

20th November 2019

Report of	Assistant Director of Policy & Corporate	Author	Matthew Brown
			 507348
Title	North Essex Economic Strategy		
Wards affected	All wards affected		

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report seeks Cabinet approval of the North Essex Economic Strategy. The report presents the future ambition and vision for economic growth across the North Essex area as set out in the strategy, an overview of the partnership through which this has been developed and an outline of the way in which the aims of the strategy will be delivered.
- 1.2 The North Essex Economic Strategy (NEES) 2040 has been developed through a partnership of Braintree District, Colchester Borough, Essex County, Tendring District and Uttlesford District Councils.
- 1.3 The partners recognise that the challenges and opportunities affecting North Essex will best be addressed through a collaborative approach to achieving inclusive and sustainable economic growth. The shared ambition is to promote, plan and deliver sustainable, strategic growth at scale and over the long-term; providing the housing, employment, necessary supporting infrastructure and innovations required to ensure the best outcomes for current and future communities of North Essex.
- 1.4 The Strategy provides a platform for strategic intervention at a scale which will achieve transformation in the overall economic prosperity of the North Essex area (and compliments local economic activity which the partners deliver). The partnership between the 5 Councils is set within a structure which brings the required leadership from Members and senior officers together with technical input from economic growth teams. The North Essex Economic Board, made up of Portfolio Holders from each of the Partners, has led the development of the Strategy.
- 1.5 The ideas and priorities set out in the North Essex Economic Strategy will contribute to both the Essex Prosperity Prospectus and South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) Local Industrial Strategy. The Strategy will also form the basis for continued promotion of North Essex to Government, key national agencies and industry.
- 1.6 The Strategy has been articulated through an overall Vision and 4 related Missions:

The Vision:

“North Essex is a high-value, productive and sustainable economy. People choose to live and work locally, in new and established communities that are well connected and inspire innovation and creativity”.

The Missions:

1. Driving innovation and technology adoption
2. Developing a skilled and resilient workforce
3. Creating a network of distinctive and cohesive places
4. Growing a greener, more sustainable economy.

- 1.7 Alongside this Strategy a rolling 'action plan' will be developed, owned by the North Essex Economic Board, through which business cases for interventions can be identified, scoped and further developed. This will enable the Board to consider options in relation to each proposed action, identify lead partners and consider potential risks, with a view to working collectively on shared objectives. The action plan will be subject to annual review and will be monitored and updated over the initial five years of this Strategy.
- 1.8. To summarise the current status of this work and subsequent actions; the North Essex Economic Strategy (NEES) is currently being taken through respective approval processes by the Partners. Following this the key next steps are:
 1. Inclusion of the NEES strategic priorities in the Essex Prosperity Prospectus and the SELEP Local Industrial Strategy;
 2. Development of an Action Plan and Success Measures;
 3. Development of a Communications Plan; and
 4. Consideration of the partnership approach and how this will develop in the future.

2. Recommended Decision

- 2.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:
 - a) approves the North Essex Economic Strategy;
 - b) notes that strategy's priorities will contribute to the Essex Prosperity Prospectus and the SELEP Local Industrial Strategy;
 - c) notes the partnership structures which are in place to facilitate the strategy;
 - d) notes that an Action Plan will be developed to guide delivery of key actions; and
 - e) notes that a process for reporting progress will be established by the partners.

3. Reason for Recommended Decision

- 3.1 Approval of the Strategy will enable the 4 North Essex Local Authorities with Essex County Council to maximise their capability to influence national government for the support and investment this sub-region needs to deliver its economic development ambitions, whilst providing a framework which will guide the development of specific economic development interventions at a locality level, ensuring these are strategically linked and have the highest possible impact.

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 No alternative options have been presented to Cabinet.

5. Background Information

- 5.1 In 2017 Government launched its Industrial Strategy aimed at boosting UK productivity by focussing on five key foundations; ideas, people, infrastructure, the business environment and places. The Industrial Strategy also identified four 'grand challenges' which the UK will need to address over the coming decades, related to our ageing population, the growing importance of artificial intelligence and the data-driven economy, the need for a new model of environmentally-sustainable 'clean growth' and the changing nature of mobility and transport.

Further details on the Government's Industrial Strategy can be accessed via the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/the-uks-industrial-strategy>

- 5.2 In 2018 Government mandated that every Local Enterprise Partnership should produce a Local Industrial Strategy (LIS). The Government is therefore working with the South East Local Enterprise Partnership to prepare its LIS, setting out how it will contribute to productivity growth and respond to the 'grand challenges', and to inform the LEP's approach to any future local growth funding.
- 5.3 In order to inform and influence the development of the SELEP LIS, work is underway to prepare a Prosperity Prospectus for Essex to set out Essex's ambitions for long-term sustainable and inclusive prosperity and to outline where we must act in the next two or three years to achieve this.

North Essex Approach

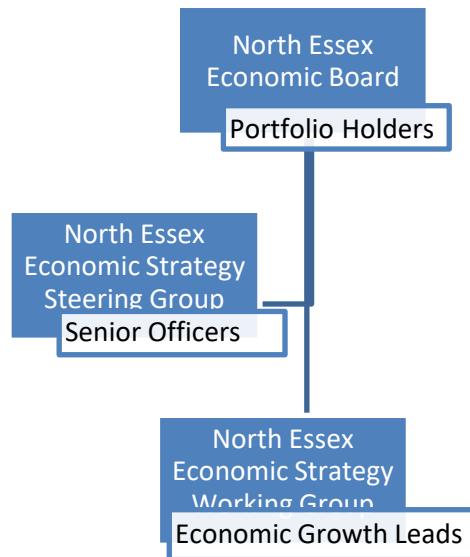
- 5.4 The North Essex Economic Strategy (NEES) has been developed through a partnership of Braintree District, Colchester Borough, Essex County, Tendring District and Uttlesford District Councils

Figure 1-1: North Essex in context Source: Produced by SQW 2019. Licence 100030994 Contains OS data © Crown copyright [and database right] [2019]



The NEES provides a platform for strategic intervention at a scale which will achieve transformation in the overall economic prosperity of the North Essex area (and compliments local economic activity which the partners deliver).

- 5.5 The partnership between the 5 partner Councils is set within a structure which brings the required leadership from Members and senior officers together with technical input from economic growth teams as outlined below:



- 5.6 The North Essex Economic Strategy drives forward the aspirations of the North Essex Economic Board, its political leaders and individual Local Authorities to come together and drive forward a collective long-term ambition for economic growth across North Essex.

The ideas and priorities set out in the North Essex Economic Strategy will contribute to both the Essex Prosperity Prospectus and SELEP Local Industrial Strategy. The Strategy will also form the basis for continued promotion of North Essex to Government, key national agencies and industry.

North Essex Economic Strategy

- 5.7 The strategy has been developed with the ambition to achieve transformation in North Essex by 2040, in recognition that the inherent challenges and opportunities can only be fully addressed through a sustained focus over that time frame.
- 5.8 Although this Strategy takes a long-term view, actions taken in the shorter term will shape the direction of future growth. Much is happening already as 'business as usual', for example, in land use and infrastructure planning, and the Strategy does not duplicate this. But within a dynamic, changing economy, there should be opportunities to develop new solutions to the challenges faced, and to test out new ideas.
- 5.9 The Strategy has been articulated through an overall Vision and 4 related Missions:



5.10 The Vision set out in the Strategy is:

“North Essex is a high-value, productive and sustainable economy. People choose to live and work locally, in new and established communities that are well connected and inspire innovation and creativity”

5.11 To deliver the vision four key ‘missions’ have been identified that will be the focus for the partner’s shared activity over the next five years, with each mission providing a framework to consider, and drive forward, new ideas and solutions:

Mission 1: Driving innovation and technology adoption

Our vision seeks an economy that is ‘high value and productive’. To support this, we will develop opportunities for innovative businesses to grow, technology clusters to emerge and for all businesses to take advantage of measures to increase technology adoption and drive forward productivity.

Mission 2: Developing a skilled and resilient workforce

From an economy-wide perspective, a skilled workforce is essential to productivity growth. From an individual perspective, the ability to adapt and develop new skills is essential in driving opportunity, better pay and progression in work. Looking ahead to 2040, we aim to develop a workforce – of all ages and in all communities – able to contribute fully to North Essex’s growth opportunities.

Mission 3: Creating a network of distinctive and cohesive places

North Essex is a diverse place, with strong local identities and a strong ‘quality of life’ offer. We want to preserve and enhance this, celebrating our unique local characteristics while ensuring that all our towns and communities contribute to and benefit from economic growth within a complementary ‘network’ of places. This will mean investing to reduce local disparities and strengthening our internal connections and our links with our neighbours, so that people and businesses can access new opportunities.

Mission 4: Growing a greener, more sustainable economy

Over the long term, we want to ensure that North Essex is a leading example of sustainable development – within existing communities, through our ambitious proposals for new Garden Communities and through lower carbon, innovative businesses.

Delivery

5.12 The partners recognise that the economic challenges and opportunities affecting respective areas will best be addressed through a collaborative approach to achieving inclusive and sustainable economic growth. The shared ambition is to promote, plan and deliver sustainable, strategic growth at scale and over the long-term; providing the housing, employment, necessary supporting infrastructure and innovations required to ensure the best outcomes for current and future communities of North Essex.

- 5.13 Alongside this Strategy a rolling 'action plan' will be developed, owned by the North Essex Economic Board, through which business cases for interventions can be identified, scoped and further developed. This will enable the Board to consider options in relation to each proposed action, identify lead partners and consider potential risks, with a view to working collectively on shared objectives. The action plan will be subject to annual review and will be monitored and updated over the initial five years of this Strategy.
- 5.14 The partnership structure will evolve following approval of the Strategy and this will be in the context of the following key considerations:
- Potential expansion of the North Essex Economic Board to include key stakeholders and business leaders;
 - Engagement at national and regional level to promote and lobby for North Essex;
 - Effective delivery of the strategy's Action Plan through joint working; and
 - Identification of Success Measures.

6. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications

- 6.1 Consideration will be given to equality and diversity issues in respect of individual schemes, initiatives and projects that contribute to the delivery of the NEES through the development of the Action Plan.
- 6.2 Essex County Council is currently preparing an Equality Impact Assessment for the NEES. Further Equality Impact Assessments will be completed as part of implementing the specific activities within the Action Plan when this is developed, and the Council will have due regard to its Public Sector Duty continuing to work to tackle discrimination and inequality and help to create a fairer society, improve housing choice and social mobility (including for protected groups).

7. Strategic Plan References

- 7.1 The following Strategic Plan References are relevant to the NEES:

Growth:

- Ensuring all residents benefit from the growth of the borough
- Help make sure Colchester is a welcoming place for all residents and visitors
- Ensure residents benefit from Colchester's economic growth with skills, jobs and improving infrastructure
- Promote inward investment in the borough
- Develop jobs, homes, infrastructure and communities to meet the borough's future needs by creating new Garden Communities
- Work with partners to create a shared vision for a vibrant town centre.

Opportunity:

- Promote and enhance Colchester borough's heritage and visitor attractions to increase visitor numbers and to support job creation
- Encourage green technologies through initiatives such as SMART Cities
- Help business to flourish by supporting infrastructure for start-up businesses and facilitating a Business Improvement District.

Wellbeing:

- Target support to the most disadvantaged residents and communities.

8. Consultation

- 8.1 The strategy has been developed following full consultation with each of the Councils at both Member and officer level. In parallel, a series of wider consultations took place. These included two workshop discussions with business, local authority and further and higher education representatives (held in Harwich and Colchester), as well as bilateral consultations with a small number of Essex businesses. Regional level consultation has also taken place with strategic stakeholders including SE LEP, the Essex Business Board and North Essex Garden Communities Ltd.
- 8.2 Where specific initiatives and interventions are developed that facilitate the delivery of the NEES, consultation will be considered for these projects as appropriate as part of the development of the Action Plan.

9. Publicity Considerations

- 9.1 None specific to this report.

10. Financial implications

- 10.1 There are no financial implications at this stage of the development of the NEES.
- 10.2 In due course there will be a requirement for Partners to consider funding options for projects to be developed and delivered as part of the Action Plan, including consideration of external funding opportunities (e.g. the Government's Shared Prosperity Fund).

11. Health, Wellbeing and Community Safety Implications

- 11.1 There are no specific implications but generally the proposal aims to promote positive health and well-being for our residents.

12. Health and Safety Implications

- 12.1 There are no specific concerns at this stage of the development of the NEES. Risk will be assessed at individual project level and addressed at that stage.

13. Risk Management Implications

- 13.1 No implications are identified at this stage. Risk will be assessed at individual project level and addressed at that stage.

Appendices: Appendix A: The North Essex Economic Strategy.

Background Papers: None.