

# HARLOW ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

# INTRODUCTION

## Harlow Economic Development Strategy

This document sets out Harlow's Economic Development Strategy for the next 5 years, building on the incredible success of the past five years in terms of business investment, new jobs, transport upgrade announcements and new housing developments.

Focusing on the three themes of 1) business and jobs; 2) place; and 3) people we set out our priorities and ideas for delivery which will lead to:

- I. 10,000 new jobs in Harlow.
- II. 16,000 new homes in Harlow and neighbouring areas.
- III. A world class location for ICT, Advanced Manufacturing and Life Sciences Industries, complementing the offer from Cambridge and London.
- IV. Measures to ensure residents benefit from new job opportunities.
- V. Higher quality of life, with a thriving culture and leisure offer, with increased health and wellbeing outcomes.
- VI. A vibrant, creative Town Centre that is an asset to our communities and businesses.

### **RECENT INVESTMENTS AND SUCCESSES DEMONSTRATE THAT HARLOW IS A KEY UK LOCATION FOR ICT, AEROSPACE AND LIFE SCIENCES INDUSTRIES.**

**Harlow is growing in significance as a location for world class knowledge-based businesses** and organisations including Life Sciences (Public Health England), ICT & Digital (Arrow Electronics) and Advanced Manufacturing (Raytheon). There is increasing recognition that Harlow has an important role to play in delivering economic growth, particularly with an emphasis on our key growth sectors of life sciences, advanced manufacturing and ICT/Digital. This is evidenced by Government decisions to award Harlow an Enterprise Zone, and to locate the new Public Health England headquarters and Science Hub here.

**The renaissance of Harlow as a location for high tech industries builds on its strong legacy.** Harlow has long been a location for innovation – it was where fibre-optic telecommunication was invented, and where devices delivering asthma medication were developed. Innovation will continue to be the hallmark of our economy going forward.

**Recent growth in jobs and businesses.** Harlow now has 41,000 jobs and the business population has grown at almost twice the rate of the national average.

**Harlow Council has proven that it can have the vision and leadership to succeed.** Harlow Council took the initial bold steps to seek Enterprise Zone status, which included gaining control of some of the key sites which were then designated as the Science and Technology Park, and then attracted Vinci as a development partner. Harlow Council has taken a leading role and has secured effective partnerships with the private sector.

### **HARLOW OFFERS DISTINCT ADVANTAGES AS AN ECONOMIC LOCATION**

**Harlow lies at the centre of a rich and diverse workforce catchment that brings in talent for its knowledge industries.** Harlow lies within easy reach of London, Cambridge, and the towns of East Hertfordshire and West Essex.

**Harlow is on or adjacent to high capacity transport infrastructure and international gateways.** As part of the West Anglia Main Line and situated with easy access to the M11 Motorway, our proximity to a growing London Stansted Airport affords both Harlow and the London Stansted Cambridge corridor, access to international markets, jobs and business opportunities.

**Harlow is the growth node for technology and knowledge businesses,** strategically situated at the heart of the London Stansted Cambridge corridor, well-connected to London and Cambridge. Harlow can play a new role in relation to London, in supporting and benefitting from London's economic success, providing mutually beneficial economic activity as our global capital city continues to evolve.

## **WITH THE OPPORTUNITY TO PROVIDE A HIGH-QUALITY LOCATION FOR BUSINESSES AND RESIDENTS**

**Harlow and its neighbouring localities are poised to deliver high quality homes, communities and business locations.** The Government's decision to support Garden Town status for Harlow and Gilston Park, delivering in excess of 16,000 homes will place an even greater emphasis on the ability of Harlow and its environs to deliver space for quality businesses and employment with the necessary infrastructure in place to support that growth. It is in this context and the environment of uncertain impacts generated by Brexit that Harlow must look to the future and make the best possible case to attract investment, business and employment.

## **Harlow faces several critical challenges to delivering shared prosperity**

### **SECURING INVESTMENT, JOBS AND NEW BUSINESS GROWTH**

**Continuing to ensure that business investment and development continues.** Harlow's economy has changed dramatically from its New Town origins. Large companies are no longer the hallmark of our economy, as only 0.5% of Harlow businesses have 250 or more employees. Manufacturing has declined but still remains a very important element of our economy supporting 3,500 jobs. The economic sectors offering growth potential for Harlow and therefore those that are prioritised in this strategy are ICT, Advanced Manufacturing and Life Sciences Industries. These sectors are based not only on historic, but current economic strengths and are reflective of economic growth sectors in the wider London Stansted Cambridge corridor. In addition to this, and linked to the ambition to provide a high quality place, supporting the growth of our cultural and creative assets to support economic and social value, and therefore the development of the visitor economy will be an area of focus.

**There is the potential for 9,000 jobs to be delivered in the Harlow Enterprise Zone and Public Health England.** In the context of Harlow's employee jobs peaking at 41,300 in 2008, falling to 37,000 in 2011, and recovering to 41,000 in 2015, it is critical to continue to work hard to maintain this momentum and secure the inward investment successes of the Harlow Enterprise Zone and the establishment of Public Health England.

**There will also be many supply chain and follow-on opportunities from the Enterprise Zone and Public Health England.** Public Health England is developing an open campus approach that will actively encourage the co-location of a supply chain, research partners and supporting services. Harlow's business stock has also grown from 2,060 in 2010 to 2,750 in 2016 at a growth rate almost twice the national

average. There will be opportunities for local entrepreneurs and new business investors – and our Strategy must deliver support to make this happen.

## **ENSURING THAT LOCAL EMPLOYERS ACCESS THE SKILLS THEY NEED AND THAT LOCAL RESIDENTS CAN BENEFIT**

**Ensuring that local employers can access the skills and qualifications that they need.** What is clear is that our labour market skills need to evolve to support the identified growth sectors. Skills gaps are identified in each of these sectors and therefore education and skills provision needs to meet not only current needs but anticipate the needs of future economic growth.

**Ensuring local residents benefit.** Currently, Harlow residents do not take advantage of the higher-skilled, higher-paid jobs in the Town. This problem is illustrated by the fact that residents are earning approximately, on average £60 per week less than the average pay available for the jobs present in Harlow. Our Strategy needs to bring learning and skills to the fore to enable Harlow residents to take advantage of the better paid opportunities on offer in the town. This will ensure that economic prosperity in our businesses translates to local residents and the local community.

## **ADDRESSING OUR INFRASTRUCTURE DEFICITS, WHICH ARE PREVENTING PRIVATE AND PUBLIC INVESTMENT**

**Our infrastructure deficits must also be addressed to achieve economic success.** We welcome the recent announcement of Government funding to deliver a new junction on the M11 north of Harlow (junction 7a) and this, along with associated highway access improvement, is imperative for Harlow to meet current and future economic and housing growth. The new junction must be delivered as soon as practicably possible and this means with the appropriate linking highway through Gilden Way. This will also enable an additional link road that would deliver access to the north of the town, supporting future housing and economic growth. The new junction 7a is imperative to the Harlow Enterprise Zone development and therefore the delivery of jobs at that location.

## **DELIVERING THE TOP QUALITY LOCATIONS AND COMMUNITIES THAT KNOWLEDGE-BASED BUSINESSES AND THEIR EMPLOYEES DEMAND**

Our ability to attract and retain leading technology firms and knowledge-based industries is dependent upon our ability to attract and retain the talent that they employ. Attracting talent relies on our ability to offer exciting career opportunities, host leading global firms, and provide vibrant, affordable and accessible homes and communities. One of the clear findings from the London Stansted Cambridge Corridor Growth Commission was that all international competitor regions are promoting or have established comprehensive place-making strategies and cross-jurisdictional collaboration, with the express intention of increasing the quality and competitiveness of location for these firms and the talent which they depend upon. A hall mark of successful locations is a strong cultural and leisure offer, with a quality of place that supports good health and wellbeing outcomes.

## **Setting out our economic strategy: key principles**

This document proposes a strategy and suggests a range of actions to deliver which will realise our Harlow Ambition and ensure that prosperity is shared.

Whilst there is much more detail in the following chapters, there are several important principles which will drive every aspect of the strategy:

**Principle 1: Maintaining and delivering on the momentum achieved for the local economy.** Harlow Council wants to make more from the fact we are already a successful business location – as evidenced by our successful global firms and the growth of our business stock numbers is almost twice the national average.

**Principle 2: Keeping the pressure on to deliver the transport and enabling infrastructure that is critical to our major developments.** Harlow Council will continue to campaign tirelessly for the delivery of major transport enablers such as motorway junctions and rail service upgrades, as well as superfast broadband.

**Principle 3: Sharing prosperity.** The Council will strive to support inclusive economic growth whereby all sections of our community and businesses are able to benefit from increased economic prosperity.

**Principle 4: Working in partnership.** The Council cannot achieve the activities and outcomes outlined here alone and we will work with partners, both within the public and private sector – within Harlow, with our neighbours and with Cambridge and London. Our approach to the delivery of the Harlow Enterprise Zone is a clear demonstration of this commitment to partnership.

**Principle 5: Financial sustainability.** From 2020 onwards the government has stated that 100% of business rates collected will remain with the local authority. At this stage, it is unclear how this and the more recent announcements of increased small business rates relief will impact the Council's finances. Therefore, the Council's Economic Development Strategy needs to support increased volumes and/or values of commercial floor-space in order that the local authority can deliver and sustain public services that our community needs. Our Strategy must therefore address how this can best be achieved.

# ECONOMIC PRIORITIES AND OBJECTIVES

## 1. Businesses and jobs

### CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

**Harlow has the opportunity to further capitalise on recent successes in retaining and attracting large businesses in knowledge-based industries and in growing the entrepreneurial base.** Harlow is growing in significance as a location for world class knowledge-based businesses and organisations including Life Sciences (Public Health England), ICT & Digital (Arrow Electronics) and Aerospace (Raytheon). Harlow has also experienced very strong growth in its business population.

**The market and private sector, on their own, will not deliver a successful business location and sustainable community.** The recent developments on the Enterprise Zone would have not occurred at all without public sector intervention. There is a need for Harlow Council as well as its public and private sector partners to remain active and engaged in shaping the development of the local economy as a business location.

**Harlow has significant strengths in the national priority sectors of life sciences, advanced manufacturing and ICT/Digital.** The local area has been very successful at attracting and retaining jobs in these sectors over recent years. There are also emerging opportunities in creative businesses.

**Knowledge-based industries and their workforce have very demanding location requirements.** Knowledge-based industries are highly selective in terms of location, requiring access to talent, who in-turn want to be located in localities with vibrant career opportunities, communities of practice, and high quality/high amenity places to live.

**The attractiveness of Harlow as a place to live and do business is also dependent upon its creative, cultural and leisure offer.** It is also important to stress the importance of improving the cultural and leisure offer of Harlow, and the role that can play in assisting the promotion of the town as a location for investment, visitors and residents.

**The positive messages and progress are not being adequately communicated or promoted.** Harlow's great progress and competitive offer as a business location could be more widely recognised and marketed, and the cultural and leisure offer should be more widely communicated, in order to secure further investment and jobs. Its value as a community and residential location, with some outstanding housing development opportunities also needs to be developed and promoted.

**Continuing to support and promote entrepreneurship and SMEs.** 99.5% of our businesses are now classified as small & medium-sized enterprises, employing less than 250 people. The vast majority of our businesses, 86.9% employ less than 10 people. The sustainability and resilience of Harlow's economy rests primarily with these businesses and it is therefore of the utmost importance that these business continue to thrive.

**Harlow Council has proven that it has the vision and leadership to succeed** – via the success of the Enterprise Zone, and the successful campaigns for junction improvements to the M11. To successfully meet the potential for up to 10,000 new jobs, and the development of supply chain and other business opportunities, we will need to continue to remain active and focused on where we can make the most impact.

## **HARLOW'S TRANSFORMATION AS A SUCCESSFUL LOCATION FOR BUSINESS INVESTMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP CONTINUES**

The number of businesses in Harlow has steadily increased over recent years. There has been a significant increase in investment, growth and jobs in Harlow's target sectors – which include Life Science and MedTech, ICT and Digital, and Advanced Manufacturing.

### **FUTURE PRIORITIES**

#### **Businesses and jobs - Priority 1: Maintain and enhance business investment and activities in Harlow's key areas of industrial specialism**

The Council will continue to support the development of the target growth sectors of Harlow Enterprise Zone through paying attention to the wider ecosystem that supports successful economic sector clusters and encourages others to choose to locate with them. This ranges from partnership work with One Nucleus to support the M11 Health Enterprise Sector Forum, to delivering the right facilities for those sectors and their staff at the Science Park.

##### Proposed actions could include:

- The Council will seek to enable local businesses to understand the supply chain opportunities that arise from the major economic growth opportunities of the Harlow Enterprise Zone occupiers, London Stansted Airport and the arrival of Public Health England in the town.
- Continued support for sector-based forums that support existing businesses and those are targets for investment attraction. Examples of current forums include M11 Health Enterprise Forum, and the Manufacturing and Engineering Forum. Further support for the development of forum/networks relevant to the ICT and creative digital sectors.
- Seek to join up with wider sector opportunities relevant to the wider geography of clusters e.g. London, Hertfordshire and Cambridge particularly for ICT and Life Sciences.

#### **Businesses and jobs - Priority 2: Effectively promote Harlow as a business and visitor destination**

The Council will lead the promotion and development of Harlow as a location for investment, building on the success of our work to bring businesses to Harlow Enterprise Zone, and securing Public Health England's location into the town. We will strive to ensure that Harlow's standing as a successful business location is improved nationally and globally through its position in the London Stansted Cambridge corridor. We will also improve our marketing collateral and the promotion of Harlow as a visitor destination, ensuring this is complementary with inward investment promotion.

##### Proposed actions could include:

- Refine and refresh our propositions for the town and to our target economic growth sectors, developing a new inward investment website.
- Develop a strategy and a marketing plan to improve the locational offer in terms creative, cultural and leisure activities, businesses and assets.
- Provide high impact branding and marketing collateral inward investment and the visitor economy.
- Establish good working relations with property agents to ensure they are well briefed of the Harlow offer and able to have confidence in referencing our materials will be a key task.

- Continue to work in partnership with Invest Essex, UKTI and Vinci where appropriate to ensure that the Harlow message is delivered to and understood by current and prospective investors.

### **Businesses and jobs - Priority 3: Support new enterprises and SME growth**

Harlow has a high rate of business formation, and encouraging business start-ups and SME growth will continue to be a priority. We will encourage businesses from Harlow to access business support of relevance to them to ensure they can be successful, and particularly in the context of uncertainties or opportunities that may arise as plans for Brexit emerge and progress. We will also encourage business activities which can help with our aim of making Harlow a competitive and attractive business and residential location, including creative, cultural and leisure activities.

#### **Proposed actions could include:**

- Harlow Enterprise Hub will support Harlow residents that wish to start their own business and those businesses from innovative and knowledge-based sectors that may wish to move to Harlow.
- Continue to promote enterprise and ensure that businesses are referred to the most appropriate source of assistance. Work with the SELEP BEST Growth Hub and other local providers to ensure that our businesses are able to access face to face business support and mentoring, and innovation support appropriate to their business.
- Deliver support and measures to stimulate new businesses and growth in creative, cultural and leisure activities.
- Continued provision of the Council's business pages, which provide access to a wealth of web-based business support information.
- Promotion of enterprise education in our schools and further education facilities.
- Support for independent and neighbourhood retail businesses through promotion of the Council's web portal Harlow Shops Local, and providing access to support for business advice and customer service training.
- Promotion of social enterprise and co-operative forms of business.
- Provide advice for succession planning to ensure that businesses can continue following the departure of key personnel or owners.
- Advice and support for businesses for human resources management, recruitment, and workforce skills.

### **OUTCOMES: BUSINESSES AND JOBS**

#### **Delivering on these priorities will lead to -**

- Securing more investment and jobs from key industries such as Life Sciences, MedTech, ICT & digital and Aerospace.
- More jobs and investment by businesses that are part of the supply chain of key industries.
- Continued growth in the business base.
- A healthy business start-up and survival rate.



- Young people and adults gaining entrepreneurial skills and experience to help with future career success and entrepreneurship.

## 2. Place

### CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

**Providing the locations and premises that businesses want.** Harlow Council has consistently sought to recover the high-quality jobs lost to Harlow (over 4,000) through the global collapse of Nortel and the decision of GSK to focus its investment in Hertfordshire. A significant initiative has been the successful negotiation of Enterprise Zone status for several sites in Harlow.

**Providing additional managed workspace to meet high demand and a lack of vacant space.** Harlow's managed workspaces are a success, currently with low vacancy rates. We will review the need, with a view to creating more supply, for additional managed workspaces for both office and flexible business space, and the availability of quality move-on space from those businesses growing out of smaller managed spaces.

**Addressing the shortage of high quality office accommodation in the context of residential conversion.** The town is now facing a shortage of good quality office accommodation outside of that which exists and will be delivered at the Enterprise Zone. There are two issues associated with this. The first is that high quality office space will need to be provided to accommodate the jobs of new residents in the new housing developments. Second, offices and employment land are being eroded by residential conversion and housing developments. Residential conversion of office space is a national planning policy issue and the Council is unable to prevent it. The Council will continue to monitor this, and will raise concerns and issues as they arise.

**Housing is a high priority for Harlow and inextricably linked to economic prosperity.** This is a challenge for Harlow given the estate based nature of much of the original new town housing stock and affordability issues for many residents. In addition to local housing needs, inevitably economic growth will be an additional driver of need for housing for a growing workforce.

**The quality and offer of Harlow Town Centre is important not only to residents but to inward investment aims.** Quality of life, the cultural and leisure offer, and living environment issues can influence not only residents' decisions about where they spend their money but are also critical to business decisions about location.

**Improving and maintaining transport connectivity and superfast broadband infrastructure, particularly to support housing and employment site development continues to be a challenge.** Harlow and its environs will continue to demonstrate the need for a programme of transport investments to ensure the town is able to maintain and improve connectivity with key transport assets such as the M11, London Stansted Airport and the West Anglia mainline. The West Anglia Mainline provides important access to London and Cambridge, the London Underground through Tottenham Hale and the Stratford interchange for London Underground, Overground rail services and the Docklands Light Railway. However, journey times are constrained and significant investment is required to address the growth envisaged along the line, at Harlow and Gilston, London Stansted Airport and Cambridge. Discussions have taken place with Network Rail and Transport for London concerning the potential for Crossrail 2 northern terminus to terminate at Harlow which will bring substantial benefit to the town, supporting planned housing and economic growth.

**Superfast Broadband is now considered as the fourth utility and essential for economic success.** Harlow requires increased investment in the infrastructure supporting business parks and employment areas to increase access, reliability and speed/capacity. Much of the residential areas of Harlow are fibre cabled to the premises but there are some pockets of areas of residential areas with poor connectivity and capacity which should also be addressed. To continue to support existing knowledge-based industries, and

to promote the development of new ones such as creative industries (many of which require high speed access to cloud data storage) – high speed broadband is essential.

## **THERE HAS BEEN SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS IN EMPLOYMENT SITES AND HOUSING DEVELOPMENT, AND THE RECENT ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE FUNDING FOR IMPROVEMENTS TO JUNCTION 7A**

The Council has invested in Harlow Enterprise Zone and will enable the development of the London Road Science Park through our partnership with developers Vinci UK. This parallels the development of Kao Park in the south of the London Road site, which has already secured tenants and will also deliver data centre capacity on site to act as a further attractor to business. The Anglia Ruskin MedTech Innovation Centre will be an early occupier of the Science Park and will be a key asset in our aspiration to support and grow the MedTech sector which has a strong presence in Harlow.

Harlow Council welcomes the announcement of Government support for a new motorway junction to the north of Harlow (known as 7a) and will continue to press the case for construction at the earliest practicable opportunity. This is essential to provide confidence for much needed investment and the attraction of businesses and jobs to Harlow and critically the Harlow Enterprise Zone.

The Airport continues to grow, with 24.3 million passengers during the calendar year 2016, beating the previous high of 23.8 million set in 2007. Cargo also recorded a significant increase with the airport handling 250,000 tonnes during 2016. London Stansted Airport has recently unveiled plans for a new £130 million arrivals building to significantly improve the passenger experience. The Airport is a key attractor to international businesses and MAG continues to work to attract long haul flights particularly to the USA. Developing these routes will be an important factor for the continued success of the Life Science and Tech Sectors present in the LSC corridor and for those businesses it is hoped to attract to the Harlow Enterprise Zone.

The airport also plays an important role in delivering short haul flights which connect businesses in our growth sectors with major European markets and European Hubs to worldwide connections. In addition to this, the Airport handles increasing freight and cargo tonnage, with capacity for more. MAG is seeking to maximise the airports approved growth potential and has outlined further growth opportunities on the existing runway and further.

Investment in the Town Centre is progressing with the opening of a new multiplex cinema and the reconfiguration of retail space with new stores and services continuing to choose Harlow as a business location. Proposals for residential development in the town centre are also being promoted. However, what is needed is continued transformative change that will make the Town Centre a place where people will choose to shop, socialise, spend leisure time, enjoy arts and culture, and, live. Certainty for housing growth development will support the case for that transformation and regeneration.

## **FUTURE PRIORITIES**

### **Place - Priority 1: Continue to effectively deliver existing development sites and opportunities, including Harlow Enterprise Zone**

The Council will continue to promote and develop the Harlow Enterprise Zone in order to recover and surpass the high-quality jobs lost to Harlow several years ago. We seek to meet our aspiration to attract business from our target growth sectors, with the provision of high quality accommodation appropriate to their needs.

Proposed actions could include:

- Continued leadership and delivery of the Enterprise Zone, including Harlow Science and Technology Park.
- Continued work to support the Public Health England Campus.
- Provide a regular 'statement of need' for employment sites, land and specification of premises. It is important that the Council, its partners, and businesses are well informed about the locational needs of businesses.

**Place - Priority 2: With partners, develop a pipeline of employment sites and premises to provide opportunities for business investment and jobs**

Harlow will need to maintain its current levels of employment land and consider how the additional employment needs of the residents of the proposed Garden Town development at Harlow and Gilston Park are to be met, giving rise to the need to identify additional employment land opportunities. There is also a need to review the availability and development of managed workspaces, as current premises are full.

Proposed actions could include:

- An employment land and premises strategy that provides high level commitment and proposes tools and approaches to employment land allocation and assembly will help to secure a viable long-term supply. It is critical to develop this in partnership with neighbouring authorities.
- Through our business engagement with existing business located in Harlow, we will identify increased investment and site development opportunities, and seek to support these, addressing any barriers to investment.
- Work in partnership to understand the additional employment needs of the residents of the proposed Garden Town development at Harlow and Gilston Park.
- Harlow's managed workspaces are a success, currently with low vacancy rates. We will review the need for additional managed workspaces for both office and flexible business space, and the availability of quality move on space from those businesses growing out of smaller managed spaces.
- Monitor residential conversion of office space and raise concerns about its prospective impacts.

**Place - Priority 3: Provide new high quality housing in sustainable communities with appropriate tenure mix and affordability**

For Harlow, housing is a high priority and inextricably linked to economic prosperity. Harlow and neighbouring authorities will need to address this issue in their Local Plans. This will ensure that businesses have confidence that a range of appropriate housing will be available for their workforces should they choose to locate to Harlow. The announcement of Garden Town status for Harlow and Gilston Park will offer a positive opportunity to deliver that aspiration.

Proposed actions could include:

- The Council will promote the delivery of a high quality and diverse housing offer to ensure that people, working at all levels in Harlow, will increasingly want to live in Harlow for its housing and quality of life offer.

**Place - Priority 4: Transformation of Harlow Town Centre**

The Town Centre needs a transformation into a high quality, high amenity centre that provides for residents of all backgrounds and aspirations, and also provides attractions for the workforce of key employers.

Proposed actions could include:

- The Council is actively pursuing plans and has committed capital investment to deliver public realm improvements, increase community, leisure and commercial activity, deliver quality residential opportunities and a vision to secure longer term investment and regeneration.
- Embed modern working environments into future Town Centre developments. Ensure that opportunities to deliver space and resources to enable business activity and development, such as shared/co-working space, meeting spaces, access to wi-fi, live/work accommodation are considered as these town centre plans progress.
- Support continued space for creative industries and cultural activities, recognising the contribution this makes to a vibrant town centre.

**Place - Priority 5: Ensure the key enabling infrastructural investments are supported**

We will continue to ensure that the right physical infrastructure is in place to facilitate delivery and ensure that businesses and investors are assured that they can benefit from Harlow's excellent local and national connectivity. This will include, continuing to work on the improvement of the road infrastructure between the Harlow Enterprise Zone sites and the M11 motorway and the A414, bringing forward M11 Junction 7a at the earliest practicable opportunity, as well as ensuring superfast broadband infrastructure to the sites.

Proposed actions could include:

*Motorway junctions*

*M11 Motorway Improvements.* The M11 is a key national transport asset and its optimum functioning is imperative for the success of the economy in Harlow and the wider London Stansted Cambridge corridor. There are a series of investments required to deliver the improvements required to ensure this can be achieved, enabling Harlow Enterprise Zone, London Stansted Airport, the establishment of Public Health England and the anticipated housing growth to the north of Harlow and in the London Stansted Cambridge Corridor.

*M11 Junctions 7 & 7a.* Junction 7 is currently operating above capacity at peak times and requires investment to ensure the maximum benefit can be achieved at this junction. This alone will not provide the solution to supporting current and future economic and housing growth at Harlow. The new junction at 7a will reduce congestion at junction 7, deliver additional connectivity with the town and provide capacity for economic and housing growth, which is essential for the long term economic development of the town.

The Council will continue to advocate for resources to deliver the junction and the appropriate highway connectivity to the town (including the potential for the northern link road), taking the case to Essex and Hertfordshire County Councils, the South East Local Enterprise Partnership, Highways England and the Department of Transport through the town's MP and our representation through the LSCC.

*M11 Junction 8.* Improvements at Junction 8 are a necessity for ensuring that London Stansted Airport can reach its optimum approved capacity, bringing additional jobs and business opportunities for Harlow and wider West Essex.

*Rail. The West Anglia Mainline* is a key piece of infrastructure, critical to the economic success of the London Stansted Cambridge corridor and therefore Harlow's future. The Council supports the call for major improvements to the line, including 4 tracking from Coppermill Lane to Broxbourne at the earliest opportunity and further on to provide for Crossrail 2 servicing Harlow as the end destination station. The Council will seek to ensure that the Stansted Express will continue to serve Harlow ensuring that both employees of the airport and businesses can continue to access the airport. This will be increasingly important as Harlow Enterprise Zone grows.

*London Stansted Airport.* Harlow Council will continue to work with London Stansted Airport on workforce and skills issues, and also to understand future expansion plans on the airport and surrounding sites. We will continue our support for the airport to attract long-haul flights that serve our business community. We will continue to advocate the benefits of Junction 8 for servicing access to the airport.

*High speed internet access.* The Council will identify any superfast broadband deficits and promote these for early solutions through the Superfast Essex programme or other appropriate avenues. We will promote optimum superfast broadband provision in new developments through Planning policy. We will aim to deliver the fastest speeds and capacity to enable competitive edge for Harlow as a location for successful business.

The Council will also ensure that any new residential developments are provided with adequate telecoms and broadband access in recognition of the path of many small businesses that are either, run from residential premises, or start in such premises until the times when the business has grown and requires different or additional facilities.

## **OUTCOMES: PLACE**

### **Delivering on these priorities will lead to -**

- An outstanding location and environment for businesses, particularly those where Harlow has existing strengths - including ICT, Advanced Manufacturing and Life Sciences industries.
- Attract and retain more jobs in Harlow.
- A world class Public Health Campus.
- A sufficient, high quality, viable employment land supply to meet future demand and provide a credible offer to prospective inward investors.
- New managed workspace and a mix of premises sizes and styles that cater for existing and future demand.
- A vibrant, inclusive Town Centre that attracts and retains existing and new residents and workers and where expenditure and footfall increases.

## 3. People

### RATIONALE AND OBJECTIVES

**Ensuring that businesses are able to access the workforce they need and that individuals can achieve their best in terms of educational and skills achievement**, is fundamental for economic success, and social and community prosperity.

**What is clear is that our labour market skills need to evolve to support the identified growth sectors.** Skills gaps are identified in each of these sectors and therefore education and skills provision needs to meet, not only current needs, but to also anticipate the needs of future economic growth. Whilst rates of school qualifications attainment have improved remarkably over the past 10 years, overall qualifications attainments amongst the adult population are lower than the national average, particularly in degree-level and professional skills.

**Harlow residents will typically face a diverse range of barriers to entering and progressing in employment**, and these could potentially relate to health and wellbeing, caring responsibilities, personal problems, lack of confidence and work experience, or lack of peer or mentor support.

**Currently, Harlow residents do not take advantage of the higher-skilled, higher-paid jobs in the Town.** This problem is illustrated by the fact that residents are earning approximately, on average £60 per week less than the average pay available for the jobs present in Harlow. Our Strategy needs to bring learning and skills to the fore to enable Harlow residents to take advantage of the better paid opportunities on offer in the town. This will ensure that economic prosperity in our businesses translates to local residents and the local community.

**There is a need to deliver initiatives and closer joint working between employers, educational and training institutes** and Harlow Council to ensure that existing and future skills needs are identified and catered for, and to ensure that adults in work are able to identify and progress into new job opportunities.

### **MUCH PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE TO DELIVER SKILLS PROVISION THAT ALIGNS WITH BUSINESS NEED**

The Harlow Enterprise Zone Skills Plan has enabled Harlow College and the University Centre to develop a curriculum offer responsive to target growth sectors. The Sir Charles Kao University Technical College is a direct response to enabling young people to access the skills required by businesses in the fields of medical technology and smart environments. In addition, engineering, the sciences and computer science skills feature strongly. The Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering Centre (AMC) at Harlow College, opening in March 2017, will similarly offer a curriculum and skills required by the advanced manufacturing and engineering sector, and the College is actively engaged with employers to ensure that this is core to the development and delivery of the AMC.

### **FUTURE PRIORITIES**

#### **People - Priority 1: Understanding future skills needs**

It is essential that the Council, with partners, understands the labour and skills requirements of new occupiers (and their supply chains), for example at the Harlow Enterprise Zone, Public Health England and from the expansion of London Stansted Airport. This will enable future provision responsive to these needs. Understanding the future needs of existing employers is also critical – for example, Harlow's largest employer is The Princess Alexandra Hospital NHS Trust (PAH) with approximately 3,000 people employed on site.

Proposed actions could include:

- A labour market intelligence network which will provide analysis and evidence as well as provide a forum for discussing the workforce and skills requirements of key employers.
- A partnership with the Council, employers and education and skills providers (including the College) to discuss future skills needs and curriculum development, apprenticeship, and workplace skills development provision.

**People - Priority 2: Providing the skills and levels educational attainment that both businesses and residents need – now and in the future**

Provision of skilled and learning needs to reflect employers' workforce and skills needs. The Council wants to play a role in ensuring that the employment needs are met and that local residents are able to acquire the education and skills to enable them to secure employment and progress once in work. There are shared education and skills needs between PAH, PHE and the life science sector where joint planning and provision would seem sensible.

Proposed actions could include:

- Establishing workforce development plans with large employers.
- Brokerage and negotiation between employers and skills and education providers to build an agenda for change and for delivering to employer needs.
- Working with partners, the education authority, and Skills Funding Agency to ensure the education and training funding and delivery matches need.
- Promote more business/employer engagement in offering curriculum enrichment opportunities.
- Continue to scrutinise and engage with educational provision and attainment in order to ensure that recent gains in education and skills attainment continues.

**People - Priority 3: Dedicated promotion and delivery of STEMC skills**

Harlow Council is not a statutory provider of education or skills provision, but recognises that the landscape in these areas would benefit from more strategic co-ordination, particularly in the field of Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths and Computing (STEMC) skills.

Proposed actions could include:

- The Council will seek to bring additionality and co-ordination of a sustained campaign, in partnership with education and skills providers to raise the profile of STEMC at all levels and in the community.
- The establishment of Harlow Science & Technology week.
- Explore ways in which individuals can access and participate in national and regional science based events, such as Stargazing, the Cambridge Science Fair, and Royal Institution lectures.
- Explore and promote opportunities that encourage girls and women into the fields of STEMC where they may be under-represented.
- Explore and promote wider opportunities were the STEMC skills interface with the arts, digital and creative sectors.



- Achieve greater visibility of the importance of STEMC to a breadth of career opportunities.
- Offer opportunities for teachers to understand the local and sub-regional economy, job and career opportunities, and the importance of STEMC to these for their pupils' future success.
- Promotion of the breadth of career opportunities available in the London Stansted Cambridge Corridor including interventions for primary age school children.

**People - Priority 4: Ensuring that adult residents in Harlow can access, and are equipped to take advantage of job opportunities from new investments and business growth**

To progress in work and access new and better job opportunities, some of Harlow's adults will need support. Earnings and employment data reveal that Harlow adult residents do not fully benefit from the skilled and better paid jobs in local employers.

Proposed actions could include:

- Harlow jobs dialogue – working with employers to develop a view of future jobs opportunities, careers progression, and communicating this in appropriate ways with adult residents.
- Analysis and action plan to identify main barriers to entering work and progressing in-work, including health and wellbeing, lack of qualifications and basic skills, lack of work experience, caring and other responsibilities.
- Harlow in-work progression initiative – exploring the opportunities from initiatives and tools that can help delivery in-work skills progression, such as job escalators and adult apprenticeships
- Deliver a sustained publicity campaign to promote learning and skills opportunities and to celebrate success in Harlow related to STEMC, including business innovations.

**OUTCOMES: PEOPLE**

**Delivering on these priorities will lead to -**

What we want to achieve in Harlow are the following outcomes:

- Harlow Council, education and training institutions, individuals and local industries will have an informed view of future skills needs that provides a basis for education and training planning and provision.
- Businesses can access the workforce they need.
- Local residents are better placed to meet businesses' workforce requirements, particularly in skilled jobs.
- Increased education and skills attainment that helps Harlow residents to access to better employment opportunities and meet local employers' needs.
- A rise in earnings of Harlow residents, closing the gap when compared with workplace earnings.

# 4. WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP TO DELIVER OUR ECONOMIC STRATEGY

## Understanding our Local Economy and Businesses

Increasing our understanding of the local economy and our businesses will enable us to develop intelligent policy and practical solutions to supporting economic growth, managing impacts of economic shock or any uncertainties arising from Brexit.

**Business Engagement is a vital part of maintaining this understanding.** We will ensure that an ongoing dialogue with business is sustained to enable us to both understand their needs and aspirations and secondly, to influence Council policy.

We will hold an annual Business Forum where we will ensure that businesses are able to hear about the Council and its Plans and approach to economic growth, and, have the opportunity to input their views and thereby influence policy.

We will publish a bi-monthly business e-newsletter to ensure that information we receive of relevance to business is shared with the business community. It will also offer the opportunity for business to contribute articles which may be of interest to their business colleagues.

We will also ensure a business friendly approach through all Council departments, using our website and 'Supporting Enterprise' materials to ensure businesses can navigate Council services effectively and efficiently.

The Council will ensure that our business engagement programme ensures that we have direct dialogue with our large employers and corporates, key sector companies and the Harlow & District Chamber of Commerce and Federation of Small Businesses. We will ensure that this dialogue and key issues are captured in a Client Management System.

**Economic Intelligence** will be gathered to ensure that we understand our key economic sectors and we will also undertake a bi-annual Business Survey.

**Community Engagement.** The Council will also consult with the community, and, local community and voluntary sector organisations, to understand what economic success looks like from their perspective. We want to explore what opportunities there may be for community economic initiatives that will promote economic value and resilience.

## Promoting the Economic Objectives of Harlow and West Essex

The Council will continue to act as community leader to influence the deployment of resources and opportunities with the aim of achieving the objectives outlined above to secure the economic success of the town.

We will seek to deliver this in partnership, recognising the reality of economic geographies and the role of the private sector wherever shared objectives are apparent. This may take different organisational forms as evidenced through our formalised partnerships to deliver the Harlow Enterprise Zone through to our continued relationships with business representative organisations and economic sector forums. The Council will ensure that Harlow's needs for resourcing the fundamental assets for economic success will be promoted at every level of governance, including at national level.

The Council supports collaboration between the districts of Epping Forest, Harlow, Uttlesford and East Hertfordshire to achieve common economic objectives, recognising Harlow's role as an economic sub-regional centre. This is increasingly important with the announcement of the Garden Town development at Harlow and Gilston Park.

We will bring together economic development and planning officers to form an Officer Group. The Group will support West Essex/East Hertfordshire as the sub-regional economic area and support its members and representatives role in relation to the LSCC, Essex & Hertfordshire County Councils, the South East and Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnerships and national Government.

## **London Stansted Cambridge Consortium**

Harlow Council is a member of the London Stansted Cambridge Consortium and recognises the value to Harlow of our role in the future economic development of London Stansted Cambridge corridor.

The LSCC will enable Harlow to continue to forge relationships with neighbouring local authorities such as East Hertfordshire and, with the Hertfordshire and Greater Cambridgeshire and Greater Peterborough Local Economic Partnerships, and the north-east London Boroughs and London LEP.

We will continue to work on issues of common interest, supporting the economic growth aspirations of Harlow, through the London Stansted Cambridge Consortium and the Core Group.

The LSCC offers us the opportunity to ensure that Harlow is on the national and global map both as a successful business location offering a positive invitation for other businesses to locate here and to make the case for the infrastructure investment we need that brings substantial economic, social and housing growth to benefit the wider LSC corridor.

## **Delivery**

The Economic Development Strategy outlines a clear direction for the Council's economic development priorities and aspirations, with specific activities.

The Council will establish an Economic Development Officer Board that will be tasked with delivering the Strategy through the development of an Action Plan with specified outcomes and timeframes.

The Board will be comprised of officers with responsibility for Economic Development and Regeneration, Planning and Harlow Enterprise Zone. It will be the Board's responsibility to execute the Action Plan, reporting to the Corporate Management Team as required and to the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Enterprise.