

Greater Essex Business Board – meet the members

The Greater Essex Business Board is currently made up of 21 members, including its Chair.

The board brings together key businesses, influential and inspiring business leaders and will act as the voice of the private sector in Greater Essex.

Its membership reflects:

- the economy of the area
- different sizes of business
- the geographical local economies
- different perspectives of the business community

Find out more about each of the members below.

Chair:

Julia Gregory - Portfolio Chair and Non-Executive Director

Julia Gregory is a distinguished Chair and Non-Executive Director with nearly three decades of expertise in strategic oversight and transformational leadership. She has a proven track record of fostering growth for public sector and FTSE 100 PLC regulated enterprises. Julia is known for her ability to balance challenge and support, enabling businesses to achieve organisational and cultural change, overcome regulatory obstacles, and mitigate risks.

Julia co-founded InfraNED, an international network inspiring women in the real estate and infrastructure industry to become Non-Executive Directors. She has held various leadership roles, including Chairperson at Biozeroc Limited and Home-Start Herts, Senior Independent Director at Corserv Solutions Ltd and Non-Executive Director at This Land Limited, Milton Keynes Development Partnership LLP, and Gateway 14 Ltd. Her executive career includes significant roles at Ebbsfleet Development Corporation, Buckinghamshire County Council, Gatwick Airport Limited, and Stansted Airport Limited.

Nationally recognised as a leader in the real estate development sector, Julia has over thirty years of experience. She has led the strategic direction of multiple companies and has been involved in delivering nationally significant projects worth up to £7 billion. Julia has extensive experience working with local and national governments, fostering economic development, and promoting social impact.

She is a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Highways and Transportation and was recognised with a lifetime achievement award by the National Businesswomen

Awards in 2023. Julia is committed to promoting equality, diversity, and ethical business practices.

Members:

Alan Shaoul, DP World

Alan Shaoul is the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) at DP World in the UK and a Thames Freeport Board Member. With over two decades of experience in the ports and terminal sector, Alan has held various financial and operational roles, including Business Development Director in DP World's European regional office and Executive Director within EY's Corporate Finance team. He also served as Group Treasurer and Head of Corporate Finance at Euroports Holdings and held several roles within P&O Ports.

Alan holds an MBA from Cass Business School and is responsible for managing DP World's finances in the UK, including financial planning, risk management, and financial reporting. He also leads business development and sustainability initiatives. Alan's current position and commercial skills make him well-placed to contribute to Essex's economic strategy and act as a business ambassador for the region.

Alison Hartley, Teledyne

Alison Hartley is a seasoned senior executive leader with over 25 years of experience in the UK manufacturing industry. She has a strong background in diverse operational leadership roles and is passionate about innovation, improvement, and working with people. Alison holds an MEng in Manufacturing Sciences and Engineering from Strathclyde University and is a certified Lean Six Sigma Master Black Belt.

Throughout her career, Alison has worked with notable companies such as Ford Motor Company, Visteon Engineering Services, and Teledyne e2v. At Teledyne e2v, she has held several key positions, including Vice President of Site Operations, Director of Transformation & Performance Excellence, and Head of Continuous Improvement. In these roles, she has demonstrated exceptional strategic leadership, transforming teams into cohesive, high-performing units, and delivering significant financial benefits through effective portfolio management and hands-on implementation.

Alison is also committed to leadership and cultural transformation on a wider scale. She plays a key role in Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion initiatives and people and skills development. As Vice Chair of the Make UK Eastern Region Advisory Board, she is dedicated to raising the profile of the manufacturing industry, shaping

government policy, advancing skills, creating opportunities, and driving economic growth.

Andrew Taylor, Vistry

Andrew is Group Planning and Sustainability Director at Vistry, one of the UK's largest housebuilders, where he leads major residential developments that create jobs, strengthen infrastructure and support sustainable economic growth. Born, raised and living in Essex, he works closely with local authorities to unlock complex development opportunities and has delivered several large-scale projects across the county.

His career combines development expertise with wider regional priorities. Andrew has represented Uttlesford District Council on the London Stansted Cambridge Consortium, contributed to the Essex Planning Officers Association and chaired initiatives that drive infrastructure investment. Nationally, he chairs the RTPI English Policy Committee, sits on the Home Builders Federation's National Planning Committee and regularly engages with ministers, civil servants and industry leaders on planning and housing policy.

He has delivered collaborative, cross-sector projects, from improving rail connectivity on the West Anglia Main Line to shaping national placemaking guidance through the Future Homes Hub. His roles with South Bank University's Partnership Board, the Future Homes Hub's Placemaking oversight group and Women in Planning reflect his commitment to skills, innovation and inclusive growth.

Ann Scott, Federation of Small Businesses

Ann Scott has been Development Manager for Essex at Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) since September 2022, following a career that spans across the criminal justice system, local authorities, and charitable/corporate sectors.

Established in 1974, FSB is a non-profit making organisation which supports self-employed people and small businesses with up to 250 employees. As experts in business, the FSB offers its members a wide range of vital business services including advice, financial expertise, support and a powerful voice in government. Members get an exclusive package of great value business services including legal advice, financial products and support. These cover a wide range of benefits such as tax, legal and HR, local network groups and business banking. The FSB mission is to help smaller businesses achieve their ambitions.

Bolaji Sofoluwe MBE, ETK group

Bolaji Sofoluwe is an internationalisation and market expansion expert with over 22 years of experience in research, consulting, strategy, and banking. She is passionate about Africa and has worked on a range of projects to support growth and expansion across the continent. As the Managing Director of the Enterprise Trade and Knowledge Group (ETK Group), Bolaji has supervised projects in over 32 African countries and has been recognized as an Export Champion by the UK Department for International Trade in 2020, 2021, and 2023.

Bolaji also serves as the Board Chair at BGEN International, part of BGEN Group, where she has worked with the company through significant growth and change, more recently, its successful acquisition. She is a Non-Executive Director and Advisory Board Member for several small and medium-sized businesses. Bolaji is committed to economic development and has advised governments on export policy. She is an Entrepreneurship Expert at Saïd Business School, University of Oxford, where she provides strategic insights and guest lectures.

Bolaji holds a BA in Languages and Linguistics and an MSc in International Business Leadership and Management from York Management School. She is known for her excellent communication skills, extensive network, and ability to manage and motivate teams across multiple countries.

Chris Lines, Leonardo

Chris Lines is an experienced leader within the Aerospace & Defence industry with 40 years of experience in engineering, project management, procurement, and compliance. He has led various teams, from small engineering groups to large multi-functional projects and procurement teams / departments. Chris has a strong background in design, project management, and procurement, which has enabled him to tackle complex technical issues, manage risks, and lead multi-discipline teams effectively.

Currently, Chris is the VP of Product & Business Compliance at Leonardo, where he leads a UK compliance team with his role focussing on ensuring compliance with all applicable laws and regulations, covering areas such as ESG, chemical and environmental regulations, and governance. Chris also represents Leonardo on several boards, including Basildon Business Leaders, South East Institute of Technology (SEIoT) and the International Aerospace Environmental Group (IAEG).

Chris has a collaborative management style, emphasizing coaching and development. He has a proven track record in strategic leadership, supplier relationship management, and delivering significant business benefits through effective procurement and compliance strategies.

Edwin Strang, Industrial Chemicals

Edwin is Managing Director at Industrial Chemicals Ltd the largest independent company in its sector. Operating a number of sites nationally with 480 staff, the majority of which are based at sites in Grays, Thurrock and the Head Office in Brentwood. A family-owned business with a £188 million turnover and a key supplier to critical national infrastructure providers (mainly water companies) and a strategic supplier to Procter & Gamble London Plant based in West Thurrock.

Edwin Strang has a diverse work experience spanning several industries, including as Non-Executive Director at WITT Limited, where he was involved with the development of a clean energy generation technology business.

Edwin founded and operated ROSS STRANG LIMITED, offering business advice and virtual finance director services. Earlier in his career, Edwin worked as the Finance Director and Company Secretary at Niscayah Limited, and as the Group Finance Director at electronic security specialists Bell Group PLC. Edwin also gained international experience as the European Operations Director at Powercom, part of Briggs & Stratton Corporation.

Jacqui Dallimore, Roslin Beach Hotel

Jacqui is the Managing Director, Roslin Beach Hotel based in Southend-On-Sea. Jacqui is a hospitality and business development specialist with over 18 years experience in the role.

Overseeing all aspects of hotel management Jacqui has a good understanding of what it takes to succeed in the sector and recognises the value the role of Tourism plays in the local economy. Jacqui's experience includes hotel operations, guest satisfaction, staff development, financial performance and brand reputation. Implementing new business initiatives and diversification, marketing communications, events and partnerships with local businesses. Jacqui brings a passion for hospitality and a strong commitment to excellence, quality, and innovation. Jacqui is equally passionate about the fabulous opportunities offered by the city of Southend and Greater Essex as a whole and is looking forward to working with others in the business community to influence perceptions and understanding of the area.

Lara Fox, Objective

Lara Fox is an accomplished Managing Director with extensive experience in technology and a strong commitment to community. She leads Objective Computing Ltd, a technology company specialising in software and data solutions.

Lara's professional journey is marked by her strategic leadership, business growth, and innovation. She has a proven track record of navigating both local and

international markets, identifying opportunities, and driving economic growth through technology. Her educational background includes an MBA with Distinction from Essex University and a Certificate in Marketing from Oxford College of Marketing.

In addition to her professional roles, Lara is deeply invested in the Essex business community. She has served as a board member for the South East Local Economic Partnership and the Success Essex Board, advocating for regional economic growth. Lara is also an Essex Community Foundation member and fundholder, demonstrating her commitment to fostering a thriving local ecosystem.

Mike Hardaker, Manchester Airport Group (MAG) / Stansted Airport

Mike is the Chief Asset and Development Director at Stansted. He has responsibility for the capital spend and infrastructure development at the airport. This is a critical role in the airport and the region's growth following Manchester Airport Group's £1.1bn capital investment announcement earlier this year, which will enable the airport to grow its capacity by a third, up to 43 million passengers per year.

Before joining MAG he was the Major Projects Director for Transport for London and spent 10 years in the Middle East with Dubai Airports as Development Director.

Ryan Liversage, Morgan Sindall Construction

Ryan Liversage is an experienced Area Director with over 19 years in the construction industry. He currently serves as the Area Director for Essex at Morgan Sindall Construction Ltd, where he is responsible for the overall performance of the Essex region, including profitability, project delivery, work-winning, and health and safety. Ryan has a strong background in commercial management and has held various senior roles at Wates Construction Ltd, including Regional Commercial Director and Commercial Manager.

Ryan is deeply committed to the Greater Essex environment and has spent his entire life in Essex. His recent appointment as Area Director is a source of pride for him and his family. He is passionate about leaving a positive legacy in the county and is actively involved in developing economic strategies, negotiating private/public sector partnerships, and engaging the wider business community as ambassadors. Ryan's extensive network of contacts and his dedication to the success of Essex make him a valuable asset to the region.

Rupert Wood, Almcor

Rupert is Head of Strategic Land at ALMCOR where he is responsible for a portfolio of large-scale complex regeneration projects in key growth locations – including Thames Enterprise Park in Thurrock.

Thames Enterprise Park is one of the largest and most significant energy-led regeneration projects in the UK. It will create a new economic centre for advanced

manufacturing and logistics, innovation, and fuels of the future by revitalising 700 acres of the former Coryton Oil Refinery. It is adjacent to London Gateway and part of the Thames Freeport.

Rupert is an executive director with 30 years of strategic and operational expertise in UK real estate across sectors including industrial and logistics, office, residential, mixed-use regeneration, and energy.

Prior to joining ALMCOR, Rupert worked for St. Modwen, a FTSE 250 company, as a senior executive, where he was latterly responsible for the group's £750m income generating portfolio across all real estate sectors and St. Modwen Energy. Before St Modwen, he was at Lendlease managing major urban regeneration developments in Norwich, Warrington, and the Shell Centre redevelopment on the South Bank.

In addition, Rupert is a non-executive director of the Thames Estuary Growth Board and a member of LandAid's Fundraising & Engagement Committee, the property industry charity working to 'End Youth Homelessness' in the UK.

Ruth Gilbert, Essex Chambers of Commerce

Ruth Gilbert is Chief Executive of Essex Chambers of Commerce, bringing more than 30 years' experience leading organisations, advising government and working with businesses to deliver economic growth, workforce development and organisational transformation.

Her career spans the private, public and voluntary sectors. A former Chief Executive, management consultant and legally trained strategic adviser, Ruth has worked for Unilever and advised major UK and international organisations including Goldman Sachs, HSBC, Hudson Global, Shell UK, IBM and the Ministry of Defence. She has supported organisations through investment, mergers and acquisitions, growth, turnaround and change, and has advised ministers and Parliament on workforce and skills policy.

Between 2022 and 2025, Ruth held senior interim leadership roles at Essex County Council, initially leading on skills and employability and subsequently serving as Interim Director of Sustainable Growth. She established the Essex Growth Agency, created an integrated Business and Skills Growth Service, propagated the Greater Essex Business Board and the first funded delivery plan for the employer-led Local Skills Improvement Plan with Essex Chambers of Commerce.

Earlier in her career, Ruth served as Chief Executive and Principal in further and higher education and founded and led the national Career Colleges Trust with Lord Baker and Luke Johnson, working with industry leaders from Google, Amazon, as well as the construction, care and hospitality industries. She continues to hold non-executive, governance and advisory roles across education, skills and organisational development.

As Chief Executive of Essex Chambers, Ruth is committed to strengthening the voice of business and building practical partnerships that make Greater Essex one

of the UK's best places to invest, innovate, recruit and grow. She brings extensive commercial, policy and governance experience, together with a strong focus on converting business priorities into practical action.

Steve Beel, Freeport East

Steve Beel is the Chief Executive of Freeport East, where he leads the delivery of the freeport policy through Freeport East, based around the ports of Harwich, Felixstowe, and Ipswich. With over 20 years of experience working at the interface of public and private sectors, Steve has a strong background in economic development, infrastructure, inward investment, ports, energy, international trade, and diplomacy. He has held various senior roles, including Development Director & Deputy High Commissioner at the UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office in Zambia, Partner at Ofgem the energy regulator, and Senior Consultant at PwC.

Steve is known for his collaborative and inclusive leadership style, strong commercial skills, and financial awareness. He has a proven track record of leading major, complex transactions, organizational change, and multi-million-pound operational and delivery budgets. Steve is also actively involved in community and sports governance, having served as Treasurer of the Zambia Hockey Association and a school governor.

Steve Mannix, Mercury Theatre

Steve is a senior cultural leader with nearly 40 years' experience across the arts, culture and charitable sectors in London and Essex. Since 2014, he has served as Chief Executive of the Mercury Theatre, Colchester, overseeing major organisational growth and leading a team of 146 staff who deliver work to 130,000 audience members annually.

He has extensive governance experience, serving on Boards and Advisory Groups including Visit Essex, the Essex Cultural Steering Group, the Greater Essex Cultural Advisory Board, All In (Arts Council England's access scheme), the National Touring Advisory Board and the Essex Music Service. He also chairs the Colchester BID Leisure and Night time Economy Board and the LGBT+ charity Outhouse, and is an Ambassador for both the City of Colchester and the County of Essex.

A committed advocate for the cultural sector, Steve led the £14.9 million Mercury Rising redevelopment and is passionate about widening access to arts, culture, heritage and learning, particularly for low income families and marginalised communities.

Stuart Rimmer, Thames Freeport

Stuart is an experienced CEO in economic development and investment, education and skills and public private partnerships sectors. He is Interim Chief Executive Officer of Thames Freeport, where he leads the organisation's strategy to drive inward investment, job creation and economic regeneration across the Thames Estuary. He joined Thames Freeport in 2023 and previously served as Deputy CEO & COO, with responsibility for skills and employment.

Stuart has more than 15 years' senior leadership experience across education, economic development and consultancy. He was formerly Chief Executive of a college group, where he led major skills and transformation programmes aligned to regional business needs. He was awarded an MBE for services to further education and is recognised for his work linking skills, industry and inclusive economic growth. He is Visiting Associate Professor in leadership at BPP University and Visiting Senior Fellow at University of Suffolk.

Tim Price, Park City Consulting Ltd

Tim Price is a seasoned business leader with over 30 years of experience in various sectors, including manufacturing, professional services, and business process outsourcing. Tim is the joint Owner and Operations Director at Park City Consulting Ltd, a company specializing in HR, Health & Safety, and training solutions for SMEs. Tim is known for his strategic vision, operational excellence, and ability to build high-performing teams.

Throughout his career, Tim has held several prominent positions, including CEO of JL French, Chairman of Colchester Ambassadors, past Chairman of Essex IoD, The Cast Metals Federation and Vice Chairman of the Essex Employment and Skills Board. His leadership has been instrumental in driving business growth, implementing lean manufacturing techniques, and fostering strong relationships with stakeholders.

Tim is passionate about contributing to the economic development of Greater Essex and is committed to promoting a positive narrative and collaborative approach in his roles.

Trevor Scott, Simarco

Trevor Scott is an accomplished Managing Director with extensive experience in logistics and supply chain management. He currently leads Simarco International Ltd, one of the UK's leading independent logistics companies, with a turnover of £96 million and a team of 400 employees. Trevor has a proven track record of driving significant revenue growth, optimizing supply chain efficiency, and reducing operational costs.

Throughout his career, Trevor has held various senior roles, including Supply Chain Director and General Manager at Simarco International Ltd, Head of Production & Logistics at Kao Group/Molton Brown, and Head of Supply Chain at Perry Ellis

Europe Ltd. His major achievements include leading the company through significant revenue growth, managing end-to-end logistics operations, and establishing strategic partnerships with key suppliers and customers.

Trevor is also actively involved in the community, serving as Vice Chair for the International Trade Group at the Suffolk Chamber of Commerce and holding various volunteer positions within Essex County Council and the education sector. He is passionate about promoting business growth and supporting customers and organizations seeking guidance.

Professor Mohammad M Ali, Anglia Ruskin University (ARU)

Mohammad is currently the Pro Vice-Chancellor and Dean in the Faculty of Business and Law at ARU. He is a specialist in Business Management. Before his life as an academic, Mohammad worked first as a consultant engineer and then as a supply chain manager in the automotive industry. During his tenure in the industry Mohammad has worked on various projects including value analysis, demand planning, inventor control and ERP/MRP implementations.

Mohammad holds a doctorate from Brunel University. His thesis discussed various new collaborative forecasting approaches in supply chains. He has completed a MSc in Business Performance Management, an Executive Certificate in Leadership and Management from Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and a postgraduate diploma in Information Technology. Mohammad's first degree was in Mechanical Engineering.

Dr Rob Singh, University of Essex

Dr Rob Singh has been Director of the Research and Enterprise Office (REO) since 2020. The REO is the area of the university that provides professional service support to researchers.

Prior to this Rob was Acting Director and, before that, was Deputy Director Enterprise, responsible for Knowledge Exchange activity. Rob has worked in research support roles for over 17 years, previously at the University of Hull, where he focused on commercialisation.

Before this he worked in the private sector looking at management and protection of intellectual property in a patent attorney firm.

He has completed an MBA that included a national study on university spin-out formation practices and has developed a number of spin-outs and licence deals. He has a backgrounded in lifesciences.

Rob represents the University with a number of regional stakeholders he has been actively involved in local enterprise partnership boards and been a director of Essex Chambers and a local enterprise agency. He is currently an elected member of the CBI East of England Council, a Director on the Freeport East Board, a member of the Heart of Greenstead Board and a director of University of Essex cyber-security spin-out, Metrarc Ltd. He is on the board of University of Essex subsidiary companies Knowledge Gateway Ltd and University of Essex Enterprises Ltd. Rob is passionate about the contribution that research and innovation can make to society and enabling students, graduates to develop their own businesses.