

Digital Strategy for Essex



Essex County Council recognises the benefits digital can bring – from enabling economic growth and supporting people in getting the best start in life, to helping to create a great place to live and work, and transforming our public services to achieve more with less. In support of the Everyone's Essex agenda, we're driving forward plans for Essex to become a digital-first county and have launched a strategy which aims to boost digital connectivity and tackle digital exclusion.

Councillor Lesley Wagland OBE

Cabinet Member for Economic Renewal, Infrastructure and Planning

Strategy overview

Benefits of digital connectivity

- Excellent mobile and fixed connectivity is one of the foundations for a successful and futureproof economy and will provide Essex residents with access to a growing global market for fully remote workers.
- Digital inclusion initiatives will ensure that residents have access to affordable equipment, good connectivity and skills, which will allow them to take advantage of digital services and employment opportunities.
- Near-ubiquitous digital connectivity will be a gamechanger for many other sectors, from sustainability and the green economy to health and social care – new technologies such as 5G and the Internet of Things (IoT) will revolutionise the way we do things.

Strategy goals

We want to see:



Superfast speeds available at all premises in Essex



Gigabit-capable services available at more than 85% of premises in Essex



4G available across 99% of Essex and 5G available at all key employment locations and priority areas



That no one is excluded from digital opportunities



That residents have access to affordable equipment and connectivity



That residents and businesses have access to the digital skills needed to manage everyday tasks

1%

of hard-to-reach Essex addresses cannot access basic superfast broadband



1 in 5 Essex households is offline



With over half using the internet for limited purposes



How will we deliver the strategy?



Working with BDUK to deliver a local voucher scheme using gainshare funds, to help reach some of the final 1% of rural addresses that still can't access decent broadband.



Actively engaging with the mobile network operators to support their local rollout plans and working with Essex Highways to enable the use of the street furniture for mobile infrastructure deployment.



Supporting and engaging with BDUK on Project Gigabit – the plan to upgrade 85% of UK addresses to gigabit-capable broadband by 2025.



Delivering marketing campaigns to raise awareness of broadband social tariffs, which could save eligible residents £144 per year, and the National Databank, which provides free SIM cards and mobile data to people in need.



Collaborating with Essex Libraries on a volunteering service to help people gain confidence with technology.

Championing digital inclusion
Boosting digital connectivity
Driving the digital economy