



MINUTES

Subject: Active Essex Board Meeting
Date & Time: Tuesday 27th January 2026 10:00 to 12:00
Location: Virtual Meeting, MS Teams
Chair: William Bird

ATTENDANCE

Acronyms	Board Member Name	Board Position	Meeting attendance
WB	William Bird	Chairman	Full meeting
BM	Bob McClintock	Board Member	Full meeting
DD	Dan Doherty	Board Member	Full meeting
CR	Caroline Russell	Board Member	Full meeting
SL	Scott Logan	Board Member	Apologies
FB	Fiona Bool	Board Member	Apologies
LB	Lee Bailey	Board Member	Full meeting
AWS	Anne Wafula-Strike	Board Member	Apologies
EL	Emma Lewis	Board Member	Full meeting
DS	David Sollis	Board Member	Apologies
AH	Angela Hutchings	Board Member	Full Meeting
	Active Essex Staff Name	Job Title	
HA	Holly Adams	Marketing and Communications Lead	Full meeting
JF	Jason Fergus	Director of Active Essex	Full meeting
HC	Hayley Chapman	Relationship Development Lead	Full meeting
AS	Amelia Slemmings	Intelligence Manager	Full meeting
RH	Rob Hayne	Strategic Lead Business Operations	Full meeting
SH	Sally Hoyle	Assistant Project Manager (minutes)	Full meeting
LV	Louise Voyce	Relationship Development Lead	Full meeting
CL	Cheryl Lomas	Relationship Development Officer	For agenda item

MINUTES

Item	
1	<p><u>Welcome</u></p> <p>Apologies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apologies were noted from David Sollis, Scott Logan, Anne Wafula-Strike and Fiona Bool. <p>Conflicts of interest declared by the board as follows:</p> <p>WB – Founder & CEO of Intelligent Health. As a regular public speaker, WB makes a declaration before each event.</p> <p>JF – Chair of Investment Committee, Board Member and EDI Champion at Sport England.</p> <p>No further declarations from other members of the board.</p>

2

Matters arising:

No matters were mentioned by the Board.

ACTION: SH to update to AH's job title on previous minutes.

CR has tried to make contact with Beverly Flowers but not been successful so far and will continue to find a route in.

ACTION: JF will share updated email for Beverly Flowers with CR.

Approval of minutes & actions from meeting held on 27th November 2025.

All Board members agreed the minutes are accurate and signed off.

Actions taken from the previous minutes:

Item No./ Agenda item No.	Action	Lead/s	Progress
4	Rob and Jason to update options paper with updates to university section to balance documents.	RH/JF	Completed
4	Rob to create an options pitch which can be presented to mayoral candidates. Needs to take into consideration who the mayoral candidate will be and how best to pitch to them.	RH	N/A
6	Jason to share list of audiences the People, Culture, Skills Review document will be shared with.	JF	To be shared ahead of meeting
6	New stakeholder analysis to be undertaken by Hollie Wood	HW	Completed & to be shared with board
8	Jason to share a list of the people he has connected with in the last quarter.	JF	Referenced in Directors report
8	For Caroline to make connection with Beverly Flower.	CR	Update to be shared in meeting
8	Scott to share his Devolution presentation with board.	SL	In progress
9	Holly Adams to address at the next board on 11 th December.	HA	Completed
10	A Safeguarding example to be included as part of the agenda for the January 2026 online Board Meeting.	DS	To be shared in meeting
12	Hayley to share links to Race Equality workshops with board.	HC	Completed
13	Hayley to reach out to the Active Partnership Network to see if there are any learnings that can be shared with the Board on racial equality.	HC	In progress

Business as Usual

3

Active Essex Foundation (BM)**Under the Radar Launch – 16/01/26**

DP World and AEF launched the 'Under the Radar' initiative with Louise, Bob, Suzanne and Jim in attendance. The programme is a pioneering multi-agency pilot project designed to support girls, boys and young men and women aged 11–24 in Basildon and Thurrock who are at risk of, involved in, or affected by criminal and sexual exploitation. Referrals are received from a wide variety of agencies.

BM to report on a regular basis on progress of Under the Radar.

LB – Thanks Bob. A point of clarification, what level of risk are we talking about? Are individuals classed as high risk? Have we had conversations with colleagues in Children Social Care in alignment with their Missing and Child Exploitation meetings, particularly in the area Basildon?

LV – Cases are high risk, and we are working in partnership with Essex Police; we have a member of Essex Police and Jenny Gray, the Gangs & Exploitation Lead, supporting too. There are quite a few eyes on us nationally from other Police Forces. We are initially working with 15 young people. It is high risk, but we are using Sport and Physical Activity alongside the council mentoring to support these children and young people. Thurrock are fully invested; it has been slightly harder with Essex. Lee, if you have connections that would be helpful to support Jenny from Essex Police and Suzanne (from AEF) in these conversations.

LB – I am happy to support with connections and link you to the MACE Coordinator in South (Basildon).

	<p>WB – Bob and Lousie, another thing from your questions is the importance of protecting those people who work with these children and young people. I think I am right in saying, there were some areas they didn't want to go into as there was a risk to those working. One of the other things that really affected me is that, some of the children are 10-13 years old and they know the police won't pick them up and are literally going under the radar. Under the Radar is an incredible piece of work.</p> <p>BAU Updates The Active Essex Foundation (AEF) Board meeting took place on 23rd January.</p> <p>BM – As we now have an annual turnover of £1 million, we have purchased some accounting software (Xero) to help with managing our accounts.</p> <p>The AEF is now 10 years old. To mark the anniversary, my own personal suggestion would be to do a series of stories who we have supported but this can be agreed in due course.</p> <p>We also agreed that due to the high amount of money we have in our bank account, we probably need to open a separate account to spread the investment.</p> <p>I have given permission for an ECC grant of £26k to be signed for capacity to support place-based cycling projects.</p>
4	<p>Finance (RH)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget report <p>There is no overspend, on track with spend. There will be some small budgets that may run into the next financial year.</p> <p>HAF confirmed as budget income for next three years with slight reduction on staff costs.</p> <p>LMF have made an offer of £750k over the next three years (£250k each year) and we are meeting with LMF in the coming month to discuss further plans for this offer.</p> <p>BM - Well done to Rob and team for keeping within spend; rarely do you see so little red (high risk) on a budget sheet.</p> <p>WB – Yes, and to Caroline also. It is worth noting that the situation can change quickly so continued close management is important.</p> <p>RH – One red (risk) that is not on the board report as its not related to this year's plan, just to remind board members what I have put in the forecast plan, the Sport England system partner funding worth in the region of about £600k will come to an end next year (March 2027). We will hopefully be able to hear around April, May, June time an update on the future of this funding stream.</p> <p>Audit Committee Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk register <p>LGR risk has changed slightly since the point of completion due to announcement last week. <i>Board recruitment raised and discussed under agenda item 9.</i></p>
5	<p>Communications Update (HA)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share Connect Collaborate Event (21/01/26) <p>WB – A very successful Share Connect Collaborate took place. Well done to Active Essex and the team for putting on another wonderful Active Essex event.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ambition Document <p>HA spoke to Ambition Document presentation.</p> <p>ACTION: Board members to provide Holly with comments on Ambition Document by Friday 30th January.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find Your Active Move For Your Mind launch (HA) <p>Find Your Active is in its fifth year. Last year we refocused around moving for your mind and partnered with Mind and the five local Minds in Essex. We launched this partnership at the beginning of last week with a walk down in Rochford. Launch video has reached over 2,300 views.</p>

We have some things in the pipelines with Supermarket and billboard advertising. We also have £2k to give each of the local Minds in Essex to support community mental health and wellbeing through the power of sport and physical activity. Keep your eyes peeled on social for that, lots of exciting things coming up.

WB – Thank you Holly for the update, so professional as always.

CR – Are you planning any sub documents that come of the Ambition document? One of the reasons I say this is that there are different audiences, that we need to reach and influence, for example, Health. A suite of documents that says the same thing but uses the language of that sector would be impactful. The document is outstanding; we just need to make sure the document is well received and impactful with the various bodies we are trying to influence.

HW – You have hit the nail on the head. We are going to be taking this to Health colleagues etc., to build understanding and ensure we have buy-in from the start with these groups and ensure that this is a collaborative document.

EL – I completely agree with Caroline and well done on a fantastic event. Please can you share the Ambition document with me?

ACTION: HA to send EL Ambition document.

JF - One of the things we are working on is an Executive Summary of the Ambition Document and then an appendix, to ensure we the right chapters reach the right audience. The reality is some of our leaders are not going to read 24 pages, so the Executive Summary has got to be sharp, to the point, punchy. This is not an Active Essex document, this is a collective, system document.

DD – Before I left the ICB we were working on an MOU similar to the GMU Move Manchester model. Has that gone or is this still in train?

JF – Following the NHS restructure, many good people such as yourself have moved on. There doesn't appear to be bandwidth and there are many distractions at this point in time. It is definitely something on our list that we want to get to.

DD - I am meeting with some senior NHS colleagues soon and will update back to the board to see if there is traction.

WB – There is so much going on at the moment. If you could find out Dan that would be great as its definitely not off the agenda.

We didn't have quite as many senior leaders at the Share Connect Collaborate event as we expected, so there was mention that we would share a short summary to show the impact of the event.

JF – Yes this was a great idea, and we will send to Chief Executives. It would also be good to have this as an agenda item at the next Essex Chief Executive meeting.

ACTION: HA to send out short summary of the Share Connect Collaborate Event to share with senior leaders.

AH – We have a hard deadline of 17th Feb for LG from government. It is unlikely that we could arrange anything in the diary before start of March.

ACTION: AC to talk to Nathan about getting Share Connect Collaborate summary on the next Essex Chief Executive agenda.

6 Safeguarding Update (CL)

Cheryl gave an overview of the Summer Case study shared in the Board pack on behalf of David who gave apologies for the meeting.

CR – Where is the HAF agreement signed? I.e. who has liability for safeguarding?

LV – We have met with ECC Health and Safety and asked this exact question. ECC are liable so we work alongside them on any Safeguarding matters.

CL – Gave summary of Safeguarding update included in board pack:

Team Updates

- Sally Hoyle has joined the team and will be a great asset, ensuring we are properly set up on Monday.com with our action plan.
- All Active Essex staff have now completed Level 2 safeguarding training for adults and children via ECC My Learning Platform.

Incidents

- One safeguarding incident was reported during the winter holidays and has been dealt with appropriately.

Key Highlights from Sport Welfare Officers

- Safeguarding Policy Guide: Continues to play a central role in supporting staff and applicants during funding decisions. Positive feedback received; reduced time and meetings needed to bring policies up to standard.
- Staff Inductions: Second safeguarding induction delivered online in November 2025 for new starters. Positive feedback will continue for all staff.
- Regional Partnership Training: Final 2025 session focused on building a positive parent culture, delivered by Gordon MacLelland (Working with Parents in Sport). Effective collaboration will continue in 2026 alongside a youth voice project.

Club Support

- Brentwood Hockey Club: Free training on keeping children safe online; strong positive feedback.
- Great Yeldham Table Tennis Club: Ongoing work to update safeguarding policies.
- Team Kinteix (Witham-based parkour club): Supporting policy updates and coach training.

Training Initiatives

- Delivered “Step In Speak Up” session at AEF networking event to address difficult safeguarding situations; excellent engagement and feedback.
- Ran 5 online workshops to help HAF clubs revise safeguarding policies: quick turnaround and positive feedback.

Events & Outreach

- Delivered safeguarding culture training at Active Thames event; plans for in-person training at Thurrock Yacht Club in February.
- Increased momentum with clubs requesting support; in-person events remain most effective.
- NGB Engagement: Continued collaboration through Essex NGB forum and regional meetings; expanding reach across clubs.
- Resources: Training brochure for 2026 and year-in-numbers summary attached.

BM – Going back to the case study, the number of times we have had a complaint and there has been no action. It is very nice that the person reached out again that there was a positive outcome that can be referred to if needed in the future.

WB – Just to be clear Cheryl, the case study was referring to a provider with multiple sites and QA visits are standard practice?

CL – Yes, that is correct.

7 People, Culture, Skills Progress (EL)

EL - I had a comprehensive handover meeting with Hollie, Hayley and Jess L two weeks ago.

Skills Review – We have added a stakeholder mapping section to the skills document and visual timeline (to section 7). Strengthening and measuring impact, so defining core indicators we have added to the document. With regard to the local skills improvement plan and data gaps, where we state what influence we have on the ELSIP and what more we need to do, we have added some additional information and recommendations for success.

HC – in relation to the performance measures, we are now looking at our Implementation plan for the next two years (2026-28). We are working Amelia and the data and insight team to feed into this.

EL – The Essex Local Improvement Plan – Louise Atkin is authoring this currently. Sport and Physical Activity will be given its own section in the plan. The drafted plan will be shared with the board soon.

Employability Academy have been working with DWP. We have just had confirmation from SIMSPA that this model will be coming to Essex, which has successfully been piloted in Scotland.

HC – Final version of the Skills document will be circulated shortly.

	<p>ACTION: HC to circulate final Skills document to board when ready.</p>
<p>8</p>	<p>EDI Update (HC)</p> <p>HC gave summary of board pack:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Team Away Day dedicated session in December allowed the team to feedback on take aways from the Race Equality Trilogy sessions. - We have two Active Essex staff members (one Active Essex and one Active Essex Foundation), who have joined a new national cohort of the Race Literate Leaders pilot programme. This is a three-month long programme launched off the back of the trilogy series and there only 20 places nationally. - Looking ahead to the next quarter, it is Race equality week in February. We have signed up to the resource, Race Equality Matters, to continue the team’s learning. - Staff training – we have rolled out Unconscious Bias training for one hundred percent completion by the end of January. - Neurodiversity training – national training programme for small group. We are developing how we share and learn this with the team. - Nina, and the Active Essex team are working hard to put a suite of resources together for the next quarter. There is a Belonging in Sport package delivered by Sport for Confidence which we are rolling out as a webinar. We have also identified three or four learning resources to share with organisation we work with. - The Moving to Inclusion guide which has been embedded into the Development Grant diagnostic. We shall shortly be launching round two of the Places & Spaces and we are going embed the Move to Inclusion Access for All guide into the application process to ensure accessible environments are being considered. - HAF - Nicky has been working with the ECC SEND and utilising the inclusive teaching framework in HAF clubs. - Activity Alliance are relaunching their forums at the end of January; they have previously been really positive. - HC had a positive meeting with Activity Alliance last week and they have developed 10 principles to deliver an inclusive learning environment. Active Essex have agreed to trial this. - DIAP – We had a really positive session last week with our EDI Champions, which will feed into the DIAP. We will aim to bring the refreshed DIAP to the next board meeting. - Inclusive recruitment – This continues to be a key part of our Employee Journey Huddle. ECC are launching some new training and information in terms of reasonable adjustment and inclusive practice. <p>WB Thank you Hayley, it (your update) is always so thorough.</p> <p>CR – That was really comprehensive update, thank you. Belonging in Sport for Confidence, could you say a bit more on this please.</p> <p>HC – Sport for Confidence have realised that it is about belonging. The Belonging in Sport webinar will be taking place on: 10th February 2026. This will be followed by a Belonging in Acton package which will focus more on the practical elements that can be taken away and implemented.</p>
<p>9</p>	<p>Q3 Directors Report</p> <p>HC – Pages 57 onwards on outcome reporting. Just one reflection on the number of performance measures which are now just under 50% completed.</p> <p>LMF on page 59 shows in round 2 for Small Grants that we have now reached 26% of ethnically diverse communities and for CYP 76.5% achieved.</p> <p>LV - HAF now confirmed from DfE for next three years which AE will be leading. There was a reduction in staffing cost, so we are working with Southend and Thurrock to move some of this funding back into the HAF pot.</p> <p>HAF procurement is taken place successfully and the HAF team continue to work hard on this.</p> <p>• LGR/Devolution/Local Elections (AH)</p> <p>Devolution – Mayoral elections have been pushed back till 2028. Government have signaled that the County Combined Authority will be incepted without the mayor in post. We will have a County Combined Authority with the three upper tiers as Southend, Thurrock and Essex. In 2027 the constituent authority will become the new unitary councils but there will not be a mayor until 2028. A new piece of secondary legislation is being worked on and will be put in front of Parliament in due course to decide on how this work in practice.</p> <p>Tom Walker is the Interim CEO and is working with Upper Tier colleagues to decipher what the authority will look like without a mayor for a year. This will have an impact on things like receiving devolved funding. There is a commitment from Government that we would not be disadvantaged by not having a major.</p>

It is all a bit fuzzy, but this does create an opportunity to influence and shape. One of the conversations we have been having at Chief level is what we think should sit in the combined authority, what sits within unitary authorities and what sits at a pan-Essex level. I have advocated that AE sits within the County Combined Authority model and this remains a live debate.

The Minded To Decision (reconfiguration) will not be made by Secretary of State until Mid-March. Each of the 15 councils must give an opinion on each of the four options on offer and there is only a period of 3 weeks to complete this task. Government asked for one combined response for all 15 councils.

Local Elections – In order to delay an election a second piece of legislation has to be laid and this has to take place before the end of January. The local elections for Thurrock, Harlow and Basildon will not go ahead this year but the scheduled elections for all other councils will go ahead. At this point in time ECC elections will go ahead and we are preparing for them as planned.

CR – Those who are having an election this year are being asked to vote on a mayor that we won't have until May 2027. How does this work?

AH – Yes, that is correct because all of the councils that currently exist will be in operation until 31st March 2028. So, this means there will be time for any authorities who have not voted this time round, to vote. The next elections for the new councils will be in 2027.

By the time we get to 2028 some Councilors will have been in post for around 7 years which is a very long time in Local democracy terms.

CR – The three-week timeframe you mentioned where the 15 authorities view proposals, will officers get any opportunity to influence this decision? Or is this entirely a member's discussion?

AH – Yes, the officer *do* have influence here. The role of the officer is all about oversight.

AH – 'Minded To' decision i.e. the council structure, takes place in Mid-March.

'Elected to' (for the shadow unitary councils) decision takes place on 6th May 2027. 7th May 2027 there will be all the new councils, all the current and the County Combined Authorities for a period of 1 year (transition year).

BM – I am so grateful for Angela who can update us on this process.

SH – Who makes the decisions for the transition year?

AH - The Minded To decision is the beginning of the parliamentary decision, joint committees will form to make decision for this year.

CR – When does the CEO for the interim authorities get elected?

AH – When the interim authority is set up. TUPE will apply to all the existing councils to the unitary authority.

CR – Who pays for redundancy of CEO?

AH - The originating councils.

WB – Thank you so much for the update. We will need to be on the ball going into the next phases.

RH – We have been talking to colleagues around the country (Devon, Cumbria, Surrey etc.) to glean insight into the Devolution/LGR process in action. We are keeping close contact with Surrey as they are slightly further down the process than Greater Essex.

• Board Recruitment

CR - Anne is retiring in May presenting an opportunity to review the skill set of the board. As we know, Anne was an elite athlete and we will lose this expertise from the board. With her disability she also brings a wealth of experience and lived experience which will leave a gap in the board membership.

We do not have anyone with a sporting background who also has business acumen.

JF – Anne has been a great asset to the board and be greatly missed. We should go to market with two or three specialist areas we are looking for.

RH – The areas are elite sport, business and education.

	<p>ACTION: RH to create a recruitment pack and advert to bring to next board meeting for approval before advert goes live.</p> <p>WB – Are we saying there are three different vacancies? One for education, one for business and one for elite athlete?</p> <p>RH – Potentially or one / 2 people could fill all depending on skill set.</p> <p>CR – Anne really did bring a great representation and brought us back down to earth, particularly on her lived experience regarding accessibility, race and equality.</p> <p>WB – Had we discussed having a child/young person on the board to represent this group?</p> <p>RH – We had explored this in the past and canvased opinions.</p> <p>LB – When this group were asked, they felt they are best represented by ourselves and we feedback as necessary.</p>
10	<p>Close</p> <p>Meeting was closed at 12:00.</p> <p>The next meeting will take place on Thursday 23rd April, venue TBC.</p>

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2	SH to update to AH's job title on previous minutes.	SH	Complete
2	JF will share updated email for Beverly Flowers with CR.	JF	Complete
5	Board members to provide Holly with comments on Ambition Document by Friday 30th January.	HA	In Progress
5	HA to send EL Ambition document.	HA	In Progress
5	HA to send out short summary of the Share Connect Collaborate Event to share with senior leaders.	HA	In Progress
5	AC to talk to Nathan about getting Share Connect Collaborate summary on the next Essex Chief Executive agenda.	AC	In Progress
7	HC to circulate final Skills document to board when ready.	HC	In Progress
8	RH to create a recruitment pack and advert to bring to next board meeting for approval before advert goes live.	RH	In Progress

Upcoming scheduled meetings

Date	Time	Title	Face to Face/Online	Status
Thursday 23 rd April 26	09:30 – 16:00	Active Essex Board	Face to Face (venue TBC)	Scheduled
Thursday 23 rd July 26	09:30 – 15:00	Active Essex Board	Face to Face (venue TBC)	Scheduled
Tuesday 3 rd November 26	09:30 – 15:00	Active Essex Board	Face to Face (venue TBC)	Scheduled
Tuesday 1 st December 26	10:00 - 12:00	Active Essex & Active Essex Foundation Engagement Meeting	Face to Face (venue TBC)	Scheduled
Tuesday 26 th January 27	10:00 – 12:00	Active Essex Board	Virtual MS Teams Meeting	Scheduled