



Chelmsford City Council Cabinet

12th September 2023

North Essex Economic Strategy and Delivery Plan

Report by:
Deputy Leader

Officer Contact:

Stuart Graham, Economic Development & Implementation Services Manager, 01245 606364 stuart.graham@chelmsford.gov.uk and Jennifer Gorton, Economic Development Lead, 01245 606367 jennifer.gorton@chelmsford.gov.uk

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to set out progress on the collaborative working across the North Essex Economic Board area and to present the North Essex Economic Board Strategy and Delivery Plan for adoption.

Options

The following options are available:

- a) That Cabinet adopts the North Essex Economic Board Strategy and Delivery Plan, or
- b) That Cabinet does not adopt North Essex Economic Board Strategy and Delivery Plan

Preferred option and reasons

The preferred option is Option A. The City Council has been a partner of the North Essex Economic Board since 2020 and the partnership has been successful in delivering a range of economic development initiatives alongside the other partner authorities, sharing resources, expertise and delivering positive outcomes. The

adoption of the North Essex Economic Strategy and Delivery Plan will cement this partnership and lay the foundations for continued joint working across the North Essex Economic Area. The Strategy aligns with the City Council's corporate, economic and spatial planning objectives and will also assist in shaping any economic activity that emerges from the devolution agenda and associated discussions.

Recommendations

It is recommended that Cabinet adopts the North Essex Economic Strategy and Delivery Plan and continues to support the work of the North Essex Economic Board.

1. Background or Introduction

- 1.1. In 2019 Tendring, Colchester, Braintree, Uttlesford and Essex County Councils agreed to develop an economic strategy that would set out the opportunities within the North Essex economic corridor. A North Essex Economic Board (NEEB) was established to oversee the development of the Strategy. The Board has no decision-making authority but operates on an informal basis with the Board comprising Leader and/or Cabinet Member representatives from each authority. An officer Steering Group oversees activity.
- 1.2. Chelmsford City Council and Maldon District Council were invited to join NEEB in May 2020 and the Board now covers over half of the second-tier authorities in Essex. The Board is currently chaired by the Deputy Leader of Chelmsford City Council.
- 1.3. During the pandemic the seven authorities combined some of its COVID business support grant funding resources to deliver a co-ordinated programme of business and skills support across North Essex. This comprised in the region of £1.6m of support.
- 1.4. Across the North Essex area, this programme supported over 1,300 businesses and 295 residents with a range of business support and skills development. In Chelmsford, 105 businesses and 72 residents were supported (including 10 employment starts).
- 1.5. The programme delivered by NEEB demonstrated the effectiveness of collaborative working, sharing resources and expertise to deliver successful outcomes for businesses and residents.
- 1.6. Subsequent to this activity, the North Essex authorities (with the exception of Uttlesford) have agreed to use part of their UK Shared Prosperity Fund allocations (totalling circa £425,000) to maintain a programme of business support across the area during 2023/2024 and 2024/2025. This was

particularly important at a time when the Government Funding of Growth Hubs was uncertain.

- 1.7. Alongside the activities described above, the NEEB decided that a refreshed Economic Strategy and Delivery Plan should be commissioned, to take account of the current economic climate and to refresh current opportunities given that Chelmsford and Maldon had now joined the partnership.
- 1.8. Henham Strategy Ltd were appointed, via a thorough and a robust procurement process, to deliver the refreshed strategy and delivery plan. Extensive evidence gathering consisting of strategic analysis, data scrutiny and stakeholder workshops facilitated the development of the refreshed strategy and delivery plan. Officers from the partner authorities have been involved at every stage of this work to ensure parity in representation of need and opportunity.
- 1.9. Cabinet will recall that in January 2023 it was agreed that the City Council entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the other North Essex Councils to work together on a broader basis. The Strategy being presented within this report and the work of the North Essex Economic Board is the economic strand of this agreed approach to shared working.

2. The North Essex Economic Strategy and Action Plan

- 2.1. The North Essex Economic Strategy and Delivery Plan is attached at Appendix 1. It comprises 3 sections:

- a) A strategic narrative
- b) A delivery plan
- c) An economic baseline

- 2.2. The overarching vision for the North Essex economy is for it to be:

“A proactive, productive and progressive North Essex that advances its economic potential through inward and outward-facing partnerships, with all residents, businesses and visitors benefitting from the region’s economic prosperity.”

- 2.3. Four strategic priorities are set out within the Strategy and are summarised below:

Innovative businesses and skilled residents - A resilient and outward-facing economy that builds on its incumbent strengths and is positioned to deliver economic opportunities for North Essex’s residents and drive inward investment to support businesses within the region’s critical growth sectors.

A greener and high growth economy - A forward-looking economy that utilises the diversity of its resources in a sustainable way that furthers North

Essex's clean energy strengths, boosts growth, and promotes residents' prosperity through net zero commitments.

A dynamic and connected region - A well-connected and digitally-linked region that provides residents with quick and reliable access to key services, encourages inward investment, and makes the most of ties to regional and international neighbours.

Prosperous and inclusive communities - A thriving and inclusive region where all residents and businesses have the opportunity to contribute and prosper, exemplifying the region as a great place to live, work and visit.

- 2.4. The Strategy is supported by a two-year Delivery Plan that identifies a range of practical interventions and actions that can deliver against these strategic objectives, which are being developed into practical and deliverable actions through a series of officer workshops. The Delivery Plan and associated actions will be overseen by the Board and the officer Steering Group and refreshed. Proposed actions are set out at pdf pages 33 to 38 of Appendix 1.

3. Linkage with Chelmsford City Council's Corporate, Economic and Spatial Planning Objectives

- 3.1. The Strategic Objectives of the North Essex Economic Strategy align well with the Our Chelmsford: Our Plan, the adopted Local Plan (May 2020) and the Council's wider economic objectives. It also aligns well with some of the activities and priorities of the City Council's partner organisations, including our further and higher education colleges/universities and third sector partners. For example, the Strategy could provide a useful framework through which the Essex Local Skills Improvement Plan could be delivered alongside the further education delivery partners.

- 3.2. The linkage between the NEEB Strategy and the Council's Corporate Plan is set out below:

Fairer and inclusive Chelmsford – aligns with the prosperous and inclusive communities objective of the NEEB strategy.

A safer and greener place – aligns with the green and high growth economy objective of the NEEB strategy.

Healthy, active and enjoyable lives – aligns with the prosperous and inclusive communities objective of the NEEB strategy.

Connected Chelmsford – aligns with the dynamic and connected region and innovative businesses and skilled residents' objectives of the NEEB strategy.

4. Conclusion

4.1. The North Essex Economic Board has successfully delivered a range of economic support activity since 2020. To enable the partnership to consolidate its work, a new Economic Strategy and two-year delivery plan is a logical next step. There are many advantages in this form of collaborative working and the Strategy and Delivery plan set out how further opportunities can be identified and delivered. The work of the NEEB fits well with the wider North Essex Authorities discussions in the context of devolution and puts the seven partner authorities in a good position to continue to work together in the coming years.

List of appendices:

Appendix 1: North Essex Economic Strategy & Delivery Plan

Background papers:

None

Corporate Implications

Legal/Constitutional:

None

Financial:

None

Potential impact on climate change and the environment:

The Strategy and Action Plan has as one of its strategic objectives to develop a greener and high growth economy and a number of the actions in the Delivery Plan reflect some of the opportunities to work across the North Essex area.

Contribution toward achieving a net zero carbon position by 2030:

The Strategy and Action Plan has as one of its strategic objectives to develop a greener and high growth economy and a number of the actions in the Delivery Plan reflect some of the opportunities to work across the North Essex area.

Personnel:

Support for the NEEB work is being delivered from within existing resources and there is some central resources (project management and communications) that is currently funded by the partner authorities.

Risk Management:

N/A

Equality and Diversity:

N/A

Health and Safety:

N/A

Digital:

N/A

Other:

None

Consultees:

All NEEB local authorities and a range of stakeholders have been consulted in developing the Strategy and Delivery Plan

Relevant Policies and Strategies:

Our Chelmsford: Our Plan

Chelmsford Local Plan (May 2020)



NORTH ESSEX'S STRATEGIC NARRATIVE



Contents

The North Essex Vision.....	3
North Essex’s Strategic Opportunities and Challenges.....	4
Innovative Businesses and Skilled Residents.....	4
A Green and High Growth Economy.....	10
A Dynamic and Connected Region.....	13
Prosperous and Inclusive Communities.....	17

The North Essex Vision

A proactive, productive and progressive North Essex that advances its economic potential through inward and outward-facing partnerships, with all residents, businesses and visitors benefitting from the region's economic prosperity.

The NEEB's 'Delivering for North Essex' plan has been underpinned by a robust and comprehensive review of the region's key opportunities and challenges, outlined within the local strategies and initiatives of the seven NEEB authorities and collated through extensive engagement with councillors, officers and key external stakeholders, including local businesses, HE and FE institutions, and the South East Local Enterprise Partnership.

'North Essex's Strategic Narrative' has been developed in partnership with Henham Strategy, with it providing greater detail on the opportunities and challenges we are seeking to action and address through our plans to deliver for North Essex. These opportunities and challenges are presented under the key strategic priority for which they apply.



Working together, we can leverage North Essex's core strengths...

Our innovative and thriving SME community and cutting edge HE and FE institutions, delivering good, local jobs

Our dynamic and competitive renewable energy generation strengths, driving net zero progression

Our unique strategic location linked to regional and international partners, supporting inward investment

Our proud urban, rural and coastal communities, focused on supporting prosperous residents and businesses

North Essex's Strategic Opportunities and Challenges

1. Innovative Businesses and Skilled Residents

With North Essex's substantial SME community driving entrepreneurship and innovation; three highly successful Higher Education institutions leading cutting-edge research in areas including computer and data science; and thriving Further Education institutions delivering the technical skills and qualifications that form the backbone of any resilient economy, now is an exciting time for the region as it looks to ensure its residents and businesses benefit from increased inward investment that helps establish the region's prosperity-enhancing growth sectors.

Innovative Businesses – Opportunities

North Essex is positioned to build on the high proportion of SMEs operating within the region, with a real opportunity to further develop incumbent strengths in the construction and real estate sectors. Alongside reinforcing existing strengths, progress within the region's key growth sectors can add to the region's innovative business landscape, building on the excellent work that has already been delivered to date.

Construction and Retrofit – Building on the region's incumbent construction strengths, Braintree has led work on delivering progress within the advanced construction sector through 'I-Construct'. Using European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) funding, this programme included the establishment of a 'Construction Innovation Hub' that has been used to support businesses in construction – and construction-related – sectors, nurture early-stage SMEs and facilitate the commercialisation of new ideas, technologies and research. This programme has supported 350 businesses, launched 150 new products and services, and created up to 130 jobs across the South East¹.

Clean Energy – Building on the region's renewable electricity generation strengths, Longfield Solar Farm is a proposal for a new solar energy and battery storage farm within Chelmsford and Braintree that will help meet the UK's need for low carbon energy and achieve the 2050 net zero target. The plans around battery storage will help deliver efficiency, with the energy generated able to be stored during times of low demand and released when needed².

Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering – Based in Chelmsford, the company Teledyne e2v is a technology manufacturer that develops specialised components and subsystems in the medical, science, aerospace, and defence sectors. Specifically, this company is looking to help drive the next generation of systems in signal chain semiconductor devices, full spectrum imaging, and high-power radio frequency solutions³.

Digital Tech – Building on the University of Essex's computer and data science strengths, Colchester launched the AIXR: Centre for Immersive Innovation in June 2022. This new centre will position Colchester as a global focus for all immersive innovation in the XR industry, and will form AIXR's base of international operations, institutionalising the technology for decades to come. This centre is open to all within the community who want to learn about XR, grow within XR, and connect with the most passionate people within the immersive world. (For

¹ I-Construct. Source: [I-Construct](#)

² Longfield Solar Farm. Source: [Longfield Solar Farm](#)

³ Teledyne e2v. Source: [Home | Teledyne e2v \(teledyne-e2v.com\)](#)

background, XR is the umbrella term for all immersive technologies, including Virtual Reality (VR), Augmented Reality, Spatial Audio and Haptics/Senses)⁴.

Life Sciences – With its proximity to Cambridge and the Life Sciences ‘Golden Triangle’, Uttlesford is playing a leading role in the UK’s life sciences sector through the Chesterford Research Park. This research park offers advanced laboratory and office space set within 250 acres of idyllic parkland, with the modern, dynamic and flexible facilities ideal for biotechnology, pharmaceutical and technology R&D companies of all sizes⁵. Braintree’s Manufacturing Innovation Centre at CGT Catapult will also play a vital life sciences role, working in collaboration with the cell and gene therapy industry to accelerate manufacturing innovation for therapy developers, technology companies and service providers⁶.

These are but a few examples of the excellent and innovative work that is planned and underway within the region to support North Essex’s key growth sectors. The benefits of continuing to develop the region’s early progress in supporting its key growth sectors is seen when looking at the potential impact these growth sectors could have in terms of jobs within the region.

Focusing on the ‘Clean Energy’ growth sector, LG Inform⁷ forecasts demonstrate the number of jobs the region is likely to benefit from as this sector continues to develop. As the table below demonstrates, the region is expected to see significant growth in the number of jobs within key Clean Energy areas, and it is vital the region continues to build on the excellent work already underway to support not only the Clean Energy growth sector, but also North Essex’s other key growth sectors.

North Essex Clean Energy Job Growth – LG Inform 2030 Forecasts						
Area	Braintree	Chelmsford	Colchester	Maldon	Tendring	Uttlesford
Low Carbon Electricity	74	2,258	163	318	90	173
Low Carbon Heat	422	494	534	183	459	242
Alternative Fuels	95	192	135	41	54	39
Energy Efficient	386	452	488	168	420	221
Low Carbon Services	61	189	189	38	37	101
Low Emissions Vehicles and Infrastructure	216	253	220	80	129	112
Total	1,254	3,838	1,729	828	1,189	888

⁴ AIXR: Centre for Immersive Innovation. Source: [AIXR Centre for Immersive Innovation to Open in Colchester UK - AIXR](#)

⁵ Chesterford Research Park. Source: [Chesterford Research Park](#)

⁶ Catapult Cell and Gene Therapy. CGT Catapult Braintree. Source: [Braintree - Cell and Gene Therapy \(catapult.org.uk\)](#)

⁷ LG Inform. Local green jobs – accelerating a sustainable economic recovery. Source: [Local green jobs - accelerating a sustainable economic recovery in Braintree | LG Inform](#)

North Essex Clean Energy Job Growth – LG Inform 2050 Forecasts						
Area	Braintree	Chelmsford	Colchester	Maldon	Tendring	Uttlesford
Low Carbon Electricity	177	5,476	359	760	201	414
Low Carbon Heat	635	743	803	276	690	364
Alternative Fuels	140	315	220	66	88	60
Energy Efficient	407	477	515	177	443	233
Low Carbon Services	170	532	532	106	105	283
Low Emissions Vehicles and Infrastructure	376	488	396	140	252	199
Total Jobs	1,905	8,031	2,825	1,525	1,779	1,553

North Essex Clean Energy Job Growth – LG Inform 2030 and 2050 Forecasts

If the region is to make the most of the opportunities its growth sectors present, North Essex must ensure that businesses working within these sectors have the space and resources to scale up effectively and establish themselves within the region. There has already been some excellent work progressed in this space, whether that be through Tendring's work delivering 24 new affordable business units in Jaywick Sands, or Braintree's plans around the Horizon 120 business innovation and logistics park that will provide in excess of 750,000 square feet of hi-tech, industrial, office and logistics space. Phase One of Horizon 120 was completed in June 2022, with 'The Plaza' providing approximately 30,000 square feet of flexible SME workshop space where individual rooms – as well as conference and event spaces – are available for hire⁸.

Braintree's Free Funding for Young Entrepreneurs

Braintree's initiative to provide funding for young entrepreneurs is helping to stimulate business growth within the authority, helping to provide Braintree's youngest and brightest business minds with the first step up required to establish a business. Alongside funding for their idea, this initiative provides 16-30 year olds with invaluable business plan training and presentational experience that helps them develop career enhancing skills. This initiative should be provided across North Essex to stimulate entrepreneurship, innovation and investment – three criteria critical to productive and proactive business growth.

Innovative Business – Challenges

If the region is to fully seize the opportunities within North Essex's incumbent strengths and realise the benefits of its key growth sectors, challenges will need to be overcome that are currently inhibiting the region's innovative businesses from making further economic progress.

Despite the progress being made in the delivery of new commercial sites, like those being delivered in Tendring and Braintree, there is much progress to be made. The lack of commercial sites compared to other areas around the country is one of the main reasons holding back the scale up of many of North Essex's innovative businesses. It is vital that the region continues to focus on ensuring businesses have the necessary commercial space to

⁸ Horizon120. Source: [Horizon 120 Business Park, Braintree, Essex - Office, Logistics & Distribution, Hi-Tech, Light Industrial](#)

grow, positioning North Essex to benefit from the economic growth that comes with SMEs further establishing themselves within the region.

There is also a challenge in collating the existing initiatives that are underway within North Essex to support business growth and ensuring that key stakeholders are aware of what they are each doing to drive business growth in the region. There have been some excellent further examples of initiatives planned and underway to support business growth within the region including:

- The **Colchester Business Enterprise Agency's (Colbea)** business support delivered in partnership with Tendring, which is helping to catalyse business success within parts of Essex⁹.
- The partnership established between **CB Heating and EDF Energy** in Tendring to support the installation of heat pumps within the region, exemplifying effective local and national business partnerships¹⁰.
- The **University of Essex's 'Knowledge Gateway'**, a research and technology park on the Colchester Campus, providing a unique home for businesses to cultivate ideas, increase motivation, generate ambition and invigorate success. This is helping innovative SMEs establish themselves further, with peer-to-peer relationships established to facilitate business growth¹¹.
- The **South East LEP's (SELEP) Enterprise Adviser Network** which aims to pair senior business volunteers with schools and colleges to build employer engagement plans in order to create powerful, lasting connections between local businesses and the schools and colleges in their area. This is helping to demonstrate employment pathways for students, increasing motivation to progress and secure career enabling opportunities¹².
- The **Essex Local Skills Improvement Plan** that is providing an employer voice and perspective on the region's local skills needs, ensuring residents are developing skills that are most likely to help them secure good jobs of the future¹³.

The NEEB has a role to play in occupying an overarching viewpoint over initiatives being delivered, ensuring duplication of activity is avoided and best business growth practice promoted and scaled up to support further businesses across the North Essex region.

Skilled Residents – Opportunities

To support the ambitions of North Essex's innovative businesses, the region should work on building on its skills strengths, with successful, innovative businesses dependent upon a highly skilled and motivated workforce.

⁹ Colbea. Source: [Office Space Colchester | Office Rental | Business Support \(colbea.co.uk\)](https://colbea.co.uk)

¹⁰ EDF investment partnership with heat pump installer CB heating, EDF, May 2022. Source: [EDF investment partnership with heat pump installer CB Heating | EDF \(edfenergy.com\)](https://edfenergy.com)

¹¹ Knowledge Gateway. University of Essex. Source: [Knowledge Gateway | University of Essex](https://knowledgegateway.org.uk)

¹² Enterprise Adviser Network. SELEP. Source: [Enterprise Adviser Network - The South East Local Enterprise Partnership \(southeastlep.com\)](https://southeastlep.com)

¹³ Local Skills Improvement Plan. Essex Chamber of Commerce. Source: [Essex Chambers of Commerce and Industry Ltd -](https://essexchamber.com)

When considering North Essex's skills strengths, a clear place to start is the region's Higher Education institutions, with the region benefitting from the excellent research and training delivered by the University of Essex, Anglia Ruskin University, and Writtle University College. All three Higher Education institutions have their specific strengths – the University of Essex has strong foundations in the computer/data science and hospitality sectors; Anglia Ruskin University in social work and sport science; and Writtle University College in animal and land-based sectors. These institutions play an important role in driving up skills within the region, with the University of Essex's 'Skills Fest' – an annual exhibition of the skills development opportunities available to students and staff of the university – an excellent example of the work put in to supporting skills development across the region.

It is essential that the region's Higher Education institutions continue to receive the support they need, given the R&D spend of the East of England's Higher Education institutions in 2019. As can be seen in the table below, the East of England ranked third – behind London and the South East – in terms of Higher Education R&D expenditure, investing £968 million in 2019. This suggests that the region's Higher Education institutions are playing a leading role in driving innovation and productivity improvements¹⁴. North Essex's three Higher Education institutions are central to this expenditure and should continue to be supported with these endeavours.

Regional Higher Education R&D Expenditure – 2019 (£ millions)								
London	South East	East of England	North West	Yorkshire and the Humber	South West	West Midlands	East Midlands	North East
2,196	1,361	968	733	610	474	470	353	251

Regional Higher Education R&D Expenditure – 2019 (£ million)

The University of Essex

The University of Essex is a North Essex Higher Education strength, ranking first in the UK for its Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTPs) which bring together the needs of businesses with the university's knowledge and expertise. This strength needs to be built upon, facilitating the spin out of businesses from the university's research. A sector where this is clearly possible is Computer Science, with the university ranking in the UK's top 10 for this subject and acting as host to the Institute for Analytics and Data Science as well as the UK Data Archive. This case study has been included to illustrate the potential of North Essex's Higher Education institutions. It is vital they partner with businesses and investors to drive innovation and business growth within North Essex.

Alongside North Essex's Higher Education institutions – and given the region's incumbent strengths within the construction sector – the region's Further Education offering is also critical to the region's long-term economic growth potential. In particular, there are several Further Education institutions that represent the region's strengths in this area:

¹⁴ ONS. Gross domestic expenditure on research and development, by region, UK. (2019). Source: [Gross domestic expenditure on research and development, by region, UK - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk/gross-domestic-expenditure-on-research-and-development-by-region-uk)

- **The Colchester Institute** – Critical to this institute is its ambition to provide education, professional development and technical skills training to young people and adults across North Essex. Vocational learning is an integral part of all the courses offered by the institute and there are two main campuses in North Essex based in Colchester and Braintree. The Colchester site has recently delivered improvements to its main buildings, enabling the provision of new facilities that include Business, Accounting and Computing, Sport and Public Service and Health and Social Care facilities. The Braintree site has a speciality in Digital, Media and Engineering¹⁵.
- **Chelmsford College** – Based across two campuses, Chelmsford College is a general Further Education college that offers a variety of courses, both vocational and professional courses. Like the Colchester Institute, Chelmsford College has undergone redevelopment in recent years which includes a brand new Electrical and Engineering block, a new Art, Design and Media Centre, as well as new welcome areas on both campuses, complete with internet cafes and landscaped areas for students to relax and socialise¹⁶.
- **Stansted Airport College** – With Stansted Airport based in Uttlesford, it is important to acknowledge the partnership the airport has established with Harlow College. Stansted Airport College is the first of its kind in the country, and offers a unique opportunity for those interested to get the first step up into a career within the aviation industry¹⁷.

The importance of these exemplar Further Education institutions is evidenced when reflecting on the diversity of skills attainment across the North Essex region. Some authorities are made up of a greater proportion of higher skilled workers and others a greater proportion of lower skilled workers, evidenced in the table below¹⁸. It is crucial that everyone within North Essex feels they have an opportunity to progress in their careers – irrespective of skills backgrounds – and the provision of Further Education courses is essential to this.

Skills Attainment (2021) – Lower and Higher Skilled Workers Divergence Across North Essex		
District	NVQ Levels 1,2 and 3	NVQ Level 4
Braintree	47.2%	25.8%
Chelmsford	43.1%	33.9%
Colchester	44.6%	32.2%
Maldon	45.9%	25.4%
Tendring	43.8%	19.9%
Uttlesford	42.3%	36.6%

Skills Attainment (2021) – Lower and Higher Skilled Workers Divergence across North Essex

Skilled Residents – Challenges

Whilst there are clear opportunities to support the upskilling of North Essex through collaboration with the region’s Higher Education and Further Education institutions, there are several challenges that are front and centre when supporting economic growth within the region.

¹⁵ The Colchester Institute. Source: [Colchester Institute - Education & Training Courses in Essex](#)

¹⁶ Chelmsford College. Source: [Chelmsford College | Our College](#)

¹⁷ Stansted Airport College. Source: [Stansted Airport College - Home](#)

¹⁸ ONS. Education: Highest level of qualification (Census 2021). Source: [Highest level of qualification - Census Maps, ONS](#)

The first challenge is encouraging and facilitating opportunities for residents to participate within skill programmes delivered across the region. Despite the NEEB running some successful skills programmes – including those in partnership with the Shaw Trust – others have proven less successful in generating resident interest. Whilst part of the explanation for the lack of engagement with some recent NEEB delivered skills programmes could be the lack of regular and reliable transport links between the North Essex authorities, there could also be other reasons for this, including a lack of confidence amongst some residents to engage, as raised by the Essex Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP). Equally as important as delivering quality skills programmes, the NEEB and other stakeholders should carefully consider the audiences they are looking to reach, understanding how they can effectively facilitate resident engagement. As highlighted by the Essex LSIP, Essex employers find that employees lack skills across a range of issues, including soft skills, and often struggle with staying positive and aiming high. Ensuring North Essex’s residents do not fall into these categories will be vital to delivering skilled residents within the region.

Another challenge, is the struggle retaining graduate talent from courses delivered within North Essex. Whilst many choose to study within North Essex – 51,425 students were enrolled at the University of Essex, Anglia Ruskin University and Writtle University College for the 2020/21 academic year¹⁹ – fewer choose to remain in North Essex following their studies. This is particularly seen within the University of Essex’s Hospitality programmes, with many students moving to larger UK and global cities to apply their skills post-training. To mitigate this from happening, there is a need to better advertise North Essex as a great place to live and work. Further collaboration between the region’s businesses and Higher/Further Education institutions is required to more effectively advertise the good jobs available within North Essex to students.

A final skills challenge relates to North Essex’s UK positioning. For many in the region, one of the main attractions of living within North Essex is its close proximity to London. There are normally 147 trains per day travelling between Colchester and London, and the average journey time is 59 minutes²⁰. This relative ease of travelling to London means many in North Essex live within the region but work within the capital, leading to much of the region’s talent contributing economic growth to other parts of the country. This ‘out-commuting’ phenomenon builds the case for action around promoting good jobs within the region, and facilitating inward investment to draw further good jobs to North Essex.

2. A Green and High Growth Economy

With North Essex’s renewable energy strengths in offshore wind, onshore wind and solar power, alongside innovative partnerships being established between local and national businesses working to deliver net zero commitments, now is an opportune time to focus on promoting the importance of a green and high-growth North Essex economy. This includes facilitating the delivery of the green jobs and skills of the future and building further positivity behind the hand-in-hand relationship of the region’s rural and coastal characteristics and its net zero potential.

¹⁹ HESA. Higher Education Student Statistics: UK 2020/21 – Where students come from and go to study. Source: [Higher Education Student Statistics: UK, 2020/21 - Where students come from and go to study | HESA](#)

²⁰ Trainline. Trains from Colchester to London. Source: [Trains Colchester to London from £10 | Greater Anglia Times & Cheap Tickets | Trainline \(thetrainline.com\)](#)

Opportunities

The North Essex region is positioned to build upon infrastructure already in place that is supporting renewable electricity generation. The region is effectively utilising its urban, rural and coastal characteristics to benefit from greener energy sources. Colchester is leading the way with solar power generation, Maldon with onshore wind, and Tendring with offshore wind. With the number of green jobs expected to increase in the lead up to 2030 and 2050, it is important to ensure the region's renewable electricity generation opportunities result in not only improved environmental outcomes, but also better outcomes for residents through good, career progressing jobs within the region's ever developing green sectors.

The work planned to enhance North Essex's solar power capacity shows North Essex's green potential. Alongside the proposed Longfield Solar Farm in Chelmsford and Braintree, Maldon also has plans to boost its solar power capacity through the proposed Dengie Solar Park – a British Solar Renewables project that plans to build a new 78-acre solar park in the area²¹. These plans to boost solar power capacity are supported by the 'Solar Together' initiative led by Essex CC which – in partnership with the region's six district authorities – is supporting residents to group buy solar PV and battery storage systems to drive demand for this renewable energy source²².

Away from solar power, there are also opportunities for the region to build on the example set in Braintree around EV charging infrastructure. The GRIDSERVE Braintree EV Forecourt is an exemplar for other areas to follow and is the largest of its kind in Europe with 12 high power charges, 12 medium power charges, 6 low power chargers and 6 Tesla super chargers²³. Braintree demonstrates North Essex's EV potential, and there is a real opportunity for the region to promote itself as an exemplar for others to follow within this green economy sector.

In addition, there are many other examples of broader work underway by leading North Essex businesses and initiatives, driving forward green technology and techniques essential to achieving North Essex's net zero transition. Tevva and Global Marine in Chelmsford are respectively driving forward the technology required to electrify HGVs and offshore wind efficiencies, whilst the I-Construct programme mentioned previously has facilitated new construction and technology ideas that will be central to delivering net zero critical retrofitting activities.

Alongside this – and to the benefit of many of North Essex's green businesses – Freeport East represents a critical opportunity to boost North Essex's green and high-growth economic ambitions. Located on Harwich Port, a 112-hectare site is being dedicated to the development of green energy, taking advantage of transport links available from the port and the close proximity to the North Sea's wind farms. The new green energy hub will focus on the manufacture of wind turbine components. This builds on the 2011 designation of Bradwell B as a site for a potential nuclear reactor. Should this come to fruition, Bradwell B will provide an estimated 3,000 construction jobs for local and regional workers and deliver 900 jobs once completed²⁴. Freeport East's Harwich site will create an estimated 3,478 new jobs in offshore wind and provide 77,900 square miles of manufacturing and office space²⁵.

²¹ British Solar Renewables. Source: [BSR | About \(britishrenewables.com\)](https://www.britishrenewables.com)

²² Solar Together. Source: [Group-buying for solar | Sussex \(solartogether.co.uk\)](https://www.solartogether.co.uk)

²³ GRIDSERVE. Source: [GRIDSERVE | Braintree](https://www.gridserve.co.uk)

²⁴ Bradwell B [Benefits - Bradwell B Project Site](https://www.bradwellb.co.uk)

²⁵ [Harwich \(freeporteast.com\)](https://www.freeporteast.com)

Despite the need to build on the excellent progress made to date in delivering North Essex's net zero transition, the importance of maintaining a balance between the development of green economy infrastructure – like solar panels and EV charging – whilst protecting the region's outstanding natural beauty for the benefit of residents and the region's visitor economy is acknowledged. As the region continues its net zero transition, it will be important to continue the promotion of the importance of progressing the region's new Garden Communities that strike a balance between delivering greener homes and further active travel opportunities, alongside maintaining and promoting the region's natural beauty. One of North Essex's key green economy strengths is the opportunity to promote the region's rural and coastal characteristics with it important that areas like Maldon's Promenade Park and Hythe Quay are appropriately protected and promoted as the region continues its net zero transition.

Chelmsford/Tendring and Colchester Borders Garden Communities

Both the Chelmsford and Tendring and Colchester Borders Garden Communities demonstrate how North Essex is best managing the importance of delivering on its net zero commitments, alongside maintaining the region's important rural characteristics.

The Chelmsford Garden Community will create a community of around 10,000 new homes and include new employment opportunities in north-east Chelmsford. In addition to the new homes to be delivered, the Garden Community will create a new country park, enhanced walking and cycling routes and facilitate new multi-functional green infrastructure that will support North Essex in achieving its net zero ambitions. In 2021, an agreement was signed between Chelmsford City Council, Countryside Zest and Homes England to deliver 80 Net Zero Carbon-ready homes as part of the new community.

Meanwhile, the Tendring and Colchester Borders Garden Community will be large enough to accommodate new homes and supporting community facilities and services, alongside employment land for businesses and industrial use. It will be served by a network of green and beautiful spaces to promote wildlife, attractive places, healthy living, recreational activity, sustainable drainage and to tackle the climate emergency; new services, facilities and infrastructure, including a new Rapid Transit System (RTS) and a new dual carriageway Link Road between the A120 and the A133.

Challenges

Despite the opportunities to build on the region's green economy strengths, there are challenges that need addressing through collaborative working across North Essex.

The first challenge is the rural/urban divide when it comes to some green economy infrastructure, and the accessibility challenges faced by some residents and businesses. As the tables below demonstrate, it is the more urban North Essex authorities – Colchester and Chelmsford – that have the closest number of EV Charging devices, compared to Braintree, within North Essex. The more rural authorities – particularly Maldon – have less EV charging infrastructure and relatively few rapid charging devices²⁶.

²⁶ DfT. Electric vehicle charging devices by local authority. Source: <https://maps.dft.gov.uk/ev-charging-map/index.html>

The lack of EV charging infrastructure across North Essex is impacting the transition to electric vehicles within the region. It is not practical for many to move away from internal combustion vehicle engines. If North Essex is to achieve its green economy ambitions, further work is required to consider how best to ensure EV charging infrastructure is evenly delivered across the region, ensuring all residents feel it possible to transition to electric vehicle use. Some movement will be seen with Tendring's REPF funding contributing to EV infrastructure in the district, but more will still need to be done.

EV Charging Devices (2023)					
Braintree	Colchester	Chelmsford	Tendring	Uttlesford	Maldon
82	62	44	37	33	14

Rapid Charging Devices					
Braintree	Colchester	Chelmsford	Uttlesford	Tendring	Maldon
82	62	44	37	33	14

EV Charging Devices and Rapid Charging Devices (2023)

Away from the divergence in coverage of some of the region's green infrastructure, another challenge the region faces is ensuring businesses know of the work already ongoing to deliver progress with the region's net zero ambitions. Despite some effective partnerships being established to deliver green improvements in the region – for example the partnership between CB Heating and EDF Energy to support heat pump installation – many businesses seem unaware of such partnerships being established. The NEEB wants to work with partners across the region, using its convening role to ensure that those involved in delivering the region's net zero ambitions collaborate regularly, and work together to scale up effective partnerships already established within the region.

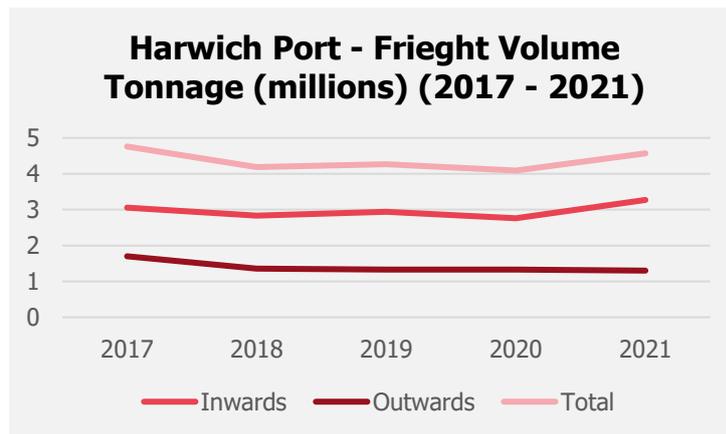
A final challenge is ensuring the region's residents benefit from the jobs that will become available as the region continues to deliver on its net zero commitments. There is a divergence in skills attainment across the region, and it is vital that North Essex's residents have an awareness of the good low and high skilled roles the region's green economy will offer looking ahead to 2030 and 2050. The Essex LSIP found that across the county, there is a paucity of green skills, and this may be partly attributed to a lack of awareness of and engagement with the opportunities available. Achieving this awareness will involve green businesses engaging with the region's schools, and Further Education and Higher Education institutions ensuring school children and students are aware of the forthcoming green economy opportunities and positioned to gain the skills required to secure the good jobs to follow.

3. A Dynamic and Connected Region

With North Essex's outward facing transport terminals forming important strategic trading links for the UK and best practice work delivered in the rollout of superfast broadband across the region, it is now imperative the region focuses on how it can drive infrastructure improvements. Specifically, the region should be focusing on how it can increase the region's roads' capacity; improve authority-to-authority public transport links; and boost ultrafast broadband availability. These improvements will further North Essex's economic growth potential, through greater inward investment and businesses establishing themselves in the region.

Opportunities

Starting with the region's transport infrastructure, one of the key opportunities for the region is to build on its external facing transport terminals – Harwich Port and Stansted Airport. As the region moves on from COVID-19 and looks to build on the post-Brexit landscape, these two international transport terminals will play a leading role in supporting economic growth in the region. Starting with Harwich Port, this international transport terminal plays a vital trade role in the region.



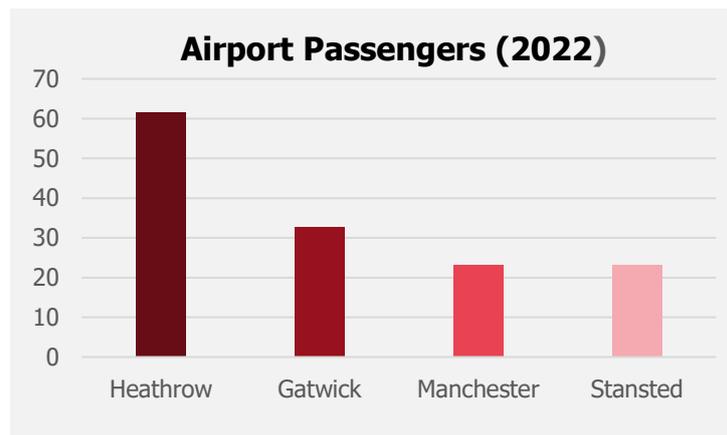
Harwich Port – Freight Volume Tonnage (Millions) (2017 – 2021)

It plays a critical role for the UK when it comes to both inward and outward freight trade, importing 3.27 million tonnes of freight and exporting 1.30 million tonnes in 2021. Also of note is the route analysis of the freight's start and end destinations, with the majority of Harwich Port's freight trade coming from, and going to, the EU. This is evidenced by the observation that, in 2021, 98.4% of the port's freight trade went to and from the EU²⁷. As the UK continues to build its relationship with the EU post Brexit, Harwich Port and the North Essex region will play an important role in facilitating prosperous trade links.

Moving to North Essex's other international transport terminal, Stansted Airport also plays a vital outward facing role for the region. As the graph outlines below, the airport ranks as one of the busiest in the UK, with 23.3 million passengers passing through the airport in 2022²⁸. Alongside passenger demand, the airport – like Harwich Port – also plays an important role in transporting freight across the globe, with its vital trading links are best utilised.

²⁷ DfT. Maritime statistics: interactive dashboard. Source: [UK maritime statistics: interactive dashboard \(dft.gov.uk\)](https://www.dft.gov.uk/maritime-statistics)

²⁸ UK Civil Aviation Authority. Annual Airport Data 2022. Source: [Annual airport data 2022 | Civil Aviation Authority \(caa.co.uk\)](https://www.caa.co.uk/annual-airport-data-2022)



Airport Passengers 2022 (Millions)

Away from the region's international transport terminals, there is an opportunity for the region to build on the internal transport infrastructure improvements underway. With the A120 planned to be widened where it meets the A12, and the A12 itself planned to be widened between junctions 19-25 and 25-29, the region's road infrastructure is already being improved to accommodate local residents' and businesses' needs. With broader transport infrastructure improvements either planned or being made across the region, including the upgrade to the Army and Navy roundabout, the A131 road improvements, and the delivery of the new Beaulieu Park train station (expected to open in late 2025), there are reasons to be optimistic about the region's internal transport network. The NEEB is keen to work with partners to see how further improvements can be delivered to best support North Essex's residents and businesses.

Whilst transport infrastructure improvements will be critical to supporting the region's economic growth ambitions, an increase in active travel initiatives will also be vital in ensuring residents and businesses can quickly and efficiently move around North Essex. The region's new Garden Communities will have active travel at their core, and there are other initiatives and projects underway within the region to boost and promote active travel. Significantly, Colchester secured £19.7 million through round 2 of the Government's Levelling Up Fund for its 'Co-Creation: A Contemporary Colchester City Centre' programme, with parts of this funding to be used to help improve active travel within the city. Specifically, the scheme includes plans to improve walking and cycling routes in the city centre by including a new road layout and removing underpasses at St. Botolph's roundabout. In addition, the scheme will provide a convenient new hub for storing and hiring bikes, e-bikes, e-cargo bikes and e-scooters²⁹. Investment like this – alongside schemes such as Essex Pedal Power – means North Essex has a real opportunity to promote active travel within the region.

Finally – and away from transport infrastructure – it is important to note the success of the Superfast Essex programme and how this has driven an increase in the number of premises across the region that have access to superfast broadband. All of the North Essex authorities benefit from over 90% of their premises having access to superfast broadband due to the success of Superfast Essex. As the region looks to address some of the ultrafast broadband challenges seen across the region, it will be important to learn from Superfast Essex's successes, with collaborative working key to further ultrafast broadband progress.

²⁹ Colchester City Council. Colchester awarded £19.66m funding for Levelling Up (2022). Source: [Colchester Awarded £19.66m funding for Levelling Up | Colchester City Council](#)

The Superfast Essex Programme

This programme led by Essex County Council illustrates what can be achieved through effective collaboration between central Government, local authorities and the private sector. Funded by Essex County Council, central Government and network operators (Openreach and Gigaclear) the Superfast Essex programme is working to make superfast and ultrafast broadband available to as many homes and businesses across Essex as possible. To date, significant strides have been made with the delivery of superfast broadband across North Essex and it is imperative the programme continues at pace with the delivery of ultrafast broadband across the region. This includes a focus on some of North Essex's rural authorities that are currently lagging behind their more urban neighbours.

Challenges

Away from the infrastructure opportunities present within North Essex, there are also challenges that need addressing to help support economic growth across the region.

The first critical challenge – which is understood by the need to deliver road improvements across the region – is the significant volume of congestion residents and businesses experience when commuting. With the high number of SMEs and a significant level of car use when travelling to work, North Essex's critical roads – including the A120, A12 and A131 – all experience high levels of congestion during peak demand hours. Data presented as part of the A12 Chelmsford to A120 planned widening (junctions 19 – 25) scheme outlines that this stretch of road has 90,000 vehicles passing through it every day, with 9% to 12% of this traffic the result of Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs), given the importance of this stretch of road to both Felixstowe and Harwich Ports³⁰. Added to this, the data presented below shows Essex as the county with the highest estimated traffic in 2021³¹. Congestion within the region must be reduced to ensure residents and businesses do not continue to lose time in transit and suffer the productivity losses that result.

Highest Estimated Traffic (millions) (2021)	
County	Vehicle Miles
Essex	8.5
Hampshire	8.5
Kent	8.4
Surrey	7.4
Hertfordshire	7.6

Highest Estimated Traffic in 2021 (Billions)

In addition to the high levels of congestion on the region's roads, there are clear rural/urban divides when it comes to both transport and digital infrastructure. There is a clear difference in the travel time to key services within the region's more urban authorities – Colchester and Chelmsford – compared to more rural authorities – Maldon and Uttlesford. Alongside the travel time to key services, there is also a rural/urban divide when considering the rollout of ultrafast

³⁰ National Highways. A12 Chelmsford to A120 widening scheme (junctions 19 to 25). Source: [A12 Chelmsford to A120 widening scheme \(junctions 19 to 25\) - National Highways](#)

³¹ DfT. Road Traffic Statistics. 2021. Source: [Road traffic statistics - Local authorities across Great Britain \(dft.gov.uk\)](#)

broadband, with Tendring particularly affected by the different levels of ultrafast broadband rollout across North Essex. If the region is to fulfil its economic potential, it is essential that all parts of North Essex benefit from the same standard of infrastructure, with the NEEB aware of the need to work with partners to ensure the region's more rural areas benefit from the same standard of infrastructure as the region's more urban areas.

4. Prosperous and Inclusive Communities

With North Essex's successes in securing central government levelling up funding; its thriving third sector; and its distinct urban, rural and coastal characteristics, there is a real chance to advance pride in place and boost residents' confidence and economic engagement within all North Essex authorities. Combining the region's outstanding rural and coastal landscapes with fulfilled and motivated residents and businesses will have a significant impact on the visitor economy, with now the time to begin further promotion of the North Essex opportunity.

Opportunities

Opportunities to build on central Government funding, secured as part of the levelling up agenda, is an important way to deliver prosperous and inclusive communities within North Essex in pursuit of further economic growth. The excellent work of North Essex's authorities has resulted in successful bids for various levelling up funding pots, and there is a real opportunity for the region to build on this funding to boost economic growth.

Firstly, two of North Essex's authorities – Colchester and Tendring – secured funding through round 2 of the Levelling Up Fund in January 2023. As outlined under the infrastructure strategic priority above, Colchester secured £19.7m of funding to deliver its 'Co-creation: A Contemporary Colchester City Centre' programme and, alongside this, Tendring secured £19.9m for its 'Clacton Civic Quarter' bid. This funding will rejuvenate a key area of Clacton, delivering 28 new affordable homes, a community hub including a new library, an adult community learning space for upskilling residents, and a space for public sector partners including a proposed University of Essex Centre for Coastal Communities³². In addition to Tendring's Levelling Up Fund round 2 success, the authority is also set to benefit from the Levelling Up Partnerships workstream and an additional £6.7m of funding to support regeneration projects around Dovercourt, announced during the 2023 Spring Budget.

This funding success builds on Colchester's £18.2m Towns Deal and the authorities' UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and Rural England Prosperity Fund allocations, with all funding being put towards boosting pride in place and enhancing prosperous and inclusive communities within North Essex. The NEEB is keen to work with partners to promote the success of this funding as projects and programmes are delivered, taking the opportunity to make the case for continued central government and wider investor support to enhance communities within the region, boosting pride in place and furthering economic growth.

Alongside the opportunity to build on the successes in securing central Government funding, there is the opportunity to build on the existing initiatives being delivered within the region to enhance community and wellbeing. The region benefits from a strong third sector involvement, with it important to explore how further collaboration with this sector can boost community and wellbeing to drive economic growth. Existing initiatives include:

³² Tendring District Council. Clacton Levelling Up Fund Bid. Source: [Tendring District Council | Clacton Levelling Up Fund Bid \(tendringdc.gov.uk\)](https://www.tendringdc.gov.uk)

- **'Community 360: One Colchester'** – A multi-agency group that provides a local strategic framework to target issues affecting local communities within the authority, with the ultimate outcome of encouraging communities to take charge of their own destiny with an emphasis on community self-help, health and wellbeing; stable homes; safety; prosperity and other outcomes deemed appropriate within the partnership³³.
- **Let's Talk Uttlesford** – This aims to be a safe and trusted online community space where residents can get information and share thoughts and ideas about local issues and initiatives. This includes the Uttlesford Net Zero Hub which provides information on how residents can help support making the authority carbon neutral³⁴.
- **Chelmsford CVS** – An independent support and development organisation set up to champion, support and strengthen local charities, voluntary and community groups. This organisation runs a number of different projects. A particular success story was Chelmsford 100 – a festival which brought together a wide range of individuals and local community groups, asking them to share stories about what living in Chelmsford meant to them³⁵.
- **One Maldon District** – A senior level partnership, working together to ensure a healthier and prosperous Maldon District in relation to place, prosperity, community and safety. One Maldon District seeks to maximise collaboration to ensure there is an abundance of opportunities for enhanced health, wellbeing, community safety and feeling of safety within communities across the district³⁶.

With strong foundations already in place in relation to delivering prosperous and inclusive communities across North Essex, there is ample opportunity to ensure successful existing authority-specific initiatives are scaled up to other parts of the region. The NEEB has an important convening role here and will look to work with partners across the region to achieve this.

Finally, it is worth noting how the success of the region's visitor economy links to prosperous and inclusive communities. With its mix of urban, rural and coastal characteristics, North Essex has foundations to build upon when it comes to its visitor economy, with the sector's further success dependent upon the health, wealth and pride of the residents and local businesses that call North Essex home. For the sector to flourish, residents and businesses need to feel engaged with their local areas, demonstrating a willingness to promote North Essex as a visitor destination. Recent central Government investment secured will help achieve this – boosting pride in place – but there is an important role to play in promoting the region's visitor economy, and the need for more community investment across the region, to strengthen this sector further. There is a strong North Essex opportunity here and collaborative working is critical to strengthening North Essex's visitor economy.

³³ Community 360: Together We Thrive. One Colchester. Source: [One Colchester - Community 360](#)

³⁴ Let's Talk Uttlesford. Source: [Let's talk Uttlesford](#)

³⁵ Chelmsford CVS. Source: [Chelmsford CVS - Inspiring Voluntary Action](#)

³⁶ One Maldon District. Maldon District Council. Source: [One Maldon District | One Maldon District | Maldon District Council](#)

Maldon District Community Container

Exemplifying the work that is ongoing across North Essex to support prosperous and inclusive communities, the Maldon District Community Container is supporting residents in need of help through the creation and running of a storage container stocked with items including food, childcare and household items, cooking equipment, warm packs, supermarket vouchers and other essentials. The container was created following a formal partnership agreed between Maldon District Council, Maldon & District Community and Voluntary Service (CVS), Salvation Army, local Housing Association, Citizen Advice Bureau and other key stakeholders. The Maldon & District CVS ensures items are topped up and use a network of supporting volunteers to manage the container's use. This container has supported many across the authority, including refugees from Afghanistan and Ukraine following the devastating recent events within these countries.

Challenges

Despite the opportunities present to enhance North Essex's prosperous and inclusive communities, there are challenges that need to be addressed to achieve this ambition.

Firstly, whilst there are ample examples of existing successful initiatives being delivered within the region to enhance community and wellbeing, scaling these up to become North Essex-wide initiatives can often be challenging and lead to gaps in provision. To ensure that community enhancements are best driving economic growth in the region, it will be important to identify what can prevent the scale up of initiatives, with the NEEB playing an important role in overcoming those challenges.

Additionally, as raised when discussing skilled residents, confidence and optimism in the job market is lacking across the region. North Essex faces issues around supporting inclusive employment, including providing mental health support for both employees and employers. These are significant barriers facing the region and raising morale through community engagement will have to be addressed in order to achieve inclusive economic growth within North Essex's communities.

Finally, the region faces particular challenges when promoting its visitor economy, impacting the extent to which this sector is contributing to North Essex's economic growth. Specifically, there is much regional competition within the East of England when it comes to the visitor economy, with Suffolk and Norfolk popular destinations for many choosing to holiday within England. Despite these regions' popularity, their offerings align to North Essex's urban, rural and coastal characteristics, with there opportunities for North Essex to rival Norfolk and Suffolk as a holiday destination. Alongside further investment to support the region's visitor economy, there is a need to promote North Essex's positive attributes; improve authority-to-authority transport links; and advertise holiday options all year round to boost the region's visitor economy. Once again, there is an important role for the NEEB to play here, ensuring these challenges are addressed when promoting the North Essex opportunity.



The North Essex Economic Board (NEEB) is a partnership of district and county councils offering fully funded business support and skills programme to support economic growth across North Essex. The partnership consists of Maldon, Tendring, Braintree, Uttlesford District Councils, Chelmsford and Colchester City Councils, and Essex County Council. Find out more at www.neeb.org.uk Socials @neebgrowth

Henham Strategy is a public policy and economic development consultancy with a focus on local growth, trade and investment and higher education. We aim to connect local, regional and international actors to stimulate economic growth across the UK.



DELIVERING FOR NORTH ESSEX



Contents

The North Essex Vision.....	4
The Economic Context.....	5
North Essex’s Strategic Priorities.....	5
North Essex’s Opportunities.....	7
North Essex’s 2-Year Delivery Plan.....	11
North Essex’s Ambitions.....	15

The North Essex Vision

A proactive, productive and progressive North Essex that advances its economic potential through inward and outward-facing partnerships, with all residents, businesses and visitors benefitting from the region's economic prosperity.

The North Essex Economic Board (NEEB) is proud to present our ambitious North Essex vision, ready to collaborate with partners to seize the region's significant and diverse economic opportunities.

Established in 2019, the NEEB represents the economic ambitions of seven North Essex authorities – Braintree District Council, Chelmsford City Council, Colchester City Council, Essex County Council, Maldon District Council, Tendring District Council and Uttlesford District Council – catalysing collective action to drive economic prosperity within all parts of the urban, rural and coastal region. It provides the strategic oversight of North Essex's diverse, inclusive and productive economic priorities, ensuring tangible actions are delivered to support residents' and businesses' goals and aspirations. Promoting the region's potential, the NEEB presents the strong strategic rationale for further central government and private sector investment, needed to deliver North Essex's long-term ambitions.

Much has been delivered by the NEEB to date – including the distribution of critical COVID-19 support funding and career-enhancing business and skills support programmes – and the partnership is now positioned to go even further and deliver even more for North Essex's residents and businesses. The 2-year delivery plan and ambitions presented below have been developed by Henham Strategy, utilising 'North Essex's Strategic Narrative' and 'North Essex's Economic Baseline' to identify the short-term actions and long-term ambitions that will deliver economic prosperity for North Essex's residents and businesses.



Working together, we can leverage North Essex's core strengths...

Our innovative and thriving SME community and cutting edge HE and FE institutions, delivering good, local jobs

Our dynamic and competitive renewable energy generation strengths, driving net zero progression

Our unique strategic location linked to regional and international partners, supporting inward investment

Our proud urban, rural and coastal communities, focused on supporting prosperous residents and businesses

The Economic Context

Much has changed since the NEEB published its 2019 economic strategy, with three critical events in particular shaping the opportunities and challenges of the North Essex economy.

Firstly, the UK's departure from the EU in January 2020 has changed the economic landscape of both North Essex and the country as a whole, with challenges still being worked through as the country seeks to prosper through its new post-Brexit economic position. For North Essex specifically, the region's significant number of SMEs are continuing to adapt to changes in the business and trading environment, changes that Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) forecasts suggest could lead to a decline in the UK's long-run productivity, relative to remaining in the EU.

Alongside Brexit, there are lasting impacts caused by the COVID-19 global pandemic. Whilst Government-mandated lockdowns and restrictions are a thing of the past, their economic impacts remain, including economic inactivity remaining stubbornly high and hybrid working patterns embedded across the country. This national picture mirrors what has been observed within North Essex, with the region's economic inactivity currently 1.9% higher than figures recorded pre-COVID-19 and a much greater proportion of residents working from home¹.

Finally, residents and businesses across the country have, most recently, been significantly impacted by cost-of-living pressures that have eaten away at disposable income and financial reserves. We know the damage inflation has had on many residents and businesses across North Essex – including the need to delay important life decisions² – with support for North Essex's residents and businesses at the forefront of our thinking as we look to progress actions to boost the region's economic growth.

North Essex's Strategic Priorities

Despite recent challenging economic circumstances, the North Essex economy stands ready to build on the fantastic opportunities within the region, with its diverse urban, rural and coastal characteristics differentiating the region from other parts of the country.

With these diverse characteristics in mind, this 'Delivering for North Essex' plan has been founded upon four key strategic priorities.

1. Innovative Businesses and Skilled Residents

A resilient and outward-facing economy that builds on its incumbent strengths and is positioned to deliver economic opportunities for North Essex's residents, and drive inward investment to support businesses within the region's critical growth sectors.

2. A Green and High Growth Economy

A forward-looking economy that utilises the diversity of its resources in a sustainable way that furthers North Essex's clean energy strengths, boosts growth, and promotes residents' prosperity through net zero commitments.

¹ NOMIS. Labour Market Profiles (Essex) (2022). Source: [Labour Market Profile - Nomis - Official Census and Labour Market Statistics \(nomisweb.co.uk\)](https://www.nomisweb.co.uk)

² Essex Open Data. Cost of Living Qualitative Research (2023). Source: [Cost of living qualitative research | Essex Open Data](https://www.essexopen.com)

3. A Dynamic and Connected Region

A well-connected and digitally-linked region that provides residents with quick and reliable access to key services, encourages inward investment, and makes the most of ties to regional and international neighbours.

4. Prosperous and Inclusive Communities

A thriving and inclusive region where all residents and businesses have the opportunity to contribute and prosper, exemplifying the region as a great place to live, work and visit.



North Essex's Opportunities

1. Innovative Businesses and Skilled Residents

RESIDENTS

We want all North Essex's residents to have the opportunity to:

- Make the most of the region's excellent Higher and Further Education offerings.
- Benefit from good, career-enhancing jobs within the region's key growth sectors – construction and retrofit, clean energy, advanced manufacturing and engineering, digital tech, and life sciences.
- Engage with NEEB-led skills development programmes and those funded through UKSPF and DWP, building workplace confidence and the region's skills.
- Benefit from living and working within North Essex, with a desire to remain within the region and contribute to its economic prosperity.
- Retrain, ensuring the region's workforce has the ability to pivot towards jobs within the region's key growth sectors.

BUSINESSES

We want all our businesses to have the opportunity to:

- Start and scale up within North Essex, benefitting from cutting edge commercial space.
- Engage with, and benefit from, the opportunities around Freeport East and its associated tax relief.
- Collaborate with other innovative businesses, sharing best business practices and supporting business growth.
- Secure inward investment, implementing cutting-edge innovations within business practices and boosting local economies.
- Employ an appropriately skilled workforce within North Essex, supporting resident and business ambitions and locally-sourced talent.

The North Essex Snapshot

These opportunities reflect the region's incumbent business and skills strengths, with infrastructure and projects already in place that are driving innovative businesses and skilled residents within North Essex. Notably, North Essex benefits from a significant SME community, with current sector strengths including construction and real estate activities. Alongside incumbent sector strengths, the region is making positive strides towards seizing the opportunities associated with key growth sectors. This includes the excellent work being progressed in the Digi Tech sector through the AIXR: Centre for Immersive Innovation and the Life Sciences sector through Chesterford Research Park. Supporting growth sector progression are North Essex's leading Higher and Further Education institutions, including the University of Essex, Anglia Ruskin University, Writtle University College, the Colchester Institute, Chelmsford College and Stansted Airport College. Education strengths include the University of Essex's expertise in computer and data science and the 'first of its kind' aviation training offered by Stansted Airport College.

2. A Green and High Growth Economy

RESIDENTS

We want all our residents to have the opportunity to:

- Benefit from North Essex's net zero transition, securing good jobs within a green economy boosted by Freeport East and Bradwell B's potential.
- Positively contribute to current and future steps taken to achieve net zero within North Essex.
- Continue enjoying North Essex's rural and coastal characteristics, in conjunction with green infrastructure delivery.
- Benefit from North Essex's renewable energy strengths – offshore wind, onshore wind and solar power – providing cheaper, long-term energy sources and exciting employment opportunities.
- Benefit from the transition to electric vehicles, with a sufficient number of charge points available across all of North Essex.

BUSINESSES

We want all our businesses to have the opportunity to:

- Form effective partnerships to progress net zero objectives, with a focus on linking national energy suppliers with local North Essex businesses to drive forward the net zero transition.
- Learn from successful green measures adopted by other North Essex businesses, ensuring best practice is adopted across the board.
- Better understand the green jobs required to deliver net zero objectives and how to create them locally.
- Articulate the green skills North Essex needs to fill green jobs identified, ensuring these jobs boost economic growth and attract inward investment.
- Build on North Essex's renewable energy strengths – offshore wind, onshore wind and solar power – benefitting from Freeport East and Bradwell B's potential.

The North Essex Snapshot

These opportunities reflect the region's incumbent green economy strengths, with North Essex positioned to become a leader in several renewable energy sources. This includes offshore wind, onshore wind and solar power, with the region already generating a significant amount of electricity from these sources. Critically, North Essex's green economy strengths will be boosted by Freeport East which will see a 112 hectare area established in Harwich dedicated to the development of green energy. This green energy hub will focus on the manufacture of wind turbine components. Progress is also being made with the East Anglia Green Energy Enablement (GREEN) project, which will reinforce the high voltage power network in East Anglia between the existing substations at Norwich Main in Norfolk, Bramford in Suffolk and Tilbury in Essex. This will also connect new offshore wind generation, boosting North Essex's strengths in this renewable energy source. In addition, CB Heating's partnership with EDF Energy – and the Heat Pump Installer Network's Academy – means Tendring is playing a critical role in the education and delivery of heat pumps across the country.

3. A Dynamic and Connected Region

RESIDENTS

We want all our residents to have the opportunity to:

- Benefit from ultrafast broadband, building on the Superfast Essex programme's successful rollout of superfast broadband.
- Utilise digital services in all parts of North Essex, not simply the region's urban centres.
- Regularly travel between the region's urban, rural and coastal authorities, confident in the reliable and high quality public transport offering.
- Participate widely in active travel schemes, making use of walking and cycling infrastructure where possible.
- Access key public services (e.g. schools and hospitals) in a timely manner, not inhibited by where they live within North Essex.

BUSINESSES

We want our businesses to have the opportunity to:

- Benefit from digital accessibility across North Essex, positioning all parts of North Essex as accessible and attractive places to do business.
- Benefit from quick and reliable transport links, with business decisions not impacted by North Essex's current congestion challenges.
- Feed into discussions on North Essex's transport needs, ensuring alignment with business needs.
- Attract inward investment, with investors having confidence in North Essex's transport infrastructure.
- Develop links with regional and national partners, with infrastructure developed to facilitate links to other parts of the country.

The North Essex Snapshot

These opportunities reflect the region's incumbent infrastructure strengths and the need to go further to enhance some aspects of North Essex's digital and transport infrastructure. Incumbent strengths include the region's outward facing transport terminals – including Stansted Airport and Harwich Port. With 23.3 million passengers passing through Stansted Airport in 2022 and Harwich Port importing and exporting 4.57 million tonnes of freight in 2021, these transport terminals provide North Essex with excellent global links that are vital to supporting the region's economic growth. In addition, the success of the Superfast Essex programme, has resulted in all of the North Essex authorities benefitting from over 90% of their premises having access to superfast broadband – a significant recent improvement in the region's digital connectivity. Despite these strengths, further improvements are required, with North Essex's critical roads – including the A12, A120 and A131 – suffering from high levels of congestion and the region inhibited by rural connectivity blackspots, especially when it comes to ultrafast broadband.

4. Prosperous and Inclusive Communities

RESIDENTS

We want all our residents to have the opportunity to:

- Build closer connections with their local communities, helping boost pride in place.
- Participate more in community activities that help build a sense of North Essex belonging.
- Feed views into community developments, ensuring interventions best deliver for community needs.
- Understand how community progression can support their personal aspirations and goals.
- Benefit from a prosperous North Essex visitor economy through inclusive and year-round employment opportunities.

BUSINESSES

We want our businesses to have the opportunity to:

- Benefit from a confident and proud North Essex workforce, engaged in supporting North Essex's economic growth.
- Engage with local communities, advertising good jobs available to kickstart and restart careers within North Essex.
- Support local residents to secure good jobs, working with community partners and organisations to enhance the region's skills offering.
- Further understand North Essex's local communities, ensuring business decisions reflect local needs.
- Promote themselves as part of North Essex's visitor economy, benefitting from more visitors all year round.

The North Essex Snapshot

The opportunities above reflect the region's recent successes in progressing prosperous and inclusive communities within North Essex. Successes include authorities securing central government support to level up North Essex, with Colchester and Tendring to benefit from £19.7m and £19.9m of Levelling Up Fund round 2 funding. Tendring will also benefit through the Levelling Up Partnerships workstream, with £6.7m of additional funding announced during the 2023 Spring Budget. Alongside critical levelling up funding secured, North Essex benefits from effective initiatives aimed at boosting community cohesion and pride in place. This includes initiatives like Community 360: One Colchester and Chelmsford CVS that encourage communities to take charge of their own destiny, support and strengthen local charities, voluntary organisations and community groups. Further progress is required to enhance North Essex's prosperous and inclusive communities, ensuring all North Essex's residents feel pride in their communities and have the confidence to engage with the region's diverse and progressive economic opportunities.

North Essex's 2-Year Delivery Plan

Delivering against the four strategic priorities – and the associated opportunities that will catalyse economic growth within North Essex – the NEEB will lead on delivering an ambitious delivery plan. This will be delivered **over the next 2 years** in partnership with North Essex's residents and businesses.

1. Innovative Businesses and Skilled Residents

A. AUDITING DIGITAL SKILLS PROGRAMMES

The NEEB will review the delivery of its previous digital skills programmes, leading resident engagement to understand why some of the programmes previously run failed to stimulate demand. Audit outcomes will be fed into the region's Local Skills Improvement Plans.

Desired Outcome: Further understanding as to what makes a digital skills programme successful in North Essex, therefore adapting them better for the future.

Delivery Date: By Autumn 2023.

B. CONVENING LOCAL BUSINESSES AND SUPPORT ORGANISATIONS

The NEEB will establish a 'North Essex Business Forum' which will invite key businesses and support organisations from across the region to quarterly meetings, with discussions to focus on highlighting initiatives underway, support available and business needs, to drive business growth and skills, aligned with ECC's efforts.

Desired Outcome: Increase in partnership working between North Essex's businesses and support organisations, with business needs addressed, and best practices adopted across the region – advertised through business best practice toolkits.

Delivery Date: By the end of 2023.

C. PROMOTING NORTH ESSEX TO GRADUATES

Working with the region's Higher Education and Further Education institutions, the NEEB will develop promotional material advertising the region as a great place to work and live which will target the institutions' skilled graduates.

Desired Outcome: Promotional material on the benefits of living and working in North Essex shared during Further Education and Higher Education careers events and advertised through an online NEEB campaign.

Delivery Date: By the start of the 24/25 academic year (September 2024).

D. DELIVERING THE NEEB'S 23/24 AND 24/25 BUSINESS SUPPORT PROGRAMMES

Building on the success of previous business support programmes, the NEEB will deliver its business support programmes planned for 23/24 and 24/25.

Desired Outcome: Continued positive business engagement with the NEEB's business support programmes, with more businesses receiving generalist support that reflects broad business needs within the region.

Delivery Date: By the end of 23/24 and 24/25.

2. A Green and High Growth Economy

A. CONVENING GREEN BUSINESSES

Utilising the CB Heating and EDF Energy partnership in Tendring as an exemplar, the NEEB will convene local and national green economy businesses, highlighting the benefits of partnership working and encouraging further collaboration.

Desired Outcome: Further partnerships established between local and national green economy businesses that support delivery of North Essex's net zero commitments.

Delivery Date: By Autumn 2023.

B. ESTABLISHING 'GREEN CHAMPIONS'

Working with local community and volunteer groups, the NEEB will identify 'Green Champions' within each authority, whose role will involve delivering resident engagement focused on articulating the importance of the net zero transition and how local characteristics can be protected as part of this.

Desired Outcome: At least one 'Green Champion' established within each local authority with increased resident support for net zero actions.

Delivery Date: By the end of 2023.

C. PROMOTING NORTH ESSEX'S GREEN POTENTIAL

The NEEB will position itself as the region's green economy lead, lobbying central government for further funding and positioning the region as a green exemplar through maximising the benefits of Freeport East.

Desired Outcome: Dialogue with Government on the opportunities around securing future funding to deliver the region's net zero commitments.

Delivery Date: By mid-2024.

D. DELIVERING STUDENT GREEN ECONOMY ENGAGEMENT

Working with North Essex's schools, Further Education, and Higher Education institutions, the NEEB will deliver engagement activities promoting the future opportunities available within the green economy, advertising roles that require both academic and more technical strengths.

Desired Outcome: Seminars delivered by leading local green economy stakeholders within schools, colleges and universities, promoting job opportunities within the region's green economy.

Delivery Date: By the start of the 24/25 academic year.

3. A Dynamic and Connected Region

A. ESTABLISHING A TRANSPORT EAST PARTNERSHIP

To better promote and address North Essex's strategic transport needs, the NEEB will establish a strategic partnership with Transport East, providing a North Essex collective voice to shape transport strategic thinking.

Desired Outcome: Strategic partnership with Transport East established, enabling one North Essex voice to be presented within strategic transport thinking.

Delivery Date: By Autumn 2023.

B. CONVENING LOCAL TRANSPORT OPERATORS

The NEEB will convene the region's local transport operators to discuss changes that can be made to service timetables to ensure residents in more rural areas are able to travel more easily across authorities.

Desired Outcome: Dialogue with transport operators around how services can be better tailored to meet all residents' and businesses' needs across North Essex.

Delivery Date: By the end of 2023.

C. FACILITATING EFFECTIVE EV CHARGING ROLL-OUT

To ensure the region's EV charging disparities are not solely considered within authority and county specific strategies, the NEEB will work with regional (e.g. SELEP) and national (e.g. National Grid) partners to articulate the particular challenges North Essex faces when delivering EV charging infrastructure, ensuring these challenges are acknowledged in regional and national EV charging strategies.

Desired Outcome: North Essex's EV charging needs effectively considered within regional and national strategies.

Delivery Date: By mid-2024.

D. LEADING DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

To ensure the rollout of superfast and ultrafast broadband is effectively utilised within the region, the NEEB will lead resident engagement to educate and promote the benefits of digital use, focusing this engagement particularly on the region's elderly and digitally excluded population.

Desired Outcome: Increase in resident engagement with digital services available to them and an increase in digital literacy.

Delivery Date: By mid-2025.

4. Prosperous and Inclusive Communities

A. CONVENING LOCAL THIRD SECTOR ORGANISATIONS

The NEEB will convene a 'Third Sector Volunteers Forum' which will invite key third sector organisations from across the region to quarterly meetings, with discussions to focus on highlighting initiatives underway that are being delivered to enhance communities and further support the work of the organisations to help them grow in stature. This forum will include a focus on facilitating intergenerational engagement through a mentorship scheme.

Desired Outcome: Increase in voluntary initiatives delivered across the region, with mentorship programme established to support intergenerational engagement.

Delivery Date: By Autumn 2023.

B. DEVELOPING A NORTH ESSEX PRIDE IN PLACE EVIDENCE BASE

The NEEB will undertake a project to showcase the region's pride in place strengths and where further support can be best delivered. This will include a delivery plan on how North Essex can best improve critical community infrastructure across the region.

Desired Outcome: A well evidenced understanding of how North Essex can improve pride in place considerations, with a clear delivery plan outlining key partners' responsibilities published.

Delivery Date: By mid-2024.

C. DELIVERING A VISITOR ECONOMY PROMOTION AUDIT

The NEEB will undertake an audit of the visitor economy promotional material delivered in other parts of the country with a positive history of attracting visitors (e.g. Scotland, Norfolk and Suffolk), drawing together best practice and working with North Essex partners to implement such practices to boost promotion of the region's visitor economy in alignment with Visit Essex.

Desired Outcome: A well evidenced understanding of best practice implemented within other regions with leading visitor economy offers.

Delivery Date: By the end of 2024.

D. LEADING NORTH ESSEX'S VISITOR ECONOMY PROMOTION

Working with regional visitor economy partners, the NEEB will deliver promotional material that aims to promote the region's mix of urban, rural and coastal characteristics.

Desired Outcome: A coherent North Essex story presented that outlines how key partners will work towards boosting the region's visitor economy.

Delivery Date: By mid-2025.

North Essex's Ambitions

Alongside North Essex's 2-Year Delivery Plan, the NEEB is an ambitious partnership that has a long-term outlook for the North Essex economy. With devolved power ever more present across the country, we have considered our long-term ambitions for the North Essex economy, providing an exciting and aspirational outlook for the region's residents and businesses. We will work collaboratively with our neighbouring Essex partners to make the strong strategic case for further private and public sector investment and support to deliver our North Essex ambitions.

1. Innovative Businesses and Skilled Residents

- A. DELIVERING SKILLS UNIFORMITY** – The NEEB would like skills attainment across the region to become more uniform, with a focus on upskilling authorities currently with a higher proportion of low-skilled workers.
- B. SECURING FURTHER R&D INVESTMENT** – The NEEB would like to have greater influence over – and ability to drive – R&D investment into the region, focusing this investment on the region's key growth sectors.
- C. DEVELOPING COMMERCIAL AND INCUBATION SPACES** – The NEEB would like to be the go-to partnership for business support within North Essex and would like greater funding to deliver further commercial and incubation spaces within North Essex.
- D. AGREEING INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS** – The NEEB would like to establish international partnerships with other regional economic development partnerships, universities and local government structures, promoting North Essex's businesses and potential to drive inward investment.

2. A Green and High Growth Economy

- A. FACILITATING FURTHER GREEN INVESTMENT** – The NEEB would like to lead on driving green investment into the region, drawing in more large energy companies and supporting innovative green start-ups within the region.
- B. SECURING LONGER-TERM GREEN SKILLS FUNDING** – The NEEB would like to secure longer-term funding to support green skills initiatives – like the 'I-Construct' programme – ensuring there is clear commitment to green skills investment within the region, giving confidence to businesses that North Essex is serious about delivering and benefitting from the green jobs of the future.
- C. LEADING THE EV CHARGE** – The NEEB would like to play a greater role in the delivery of EV charge points across the region, with further Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) funding to help achieve these ambitions.
- D. LEADING ESSEX'S GREEN JOBS DELIVERY** – The NEEB would like North Essex to be the region leading delivery of Essex's green jobs, ensuring the county reaches its goal of delivering 18,000 green jobs by 2030.

3. A Dynamic and Connected Region

- A. SUPPORTING SUPERFAST AND GIGABIT BROADBAND UNIFORMITY** – The NEEB would like to see the availability of ultrafast broadband within North Essex’s premises match that currently seen (i.e. 90% plus availability) when looking at the region’s superfast broadband availability, and 85% for gigabit availability.
- B. SECURING MORE PUBLIC TRANSPORT SERVICES THAT CONNECT URBAN/RURAL AREAS** – The NEEB would like to see funding made available to deliver more public transport services (i.e. routes) between the region’s urban and rural authorities, making it easier for residents to travel across the region.
- C. ESTABLISHING A NORTH ESSEX EV CHARGING EXEMPLAR** – Building on Braintree’s GRIDSERVE EV Charging forecourt, the NEEB would like to see further EV charging points delivered across the region, positioning North Essex as an exemplar for other regions to follow.
- D. ENHANCING HARWICH PORT’S EU LINKS** – Supporting the UK’s trade ambitions, the NEEB would like to work with Harwich Port to identify ways to boost inward and outward freight trade with the EU, given the port’s incumbent links with this trading bloc.

4. Prosperous and Inclusive Communities

- A. INCREASING COMMUNITY INVESTMENT** – The NEEB would like to see North Essex have further powers over funding to invest in enhancing its prosperous and inclusive communities across, with a focus on local leaders knowing what is best for local areas.
- B. BOOSTING PRIDE IN PLACE** – The NEEB would like to see an increase in residents’ pride in place, with opportunities for residents to have greater input into the ownership and delivery of assets of particular local importance.
- C. CREATING CONFIDENT COMMUNITIES** – The NEEB would like to see further investment focused on increasing ‘soft skills’ across the region, ensuring more of the region’s residents are positioned to engage with North Essex’s economic opportunities.
- D. MATCHING OTHER AREAS’ VISITOR NUMBERS** – The NEEB would like to see North Essex rival other areas in the East of England (e.g. Suffolk and Norfolk) when it comes to the visitor economy, matching the popular visit destinations in terms of visitor numbers.



The North Essex Economic Board (NEEB) is a partnership of district and county councils offering fully funded business support and skills programme to support economic growth across North Essex. The partnership consists of Maldon, Tendring, Braintree, Uttlesford District Councils, Chelmsford and Colchester City Councils, and Essex County Council. Find out more at www.neeb.org.uk Socials @neebgrowth

Henham Strategy is a public policy and economic development consultancy with a focus on local growth, trade and investment and higher education. We aim to connect local, regional and international actors to stimulate economic growth across the UK.



NORTH ESSEX'S ECONOMIC BASELINE



Contents

The North Essex Vision.....	3
Methodology.....	4
What has changed since 2019?.....	6
North Essex’s Strategic Priorities.....	10
Innovative Businesses and Skilled Residents.....	10
A Green and High Growth Economy.....	17
A Dynamic and Connected Region.....	20
Prosperous and Inclusive Communities.....	24

The North Essex Vision

A proactive, productive and progressive North Essex that advances its economic potential through inward and outward-facing partnerships, with all residents, businesses and visitors benefitting from the region's economic prosperity.

Alongside the North Essex Economic Board's (NEEB) 'North Essex Strategic Narrative', the partnership has undertaken a robust review of national, regional and local datasets to present 'North Essex's Economic Baseline', further informing the 2-year delivery plan presented within the NEEB's 'Delivering for North Essex' plan. This economic baseline has been produced in partnership with Henham Strategy, who have provided an independent voice to the evidencing and identification of the four key strategic priorities and the North Essex Vision. The four strategic priorities will deliver prosperity for the region's residents and businesses, with the 'Delivering for North Essex' plan outlining the short-term actions and long-term ambitions the NEEB will deliver.



Working together, we can leverage North Essex's core strengths...

Our innovative and thriving SME community and cutting edge HE and FE institutions, delivering good, local jobs

Our dynamic and competitive renewable energy generation strengths, driving net zero progression

Our unique strategic location linked to regional and international partners, supporting inward investment

Our proud urban, rural and coastal communities, focused on supporting prosperous residents and businesses

Methodology

In November 2022, Henham Strategy commenced work on developing a robustly evidenced North Essex economic baseline, underpinned by a comprehensive desktop and data analysis review process. This exercise allowed for an understanding of the region's economic opportunities, challenges and risks, alongside a comprehension of areas of collaboration that the NEEB could lead on to drive productivity, innovation and economic growth.

The economic baselines draw on existing material from NEEB authorities and their partners, alongside official statistics from the ONS, Essex Open Data, NOMIS, the Thriving Places Index, central government, and other sources. Data findings were also tested and developed through a series of workshops with councillors, officers, key local businesses and Higher Education and Further Education institutions.

The Data Analysis

To extend and deepen the evidence base and understand how North Essex's economy has comparatively performed in recent years, comparator geographies (and associated data) were used throughout the analysis. As well as using regional level data (at an East of England level) and national data (at an England level), we also analysed four other 'similarly-sized' Local Authority districts that were similar to the NEEB in statistical terms, based on a comparative analysis of publicly available Census 2021 data.

Our approach to the analysis of the four similarly-sized districts is outlined below:

- For each of the six North Essex districts (excluding Essex County Council), we looked at data on 'Population Density', 'Household Size (1 person, 2 people, 3 people, 4 people)', 'Distance Travelled to Work (less than 10km)', 'Distance Travelled to Work (10km and over)', '[Workers] Working Mainly From Home', 'Economically Inactive' and 'Economically Inactive'.
- For each dataset, we found the North Essex average to allow for a comparison to be made to districts across the country we may have wanted to include within our comparative analysis.
- Using the North Essex averages, we found the percentage differences in the statistics recorded for a long list of districts (identified through our strategy analysis stage and an initial analytical review of 'Population Density' data), before calculating the average percentage difference and using this as an indicator to demonstrate which districts were most closely aligned to the six that constitute North Essex.

With North Hertfordshire, Central Bedfordshire, Maidstone and Dover identified as the similarly sized districts, and an awareness of the need to analyse data on a regional and national level (East of England and England as a whole), we conducted our data analysis, bringing together district, county, regional and national level data (where possible) for the years 2017 – 2022. This timeframe was identified to help uncover potential COVID-19 and EU Exit impacts outlined within the datasets analysed.

The findings of the data analysis exercise made clear that there were four themes ('key strategic priorities') that united all seven authorities, from which a coherent and compelling 'North Essex Vision' could be built. These were:

1. Innovative Businesses and Skilled Residents

A resilient and outward-facing economy that builds on its incumbent strengths and is positioned to deliver economic opportunities for North Essex's residents, and drive inward investment to support businesses within the region's critical growth sectors.

2. A Green and High Growth Economy

A forward-looking economy that utilises the diversity of its resources in a sustainable way that furthers North Essex's clean energy strengths, boosts growth, and promotes residents' prosperity through net zero commitments.

3. A Dynamic and Connected Region

A well-connected and digitally-linked region that provides residents with quick and reliable access to key services, encourages inward investment, and makes the most of ties to regional and international neighbours.

4. Prosperous and Inclusive Communities

A thriving and inclusive region where all residents and businesses have the opportunity to contribute and prosper, exemplifying the region as a great place to live, work and visit.

Stakeholder Workshops

In order to test and refine the analysis underpinning the economic baseline, a series of six workshops were held with key local stakeholders, including councillors from each authority, lead council officers, local businesses, business representative groups, Higher Education and Further Education institutions, and others. The objective of each workshop was to test data findings, strengthen insights and conclusions, and understand their priorities for the 2-year delivery plan the NEEB will lead on. These workshops took place in February and March 2023.

The evidence baseline has then informed the 'Delivering for North Essex' plan, as well as the 'North Essex Strategic Opportunities and Challenges' document, which seeks to draw together North Essex's compelling vision around the four key strategic priorities above.

What has changed since 2019?

As part of the development of North Essex's economic baseline, a robust analysis has been undertaken on the key economic changes that have occurred since 2019, helping to develop an understanding of the current North Essex economic baseline. Predominantly, three key economic events have occurred since the NEEB published its last economic strategy – i) Brexit; ii) COVID-19; and iii) the current cost of living pressures. The impacts of these events on the North Essex economy have been detailed below.

Brexit

The first significant event that provides the economic context in which North Essex now finds itself in is the UK's formal departure from the EU on 31st January 2020. Over three years on from this moment, North Essex is continuing to adapt to the changing business and trading environment that has resulted. Essex Chamber of Commerce surveys have highlighted the extra challenges now placed upon North Essex's SME community, including the increased cost of purchasing from, and transporting to, the EU, artificially high shipping prices, an increase in paperwork and costs due to extra duty charges, and concerns around exports "standing still"¹. In addition, these surveys hone in on some of the recruitment challenges now faced as a result of Brexit, with North Essex businesses now finding it particularly challenging to recruit for 'semi/unskilled' roles².

With recent Office Budget for Responsibility (OBR) forecasts highlighting some of the negative Brexit consequences – including the UK and the EU's new trading relationship likely to reduce long-run productivity by 4% relative to remaining in the EU (as a result of increased trade barriers) – challenges are likely to remain as North Essex and the UK as a whole adapts to its new global position post-Brexit³.

Covid-19

The second significant event that provides the economic context in which North Essex now finds itself in is the onset of COVID-19 and the significant economic, health and social consequences that continue to impact the region and beyond. Unmatched in its impact, the pandemic has led to lasting economic behaviour changes that North Essex has had to adapt to, with these changes considered within the 'Delivering for North Essex' plan.

Like many other regions across the country, North Essex was significantly impacted by the restrictions enforced to protect people from the virus, with the restrictions' impact clearly evidenced by North Essex's claimant count across the pandemic period. Akin to other parts of the country, the region saw large increases in claimant count during the pandemic's onset, with this variable increasing sharply in all of the NEEB's constituent members in March 2020. As the pandemic's first year progressed – and with the furlough scheme's support – the region's claimant count remained roughly around the peak recorded in May 2020. As the Government progressed its roadmap out of lockdown, North Essex's claimant count started to gradually decline, with the rate observed lower than the rate of increase observed in March

¹ Essex Chambers of Commerce. 2022 First Quarter Economic Survey. Source: [EssexQ1QuarterlyEconomicSurveyMarch2022.pdf](#) ([essexchambers.co.uk](#))

² Essex Chambers of Commerce. 2022 First Quarter Economic Survey. Source: [EssexQ1QuarterlyEconomicSurveyMarch2022.pdf](#) ([essexchambers.co.uk](#))

³ Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR). Brexit Analysis (2022). Source: [Brexit analysis - Office for Budget Responsibility \(obr.uk\)](#)

2020⁴. This reflects the difficulty people faced getting back into work over the reopening period as the furlough scheme began to wind down.

Whilst the claimant count has fallen across the North Essex authorities following the pandemic period, COVID-19 has left a worrying and long-lasting economic trend that has gained much attention. This trend is the rise in economic inactivity across the pandemic years (2019 – 2020 and 2020 – 2021) and the observation that economic inactivity rates across the country have remained high relative to pre-pandemic levels. This has been observed within North Essex, with **Figure 1** outlining how the North Essex average economic inactivity rate rose considerably at the start of the pandemic (rising from 16.9% to 20.2% between 2018 – 2019 and 2019 – 2020), and stayed above pre-pandemic levels in 2021 – 2022 at 19.5%. Whilst the majority of North Essex’s authorities have seen a fall in their economic inactivity rates in 2021 – 2022, Chelmsford (18.3%) and Tendring (32.1%) saw increases in this year, with Tendring facing particular challenges in reversing the economic inactivity pandemic trend observed⁵.

The cause of this rise in economic inactivity has been much debated, from an increase in early retirees to childcare costs making it unviable for parents to return to the workplace.

North Essex Economic Inactivity (%) (2017 – 2022)					
Area	2017 – 2018	2018 – 2019	2019 – 2020	2020 – 2021	2021 – 2022
Braintree	11.3	14.4	16.5	15.6	14.8
Colchester	17.8	12.0	17.1	20.0	18.3
Chelmsford	15.3	20.1	16.5	15.8	18.3
Tendring	17.1	20.7	31.3	31.3	32.1
Maldon	17.0	15.3	21.0	21.5	15.3
Uttlesford	19.4	18.9	18.8	24.3	18.0
Essex	18.4	19.7	20.2	20.6	18.9
North Essex Average	16.3	16.9	20.2	21.4	19.5

Figure 1: North Essex Economic Inactivity Rates (2017 – 2022)

⁴Essex Open Data. COVID-19 Economic Impacts Report (2022). Source: [COVID-19 Economic Impacts Report | Essex Open Data](#)

⁵ NOMIS. Labour Market Profiles (Essex) (2022). Source: [Labour Market Profile - Nomis - Official Census and Labour Market Statistics \(nomisweb.co.uk\)](#)

Away from North Essex's changed economic inactivity picture, the final COVID-19 related change to note is the dramatic adoption and acceptance of hybrid working within workplaces across the region. With little choice during lockdowns, much of the working world switched to full working from home arrangements, with today's working arrangements for many businesses reflective of employees' desire to keep some element of home working, alongside commuting to collaborative office spaces. This change in workplace attitudes it illustrated when comparing Census 2021 and 2019 ONS working from home data. **Figure 2** below illustrates the Census 2021 data collated for the North Essex authorities, with Tendring the North Essex authority that recorded the lowest proportion of its workers working from home – 22.9% – and Uttlesford the highest proportion – 39.4% – in 2021⁶. These figures are significantly higher than the ONS data collated in 2019 for the East of England as a whole that outlined that only 5.5% of workers in this region worked mainly from home prior to the pandemic's onset⁷.

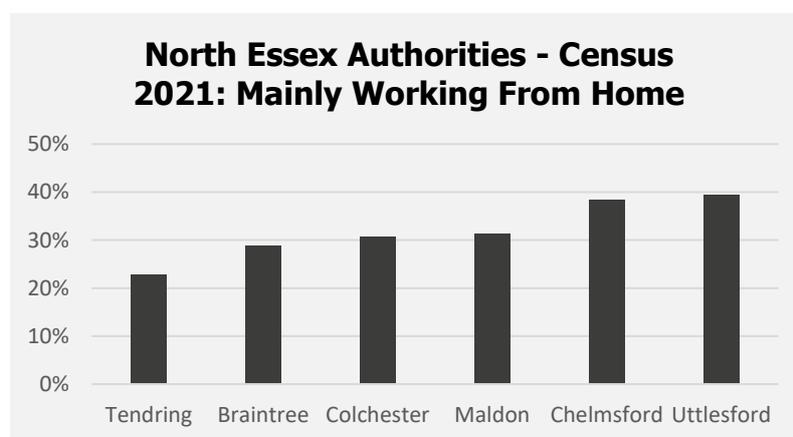


Figure 2: North Essex Authorities – Census 2021: Mainly Working from Home

The increase and continued retention of hybrid working patterns within the workplace has had a significant impact on the structure of regional economies, with commuting patterns, high street footfall and retail/leisure expenditure all still being impacted by the new ways of working. This impact has been considered during the development of the 'Delivering for North Essex' plan, with a strong awareness of the impact this critical change has had on the North Essex economy.

Cost of Living Pressures

The impact of the continued cost of living pressures within North Essex is best evidenced through published Essex Open Data⁸. Through in-depth interviews with 20 participants from across Essex, an understanding has been collated on experiences around the increasing cost of living; the impact this is having on people's day-to-day lives as well as bigger life decisions being made or considered; and what things may help ease pressures. Key points from this research include:

⁶ ONS. Percentage of workers who work mainly at or from home (Census 2021). Source: [Method of travel to workplace - Census Maps, ONS](#)

⁷ ONS. Coronavirus and Homeworking in the UK Labour Market: 2019. Source: [Coronavirus and homeworking in the UK labour market - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](#)

⁸ Essex Open Data. Cost of Living Qualitative Research (2023). Source: [Cost of living qualitative research | Essex Open Data](#)

- **Some are experiencing the cost-of-living increase much more harshly than others.** Groups particularly impacted include those not working and in receipt of welfare (due to disabilities), families with children where only one parent is working, and single parent families.
- **The cost of living is impacting on day-to-day wellbeing, as well as life decisions and milestones.** Many residents across Essex feel they are 'surviving' rather than living due to the removal of non-essential spending from budgets, whilst some are struggling to even afford the essentials such as food and heating. Many are also postponing key life-decisions.
- **All are making lifestyle changes and cutbacks, but some residents have no other options to address cost of living pressures.** Essex residents are making lifestyle changes to save money, with these including small behaviour changes to more significant sacrifices.

The challenges many North Essex residents have faced in light of the recent cost of living pressures are widely acknowledged, with this macroeconomic impact a key difference considered since publication of the 2019 economic strategy.

North Essex's Strategic Priorities

1. Innovative Businesses and Skilled Residents

The data analysis was clear that North Essex has incumbent key sector strengths, growth sector potential and SME foundations that are robust building blocks for future economic growth.

In regard to North Essex's incumbent sector strengths, the most recent Gross Value Added (GVA) data, which measures economic contribution, demonstrates North Essex's several incumbent sector strengths. First and foremost, the region benefits from a strong 'Real Estate and Activities' sector, with this contributing £3.1 billion of GVA to the North Essex economy in 2020⁹. This sector produced the greatest output for all six North Essex authorities in 2020. **Figure 3** outlines the top three sectors – in terms of GVA – for every North Essex authority in 2020.

North Essex Authorities – Top 3 Sectors (GVA) in 2020					
Braintree			Chelmsford		
No.	Sector	Value (m)	No.	Sector	Value (m)
1	Real estate activities	£500	1	Real estate activities	£820
2	Financial and insurance activities	£433	2	Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles	£568
3	Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles	£374	3	Construction	£544
Colchester			Maldon		
No.	Sector	Value (m)	No.	Sector	Value (m)
1	Real estate activities	£726	1	Real estate activities	£235
2	Human health and social work activities	£548	2	Construction	£192
3	Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles	£492	3	Manufacturing	£188
Tendring			Uttlesford		
No.	Sector	Value (m)	No.	Sector	Value (m)
1	Real estate activities	£426	1	Real estate activities	£406
2	Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles	£250	2	Construction	£249
3	Manufacturing	£167	3	Transportation and Storage	£222

Figure 3: North Essex Authorities – Top 3 Sectors (GVA) in 2020

⁹ ONS. Regional Gross Value Added (balanced) by industry: local authorities by ITL1 region (2022). Source: [Regional gross value added \(balanced\) by industry: local authorities by ITL1 region - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk/regions/northern-ireland/indicators/real-gdp)

Alongside North Essex's incumbent strengths in 'Real Estate Activities', the region also has strengths within the 'Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles', 'construction' and 'manufacturing' sectors. It is also important to note the diversity present within North Essex's economy – with Braintree having a specific incumbent strength within the 'Financial and insurance activities' sector and Colchester seeing a specific incumbent strength within the 'Human health and social work activities' sector.

Building on the understanding of North Essex's incumbent sector strengths, it is important to reflect on the number of businesses that operate within certain sectors, to provide a picture of where North Essex's most prominent employment opportunities can be found. Referring to ONS Business Count data, we see that the sector with the greatest number of businesses within North Essex, in 2022, was the 'Construction' sector, with a total of 6,885 businesses¹⁰. Aligning to this observation, the same data indicates that the 'Construction' sector saw the greatest increase in the number of businesses within North Essex between 2017 and 2022, with 1,305 businesses establishing themselves within this sector¹¹. **Figure 4** outlines the top 3 sectors that saw the greatest increase in businesses between 2017 and 2022 within North Essex.

¹⁰ NOMIS. UK Business Counts – enterprises by industry and employment size band (2022). Source: [UK Business Counts - enterprises by industry and employment size band - Nomis - Official Census and Labour Market Statistics \(nomisweb.co.uk\)](https://nomisweb.co.uk/enterprises-by-industry-and-employment-size-band)

¹¹ NOMIS. UK Business Counts – enterprises by industry and employment size band (2022). Source: [UK Business Counts - enterprises by industry and employment size band - Nomis - Official Census and Labour Market Statistics \(nomisweb.co.uk\)](https://nomisweb.co.uk/enterprises-by-industry-and-employment-size-band)

North Essex Authorities – Top 3 Sectors in terms of business increase (2017 – 2022)					
Braintree			Chelmsford		
No.	Sector	Number of Businesses	No.	Sector	Number of businesses
1	Construction	165	1	Construction	225
2	Administrative and support service activities	85	2	Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	110
3	Accommodation and food service activities	60	3	Transportation and storage	75
Colchester			Maldon		
No.	Sector	Number of Businesses	No.	Sector	Number of Businesses
1	Construction	450	1	Construction	100
2	Transportation and storage	250	2	Accommodation and food service activities	40
3	Administrative and support service activities	167	3	Real Estate Activities	20
Tendring			Uttlesford		
No.	Sector	Number of Businesses	No.	Sector	Number of Businesses
1	Construction	160	1	Construction	205
2	Transportation and storage	100	2	Administration and support service activities	100
3	Accommodation and food service activities	65	3	Accommodation and food service activities	25

Figure 4: North Essex Authorities – Top 3 Sectors in terms of business increase (2017 – 2022)

The large number of businesses operating within North Essex's 'Construction' sector reflects another important characteristic of the region's business landscape – the large proportion of SMEs delivering North Essex's economic output. The UK defines an SME as an enterprise that employs fewer than 250 employees, with **Figure 5** illustrating the high proportion of SMEs operating within North Essex. 90% of North Essex's businesses are defined as 'Micro', meaning they employ between 0 and 9 employees. Illustrating the importance of this North Essex characteristic further, there were only 95 businesses within North Essex defined as 'Large', meaning they employ over 250 people in 2022, with these businesses accounting for just 0.3% of North Essex's business population¹².

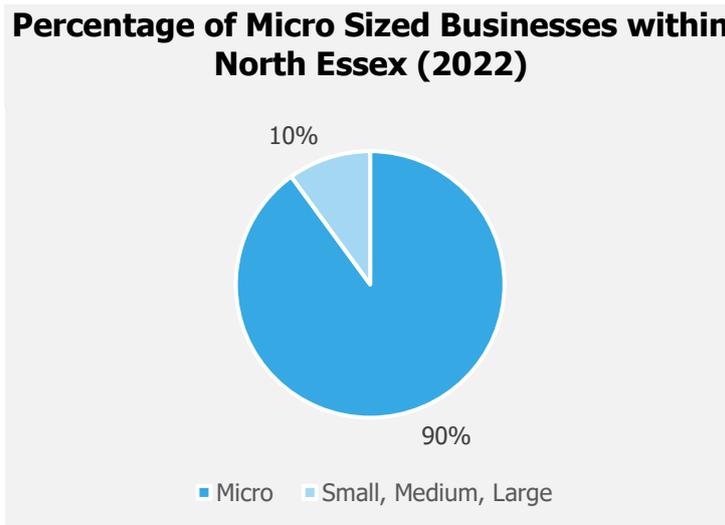


Figure 5: Percentage of Micro Sized Business within North Essex (2022)

Away from North Essex's incumbent business strengths and characteristics, Cambridge Insights' forecasts provide a view on the roles that are likely to see the greatest growth in terms of employment in the lead up to 2040. Given population growth and areas of North Essex having relatively high levels of elderly residents, it is no surprise that for some of the North Essex authorities – Chelmsford, Uttlesford and Maldon – 'Caring Personal Service Occupations' roles are expected to see the greatest employment growth over this time period. For Braintree and Colchester, employment growth over this time period is expected to be greatest within 'Skilled Agricultural Trades' roles, whilst for Tendring, the authority is expected to see the greatest employment growth in terms of 'Corporate Managers'¹³. **Figure 6** outlines the top three roles the Cambridge Insight modelling suggests will see the greatest percentage increase in employment growth leading up to 2040 for each North Essex authority.

¹² NOMIS. UK Business Counts – enterprises by industry and employment size band (2022). Source: [Nomis - Official Census and Labour Market Statistics - Nomis - Official Census and Labour Market Statistics \(nomisweb.co.uk\)](https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/)

¹³ Cambridge Insight. East of England Forecasting Model (EEFM) (2019). Source: [Cambridgeshire Insight – East of England Forecasting Model \(EEFM\)](#)

North Essex Authorities – Top 3 roles in terms of expected employment increases (up to 2040)					
Braintree			Chelmsford		
No.	Sector	% increase	No.	Sector	% increase
1	Skilled Agricultural Trades	57	1	Caring Personal Services Occupations	34
2	Caring Personal Services Occupations	33	2	Corporate Managers	31
3	Health and Social Welfare Associate Professionals	27	3	Health and Social Welfare Associate Professionals	30
Colchester			Maldon		
No.	Sector	% increase	No.	Sector	% increase
1	Skilled Agricultural Trades	44	1	Caring Personal Service Occupations	40
2	Caring Personal Services Occupations	41	2	Health and Social Welfare Associate Professionals	33
3	Managers and Proprietors in Agriculture and Services	39	3	Customer Service Occupations	33
Tendring			Uttlesford		
No.	Sector	% increase	No.	Sector	% increase
1	Corporate Managers	39	1	Caring Personal Services Occupations	47
2	Caring Personal Service Occupations	38	2	Health and Social Welfare Associate Professionals	37
3	Customer Service Occupations	37	3	Health Professionals	37

Figure 6: North Essex Authorities – Top 3 roles in terms of expected employment increases, up to 2040. The percentage increase has been calculated by taking the number jobs in 2022 and finding the percentage difference between the expected number of jobs in 2040

This analysis links to the strategic analysis undertaken by the North Essex authorities within their own economic strategies, with Essex CC's Sector Development Strategy providing insights into the growth sectors that North Essex – and the broader county – are expected to prioritise over the coming years to boost economic growth and drive prosperity across the region. These growth sectors are expected to focus on 'Construction and Retrofit', 'Clean Energy', 'Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering', 'Digital Tech' and 'Life Sciences'¹⁴. These

¹⁴ Essex County Council. Essex Sector Development Strategy (2022). Source: [Plans and strategies: Sector development strategy - Essex County Council](#)

growth sectors build on North Essex's incumbent strengths outlined within the data above, and will provide new and career progressing jobs for many residents across the region.

Shifting focus to the skilled residents elements of this strategic priority, to secure the good jobs the North Essex region is expected to benefit from, North Essex's residents need to have the opportunities and confidence to develop requisite skills.

When looking at North Essex's current skills levels, it is clear there is a divergence in attainment across the region. The latest Census 2021 data has been used to establish the skills baseline for the NEEB's 2-year delivery plan, providing detail of the relative skills attainment levels across the North Essex region. **Figure 7** outlines the North Essex average in terms of skills attainment at differing levels, and how these figures compare to regional and national comparators.

Skills Attainment (2021) – North Essex, East of England and England as a whole				
Area	No Qualifications	Apprenticeships	NVQ Levels 1, 2 and 3	NVQ Level 4
North Essex Average	18.1%	5.8%	44.5%	29.0%
East of England	18.1%	5.5%	42.0%	31.6%
England as Whole	18.2%	5.3%	39.9%	33.9%

Figure 7: Skills Attainment (2021) across North Essex, the East of England and England as a whole

North Essex performs relatively well compared to the East of England and England as a whole when it comes to mid-lower skills level attainment, with a higher proportion of its working age population involved in apprenticeships and having attained NVQ skills up to level 3 (equivalent to 2 or more A levels or VCEs, 4 or more AS levels) when compared to regional and national comparators. Despite this success, North Essex compares less favourably when considering the proportion of its working age population that has secured skills at NVQ level 4 and above (equivalent to a degree (BA, BSc) or higher degree (MA, PhD, PGCE)), with both the East of England and England as a whole recording higher percentages for this skills metric. This suggests North Essex has a relatively smaller proportion of high skilled workers compared to the regional and national comparators¹⁵.

Alongside comparing the North Essex average to the regional and national comparators, it is also important to note the differences in skills attainment seen within the North Essex region. Taking the 'NVQ Levels 1, 2 and 3' and 'NVQ Level 4' metrics, there is a clear divergence in the proportion of lower and higher skilled workers across the North Essex authorities. This diversity is highlighted in **Figure 8**.

¹⁵ ONS. Education: Highest level of qualification (Census 2021). Source: [Highest level of qualification - Census Maps, ONS](#)

Skills Attainment (2021) – Lower and Higher Skilled Workers Divergence across North Essex		
Area	NVQ Levels 1, 2 and 3	NVQ Level 4
Braintree	47.2%	25.8%
Chelmsford	43.1%	33.9%
Colchester	44.6%	32.2%
Maldon	45.9%	25.4%
Tendring	43.8%	19.9%
Uttlesford	42.3%	36.6%

Figure 8: Skills Attainment (2021) – Lower and Higher Skilled Workers Divergence across North Essex

Whilst there is some consistency to the proportion of workers across the North Essex authorities with skills attained up to NVQ level 3, there is a strong divergence when reviewing the proportion of working age populations within the North Essex authorities that have attained skills at NVQ level 4 and above. This divergence is observed by the difference between the highest ranking North Essex authority for this metric – Uttlesford – and the lowest ranking North Essex authority for this metric – Tendring – with a difference of 16.7% recorded¹⁶. This diversity in skills attainment across the region is an important consideration within the NEEB’s ‘Delivering for North Essex’ plan.

Whilst local authority data for T levels is not available, apprenticeship data provides some insight into the kind of vocational training available. The 2021 – 2022 data is shown in **Figure 9**. The number of apprenticeship uptakes are expectedly higher in Colchester and Chelmsford, as the urban districts, and lower in Uttlesford and Maldon, as the more rural districts. Tendring sees higher than expected levels of apprenticeship starts, closer to Braintree’s numbers. One significant trend is low, although similar, levels of vocational attainment across authorities¹⁷.

Apprenticeship Starts and Achievements (2021 – 2022)			
Area	Starts	Achievement	Participation
Braintree	870	360	1850
Chelmsford	1030	450	2240
Colchester	1060	440	2230
Maldon	360	130	790
Tendring	800	310	1680
Uttlesford	490	170	980

Figure 9: Apprenticeship Starts and Achievements (2021 – 2022)

Finally, on skills, it is worth noting the productivity of North Essex’s working population, with this being a key factor in driving economic growth. Referring to ONS data outlining the GVA per hour worked, the North Essex region has seen an increase in productivity since 2017,

¹⁶ ONS. Education: Highest level of qualification (Census 2021). Source: [Highest level of qualification - Census Maps, ONS](#)

¹⁷ GOV.UK. Apprenticeships and traineeships. Source: [Apprenticeships and traineeships, Academic year 2022/23 – Explore education statistics – GOV.UK \(explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk\)](#)

recording a figure of £32.4 in 2020¹⁸. **Figure 10** illustrates this increase and shows how the region compares to the East of England and England as a whole.

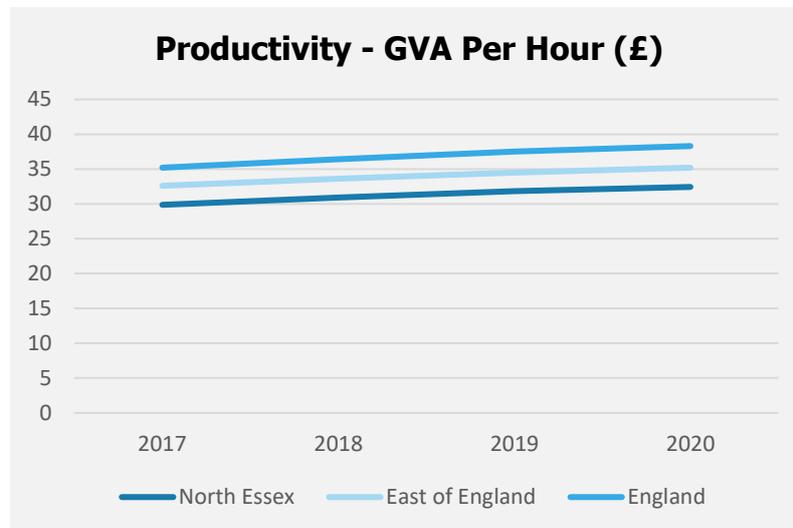


Figure 8: Productivity – GVA per hour (£) for the North Essex region, East of England and England as a whole between 2017 and 2020

Whilst North Essex’s productivity has been rising between 2017-2020, the region’s productivity has consistently ranked below that of the East of England and England as a whole. The differences in 2020 are quite significant, with the East of England’s GVA per hour £2.8 greater in 2020, and England as whole £5.9 greater¹⁹. With North Essex lagging behind regional and national productivity comparators, it is essential actions are delivered to drive up productivity to help boost economic growth in the region.

2. A Green and High Growth Economy

Local Authorities across the country are playing a vital role in supporting the UK to achieve its net zero objectives. In terms of establishing North Essex’s baseline for this area, data on the region’s renewable electricity capacity and generation has been collated, alongside data on attitudes towards the green economy and progress made in making households across the region more energy efficient.

Starting with renewable electricity capacity and generation, North Essex has the potential to build on its incumbent strengths in this space, positioning itself as a renewable energy exemplar. In 2021, the North Essex region had a renewable electricity capacity of 563.3 MW, with this capacity generating roughly 1 million MWh of renewable electricity in the same year²⁰. The regional renewable electricity strengths are driven by three main sources of energy – onshore wind, offshore wind and solar power, with **Figure 11** outlining the amount of renewable electricity each of the North Essex authorities generated from these sources in 2021.

¹⁸ ONS. Subnational productivity: labour productivity indices by local authority district (2022). Source: [Subregional productivity: labour productivity indices by local authority district - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk/subregional-productivity/labour-productivity-indices-by-local-authority-district)

¹⁹ ONS. Subnational productivity: labour productivity indices by local authority district (2022). Source: [Subregional productivity: labour productivity indices by local authority district - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk/subregional-productivity/labour-productivity-indices-by-local-authority-district)

²⁰ BEIS. National Statistics – Regional Renewable Energy Statistics. Source: [Regional Renewable Statistics - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/regional-renewable-energy-statistics)

North Essex's Renewable Electricity Generation (2021) (MWh)			
Area	Onshore Wind	Offshore Wind	Solar Power
Braintree	132	0	31,720
Chelmsford	76	0	10,783
Colchester	85	0	83,745
Maldon	152,931	0	10,311
Tendring	28,122	513,080	71,442
Uttlesford	41	0	44,322

Figure 9: North Essex's Renewable Electricity Generation (2021) (MWh) from onshore wind, offshore wind and solar power sources

Both Maldon and Tendring have particular strengths when it comes to onshore wind generation, whilst Tendring – given its coastal characteristics – is the only North Essex authority to benefit from offshore wind renewable electricity generation. In contrast to these sources of renewable electricity – where there are clear divergences in generation – all of the North Essex authorities generate a good amount of renewable electricity from solar power, with Colchester leading the way when considering this energy source. Building on these renewable electricity generation strengths will be essential as the region looks to benefit from the green skills and jobs required to deliver net zero commitments.

Away from the region's renewable electricity capacity and generation statistics, another important aspect to understanding North Essex's green economy baseline is residents' attitudes towards the green economy and the extent to which residents are invested in supporting the delivery of net zero commitments. As a proxy for this measurement, data has been collated on the North Essex authorities' recycling rates, with a high recycling rate taken as an indication of residents' willingness to support the environment and avert negative climate consequences. **Figure 12** outlines the recycling rates for the six NEEB authorities²¹.

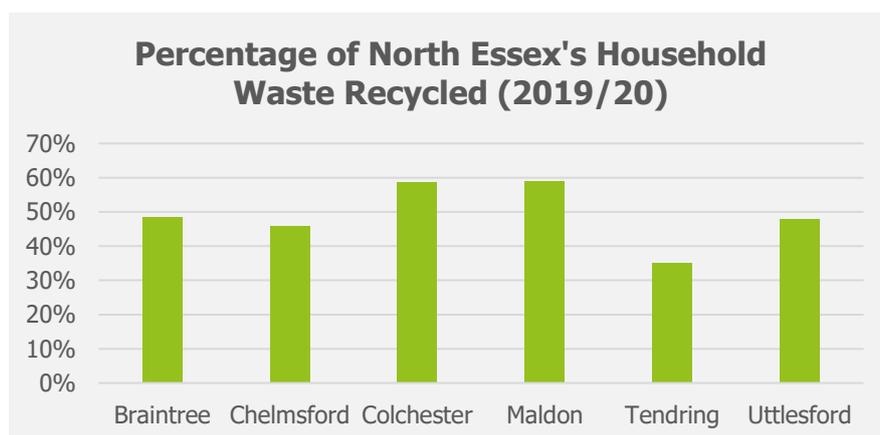


Figure 10: Percentage of North Essex's Household Waste Recycled (2019/20)

²¹ NimbleFins. Which English Councils are best and worst at recycling? Top 10 and bottom 10 revealed. Source: [Which English Councils are Best and Worst at Recycling? Top 10 and Bottom 10 Revealed | NimbleFins](#)

There is a divergence across North Essex in terms of household waste recycling rates, with Tendring having the lowest recycling rates, and Maldon the highest. Whilst an interesting perspective on the relative green engagement within North Essex, it is important to consider how these rates compare to other local authorities across the country, to have a view on how the North Essex region compares to other areas when it comes to green engagement. Reviewing broader local authority data available, all North Essex's authorities – aside from Tendring – ranked in the top 50% of local authorities in terms of household waste recycled, with Colchester and Maldon ranking in the top 25%²². This suggests there is a fairly positive engagement with green actions, when taking household recycling rates as a proxy for this engagement. However, it does appear that progress is needed with regards to attitudes towards the green economy, with Essex recording a relatively low level of conversation sites in positive management (36%) compared to some of its neighbours, including Norfolk who recorded a positive management rate of 74% in 2021/22²³.

In addition to household waste recycling rates and positive conservation site management, another important statistic to consider when understanding North Essex's green economy baseline is the extent to which its households are energy efficient across the region, with the type of central heating used within households a useful metric to consider when understanding a region's relative green impact. Using Census 2021 data, **Figure 13** provides a view on how the North Essex region compares to the East of England and England as a whole in terms of the type of central heating utilised within households²⁴.

Percentage Central Heating Source (2021) – North Essex, East of England and England as whole				
Area	Mains Gas Only	Electric Only	Oil Only	Renewable Energy Only
North Essex Average	66.0%	9.8%	10.5%	0.7%
East of England	70.1%	9.5%	7.2%	0.7%
England as Whole	74.0%	8.7%	3.2%	0.4%

Figure 11: Type of Central Heating (2021) – North Essex, East of England and England as a whole (main types of central heating – alongside renewable energy only source)

²² NimbleFins. Which English Councils are best and worst at recycling? Top 10 and bottom 10 revealed. Source: [Which English Councils are Best and Worst at Recycling? Top 10 and Bottom 10 Revealed | NimbleFins](#)

²³GOV.UK. ENV10 – Local sites in positive conservation management. Source: [ENV10 - Local sites in positive conservation management - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

²⁴ ONS. Housing. Type of central heating in household. (Census 2021). Source: [Type of central heating in household - Census Maps, ONS](#)

Whilst North Essex records a similar percentage to the East of England and England as a whole when considering renewable energy only and electric-only central heating, there are strong divergences when it comes to mains gas only and oil only. Less central heating is provided in North Essex through mains gas and more through oil, when compared with the regional and national comparators. The relatively high proportion of central heating systems being fuelled by oil only is largely explained by the relatively high proportion of this fuel being used within Maldon, Tendring and Braintree, as **Figure 14** demonstrates.

Percentage of Central Heating Fuelled by Oil Only in North Essex (2021)	
Area	Percentage
Braintree	10.8%
Chelmsford	5.3%
Colchester	6.2%
Maldon	19.8%
Tendring	4.7%
Uttlesford	16.3%

Figure 12: Percentage of Central Heating Fuelled by Oil Only in North Essex (2021)

Central to North Essex's future economic prosperity will be the effective transition to a green and high-growth economy, with the data above illustrating how the region can look to build on its strong renewable electricity generation foundations, facilitate further resident engagement to promote the importance of green actions, and continue to work to consider how households can be made more energy efficient through the use of cleaner energy sources. This has all been considered within the development of North Essex's 2-year delivery plan.

3. A Dynamic and Connected Region

With the green and high-growth economy strategic priority referencing key aspects of North Essex's green economy infrastructure, it is appropriate that the next area central to the region's baseline focuses on broader transport and digital infrastructure, critical enablers for economic growth.

Starting with transport, it is clear a rural/urban divide exists within the region, with those from the more rural authorities – in particular Maldon and Uttlesford – facing greater transport challenges when compared to the more urban authorities of Colchester and Chelmsford. This divide is best evidenced by 2019 data that illustrates the time it takes to get to key services by public transport/walking. As highlighted in **Figure 15**, the more rural authorities of Maldon and Uttlesford see the greatest time taken to get to key services by public transport/walking, with average journey times of 28 and 27 minutes respectively when travelling by these modes of transport. In contrast, North Essex's more urban authorities – Colchester and Chelmsford – see much shorter average journey times, 19 and 18 minutes respectively²⁵.

²⁵ Department for Transport. Officials Statistics – Journey time statistics, England: 2019. Source: [Journey time statistics, England: 2019 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/journey-time-statistics-england-2019)



Figure 13: Average Journey Time to Key Services by Public Transport/Walking in 2019 (minutes)

In addition to analysing North Essex's public transport infrastructure – and the divergence in coverage across the region – Census 2021 data has been used as a way of understanding the demands placed on the different parts of the region's transport infrastructure when its residents travel to work. Whilst some of the travel to work Census 2021 data is likely to have been impacted by the COVID-19 restrictions that were in place during the first half of 2021, this data provides a proxy for the relative demand for different modes of transport when residents within the North Essex region are travelling to work.

The first Census 2021 travel to work data to note is the relative distances those living in different parts of North Essex travel to get to work. As **Figure 16** demonstrates, there is once again a rural/urban divide within North Essex, with a greater proportion of residents from the more rural North Essex authorities having to travel more than 10km to get to work, with Braintree the North Essex authority with the highest proportion when considering this metric²⁶.

Proportion of workers travelling more than 10km to get to work (2021)	
Area	Percentage
Braintree	29.7%
Maldon	28.8%
East of England	26.3%
Uttlesford	26.2%
Tendring	25.6%
Essex	22.6%
England	21.8%
Chelmsford	20.1%
Colchester	18.7%

Figure 14: Proportion of workers travelling more than 10km to get to work (2021)

²⁶ ONS. Work: Distance travelled to work (Census 2021). Source: [Distance travelled to work - Census Maps, ONS](#)

In a similar fashion to the average journey time to key services by public transport/walking statistics, it is only Colchester and Chelmsford that recorded statistics less than those recorded for Essex, the East of England and England as a whole – reflective of the authorities' urban characteristics.

Linked to the distances travelled to get to work, much of the congestion seen on North Essex's critical roads – including the A120, A12 and A131 – can be explained by the dominance of the use of cars/vans as the main mode of transport for getting to work in North Essex. As **Figure 17** demonstrates, car/van use is particularly prominent within Tendring, Braintree and Maldon as the main mode of transport to get to work, with these authorities ranking above the percentages recorded for Essex, the East of England and England as a whole. Once again, it is North Essex's more urban authorities – Chelmsford and Colchester – where we see the lowest use of cars/vans, with Uttlesford – likely due to the high proportion of its workers working mainly from home – also recording relatively low car/van use in journeys to work²⁷.

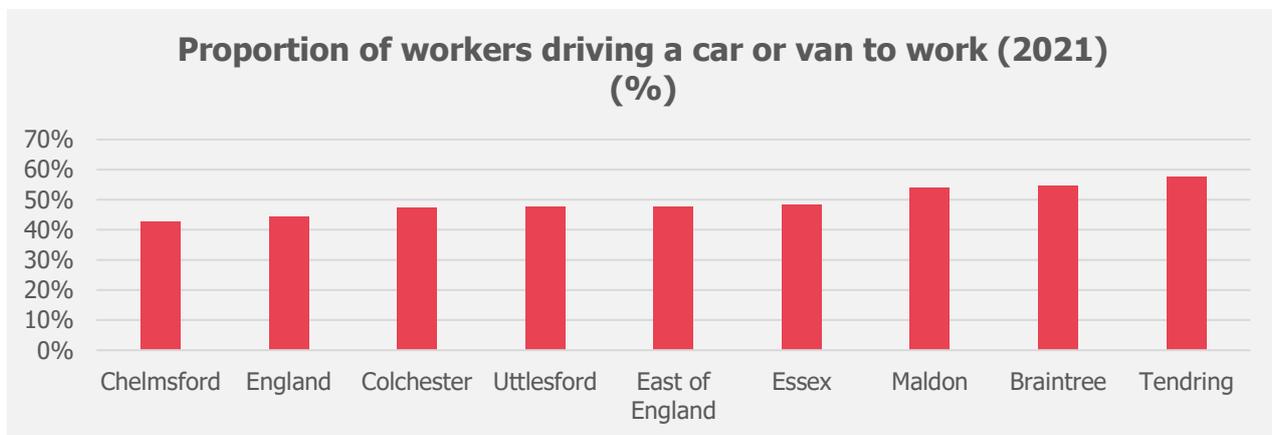


Figure 17: Proportion of workers driving a car or van to work (2021) (%)

From an active travel perspective, it is also worth noting that the only two North Essex authorities to rank above figures recorded for the East of England and England as a whole for the proportion of workers travelling to work on foot are Colchester and Tendring. As **Figure 18** demonstrates, the North Essex authorities with the lowest percentages of workers walking to work are Maldon and Uttlesford, with these two North Essex authorities ranking below the figure recorded for Essex CC²⁸.

²⁷ ONS. Work: Method of travel to workplace (Census 2021). Source: [Method of travel to workplace - Census Maps, ONS](#)

²⁸ ONS. Work: Method of travel to workplace (Census 2021). Source: [Method of travel to workplace - Census Maps, ONS](#)

Figure 18: Proportion of workers travelling to work on foot (2021) (%)

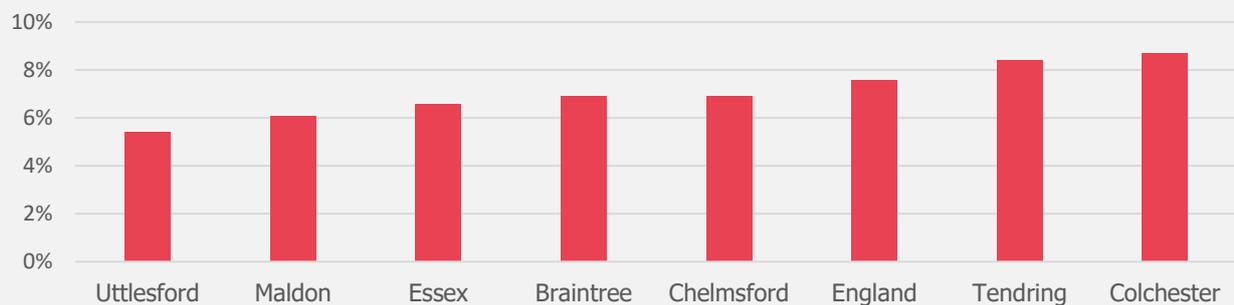


Figure 18: Proportion of workers travelling to work on foot (2021) (%)

Away from transport infrastructure, Ofcom data presented in **Figure 19**, has been reviewed to consider the region's relative digital connectivity, to understand the improvements that could be made to this economic enabler to help stimulate economic growth.

Starting with the number of premises with access to superfast broadband, the data shows that every North Essex authority performs well in terms of access to this broadband speed, with the lowest ranking North Essex authority – Uttlesford – still seeing 94.5% of its premises having access to superfast broadband. Tendring is the North Essex authority with the greatest proportion of its premises with access to superfast broadband, recording a figure of 97.8%²⁹. The high proportion of premises across North Essex with access likely reflects Essex CC's 'Superfast Essex' programme successes³⁰.

The story is a little different when considering statistics collated for ultrafast – or gigabit – broadband, with divergence across the region in terms of the number of premises with access to this level of broadband speed. The more urban North Essex authorities – Colchester and Chelmsford – recorded the highest proportion of premises with access to ultrafast broadband, with figures of 66.2% and 63.0% respectively. Whilst Colchester and Chelmsford were the North Essex authorities with the highest proportion of ultrafast premises, the authorities ranked below 3 of the 4 similarly sized authorities included within the comparative analysis undertaken, with North Hertfordshire, Central Bedfordshire and Maidstone recording figures of 75.7%, 71.1% and 69.4% respectively. This suggests the North Essex region is behind other parts of the country in terms of ultrafast broadband rollout, with this observation reinforced when considering the North Essex authorities with the lowest proportion of premises with ultrafast broadband availability – Braintree and Tendring – who recorded figures of 48.6% and 14.8% respectively³¹.

²⁹ Ofcom. Connected Nations 2022 (Superfast Broadband). Source: [Connected Nations 2022 - Ofcom](#)

³⁰ Superfast Essex. Source: [Superfast Essex](#)

³¹ Ofcom. Connected Nations 2022 (Ultrafast Broadband). Source: [Connected Nations 2022 - Ofcom](#)

Superfast Broadband		Ultrafast Broadband	
Authority	Premises %	Authority	Premises %
Tendring	97.8	Colchester	66.2
Essex	96.9	Chelmsford	63.0
Braintree	96.8	Uttlesford	59.4
Colchester	96.2	Maldon	58.7
Chelmsford	96.1	Essex	58.1
Maldon	96.0	Braintree	48.6
Uttlesford	94.5	Tendring	14.8

Figure 19: North Essex's Superfast and Ultrafast Broadband Coverage (2022) (%)

The transport and digital connectivity baseline has been considered within North Essex's 2-year delivery plan, with this infrastructure critical to North Essex's economic growth.

4. Prosperous and Inclusive Communities

Data indicators for North Essex's prosperous and inclusive communities have been considered to provide a robust understanding of how the 2-year delivery plan's actions can best facilitate economic growth for everyone within North Essex, ensuring no-one is left behind as the region looks to build on its incumbent strengths and seize future growth opportunities.

When understanding North Essex's community strengths, it is first important to understand the region's age demographics. **Figure 20** shows the North Essex authorities with the highest proportion of their populations aged 15 and under are Uttlesford, Colchester and Chelmsford, recording figures of 19.5%, 18.9% and 18.6% respectively. Tendring is the North Essex authority with the lowest proportion of its population aged 15 and under, recording a figure of 15.8%. Moving to those of working age, the more urban North Essex authorities – Colchester and Chelmsford – have the greatest proportion of their populations of working age, recording figures of 63.3% and 62.0% respectively. Once again, Tendring is the North Essex authority with the lowest proportion, with only 54.6% of its population of working age. Finally, it is North Essex's more rural authorities – Tendring, Maldon, Braintree and Uttlesford – that have the highest proportion of their populations aged 65 and over, recording figures of 29.6%, 25.0%, 20.4% and 20.2% respectively³². Clearly, a rural/urban divide exists when considering North Essex's demographics, with the region's more urban authorities (not considering Uttlesford) having a higher proportion of younger residents, whilst the more rural authorities have a high proportion of older residents. This is an important consideration, with there likely being differing demands across the region that reflects the contrasting demographics across the North Essex authorities.

³² ONS. Population: Age (Census 2021). Source: [Age - Census Maps, ONS](#)

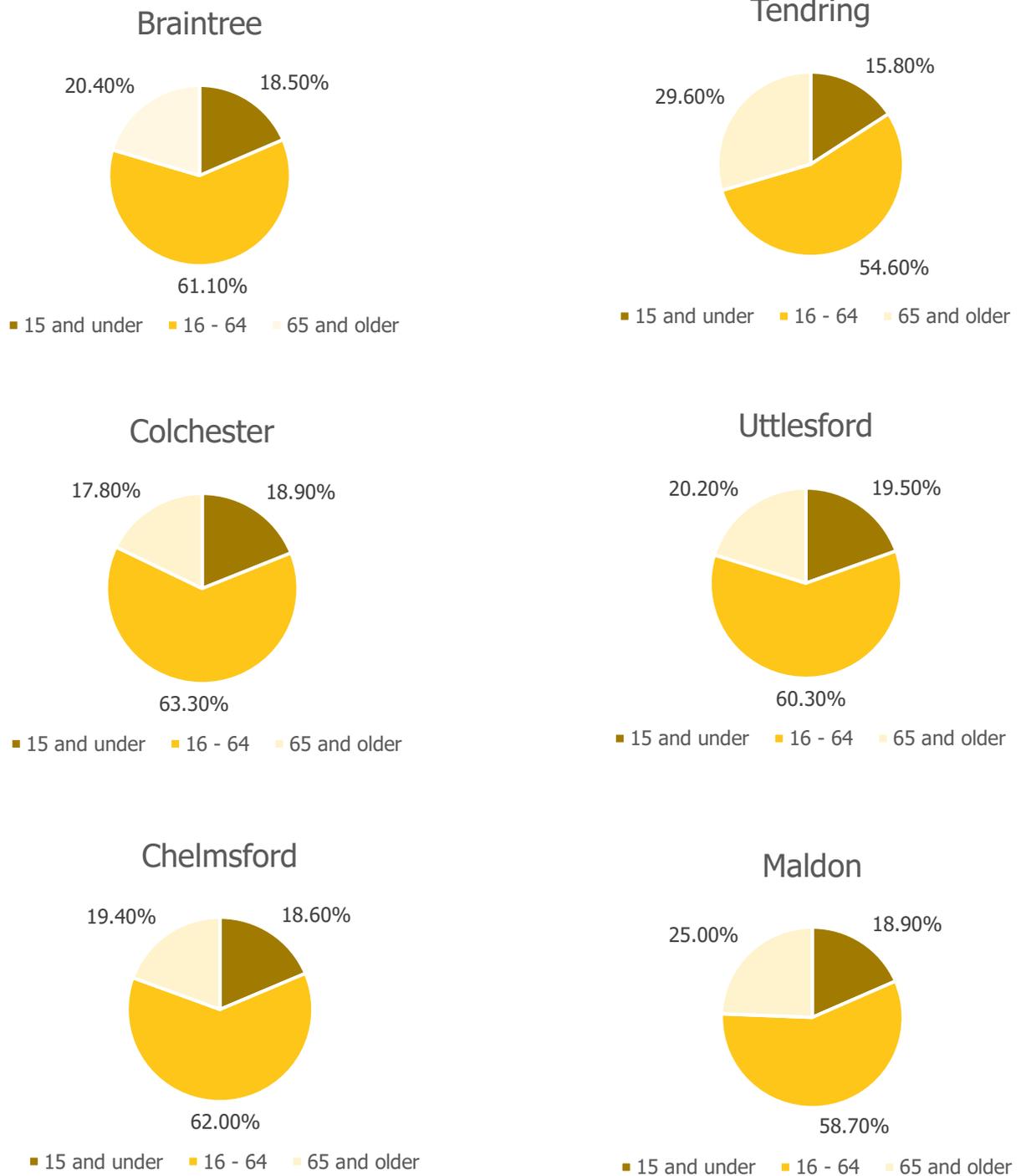


Figure 20: North Essex authorities' age demographics (ages 15 and under, ages 16 – 64 and ages 65 and under)

Building on the age demographics – and utilising the Thriving Places Index – critical community data provides a view of the region’s relative equality, local conditions and sustainability opportunities and challenges. Before exploring the metrics underpinning the three variables, it is important to note the scale used by the Thriving Places Index, with this critical to understanding the relative opportunities and challenges of North Essex’s authorities within these variables. This scale is outlined in **Figure 21**.

Thriving Places Index Scale				
Low	Low – Medium	Medium	Medium – High	High
<3.5	3.5 – 4.5	4.5 – 5.5	5.5 – 6.5	6.5<

Figure 21: Thriving Places Index Scale

Starting with the equality variable, 2022 Thriving Places Index data suggests that Tendring and Colchester are the most equitable North Essex authorities, with Uttlesford and Maldon the least. Only Uttlesford and Maldon ranked in the ‘Low – Medium’ category for this variable. Moving the focus to the ‘local conditions’ variable, Uttlesford and Chelmsford are the North Essex authorities that recorded the highest score for this variable, both ranking within the ‘Medium – High’ category. The only North Essex authority to rank as low as the ‘Low – Medium’ category was Tendring, with a figure of 4.2. The index suggests there is a gap between Tendring and the next North Essex authority on the scale, with Colchester recording a score of 5.4, falling just short of the ‘Medium – High’ category for this variable. In terms of sustainability, all North Essex authorities performed relatively well when considering this variable, with the lowest ranking North Essex authority – Chelmsford – recording a figure of 4.9 which put it in the ‘medium’ category. The North Essex authority with the highest figure recorded for this variable is Colchester, with a figure of 6.2 putting this authority in the ‘Medium – High’ category³³. **Figure 22** lists the figures recorded for all the North Essex authorities across the 3 categories.

Thriving Places Index					
Equality		Local Conditions		Sustainability	
Authority	Score	Authority	Score	Authority	Score
Tendring	6.0	Uttlesford	6.3	Colchester	6.2
Colchester	5.6	Chelmsford	6.0	Essex	5.9
Essex	5.0	Braintree	5.7	Maldon	5.4
Chelmsford	4.7	Maldon	5.5	Braintree	5.3
Braintree	4.7	Colchester	5.4	Uttlesford	5.2
Uttlesford	4.3	Essex	5.3	Tendring	5.1
Maldon	3.9	Tendring	4.2	Chelmsford	4.9

Figure 22: Thriving Places Index – Equality, Local Conditions and Sustainability scores (2022)

³³ Centre for Thriving Places. Thriving Places Index (2022). Source: [Thriving Places Index | Centre for Thriving Places](#)

It is clear that there is greater diversity across the North Essex region in terms of the equality and local conditions variables than when compared to the sustainability variable. This suggests there is greater work that could be done to increase equality within both Maldon and Uttlesford, and to improve Tendring's local conditions to ensure residents across the region feel a similar amount of pride in place and attachment to where they live.

Moving away from the Thriving Places Index, another important aspect when considering North Essex's community opportunities and challenges is consideration of housing data and the level of crime prevalent within the area. Linking this data to economic growth, house prices are a key form of wealth for many, with an understanding of house prices and form of tenure within a region useful indicators of relative wealth that can support economic growth. In terms of crime, a more deprived area is likely to see increased incidences of crime, proving a useful proxy for economic growth considerations.

Within North Essex, it is clear there is diversity in house prices across the region, with the more rural authorities of Uttlesford and Maldon seeing the highest average house prices in 2023. In contrast, the lowest average house price is recorded by Tendring, with a price difference of £180,892 observed between Uttlesford and Tendring³⁴. This suggests there is significant divergence in wealth across the region, which has been considered when developing actions included within the Delivery Plan. **Figure 23** provides a view of the different average house prices within North Essex and how these figures compare to Essex CC and the East of England.

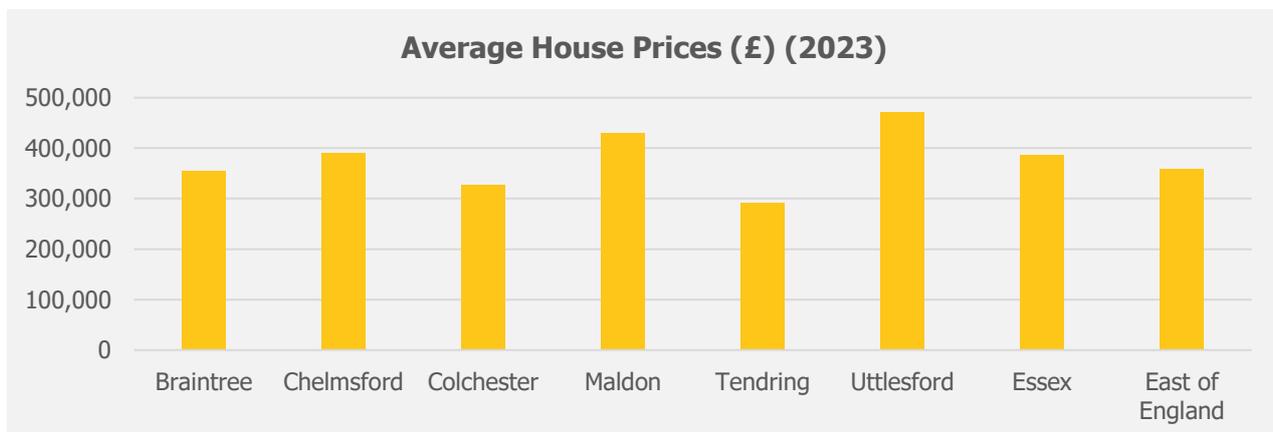


Figure 23: Average House Prices (£) (2023)

³⁴ UK House Price Index. House Price Statistics (2023). Source: [UK House Price Index \(data.gov.uk\)](https://www.data.gov.uk/dataset/uk-house-price-index)

Building on the average house prices across North Essex to understand the region's relative wealth, it is important to consider the form of tenure. As **Figure 24** illustrates, there is a divergence in the proportion of home owners (both with and without mortgages) across the North Essex authorities, with Maldon the authority with the highest proportion of home owners and Colchester the lowest, according to Census 2021 data³⁵. Given the average house prices within both Uttlesford and Maldon – and the relatively high levels of home ownership within these authorities – it can be concluded that these two authorities are likely to see a higher proportion of wealthier residents when compared to other authorities across the region.

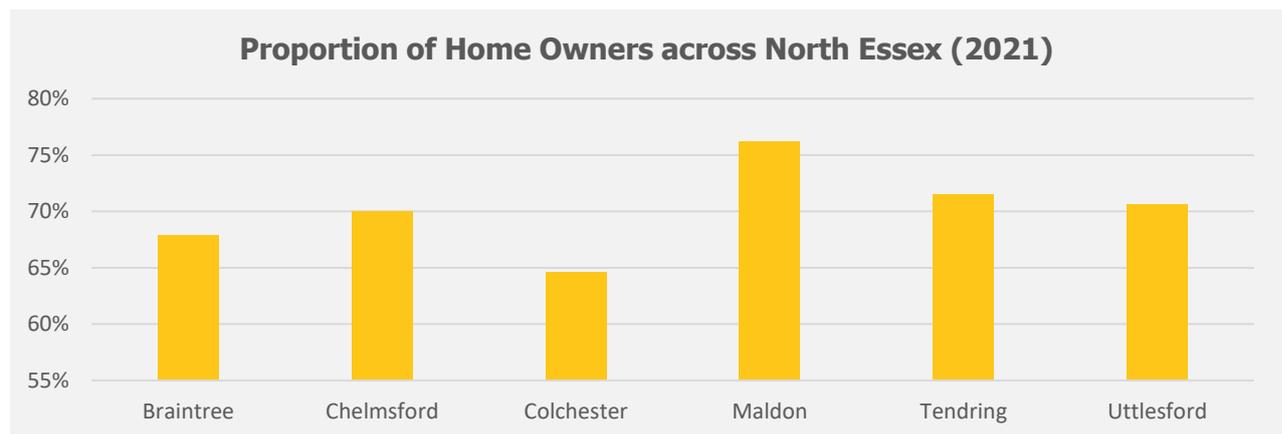


Figure 24: Proportion of Home Owners across North Essex (2021)

Away from house prices and home ownership, the region's crime statistics also provide a useful proxy for the region's relative wealth. As **Figure 25** demonstrates, Tendring and Colchester are the North Essex's authorities with the highest police recorded crimes per 1,000 population, both recording figures of 98.6 for this metric. Maldon and Uttlesford – the North Essex authorities with the highest average house prices – see the lowest crime rates, recording figures of 59.9 and 62.3 respectively³⁶.

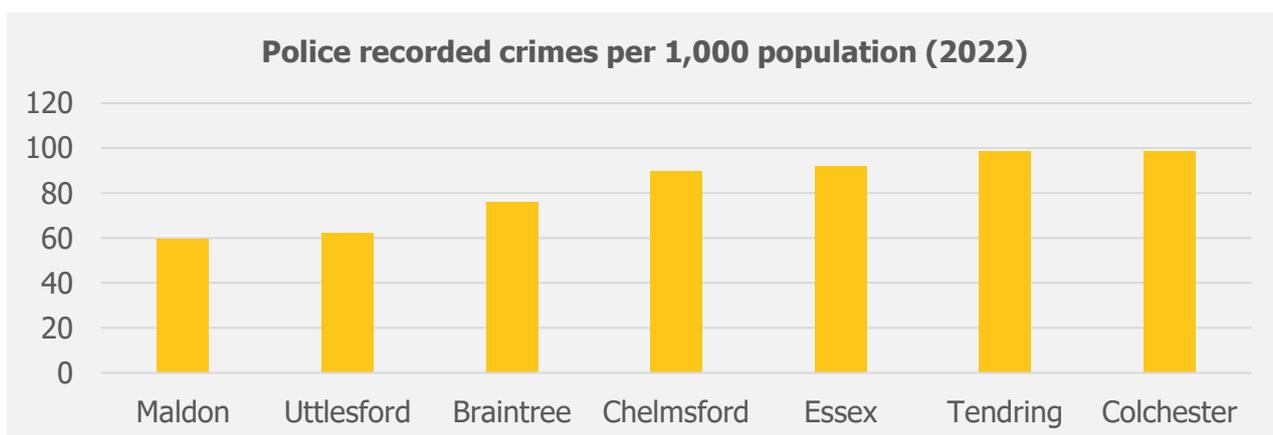


Figure 25: Police recorded crimes per 1,000 population (2022)

³⁵ ONS. Housing: Tenure of Household (Census 2021). Source: [Tenure of household - Census Maps, ONS](#)

³⁶ Police.UK. Compare your area. (2022). Source: [Compare your area | Police.uk \(www.police.uk\)](#)

In addition to the data above, the prosperous and inclusive communities strategic priority has considered data that provides perspective on residents' views towards the North Essex region and pride and happiness they feel going about their everyday lives. This data is important to understanding this strategic priority, as it provides a view of North Essex's resident's engagement with their local communities, an important consideration when understanding how best to drive economic growth. ONS data has been presented below that provides a view of North Essex's residents' life satisfaction, happiness, anxiety, and a feeling that their lives are worthwhile.

Starting with life satisfaction, residents across North Essex feel fairly satisfied with their lives, with the North Essex authorities performing similarly across the board. As **Figure 26** outlines, Uttlesford recorded the greatest score for this statistic, recording an average figure of 7.9 out of 10, whilst Colchester recorded the lowest score at 7.4³⁷.

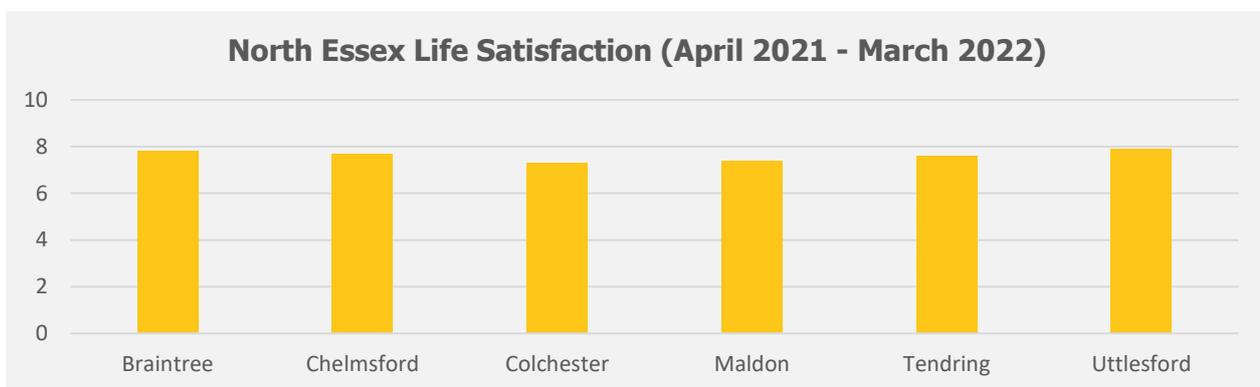


Figure 26: North Essex Life Satisfaction (April 2021 – March 2022)

When considering happiness, it can be seen that five of the North Essex authorities recorded average scores of above 7, with Braintree the authority that recorded the highest average score of 7.7. As **Figure 27** shows, Colchester recorded the lowest happiness average score, with a figure of 6.8³⁸.

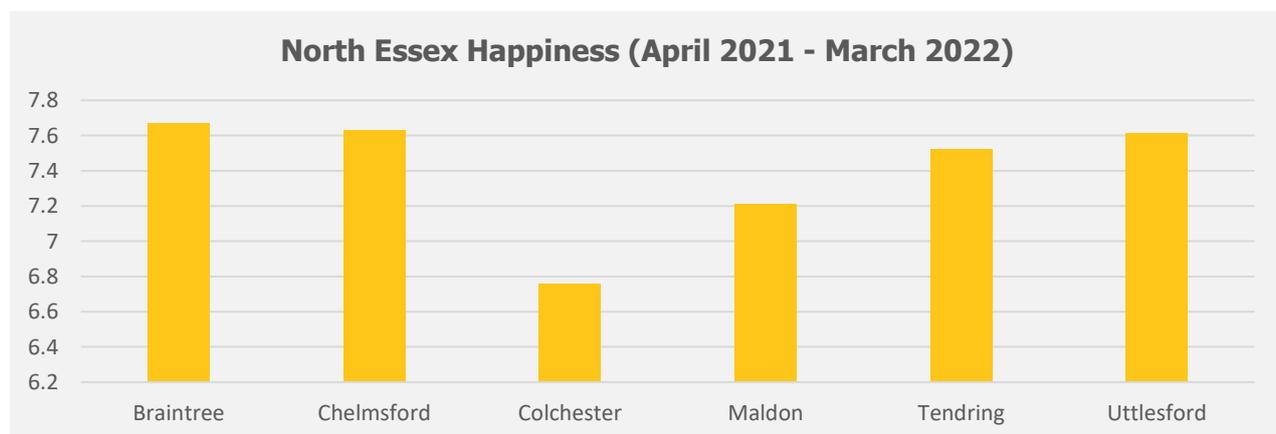


Figure 27: North Essex Happiness (April 2021 – March 2022)

³⁷ ONS. Personal well-being in the UK: April 2021 to March 2022. Source: [Personal well-being in the UK - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk/personal-well-being)

³⁸ ONS. Personal well-being in the UK: April 2021 to March 2022. Source: [Personal well-being in the UK - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk/personal-well-being)

Moving to anxiety, the North Essex authorities had similar average scores for this metric, with it important to note that the lower the score, the less anxious an authority is feeling. There is very little difference between the North Essex authority with the lowest anxiety levels – Braintree (3.0) – and the North Essex authority with the highest anxiety levels – Maldon (3.4)³⁹. This is exemplified in **Figure 28**.

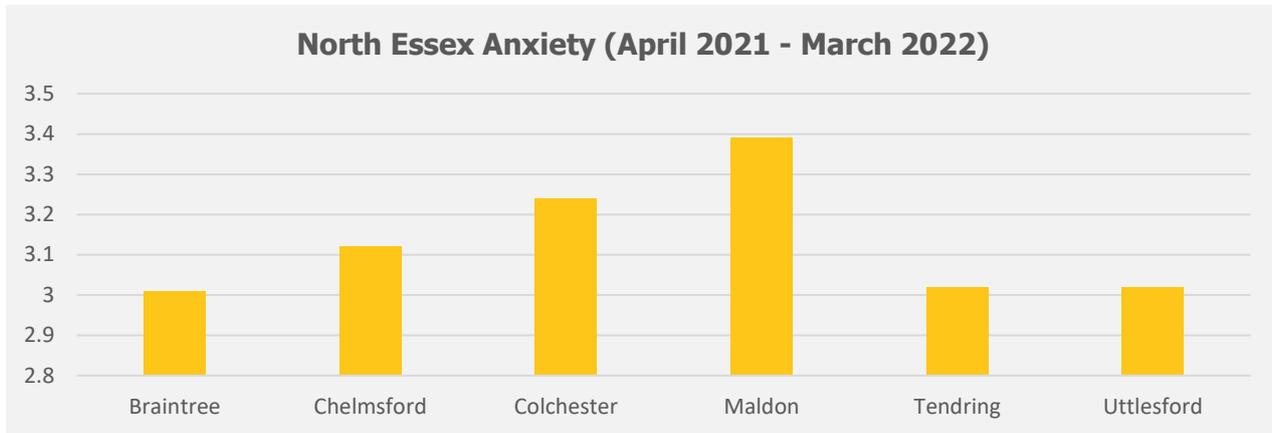


Figure 28: North Essex Anxiety (April 2021 – March 2022)

Turning to the extent to which residents view their lives as worthwhile, again, the data collated for the North Essex authorities is fairly consistent, with little difference observed between the authority – Braintree (8.1) – recording the highest score in terms of residents viewing their lives as worthwhile and the authority – Colchester (7.6) – recording the lowest score in terms of residents viewing their lives as worthwhile⁴⁰. This is exemplified in **Figure 29**.

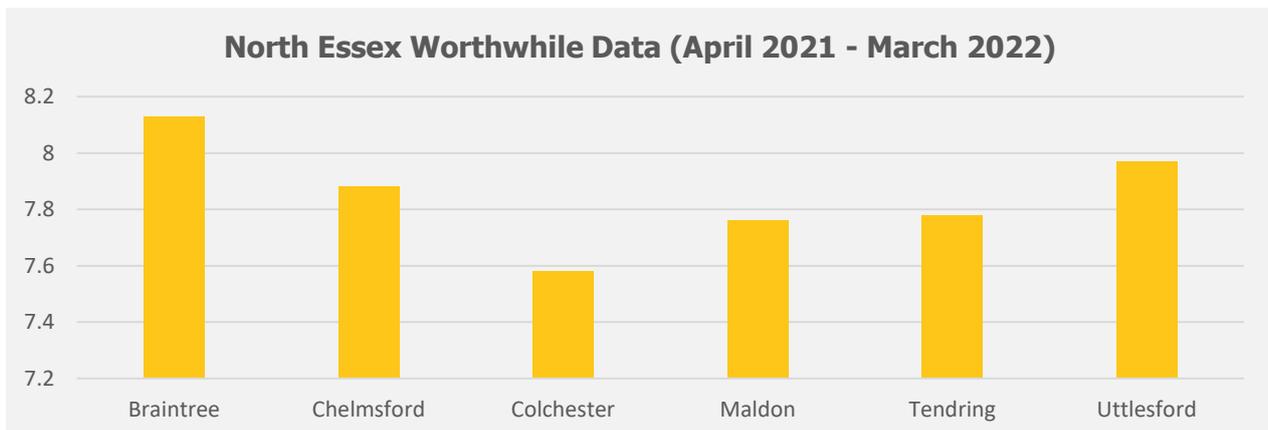


Figure 29: North Essex Worthwhile Data (April 2021 – March 2022)

³⁹ ONS. Personal well-being in the UK: April 2021 to March 2022. Source: [Personal well-being in the UK - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk/personalwell-being)

⁴⁰ ONS. Personal well-being in the UK: April 2021 to March 2022. Source: [Personal well-being in the UK - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk/personalwell-being)

The importance of these metrics to North Essex's 2-year delivery plan is understood when considering the impact life satisfaction, happiness, anxiety and perception of worthiness have on a resident's confidence and willingness to engage with economic opportunities available, such as those offered by the NEEB. As explored elsewhere, there is a need to further explore why some NEEB opportunities delivered have not seen the uptake expected from residents across the region. Accessibility is likely one reason for limited uptake in some instances, but there is also likely a confidence aspect to consider. The more that can be done to boost life satisfaction, increase happiness, reduce anxiety and advance the feeling of worthiness, the more likely the region's residents – in particular those that feel they are being left behind – will engage in economic opportunities available, supporting North Essex's economic growth ambitions.



The North Essex Economic Board (NEEB) is a partnership of district and county councils offering fully funded business support and skills programme to support economic growth across North Essex. The partnership consists of Maldon, Tendring, Braintree, Uttlesford District Councils, Chelmsford and Colchester City Councils, and Essex County Council. Find out more at www.neeb.org.uk Socials @neebgrowth

Henham Strategy is a public policy and economic development consultancy with a focus on local growth, trade and investment and higher education. We aim to connect local, regional and international actors to stimulate economic growth across the UK.