Essex commissioners have met with MPs and care industry leaders to discuss how urgent challenges facing health and social care apply to the rest of the country.

The Essex **C**aring **C**ommunities **C**ommission [produced a report](https://www.essex.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2025-05/Caring%20Communities%20Commission%20Report.pdf) in May calling for radical change in health and social care across Essex.

This includes a shift to preventing cases, strengthening connections in local communities and using mayoral powers through the opportunity of devolution in Greater Essex.

The commission’s work mirrors the national picture of health and social care and the government’s aim to create a national care service, following the Casey Commission.

It also comes as the government publishes its 10-year plan for the NHS, shifting focus from hospitals to communities and sickness to prevention.

As a first-of-its-kind commission, the 11 commissioners led by Essex County Councillor Beverley Egan have shared their findings with leading figures to inform the conversation.

A Connected Places partnership was also announced between the commission and Royal Society of Arts. The partnership aims to nurture social connections to create a sense of unity within local communities.

**Councillor Egan said:** “The national picture mirrors what we see here in Essex. We have engaged with frontline workers, service users, local organisations and industry bodies to understand the pressures faced and opportunities for change.

“It is strikingly clear that preventing health and social care cases, rather than just reacting to them, would streamline services for millions of people. Local communities are where most of the heavy lifting is done, which is why our Connected Places partnership with the Royal Society of Arts is so important to fostering connections between people.

“I am delighted we have been able to share our findings with MPs and care industry leaders to help inform the national picture. The commission looks forward to implementing its 23 actions over the coming months and continuing this dialogue.”

**Speaking at the event, the Rt Hon Edward Argar MP said:** “What we’re all trying to do here, irrespective of party politics, is build a way forward that genuinely serves all of our communities.

“The big challenge is both delivering and implementing a plan. Many in this room are delivering every day and seeing the challenges on the ground. What we’ve seen today and with the Essex Caring Communities Commission report is, I think, a huge contribution.

“I expect the government will consider very carefully what you’ve written and what you’ve put in this report. It’s calling for transformative action, advocating a community-led and preventative approach at the local level, underpinned by data. It is practical in its recommendations.

“I very much hope the government, and indeed other local authorities, will look to the work you’ve done as a way to empower communities.”

**Sir Bernard Jenkin MP added:** “As I read through this document, I find a report quite unlike anything else I’ve read.

“It’s a really visionary document about the culture of how we approach all these things. That’s people in the public service, people who work around them and other parts of local government.

“This is an invitation for each and every one of us to think differently and more positively. I really do commend this document and congratulate the Essex Caring Communities Commission for producing it.

“My heart is in my mouth with excitement to see how this is going to turn out. Each and every one of my Essex colleagues will be wanting to participate in this to help make it happen.”

**Councillor Kevin Bentley, Leader of Essex County Council, said:** “I’m very keen as leader that we look to the future of how we care for people, not just now but in the decades to come. How we care for the most vulnerable in society is one of the most important things any society can do.

“This report makes clear that things cannot simply continue as they are. The Essex Caring Communities Commission is prepared to radically transform outcomes for residents while addressing the demand on public services. It’s one of the only reports of its kind in the UK.

“The opportunity of devolution in Greater Essex will enable much change by bringing more power to local people, including the proposed creation of a Mayoral Combined County Authority.”

**Tom Stratton, Chief of Staff at the RSA, said:** “Through our Connected Places partnership with Essex, the RSA is proud to support a bold, place-based approach to one of the most urgent challenges of our time. Social connections shape our wellbeing and opportunities, with the power to prevent ill health and ease pressure on health and social care services.

"By combining the RSA's innovative data analysis with deep community engagement, Connected Places identifies where connections are weakest and co-designs ways to strengthen them.

"We’re excited to work with Essex on this groundbreaking project to improve wellbeing, grow opportunity, and support a more resilient, preventative future for health and care.”

**Cllr Peter Schwier AIEMA**

**Cabinet Member for Environment, Waste Reduction & Recycling**

**Chair, East of England Regional Climate Change Forum**