



# Observatory PASCAL

*Place Management, Social Capital and Learning Regions*

---

*PURE Regional Profile*

*ESSEX, UNITED KINGDOM*

*Appendix 1*

*Region:*

**Essex, United Kingdom**

*Principal PURE contact:*

*Title:*

*Institutional base with full postal mailing address:*

**Essex County Council  
Policy, Community Planning & Regeneration  
PO Box 11  
County Hall  
Chelmsford  
CM1 1LX**

*Contact Details:*

**Email:** [Fiona.bodle@essex.gov.uk](mailto:Fiona.bodle@essex.gov.uk)  
**Tel:** +44 (0) 7811 178372  
**Mob:**

*Name of main collaborating region:*

**Greater Essex**

*Suggested members of your Regional Co-ordinating Group (RCG) (between 3 and 5 Persons):  
Name, organisation and email:*

**Greater Essex (administrative areas of Essex, Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock as defined by the Greater Essex Economic Framework)**

1. **Nigel South, Pro Vice Chancellor, University of Essex**  
[Soutn@essex.ac.uk](mailto:Soutn@essex.ac.uk)
2. **Jeremy Strong, Head of Higher Education, Writtle College**  
[jeremy.strong@writtle.ac.uk](mailto:jeremy.strong@writtle.ac.uk)
3. **Chris Davies, Assistant Director Business Development, Anglia Ruskin University**  
[Chris.Davies@anglia.ac.uk](mailto:Chris.Davies@anglia.ac.uk)
4. **Glenn Athey, Director, Insight East**  
[glennathey@eeda.org.uk](mailto:glennathey@eeda.org.uk)
5. **Peter Welsh, Kent County Council**  
[peter.welsh@kent.gov.uk](mailto:peter.welsh@kent.gov.uk)



# Observatory PASCAL

Place Management, Social Capital and Learning Regions

---

*Suggested Peer Reviewer from region:*

*'Identity' of Region (eg. governmental admin. region; special development zone; informal 'working reality' region, etc)*

The ceremonial county of Essex, or Greater Essex (Essex with Southend and Thurrock) for our purposes, is a county of nearly 1.7m people and is located to the immediate north east of London. Essex is bordered by the River Thames to the south, Hertfordshire to the west, and Cambridgeshire and Suffolk to the northwest and north respectively. The administrative county comprises twelve districts and boroughs, the county town of Chelmsford being part of Chelmsford Borough. Greater Essex also included the unitary areas of Southend and Thurrock, situated in the urban south of the county, anchor tenants of Thames Gateway South Essex (TGSE).

Despite being more closely aligned to the south-east, for regional government purposes, Essex is part of the East of England region. Regions are not coherent economic geographies – ECC argue that Greater Essex is the most appropriate level for 'regional' policy making as our commuting flows, migration patterns, and retail footprint are all sufficiently coherent for the county to be validly classified a functional economic area.

Within Essex we have 'policy areas' of growth which span the county coherently. These are Haven Gateway, TGSE, the Heart of Essex and the M11 corridor. All have consolidated development aspirations based on the specific needs of their major settlements.

The economy is mixed between light industry in the south and agriculture in the rural north, which represents the majority of the county in terms of land mass. Traditionally Essex's economy focused on supporting London with manufacturing and service provision paramount. We are now developing a greater internal economy but businesses must recognise how vital the London and international markets are to success.

Central to Essex's economy is the success of our ports infrastructure, at Tilbury and Harwich, and our international airport, Stansted. Our geography – particularly the full utilisation of our meandering coastline, is critical to the success of our economy.

Hadleigh Country Park in Essex will play host to the Mountain Biking Event of the 2012 Olympic Games. The county has a specialist Olympic legacy function with the aim of ensuring that Essex people and Essex's economy can take maximum benefit from having the Games in the county.

Many of our key documents are linked in the associated profile document. Links to key documents are as follows:

- [East of England Regional Economic Strategy](#)
- [The Essex Strategy and Essex Local Area Agreement](#)
- [Thurrock Local Area Agreement](#)
- [Southend Local Area Agreement](#)

# Observatory PASCAL

Place Management, Social Capital and Learning Regions

---

## REGIONAL PORTRAIT

(Please list key issues of interest and relevance to PURE)

(i) *Approx. population and any key features: (e.g. new migrant numbers)*

Essex is an area of some contrast. On the one hand, the county is largely deemed to be affluent – with 20% of our working age population bringing home London salaries. Quality of life in the north of the county is also good. However, there are also areas of deprivation such as Tilbury and Jaywick – the latter being the third most deprived area of the whole country.

Access to services, transport and employment is an increasing issue in rural Essex, as is housing affordability; this issue pervades the whole of Greater Essex and typifies the south east of England. Some locations have recently seen migration from London to Essex – mainly service sector workers. This has had the effect of either nullifying or reversing the impact of the recent house price slump.

More statistical detail is available in the associated regional profile document, highlights are as follows:

- There are 45,500 VAT registered businesses in Essex, around 3,600 in Thurrock and around 5,000 in Southend;
- 77% of Greater Essex's working age population is in employment;
- 35,563 people are currently claiming job seekers allowance in Greater Essex;
- 14.4% of Essex adults have no formal qualifications – 11.7% in Southend and 18.2% in Thurrock.

According to central Government plans, Essex (together with the neighboring unitary authorities of Southend and Thurrock) may have to absorb 127,000 new homes by 2021, increasing the number of homes in the county by almost a fifth. This will of course have significant implications for the economy, with an estimated 131,000 new jobs in Essex, Southend and Thurrock required to support this development. We are committed to ensuring adequate infrastructure is in place, thereby ensuring any growth in housing numbers is both viable and sustainable.

(ii) *Other essential geographical features:*

Despite being in one of the most densely populated areas in Europe, Essex boasts a rich and varied environment. It has one of the longest coastlines of any county (over 350 miles), conservation areas of international importance, some of the highest densities of ancient trees in Europe and hundreds of miles of ancient hedgerows. Essex is more than 70% rural, with 28% of our population living in rural areas, well above the national average. The administrative county contains 75 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), which have statutory protection, and which cover almost 35,000 hectares. Inland the network of over 1500 Local Wildlife Sites covering 13,900 hectares constitutes an important asset for both wildlife and people. Essex is also home to 234 Conservation Areas, more than 14,000 Listed Buildings and over 300 Scheduled Monuments. Looking after these environmental assets will boost Essex's image locally, nationally and internationally and increase tourism and investment in the county.

The health benefits for local people (both physical and mental) are also well documented: attractive, diverse and well-maintained public open space is a valuable community resource that brings improvements to quality of life and civic pride.

(iii) *Economy, industries and employment features:*

The draft Regional Economic Strategy identifies significant economic drivers in Essex related to the developing international gateways such as Bathside Bay and Shellhaven.

Essex is performing below the national and regional average in skills levels 2-4. Across the county there are great disparities in skills. This clearly impacts on a variety of areas, including inward investment and innovation.

There has been a decrease in VAT registrations in Essex in recent years and these and de-registrations have seen significant fluctuation. New business startups and survival are vital for a healthy and buoyant economy.

Essex has traditionally seen an above average proportion of entrepreneurs, sole traders and micro-businesses than other parts of the country. This has an impact on skills as people start a business without formal qualifications and then do not grow to the size where the training of employees makes financial sense. This under-reliance on large company employment is still prevalent in the county.

Data from the Annual Business Inquiry, based on the standard industrial classification, suggests that 'distribution, hotels and restaurants' and 'public administration and education' followed by 'banking, finance and insurance' are the chief employers in Essex. Southend-on-Sea follows a similar pattern, although the manufacturing sector (particularly advanced manufacturing) is more significant than in the Essex CC area. Thurrock's economy has a similar reliance upon employment in distribution and in public services, but there is also significant employment in 'transport and communications', underlining the importance of the logistics industry to the area.

In previous years, despite its size, range of offer and location, Essex has not attracted as much inward investment or seen as much innovative business activity as regional counterparts. The situation is starting to improve but a continued effort by public sector stakeholders will be necessary to maintain and improve this. Both are important in developing a sustainable economy and one which offers high value jobs. (Essex has been set a provisional new jobs target of 92,000 by 2021). Existing companies are a key asset to the economy, particularly where they employ large numbers of people. The public and private sectors need to work collaboratively to ensure existing companies continue to be based in Essex and are supported to expand their operations here.

## KEY ISSUES AND CHALLENGES CONFRONTING THE REGION

(i) *Economic issues:*

1. Impact of the recession.
2. Plugging the economic productivity gap.
3. Level of investment in R&D.
4. Growth in the real value of the economy.
5. Number of Knowledge Transfer Partnerships and other HEI collaborations.

*Key websites for more information:*

- ExDRA (who are to be subsumed within the county council from April 2009) run a number of innovation programmes which would impact upon 3, 4 and 5. [Follow this link for more information.](#)
- EEDA set the East of England context for innovation and high-level skills and run a well established series of innovation related activities. [Follow this link.](#)

- In relation to the issues in TGSE, the *Thames Gateway Skills Framework* (November 2008) – <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/thamesgateway/pdf/1074219.pdf> - sets out a set of agreed principles to tackle skills gaps – however it must be noted that only part of this is directly relevant to Essex.
- The priorities of the Technology Strategy Board provide a useful national context to this agenda. [See link.](#)
- DIUS is committed to the innovation agenda and uses its website to demonstrate the policy context. The most recent [Annual Innovation Report](#) is useful background here.

(ii) *Social issues including health:*

1. Skills gap in health sector.
2. Need higher educational attainment and skills levels in the adult population.
3. Index of Multiple Deprivation 2007 shows health inequalities is an issue in Greater Essex.

*Key websites for more information:*

Priority 8 of the Essex LAA (see above)

Index of Multiple Deprivation 2007:

1. <http://www.communities.gov.uk/communities/neighbourhoodrenewal/deprivation/deprivation07/>
- 2.

(iii) *Environmental issues:*

1. How to enhance Essex's coast and countryside and accommodate the impact of growth.

*Key websites for more information:*

- EEDA has orchestrated some major interventions in the green (and cultural) infrastructure of Essex and continues to set the regional context for our work. [See link.](#)
- Essex County Council's commitment under Essex Works is set out [here.](#)
- In terms of TGSE, the Parklands programme was set out in the Thames Gateway Delivery Plan in 2007. Its overarching objective is to celebrate and enhance the natural and urban environment of the Thames Gateway, to improve the quality of life for residents, workers and visitors, and to make it an attractive place to invest:  
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/thamesgateway/parklandsvision>

(iv) *Cultural issues:*

1. Due to the increasing population, there needs to be significant progress in maintaining concomitant cultural provision.

*Key websites for more information:*

1. Many areas are beginning to use culture as a means of tackling economic and social issues. TGSE use culture and leisure to great effect in this respect.  
<http://www.tgessex.co.uk>



# Observatory PASCAL

*Place Management, Social Capital and Learning Regions*

---

(v) *Other issues or dimensions:*  
(e.g. *political & administrative, civic and participation*)

- 1. Due to Essex's classification as an administrative area, it is difficult to find data which is fully aligned to our more sensible functional economic areas (namely Haven Gateway Partnership, TGSE, and the emerging partnerships in Mid and West Essex). We have a sophisticated organisational architecture and therefore see different levels of engagement from EEDA, from government and between ourselves.**
- 2. A key strand to emerge from this work should be a framework for the development of an Essex wide HEI strategy. HEIs have tended to focus their role on their sub-regions (University of Essex / Southend vision and Anglia Ruskin University / Harlow skills). We need to draw this out to Greater Essex.**

*Key websites for more information:*

- 1.
- 2.



# Observatory PASCAL

*Place Management, Social Capital and Learning Regions*

---

## UNIVERSITY AND OTHER HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS (HEIs) PORTRAIT

*(Please describe in a few words the HE system operating in the region, in terms of any important matters, the following):*

### *(i) Structure, legal and financial status of HE system*

- **Funding:** all HEIs in Essex are funded by Higher Education Funding Council for England.
- **Type:** Anglia Ruskin University; the University of Essex and Writtle College all operate as both teaching and research institutions.
- **Rating:** some 5\* star ratings in the UK governments Research Assessment Exercise and many submissions rated as Internationally Excellent or World-leading.
  - University of Essex: *The Times Good University Guide ranking (last year): 42 (36). Total score out of 1000 (last year): 611 (576). The Sunday Times University Guide ranking: 39 (40).*
  - The social science departments led a strong set of results in the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise (RAE). Almost two-thirds of the work submitted by the university was found to be world-leading or internationally excellent. Both politics and sociology produced the best results in the country, while the newly-formed Essex Business School ranked second in the UK for accounting and finance.
  - Anglia Ruskin University: *The Times Good University Guide ranking: 106 (104). Total score out of 1000 (last year): 262 (297). The Sunday Times University Guide ranking: 113 (123) All but one of the nine subject areas had some top-rated research, with history, English and psychology producing the best grades.*

### *(ii) Main priorities for the HEIs in the region*

Vary widely between institutions but cross-cutting themes include:

- excellence in teaching and learning;
- develop regional and international reputation for excellence;
- regional partnerships;
- widening participation through AimHigher Essex, part of national Aim;
- business engagement (through i10);
- expanding opportunities;
- knowledge transfer;
- innovation support;
- championing employer and community engagement;
- increasing participation in higher education in the region;
- Development of campus facilities/ buildings.

### *(iii) Relevant recent changes and developments in policy and/or practice*

At the East of England level, a new Higher Education strategy is being developed with the aim of identifying priorities for the public sector's engagement with the universities. This should feed into a business planning process with AUEE and joint planning with HEFCE, LSC and other partners.





# Observatory PASCAL

*Place Management, Social Capital and Learning Regions*

---

Essex University's recent campus opening at Southend has led to the creation of over 100 jobs. As at May 2008, over 400 companies from the Southend area had already received business support from the university.

(iv) *Ways of organising and managing within the HEIs*

Writtle College and the University of Essex are campus based universities (this is certainly true of UoE's Colchester base), whilst Anglia Ruskin University has a town centre campus focus in Chelmsford and its other base, in Cambridge.

The three HEIs are linked by the AUEE – the Association of Universities in the East of England. They are also affiliated with i10, an association of the 10 higher education institutions in the East of England, [see link](#). However, this is strictly focused on the business engagement arena.

*HEIs in REGION*

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| 1. University of Essex                           | Wivenhoe Park,<br>Colchester, CO4 3SQ<br>and<br>Elmer Approach,<br>Southend-on-Sea, SS1 1LW | Nigel South<br><a href="mailto:south@essex.ac.uk">south@essex.ac.uk</a><br><a href="http://www.essex.ac.uk">http://www.essex.ac.uk</a>                    |
| 2. Anglia Ruskin University<br>Chelmsford Campus | Bishop Hall Lane,<br>Chelmsford, Essex, CM1 1SQ   | Chris Davies<br><a href="mailto:chris.davies@anglia.ac.uk">chris.davies@anglia.ac.uk</a><br><a href="http://www.anglia.ac.uk">http://www.anglia.ac.uk</a> |
| 3. Writtle College                               | Chelmsford,<br>Essex, CM1 3RR   | Jeremy Strong<br><a href="mailto:jeremy.strong@writtle.ac.uk">jeremy.strong@writtle.ac.uk</a><br><a href="http://www.writtle.ac.uk">www.writtle.ac.uk</a> |