

Essex Partnership News - *keeping you in touch*

Essex Conference 2009

More than 300 officers and elected members from over 100 organisations attended the Essex Conference on Thursday 9 July at the new Colchester United Stadium.

The conference opened with a bang, as Chelmsford band Drum Kulture woke up the 300 delegates with rhythms and singing. Drum Kulture then continued to play throughout the day between workshops and over lunch.



Drum Kulture opening the conference in the main hall



Tony Bovaird's introduction

The conference was chaired by Professor Tony Bovaird of University of Birmingham. He opened the conference by asking delegates to assess whether their partnership working was real or pretend. Real partnerships made positive contributions to improving service delivery, while pretend partnerships had no impact on quality of life for residents but did get through plenty of biscuits and coffee. He recommended dis-investment in pretend partnerships. ([view presentation here](#))

Following Lord Hanningfield's welcome, Dan Gascoyne explained the Essex Strategy Review Process by talking about 'wicked issues' facing Essex and some of the partnership activity delivering improved outcomes. Interim findings from the Review can be viewed by visiting the new Essex Partnership Portal. (www.essexpartnershipportal.org). Partners are asked to review these and feed their comments back to the Partnership Secretariat prior to the Partnership Forum in September. After EPF there will be a series of consultation summits throughout the autumn. Partners will be consulted with regard to the summits in the near future. ([view presentation here](#))

After the opening presentations a series of workshops looked in more detail at specific 'wicked issues' or the components of these. The five most popular workshops were:

- Developing a common approach to reducing health inequalities in Essex led by Loretta Sollars of ECC.
- Strategic commissioning led by Tina Holland from IDEa. A proposal from this workshop was to develop a Commissioners for Essex Group.
- Can anyone hear me? This looked at sharing and co-ordinating public consultation. It was facilitated by Duncan Wood and Suzanne Harris



National Apprentices Scheme workshop

- Shared Services - which developed a list of blockers to developing shared services – facilitated by Patrick Smith from IBM and Richard Waterhouse from ECC.
- What a performance facilitated by Gill Butterworth from ECC.

View the [workshop presentations here](#)



Strategic Commissioning across Essex workshop



Richard Reeves and John Knell delivering their 80 Minute MBA

A highlight for many was Richard Reeves and John Knell delivering their 80 Minute MBA, which was counted down to the second by digital clock. Drawing on the latest research the presenters focused on 5 topics: Sustainability, Culture, Conversation, Cash and Leadership. Under Sustainability the emphasis was the need for all organisations to change in response to environmental issues, a theme of Conversation was the importance of allowing customers to co-produce services. Under Culture they emphasised the importance of trusting staff and focusing on outcomes rather than obsessing about time employees spent at their desk. They also recommended leaders focus less on strategy and more on execution.



Workshop outcomes being captured

The conference was sponsored by IDeA who facilitated two workshops. There were also a number of stalls showcasing the excellent work of partners across the County. The conference was closed by Pam Challis on behalf of the Essex Partnership Forum.

The partnership team at ECC are now looking at the feedback and workshop outcomes to develop a conference report which will go to the Essex Partnership Forum on 15th September – this date should already be in EPF member's diaries. Meanwhile, Thematic Partnerships are being encouraged to take forward their relevant recommendations from the day.

For more information or any questions about the Essex Conference 2009 please email: info@essexpartnership.org or telephone 01245 437552.

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