

**ACL**

# ACCOUNTABILITY AGREEMENT

**ACL ESSEX**

**JULY 2023**

**2023/24 ACADEMIC YEAR**



# ACL Essex Vision, Mission and Purpose

## *Vision*

- Giving Essex residents the opportunity to be the best they can be and achieve their goals.

## *Mission*

- To provide a high-quality learning offer that makes a positive difference to the lives of residents and businesses of Essex.

## *Purpose*

- To improve lives through learning.

## ***Strategic Aims and Goals***

The strategic aims in the ACL Essex Strategic Plan align with the key commitments of Essex County Council as set out in Everyone's Essex: our plan for levelling up the county 2021 to 2025. This will ensure we can work with others towards our common goals.

Everyone's Essex focuses on 4 areas where outcomes really matter, they are:

- the economy
- the environment
- children and families
- promoting health, care and wellbeing for all the parts of our population who need our support



# ***Our Plan for Essex***

Our plan for Essex sets out 20 commitments to improve the lives of the people of Essex divided into 4 key areas: economy, environment, health and family.

Economy	Environment	Health	Family
Good Jobs	Net zero	Health lifestyles	Education outcomes
Infrastructure	Transport and built environment	Promoting independence	Family resilience and stability
Future growth and investment	Minimise waste	Place-based working	Safety
Green Growth	Green communities	Carers	Outcomes for vulnerable children
Levelling up the economy	Levelling up the environment	Levelling up health	Levelling up families



## ***Strategic Aims and Goals***

ACL aims to deliver a great service, being ambitious for its learners and staff. It will be imaginative and open to new ways of doing things to meet the needs of Essex people.

We aim to improve chances for increased prosperity, improved health, wellbeing and independence and create a greener and more sustainable Essex.

We want our offer to inspire, create a love of learning and bring a sense of achievement and pride.

We want our offer to create opportunities for progression and improved destinations.



# ***Our Goals and Purpose***

## **Communities and families**

- Support families to access learning that promotes aspiration and resilience for themselves and their children
- Reach underrepresented and/or disadvantaged groups to support progression towards learning opportunities
- Widen participation in areas of disadvantage by working in partnership with families, community groups, providers and Essex County Council colleagues.

## **Economy**

- Deliver courses that improve the maths, English and digital skills of adults in Essex
- Deliver inclusive skills and employability courses so residents can gain skills, find good jobs and improve social mobility
- Provide a curriculum that meets the skills needs of Essex employers and gives consideration for the jobs of the future.

## **Health, wellbeing and independence**

- Support residents to lead healthy and socially included lives, thereby reducing loneliness and dependency on health services
- Increase digital inclusion so the people of Essex can access services and remain connected
- Adult learners with learning difficulties will lead more independent lives
- Support residents who are recovering from mental illness and who are mentally frail.

## **Environment**

- Respond to the skills needs of the new green sectors
- Encourage a greener future and work towards Net Zero
- Embed sustainability in all aspects of our delivery to raise awareness of environmental issues
- Reduce travel by developing an online learning offer.



# Context and Place

Essex is a county in the East of England. One of the home counties, it borders Suffolk and Cambridgeshire to the north, the North Sea to the east, Hertfordshire to the west, Kent across the River Thames estuary to the south and Greater London to the south and south-west.

Currently Greater London, along with Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, are devolved authorities.

Proximity to London is significant, with high levels of commuting to the capital or home-based working for London-based employers. Similarly, proximity to areas such as Cambridge, Hertfordshire and Suffolk are factors for people commuting in and out of Essex.

In the context of the Local Enterprise Partnerships, Essex is part of the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP).

Although there are a number of high-profile large employers in Essex, the table overview illustrates the large presence of small and micro-businesses. Essex has a slightly larger proportion of micro-businesses than the regional average, with small businesses often requiring additional support to engage with the skills system and to provide opportunities such as apprenticeships. In general, the number of businesses in Essex has steadily increased, from 51,600 in 2011 to 66,800 in 2020.

The Essex Skills Plan 2022-23 highlights that skills levels have improved but are still generally below the national average, although there are variations at district level.



## UK business counts (2022)

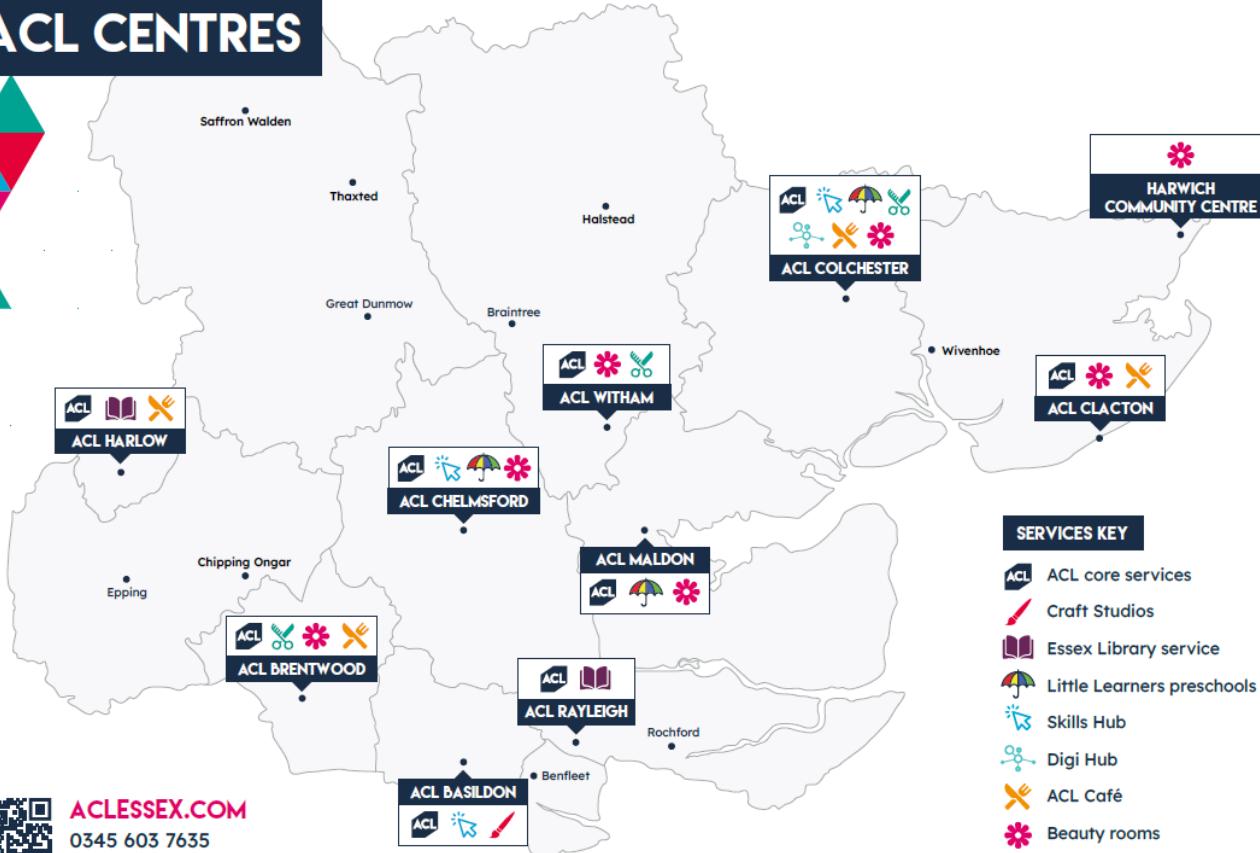
### Essex

Micro (0-9)	60,110 (90%)
Small (10-49)	5,590 (8.4%)
Medium (50-249)	920 (1.4%)
Large (250+)	180 (0.3%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>66,800</b>

Source: Official Labour Market Statistics (Nomis)



# ACL CENTRES



[ACLESSEX.COM](http://ACLESSEX.COM)

0345 603 7635

[lifelong.learning@essex.gov.uk](mailto:lifelong.learning@essex.gov.uk)

## SERVICES KEY

- ACL core services
- Craft Studios
- Essex Library service
- Little Learners preschools
- Skills Hub
- Digi Hub
- ACL Café
- Beauty rooms
- Hair Salon

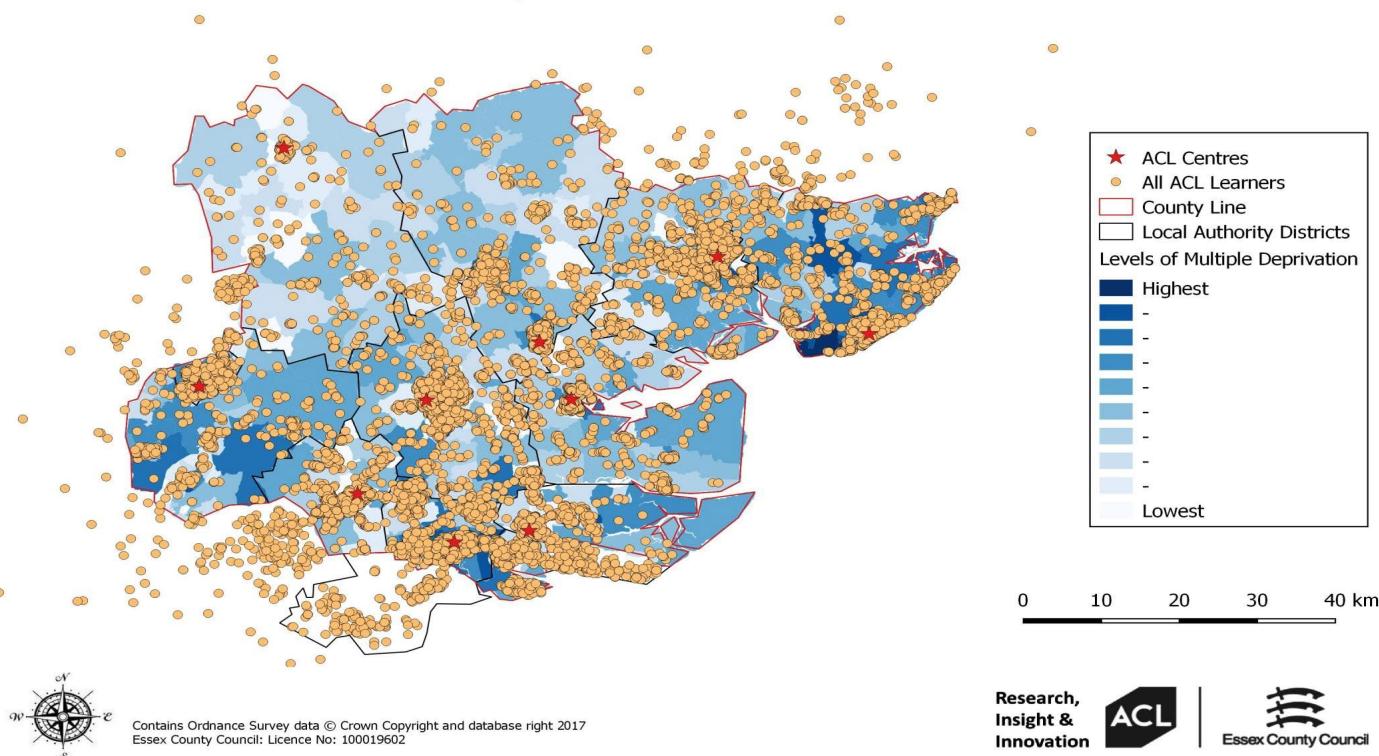
Essex County Council commissions Adult Community Learning Essex (ACL Essex) to provide learning across the county, with Southend and Thurrock unitary authorities having their own ACL provider. Essex is a large county with a population of around 1.5 million (working age 16-64 910,000). It has a wide range of communities spanning rural, urban and coastal areas with widely varying qualification levels and areas of significant social deprivation

ACL Essex is primarily a direct delivery service and has nine adult community learning centres in most of the major cities/towns in Essex. In support of the levelling up agenda, ACL Essex also offers courses at other community venues across the county including libraries, community centres, schools and care providers.

ACL Essex is graded as 'good' by Ofsted.



incil



The diagram highlights the spread of ACL Essex's learner's pre-pandemic, along with the indices of multiple deprivation across the county. This effectively highlights the uneven spread of deprivation across the county.

Data from Essex County Council, Strategy Insight and Engagement, highlights that a fifth of Essex households are offline, with over half using the internet for limited purposes, skills or frequency (141,765 (22%) are offline and 357,667 (45%) have limited online access in their households, which equates to 500,432 either have limited access or are offline, as opposed to 148,475 (23%) that are online). This data analysis informs our curriculum offer and its mode of delivery e.g. face to face, online, hybrid.



# ***Key Stakeholders that inform key priorities***

## *Engagement with Other Providers in the Area*

- Across the area served by ACL Essex, there are significant Further Education providers which offer a substantive vocational curriculum. There are also a number of special schools across the county. Working links exist between these organisations and ACL in various cross-county forums. Examples include the Essex Provider Network that brings together both private training providers and GFECs, the Federation of Essex Colleges that promotes collaborative work of member colleges. Another body where colleges meet is LEAFEA, which includes the other adult community learning providers in Essex, namely Southend ACL and Thurrock ACL covering the unitary authorities that make up Greater Essex.
- A good example of how we collaborate with across levelling up priority places is The Tendring Strategic Group, with whom we are equal partners. In Harlow we are part of the Council Skills Forum, along with Harlow College. Another example is in the ‘Your Future Matters Project’; some of our funding is being utilised to deliver IAG training at level 4 and 6 to staff in Colchester Institute as well as in Harlow College and Chelmsford College.
- There are three universities across Essex, two in mid-Essex; Anglia Ruskin University and Writtle University College, and the University of Essex in Colchester. ACL Essex works in partnership with each of these in a variety of ways, for example developing courses for the general adult population or supporting apprentices with English and maths.



# **Key Stakeholders**

## *Engagement with Other Stakeholders in the Area*

ACL Essex has an established business development team that, along with curriculum areas, have good employer and stakeholder links to support the curriculum offer and delivery. Examples of these include: anchor groups, National Careers Service, Job Centre Plus, local district councils, South East Digital Skills Partnership, ECC Skills Team, South East LEP, Essex Cares, BEST Growth Hub, Federation of Small Businesses, Essex Chamber of Commerce, Citizens Advice Bureau, COLBEA, Let's Do Business, NHS Trusts, Essex Wildlife Trust and a range of employers and voluntary organisations, in addition to a broad range of private sector organisations. ACL Essex works with these organisations both at a strategic and operational level, which has included the co-design of curriculum.



# ***Contribution to national, regional and local priorities***

ACL Essex undertakes an annual curriculum planning cycle to bring to life the Strategic Plan, which in itself is informed by national, regional and local priorities including the Essex skills plans. Each year, data updates are sought to inform curriculum planning. In addition to the above, updates from the ACL Essex Strategic Annual Review, the associated Quality Improvement Plan as well as our learners and local/regional employers.

ACL Essex does not have the resources to operate in all Skills Sector Areas, however local private training providers and the large GFECs do have the required resources and specialists in these areas. As a result, ACL Essex is directly supporting the following national priorities that also fit well with identified regional/local need:

- Construction, via a retrofit offer
- Digital and Technology
- Health and Social Care
- Science and mathematics

However, all national priorities including

- Engineering
- Manufacturing

are supported by the ACL Essex offer of essential and employability skills that prepares learners for the opportunities learning creates for progression and positive destinations. This includes routes into other providers supported by FEDEC membership as detailed in provider stakeholders.



# **Local Priorities**

In the year ahead, ACL Essex will contribute to addressing a core set of challenges faced within Greater Essex:

- 123,000 Essex residents live in the 20% most deprived neighbourhoods in the country with too many residents unable to benefit from economic growth and prosperity, now also facing rising costs of living.
- There are too many residents who are under-employed with low skills and poor connectivity to employment and training opportunities.
- Our economy is not yet fit for the future, with structural problems such as poor productivity, a mismatch between business need and resident skills and low levels of innovation in the economy.
- The county suffers from insufficient new affordable housing, with pockets of extremely poor housing impacting the physical and mental health of our residents.
- Our town centres and businesses have suffered during Covid and are now facing increasing costs, so need support to adapt and recover.
- 15% of greenhouse gases in Essex stem from housing. Non-net zero carbon housing continues to be developed in Essex and will continue to do so until at least 2025.



College Strategic Aims and Objectives	Impact and/or Contribution towards National, Regional and Local Priorities for Learning and Skills
<u>Aim/Objective 1:</u>  <b>Deliver courses that improve the mathematics, English and digital skills of adults in Essex</b>	<p>To increase the number of adults who participate in maths, English and ESOL in order for them to increase their chances of better employment opportunities. Maths and English competencies are a national, regional and local need, as highlighted by the Essex LSIP skills priorities. For example, 49% of working age adults have numeracy skills expected of primary school children. There are currently 3,296 enrolments on maths, English and ESOL courses and we anticipate increasing these numbers by 10% (to 3,626) next academic year with further growth targeted in the following years. We will work with community partners to achieve these aims.</p>
<u>Aim/Objective 2:</u>  <b>Provide a curriculum that meets the skills needs of Essex employers and gives consideration for the jobs of the future.</b>	<p>Professional Services, Transport and Logistics</p> <p>To address and support identified LSIP Sector and Technical Skills priorities, in particular for Professional Services, Transport and Logistics, ACL Essex will develop this as a new curriculum area focussing on an apprenticeship offer.</p> <p>This will focus initially on developing and piloting the Level 2 Supply Chain Warehouse Operative role with a initial recruitment target at least 10 starts. This will then be followed by the development of the Level 3 Transport and Warehouse Operative standard for delivery from August 2024.</p>
<u>Aim/Objective 4:</u>  <b>Respond to the skills needs of the new green sectors</b>	<p>Construction and Built Environment/Green Skills via Retrofit</p> <p>Addressing national, regional and local skills and technical priorities recruiting to various construction and green skills roles.</p> <p>Building upon the successful launch of Retrofit courses with the Retrofit Academy in 2022/23 to support the projected county demand for 6000 enrolments in Essex for this sector by 2030, ACL Essex is planning to extend provision. This will be accomplished by developing and piloting the Level 2 Facilities Service Operative apprenticeship standard. Initial minimum target for this new provision is a minimum of 10 starts.</p>
<u>Aim/Objective 5:</u>  <b>Widen participation in areas of disadvantage by working in partnership with families, community groups, providers and Essex County Council colleagues</b>	<p>Levelling Up</p> <p>Through the development of an Essex Learning Partnership group and working with community partners and schools, including engagement of the multiply project we will extend the reach of our provision into areas of disadvantage. This objective will contribute towards the levelling up agenda and ensure that those in areas of disadvantage and furthest from the labour market are given opportunities to re-engage with learning.</p> <p>Our family learning enrolments (for 2022-23) are 1,441 and we will aim, in the next 12 months to increase this area provision by 15% (1660).</p> <p>We will pilot new provision in two local priority areas (Canvey Island and Harwich) as identified within the Everyone's Essex plan. <a href="#">Everyone's Essex: our plan for levelling up the county 2021 to 2025: Our 20 commitments - Essex County Council</a>. The offer will consist of accredited and community/ family learning courses with the expectation of a further 40 enrolments on accredited courses and 200 community/family learning</p>

# ***Corporation Statement***

On behalf of the ACL Essex Strategic Advisory Board, it is hereby confirmed that the ACL Essex plan, as set out above, reflects an agreed statement of purpose, aims and objectives as approved by the Strategic Advisory Board at their meeting on 29th of June 2023.

The plan will be published on the ACL Essex website within three months of the start of the new academic year and can be accessed from the following link:

**Chairman of Strategic Advisory Board**

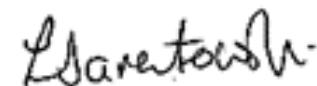
**Cllr Tony Ball**

A handwritten signature of Cllr Tony Ball in black ink, enclosed in a white rectangular box.

**Dated: 26/7/2023**

**Principal**

**Lisa Jarentowski**

A handwritten signature of Lisa Jarentowski in black ink.

**21/7/2023**



# Reference to Relevant Supporting Documentation

ACL Essex Strategic Plan

<https://www.aclessex.com/strategic-plan>

[Broader determinants of health | The King's Fund \(kingsfund.org.uk\)](#)

Essex Skills Plan

<https://www.essex.gov.uk/plans-and-strategies/essex-skills-plan>

Essex Chambers of Commerce, Local Skills Improvement Plan  
(contains information and updates, plan to be submitted end May 2023)

[https://www.essexchambers.co.uk/local\\_skills\\_improvement\\_plan\\_lsip.htm](https://www.essexchambers.co.uk/local_skills_improvement_plan_lsip.htm)

Everyone's Essex: our plan for levelling up the county 2021 to 2025

<https://www.essex.gov.uk/everyones-essex-our-plan-for-essex-2021-2025>

Levelling up Essex: An Essex White Paper

<https://assets.ctfassets.net/knkzaf64jx5x/xTQoof74Yb8VF4DIqYGQ2/a1b9223c9730c307979a527a2270261e/Essex-County-Council-Levelling-Up-strategy.pdf>

Local Area Report: Canvey Island

[Local Area Report for areas in England and Wales - Nomis \(nomisweb.co.uk\)](#)

[Local Area Report: Harwich](#)

[Local Area Report for areas in England and Wales - Nomis \(nomisweb.co.uk\)](#)

[Social determinants of health - The Health Foundation](#)

[Understanding the wider determinants of health | Rochford District Council](#)

Working Together for a Faster, Smarter and More Sustainable Economic Recovery, South East LEP

<https://www.southeastlep.com/our-strategy/economic-recovery-and-renewal-strategy/>