street Weeks promotes a better quality of life in Essex communities and aims to transform the way public services are delivered, ensuring they are: Joined-Up, Proactive, Intelligence-led, Responsive and Visible.

At the heart of the Street Weeks programme are a team of Police Officers who operate from a community area of Essex for one week, exclusively, working 24/7 to tackle specific issues of concern, visiting the local community to understand the people and services, and partnering with local policing teams and wider organisations to increase engagement and intelligence flow.

The ambition is to increase community safety, confidence and satisfaction by reducing crime, anti-social behaviour, proactively identifying hidden harm and vulnerability and promoting a proactive multi-agency response embedded in the community.

The initiative has proven to be a great success with lots of actions taken to engage and support the community and its residents.

In Grays, they conducted 'drop in' events at the local police stations to raise awareness of safeguarding and financial abuse. In St. Michaels Estate in Colchester, over 500 residents were part of a community day organised as part of the programme. Residents were encouraged to join the Neighbourhood Watch, with over 50 new members signed up!

Street Weeks has been able to strengthen the relationships between residents and the police and broaden the partnership working with organisations in the community.



## Primary Wellbeing Hubs - Tendring District Council

Originally developed through the work of the Tendring Education Improvement Group, two ambitious wellbeing focused hubs have been established at [Great Bentley](#) and Frinton-on-Sea, in Tendring District over the past three years.

With a primary focus on the wellbeing of local children and families the roll out of this pilot programme to twenty-two schools across the wider Tendring and Colchester areas has been resourced by the North Essex Health and Wellbeing Alliance from May 2021.

Based on an after-school club that runs for an hour on a weekly basis (six weekly cycle) the programme has been developed by the school and support professionals in partnership with parents to remove the barriers to learning that some children and families experience.

With a range of activities on offer to children, the sessions seek to unpack feelings, recognise emotions and learn skills to manage these. Providing children with a valuable "rucksack of skills to take them into secondary schools and beyond. Information sessions for parents/carers are also offered covering nutrition, sleep hygiene and behaviour management.

The programme is delivered by qualified teachers, and support staff who are Mental Health First Aid trained and the feedback from parents and children who have taken part is extremely positive.

The Wellbeing hubs are currently being evaluated by the University of Essex through a methodology that has the views of the children and parents at the heart of reviewing the impact, in the hope that the model can be shared with partners across Essex.

[For more information please click here](#)



4

# Building strength based relationships

...

Working with communities from a position of what's strong and not what's wrong.

Maximising the impact of community assets and seeing each community as individual.



## **Firstsite - Art and the Community**

Supporting individuals to celebrates the unique culture, heritage and landscape of the region.

[For more information click here](#)

## **Essex Police Engagement with Local Communities**

Commitment to engage with the local community.

[For more information click here](#)

## **Creating a Community Garden**

Promoting the benefits of community gardening by working with the community, statutory agencies, voluntary organisations, and the general public to provide facilities for recreation and education.

[For more information click here](#)

## **Creation of a new Community Garden in Epping Forest**

Enhancing opportunities in the community for children and adults with learning disabilities.

[For more information click here](#)

## Essex Faith Covenant Social Prescribing with Faith Communities

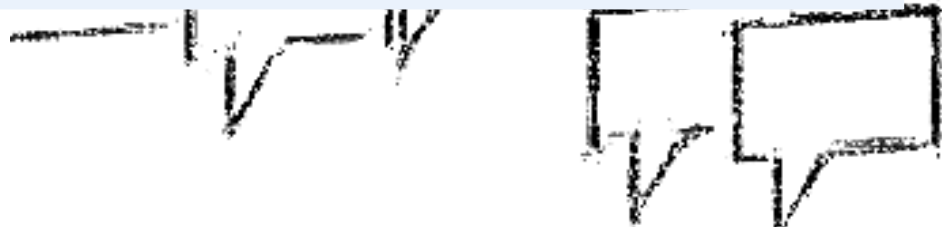
Social prescribing allows people to access solutions to their wellbeing needs through non-clinical interventions. Faith-based organisations play an important role in the wellbeing of the communities that they serve. To make social prescribing schemes more inclusive and comprehensive, the Essex Faith Covenant, working alongside the One Colchester Partnership, is working to raise awareness of social prescribing among faith-based organisations.

A working group was established to link public services, faith-based organisations and the local social prescribing scheme operated by Community 360 to develop useful resources that will assist faith organisations understand how to get involved in social prescribing and will enable social prescribers to learn more about the value that faith-based organisations can offer.

The working group includes representatives from the Essex Faith Covenant, Community 360, Essex County Council, Colchester Borough Council, Carers First, Active Essex, St Helena Hospice, Wimpole Road Methodist Church, Kingsland Church, Divine Assemblies Ministries and DNA Networks.

The intention is to share learning from this project with other social prescribing schemes across Essex. Conversations have already taken place with CVS colleagues in Mid-Essex.

While we are keen to engage with a more diverse range of faith-based organisations going forward, a range of activity is taking place.



This includes:

Work to extend the community asset mapping project being undertaken by Community 360 to include faith-based organisations. A survey is being sent out to local faith groups to capture the activity undertaken in the community and link this to the local social prescribing offer.

Training sessions being delivered for faith groups to get an increased awareness of social prescribing. A recent success involved an online awareness raising session being held for representatives from faith-based organisations to learn more about how social prescribing works and how they can contribute to it, not just as providers but also referrers. Feedback has been positive and future sessions are planned.

A resource being developed to help social prescribing professionals understand how to better understand how faith-based organisations operate to enable more meaningful interventions - focusing on their assets, remit and limits.

Engaging with students from Anglia Ruskin University, as part of the Students at the Heart of Knowledge Exchange project, to undertake some research into developing a framework that aims to help faith-based organisations review their health assets and better articulate exactly how they can support their local health and care system. The final product will be further developed over the coming months.

Supporting the co-production of community activities that engage faith groups and address gaps in provision. In particular an outreach social prescribing project is underway led by St Helena Hospice to work with local communities who do not traditionally access Hospice services, for example those from BAME background, areas of deprivation and different faiths and cultures.

[For more information please click here.](#)

## Local Cultural Education Partnership - Braintree Council

The Local Cultural Education Partnership (LCEP) is an initiative set up with the aim of bringing together schools cultural providers and Local Authorities with the aim of joining up and improving cultural education provision for children and young people in the Braintree District. The project was developed by ex headteacher, Judith Harvey in partnership with primary and secondary schools in the area after she was approached by Royal Opera House Bridge, who work to connect children with art and culture.

The group recognised the need for high quality teacher CPD in specific art forms but that enables a teacher to use Creative and cultural learning across the whole curriculum.

The partnership established cultural leaders across a range of organisations and recognised the need for high quality teacher CPD in specific art forms that enables a teacher to use Creative and cultural learning across the whole curriculum. The partnership provides training, facilitating professional learning and coordinating the wide range of expertise within their network of schools and the cultural organisations. The cultural leaders could be teachers, volunteers or staff members as they were best placed within their facility to drive forward the partnership.

The LCEP explores everything on the cultural spectrum, including dance, art, creative writing and any additional cultural themes the schools would like support with. The project has also received support from the local museum to aid in the historical elements of cultural education, creating stronger partnerships within the community.

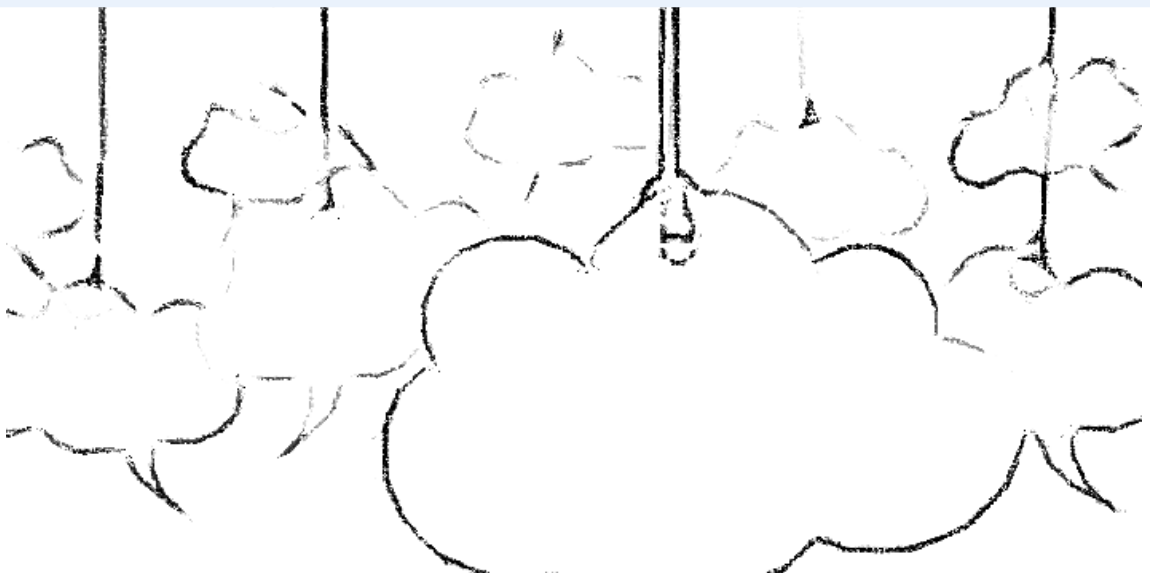


Braintree District Council have been a key partner in the growth of the project, they have been able to provide staffing support around community engagement and explore how they can link with community partners. They were also able to provide funding and staffing to push the project forward and ensure it was the best it could be.

Health and Wellbeing were a key part of the project, securing seed funding to provide smaller projects for primary schools, in order to use art as a way of expression for those who may have been negatively impacted from the pandemic mentally. This allowed schools to explore art therapy with one school creating a memorial garden for a teacher who had sadly passed away.

Other schools in the area are now offering similar programmes, using art and culture to support mental health and the Local Cultural Education Partnership hopes to develop over the next year, continuing to cross over with health and wellbeing to support the local children and young adults.

[For more information please click here.](#)



## Holiday Activity and Food Programmes for Children in Braintree

Braintree District Council supported Community 360 in developing a scheme for primary school children to support their nutritional needs whilst also supporting their mental health over the school holidays. Supporting children from lower income families the scheme was a huge success and additional funding from Essex County Council and Active Essex was provided to extend the work to support those in need.

Not only did the scheme provide nutritious meals for children but along with it a variety of fun physical and enrichment activities were also provided to engage with the members and provide a fun outlet whilst they were at their centre. Many of the activities were led by Community360, local sports clubs and Active Essex, whilst other local partners were also involved to provide an activity filled day. This was a huge success as the children were provided multiple streams of engagement.

One of the most important and crucial developments of the scheme was the consideration of the health and wellbeing of the children which led to specialist support being established with a focus on mental health and wellbeing. This ensured there was an extra level of care and support for those who may not be able to access it elsewhere.

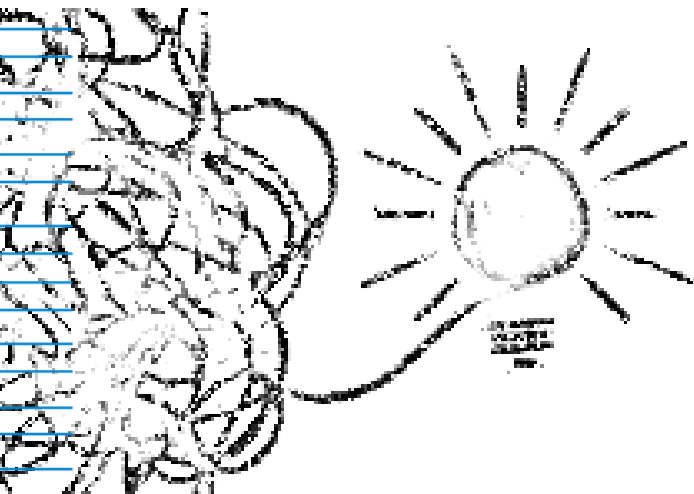
Throughout the pandemic the programme provided support to families through food parcels made up from donations from the local supermarkets and delivered by community volunteers.



The scheme has been incredibly successful with more partners joining, such as Community Iron, to support the children. The scheme has also been rebranded Essex ActivAte and is now county-wide with funding enabling it to be extended to April 2022!

“This is probably the most amazing scheme that I have experienced. My children were so happy and it reduced my stress levels which usually increase greatly over school holidays. [...] We are on a tight budget and cannot normally afford to put the children into the expensive holiday clubs and they end up spending holidays in the house, not being very active.” - Family feedback after the Summer Half Term.

[For more information please click here.](#)



## The Black, Minority, Ethnic Insight Programme

This programme is led by Community 360 (C360) and Community Voluntary Services Tendring (CVST) who are leading and supporting the North East Essex Health and Wellbeing System to work together with partners and local community groups to develop a platform that allows collaborative discussion about the experiences of Covid-19 from the BAME community as well as to start to look differently at the ways we can address Inequities in our Health and Care System. They started with a series of actions, including conferences which invited speakers from the community to present their individual stories, the forums are very much community lead and driven with support from VSCE leaders.

In these forums they heard from keynote speakers and guests from the younger BAME community and members of the Colchester Nepalese Society who presented their experiences, and the experiences of their communities to the invited audience. A question-and-answer session took place at the end of the presentations, with information exchanges and opportunities to share contact details. This was part of a wider services of work with our communities across SNEE to seek to get underneath causes of inequalities and to respond to these more proactively.

### Overarching Themes

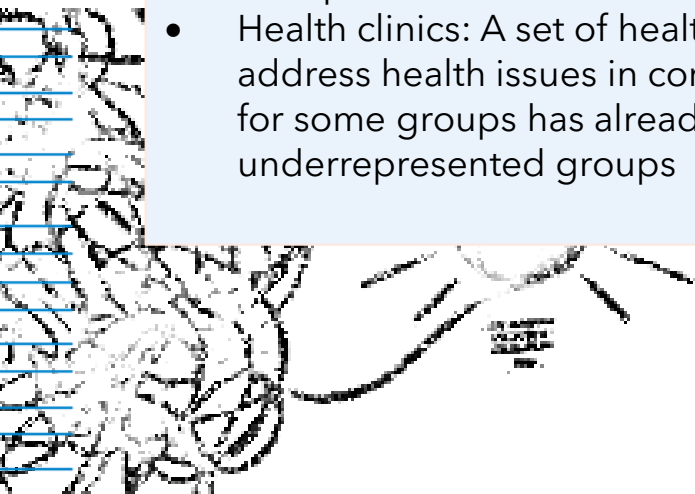
- The isolation of students in lockdown, being away from families, which was particularly tough for International students and concerns for their families' wellbeing.
- BAME students felt particularly isolated away from families and community during religious festivals such as Eid
- Members of the elder Gurkha Nepalese community do not have family in the UK and are reliant on the excellent support given by society members.



- The issue of accessing cultural food during lockdown for BAME members of the community shielding was raised again.
- Mental health for young people is problematic: school age children have suffered by being away from classroom peers and with a background of uncertainty.

### **They have used this learning to turn listening into action:**

- Working with the local groups and community workers to develop consultation with citizens, community workers and groups, to facilitate closer and sustained partnering between the community, statutory bodies and local authority.
- Community workers partnering with NE Essex CCG to look into the Winter Flu vaccine and how information is received and understood by our communities as well as supporting Covid vaccination centres on running sessions aimed to support our diverse community needs to be met to support an increase in vaccinations i.e. specific sessions for the Chinese community, Gurkhas, and other communities.
- Continued close and regular dialogue with communities regarding what was working in the vaccination programme and what was not
- Continuance with quarterly conference which will incorporate the citizen voice
- Health clinics: A set of health clinics, on-line and physical to address health issues in communities - Cervical screening for some groups has already been set up targeted at underrepresented groups

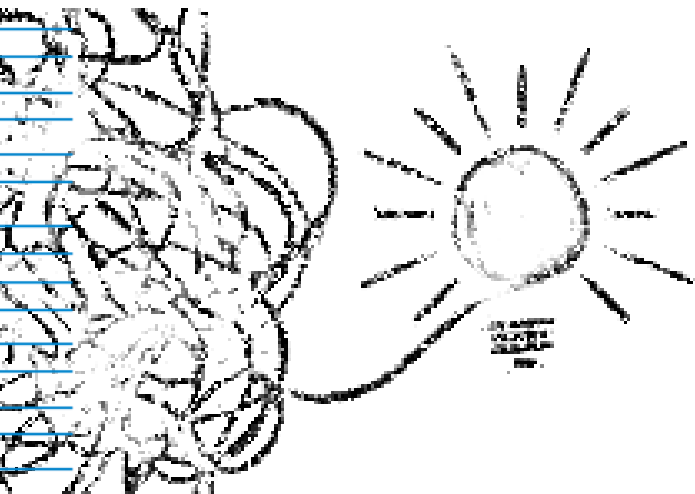


- Appointing volunteer community workers in both CVST and C360 to improve our listening efforts and keep challenging us to do more and faster
- Collaborations with the One Colchester and Tendring together Winter Resilience programmes

### **Further action initiated**

- Weekly peer support network groups - with open access for community leaders to meet with local partners such as TDC, CBC and the CCG
- C360 co-designed an ABCD (Asset Based Community Development) training course for community leaders
- Working with CCG leads to look at informal, community interpretation at medical appointments

None of this would have been possible without the codesign work and leadership from both the community and faith leaders and the voluntary sector partners in NEE



5

# Acting as an Enabler

...

Placing trust in communities and supporting their ambitions by making things simpler, less bureaucratic and quicker.

## Healthy Communities Together

Supporting partnership-working in local areas to improve health and wellbeing through funding.

[For more information click here](#)

## The New Social Covenant Unit

Developing proposals to strengthen families, communities and the nation in Conservative MP Danny Kruger's Report.

[For more information click here](#)

## Community Food Bus

A mobile bridge between Food Banks and affordable supermarkets

[For more information click here](#)

## In The Making

A partnership between Harlow College and the Phoenix Resource Centre creating opportunities for the local community to be involved in creating and selling handmade crafts from recycled products

[For more information click here](#)

## Community Storage in Maldon

The Maldon District Community Storage facility is a container sited in Maldon enabling a range of community groups to provide emergency response to residents of their district who find themselves in crisis due to the pandemic.

It was launched in March 2021 after a year of collaboration with a range of local organisations including the Essex Child and Family Wellbeing Service - Maldon Family Hub, Maldon and District CVS, Maldon District Council, Moat Foundation and Churches Together in Maldon. Partners all valued the shared approach where support from the right service could be put in place quickly and easily and without duplication. The container allowed the continuation of this approach into business as usual to create a lasting asset for the residents of the district.

The storage container holds a range of items that can be made available to individuals and families in crisis or urgent need.

For example

- Non perishable food items
- Child care items such as high chairs, strollers and stair guards
- Toys and books
- Cooking equipment and appliances
- Vouchers for supermarkets and other high street stores

The project has supported 26 households and a total of 59 individuals so far. The individuals who are most commonly supported are those with mental health issues and/or single parents.

88% of the people of have been supported are on a low income and over a quarter have been identified as having housing needs.

But the project didn't just help individuals with items, it also opened up the conversations around other support. 10 individuals were provided with a referral to a service, 4 were support through meal preparations and 3 were provide support to apply for funding.

As this progresses, the community will be encouraged to take more ownership with fundraising and donation wish lists. They currently have a local first policy for sourcing items for the container and people in crisis and want to foster links with local businesses to build on this.

[For more information please click here.](#)



## **School Hub Pilot - Basildon Council working with Active Essex and ATF (Achieve, Thrive, Flourish)**

***The importance of viewing things as system partners and blurring the lines of responsibility to improve lives.***

In December 2019, the work of Basildon Council led them into a conversation with Briscoe Primary School and Nursery in North West Pitsea, who were seeking to reach out and engage more with the local community. Despite being in an area of high deprivation and facing challenges relating to attainment, the leadership team and the ethos of the staff at the school was proactive, seeking to identify those people in the community who would bring people with them if engaged.

Working with Basildon Council and ATF (a charity at that point working in Southend through a Town Centre Hub), the school held a 'Discovery Day' at the school attended by over 40 parents and children supported by staff, ATF and Basildon Council. The focus of the Discovery Day was a series of questions for members of the local community to consider all based on the strengths, opportunities and what was good about the area, aligned to ABCD.

When asked what works and what is good in the community, there were high levels of engagement and excitement in sharing examples of celebrations and events, the community coming together to share experiences and to respond to local needs.

There was a sense of accepting differences and wanting to help but understanding that there was a need for further Asset Mapping to understand what works well and what can be expanded. There were requests for more allotments and community space to support programmes which could focus on mental health. The park was seen as a community asset, but the local residents felt intimidated by antisocial behaviour in the area, and they expressed the importance of reclaiming the space for families and the community.

Building on the strength of the response to the COVID pandemic and the increase in community activism, there were people who had stepped up to offer their support in all sorts of ways. As normality returns, some are saying, '*what's the next thing for me?*' and this was the perfect opportunity.

Working with ParkPlay, a weekly session has been set up and saw as many as 75 people attend for a 1 hr session in Northlands Park, reclaiming the space through organised activity, enabling the local community to develop their skills and confidence and take on a leadership role for its delivery. The model utilises the National Park Play model which aims to provide an hour of outdoor fun and games every Saturday from 10-11am.

As well as this, ATF have also been operating regular weekday and school holiday activities in Northlands Park including three weekly afterschool children's fitness sessions, mum's fitness club, adult's fitness club, teen's sports sessions and lunch during holidays and other periodic community activities in the park, working with local community volunteers and providing paid work opportunities where possible.

Simplicity of the story belies the foundation work that has been done by BBC with Active Essex through the Local Delivery Pilot which has created the foundations and the mindset for this work to flourish and for the community to be given the chance to take the lead and has provided funding to support ATF in their delivery aims in this area, enabling partners to hone the model and identify the sustainable recipe for success.

### **So what's the recipe for this success?**

The team was clear that this was about hyper-local conversations and creating the right conditions to build a hub or a micro community. Using Asset Based Community Development to enable the community to respond to the needs they identify. Facilitating, encouraging, and supporting where needed but knowing when to pull back. Working within an established, outward looking school has been a key part of the success through tapping into the "ready-made" school community.

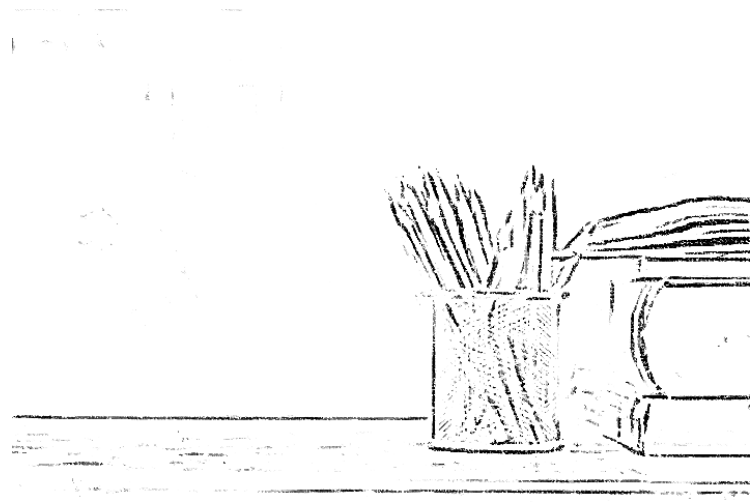


In Basildon the success had been led by a small, passionate team of people embracing the ABCD philosophy and building on the foundations created by the Local Delivery Pilot (LDP). They were people with a shared vision and values, and they were people that others could relate to.

Finding the right people is key people in the community, you need people who can influence others, the people who can bring 8 or 10 people along with them encourage proactive work in the interest of the local residents, and this can strengthen the community enormously.

This work has directly influenced the creation of Basildon Council's new and ambitious **Connected Communities Policy**.

[For more information click here](#)



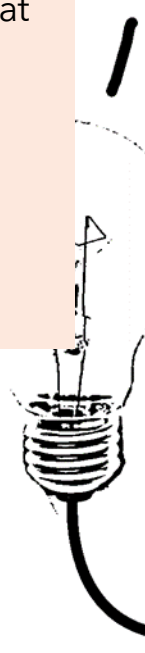
## Democracy in Action - University of Essex

Democracy in Action is a collaborative initiative devised by staff and students at the University of Essex in partnership with Citizens UK (CUK). It is a participatory, research-informed and student-led module through which students learn from theoretical and real-life engagement, putting into practice classroom learning, and engaging in alternative participatory forms of teaching and learning. This initiative created an environment in which students could develop, refine, and practice a wide range of skills relevant to their employability prospects and their role as citizens.

All students received CUK's widely recognised training in community organising and worked with four CUK Colchester member organisations, carrying out listening exercises for the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner's campaign. Students listened to the stories of rough sleepers, youth workers, the elderly and many more, allowing all involved to achieve a better and more profound understanding of the community in which the university lives and breathes.

They developed new ways of understanding and acting on the problems we face, strengthening our relationships with other community members and bolstering our common democratic power.

The students on the pilot took action on a lighting and safety issue at the Greenstead underpass. Through listening exercises, students were able to identify that communities in Colchester felt unsafe, particularly about the lack of street lighting, with the Greenstead underpass being an area of particular concern.

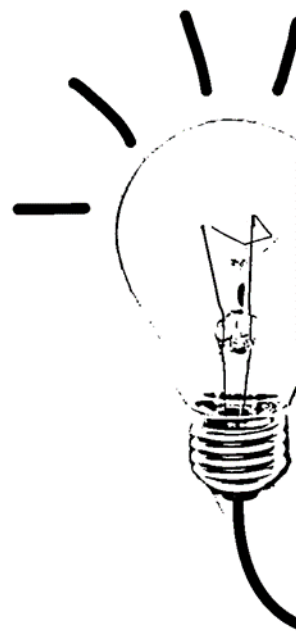


Once COVID-19 halted the project, staff continued this action, resulting in the resolution of the lighting issue at the Greenstead underpass. Therefore, the pilot had a specific tangible community impact, highlighting the potential for similar future community organizing actions within the auspices of the module.

The idea behind this pilot was to construct a practice-based module, participatory in character, that would allow students to develop their critical academic skills in community building. They connected with the community in a way that they had not previously had the chance to do and they could connect the work they have done in the classroom with the world around them and being actively involved in this connection.

The project highlights the importance of transformational education, community engagement and interdisciplinary teaching.

[For more information please click here](#)



## **The Good Neighbours project facilitated by Uttlesford District Council's Communities, Health and Wellbeing Team.**

The Good Neighbours project was facilitated by Uttlesford District Council's Communities, Health and Wellbeing Team who wanted to work with local partner organisations (from the voluntary sector, public services and local authorities) to best support the residents of Great Chesterford in creating a strong and well-connected local community.

Inspired by presentations at a Loneliness and Isolation conference hosted by Uttlesford District Council in 2018, the work prompted residents to question if members of their community were lonely or isolated and whether this was affecting their health and wellbeing.

Great Chesterford is an ancient village of 1700 residents and 765 dwellings, situated on the banks of the river Cam on the boundary of Essex [Uttlesford] and Cambridgeshire.

A priority was to identify the social activities, networks and facilities that people felt connected to, and to learn about whether people sometimes felt isolated or lonely in their neighbourhood.

The Parish Vicar initiated the communication with the District Council to discuss options, also inviting a group of key individuals who led the local church activities within the community, providing a strong connection to the local people, for example they provided a welcoming service reaching out to new people as they moved into the village.

The project utilised both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies to conduct a short piece of light touch community research to find out how people feel about the place where they live. The research began in June 2019 and ended in October the same year.

Brief doorstep interviews were conducted with every household in the village giving them the opportunity to share how they felt about their community, what they liked and what they felt was missing.

All the findings from the door knocking exercises were collated anonymously and shared with the Good Neighbours group, as well as being displayed at a community feedback event for residents to attend to hear about the outcomes in February 2020.

The qualitative data gathered was analysed and discussed at a series of meetings by the research group. The most common themes are identified in the tables above and these were presented in a speech bubble display in the community feedback event as well as a calendar of clubs and activities. Over 60 members of the community attended an event set up to promote local groups and activities giving people an opportunity to meet and further develop some of the ideas that had emerged from the research.

With the impact of the pandemic in 2020 the Good Neighbours Project took a swift and decisive change of direction. Led by the Parish Council, the project set out to offer support in the community to those that needed it. They quickly established a network of volunteers to ensure that shopping, prescriptions etc were provided where necessary and even provided a cream tea to those who were isolating and/or considered vulnerable so they could celebrate VE day.

The project remains ongoing and it is hoped that it will resume and conclude when the situation allows as the residents were overwhelmingly positive about the community engagement project.

[For more information please click here.](#)

## **Detached Youth Work led by the Essex Council for Voluntary Youth Services (ECVYS)**

The detached youth work project led by Essex Council for Voluntary Youth Services (ECVYS) showcases the incredible results of partnership working across the voluntary youth sector in Essex. The work has allowed community youth organisations, based within their local communities, to be a part of a shared success in the community.

At the heart of this work was the relationship between ECVYS and a broad range of community based, grass roots organisations with ECVYS acting as a conduit to ensure funding was allocated to those groups closest to vulnerable young people in the community.

ECVYS were able to convene a partnership of providers, ranging in size and experience, awarding funding directly to support the work or working with organisations, buddying them up to develop the capacity in the system for the future.

The project priorities were first determined through a 'Listening Project' instigated by funding from the Violence and Vulnerability Unit (VU) in 2020. With over 600 young people taking part in the project it clearly identified two themes that subsequently developed into strands of work or co-designed interventions:-

### **Detached Youth Work**

Focus here was on meeting young people in parks, on high streets and in their communities, talking to them 'where they already were'. Using this model, youth workers were able to offer support and advice through conversation, responding to the needs of the individuals and from a neutral, non-judgemental point of view. The approach was particularly successful with vulnerable young people at risk of being exposed to issues such as gang participation, drugs, sexual activity, youth crime and violence, supporting them to make healthy choices and informed decisions.

### **Outreach work**

This work was specifically aimed at the most vulnerable young people. Those who might be targeted by gangs, and sought to provide them with a trusted adult and activities in a safe environment. Youth workers developed positive, trusting relationships with the young people over a period of time until they were confident and able to re-join more traditional support structures such as Youth Clubs.

### **Grass roots partnership working**

This project was led by ECVYS who managed all the partnership arrangements, working alongside the Essex Association of Boys and Girls Clubs (EABGC) who led on project management and data collection.

Together ECVYS and EABGC partnered with Home Start and YMCA in Colchester, Teen Talk, in Tendring and Bar'N'Bus in Basildon who delivered football training and graffiti art sessions. The Red Balloon Foundation in Thurrock set up stands with hot chocolate in local areas and the YMCA in Southend engaged with young people in parks and high streets.

1,313 young people were engaged in the Basildon district, 477 in Colchester, 206 in Southend, 130 in Tendring and 313 in Thurrock. That is a total of 2,324 young people who were engaged with a team of detached youth workers delivered through 241 youth work sessions across the 5 districts.

### **The impact:**

The work has highlighted the incredible power of local organisations working together and using their knowledge, understanding and relationships with the young people in their communities to support their development. They have a foundation of trust that allows them to engage with the local young people and encourage them to participate in local youth projects to support their personal development.

The detached youth work project has proven to be an excellent model for partnership delivery. It has given the voluntary sector the chance to show how together they can deliver shared objectives as part of a larger project, and with all the heart of locally-delivered community-based youth work.

The teams involved are really excited at the impact this project is having locally on young people to keep them safe, and the success of the programme has led to another 12 months working with the support of the VVU and Active Essex.



## Communities Can Strategy - Colchester Borough Council

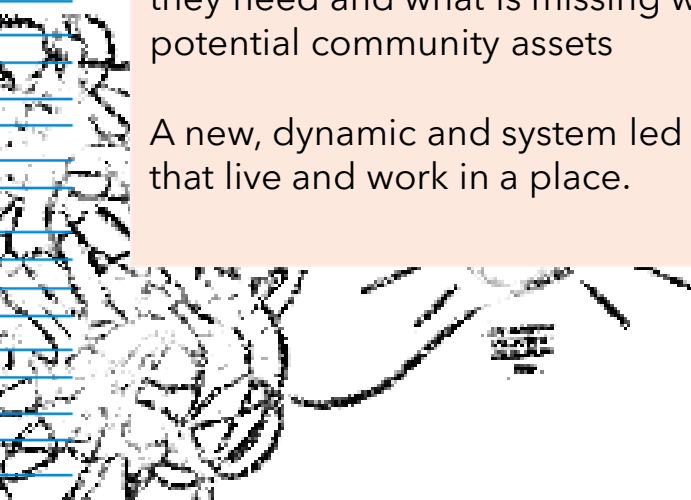
Building on the significant levels of community activism generated by the COVID-19 pandemic the Communities Can strategy represents a new approach for a new normal. The first of its kind the document reflects the ambitions of Colchester Borough Council to take a whole system approach to enabling local communities by working as a member of the [One Colchester Partnership](#)

Made up of the Borough Council, County Council, Community and Voluntary Sector organisations and the North Essex Health and Wellbeing Alliance, One Colchester has set out a clear mandate to establish and embed an Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) approach to working to build on and develop community assets

The strategy is designed to attract attentions. Any strategy that sits in an inbox or on a shelf can't deliver change. With a very conscious tone of voice the strategy sets out ABCD in action through a series of community case studies and uses fluid and flexible definition of communities appreciating that communities identify in unique ways around places, interests and online. They are not fixed in time but evolving and strategy needs to be flexible and evolve with them.

Communities Can intentionally has no action plan. It is a statement of intent to work alongside communities, to talk about and build on what they need and what is missing whilst maximising the usage of potential community assets

A new, dynamic and system led approach to working with the people that live and work in a place.



## IntoUniversity - Inspiring young people in Clacton

IntoUniversity is the largest charity working nationally to support young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to attain a university place or realise their own ambitions.

A partnership with Anglia Ruskin University has seen the first **IntoUniversity** centre in Essex set up in Clacton-On-Sea where young people from local schools either attend the **IntoUniversity** centre in Clacton or benefit from their outreach in schools.

Like many seaside towns, the opportunities for children and young people in Clacton are fewer than elsewhere and the low take up of Higher Education places is one of the indicators linked to the higher deprivation index score for parts of Tendring District.

Through dynamic and innovative interaction, **IntoUniversity** challenge the norms and seek to breakdown the barriers that mean young people don't consider that Higher Education is for them. Sponsored by ARU the scheme is supporting children from as early as age 7 to talk about university and think about their future with support increasing in emphasis, throughout their time at Secondary school and their move into sixth form.

Raising aspirations is a long-term investment but the partnership between **IntoUniversity** and ARU encourages students to believe in their own potential and gives them a chance to get a feel for university first-hand through visits to the Chelmsford campus supported by the ARU Schools Engagement Team.

James Rolfe, CEO at Anglia Ruskin University sees the relationship as a long-term investment and believes it doesn't really matter whether the young people go to university at ARU or the University of Essex, or Russell Group universities or even see their future being through Further Education or vocational study programmes; young people believing in their own abilities and their own potential is the real success.

[For more information please click here.](#)

