



EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

PRODUCTIVITY PLAN – July 2024

How we are transforming the way we design and deliver services to make better use of our resources (1)

What we have done	Our Future Plans
Stronger Communities	
Put Housing, Community, health & wellbeing together to ensure target place-based approach to working	Once target based approaches are embedded, we will expand the practice across 2 other super output areas in the District
Moved our Museum into a charitable trust	Align our customer strategy and digital investment to maximise customer expertise. Ensure that complex and urgent customer need is met as a priority and customer satisfaction is on an upwards trajectory. (Fit for the Future Programme)
Introduced a Community Lottery to mitigate the impact of reduction in community grants	Development of our waste and recycling services following the end of the Biffa contract. Focus on the value add of insourcing a service that touches every household across the district. (Fit for the Future Programme)
Set up a LATCO which provides our housing repairs, grounds maintenance, commercial assets functions	Insourcing our waste function into our wholly owned company – Terra Verde Services Ltd (TVS)
Overhauled & simplified our Local Council Tax Support to make it easier for claimants to understand entitlements and make it more efficient to administer	
Teams are working agilely utilising technology to record and upload inspections, virtual meetings are in place and cashless payment systems are in place to make transactions easier for our residents	
Stronger Place	
Working with 4 authorities to deliver Harlow & Gilston Garden Town	Take forward recommendations from a recent Planning Advisory Service review to improve our decision making processes
Adopting the Local Plan and gaining approval for a number of Strategic Masterplans supporting our housing requirements and sustainable growth	Economic Development expertise is provisioned from the County Council working in partnership to deliver skills we do not hold in-house
	Maximise the opportunity for EFDC assets to contribute to the financial stability, growth, and inward investment of our District.

How we are transforming the way we design and deliver services to make better use of our resources (2)

What we have done	Our Future Plans
Stronger Council	
<p>Shared arrangements in Legal, Payroll, Economic Development, Emergency Planning, Essex Procurement Partnership North Essex Parking Partnership, ICT and 151/Deputy 151 functions. Also delivery of services on behalf of other Councils e.g. DFG for Castle Point BC -On street parking enforcement for North Essex Councils. Shared Senior Roles - Head of Legal, Chief Internal Auditor, S151 officer, Chief Accountant and Service Directors for Finance, ICT & Transformation across Colchester and Epping</p>	<p>To share our enabling functions, ICT, People, Finance across 3 authorities – Braintree, Colchester, Epping. Also our Revenues and benefits functions.</p>
<p>Implementing our People Strategy 2023 – 2027 - Maximising Organisational Capacity and Capability; Effective and Inspirational Leadership, Values & Culture; Employee Experience and Engagement</p>	<p>Develop our People Strategy to align with our Fit for the Future Programme – Future Workforce Working with North Essex Councils to share, procure and commission together</p>
<p>Worked with our Trading Company to review the Council's asset holdings, to maximise rentals and dispose of surplus assets in support of Corporate ambitions</p>	<p>LGA Peer Review into our Corporate Communication function including community consultation and insight later in 2024. Corporate peer Review in 2025</p>
<p>Reviewed Council office accommodation and disposed of 2/3rds by working flexibility, reducing operating expenses and releasing surplus assets for regeneration.</p>	<p>Our Fit for the Future Programme, focussed on a portfolio of transformation over the next 4 years – details to be confirmed but focus on – future workforce; shared services; improvements to our waste and planning services; our assets; digital transformation</p>
	<p>Work with our private sector partners to sponsor our citizens award celebrations and other events</p>

How the Council plans to take advantage of technology and make better use of data to improve decision making, service design and use of resources

What we have done	Our Future Plans
Stronger Communities	
Used housing compliance/benchmark data to inform our service design	Continue to develop our Housing system and process to improve service delivery
Upgraded our Customer Contact Centre IT system to improve our customers' journey/satisfaction	Align our customer strategy and digital investment to maximise the customer experience
Upgraded our Housing system to improve our customer interaction, provide data for decision making	
Stronger Place	
Being a founding member of the Digital Innovation Zone and Board to bring digital enhancements to our residents. Partners with Councils in Essex and Hertfordshire	As a partner of the Harlow, Gilston Garden Town Partnership develops technology across the development sites
Stronger Council	
Embracing new technologies through Covid – Zoom, Teams etc	Review of our Organisational Performance Management including KPIs, employee reviews,
Senior Strategic leadership across ICT and Transformation	Develop a Digital Strategy across 2 authorities
Utilising data to develop meaningful performance data to inform our service and improvement plans	Develop a Data Governance Strategy including enhancing our use of SharePoint and one drive capabilities
Invested in Digital Transformation to deliver automation and self-service for those that want it	Work with Essex County Council and 3 other authorities to share a Policy graduate to enable joint working on issues impacting us all

The Council's plans to reduce wasteful spend within its organisation and systems

What we have done	Our Future Plans
Business Support reductions due to automation – savings realised in excess of £2m since 2018	Planning Review recommendations to transform our committee structure and decision making
On going programme of ICT system upgrades and implementations i.e., Housing, Planning, Regulatory services to improve customer journeys	Review of our Council Debt function, improvements to our Policy and Processes to maximise income
Commission Essex County Council to supply temporary/agency workers and consultants via their procured framework	Shared Finance Service with Colchester – currently sharing 151/Deputy 151 function
Robust budget monitoring and budget management process in place	Shared services across 3 Councils to achieve efficiencies and resilience
Partners co-locating into a Community Hub to make better use of our Civic Office for our residents	Marketing empty office space for lease/rent. Maximising income and retaining businesses within the locality
Leasing a floor of our Civic Offices to a private sector workspace provider to maximise income and utilise our estate	Maximise income, reviewing services for additional income streams
Over £6.4 million of savings and efficiencies removed from the Council's budgets in 2023/24 and 2024/25 alone against a net budget of £16 million.	Leveraging economies of scale across our Councils
	Improving our ICT supplier management across our contracts and contract management in general. Including specific training to maximise value for money from our suppliers

The barriers preventing progress that the Government can help to reduce or remove

Create resilience in our public services

Support local government with sector recruitment issues

Implement multi-year finance settlements to allow longer term planning

Better support for Councils dealing with those leading market share/market dominating technology providers to tackle poor performance and products

Evaluate the current restrictive procurement regulations to refocus them so that better outcomes are achieved

Promote shared common operating systems across local government to remove barriers

Flexible funding streams to enable closer working with the Health Service to enable whole system provision for our residents/patients/service users

Resolution to the Local Authority Audit Backlog through simplification of the Accounting reporting requirements