Circular Economy and the Library of Things Project

Be part of a new library where residents can borrow things as well as books! As part of the Circular Economy Project, Essex County Council has launched a new service: the Essex Library of Things. Find out how you can get involved to help reduce waste and support our communities.

What is a circular economy?

Circular economy principles are based on moving away from a "throw-away society" to one that minimises waste and pollution. It keeps products and materials in use for as long as possible and supports the protection of natural resources.

Engagement opportunities for businesses

The Library of Things is part of the 'BLUEPRINT to a Circular Economy Project' – an European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) funded project led by Essex County Council. The new service offers residents the chance to borrow items, instead of buying brand new products. This makes sense for a variety of reasons – for example someone might need to use a tool just once or or they might not have the space to store a bulky item. It helps to reduce waste by discouraging new items from being created and purchased. Instead, it encourages a sharing economy where items are kept in use for as long as possible and by as many people as possible.

The Library of Things Catalogue will include items such as DIY and gardening tools, party decorations, hiking/camping equipment, kitchen appliances and much more.

The Library of Things Team is always looking to expand the catalogue and improve its service. If your business would like to support the success of this project by donating new or display items from the categories listed above, please get in touch today!

Email us to find out more.

Assistance to businesses

Essex County Council will support sponsors by providing them with a media package, including press release and social media templates to promote their involvement in the project.

Sponsors will also be featured on our social media channels and have the chance to be listed on our Circular Economy Directory.

The BLUEPRINT Project will be launching a newsletter, in which sponsors can be featured. We also work closely with the Love Essex Team, who will list sponsors in their newsletter, which reaches over 18,000 residents.

In terms of practicalities, Essex County Council will take care of the storage, cleaning and maintenance of the items. They will also be responsible for PAT testing and ensuring adequate insurance is in place.

If you are interested in donating products to the Library of Things, your next steps will be:

- **Contact us via email or social media**
- **Review the wish list we will send you**
- **Tell us what you can donate and when**
- **Agree delivery with us**
- **Tell everyone about the new project you are contributing to!**

Circular Economy and Social Value

Circular economy refers to an economic system that aims to eliminate waste through the continual use and re-use of resources. As a business your organisation can create social value when you support the implementation of circular economy solution, by being a partner that provides goods and services.

As a potential supplier to ECC you could include a contribution to the Essex Library of Things as a social value offer when bidding for ECC contracts.   using the Essex TOMs. Measure ECC 32 (that covers in-kind contributions to local community projects (value of materials measured in £). Please note we do not accept cash donations.

There are some important principles that any public procurement must follow. We outline a summary here, but please ensure that you always read the tender document carefully and follow the instructions contained therein.

Firstly, any social value offer must be relevant and proportionate to the subject matter of the contract being procured. So any offer must relate to the contract for which you are tendering for.

Social value offers must not include activities that are:
- Already part of the main product or service specification;(i.e. that you have already been asked to deliver as part of the core specification); or
- paid for by a 3rd party.

Essex Library of Things
Our place to reuse, borrow and share

Essex County Council