



# **London Marathon Foundation**

# **Active Essex M&E report**

## **August 2025**

Produced by Active Essex Insight and Evaluation Team

After two successful years of the strategic partnership with London Marathon Foundation (LMF), Active Essex (AE) we're delighted to continue working together in 2025.

## Year 1 >>>

245

organisations funded by the small grants programme, delivering in the most deprived areas in Essex; fund active travel initiatives, capacity build the Active Essex Foundation (AEF) and fund Essex Pedal Power (EPP).

17,866



individuals were estimated to be affected by this funding.



## Year 2 >>>

119

projects funded by the small grants programme. 42 of these were delivered in the most deprived areas of Essex (IMD 1-4). 18,884 individuals estimated to be affected by small grants funding.

13

Spaces and Places projects funded. 2790 individuals estimated to be impacted by P&S funding.

359 EPP bikes given out to Children and Young people in Essex.

15

projects funded in for capacity building around the themes of Learning and Development, Employee experience, Stakeholder experience, Governance and Compliance, Employee journey.

22,033



individuals were estimated to be affected by LMF funding across workstreams.

- [Click here to read 2022/2023 EOY report](#)
- [Click here to read 2023/2024 EOY report](#)

This year we have taken the learnings from the past two years and streamlined the funding into three areas, The Small Grants Programme and the Places and Spaces Fund will continue. Capacity building will be more deliberate and targeted to organisations who can benefit from capacity building support. This year we have continued to use Monday.com to manage the three funding streams and have expanded the use of this across the business.



# Project Summary

A partnership that aims to inspire activity across Essex during 2025/2026 with three elements:



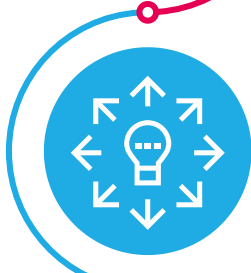
## FIND YOUR ACTIVE (FYA)/LMF SMALL GRANTS PROGRAMME:

An open and universal Essex-wide small grants programme that brings to life the priorities of LMF and Active Essex around inspiring activity. The programme is open to all organisations across Essex, although the priority is to fund areas and target audiences in greatest need.



## PLACES AND SPACES SMALL GRANTS PROGRAMME:

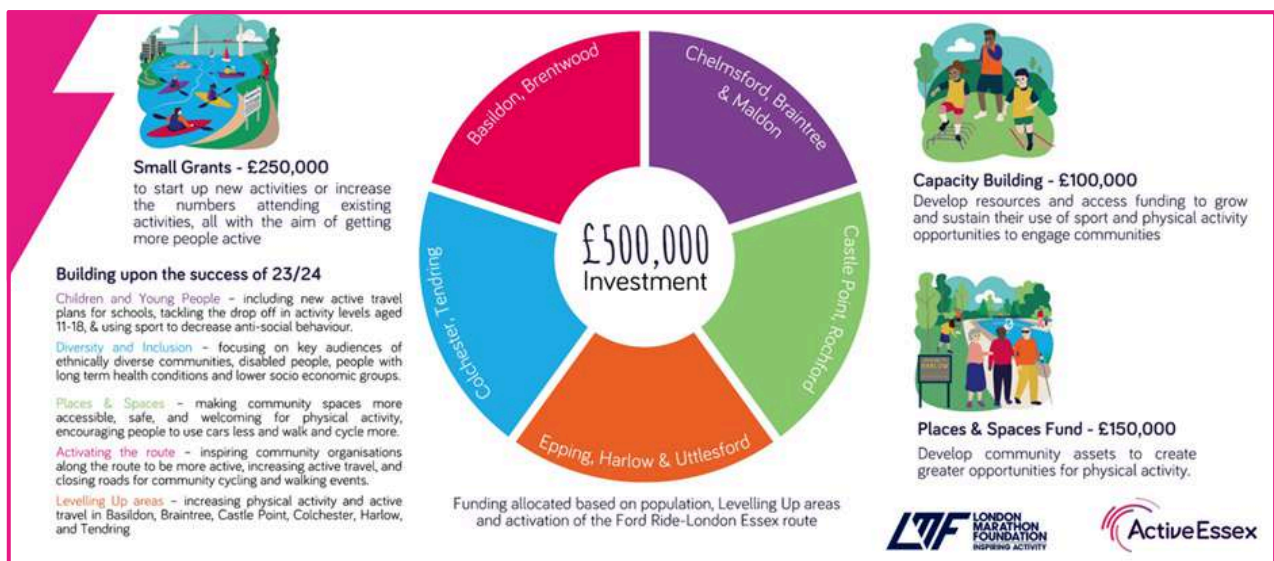
An open small grants fund aimed at organisations that want to encourage physical activity by making their facilities fit for purpose.



## BUILDING CAPACITY: DEVELOPMENT FUND


Development fund of up to £5,000 to support organisational development of Essex Based organisations.

The investment was split into the three areas of Small Grants, Places and Spaces and Capacity building. Within these three areas, the investment is split across the five hub areas to spread investment across Essex.



# Funding Outcomes

## SMALL GRANTS PROGRAMME

60% 

have increased participation in sport and physical activity

50% 

of funding to reach Children and Young people

40% 

of funding to reach IMD 1-4 in Essex

## PLACES AND SPACES

50% our our target audience have increased physical activity levels.

40% of funding to reach IMD 1-4 in Essex.

80% of places have activated their spaces with physical activity within 3 months.

## ACTIVE ESSEX



Publish Climate Change Action Plan.



Active Essex to promote and encourage more environmentally friendly ways of travelling to the team.



Active Essex to promote and encourage environmentally sustainable behaviours to the team.

## CAPACITY BUILDING: DEVELOPMENT FUND

60% of organisations funded have increased organisational resilience through investment in business development capacity.



Greater understanding of individual intended and unintended outcomes for organisations as a result of the capacity building programme (through Ripple Effect Mapping)

3

Organisational case studies demonstrating impact of capacity building investment.



26,374

unique individuals in Essex are estimated to participate in activities funded by London Marathon Foundation investment in 2024/2025.





# Find Your Active Small Grants Programme: Outcomes



The Find Your Active Small Grants Programme Y2 launched in September 2024

**£250,000**

Total Find Your Active Small Grants budget for 2024/25

The programme prioritised applications that reach inactive people for priority audiences:



**Mental Health complexities**



**Lower Socio-Economic groups**



**Long Term Health Conditions**



**Ethnically diverse communities**

**96** projects approved

**208** total applications this year

## Small Grants - £250,000

**£219,191** awarded to applicants that submitted an application

**96** applications approved, and receiving funding (4 supported by Sport Welfare Leads and not receiving funding)

### Area split for approved applications



**63%** of FYA Small Grants delivered in community based venues (target was 40%)

**40%** of projects are supporting access to disabled people



# Find Your Active Small Grants Programme

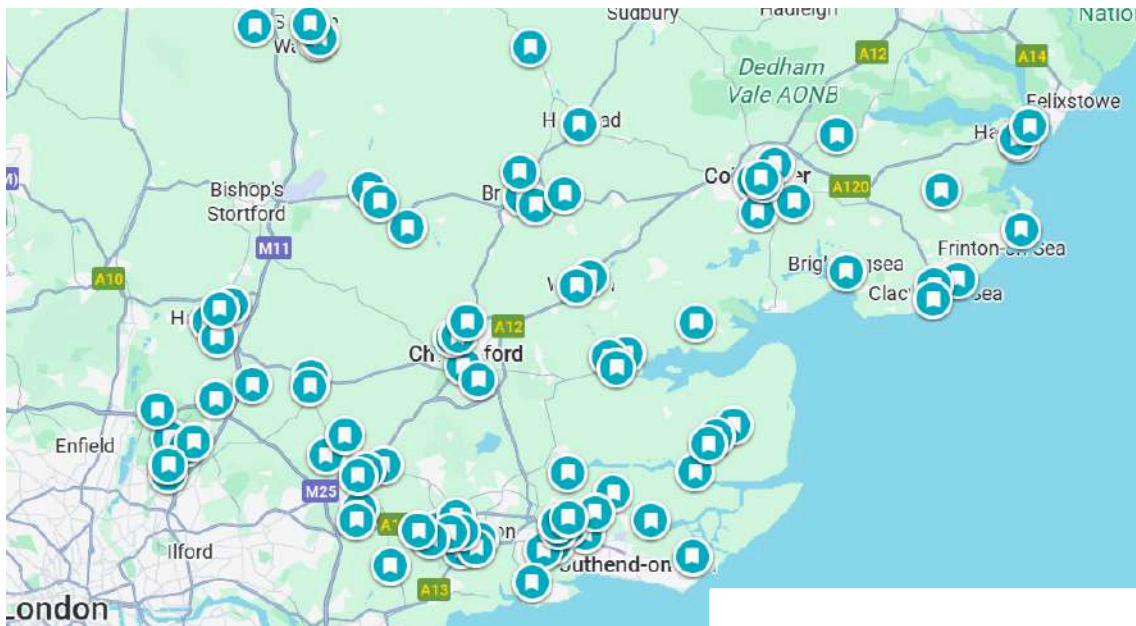
The funding was allocated proportionately to projects based on priority audiences, levels of deprivation and activating the route. As such there was varying levels of funding spent in each local authority. The graph shows the spend via hub area and more specifically the local authority within each hub area.

## Outcome 1



**40%**  
of funding to reach  
IMD 1-4 in Essex

**37%** projects funded to deliver in IMD areas 1-4 of the areas below (meaning the areas of highest deprivation). 34 projects funded were delivering in IMD 1-4. This slightly falls short of our 40% target levels. However, funding was also allocated based on priority audiences. A map of funded projects can be found below.



*The funding from this project has had a massive positive impact on the families we support and it would be amazing if we could continue to offer regular weekly sessions at the after school club to these students and provide invaluable respite for their families.*

**FYA funding recipient**



# Find Your Active Small Grants Programme

## Outcome 2



48%

projects funded had a primary audience of CYP (N=46) funding going to CYP. Just slightly short of the target of 50%, however a number of the adult based projects engaged families, therefore further CYP have been supported through this work.

The Active Essex team work closely with projects across Essex to support and develop their projects and programmes. This spans from initial idea, project delivery and data collection for evaluation purposes. Feedback data from providers and participants is collected through a number of sources, predominantly two surveys, one for providers and one for participants of those projects.



### Provider survey: completed by Find Your Active funded organisations

This explores project outputs including number of participants involved in the project, key challenges, highlights and other provider feedback.



### Participant survey: completed by participants of FYA funded projects.

This explores participant demographics as well as outcomes such as physical activity levels and wellbeing. This also includes participant feedback on the project.

As of 18th August 2025, provider surveys had been returned from 47 providers, totalling 49% of all projects funded. There are still 27 (28%) project that have not yet finished delivering or have finished in the past 2 weeks and therefore not had their M&E reminder email at time of writing.

1000+  
sessions run across  
Essex with over



14,000+  
attendances from  
adults and children and  
young people



451 participant  
responses

373 from adults

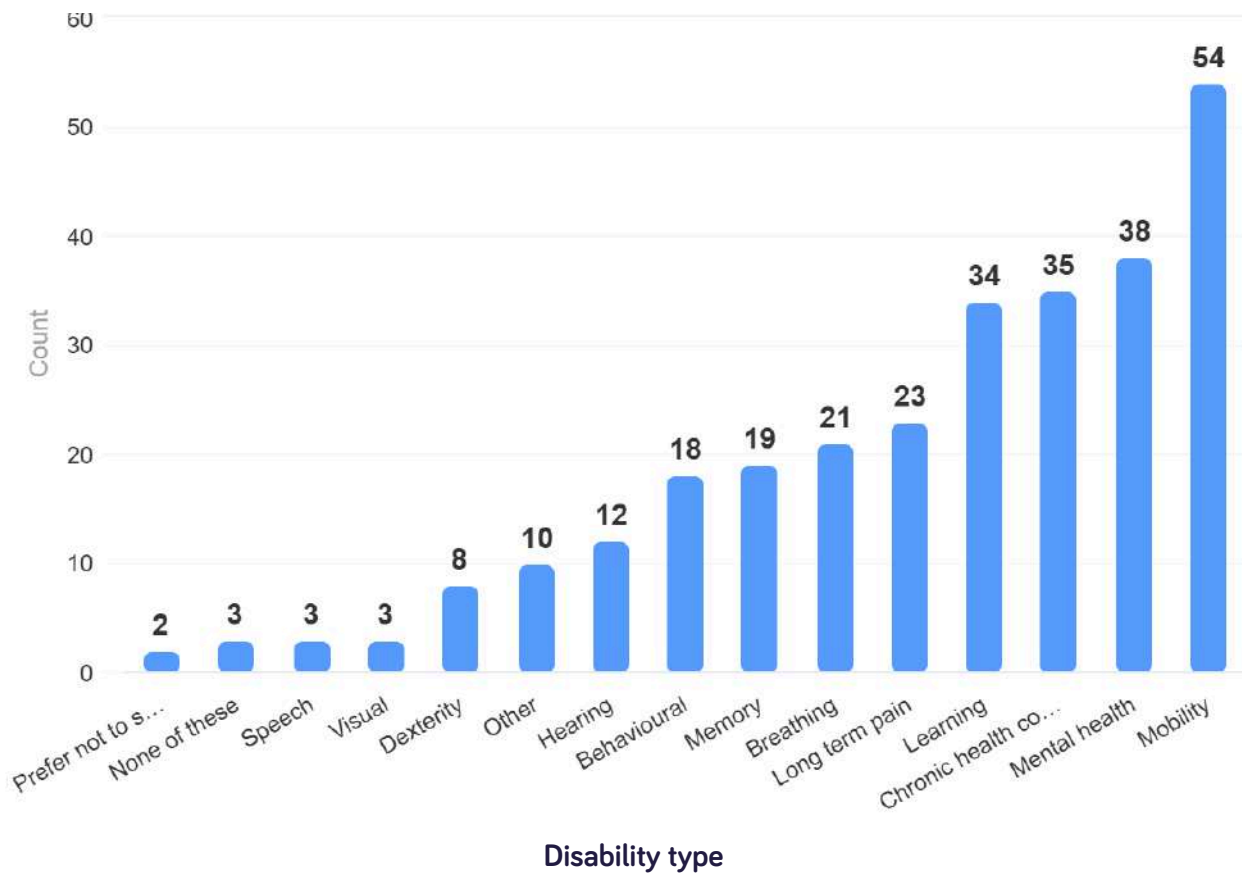
78 from parents and  
carers on behalf  
of a young  
person

43% (192/451) of  
respondents  
reported they  
had a long  
term health  
condition or  
disability



FIND  
YOUR  
ACTIVE

# Find Your Active Small Grants Programme



## Outcome 3



**60%**  
of our target audiences have increased participation in sport and physical activity

**58%** of target audiences self-reported increases in physical activity levels following participation in LMF funded projects. Participants had an average increase of 30 minutes more physical activity than before engaging in these projects.

Through the participant survey we asked participants their pre physical activity levels. Unfortunately we have a high percentage of respondents not answering this question. However for the sample that did answer, those participating in projects funded through the Small Grants fun were less active than average (Small grants 40.8, Active Lives Survey 2023/24 63.1%)

*'I have appreciated the support provided by Active Essex especially [Active Essex Staff Member], which has significantly enhanced my understanding of how to run a sustainable project. Their guidance encouraged me to look beyond the activity itself and consider long-term impact, strategic planning, and community engagement.'*

FYA funding recipient

## Columbus School After School Club

**“Since attending the Columbus After School Club the difference I see in Edith is just priceless.”**



Her confidence and the belief in herself to ‘just try’ is incredible. Her tolerance with her peers and her choice to move away from situations that don’t suit her is something I thought I would never see!

To see friendship groups develop and individual friendships grow to the point we get together outside of the club, this is something I never thought I would see for Edith and this is really important and very special. Her whole understanding of life has benefitted from independence project, to have choices, to experience new things and feel excitement from this and to feel comfort from spending time with people she enjoys spending time with. Every week this is a highlight for us all as a family.

Due to her confidence and trust now, she no longer always needs to know every detail of what is happening, she is happy to say ‘ I don’t know, let’s find out ‘ this just shows the trust she has in this club.



# Places and Spaces Small Grants Programme

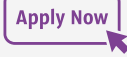

## Outcomes

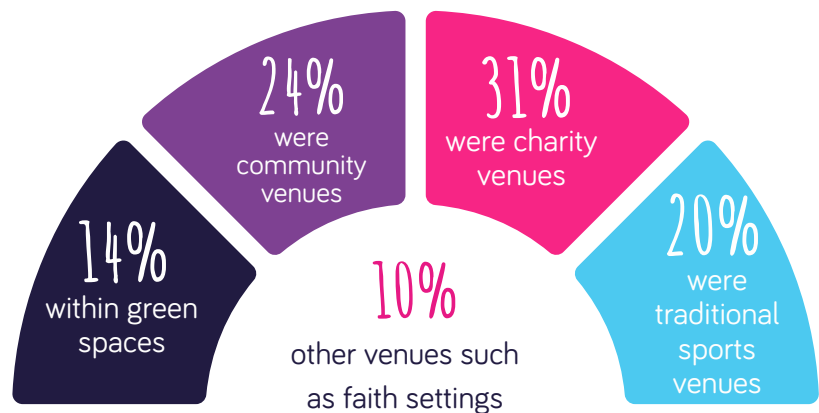


 **SEP** The Places and Spaces Small Grants Programme launched in September 2024

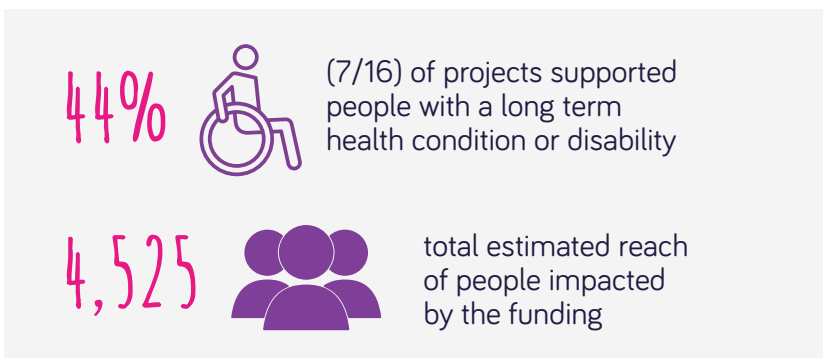
**£100,000** total budget distributed in small grants up to **£10,000**

### Breakdown of applications:

**29**  **Apply Now**  
applications of which  
**16**   
were approved  
across the county



With only 20% of the venues being a traditional sports venue, this suggests that this project is tapping into new inactive audiences that will make the venues appropriate to bring physical activity where these audiences are already meeting.



This is likely to increase as time goes on with facilities in place. Evaluation has taken some time, due to the time taken to complete works and then activate spaces. A more comprehensive view of the impact of this fund will be available by Winter 2025.



# Places and Spaces Small Grants Programme



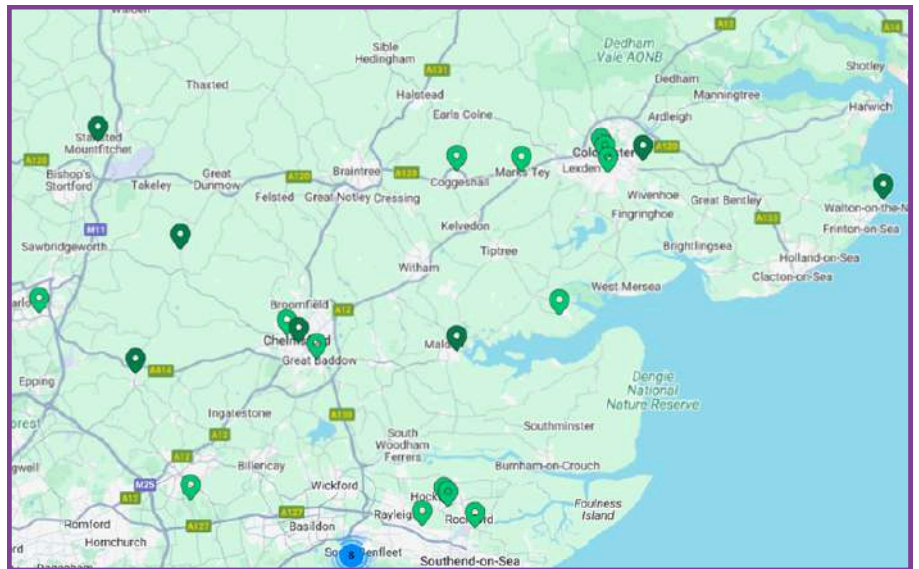
## Outcome 1



**32%** projects funded to deliver in IMD areas 1-4. 5 projects funded were delivering in IMD 1-4. This slightly falls short of our 40% target levels. Projects just outside this bracket (additional 25% IMD 5 & 6) had strong focuses on priority audiences.

A map of the Places and Spaces funded projects can be seen in the map. You can see there is a good spread across the breadth of Greater Essex.

Next year we aim to increase the number of projects funded in IMD 1-4 and have developed new back end procedures to ensure the 40% target is achieved.



Map of Places and Spaces funded projects

## Outcome 2



**44%** of total projects have activated the space within 3 months for physical activity. Due to the nature of the fund, there is a delay in the works being completed and then activation of the space. We currently have 7/16 completed works (of these 100% have activated). More data on this will be available in Winter 2025.



### Changing Lives

The creation of a new multi purpose physical activity space on the floor of their premises. Previously only accessible by a ladder and climbing wall, new stairs as well as the space being renovated have allowed this space to be used by a variety of groups.

'Our women's circles regularly use this space and has been so well received - serving approximately 30 people a week, plus our you grow girl sessions every Friday delivering wellbeing groups to 8+ girls age 11-16'

# Places and Spaces Small Grants Programme

## Outcome 3



 **50%**  
our our target audience have increased physical activity levels

At the time of writing, there are only 7 projects that have completed works and started activating their spaces. As there is a lag in receiving M&E data, we currently do not have enough data to give a clear % of those increasing physical activity levels. We plan to amend this outcome for next years framework to ensure we have enough data to include in our end of year report.

### Chelmsford City Council – Cycle Skills Circuit



Before

Chelmsford City Council were awarded just under £10,000 to repurpose two tennis courts that are no longer useable for tennis to create a cycle friendly area that can be used for a range of cycling activities.



Cycle friendly road markings, tracks and trails were laid to allow the delivery of structured balance bike, learn to ride and Bikeability level 1 training sessions. The facility is also open with free access for the general public to use.



A launch event was delivered in August to launch the space and give the opportunity for local people to come and have a go. Families enjoyed ‘come and try’ activities, with Bikeability instructors from Essex County Council leading free balance bike, Learn to Ride and Bikeability Level 1 sessions. Every session was fully booked, 48 children got to test out the new circuit over the course of the morning.



“The facilities are fantastic, I’d highly recommend a visit! And I can’t believe how effective the Learn to Ride sessions are – we came in with stabilisers and just half an hour in and [my daughter] is flying round without them! I’m so proud of her.”

-launch event attendee



# WHAT IS ORGANISATIONAL RESILIENCE?

Organisational resilience is the capacity of a team or organisation to adapt, sustain, and thrive through change and challenge—anchored in a culture of wellbeing, trust, and shared purpose. It is built on:

Staff wellbeing as a foundation, ensuring individuals feel supported, valued, and able to maintain healthy boundaries.

Agility and flexibility in ways of working, with infrastructure and autonomy that empower staff to respond effectively to emerging needs.

Trust and collaboration, enabling people to rely on one another and feel confident in the organisation's direction

Succession planning and shared leadership, where stepping back is intentional and others are equipped to step forward.

Financial stability that enables strategic planning and long-term sustainability.

Clear, collective vision and agreed ways of working, reducing single points of failure and aligning everyone toward a resilient future.

Time and space for reflection, learning, and development, allowing individuals and teams to grow and evolve.

## Outcome 2

Greater understanding of individual intended and unintended outcomes for organisations as a result of the capacity building programme

We have continued to see success with Ripple Effect Mapping within the Capacity Building: Development Fund. Key impacts from across the cohort include Increased capacity at Senior Leadership, Distributed Leadership, Increased confidence better practices across organisations and Increased funding

# Active Essex

Internally, we have worked towards four outcomes associated with diversity, inclusion and sustainability.

## Outcomes



Publish Climate Change Action Plan



Active Essex to promote & encourage more environmentally friendly ways of travelling to the team



Active Essex to promote & encourage environmentally sustainable behaviours to the team

This year the internal Active Essex outcomes focused around environmental sustainability. As these are intrinsically linked, we will discuss our progress across all three outcomes together.

We have continued to work on Active Essex Climate Change Action Plan. The team have been working with Essex County Council and Active Essex Board to develop this over the past year. This has developed into a wider Environmental Sustainability Document and will be going to Active Essex Board for sign off in October 2025.

We have also taken steps to think about our own internal sustainability, encouraging staff to car share, use public transport, reduce printing and recycle where possible. These have been included in our Awayday and meeting communications.

You can see from our Away Day packs that we are as standard promoting car sharing and public transport when we attend new venues across the county.



**USEFUL INFORMATION**

**Location**  
Foresters' Skills, Forester Park Bickingham Road, Great Tottenham, N. Malden, Essex, CM3 3EA

**Timings**  
Arrival/Start to start at 9:30am  
Finish by 4:30pm

**What to wear**  
Casual wear, whatever you're comfortable in

**Travel information**  
Free parking is available at the front of the building. Team activity at the end of the day is also on site, so no need to travel.

(Both Witham and Hatfield Ferial train stations aren't too far away, so please let the Learning module know if you need a lift to and from the station. We advocate for car sharing and car pooling from the train station to reduce our carbon footprint as much as possible.)



**USEFUL INFORMATION**

**Location**  
Little Cheneys, Priests Farm Lane West, Little Waltham, Chelmsford, Essex, CM3 3PE  
We will be located in the 2nd floor subject to the glass fronted walkway.


**Timings**  
Arrival 10-10:30am, finished by 4pm  
Summer social will begin at 4pm - 9pm\*


**What to wear**  
Casual wear, whatever you're comfortable in

**Travel information**  
Free parking is available around the building.  
Chelmer Valley Park and Ride is located nearby, so we encourage lifts if required. You can get on the park and ride bus from Chelmsford City train station.


\*The Summer Social will also be at Little Cheneys, with the option to head to the bar when BBQ will be provided, but drinks will need to be ordered from the bar.

We are also currently running an internal Carbon Footprint survey to explore where the team are as a baseline and support our action planning over the coming year to support the team to be more environmentally sustainable. We also continue to promote environmental sustainability in the following ways:

 Promote sustainability in our weekly Share and Learn topics (attended by the whole AE team)

 All AE staff required to be Carbon Literacy Certified by March '26. Over the past year we have worked to get this to being 50%, but are pushing to increase this to 100%

 Sport England have partnered with BASIS, in turn have dedicated 10% of Movement Fund (Every Move) towards Sustainability projects. Active Essex are encouraging LTO's to apply for this fund with a environmental aspect.

 Run and manage the Big Team Challenge across AE and Essex workplaces.



## 2025/2026

Active Essex are delighted that we will continue our strategic partnership with London Marathon Foundation into 2025/2026.

Over the course of this partnership, we have learnt a tremendous amount and continue to push this work further to allow greater access to residents of Essex to be more active.

This year we have identified the need for more Project Management support to the delivery team to ensure we capture all the information we need and demonstrate the impact of the work. We have now used Monday.com as a platform to manage grant making for the past two years. This has been a success, but as we have matured, we have seen how we can use this even more effectively to manage our work. This year we have introduced URN's for organisations, to reduce duplication of information from local organisations. We now hold all the information on an organisation centrally, so we do not need to ask them every time they apply for funding. This also allows us to keep on top of their policies and procedures and reduce duplication of reviewing of information.

## Conclusion

The strategic partnership between London Marathon Foundation, Active Essex and Essex Foundation has once again proved successful. The funding is estimated to have reached record numbers of over 26,000 residents of Greater Essex. It has increased physical activity levels, made our assets more fit for physical activity and given our workforce time and space to learn and develop.

Active Essex looks forward to the next year of this partnership and continuing to support the most inactive residents in Essex.

