



Annual Report 2022-23

Essex Association of Local Councils

Executive Committee Members

Chair	Cllr Peter Davey
Vice-Chairs	Cllr John Gili-Ross Cllr Mike Eldred
Treasurer	Cllr Stephanie Gill
Committee Members	Cllr Brian Butcher Cllr David McPherson-Davis Cllr Jim Devlin Cllr Paul Lees Cllr Abdul Hafiz Cllr Martin Lee Cllr Richard North Cllr Susan Martin Cllr Angelina Marriott Cllr Alan Townsend Cllr Sheila Jackman MBE
	Ms Beverley Rumsey
President	Cllr John Jowers
Vice-Presidents	Mr Mick Page Cllr Sheila Jackman MBE Mrs Anne Brown Mrs Jennifer Tolhurst, Lord-Lieutenant of Essex

Staff Members

Chief Executive Officer	Charlene Slade
Executive County Training Officer	Pearl Willcox
Financial Controller	Stephanie Robinson
Member Enquiries	Ann C Wood
Coms & Office Co-ordinator	Sophie Walker
Funding Administrator	Michelle Storey

The Essex Association of Local Councils would like to thank Essex County Council for their continued support and financial commitment to our activities and services in the parish sector of Essex.

This report was produced and published by The Essex Association of Local Councils
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Essex CM6 1AH

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Chair's Report



Cllr Peter Davey, Chair of Essex Association of Local Councils

This Year in Review

The EALC continues to be recognised nationally for the work it carries out in support of the Parish and Town Council Sector within Essex.

EALC supported three new Parish and Town Councils. Wickford Town Council, Chelmsford Garden Community Council and Chelmer Village Council during their first year of creation. These are now affiliated members.

Our top priorities remain in the development and delivery of a highly professional training programme and council support services, whilst looking for new areas where value can be added for member councils.

To meet the challenges presented throughout the year, it is essential that we work diligently and successfully with our primary partners to create mutual benefit. As the county association we must exploit every opportunity to work with Essex County Council, the National Association of Local Councils, the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner and the Essex Rural Partnership to benefit you the membership.

The EALC in collaboration with Essex County Council (ECC) continue to act as the administering agent for Grant Funding to meet the challenges faced by many Essex communities and residents during the current cost of living crisis and the Town and Parish Councils and Local Charities sectors through the £300k annual Community Initiative Fund (CIF), has once again been one of the biggest projects in awarding just over £685,000 of grants to include Microgrants, foodbanks and winter warmth initiatives, supporting families across Essex during the last 12 months.

I would like to acknowledge Essex County Councils continuing support for the sector in these financially challenging times and the speed and efficiency that was evident in their quest to support the most vulnerable residents during difficult and challenging times.

The Local Council Award scheme continues to grow and within Essex we still have one of the highest number of LCA accreditations in the UK. I retain my role as Chair of the Essex Accreditation Panel and on the panels behalf I, my Vice-Chairs or the CEO present the Foundation, Quality and Quality Gold certificates in person throughout the County to councils in recognition of the excellent work they undertake.

Continued overleaf-

Chair's Report

This Year in Review

The Climate Emergency and Health & Wellbeing agendas remain a priority both in Essex and Nationally. ECC, has now provided the EALC with funding to create bespoke training courses through qualified Tutors to ensure quality and professional support is available to all member councils in these areas. I remain a member of the ECC Health & Wellbeing Board, and a member of the Independent Climate Commission to help compliment and influence the work undertaken in these vital areas. Cllr Mike Eldred, a Vice-Chair of the Association, is currently undertaking a review of the EALC Health and Wellbeing Board to ensure that there is representation from all sectors across Essex of both the Health and Wellbeing and Climate Change initiatives.

The Independent Essex Climate Action Commission continues to focus on climate change and the environment which will have economic benefits for Essex, as well as helping the global climate and improving the environment for citizens at a local level. The commission's ongoing recommendations to Essex County Council, continue to influence the council to implement recommendations and policy suggestions which will be transformative, but practical.

To enhance and strengthen our capabilities, a complete review of our IT requirements was undertaken in the last year which led to the selection of a new IT provider to seamlessly transition our IT to a cloud based system supported by Office 365 and in parallel this year we have introduced bespoke remote video and audio equipment to offer quality remote conferencing and hybrid training sessions so that where practical members can choose how to participate.

Sophie Wolker, our Communications and Office Coordinator is also carrying out an internal review of our website to create an interactive website which is in the final stages and will be launched at a later date this year.

EALC continues its work alongside the office of the Essex Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner, the Safer Roads Essex Initiative, the Rural Crime Forum and the Essex Rural Partnership strategic initiative.

Continued overleaf-

Chair's Report

This Year in Review

As the Vice-Chair of the NALC with responsibility for finance and a member of the NALC Management Board, the EALC has a significant influence in the strategic initiatives that take place across the UK by the Parish and Town Council sector. My objective is that the NALC retains a strong financial position, maintains a healthy relationship with central government and provides a best value for money service to its member councils.

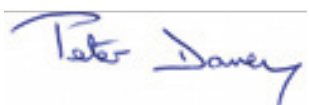
I would like to remind you to nominate that special person in your community whose actions often go unrecognised but make a big difference to the community. The Honours Brochure initiative which will be re-launched this year through the offices of His Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Essex, Mrs Jennifer Tolhurst encourages your nominations.

The many EALC achievements this year, both strategic and supportive could not have been possible without the absolute commitment, hard work, dedication, professionalism, and foresight given by Charlene Slade and her team of professionals in the key areas of Training, Communication, Legal Advice and Finance, to support our Town and Parish council members. I would also like to thank all the EALC Executive members for their continuing support and hard work during this year in ensuring that our member's voices are heard and acted upon.

To ensure the Association continues to create best value and services for its members and stakeholders a Task and Finish Group from the Executive will carry out a full review of the Strategic Plan and Action Plan to provide a 4-year Business Plan and Marketing Strategy which will be announced in the new year. This strategic review is crucial to the organisation's success and will ensure the future sustainability of the EALC. I am proud to have been chosen to Chair the EALC for a further year and I will continue to work tirelessly to support the EALC staff with its proactive work in ensuring that the EALC offer the most advanced support to you, our membership.

Peter Davey

Chairman of the Essex Association of Local Councils



CEO Report



Charlene Slade AATQB CiLCA, CEO
Essex Association of Local Councils

Chief Executive Report 2022-23

It is an honour and pleasure to write to you as the Chief Executive Officer in this year's report; giving an overview of the achievements made over the last year to 31st March 2023.

The Association has continued to improve the training function and variety of courses, both in house and delivered online. New courses have been created by our tutors who have expert knowledge and skills, raising the standards for the sector in councillor training, the Clerks qualification, and other key subjects.

The EALC have continued to support many Parish and Town Councils to achieve an award under the Local Council Award scheme, the award was designed to celebrate the successes of the very best local councils and to provide a framework to support all local councils to improve and develop to meet their full potential, recognising the outstanding work of the Clerks and Councillors. EALC is proud to lead the Country with the largest number of accreditations. A total of 31 member councils applied through the NALC accreditation process with 12 member councils awarded Foundation and 1 awarded Quality. (April 2023 figures).

Thank you to our team of dedicated staff, who continue to make improvements to member services; ensuring the Association continues to meet the needs of the modern council and the changes that we face in our modern world. Personal thanks to Pearl Willcox, Executive County Training Officer, Stephanie Robinson, Financial Controller, Ann Wood, Head of Member Enquires, Sophie Wolker, Comms. & Office Coordinator and Michelle Storey, Funding Administrator. These key appointments are fundamental to providing member services and support with council enquiries, training at the highest standard for the sector, communications from key partner organisations, grant opportunities to members and charity organisations and fundamental financial safeguarding for the associations finances.

As the demands and needs upon our membership change, the EALC will continue to evolve to support you, the Councillors and Clerks who are at the heart of our communities. A full review is being carried out of our current strategy and a new 4-year business plan will soon be in place which will ensure that the Association continues to improve and provide even greater value for its membership.

Charlene Slade
Chief Executive Officer

Treasurer's Report



Cllr Stephanie Gill, Treasurer Essex Association of Local Councils

Treasurer's Financial Report 2022-23

Cllr David McPherson-Davis stood down in November 2022 from the position of Treasurer, having held this post for some twenty two years. The EALC is greatly indebted to David for the time and experience he put into the organisation in carrying out his responsibilities over this period of time. Having been a member of the Finance Sub-Committee since 2021, and the Executive Committee since 2020, I agreed to take on this role.

It should be noted that this position has changed greatly since David first took it on as the EALC now employs a qualified accountant, Stephanie Robinson, as the Financial Controller. My background is Treasury Finance in the banking and corporate industries; the role of Treasurer is now that of chairing the Finance Sub-Committee whilst complementing the Financial Controller's work.

The Association continued to support Members via the services of Governance Advice, Communications and the advertising of staff vacancies plus the provision of Clerk and Councillor Training.

The EALC continues to administer the Essex County Council CIF Grants and has undertaken other grant administration for Essex County Council via separately negotiated Service Level Agreements.

Last financial year saw expenditure from restructuring reserves already set aside for refurbishment as it was necessary to make the downstairs kitchen attached to the training room fit for purpose.

The result of Association's activities for the year ended 31st March brought about a surplus of £29,614.49

It was determined at the Finance Sub-Committee meeting in June that this accrual would be used to set up a new EALC Councillor Training Bursary in the amount of £30,000 and thus invest in our members.

The details of how this bursary is to be implemented is currently being determined by the CEO.

The Profile and Finance Report compiled by the EALC Financial Controller explains in detail the financial performance of the Association.

The Finance Sub-Committee held regular meetings throughout the year to discuss and monitor the ongoing performance of the Association, including any relating financial implications, and accordingly deliver reports and recommendations to the Executive Committee.

Continued overleaf-

Treasurer's Financial Report 2022-23

Risk Review

There is continued reviewing of risks relating to internal procedures and external financial risks to minimise the exposure of the Association.

The Financial Regulations were revised and adopted in February 2023.

A Treasury Management Policy was adopted in November 2022.

Two of the Association's bank account providers are in the process of being altered.

The insurance policy is annually reviewed per the adopted Financial Regulations.

Auditors

Heather Heelis from Heelis and Lodge completed the Audit for 31st March 2023. Arising from requirements of the Association's insurance policy, a new Auditor will be proposed as the Auditor to the accounts for a term of one year at the Annual General Meeting 2023.

Pensions

The EALC participates in a defined benefit scheme operated by Essex County Council. The contributions are determined by Essex County Council. Although the fund is a defined benefit scheme, EALC is grouped together with other similar employers. It is not possible to identify its share of underlying assets and liabilities and it is therefore accounted for as a defined contribution scheme. The EALC contribute monthly to the employees' pension scheme as set by Essex County Council's Pension Office. Currently the EALC is in deficit with the deficit being paid as additional monthly contributions as defined by valuers Barnett Waddingham. The EALC also participates in a defined contribution scheme operated by NEST. During 2014 the EALC adopted a Pension Policy Statement in line with legal requirements.

Cllr Stephanie M. Gill

Treasurer of Essex Association of Local Councils

Financial Reports



Stephanie Robinson ICAEW CiLCA
Financial Controller

Financial Report 2022-23

I joined the EALC on the 9th May 2022 and have a background in both Finance (ICAEW qualified) and also local government as I am a CiLCA qualified clerk for 2 parish councils (formerly 3).

I started working as RFO/Parish clerk 4 years ago with Herongate & Ingrave parish council. Prior to that I worked as Global Financial controller for MMS and more recently as Financial Controller for Rainham Steel.

The financial statements for the year ending 31st March 2023 can be found at pages 11-17. These accounts have been subject to an external audit by Heelis & Lodge on the 5th June 2023. The conclusion to their report states:

"I have audited the financial statements of the Essex Association of Local council for the Year Ended 31 March 2023.

The audit work has been undertaken so that I might state to the Association's members those matters I am required to state to them in a report of the Auditors and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, I do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the Association and its members, for my audit work, for this report, or for the opinions I have formed.

Respective responsibilities of the EALC and Auditors

The Executive Finance Officer and the Treasurer of the EALC are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view. My responsibility is to audit and express an opinion on the financial statements in accordance with good practice.

Scope of the audit of the financial statements

An audit involves obtaining evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements sufficient to give reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or error.

Opinion on financial Statements

In my opinion the financial statements:

Give a true and fair view of the state of the Association's affairs as at 31 March 2023 and of its surplus for the year then ended. They have been prepared in accordance with the EALC Financial Regulations dated March 2023."

Heather Heelis, Heelis & Lodge
5 June 2023

Financial Report 2022-23

An external audit of the grant funding administration streams was carried out on 25th April 2023 by Heelis & Lodge and concluded “There are no additional comments/recommendations to make in relation to this audit. There is a very high standard of record keeping in a logical and systematic format resulting in a clear audit trail”

The year ending 31st March 2023 has been a busy and successful year for the EALC with course income of £99,129 and exceptional income of £34,000 from the administration of food support funds and Winter Warmth and Welcome spaces fund.

Subscription income increased by just under 1% to £84,670.

On behalf of Essex County Council, a total of just over £685,000 of grants have been awarded in the 2022/23 financial year including 77 micro-grants to the value of £49,044 and Community Initiative Funds to the value of £170,908.

Separate accounting practices, including Treasury Management, Risk Assessments and robust Financial Regulations are in place to ensure that all the funds administered on behalf of Essex County Council are transparent, accountable and separately managed from the core purpose and functions of the Association.

Financial Reports

Essex Association of Local Councils Statement of Income & Expenditure as at 31 March 2023

Note No.	31/03/2023	31/03/2022
1 Services Provided to Members	99,129.10	114,525.51
2 Publications & Mail Services	3,651.45	1,041.00
3 Other income AGM/ Advertising	13,512.84	(51,930.00)
4 Fund Administration Income	34,000.00	55,356.57
	<u>150,293.39</u>	<u>118,993.08</u>
Subscriptions		
5 Members Total Subscriptions	132,814.25	133,194.02
Less NALC Subscriptions	(48,143.91)	(49,297.77)
	<u>84,670.34</u>	<u>83,896.25</u>
Grants Received		
6 ECC Grant	40,000.00	40,000.00
7 ECC Grant CIF Fund/Microgrant	35,000.00	46,910.90
8 ECC Grant Health & Wellbeing	0.00	10,000.00
9 HR Grant	3,105.00	3,105.00
10 Interest Net of Bank Charges	2,369.32	(240.24)
11 PFCC Grant	10,000.00	10,000.00
	<u>90,474.32</u>	<u>109,775.66</u>
TOTAL INCOME	<u>325,438.05</u>	<u>312,664.99</u>
Expenditure		
12 Employee Costs	198,105.14	203,589.01
13 Tutors	27,481.02	24,670.11
Services Provided Costs	7,179.46	1,057.98
Premises	20,871.95	24,204.56
Office	8,234.13	7,831.30
IT including support, website	7,976.02	2,236.56
Subscriptions	425.02	(125.65)
Committee costs	2,893.94	995.17
14 AGM	12,907.89	0.00
15 Audit	1,600.00	0.00
Vine HR	3,840.00	4,080.50
Depreciation	4,308.99	0.00
Donations	0.00	50.00
	<u>295,823.56</u>	<u>268,589.54</u>
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	<u>295,823.56</u>	<u>268,589.54</u>
SURPLUS / DEFICIT	<u>29,614.49</u>	<u>44,075.45</u>

Financial Reports

Essex Association of Local Councils Statement of Financial Position at 31 March 2023

Notes No.	31/03/2023	31/03/2022
Fixed Assets		
1 IT equipment - Cost	12,927.00	12,927.00
Accumulated Depreciation	(4,308.99)	0.00
Net Book Value	8,618.01	12,927.00
Current Assets		
2 Stock	5,674.06	1,422.15
3 Debtors	9,905.88	3,953.56
4 Other Debtors	580.00	0.00
5 Prepayments	3,259.60	2,979.13
6 Vat on vatable sales/purchases	0.00	325.64
	19,419.54	8,680.48
Cash		
NS&I Bonds	90,000.00	90,000.00
Public Sector Deposit Fund	85,000.00	60,000.00
Cash at Bank	121,764.92	150,596.37
Petty cash	2.72	2.72
7 Cash held on behalf of ECC	129,744.25	225,815.79
	426,511.89	526,414.88
Total Current Assets & Cash	445,931.43	535,095.36
TOTAL ASSETS	454,549.44	548,022.36
Current Liabilities		
Trade Creditors	2,781.58	16,809.23
Credit Card	1,075.08	353.53
Other creditors	216.00	0.00
8 Receipts in advance	64,520.49	55,420.00
6 VAT liability	3,694.52	0.00
9 Accruals	1,231.49	0.00
	73,519.16	72,582.76
Non EALC reserves		
10 Clerks Bursary Reserve	14,934.20	16,831.70
11 Potential New Councils	2,493.37	2,493.37
11 Maldon Bursary Reserve	13.00	13.00
12 CIF /MG	31,594.27	36,649.32
13 Funding Streams	62,546.73	169,826.40
	111,581.57	225,815.79
TOTAL LIABILITIES	185,102.73	298,398.55
NET ASSETS/(LIABILITIES)	269,446.71	249,623.81
RESERVE S		
Accumulated Funds		
Surplus/Deficit	35,123.81	28,532.38
Transfer to reserves	(32,755.59)	(35,484.00)
	31,982.71	35,123.81
14 Legal Costs Reserve	10,000.00	10,000.00
15 Repairs & Renewals Reserve	5,500.00	5,500.00
16 Restructuring Reserve	72,964.00	80,000.00
17 Councillor Training Bursary	30,000.00	
18 Termination Reserve	119,000.00	119,000.00
	237,464.00	214,500.00
TOTAL RESERVE S	269,446.71	249,623.81

Financial Reports

Essex Association of Local Councils Annual Accounts for the Year Ended 31st March 2023 Statement of Reserves and Funds Held.

	Accumulated Funds	Restructuring Reserve	Termination Reserve	Repairs & Renewals Reserve	Clerks Bursary Reserve	Maldon Bursary Reserve	Legal Costs Reserve	Potential New Councils	Councillor Training Bursary	Balance
	£	£		£	£	£	£	£		£
Opening Balance	35,123.81	80,000.00	119,000.00	5,500.00	16,831.70	13.00	10,000.00	2,493.37	0.00	268,961.88
Funds Received										0.00
Surplus/Deficit	29,614.49									29,614.49
Transferred	(32,755.59)			2,755.59					30,000.00	(30,000.00)
Grant										0.00
Funds Spent		(7,036.00)		(2,755.59)	(9,897.50)					(19,689.09)
Clerks Bursary					8,000.00					8,000.00
Maldon Bursary										0.00
Closing Balance	31,982.71	72,964.00	119,000.00	5,500.00	14,934.20	13.00	10,000.00	2,493.37	30,000.00	256,887.28

Transfers of £27,968 and £7,516 were made from the accumulated reserves to the restructuring reserve and the legal costs reserve respectively.

The restructuring reserve is to fund the modernization of the EALC including work needed to implement new IT systems and reconfigure the office to allow for a hybrid training facility.

The termination reserve represents potential liability should redundancies need to be made. Repairs and renewals reserve is for minor alterations and improvements to the office. Clerks Bursary reserve is funded by Essex County Council to provide funding for training of Clerks from councils with an annual budgeted income under £80,000, to a limit of £500/year. Maldon bursary reserve is a historic balance of a reserve funded by Maldon District Council for the training of town and parish councils in the Maldon District.

Legal costs reserve is for legal costs which cannot be funded from income in the year incurred.

Potential New Councils reserve is funded by NALC and is to provide financial support in the creation of new town and parish councils. Councillor training bursary is a newly created fund to assist smaller councils with the cost of councillor training.

Essex Association of Local Councils Notes to accompany the EALC 2022/23 Year End Accounts

Note No.

Notes to Statement of Income and Expenditure

- 1 Income from courses include Online Training, CiLCA & bespoke courses
- 2 Income from the sale of publications including Good Councillor Guides and CAB.
- 3 Other income including AGM sponsorship and advertising
- 4 Administration of Grand Funding Streams on behalf of Essex County Council
- 5 Members Subscriptions, There was an increase of 1% in 2022/23, however there was a drop in affiliation rate in 2022/23
- 6 ECC Core Grant
- 7 ECC Grant CIF Fund
- 8 ECC Grant Health & Wellbeing - this is £16,000 currently held on the balance sheet under receipts in advance pending any spending in relation to Health & Wellbeing provision for membership
- 9 ECC HR Grant
- 10 Interest net of Bank Charges
- 11 Stipend partnership working with PFCC
- 12 Payroll - includes NALC backdated payscales
- 13 Tutors includes staff tutoring
- 14 AGM cost fully funded by AGM sponsorship (note 3)
- 15 Audit includes audit cost of £800 for 2021/22 which was not accrued for last year end.

Notes to Statement of Financial Position

- 16 IT equipment purchased has been capitalised and will be depreciated over 3 years (straight line)
- 17 Stock consists of publications and gavels. No gavels in stock at the end of 2021/22. Now have considerable stock ahead of expected rise in numbers attending chairman's training in an election year.
- 18 Trade Debtors: £8,618.19 are current or 1 month old. Increase year on year is a result of increased activity feb/march time rather than an issue with collection of debt.
- 19 Other Debtors are accrued income.
- 20 Prepayments for Rent, franking machine., it support and software
- 21 VAT on vatable sales / purchases - this year a liability rather than an asset. Another reflection of increased activity in run up to year end.
- 22 Cash held on behalf of Essex County Council to administer their funds.
- 23 Receipts in advance - Receipts in advance for Funding Streams £32000. AGM Sponsors £8520.49 PFCC funding for 2023/24 £10,000 and ECC Health & Wellbeing funding 2022/23 £16,000
- 24 Accruals for Tutor costs, audit costs and other services
- 25 Clerks Bursary funds provided by ECC to assist with member council's training costs
- 26 Potential New Councils reserve and Maldon Bursary are historic reserves which are no longer active
- 27 CIF and Microgrant reserves - funding yet to be allocated
- 28 Funding Streams administered on behalf of ECC
- 29 Legal Cost Reserve ear marked reserve for future legal costs such as re - negotiation of rent
- 30 Earmarked reserves for repairs and renewals
- 31 Earmarked reserves for the costs of restructuring the EALC as an organisation and a premises to meet evolving market needs such as hybrid training. Release of reserve in the year for the installation of a kitchen attached to the training room and some new audio/visual equipment in the training room.
- 32 Councillor Training Bursary to assist councils with councillor training costs.
- 33 Termination reserve created in 2020/21. Earmarked reserve to cover costs of redundancy should the EALC cease to trade

Financial Reports

EA (2013) Ltd Statement of Income & Expenditure as at 31 March 2023

Note	31/03/2023	31/03/2022
No. Income		
EALC contribution to rent	7,250.00	6,500.00
ECC contribution to rent	21,000.00	21,000.00
1 EALC re-imbursement (for bank charges)	72.00	72.00
	<u>28,322.00</u>	<u>27,572.00</u>
TOTAL NET INCOME	<u>£28,322.00</u>	<u>£27,572.00</u>
Expenditure		
Rent	28,250.00	27,500.00
Bank Charges (service charge)	72.00	72.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	<u>28,322.00</u>	<u>27,572.00</u>
	<u>£28,322.00</u>	<u>£27,572.00</u>
<u>SURPLUS / DEFICIT</u>	<u>£0.00</u>	<u>£0.00</u>

Financial Reports

EA (2013) Ltd Statement of Financial Position at 31 March 2023

Note No.	31/03/2023	31/03/2022
<u>Non Current Assets</u>		
Set up costs	0.00	0.00
<u>Current Assets</u>		
Debtors	72.00	0.00
Payments in Advance	7,125.00	6,875.00
Bank Account	28.00	100.00
	<u>7,225.00</u>	<u>6,975.00</u>
<u>TOTAL ASSETS</u>	£7,225.00	£6,975.00
<u>Current Liabilities</u>		
Creditors	0.00	0.00
Receipts in Advance	7,125.00	6,875.00
	<u>7,125.00</u>	<u>6,875.00</u>
<u>TOTAL LIABILITIES</u>	7,125.00	6,875.00
	<u>100.00</u>	<u>100.00</u>
<u>SHAREHOLDERS FUNDS</u>		
Balance brought forward	100.00	100.00
	<u>£100.00</u>	<u>£100.00</u>

EA (2013) Ltd

Notes to accompany the EA (2013) Ltd Year End Accounts

**Note
No.**

Notes to Statement of Income and Expenditure

- 1 Bank Charges for re-imbusement £72 from 202/23

Notes to Statement of Financial Position

- 1 Receipts in advance - comprising
ECC rent grant of £5250
EALC contribution to rent in advance of £1875
Total sum of £7125

NOTE Opinion of financial statements

In my opinion the financial statements:

Gives a true and fair view of the company's affairs at 31st March 2022.

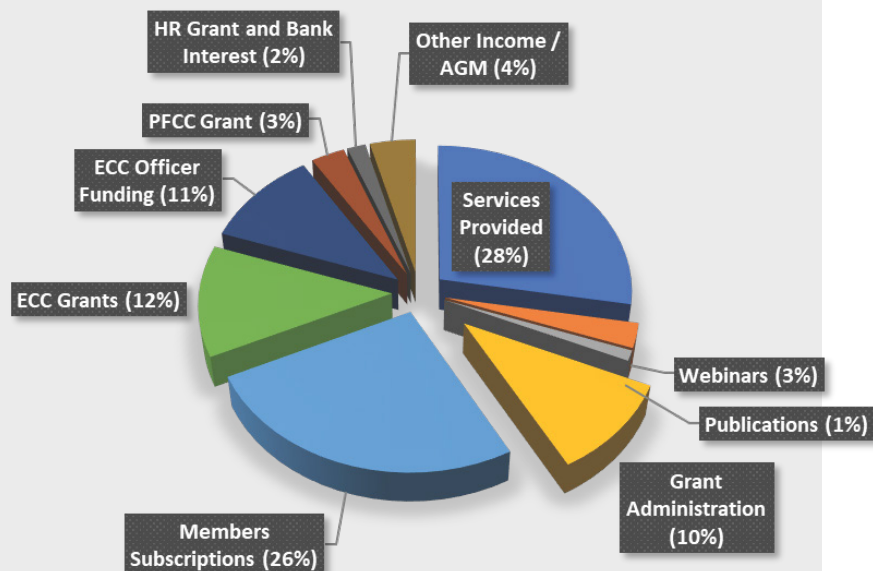
Financial Summary

Income Figures

EALC Income 2022/2023

Services Provided (28%)	90303
Webinars (3%)	8826
Publications (1%)	3652
Grant Administration (10%)	34000
Members Subscriptions (26%)	84670
ECC Grants (12%)	40000
ECC Officer Funding (11%)	35000
PFCC Grant (3%)	10000
HR Gr	
HR Grant and Bank Interest (2%)	5474
Other Income / AGM (4%)	13513

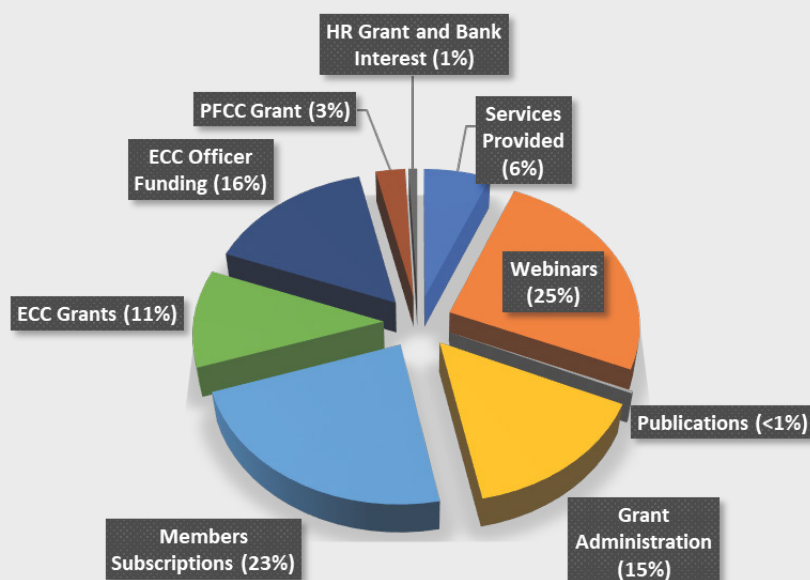
Total Income 325438



EALC Income 2021/2022 before prior year adjustment

Services Provided (6%)	22596
Webinars (25%)	91930
Publications (<1%)	1041
Grant Administration (15%)	55357
Members Subscriptions (23%)	83896
ECC Grants (11%)	40000
ECC Officer Funding (16%)	56911
PFCC Grant (3%)	10000
HR Grant and Bank Interest (1%)	2864

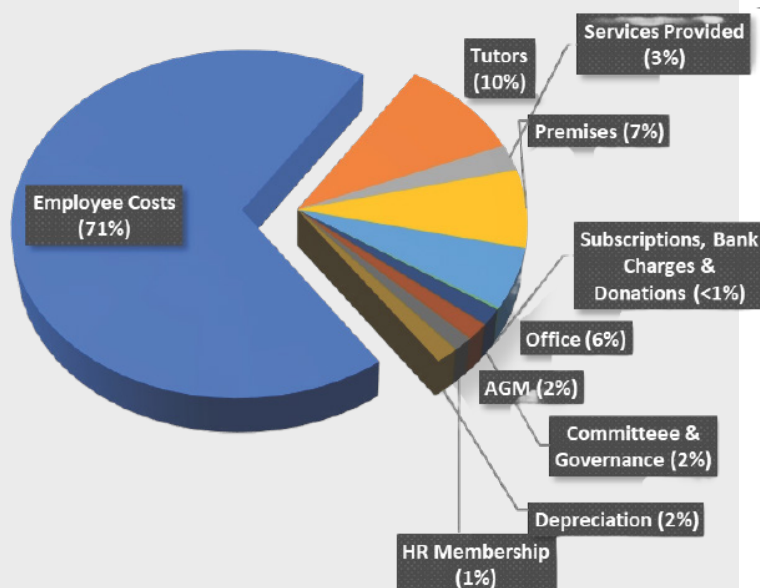
Total Income 364595



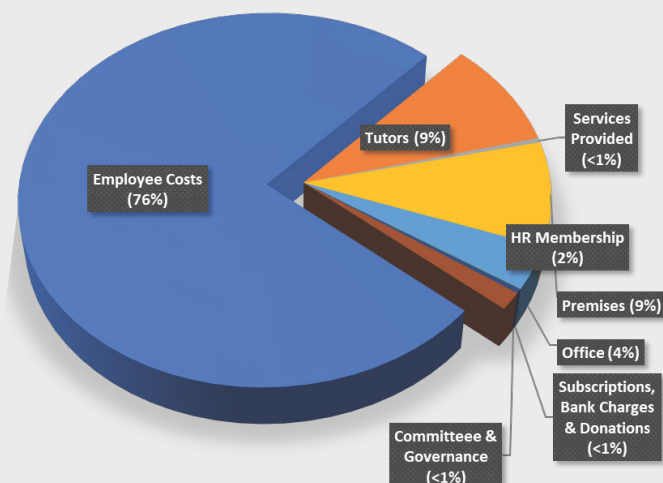
Financial Summary

Expense Figures

EALC Expenditure 2022/2023		£
Employee Costs (71%)		198105
Tutors (10%)		27481
Services Provided (3%)		7180
Premises (7%)		20872
Office (6%)		16210
Subscriptions, Bank Charges & Donations (<1%)		425
Committee & Governance (2%)		4494
AGM (2%)		4494
HR Membership (1%)		3840
Depreciation (2%)		4309
Total Expenditure		283101



EALC Expenditure 2021/2022		£
Employee Costs (76%)		203589
Tutors (9%)		24670
Services Provided (<1%)		1058
Premises (9%)		24205
Office (4%)		10068
Subscriptions, Bank Charges & Donations (<1%)		-76
Committee & Governance (<1%)		995
HR Membership (2%)		4081
Total Expenditure		268590



Training Report



Pearl Willcox CiLCA Executive
County Training Officer

Training Report 2022-23

EALC training still remains the most comprehensive service that the Association runs to support & benefit Member Councils. The core courses are aligned to the Clerks qualification and to support and develop members.

2022/2023 the Association continued to deliver our comprehensive & high standard of courses, briefings & workshops to the Membership. We continued to deliver our courses both in house & virtually.

Throughout 2022/2023 we trained over 800 Clerks, Chairman, Councillors and Parish Council Staff on core, certificated, Clerk, Councillor & Chairman training courses. Without the other areas of training & support we have provided in forums, workshops & webinars for 20's Plenty, Ride London, Climate Crisis, Community Specials & Elections.

I remain extremely proud that the Associations training programme goes from strength to strength every year and we are only able to achieve this level of training that is provided by the 18 tutors & working partners that deliver our courses with passion & knowledge of the area of training they are delivering.

Online Training Programme

Our online training programme with Nimble that was launched back in February 2020 has remained popular throughout 2022 & 2023 as Clerk's, Officers & Councillors were able to continue and access & complete training in their own time. We now have a total of 21 online courses available.

Short Courses

Our bespoke short course programme to Parish & Town Councils proved popular during 2022/2023 with our tutors going out to deliver Planning, Safeguarding, Code of Conduct & Chair training courses. Our Councillor training tutors also went out to certain Districts in the County and delivered bespoke Councillor Training Days 1 & 2 to Councils.

Figures for 2022-23

Councillor Training Days 1 & 2 sets (14 courses in total)	7
New Clerk's Course	3
CiLCA Courses	2
Planning Briefings	4
Core courses	30
Chairman's Training Days 1, 2 & 3 sets (9 courses in total)	3
Certificated courses	7
Bespoke Course	4

Training Report 2022-23

Certificate in Local Council Administration

Our CiLCA courses have continued to run virtually throughout the year. 2022/2023 saw another great year of pass rates for the Association with 10 Clerks & Officers successfully passing their qualification. We are extremely proud at the Association that Essex continues to lead the whole of the Country with the highest CiLCA passes for an Association. The beginning of 2023 also saw the introduction of our evening CiLCA course that is now available to our Membership.



Essex Clerk's Bursary

Our Essex Clerk's Bursary scheme remains eligible to all Clerk's with a Parish Council precept of below £80,000. The bursary scheme enables & supports the smaller Councils Clerks to attend training courses & to also complete their CiLCA qualification. 75% of the training costs is then refunded back to the Council upon completion of courses. During 2022 & 2023 we awarded a total of 45 bursaries. Bursary application forms can be found on the EALC website & for all enquiries please contact Pearl Willcox for more information.

What have we planned for training in 2023/2024

As always our aim will be to provide & make available the most up to date training for our Membership during the week, Saturdays & evenings. This coming year will see the introduction of new courses, Clerk & Councillor Refresher full day courses will be made available as we have identified a need in these particular areas. We are currently in the process of refreshing all of our finance courses. This will enable us to offer more finance courses depending on the size of the Council. Also being introduced this year will be courses on War Memorials and Footpaths & Bridleways.

Congratulations to the following Clerks, Assistant & Deputy Clerks and Officers-

- **Cllr Carlie Mayes**, Maldon Town Council
- **Karen Gaiger**, Asst. Clerk at Rayleigh Town Council
- **Emma Philbrick**, Asst. Clerk at Stansted Mountfitchet Parish Council
- **Jacky Bannerman**, Clerk at Woodham Walter Parish Council
- **Julia Howard**, Clerk at Steeple Bumpstead Parish Council
- **Lorraine Bailey**, Clerk at Wickham Bishops Parish Council
- **Jennifer Woodland**, Town Clerk at Frinton & Walton Town Council
- **Clare Schorah**, Asst. Clerk at Felsted Parish Council
- **Justine Atterbury**, Clerical Officer at Writtle Parish Council
- **Donna Tristram**, Clerk at Stanway Parish Council

The Importance of Training for Chairs, Councillors & Clerks

Clerks

The role of a Clerk is to ensure that the Council, as a whole, conducts its business properly and to provide independent support.

A Clerk is a vital asset to the Council, making a significant contribution to the work of the Council. It is a professional role requiring specialist knowledge and a range of skills. As the proper officer, the Clerk performs all routine administration, Financial management, staff management (if applicable), manages the Councils procedures, raises the profile of the Council in the Local Community and implements Council decisions.

Councillors

Councillors are collectively responsible for making Council policy, for which they are accountable to the electorate. They are recognised nationally as the level of local government closest to people, or the 1st tier.

The Chairman and the Mayor are the figure heads of Councils across Essex. Playing an important role ensuring the Council conducts its business professionally.

Will your Council have a budget for training this year?

The EALC and the SLCC believe that all Councils across Essex should provide training to enable the sector to represent the communities it serves. Clerk training should be paid for by the Council, with time allocated. Every Clerk should be able to take the CiLCA (Certificate in Local Councils Administration). The Clerks body provides training for Clerks, which sits alongside the EALC Courses.

Chairman training at the EALC, along with Councillor training are also available, for Members. The EALC also provides training for Councils in the evening or at the weekend, delivered in your own premises or virtually. For these reasons, any training that the Clerk or Councillor achieves, including the CiLCA, provides them with a broad knowledge of all the aspect of work – Roles & Responsibilities, the Law, Procedures, Finance planning and Community development. A robust training and development program, ensures that the Council has a consistent experience and background knowledge of Local Government.

We believe that training for Clerks & Councillors is imperative to the efficient running of the Council and its growth.

Communications Report



Sophie Wolker BSc Hons Comms
and Office Co-ordinator

Communications Strategy 2022-23

Communication is a very important part of what we do here at the EALC. My role as Communications Co-ordinator is to ensure that our membership are receiving the most up-to-date, relevant and quality information to be able to engage efficiently with their residents. With so many changes happening not only in the sector, but within information sharing as a whole, ongoing reviews have to be put in place to make sure we are kept in line with new technology, software and procedures.

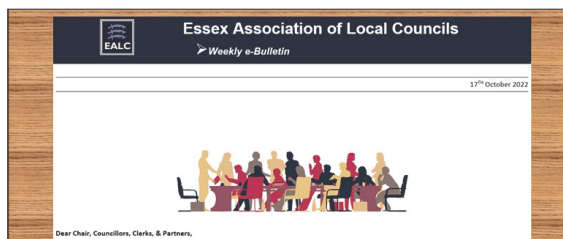
I identified three key areas within communications that needed to be reviewed within the EALC, and these were-

- **How we send out information to our member councils via email streams;**
- **Is the information sent out in our e-bulletins relevant and interesting, meeting all the needs of our readers?**
- **EALC Website navigation- finding information and being able to share it successfully.**

As part of the decision making process, I had taken the time to research what other County Associations across the country provide to their membership. This set a baseline for me to identify what more we could offer to our member councils. From reviewing my findings and comparing it to what we currently have in place, I have created objectives that will be able to move communications in the EALC forward. I have called this the 'Communications Strategy 2023'.

Phase 1- Updating our Mail Subscription Services via MailChimp

The first phase, was to update our mailing subscription services. So far, this has proven to be successful and creates a more modern, fresh look to our emails. Not only does it look better, but is easier for readers to access relevant information without large attachments and long load times. Another benefit includes letting readers change their preferences on what they receive from us- subscribers can choose what emails they would like to receive rather than feeling overwhelmed with information. Through Mailchimp, we are also able to compile statistics- who has opened our emails to understand what type of audience we are most engaging with.



Communications Strategy 2022-23

Phase 2- Communications Survey

I had created a Communications Survey to send out to the membership via Mailchimp which had 81 responses. The aim was to understand are our membership content with what they receive from us, and what could be improved. Out of 10, the average rating for our content of our e-bulletins was 7.6. Comments and suggestions were taken and will be used for the review of the quality of information we send out.

Phase 3, is the re-launch of our new website. Our website is a key hub for information, so it is important that it is kept to date with key information that is easily accessible. Through researching the fundamentals of website development and working with our IT Support partner, I have started to create a brand new website for the EALC. This will enable easier navigation and interactive experiences. I hope to create a unique but simple style including a new colour theme and branding. This is to be used to create consistency and professionalism throughout what we do. I plan to have this completed and live by Winter 2023, so watch this space.

Alongside my role as Communications Co-ordinator, I have taken on the role of Office Co-ordinator, supporting the other areas of the EALC. I have been spending a lot of time with our Executive County Training Officer, Pearl who has been advising on the Training Program set-up and bookings. I have also been attending the core courses as part of my career journey into Local Government, planning to undertake the CiLCA (Certificate in Local Council Administration) in 2024.

Supporting the other areas of the EALC has given me a greater understanding of what the EALC does for its members, and how in my role I can help with the development of future strategies with my transferrable skills in IT and hospitality.



Funding Report

Michelle Storey
Funding Administrator
Funding Report 2022-23

Throughout 2022/23 the EALC have continued to administrate various funding on behalf of Essex County Council.

In 2022/23 459 successful applicants were awarded a total of £797,703.50. The funding continued to support Community Groups, Charities, Organisations, Parish and Town Councils to continue to deliver new services into the area in which they operate across Essex.

128 Micro-Grants applications were awarded in 2022/23 to the value of £59,705.00. Following on from 2021/22 the Micro Grants continued to run as two funding streams, Community Chest or Communication and Technology. Successful projects included IT upgrade, Promotional Banners & Printing, Memory Café, Speaking club, community garden, communications improvements, Fun day, Lunch club.

There were 27 successful applicants to the Community Initiative Fund (CIF) awarded in 2021/22 to the value of £170,908. The successful projects included refurbishments & renovations to a Village Hall, installation of a disabled access Eco Toilet, Drama and theatre projects, Establishing a new day Centre for adults with acquired brain injury, improving security of a Village Hall, Free Music sessions for young people, Micro Marker Space sessions for hands on learning.

3 CIF Emergency grants awarded to the value of £19,690. Grants are awarded on an exceptional basis on the grounds of extreme urgency. These grants have helped organisations with various urgent costs. Successful applications include funding towards providing a replacement van for a community Food Bank, A replacement outside shelter at a therapy centre, Emergency structural repairs to a village hall.

After the success of the Foodbank funding in 2021/22, the EALC administrated three new funding streams on behalf of Essex County Council. Food Support May 2022, Food Support and Winter Warmth Essentials Fund and The Winter Warmth and Welcome spaces Fund. A total of 269 applicants were awarded £532,403.50. The funding went towards projects aimed at supporting those who have been adversely impacted by cost of living rises. Providing Free access to all, warm, safe and supportive spaces and assisting food banks, food pantries, community organisations and voluntary groups in providing vital food support and winter warmth essentials packages to those most in need.

The EALC administrated the funding for Ride London-Essex. £14,997.00 was awarded to 32 applicants to assist in supporting the event and riders.

Ann C Wood LLB CertHE DMS
Head of Member Enquiries

Doing our very best to support our members' development

I joined the EALC team in November 2022 as the Head of Member Enquiries, having been a clerk for over 25 years and also serving as an elected member on the parish council in my home village for 10 years. I deal with enquiries from the members, which cover many subjects and issues and since starting in the office, there has been a steady flow of enquiries from member Councils and their Clerks. We have also re-started the Legal Bulletin, which has been very well received.

Legal Summary

EALC is very proud to continue to provide member council support to Clerks and councillors on various subjects across the sector, on a daily basis. Mapping the data has enabled us to understand where member councils need the support most. This means that EALC can work closely with our new partners Worknest and the Steve Parkinson Partnership and our tutors, to ensure advice is available on specialist subjects, such as HR and VAT and that new courses are introduced into the training programme. New courses have been created this year as a direct outcome of capturing data delivering specific training on HR, elections and Clerk drop in sessions.

Legal Statistics

Between the 1st of April 2022 and 31st of March 2023, we responded to our members giving support and guidance over the telephone and e-mail supporting enquiries with Legal Topic Notes and other documentation.

Total amount of legal inquiries: 426. Of these-

380 were resolved by the EALC (89%)
31 were referred to NALC Legal team (7%)
8 were referred to VineHR/Worknest (2%)
7 were referred to Essex Legal Services (2%)

Basildon	6	Epping	52
Braintree	59	Maldon	44
Brentwood	16	Rochford	17
Castlepoint	0	Tendring	28
Chelmsford	39	Uttlesford	107
Colchester	58		

Local Council Awards Scheme Setting the standard for the Sector



The Local Council Award Scheme (LCAS) has been designed to celebrate the successes of the very best local councils and to provide a framework to support all local councils to improve and develop to meet their full potential. The scheme offers councils the opportunity to show that they meet the standards set by the sector, assessed them by their peers, and put in place the conditions for continued improvement.

The scheme has been designed to provide the tools and encouragement to those councils at the beginning of their improvement journeys, as well as promote and recognise councils that are at the cutting edge of the sector. It is only through the sector working together, to share best practices, drive up standards and support those who are committed to improving their offer to their communities that individual councils and the sector as a whole will reach their full potential.

Local councils must meet the criteria of the guidance that is in place on the date they submit their completed application form to their local accreditation panel.



Members accredited to 'Foundation'

- Bures Hamlet Parish Council
- Little Baddow Parish Council
- Little Waltham Parish Council
- Great Waltham Parish Council
- Hullbridge Parish Council
- Saffron Walden Town Council
- Sandon Parish Council
- Tolleshunt D'Arcy Parish Council
- West Hanningfield Parish Council
- Wickam St Paul Parish Council
- Woodham Ferrers & Bickanacre Parish Council
- Woodham Walter Parish Council



Members accredited to 'Quality'

- Great Notley Parish Council

Members who have registered for a renewal of a Local Council Award Scheme application – April 2023-2024 registrations

- Abberton & Langenhoe Parish Council – *Foundation*
- Alresford Parish Council - *Foundation*
- Buckhurst Hill Parish Council - *Foundation*
- Epping Town Council – *Quality Gold*
- Hatfield Peverel Parish Council -*Foundation*
- Highwood Parish Council - *Foundation*
- Ingatestone & Fryerning Parish Council - *Quality*
- Marks Tey Parish Council - *Foundation*
- Mistley Parish Council – *Quality Gold*
- Saffron Walden Town Council - *Quality*
- Sandon Parish Council - *Foundation*
- Thaxted Parish Council - *Quality*
- The Salings Parish Council - *Foundation*
- Tolleshunt D'Arcy Parish Council - *Quality*
- West Hanningfield Parish Council - *Foundation*
- Wickham St Paul Parish Council - *Foundation*
- Witham Town Council - *Quality*
- Woodham Ferrers & Bicknacre Town Council - *Foundation*

Figures for 2022-23

This means that 12 councils were awarded the Foundation accreditation, 1 council awarded Quality with a total of 13 awards being bestowed. 18 member councils have submitted an application.

	Foundation	Quality	Quality Gold
National figures (April 2023)	118	49	53
Essex figure	12	1	0



Creating a healthy culture of residential welfare

Health and Wellbeing is an important topic and Local Councils across the Country have a role to play. The Chair of EALC represents it's members on the Essex Health and Wellbeing Board to encourage and support the local councils across Essex to understand and engage with Health and Wellbeing initiatives in our communities. EALC have championed and supported the great work being done by our Parish and Town Councils who are engaging with Health and Wellbeing, especially as part of budgeting for their provision and precept. It is important to consider each proposal you put forward not only in terms of climate efficiency but also in health, as in reality they are intrinsically linked.

The EALC have linked with key partners including Mid and South Essex NHS Community Assembly Co-Production Steering Group created a Health and Wellbeing Board with representation from the local council sector, Councillors, Clerks and the voluntary sector, opening up a dialogue with the Alliances and other Health and Wellbeing Boards across the county, to push to have a Local Council representative member.

Forums were delivered to local councils by District and conferences created with key speakers on varying subjects to support and encourage local councils to at a minimum, signpost but also to create initiatives to support residents.

The EALC's main achievements-

- Delivered sessions on how to become Dementia Friends or dementia-friendly communities.
- Created a resource booklet to promote and support groups across the County.
- Created a Climate Crisis course with ECC with health attributes.
- Supported individual local councils with forums to create a health and wellbeing plan.
- Working with all the Alliances and Integrated Care Services to ensure Local Council representation influencing from the ground up.
- Promoting best practice for Local Councils to use as examples.
- Promoting free partner training.
- Creating conferences on Health Wellbeing, Climate and Youth Engagement.

Climate Action



in partnership with Essex Climate Action Commission

The Essex Association of Local Councils is committed to supporting Climate Change in Essex. We are proud to support the Essex Climate Action Commission, including Cllr Peter Schwier, Climate Czar of Essex County Council to engage with our members, promoting the topic of Climate Action.

In May 2021, Essex County Council developed three Climate Action Advice Packs (for Residents, Businesses and Schools) offering a variety of cost-effective, achievable and advantageous solutions and ideas, relevant to different audiences. These are available on the EALC and ECAC websites.

In November 2022, the first Essex Climate Action Annual Report was launched by Essex County Council. This gave updates on actions across Essex to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase climate resilience. The report comes a year after the Council announced its Climate Action Plan. The £200 million Essex Climate Action plan reflected the priorities set out by the Essex Climate Action Commission's 2021 report, 'Net Zero: Making Essex Carbon Neutral'. The annual report focuses on how Essex County Council has actively worked to reduce carbon emissions in the county. It is broken down into the six themes from the Commission's report, Land Use & Green Infrastructure, Energy, Built Environment, Transport, Waste and Community Engagement.

The global organisation, CDP, formerly known as the Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP) awarded Essex an A-rating for its climate action work. Essex County Council were the only county council in the UK to be awarded an A rating this year- along with the other 121 local authorities on this year's A List, and are being celebrated for showing that urgent and impactful climate action is achievable at a global level.

Included in the Climate Action Annual Report are details and projects Essex County Council have undertaken to help fight climate change in the county. There are also case studies providing specific examples of how ECC has helped individuals and/or organisations reduce their carbon footprint.

Some of Essex County Council's key achievements include:

- Essex Forest Initiative planting over 140,000 trees in just two years
- 62,500 new properties have received flood reduction expertise (since 2011)
- 36,681 LED streetlamps now installed across the county
- 2,516 fuel poor households engaged

Being recognised globally for the climate action work in Essex is a huge accomplishment. Since it was unveiled in November 2021, our ambitious £200 million Climate Action Plan continues to be successfully executed as we continue our mission to become a net zero county by 2050.

Cllr Peter Schwier, ECC Climate Czar

It fills me with great joy to see Essex receive global recognition for its fight against climate change. We are fully committed to tackling climate change and we have shown that by making environment one of four key focus areas in our Everyone's Essex strategy to level up the county between 2021 and 2025.

Cllr Kevin Bentley, Leader of ECC

Other Partner Organisations



National Association of Local Councils

The EALC are affiliated to the NALC, who work on behalf of the councils in Essex to provide services and support, including legal advice and training. The legal services, referrals for desktop advice and the provision of legal topic notes and briefings are available through the website, and are professionally provided by NALC solicitors.

The development team work hard on lobbying government over policy and influencing ministers to achieve the very best for the sector. The strong leadership of the NALC Council and the Chief Executive Officer ensure that the needs, wants and aspirations of our local communities can be achieved.



Essex County Council

Essex County Council

For many years, Essex County Council have developed a good working relationship with the EALC and the Town, Parish, Village, and Community Councils of Essex. The partnership continues to grow with new initiatives and the EALC playing a larger role in developing new schemes and ideas. The EALC has developed due to the continued support of ECC leaders Cllr Kevin Bentley, the newly appointed leader, deputy leader Cllr Louise McKinlay and other County Cllrs who have provided the sector with a range of financial sponsorship and other support. The EALC wish to record the membership's thanks for this continued partnership. Together we can make a real difference to our local communities.



Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner

When the Commissioner was first introduced into the County's policing family, a strong and supportive partnership has existed between the EALC and the PFCC. Policing and Fire and Rescue are two vital services that support Essex residents to help keep them safe, whilst having a significant impact on community and individual well-being. The EALC are proud to provide the PFCC with links to Essex communities through the EALC's communications infrastructure and fully support the work of the PFCC, the Chief Constable and Chief Fire Officer.

Other Partner Organisations



Essex Legal Services

The EALC has negotiated good rates from Essex Legal Services, enabling the councils in Essex to use commission work that requires a solicitor to act for the council. These services have been used during the last year and councils are encouraged to ask for a quote.



Essex Rural Partnership & Rural Community Council of Essex

The RCCE is an independent charity helping people and communities throughout rural Essex build a sustainable future. They manage the ERP which brings together strategic partnerships in the public, private and voluntary sectors to co-ordinate action on the major economic, social and environmental issues facing rural Essex. Established in 2002 in the wake of the Foot & Mouth crisis, the ERP provides a forum to exchange information to encourage a collaborative responses to important policy issues. It is one of 17 member's of DEFRA's National, Rural & Farming Network, which it has used to engage directly with Government.

The Essex Association of Local Councils 42B
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