



# Digital Essex & Superfast Essex update

# Digital Essex programme launch

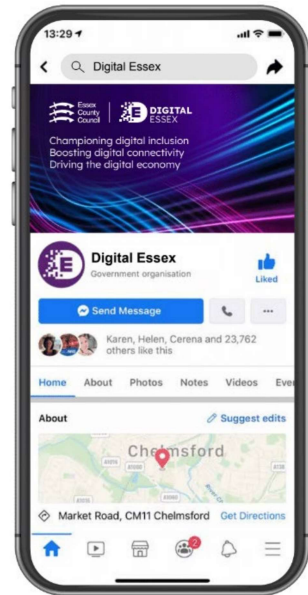
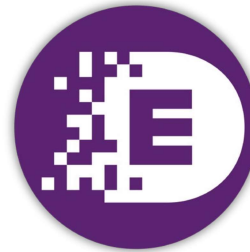


Essex County Council has committed **£1.88m** to fund the Digital Essex team for the **next three years**.

Digital Essex has been set up by Essex County Council as the central body for countywide digital initiatives.

We aim to ensure that **no individual or business is excluded from digital opportunities** due to lack of high speed and affordable broadband connections, equipment, or skills.

With a programme of work that covers **digital connectivity and inclusion**, the County Council and Essex partners will work to deliver and support projects in alignment with the Digital Strategy for Essex and [Everyone's Essex: ECC's plan for Levelling Up the county](#).



# Digital Essex programme launch

ESSEX.GOV.UK Search es

[Home](#) > [News](#) > New digital programme set to boost connectivity and inclusion in Essex

## New digital programme set to boost connectivity and inclusion in Essex



Essex County Council has launched a new £1.88 million programme to support digital connectivity and tackle digital exclusion.

**Digital Essex** @Digital\_Essex · Oct 3

Meet Digital Essex, our new central body for digital initiatives!

We plan to boost digital connection & tackle digital exclusion in line with our Digital Strategy for Essex and @Essex\_CC's plan for Levelling Up the county.

Head of Digital Connectivity, Doug Parrant, explains 🗨️



Doug Parrant  
Head of Digital Connectivity, Essex County Council

on digital initiatives happening across the county.

Follow us on social!



[Read the media release here!](#)

[Watch Cllr Wagland's video](#)



# The Digital Essex team



- All Digital Essex projects and initiatives are designed to align with:
  - **Digital Strategy for Essex**
  - **Levelling Up**
  - **Everyone's Essex**



From left to right:

**Vicky Leech** - Data Analyst

**Doug Parrant** - Head of Digital Connectivity (interim)

**Jess Flack** - Digital Inclusion Lead Officer

**Amy Townsend** - Communications Officer

**Lois Harris** - Communications Manager

**Shivani Patel** - Data Analyst

**Claire Walkinshaw** - Programme Management Officer

**Laura Walkinshaw** - Communications & Engagement Lead

**Josh Mews** - Communications Officer

**Paul Wehren** - Market Engagement Lead



# Digital Strategy for Essex - Overview

# 1%

of Essex addresses cannot access basic superfast broadband



1 in 5 Essex households is offline



...with over half using the internet with limited skills or for limited purposes

## Strategy goals

We want to see:



Basic superfast speeds available at all addresses in Essex



That residents have access to affordable equipment and connectivity



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



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



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



That no individual or business is excluded from digital opportunities

# Digital Strategy for Essex - Projects in Development

## Project Gigabit



Building Digital UK (BDUK) is responsible for digital infrastructure programmes for the government.

- Project Gigabit is a **£5 billion government infrastructure project** that will upgrade **85% of UK addresses** to gigabit-capable broadband by 2025.
- Essex is predominantly covered by Lot 21. Areas of north-west Uttlesford are covered by Lot 5, which is managed by Cambridgeshire County Council.
- Initial investment plans for the Essex Lot (21) will be announced by BDUK between **March and June 2023**. **Delivery** is likely to commence in **April 2024**.



- The first phase of Project Gigabit is not targeting very hard-to-reach premises.
- It is **expected that future phases of work will follow** this initial phase, though likely after 2025.



## Essex Lot (21) – Public Review

Essex Lot (21) is currently undergoing a “[Public Review](#)” which will **determine which Essex residences and businesses will qualify for future BDUK investment**.

- If Essex residents or businesses cannot currently access a gigabit broadband connection, they should contact BDUK via email by **3rd November 2022 at 5pm**.
- BDUK has used data provided by broadband providers on their current and planned gigabit capability to produce the public review. It is important this data is checked, to ensure that nobody is excluded from BDUK investment due to inaccuracies.
- ECC is running a campaign to inform Essex residents and businesses of the public review and encourage them to respond. BDUK has already received more responses to the Essex public review than any other lot.
- Respond to BDUK by **3rd November 2022 at 5pm**: [ukgigabit@bduk.zendesk.com](mailto:ukgigabit@bduk.zendesk.com)

# Digital Strategy for Essex - Projects in Development



## Local Voucher Scheme

ECC has worked with BDUK to design a scheme to reach the final 1% of rural addresses that still can't access decent broadband.

- BDUK already operates the [gigabit voucher scheme](#) but the scheme is not adequately connecting rural addresses in Essex due to insufficient funding per premises.
- ECC has “topped up” the existing scheme, which will provide specific areas with up to **£15k for businesses** and **£8.5k for residents**.
- The scheme will focus on premises that can't access superfast broadband (30Mbps) that are also either rural or Levelling Up areas.
- Communications and engagement will start in November 2022.



## Mobile infrastructure on ECC assets



Working with Essex Highways to assess the viability of the use of the street furniture for mobile infrastructure deployment.

- Ongoing engagement with mobile network operators has shown an active interest in using ECC assets, principally lampposts, to deploy 4G/5G.
- Lamppost deployment would help strengthen existing network coverage.
- This work would be in addition/extension to mobile masts.



# Digital Strategy for Essex – Projects in Development

## Social broadband tariff campaign

- Broadband social tariffs are available for people who receive Universal Credit and other benefits.
- Eligible households could save up to £144 a year if they switched to a discounted deal.
- Currently only 3% of eligible UK homes are taking advantage of these discounted rates.
- ECC has developed and will start delivering a hyperlocal on-the-ground campaign that reaches residents in Tendring via postcards and direct engagement with community centres, libraries and foodbanks.
- **Residents simply need to call and ask their provider if they can receive the discount.**
- Further information is [available on this webpage](#).
- This hyperlocal approach is something new – we'll be using a test and learn approach before we look at engaging with other Districts.



# Digital Strategy for Essex – Future Projects



Working with Districts and Public Sector bodies to **collaborate, share knowledge and maximise the benefits** of projects and initiatives.



Actively engaging with the **mobile and broadband network operators** to support and understand their local rollout plans.



Acting as a **digital champion** to help coordinate local authorities' digital strategies and relationships with the mobile and broadband industry



Working with the **National Databank** to provide free SIM cards and mobile data to people in need



**Promoting digital skills** to allow businesses and residents to take advantage of digital services and employment opportunities



Working with ACL to collaborate and support **digital apprenticeships** to help Essex SMEs



Collaborating with Essex Libraries to support a **volunteering service** to help people gain confidence with technology. We are looking at whether ECC volunteering days can be used to support this.

# The Superfast Essex programme

## What about SUPERFASTESSEX?



Since 2012, Superfast Essex has used funding (government, ECC, districts and the network operators) to **accelerate broadband deployment in Essex.**



Superfast Essex has been recognised as an exemplar among the 44 projects under the national superfast programme. This includes **winning an award** for our work.



Superfast Essex is delivering four contracts:

- 3 with **Gigaclear**
- 1 with **Openreach** (fully funded by **DEFRA** and the **Getting Building Fund**)



**20% of Essex premises** have been upgraded as part of the programme, rollout continues until next year (March 2023)



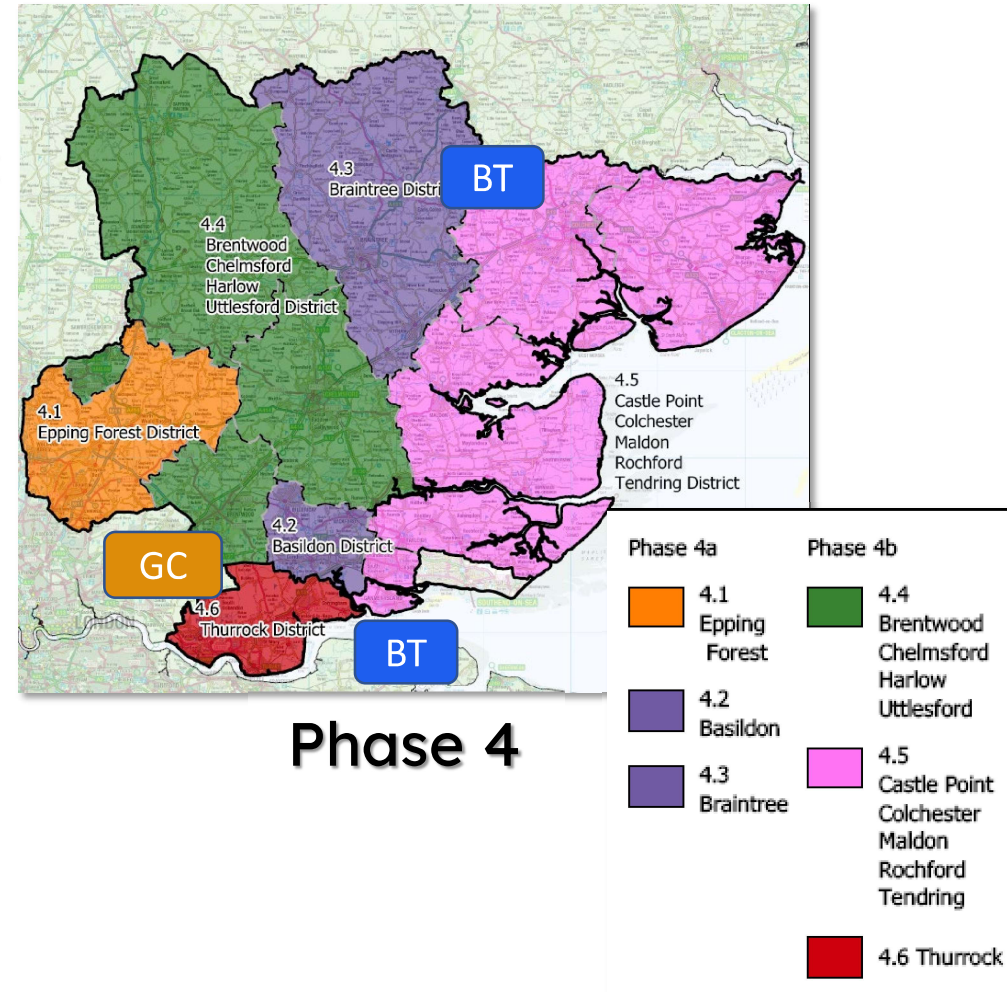
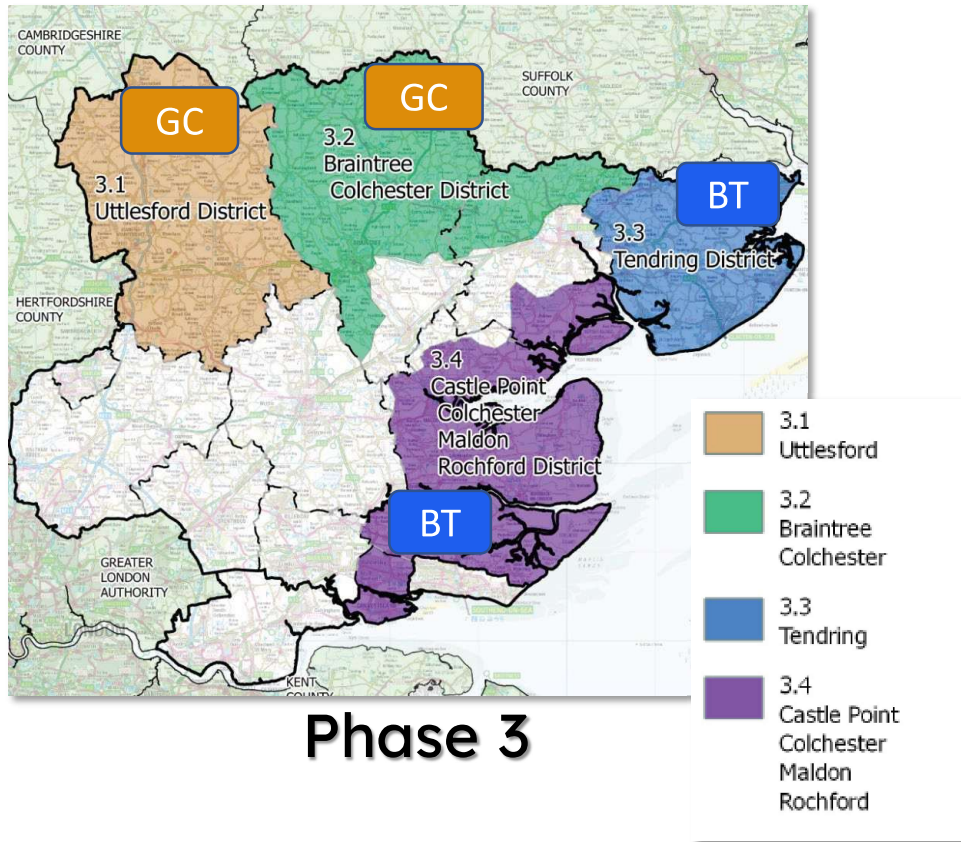
The Superfast Essex programme will **continue to run until all the contracts are completed and closed.**



# Superfast Essex contracts on a map



- BT** Phase 1 completed across Essex
- BT** Phase 2a completed across Essex
- GC** Phase 2b completed in Epping Forest District



# Superfast Essex Broadband Delivery



## Completed contracts

Phase	Area	Supplier	Delivered Premises	Takeup
1	Essex + Southend Thurrock	Openreach	66,894	Superfast 76%
2a	Essex (excl. Epping Forest)	Openreach	66,841	Superfast 77.26% Gigabit 66.08%
2b	Epping Forest	Gigaclear	3,351	Gigabit 47%
3.3	Tendring	Openreach	4,475	Superfast 66.86% Gigabit 53.17%
3.4	Castle Point, Colchester, Maldon, Rochford	Openreach	5,473	
4.2	Basildon	Openreach	1,058	Gigabit 32.73%
4.3	Braintree	Openreach	1,318	

Contract closure underway/planned on 6 contracts

## Open contracts (Statistics correct as of September 2022)

Phase	Area	Supplier	Contracted Premises	Delivered Premises	Remaining Build	Takeup	Completion date
3.1	Uttlesford	Gigaclear	4,627	4,052	324	37%	Jan-23
3.2	Braintree, Colchester	Gigaclear	3,735	3,502	84	27%	Jan-23
4.1	Epping Forest	Gigaclear	1,598	1,085	139	17%	Jan-23
4b	Essex	Openreach	3,668	1,468	1,322	33%	Mar-23

\*We are working with Gigaclear via our contractual mechanisms to push forward delayed delivery to some of the addresses under the contract (409)



# Communications & engagement

## Our day-to-day comms activities include...



**Responding to enquiries** from residents, businesses, ECC Members, District and Parish Councillors, and MPs. In 2021, we **answered nearly 1,000 enquiries!**



Our **Digital Essex newsletter** gets sent out to **24,000 people** every other month! We also have a **dedicated newsletter for our 300 Broadband Champions**, which we send out quarterly.



We're active on social media across **Facebook**, **LinkedIn** and **Twitter**. We have more than 3,200 followers across these three platforms.



We plan and deliver campaigns – for example, our [#Be5GSmart](#) campaign and our most recent [social broadband tariff](#) campaign.



We attend business-facing events, in addition to our Digital Essex Steering Board, where we engage with Cllrs, district officers & public sector representatives.

## Our offer to you...



Send your enquiries to us at [make.theconnection@essex.gov.uk](mailto:make.theconnection@essex.gov.uk) – we can provide statistics for your district or answer other questions you may have!

# Broadband case studies & blogs

Do you know of a local business that's been transformed by full-fibre broadband delivered by the Superfast Essex programme?

We'd love to hear from them!



## Excel Helicopters

Gaining access to full fibre broadband has enabled Excel Helicopters to future-proof their business operations.



## Boosting energy efficiency with smart tech

For Energy Efficiency Day in October, we highlighted ways that connectivity and digital technology can be used to reduce our energy expenditure and increase energy efficiency – and, at the same time, help us to create a healthier and happier planet!



## Martin Bristow from Roding Tech

After moving his IT support company, Roding Tech, to a new business park in Harlow, Martin Bristow knew he was going to need a better broadband connection. In this case study, we share how a broadband funding scheme helped.



## How smart tech is empowering people at home

In May, the West Essex Community Action Network (WECAN) launched its Living Smart Home demonstration shop at the Harvey Centre, Harlow. The Superfast Essex team went along to see how smart technology can help people to live life more independently in their own homes...



**Any questions?**