

APPENDIX

SHAPING THE FUTURE OF ESSEX - A Community Strategy 2004-2024

Essex is changing. We, the organisations that work for and rely on the people of Essex, have come together to agree this strategy for change.

Our vision for Essex is of safe, healthy, diverse and sustainable communities, open and welcoming to all; a place where people want to live, work and visit; where people and communities take charge of their lives through active citizenship; where heritage is valued and innovation thrives; where people can travel easily, both locally, and through making the most of excellent access to London, the rest of England and Europe

This Community Strategy sets out what the people of Essex have told us they want for their futures, and what action we propose to take to make it happen. This document describes the challenge. From now on, it is up to all of us to deliver the improved services that will make it a reality.

A STRATEGY FOR ESSEX

We have set up the Essex Partnership to provide, for the first time ever, a unified voice for Essex people on issues of key concern to the county. Our first task has been to set out the agreed vision in this Community strategy, which we will now work together to deliver. The members of the Essex Partnership include the County, district, borough and parish councils, the police and fire authorities, Health Trusts, businesses and voluntary sector organisations. A full list of members of the Partnership is on page [].

We have consulted extensively to make sure the strategy tackles the things that really matter to local people. We have also worked with the similar Partnerships that districts have set up to ensure that we are all working together to achieve common outcomes.

In all our plans and decisions, we will take account of these nine key factors:

- **Will this increase prosperity to Essex people?**
- **Does it protect, or at least not damage, the environment?**
- **Will this have a positive impact on rural communities?**
- **Does this reflect the different needs of young and older people?**
- **Does this help make Essex less dependent on London, or help us make better use of our links with London?**
- **Does this help break down barriers and promote social inclusion?**
- **Will everyone have a fair chance to benefit and take part?**

- **Would this help the image of Essex?**
- **Can it last?**

This Strategy is an expression of the will of the community. It will be treated by all parties as crucial guidance in producing statutory documents and making policy, strategic and budget decisions. In particular, it will now form a key part of the policy framework for Essex County Council.

ESSEX: CHANGING AND GROWING

Essex is changing.

Changing for the better, as its people grow healthier, live longer, and become more prosperous and better educated. Essex is one of the largest and wealthiest counties in England. Its landscape and coastline are among Britain's most beautiful. Its population has grown fast, and is set to carry on growing rapidly over the years to come.

But that success brings its own challenges. If we are to protect the special quality of our environment and the integrity of our communities, then we need to support growth carefully with the right kind of service infrastructure and wise land use planning. Nor are all of our communities success stories. For all its energy and prosperity, there are areas of Essex where we need to address poverty, boost education standards and promote a sense of community. We also need to recognise that Essex's rise has long been closely related to London's, and is likely to remain so. We need to make sure that this continues to mean contributing to and sharing in London's success, not living in its shadow.

[Chart: housebuilding in Essex, 1990-2000]

Essex's link with London is only one of a network of relationships that affect our ability to plan for the future. Within the county, community planning at an Essex level is strongly influenced by the plans of Local Strategic Partnerships at district level. Our strategy for Essex has drawn on ideas from district plans. It concentrates on areas where action is best taken at county level, or where action by the Essex Partnership can help district partnerships reach their objectives.

Many plans are now made at regional level. Essex is part of the East of England together with Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Suffolk and Norfolk. The Essex Community Strategy will need to take account of regional strategies, as well as plans for surrounding areas, particularly the Mayor's Plan for London and the Community Strategies being produced by neighbouring counties. However, we can also listen to people's concerns about plans being made elsewhere, and speak with one Essex voice to influence them.

[Chart: net in-migration to Essex, 1990-2000]

The regional plan which will have the most impact on the county is the forthcoming Regional Planning Guidance (RPG14) which sets out plans for land use and its wider connections to transport and service provision in the East of England over the years to 2021. This Guidance was still being discussed as we finalised this strategy, and as a result we are unable to say for certain what assumptions about the future physical development of Essex it will reflect.

RPG14 will have a major impact on all other aspects of life, affecting our social and environmental, as well as economic well-being. Striking a balance between development and conservation of the environment is and will be a central concern of the Partnership over the next twenty or thirty years.

But what is certain is this: parts of Essex fall within areas identified by the government for major expansion of housing. South Essex, along with much of East London and North Kent, forms part of the Thames Gateway, a national priority area for regeneration. The corridor from London to Peterborough, taking in Harlow, Stansted Airport and the M11, is also of growing importance. The government wants it to take substantial housing growth. In addition, the government wants to see an additional runway built at Stansted by the beginning of the next decade. There is resistance to the proposals from some Essex Councils and partner organisations.

Essex and Suffolk local authorities are also working in partnership with other agencies to promote Haven Gateway (the Ipswich/Felixstowe/Harwich/Colchester area) as a growing and key port and business area. A significant amount of development will also take place in the London to Colchester corridor.

The prospect of this new development requires us to face hard choices about what sort of county we want. For all these areas, there are major issues about where new housing will go and what sort of housing will be built - and about providing jobs, transport and services to go with it. It is almost inevitable that some of our green fields will be lost and that some of our existing communities will change in character. But the consultation we undertook as we were preparing this strategy told us clearly that local people only want new development if it is sustainable, both in terms of its impact on the environment and in terms of the services required - transport, schools, shops, leisure and cultural activities, doctors surgeries and other health services. This Community Strategy highlights the spatial aspects of all key issues and themes. The mapping of each of the themes in this document emphasises its importance.

Land use and development are not the only influences on our shared future. Other changes will affect our county, too. We believe the most important are:

- ◆ The population of Essex will continue to grow – rapidly in the identified development areas mentioned above;
- ◆ The proportion of the population over 65 will increase;

- ◆ Housing demand will grow faster than population, as households continue to become smaller (this trend is slowing, but is unlikely to stop).
- ◆ The amount of travelling in and through Essex will increase, including increases in road traffic above national averages.
- ◆ Medical advances will continue to improve survival of fatal illnesses (which may mean a larger number of people with long-term illness).
- ◆ The economy will depend more and more on skills and information, less on raw materials and physical labour.

[Chart: traffic on Essex roads, 1990-2000]

FACING THE FUTURE ON OUR TERMS

Change is inevitable: but we have the power to influence and direct it. Our consultation helped to tell us what the people of Essex want out of the change that we face.

These are the most important challenges that consultation has helped us identify:

- ◆ *Balancing pressures for development with the need to protect the quality of our environment: The Government's proposals for large-scale development in Essex, including the rapid expansion of housebuilding, major new roads, and the scheme for a new runway at Stansted Airport, will have major impacts on our environment; but they can also increase prosperity. We should work to limit their impact if they happen, and must ensure they are sustainable.*
- ◆ *Helping people get around Essex: We should work to reduce congestion on roads and improve the quality, accessibility and sustainability of all forms of transport*
- ◆ *Promoting active citizenship in Essex: Essex is full of valuable voluntary activity, but many people do not find it easy or see no point in joining community groups, voting, or taking action on local issues. We need to encourage and help them to play a full role in society and have a real impact. This is a particular issue for young people and for other groups who are often overlooked.*
- ◆ *Developing Essex's relationship with London: Essex is strongly influenced by its nearness to London - a source of employment, tourism and services, but also of housing pressures and pollution. How can we make the best of the opportunities and pressures?*

- ◆ *Taking positive action to conserve Essex's unique environment and heritage: how can we tackle the effects of climate change such as flooding, reduce pollution levels, conserve coastal and other valuable habitats and conserve water and other resources and our historic buildings and sites*
- ◆ *Making the most of the image of Essex: How can we best emphasise the many positive points about the county and its people?*
- ◆ *Helping to improve peoples quality of life: How can we help people live healthier lives, ensure everyone feels safe on our streets and encourage people of all ages to take advantage of education and training opportunities*

The remainder of this strategy sets out what you told us about your hopes and fears for Essex and what we plan to do to secure a better future for all. We have organised it to reflect aspects of daily life that Essex people have told us they value:

- being part of a community
- feeling safe
- being healthy
- creating opportunities
- getting around
- being served well and fairly
- conserving our environment
- having fun

The Community Strategy sets out our priorities for improving the quality of life in Essex and will be reflected in the strategies and policies of the Partnership members. Progress will be dependent on available resources and must demonstrate clear value for money for the people of Essex. In particular, the local authority members of the Partnership undertake to work within existing budgets wherever possible, and without putting extra pressure on local taxes. Working in partnership to achieve the maximum possible benefit from the resources of all partners will be key to achieving these aspirations.

BEING PART OF A COMMUNITY

Our vision is of vibrant, active, open, fair and sustainable communities in Essex which have a unique, positive identity and increase the well-being of all

We asked how to:

- *Encourage people to become involved in their local communities and strengthen community activities*

- *Help people make a difference through community work, campaigning on local issues, being active in local groups, volunteering and voting*
- *Improve the image of Essex and encourage strong, positive identities for our local communities*
- *Achieve a balance between protecting the environment and providing affordable housing close to transport and other services*

You told us:

- *Encouraging voluntary activity and organisations was crucial to making Essex a better place*
- *We needed to make efforts to make sure everyone was included, for example disabled people, minority ethnic groups, travellers and people in remote rural locations*
- *The planning of housing developments, local authority information and funding and education in schools all need to give priority to encouraging active citizenship*
- *The image of Essex would best be improved by providing top-quality events and facilities*
- *The countryside and green belt should be protected*
- *New housing should be near to existing good roads, railways, services and jobs where possible, and services should certainly be in place when the first people move in*

to achieve this, we will:

- **Help all sections of the community to participate, co-operate and have a voice, working to overcome barriers to groups like older people, people with disabilities, ethnic groups and people with limited incomes getting involved in voluntary work in the community.**
- **Encourage people to support one another, especially vulnerable people, overcoming isolation, fear of crime and other problems, in particular support and seek funding for regeneration projects to help local people tackle clusters of problems in their communities such as crime, ill-health, poor education, high unemployment and poor environment**
- **Strengthen the voluntary and community sectors in Essex making funding arrangements simpler and more secure and helping organisations to co-operate.**
- **Build the capacity of Parish and Town Councils to enable them to take more responsibility for decisions affecting their communities**
- **Encourage everyone, especially young people, to join in public service and democratic life, including supporting the Essex group of the Youth Parliament and the Young Essex Assembly and a website for young people**

-
- Encourage active involvement of young people in voluntary and community work and in improving their local communities through Citizenship Education and encourage positive parenting
 - Ensure that community needs for affordable housing are met in a sustainable way, well-linked to transport, shops, public services and jobs - providing for the needs of older people and disabled people and planning houses so people can stay in them through changes in their lifestyles and physical abilities
 - Make sure housing developments plan for a mix of price levels and a broad, diverse community, providing community facilities especially in rural areas
 - Press for new developments to use up as little as possible of the countryside or of green spaces in towns

FEELING SAFE

Our vision is of everyone being and feeling safe at all times when living, working or travelling in Essex.

We asked how to:

- *Reduce levels of crime, such as drug or alcohol abuse, harassment, bullying and vandalism and other antisocial behaviour, and help offenders to go straight?*
- *Improve life for vulnerable people, such as older people and ethnic minorities, by reducing the fear of crime?*
- *Work together to reduce the number of accidents on Essex roads and make them safer for users?*
- *Make sure people are not provided with unsafe goods or services?*

You told us:

- *Preventing offending by children and young people would reduce the fear of crime among the community.*
- *We need to ensure that everyone feels safe on our streets especially vulnerable people such as the disabled and ethnic minorities.*
- *People feel safer with more visible crime prevention measures such as police on the streets and neighbourhood watch schemes.*
- *Crime against property is important because it contributes to run-down neighbourhoods and damages the prosperity of all*
- *Promoting active, fair communities reduces the fear of crime.*
- *Issues of bullying, domestic and racial violence need to be addressed.*
- *Children should be protected throughout our society.*

- *Providing alternatives to car use such as cycle ways and walking buses would reduce the number of deaths, injuries and damage on our roads.*

to achieve this, we will:

- **Work together to minimise crime and anti-social behaviour by design, enforcement and diversion in order to improve the quality of life in Essex**
- **Bring together and strengthen communities to create a sense of pride, confidence and safety**
- **Strengthen and extend partnerships and existing plans so as to present, prepare for, react to and recover from emergencies**
- Encourage projects to provide young people with alternatives to crime and anti-social behaviour, supporting sport, recreation and educational projects for young people at risk of offending
- Ensure new developments incorporate design features which reduce the opportunity for crime
- Improve safety for pedestrians
- Co-operate across agencies to ensure the safety and health of children as advocated in the Government White Paper Every Child Matters
- Adapt the 'Essex Proof of Age' scheme for young people, setting up e-mail systems to encourage them to report unsafe or misleadingly sold goods.
- Monitor the safety of goods being sold in our shops and the services being provided in the county and work with Trading Standards to ensure the complaints procedure is accessible for all.
- Reduce personal injury, property damage and environmental impacts of fires and other emergency incidents
- Plan for the safety implications of major developments such as expansion of Stansted

BEING HEALTHY

Our vision is of a healthy Essex, in which health inequalities are progressively reduced enabling people to live active and independent lives

We asked how to:

- *Encourage people to exercise and live healthily*
- *Promote the benefits of good health for everyone*
- *Reduce stress-related illness in Essex*
- *Make sure care services in Essex meet people's needs and are within easy reach*

You told us:

- *Health is closely linked to exercise, and thus to accessible open space*
- *Promoting healthy eating and drinking is vital*
- *Health services and Social Services must work closely together*
- *More needs to be done to open up all sorts of opportunities for disabled people, people with learning difficulties and people with a history of mental health problems, thus improving their health*
- *Health contributes to and can benefit from progress under all the other headings in the community strategy*

to achieve this, we will:

- **Help people to live long, active, independent lives through support for voluntary and community activity and lifelong learning on health issues, including sports and exercise**
- **Work to reduce health inequalities through projects targeted at specific geographical areas and groups in greatest need, with particular regard to children and young people, using imaginative, informative and accessible information**
- **Build on existing partnerships between health and social services to make sure people have access to timely, effective, friendly and reliable care services and improve transport access to hospitals and clinics**
- Support the UK Olympic bid and the facilities and resources it will bring to Essex if successful
- Work to reduce environmental pollution and minimise the impact of new developments on pollution
- Make sure access issues for patients and visitors are given due weight when proposals to reposition health services are considered
- Work with parents to help them give good support and advice on community safety and health issues
- Carry out health impact assessments before major decisions are taken
- Support work towards making a case for a medical school in Essex, and other measures which could improve the attractiveness of Essex to health service professionals

CREATING OPPORTUNITIES

Our vision is of a sustainable Essex famous for innovation, a skilled workforce, training, diversity in business, and strength in science and technology. Unemployment will be low, and everyone's skills will be valued and deployed.

We asked how to:

- *Effectively work with parents, schools, social care and health services, to ensure our children have the right skills to contribute to the county's economic and cultural future?*
- *Help new industries grow, and help people in declining industries to find new work?*
- *Fully utilise our links with Europe and London, and of major sites for travel and trade like Stansted, Harwich and the Thames ports, while reducing the negative effects?*
- *Make sure people's skills are fully used, both in the voluntary and paid sectors – without **any** form of discrimination?*

You told us:

- *We need to provide education and training for a wide range of skills and for both children and adults, improving educational attainment and supporting business in ensuring the skills required by local industry and commerce are developed*
- *Businesses and funding opportunities should not be discriminatory.*
- *Tourism should be promoted and we should capitalise on the opportunities provided by our transport gateways.*
- *We need to ensure economic development is balanced by protecting the environment.*
- *Encouraging diversity and fairness makes economic sense*
- *To cooperate with local businesses on regeneration projects and on improving the economic situation of the county.*
- *There are opportunities for growth in small scale, specialised, high skilled manufacturing industries.*
- *Communication networks should be a priority across the county, including developing broadband.*
- *We should adopt flexible policies towards the countryside to enable rural areas to adapt to the decline in agriculture.*
- *We must put greater emphasis on ensuring the survival of new businesses and providing the right infrastructure to attract incoming businesses.*
- *We should develop our ties with the EU to improve trade links for the county and to promote the county's interests within Europe.*

to achieve this, we will:

- **Ensure that schools, colleges and local businesses cooperate to provide a wide range of opportunities for young people, raising aspirations and taking action to improve areas of low educational attainment, encouraging young people to stay on in education or training beyond the age of 16 or 18**
- **Provide specialist advice and training to help businesses find new ways of increasing their competitiveness and profitability and the establishment of successful new businesses, and form networks of small businesses for co-operation and development.**
- **Promote regeneration in areas of need, particularly in the Thames and Haven Gateways and Harlow, helping attract funds and skills.**
- **Make sure everyone benefits from prosperity and increased opportunities**
- Support the creation of high profile science and technology centres linked to the county's Universities, businesses and schools.
- Encourage provision of small units for start-up businesses
- Support the development of the cultural and creative industries sector.
- Work to overcome barriers to older people who want to work being able to do so in jobs that make full use of their experience and skills
- Provide training tailored to the needs of socially disadvantaged groups, with opportunities to develop their business and life skills through initiatives such as Welfare to Work
- Help people in rural areas to develop their skills to cope with the changes to employment opportunities in the countryside, including farming diversification.
- Provide high quality infrastructure, especially the integration of road, bus and rail transport, to support the needs of business in a way which minimises environmental impact
- Expand IT use around the county extending the availability of broadband, particularly in the countryside, to support the development of rural businesses.
- Ensure that the opportunities provided by the county's airports and ports as international gateways are fully realised for the benefit of the local economy, in a way which minimises environmental impacts
- Work with the EU to encourage international trade and investment in the region and develop our international links
- Promote tourism to a wide range of Essex locations, making sure the right infrastructure is in place, and sites sympathetically managed
- Make sure everyone benefits from prosperity and increased opportunities

GETTING AROUND

Our vision is of an Essex where we can travel safely, sustainably and on time, and where things can be done without the need to travel far

We asked how to:

- *Help people get to where they want while preventing the environment being ruined by traffic?*
- *Make facilities such as shops and hospitals more accessible, especially for people without a car and people in rural areas?*
- *Make sure people without cars are not isolated?*
- *Make sure new residential, industrial and commercial developments are served by a choice of good transport connections?*

You told us:

- *We should try to stagger work patterns, change school hours, and encourage people to avoid “rush hour” to reduce traffic congestion at peak times.*
- *You would like to see more initiatives aimed at reducing congestion around schools*
- *You would like us to make improved and co-ordinated public transport a priority*
- *People with disabilities feel that accessible transport and inter-connections are poorly resourced*
- *You support “home zones”; “sharing the road” and “quiet lanes” projects to achieve to encourage people to use different types of transport*
- *It is hard to travel across Essex East-West, or anywhere away from the London – Ipswich and London – Cambridge corridors*

to achieve this, we will:

- **Promote park and ride facilities for all large towns**
- **Work with schools and transport providers to promote safer, healthier, more sustainable travel to and from school**
- **Make sure information on travel options and services is easily available and clear by co-ordinating publicity and information on public transport options, publishing regular comprehensive time-tables and rolling out a programme of “real time” bus information at bus stops**
- **Provide a well-maintained road and footpath network, working on the reduction of congestion on the roads through innovative measures and hard choices in the Local Transport Plan**

-
- Work to provide regular, reliable public transport, affordable by and accessible to everyone, with particular attention to the needs of young people, older people and rural communities
 - Promote walking, cycling and community transport as safe and increasingly popular ways to travel
 - Make changing from one service to another easy making changeover points safe, welcoming, accessible and informative
 - Promote through-ticketing and a comprehensive concessionary travel schemes and achieve greater co-ordination of services and timetables, for example changing from bus to rail
 - Continue to improve accessibility for people with mobility difficulties to use convenient, affordable public transport
 - Include transport when planning services in large new developments, and make sure such developments are well-connected to nearby jobs and services to reduce the need for travel
 - Review and promote East – West transport links
 - Secure major infrastructure schemes to support the housing allocations proposed in the Government's "Sustainable Communities Plan"

BEING SERVED WELL AND FAIRLY

Our vision is of everyone receiving excellent, accessible, fair and reliable public services which represent value for money. Public, private and voluntary services should be welcoming and help to overcome barriers – listening to and responding to people's needs and concerns.

We asked how to:

- *Make sure people receive prompt, good quality services*
- *Make sure people are informed and updated about issues of concern*
- *Ask citizens for their views, encourage them to speak up – and reassure them that their opinions do make a difference*
- *Make sure people are always treated fairly and listened to – irrespective of their social or ethnic background – and that neither disability nor hostility prevents anyone from using services*
- *Keep up with the latest developments in communication, without excluding people who have no access to computers and other technology*
- *Provide appropriate care, help and support for those in need*
- *Promote our position as a county of people with many different backgrounds as a strength, not a threat*

You told us:

- *We should be upfront about celebrating the diversity of Essex – language, ethnic groups, history, rural and urban, Essex man and woman and high culture.*
- *There should be a clear commitment to equity and non-discrimination in services*
- *We should assure all people that their views count, giving feedback and taking action to prove it*
- *We should treat elderly people with more sensitivity and take account of their often tight financial circumstances*
- *Access to services for rural residents is often difficult, and depends on keeping local service outlets open or improving public transport*
- *Post offices are vital suppliers of community services*
- *Joined-up working between services, and multi-use of facilities, are key to success*

to achieve this, we will:

- **Deliver efficient, high quality public, private and voluntary services, working in partnership to improve standards of service, co-operation across services and responsiveness to people's needs and views.**
- **Ensure partners sign up to promote best practice in relation to the quality and accessibility of their service**
- **Make sure all minority groups of people can access services without difficulty, and develop comprehensive social inclusion strategies and Racial Equality Schemes across all Essex Partnership members.**
- Make sure all our services are easy to reach and welcoming, serving all sections of society fairly through imaginative multi-use of existing resources such as libraries, post offices and other local public buildings
- Develop IT links between public bodies and the communities they serve, with particular attention to the needs of older people
- Give people good access to reliable information about services - ensuring they are know what's available - maximising choice, pressing for broadband internet access everywhere in Essex, and for schemes to improve skills to use it
- Make sure opportunities for multi-use of buildings and services are used to the full

CONSERVING OUR ENVIRONMENT

Our Vision is of a county with diverse urban and rural environments rich in wildlife, in which people live and work sustainably, conserving natural resources

We asked how to:

- *Develop an environment that supports diverse habitats in town and country, and is rich in both wildlife and interest for Essex people?*
- *Persuade people and organisations to produce less waste and encourage reuse and recycling wherever possible?*
- *Ensure there is sufficient water supply in the future to meet increasing demands, without damaging our environment?*
- *Plan for, reduce and respond to damage caused by climate change?*
- *Help rural areas to develop and enjoy prosperity while preserving the beauty of the “traditional” landscape and benefits of village life?*

You told us:

- *You are concerned about the amount of litter, discarded rubbish and abandoned cars, particularly on road verges;*
- *You would like to see improved access to the countryside and historic buildings, particularly for disabled people;*
- *You think that conservation and improvements to the urban landscape and street scene are just as important as the countryside*
- *You consider that the beauty and variety of the Essex countryside should be strongly stressed as well as the positive contribution that farm diversification and community forests could make to the landscape and rural economy*
- *You are concerned about the affects of global warming, such as flooding, rising sea levels, pollution, water consumption and coastal erosion and would like to see mention of Agenda 21*

to achieve this, we will:

- **Reduce pollution and other damage to our environment as much as possible, minimising wastage and unnecessary use of fuel and energy**
- **Plan and prepare for likely climate change, particularly in relation to rising sea levels, floods, water shortages and weather extremes**
- **Minimise the damage to the natural environment and built heritage caused by major developments such as new towns, major roads and airport expansion**
- **Promote voluntary and community action which gives a high priority to improving the local and global environment**

- Encourage the production of less domestic and business waste, reuse or recycle things wherever possible and dispose of the rest safely
- Promote education awareness campaigns such as “Reduce, Reuse, Recycle” and the reduction of packaging both locally and nationally
- Make sure environmental education is taught effectively in schools and outdoor learning centres, with support from other bodies, such as Country Parks, Essex Biodiversity Partnership and Schools’ Waste Action Groups
- Develop strategies to deal with the results of climate change and growing water demand, promoting water conservation measures, alternative energy generation such as wind farms and growing bio-fuels
- Make sure environmental factors are adequately reflected in the delivery of government intentions for major development in Essex
- Make sure that historic and attractive buildings, gardens, nature and scenery are conserved and, where appropriate, improved through projects such as Thames Chase Community Forest
- Conserve and improve important habitats for wildlife and halt the decline of habitats and species recognised as important within the county

HAVING FUN

Our vision is of a full range of leisure, sport, cultural and learning opportunities being used and developed by a wider range and larger number of people. Our heritage and environment will be valued and enhanced.

We asked how to:

- *Encourage people to get involved in cultural, learning and sporting activities?*
- *Make sure that everyone can reach and participate fully in their chosen activity?*
- *Explore and protect our heritage while encouraging sustainable change and development?*

You told us:

- *Schools and colleges should make sure their facilities can be utilised after school hours*
- *Recognise the value of exercise for older people, as well as bridging the school/work gap when so many stop exercising.*
- *Include facilities such as public parks, public community gardens, gyms and swimming pools in new developments*
- *First class facilities should be supported to give Essex a national profile*
- *Rural areas should be as well served as urban areas*

- *Young people need convenient and inexpensive access to leisure facilities, along with more areas to gather and socialise*
- *Develop attractions and visitor infrastructure to support tourism.*
- *Use cultural activities to raise the image of Essex as an enjoyable and successful place to work and live*
- *Support multi-cultural centres and cultural diversity in Essex*
- *Stress lifelong learning and education for life*
- *Stress the importance of our built heritage and the street scene*

to achieve this, we will:

- **Support and promote new cultural, leisure and educational facilities making sure the benefits are spread widely. Make Essex a leading county for sport through promotion of increased participation levels and through active support for the Olympic bid as well as for facilities for all levels and types of activity**
- **Make sure leisure and learning facilities are accessible to everyone. Increase the role of community facilities and schools as community centres and sports/leisure facilities**
- **Support facilities and programmes that tell people about the history and culture of Essex. Make Essex's coast, forests, country parks, historic buildings and archaeological sites easily accessible. Make sure that they can be visited conveniently, safely and without causing damage.**
- Support a range of good leisure, museum and arts facilities, within easy reach of and appropriate to people of all ages, ensuring there is relevant information readily available
- Expand the role of libraries as access points for information and community resource centres
- Wherever possible, prevent loss of open space for informal recreation
- Work with all relevant agencies, in particular Lea Valley Regional Park Authority, to promote publicity, access (including disabled access), healthy recreation and sustainable tourism.

In all our actions towards all the goals of the community strategy, we will keep on listening to people as they tell us how things are working and make new suggestions.

AND NOW?

Action plans to deliver the strategy will be published soon. We will review progress with action plans regularly, and report on it to the people of Essex. Changes to action plans will also be made annually. The community strategy itself will be reviewed after five years, taking into account what has happened in the meantime.