

West Essex



Local Investment Plan

2011



The Local Investment Plan for Epping Forest District Council, Harlow District Council and Uttlesford District Council.

January 2011

West Essex Local Investment Plan

Foreword

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Section 1 – West Essex in Context

1.0 Introduction to the West Essex Local Investment Plan

1.1 Background to the West Essex Local Investment Plan

West Essex is an attractive area of great opportunity. It comprises the predominantly rural Districts of Epping Forest and Uttlesford, around the urban sub-regional centre, Harlow. The area is also home to Stansted Airport. This Local Investment Plan (LIP) describes a clear vision for West Essex, and sets out priorities for housing, infrastructure, and regeneration activity to deliver the vision over the next 15 years. It draws on the priorities for each local area as set out in key local plans and is an ongoing, evolving and dynamic process. It has at its core, shared visions and objectives for places.

A key function of this LIP is to provide a framework for future partnership working with the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA). It will articulate the shared priorities of each local authority and other partner agencies and will be the starting point for partners to consider resource allocation to local areas. The development of the Local Investment Plan (LIP) has been led by a joint steering group in partnership with Housing, Planning and Economic Development teams and Members of the three District Councils, the County Council's regeneration team and supported by the Homes and Communities Agency, Harlow Renaissance Ltd, East of England Development Agency, Government Office for the East of England, and the Environment Agency. Development of this Local Investment Plan has also fed into the development of *Opportunity Essex – an Integrated Strategy for Greater Essex* [NB title of the integrated county strategy has yet to be agreed / finalised]. It should also be noted that consultation with the communities affected has taken place through the Local Development Framework and associated processes.

The amount and location of new housing provision is properly a matter for the three District Councils through their Local Development Frameworks (LDFs) and any revised planning processes that are required through the Government's localism agenda and subsequent statutory requirements. This LIP has been developed recognising that all three LDFs are at the early stages of development. In identifying priorities it has drawn on the evidence base prepared for the LDFs, but will necessarily need to be reviewed and revised as the LDF processes go forward. Until recently LDFs were being developed in the context of the East of England Plan (EEP) which, amongst other things, set housing delivery targets for Epping Forest, Uttlesford, and the Harlow Area. Following the decision to revoke the EEP, all three Districts are reviewing the most appropriate level of housing delivery for their area in light of the evidence and the views of local communities. This work is being further informed by the emerging direction from central government which is set out in the Localism Bill, published in December 2010.



Fig 1. The West Essex LIP Area

1.2 The origins of our joint approach to Local Investment Planning

The three partners have a history of working together, with joint discussion on the previous regional spatial strategy, joint working on Harlow's growth, and in the work with the Homes and Communities Agency on their original Single Conversations with the Districts. The development of this LIP has been led by a Steering Group which includes senior officers from all three Districts.

On the 30th July 2010 the Leaders of the three District Councils and the Leader of East Herts District Council jointly wrote to the Housing Minister, Grant Shapps setting out their approach to housing growth, primarily in Harlow, as requested by the Minister. A copy of the letter is attached at Appendix 1.

This plan reflects the development of the joint thinking set out in that letter and recognition that joint co-operation and development of shared objectives can provide a range of mutual growth and economic benefits.

This commitment to partnership working was further strengthened in December 2010 when the three authorities signed up to a joint Memorandum of Understanding which set out how they would work together to improve their organisational economy, efficiency and effectiveness. The Councils agreed that when acting together they would be known as the West Essex District Councils Group. The Memorandum of Understanding is attached at Appendix 2.

It is fully recognised that the LIP will be a 'living document' and the Steering Group will continue to have a pivotal role in overseeing and monitoring the delivery of priorities.

The Steering Group will meet quarterly to review the status of the LIP and to update it as projects progress and as additional information is provided. The core group shall engage with relevant partners and undertake any necessary actions. The Affordable Housing Delivery Schedules (see Section 6) will be updated by the three Districts every two months, and provided to the HCA.

1.3 The Aims of the Local Investment Plan

The West Essex LIP demonstrates that investment in West Essex will:

- Meet the significant need for additional housing including affordable housing , infrastructure and community facilities
- Meet key objectives for the County and the Local Economic Partnership in delivering sustainable growth and regeneration
- Represent excellent value for money
- Demonstrate that growth and regeneration projects in West Essex can be delivered.

The LIP provides an introduction to the West Essex Authorities supported by detailed evidence setting out the strategic case for West Essex. The appendices draw on a range of policy documents to provide this evidence.

2.0 West Essex – The Vision and the Three Districts in context

2.1 The Shared Vision

West Essex has become an area of importance in its own right, still with strong links to London, but increasingly working with Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire as well with partners in the rest of Essex. The West Essex area offers an unparalleled opportunity in close proximity to London, Cambridge and Stansted Airport, which can deliver economic and jobs growth in the private sector.

The West Essex area has a unique role to play in the future prosperity of the region and the nation, encompassing the following vision which will be delivered by taking advantage of its opportunities and assets:

- The area has consistently been identified as a location for both economic and housing growth over the last two decades. This status recognizes the unique mix of the sub regional role of Harlow within West Essex and the importance of protecting the high quality environment of Epping Forest and Uttlesford. This combination along with the excellent strategic transportation links of West Essex creates a focus for untapped and unparalleled opportunity in close proximity to London
- The green and unique character of much of the Epping Forest and Uttlesford Districts is very important to the residents of these two Districts, which the two Local Authorities are anxious to protect, whilst encouraging appropriate development – particularly in support of Harlow's growth ambitions. Therefore an appropriate balance needs to be struck

- Existing sector strengths with the potential for growth and significant contribution to national recovery e.g. research & development, knowledge based industries, pharmaceuticals, health care sector, construction, distribution, advanced engineering and electronics aligned with a large amount of potential employment land in Harlow.
- An international airport at Stansted with the capacity to be a strong driver for economic growth, and attract inward investment to the area and wider region
- The necessary infrastructure for an excellent tourism industry bringing jobs and marketing opportunities that will be of positive benefit to business, residents and the community as a whole. The mix of ancient Forest, waterways, proximity to the Olympic Park and the cycling and white water canoeing venues, historic environments, green approach and spirit of enterprise produces an excellent foundation for this area of growth
- An area that has existing partnerships attracting funding and resources, with a record of delivery
- An area where business and the public sector have already identified priority issues for investment that will support a thriving private sector
- The opportunity for a collective solution and drive across the three Districts to achieve economic prosperity and housing growth.

The opportunity of promoting the identity and strengths of West Essex as an area offering a diverse and unique offer to residents and businesses will contribute to the regional and national economy through marketing the breadth of physical, natural and social environment in this area. These opportunities will be delivered with respect to the purposes of the Metropolitan Green Belt that forms its setting and the desire to protect and enhance the rural character of much of the rest of the West Essex area.

Historically this area has had strong links with London. Epping Forest District for many years has both supported and benefited from the Capital. Harlow New Town is looked to internationally for its role in creating a new living environment for some of the post-war population of London and Stansted is regarded as London's third airport. The area enjoys good transport links with London, Harlow and other nearby centres, through the M11 and M25 motorways and several Transport for London underground stations on the Central Line. There are however, issues with congestion in some areas. Conversely, many of the more rural areas lack sufficient public transport, and residents without a car can find travel difficult.

West Essex is an area that has huge potential with these strategic transport links, road, rail and air, its potential for providing housing and employment land to contribute towards growth in the region and its fantastic heritage and rural environment. This potential can best be realized with a strategic partnership that is local enough to concentrate on the positive challenges but also recognize the areas of concern and more importantly a vision for the future that is particular to this functional economic area.

The West Essex area is ideally located in the east of England to realize the potential of the UK's research and development which is centred in Cambridge as there are spatial opportunities for growth. The area has untapped potential which requires

strategic leadership to deliver, contributing to the nation's economic prosperity. We believe that the Steering Group tasked to deliver the West Essex area Local Investment Plan has the necessary skills, drive and enthusiasm to fulfil this role. Partners have already proved their capacity for joint delivery for example through joint housing, planning, regeneration and employment initiatives for example, the Growth Area Fund Programme of Development and the West Essex Future Jobs Fund programme.

Harlow as a town has an aspiration for housing and economic growth but recognizes the importance of a wider partnership. Neighbouring Districts support the regeneration of Harlow because of the significant benefits this will bring to the wider area, but have significantly less appetite for growth in their Districts. Developing the mutual benefits and the relationship between the opportunities for growth in the Harlow and the shared impact on the more diverse strengths of Epping Forest and Uttlesford will be key to delivery of this Local Investment Plan. Epping Forest and Uttlesford can continue to contribute to national economic growth through such elements as the high number of new enterprises, the potential for Stansted airport and the growth in tourism knowing that Harlow is in an excellent position to absorb housing and economic growth that could otherwise be detrimental to the historic and natural environment that makes this area so special.

Delivering housing and economic growth is central to delivering this much needed regeneration and to deliver this, growth will need to be concentrated at Harlow but jointly directed and supported by Epping Forest and Uttlesford's developed and prosperous economies. With this in mind we welcome the opportunity to establish a Local Investment Plan for the West Essex area which will seek to support both aspiration and achievement and to provide a compelling case for the private sector to invest in the area.

The West Essex LIP is a good approximation to a real functional economic area, with strong links to East Hertfordshire, Cambridgeshire and North East London. This is demonstrated by the Business Survey 2010 which found that 54% of business respondents in the West Essex area claim to have a market reach within 20 miles. In recognition of this, business representative organizations are increasingly collaborating across the area, reflecting issues of common interest.

The West Essex Area falls within the approved boundary of the Kent, Greater Essex and East Sussex Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). As the plans for the LEP evolve, the Steering Group will assess how the priorities set out in the west Essex LIP can be realised through partnership working within the LEP framework.

2.2 The West Essex Districts' Community Strategies

Set out below is a summary of the key priorities set out in the three Districts Community Strategies which are reflected in this Local Investment Plan.

Epping Forest	Harlow	Uttlesford
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accommodate appropriate levels of growth whilst protecting the rural landscape. • Work to deliver environmental gains from effective planning of floodwater retention and water gathering areas. • Develop a rural transport strategy in partnership with ECC. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase levels of waste recycling and promote energy and water efficiency • Ensure that growth in the number of homes in the District is properly planned, along with adequate infrastructure • Make affordable housing available, in rural and urban locations • Accommodate homeless people in suitable accommodation. • Ensure that all homes are in a decent condition • Co-ordinate land use, planning policies, housing, transport and infrastructure in a way that ensures economic prosperity. • Encourage and support innovation and enterprise, small businesses. • Work to secure vibrant and viable town centres. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a dynamic economic base, by retaining attracting business and investment • Continuing to regenerate the Town Centre • Training a skilled workforce to meet employers' needs • Raising aspirations and achieving progress across all phases of learning • Securing the best possible educational staff, facilities and resources • Developing a strategy which enables all sections of the community access to lifelong learning • Enhancing our open spaces and improving the way they are used, to meet the needs and aspirations of local people • Increasing the supply of good quality, decent and affordable housing • Reducing waste and maximising recycling • Improving the local neighbourhood street scene and enhancing the green environment • Ensuring that Harlow is able to exploit fully its geographical position in relation to major regional economic developments by developing transport networks in our area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing high value jobs in small businesses • Reduced carbon footprint of local businesses • Reduce pockets of deprivation, poverty and low economic activity • Raise the benefits of local tourism • A smaller carbon footprint with less waste • A well managed environment

2.3 Individual District Profiles

Set out below is further detail on the three Districts in the West Essex Local Investment Plan area

2.3.1 Epping Forest District



Epping Forest District is an area of contrasts. It has some very rural and agricultural areas, particularly in the north and east of the District, and some more urban areas, mostly towards the south and south west, near to the border with London. The District is, in the main, quite affluent, but pockets of deprivation exist primarily in the urban areas. The District comprises a total of 24 Parishes, or 32 Wards. Epping Forest District abuts four Greater London authorities (Enfield, Havering, Redbridge and Waltham Forest), four Essex authorities (Brentwood, Chelmsford, Harlow and Uttlesford) and two Hertfordshire authority areas (Broxbourne and East Hertfordshire).

Housing has been at a premium historically, as the District has proved a popular place to live, although this has resulted in higher prices and a greater need for affordable housing, for example to enable younger local people to stay within the area. Much of the District's area is within the Green Belt, and protection of the 'Green and Unique' nature of the area is prized by residents. These contrasting needs, for development and for the protection of the District's green character, require careful balance.

Epping Forest District has a network of 6 smaller town centres, rather than one primary centre. These vary in nature, from historic charter market towns to the more conventional high street, and from local neighbourhood parades to clustered specialist retail units.

Epping Forest is a strong business location with excellent communication links, a substantial local business base and a fairly diverse economy. The District does not operate in isolation and its economy is impacted by its location adjacent to London and there is a large volume of out commuting.

The District boasts very high levels of entrepreneurship and business creation with local levels fairly significantly outperforming all higher geographical areas. In 2008 Epping Forest District achieved 95.6 business start-ups registrations per 10,000 people aged 16 years +. This may be compared to regional and national rates of 56.4 per 10,000 residents and 57.2 per 10,000 residents respectively.

Growth industries include construction, distribution, hotels, restaurants, banking, finance and insurance sectors, all of which have experienced significant growth in recent years. The public administration, education and health sectors, which although significant in the local profile, are substantially smaller than the regional and national average. Horticulture and farming continue to play a role in the local economy, with tourism and leisure seen as a sector of the economy with much growth potential.

The District has tremendous assets in terms of its built and natural heritage with distinctive towns and rural villages set in pleasant countryside, as well as the ancient Epping Forest itself and the River Lea. The development of the Lee Valley White Water Centre in Hertfordshire on the western boundary of the District for the London 2012 Games is seen as a key opportunity for the wider area particularly in relation to the post Games operation of the venue.

2.3.2 Harlow



Harlow is a compact, strategically located town in West Essex that was built from the 1950s onwards as one of the post-war new towns. In 1947, Harlow was a rural area with a scattered population of about 4,500. By 1980 it was a prosperous town, housing about 80,000 people and providing work, shopping and entertainment for a large surrounding area.

The town was built by Harlow Development Corporation to the Master Plan of Sir Frederick Gibberd. Sir Frederick created a town plan based on a series of neighbourhoods separated by green wedges, which are highly valued by local people. These green spaces enabled the residential areas to be built at a higher density, often using experimental designs. The neighbourhoods were designed with access to amenities such as community centres, shopping, primary schools, leisure and employment within walking distance. The town was also designed with a comprehensive and well integrated network of excellent cycle ways and Harlow's 'green wedges' complement the surrounding Green Belt giving an overall feel of space and connectivity with the surrounding countryside.

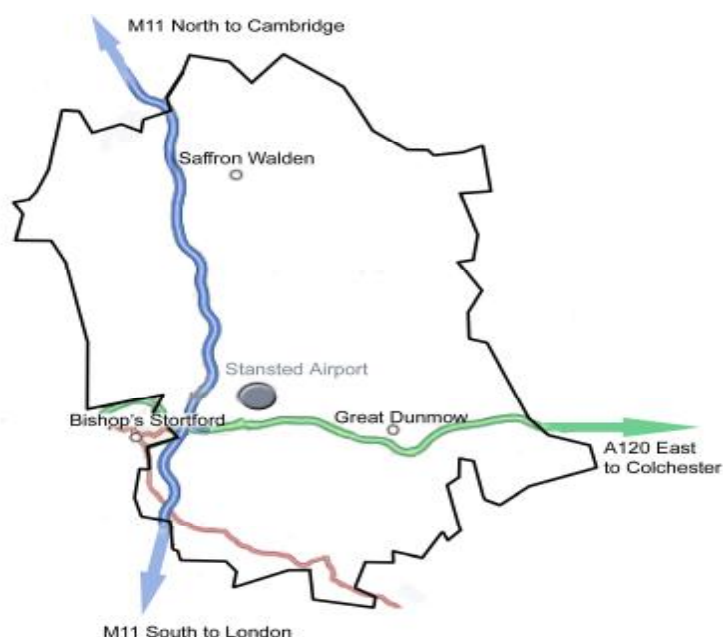
Harlow and the wider area's close proximity to London, Cambridge, Stansted airport and the motorway network enable easy access to UK and global markets. It offers value for money business space to facilitate economic growth, with a population of 4 million people within a one hour journey time from Harlow; and is a sub regional employment hub providing 40,000 jobs.

Harlow has underperformed economically and positive regeneration initiatives have not yet been delivered through the market. Co-coordinated and strategic interventions have been required to bring significant renewal projects forward. The recession impacted disproportionately upon the town creating regionally high levels of unemployment and will require similar interventions to enable it to recover. There is also an economic mis-match, with Harlow residents earning on average 23% less than those who commute into the town to work. This is in large part because Harlow's highly paid workforce does not choose to live in the town because of a lack of high quality housing, weak town centre offer, and negative image.

Harlow offers an unparalleled opportunity in close proximity to London to deliver economic growth to the benefit of the area. The areas of advanced electronics and ICT, pharmaceuticals, advanced manufacturing, and health related industries have been highlighted as sectors with significant potential for economic growth. Harlow has a base in each of these and will be looking to maximise the potential that it has as a hub for each of these industries, contributing to national economic recovery and growth.

The town, which saw the birth of fibre-optic cable, the development of cutting edge radar equipment and which has been home to significant research and development activity, has the potential again to create a vibrant future.

2.3.3 Uttlesford



Uttlesford District is located in North-West Essex and covers an area of approximately 250 square miles. Uttlesford is considered a predominantly rural area but has major road networks running through it which allow easy access to London. The main residential areas of Saffron Walden, Great Dunmow and Thaxted are all historic market towns displaying a wealth of beautiful and distinctive architecture.

A predominantly rural, sparsely populated District it has good road and rail links to both London and many regional towns, but public transport in the more rural areas is poor. Most importantly for the District's infrastructure though is that London's third largest airport, Stansted, lies within its boundaries. The airport itself offers economic growth opportunities for the West Essex LIP to progress.

Its rural nature, coupled with its proximity to London and Cambridge, make it a highly desirable place to live. The area provides desirable homes at the higher end of the market. However this causes difficulty for the local economy. Businesses find it increasingly difficult to locally recruit staff as their workforce cannot afford to live in the area. The construction of affordable housing, as yet, has proved inadequate to meet demand.

Given the presence of Stansted Airport, it is not surprising that the sector with the highest density of industry in Uttlesford is air transport followed by land transport and agriculture. Communications, metals & engineering and construction are also located in the District but the majority of sectors with high densities in Uttlesford are service sectors serving local residents or visitors to the District's attractions. Knowledge economy businesses are also well represented in the area. The aerospace industry is also extremely important on Uttlesford, naturally this cluster around Stansted.

Chesterford Research Park hosts fourteen hi tech industrial laboratories with strong links to Cambridge University. Close to this site a further Science Village is to be built, offering 28,000 sq ft plus a further 60,000 sq ft in one unit. This illustrates the links between Uttlesford and Cambridge.

Uttlesford is an area of contrasts - a strong agricultural base with funding to develop low carbon schemes alongside a growing aerospace industry benefiting from the UK's third largest airport. The District benefits from a growing tourism industry based on its heritage but needs the support of areas such as the regeneration of Harlow to provide a local workforce for successful business growth.

2.4 Summary of key Evidence

The three Districts have all produced substantial evidence base documents to support this Local Investment Plan. Set out below is a summary of some of the key indicators derived from these studies.

Key Evidence Area	Stand out Evidence	LIP Outcome Required
Population Growth	Substantial population growth in excess of 10,000 people primarily in Harlow and Uttlesford over the next 10 years	Growth in jobs and affordable homes
Population Growth - Elderly	Substantial population growth of older persons in excess of xx people across all three Districts	Growth in suitable homes and appropriate care
Unemployment	Harlow 4.3% Epping Forest 2.8% Uttlesford 3.3%	Growth in jobs required
Education, Employment and Training requirement	Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETs) 16 – 19 year olds: Harlow 6.2% Epping Forest 2.3% Uttlesford 3.6%	Investment required in jobs growth, educational opportunity and apprenticeships
Deprivation	Harlow is the 3 rd most deprived District in Essex Epping Forest and Uttlesford have 'pockets' of deprivation	Investment required in jobs growth, educational opportunity and apprenticeships
Health	Harlow has below average health indicators, Uttlesford is above average. Epping Forest is xx	Investment required in jobs growth, educational opportunity and apprenticeships
Education	Harlow below average Underperformed GCSE	Investment required in jobs growth, educational opportunity and apprenticeships
Housing Need	4,800 households in housing need and 8,448 registered on waiting lists	New Affordable Homes required
Affordability	Average House price to earnings ratio of minimum of 8:1	New Affordable Homes required

2.5 Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) Exercise

Partners across all three Districts carried out a SWOT exercise and identified the following strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats:

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buoyant before recession with low unemployment rates • Proximity to London • Transport infrastructure – M11/M25/London Underground/rail stations, Stansted Airport and London City Airport close-by as well as North Weald and Stapleford airfields • Quality of life and pleasant natural environment –Green & Unique • Rich heritage, Epping Forest, Lee Valley Regional Park etc. • Location is in demand - attractive to potential house buyers/residents • Parts of local community engaged with planning policy already, lots of residents groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability of developable land given Green Belt constraint • High levels of out-commuting of skilled workforce impacting on productivity levels • Certain areas poorly served by public transport • Poor access to M11 in some places • Pockets of deprivation, particularly in Harlow that can be overlooked when viewing the broad affluence of the area • Lack of sufficient affordable housing • All three Districts have yet to adopt a Local Development Framework Core Strategy • Potential lack of extra capacity on the Central Line in to Epping Forest.
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To capitalise further on the area's green and unique character • Strategic development opportunities associated with potential Harlow growth (e.g. connected with junction 7a on M11) • Opportunities related to the 2012 Olympics • Increased community engagement localism agenda and progression of Local Development Framework Core Strategies • Housing provision through schemes involving regeneration and employment/retail • Redevelopment of Loughton Broadway, incorporating housing, employment, retail (Epping DC) • Potential retail warehouse scheme at Langston Road, Loughton Broadway, (Epping DC) • Redevelopment of site on St John's Road, Epping (Epping DC) • Redevelopment of Harlow Town Centre. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced public sector support in current economic climate. • Contraction in public sector employment given central government's budget cuts • High residential property costs In some areas • Lack of Broadband access in rural areas, causing a loss of potential economic activity • Loss of labour through out-commuting of workforce and increasing dormitory role for the area • Lower development during the recession leading to lower provision of affordable housing • Confusion of national/regional policy situation following change of Government.

Section 2 – The Objectives of the Local Investment Plan

3.0 Growth in West Essex

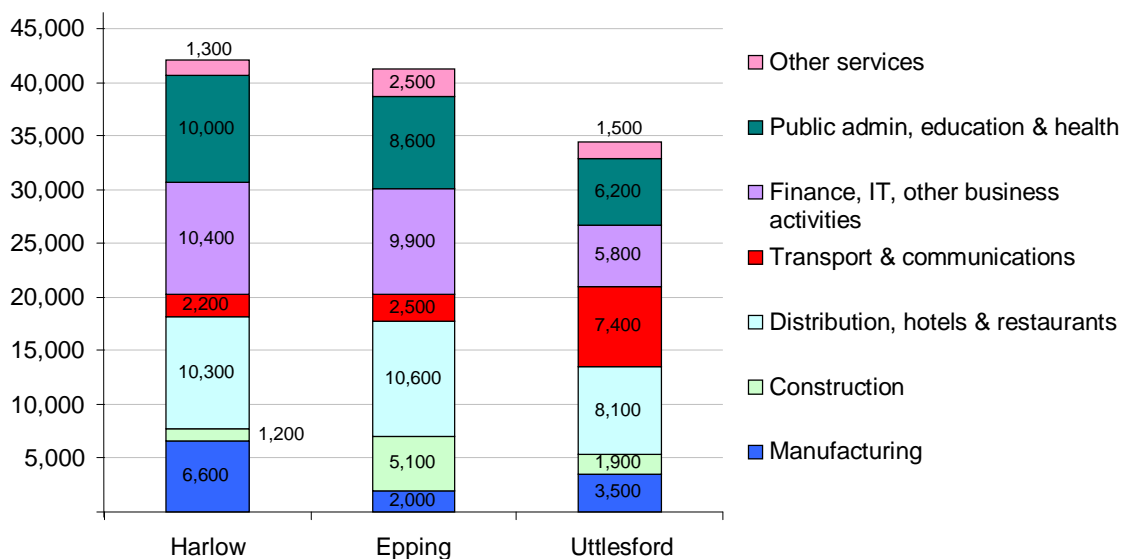
3.1 Economic Growth

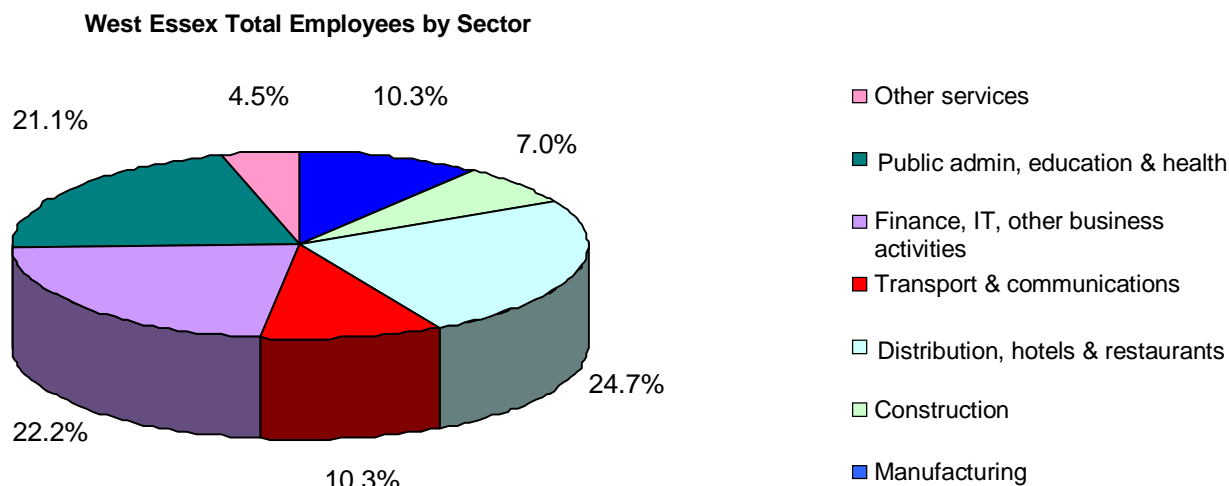
The West Essex LIP will have focus on a real functional economic area and can deliver the strategic leadership for the economic revitalization of the area and the housing growth needed to support it.

West Essex alone has a population of over a quarter of a million people (276,600), covers over 1,000 square kilometres, and is home to 14,000 businesses, including major employers such as Raytheon, Kier, Higgins, GSK, the Bank of England, BUPA Home Healthcare and London Stansted Airport. Epping Forest District by itself has a larger population than many unitary authorities, and growth in Harlow will make it similarly significant.

In 2007, the Gross Value Added of West Essex was roughly £5.5bn, larger than unitary authorities such as Derby, Southampton and Brighton, and similar in size to Milton Keynes and Leicester. The sub-region's economy is forecast to be worth £6.8 billion by 2020 and over £8 billion by 2030. The Portsmouth/Southampton partnership, which was one of the first to establish effective sub-regional working, had a 2007 combined GVA of around £9bn – not dissimilar in scale to that of West Essex.

Employee Jobs by Sector





3.1.1 Harlow's role as the Growth Hub in West Essex

Following consultation with Harlow Council's 'People's Panel' in 2008, *Regenerating the Town* has been identified as Harlow Council's top corporate priority. Epping Forest and Uttlesford support the regeneration of Harlow Town because of the benefits this will bring to the wider area. Delivering housing and economic growth is central to delivering this much-needed regeneration. Ongoing informal consultations associated with the preparation of Harlow's Core Strategy reinforce the need to improve the range of housing within the District, supported with appropriate levels of infrastructure provision and environmental enhancements in order to meet community needs.

Harlow now suffers from high levels of deprivation, ageing infrastructure and a poor range of housing. Nonetheless, the town's location means it is ideally placed for the growth that will ensure its long-term regeneration.

Harlow's aim is to create a place that is economically thriving and with the positive attributes and vibrancy of a city. The cornerstones of these aims are:

- Harlow as a place of aspiration and a University town (As part of Anglia Ruskin)
- Harlow as a prime business location
- Harlow as a cultural hub
- Harlow as a sub-regional centre and retail destination.

Regeneration and growth of the town need to recognise and respect its setting in the Metropolitan Green Belt, and the purposes for including land in the Green Belt. The whole of Epping Forest District and the southern part of East Herts District, which together surround Harlow, are within the Green Belt, with only towns and larger villages being excluded.

All partners are signed up to considering appropriate levels of growth in/around Harlow, in appropriate locations, which assist Harlow with its growth ambitions, whilst respecting and recognising Epping Forest's and Uttlesford's lower growth ambitions.

Realising these aims for Harlow will be fundamentally dependent upon the continuation and extension of partnership working between the public, private and voluntary sectors, and the local community. It is also dependent upon delivery of new homes and associated infrastructure, for which there is cross-party political support in the town, and from Uttlesford and Epping to create the broad based economy and society that will deliver sustainable prosperity.

It should be noted that East Herts DC is currently consulting on its issues and options for their LDF core strategy. This includes proposals for a major urban extension to the north of Harlow, of around 10,000 homes. Harlow Council supports housing growth, including at North Harlow, provided it is of high quality and accompanied by appropriate infrastructure.

To the east of the town, the Newhall development of 3000 homes is continuing. The area is being built in line with an ambitious master plan which aims to develop a high quality living environment. Phase 1 of Newhall will be complete by the end of 2011 with the last 3 elements, 'North Chase', 'Be' and 'Slo' completing this phase.

Phase 2 of Newhall will include a further 2500 dwellings, neighbourhood centre, commercial District and school and is currently in the final stages of planning.

3.1.2 London-Harlow-Stansted Programme of Development Partnership

The three Districts are part of a broader sub-regional partnership which has collectively delivered a programme of housing, economic development and environmental projects over the last two years. The London-Harlow-Stansted Programme of Development Partnership (LHSP) comprises Broxbourne, East Hertfordshire, Epping Forest, Harlow and Uttlesford District Councils along with Essex and Hertfordshire County Councils and a number of other key stakeholders including Harlow Renaissance Ltd, British Waterways and the Harlow Area Green Infrastructure Partnership. The LSHP aims to:

- ensure that the delivery of new homes, infrastructure and economic growth plays a major role in the regeneration of Harlow and the Lee Valley
- ensure that development in the area meets the highest possible quality, sustainability and design standards, is supported by the necessary services and infrastructure, and is well integrated with existing communities
- protect and enhance the rural character of the majority of the area and the character of smaller and historic towns
- recognise the important role that historic buildings, conservation areas and other features can play in creating communities with a sense of place
- make the most of existing, and create new, green infrastructure as a resource for local communities, and in particular promote cycling and walking for recreation and transport
- use growth at Harlow, and its proximity to London, Stansted Airport and Cambridge, to promote its role as a substantive sub-regional centre and as a catalyst for a fundamental change in its image
- establish Harlow as a key location for airport-related employment and housing, and as a university town
- tackle the significant transport issues facing the area, particularly congestion at Harlow, by appropriate management of existing and provision of new infrastructure and by a major increase in the provision of facilities for and use of public transport, walking and cycling.

To deliver this vision, growth will need to be concentrated at Harlow – to support the regeneration of the town, to respect its setting within the Metropolitan Green Belt and to protect and enhance the rural character of much of the rest of the area. In order to deliver this vision all future growth will be determined through the Local Development Framework processes where it has the support of local communities. The Partnership will continue to support such growth where it is locally supported.

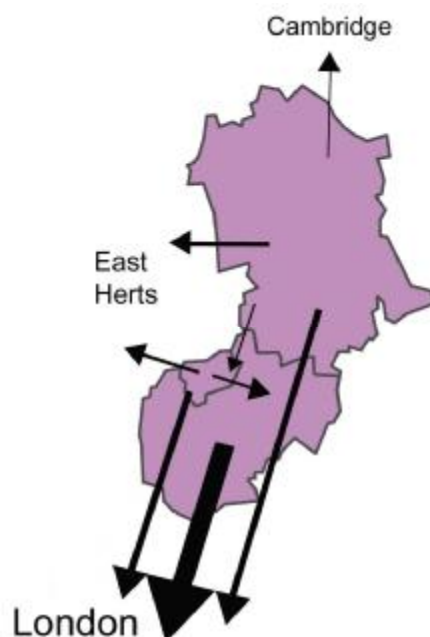
Whilst the delivery of growth at the level proposed in the expected to be revoked Regional Spatial Strategy would not be achievable by the original date of 2021, substantial new housing in Harlow is desirable and deliverable in that timeframe. Planning permission has already been granted for 3,000 new homes at Newhall, in the eastern part of the town, with a number of developers considering proposals within the town. The precise level of growth appropriate to the wider Harlow area, and options for the location of that growth, will be the main ingredients of community engagement starting this autumn, as the first stage in the preparation of Local Development Frameworks for Harlow, Epping Forest, and East Herts Districts. Attention will need to be paid to the differing housing needs of the partner authorities – Harlow has identified a need for more aspirational housing, while Epping Forest and Uttlesford require significant numbers of affordable homes.

Harlow Council and its partners recognise that Harlow need to take the opportunity to renew and reinvigorate itself. Epping Forest and Uttlesford recognise Harlow's aspiration to provide a compelling case for the private sector to invest in the town and for people wanting to live in the town. The delivery of new housing, and in particular a wider mix of housing, is essential to lift the town from a long period of stagnation and for it to deliver valuable benefits for the wider area. Achievement in this area will assist the strategic priorities of Epping Forest and Uttlesford.

Broxbourne Borough Council and East Herts District Councils will be producing their own Local Investment Plans and are expecting to contribute to a wider over arching Herts County Local investment Plan.

3.1.3 Business and Workforce Development

Businesses in the area have all identified that while the transport links offer great advantages to the area they are also of concern and need to be planned and managed strategically. The area of West Essex encompasses a great diversity of housing types/tenures/values and in order to ensure that an overall package of housing options can be delivered to existing expanding businesses as well as enterprises attracted to the area a strategic overview is crucial. All three Districts are in a position to provide additional housing at affordable prices whilst areas of Epping and Uttlesford are extremely attractive to the highest earners. These factors contribute to a clear travel to work area which the proposed West Essex area mirrors.



Over the course of the last year, the Local Authorities of West Essex have increasingly been working together on economic development and shared needs, opportunities and priorities, and now have a well established understanding. Recently this has included the delivery of economic intelligence and business advocacy work to EEDA (under the banner of “London Arc East”), a substantial and successful West Essex submission to the Future Jobs Fund and current proposals for the establishment of a more formal M11 Economic Partnership to feed into the Kent, Greater Essex and East Sussex Local Enterprise Partnership.

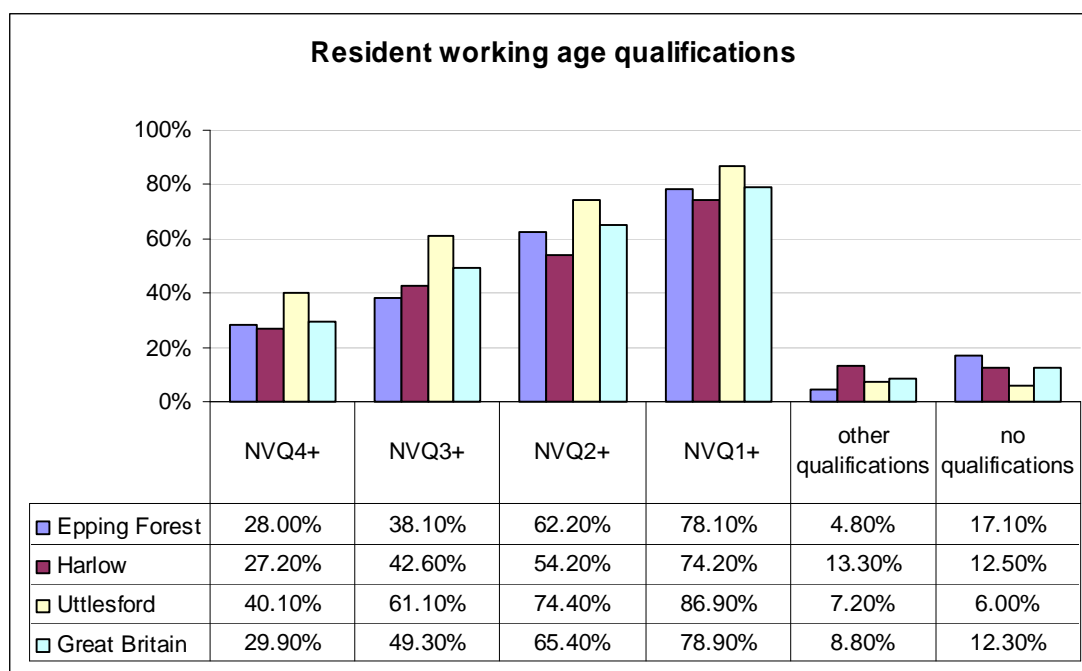
A desire to embrace sustainability has been identified from the business community. The business case is clear with increasing energy costs it is an area mentioned by the majority of businesses where assistance is required. The culture for enterprise in the area (highest % of start ups in the UK) aligned with the concentration of knowledge driven businesses (31% in Harlow) give a unique baseline for developing businesses addressing the low carbon agenda.

Traditionally this area of West Essex has been lacking high quality education facilities. It has benefited from the Eastern region’s superb academia (the Universities of Cambridge, Hertfordshire, Essex and London) but this has perhaps stifled local provision. However, new opportunities recognizing the needs of local businesses, including large international companies can ensure that universities with sites in Harlow and Epping Forest provide skills and qualifications required to service the local workforce and businesses. Also importantly local businesses working in partnership with academic institutions can benefit from research and development. The establishment of the Anglia Ruskin University campus at Harlow, with courses running from September 2010 and a new University Centre opening in 2011, will be of major benefit to the sub-region.

3.1.4 Skills, Employability & Aspirations

Parts of the sub-region, particularly Uttlesford, have highly skilled populations. However, skills attainment must increase to ensure economic prosperity of the sub region; in particular Harlow needs to continue to increase educational attainment and up-skill the proportion of its residents attaining NVQ Levels 1-4 .This will be critical to ensuring that local residents are able to attain better quality and remunerated work thus decreasing the large wages disparity between resident and workplace earnings in Harlow. Additionally, Epping Forest has pockets of deprivation where education

and skills attainment levels suffer. It should also be noted that there are difficulties in assessing further education in rural parts of Uttlesford.



About a half of businesses (49%) in the West Essex area identify skills gaps in their current workforce. There is an urgent need for a strategic overview of skills delivery to ensure step change improvement is achieved. The Districts will need to consider how best this can be led and ensure business needs are delivered, building upon successful existing relationships for example the arrival of Anglia Ruskin University (ARU) to Harlow including a part of its highly regarded Business School provision. Such expertise would greatly benefit the area in its endeavours to encourage business innovation and economic growth. Indeed ARU has already commenced discussion with local businesses. In addition to this, the provision will increase access to skills training for Uttlesford.

3.2 Transport & Infrastructure

Tackling congestion is identified by the Local Authorities and local business as the highest priority for action for the benefit of the sub-region. There is extensive support for a second M11 junction to the north of Harlow. Improvements such as this are critical to local business success. The Authorities wish to support businesses and the excellent transport links that attracted them to the area in the first place need to be assured now and in the future. The infrastructure serves a much larger area but with local guardians of it with the highest motivation of ensuring efficient movement of people and goods for their own businesses will ensure that the much wider population also benefits. Future decisions on Stansted Airport also need to be supported by a local partnership which can look both to the immediate picture and the far reaching implications.

The Harlow and Stansted Gateway Transportation Board is a successful public-private partnership of the West Essex area working together to achieve improvements in the transportation infrastructure. Wider infrastructure needs, for

example the enhanced provision of water, energy, and broadband infrastructure, will be required to support both economic and housing growth.

3.3 Community Support

Widespread community support for growth has been evidenced in Harlow over many years. It has long been seen that growth, combined with the appropriate infrastructure provision, can deliver the wider regeneration of the town. The Communities and Local Government funded Growth Area Funding 2 projects have all been subject to extensive local community consultation through dozens of residents meetings to discuss community needs and project design. At these meetings, a common theme has been the need to provide new housing for current and future generations combined with improved local retail and health facilities, which are now being delivered through these projects.

In 2009 a consultation process on the proposals for the re-development of Harlow Town Centre saw more than 2,500 people visit the exhibition with 90% of those responding supporting the need for regeneration, and over 80% supporting the proposals.

Access to good quality housing and regeneration are two of the key themes to have emerged from informal consultations associated with the preparation of Harlow's Core Strategy. This will be delivered through the Council's growth aspirations. The Council's 2010 'Call for Sites', and other technical work, has revealed considerable interest from landowners, developers and other interested parties to develop land. This has indicated potential for future development opportunities in and around the town.

The Council commenced its formal consultation on its Core Strategy Issues and Options in the autumn of 2010 to ensure the community is involved in developing an appropriate policy base to underpin Harlow's growth and regeneration aspirations.

Epping Forest Council will shortly adopt a "Local Development Framework Communication Strategy". This is an initial response to the Government's localism agenda, and the results of the engagement will form a key part of the LDF evidence base and will be used to develop the Core Strategy Issues and Options. Consultation on the latter will commence in June 2011. The Communication Strategy will eventually be expanded to form the Council's Statement of Community Involvement.

The Council commenced a Call for Sites exercise in 2008, and will shortly re-run this to try and encourage a more meaningful response from public sector organisations. As with Harlow, the initial exercise revealed considerable interest from landowners and private developers.

The Debden Broadway regeneration scheme was the subject of a number of successful consultation exercises, and it is anticipated that the St John's Road, Epping regeneration scheme will be published for public consultation in early 2011.

Uttlesford DC is also expecting to undertake formal consultation on key areas around employment and housing provision as part of the development of its Local Development Framework in 2011.

3.4 Enabling Delivery

All the LIP partners recognise that the main requirement for Growth Funding is for Harlow.

To date, Harlow Council and its partners have been able to use Growth Fund money to stimulate housing delivery, provide the infrastructure needed to facilitate growth, and to deliver wider packages of community benefit to complement growth. This has seen, and continues to see, the following activities:

- Delivery of local neighbourhood based mixed use projects, affordable and market housing, new shops, health centres and other community facilities.
- Development of a major town centre scheme
- Development of renewal plans for some of the town's poorer estates
- The launch of an inward investment and re-branding campaign
- Acquisition of sites for new affordable housing
- Completion of the funding package to bring Anglia Ruskin University to the town
- Completion of the necessary evidence base to support the growth plans
- Development and delivery of transportation proposals designed to support growth
- Delivery of a range of enhancements to the green infrastructure of the town and the wider area of the Stort and Lee Valleys.

The Partnership intends to complete this programme over the next year, utilising the existing Growth Fund allocation, whilst developing plans for future activity from 2011/12 through the community consultation processes to be undertaken in 2010 and 2011 on the respective Local Development Frameworks. These will determine the preferred extent of and locations for growth as well as the range of additional measures required to facilitate this growth. Details of the nature of any future growth cannot be quantified until the Local Authorities within the partnership have completed their community engagement processes. This consultation will also determine the way in which the individual authorities within the Partnership implement any incentive schemes.

The other main area for delivery funding across all three Districts of West Essex is in the provision of grant from the HCA and the exploration of the use of rent revenue generated through the new 'affordable rent' tenure to maximise the provision of affordable housing. Details of the need for affordable housing are set out in Section 5.

3.5 Responding to Incentives

The LIP partners seek to balance the requirements to deliver housing growth with packages of measures that will provide the necessary benefits to existing residents. For example, in Harlow, the key requirements have been to deliver the necessary transport infrastructure to tackle the existing infrastructure deficit as well as to accommodate future growth. The current works to widen the A414 into Harlow is a good demonstration of this.

The West Essex Partnership welcomes the Government's intentions to deliver incentivised growth. We support the innovation of local retention of Council Tax match funding and would benefit if delivery of incentives took place in advance of housing delivery. This particularly relates to the provision of infrastructure. For this

reason we would urge the retention of Growth Funding as a non-ringfenced block grant as we have found this to be invaluable as a mechanism for stimulating delivery.

All three authorities will also be considering the impact of the proposed New Homes Bonus and revisions to the Community Infrastructure Levy in incentivising growth through the provision of additional funding.

4.0 Regeneration

In addition to the growth aspirations set out above, there is a substantial requirement for the regeneration of specific areas across West Essex.

4.1 Epping Forest

The main objectives for Epping Forest within West Essex are as follows:

- Limited, but planned, housing growth
- Protection of its green and unique character
- Allocation of Green Belt land for additional housing growth to be minimised as much as possible. Currently 94% of the District is in the Green Belt with only towns and larger villages being excluded.
- Encourage and promote the reuse or redevelopment of brownfield sites
- Increased affordable housing
- Limited funding for infrastructure required – main investment requirement is from the HCA for maximising affordable housing provision.

Epping Forest has 2 regeneration schemes in the Loughton Broadway and St John's Road area, Epping, with other potential housing sites located on smaller windfall brownfield sites owned primarily by developers.

4.1.1 The Broadway area (Debden) Loughton Broadway

The Broadway is part of overspill estate from 1950s, town centre constructed in range of 2 broad runs of buildings with retail and community facilities on ground floor, residential above. Debden estate was originally 100% council housing with substantial homes now sold under right to buy with the remainder still in Council control. Most of the land is in public ownership, apart from Debden Underground Station.

Land assembly is expected to be straightforward, but existing developments may cause problems, e.g. BP site and the small Sainsbury's. There is a local aspiration for a petrol station but the current brief specifies the site as re providing retail, with housing above, and significant improvement to transport interchange. Other sites such as the Winston Churchill Pub have fairly new leases. There is lot of interest in the pub site from one small-scale developer

The Broadway Development and Design Brief was adopted by EFDC at Council on 25 September 2008; the report included the following paragraph; "Following adoption, the brief will become a material consideration in the assessment of any future planning applications for the locality. The brief will also build upon Local Plan policies and may eventually provide the basis of an Area Action Plan - a Development Plan Document within the new Local Development Framework."

The Council is looking at how it can use its land assets to deliver the aspirations set out in the Brief. Discussions are at an early stage and an officer group is being formed. The Council needs to determine how much housing should be affordable and how much private. Affordable housing is the priority for the Council in the area although a substantial capital receipt could be gained from market housing. The expectation is that there will be at least 40% affordable housing as set out in the policy. The location is sustainable as it is near a school, tube station, shops etc. It is expected that the Council could move forward on the more straightforward parts of Broadway regeneration during the first half of 2011.

4.1.2 St John's Road area, Epping

St John's is set in the area of Epping centred around a historic church, the town centre with some retail elements, listed buildings, the library, County offices and a school site. The County decided to reprovide that school on existing nearby site and there have been some concerns that this site would be developed for purely housing.

The Council is working on a development brief to look at that area and a number of options have been considered. Officers are now looking at a significant retail-led scheme (but issues with impact on other businesses and access) with housing, and better pedestrian links. This could involve significantly altering the library building. The other option is to reprovide the existing council sports centre which is in another location in Epping but is arguably not fit for purpose. There is support for reproviding the sports centre but a sports led scheme could be less viable. It is possible that a retail/sports combination may be more deliverable.

Council Members are not yet ready to go out to consultation on the options identified so far. However, most of the sites are in public ownership and so not in a fragmented position. The area offers some exciting opportunities for a mix of uses including affordable housing.

If sports centre is re-provided on St John's site, a large site for housing could be freed up on the former sports site which is owned by the Council.

The main difficulty with St John's area is timing, as the Council has yet to identify the preferred option. The St John's situation is more complicated than Broadway, as there is more uncertainty over what the preferred option will be. Some viability assessment work on the options has been undertaken but this work is ongoing.

Since the proposed Design and Development Brief is still at an early stage, and has not yet been subject to public consultation, the numbers of new homes to be provided within the regeneration area has not yet been agreed. 4 options are currently under consideration:

- retail-led option, with residential accommodation
- a leisure-led option with residential accommodation
- a combined retail and leisure-led option, with residential accommodation
- a wholly residential accommodation option.

4.1.3 Small-scale sites

These are all the smaller sites that are ranked in the affordable housing schedule. set out in section 3 .They are smaller, but are more likely to come forward before the Broadway or St John's.

There would be added value from these housing sites which can provide much needed affordable housing. Addressing deprivation, protecting the Green Belt and providing affordable housing are very strong priorities in the District.

4.2 Harlow

Harlow's regeneration priorities lie in three different areas:

- Town Centre
- Appropriate Urban Extension
- Priority Estates
- Neighbourhood Centres.

4.2.1 Town Centre

The Council is committed to regenerating the town centre as it is seen as the place to break a potential cycle of failure. Improving the town centre is a priority to make the town more attractive to current and potential investors, residents, businesses and visitors. A regenerated town centre in Harlow will provide attractive shopping, employment and wider leisure opportunities

The key issues which will affect the success of the regeneration of the centre include

- Quality of business space
- Transport
- Meeting people's aspirations.

There is strong evidence to support the regeneration of the town centre

The regeneration of the town centre is not just about direct delivery of jobs, homes and shops etc; but also catalytic effect of attracting people to live and work in Harlow in the new and existing homes. A more attractive town centre aligned with substantial housing growth will provide somewhere cheaper and more attractive for people to potentially move in from Epping Forest and Uttlesford. A key aim of the Local Investment Plan is to make it more desirable to live in Harlow. By increasing the self containment of the town this will also reduce congestion both in Harlow and the wider sub-region. If this can be achieved it is envisaged that the housing offer can then be improved with more attractive higher end market housing becoming available over time.

It has been identified that improving the night time economy will also be a priority and make a significant difference to attractiveness of area to existing and potential residents.

The northern part of Harlow Town Centre suffers from large numbers of empty units, is of tired appearance with dated retail units and poor quality public realm, a very limited evening economy, a significantly diminished market offer and a fear of crime. An ongoing project will provide a much improved environment in this area of the town centre, with a greater variety of retail and leisure facilities which will be of benefit not only to the existing community, but also to the residents of the wider area including Epping Forest and Uttlesford.

The overall objectives for this project are:

- To improve and increase Harlow's retail offer ensuring the town centre becomes a regional centre that incorporates high quality retail including a major department store
- To improve the culture and leisure facilities within the town centre including the provision of a new library, a theatre/multi-purpose entertainment space and other leisure activities, complemented by bars, cafes & restaurants that help sustain an evening economy.
- To regenerate and connect the market square into the rest of the town centre, including high quality public realm and excellent linkages.
- To include a high quality residential development with a diversity of tenures
- To achieve a balanced transport and parking solution that creates a more positive streetscape, encourages public transport use and is safe and accessible for pedestrians, breaking the collar of the ring road.

It is recognised that the success of the scheme will depend on the mix of the offer and that the economic climate will have an impact on the scheme.

4.2.2 Priority Estates Projects

The Priority Estates programme was established in 2007, initially in response to concerns about the condition of housing, which in many cases has been designed to have a short life. The priority estates are:

- Aylets Field, Copshall Close and The Briars
- Barley Croft and Lower Meadow
- Northbrooks.

In late 2008 the programme was broadened to recognize the importance of taking a wide ranging approach to regenerating the estates by improving the quality of housing, the built environment and open spaces. The challenges facing the estates fall into three categories:

- Layout of streets, homes and open spaces
- Structural condition of the buildings
- Socio-economic deprivation.

The focus throughout 2009 was on gathering factual information about and professional assessments of the estates, in particular the condition of stock, the suitability of layouts, the cost of future maintenance and repair, and the state of the housing market in those neighbourhoods. In the first half of 2010, the emphasis shifted to community engagement and consultation, with a workshop for members and a series of consultation events with residents from the six estates.

A dedicated Priority Estates officer is now in post, and newsletters are now being issued quarterly to keep residents informed of developments on the project. Through that engagement with Members and the community the following separate vision for the Priority Estates has been confirmed:

“To create successful, desirable neighbourhoods which engender prosperity and an enhanced standard of living, of which current and future communities can be proud”.

This vision is underpinned by six core principles:

- Balanced and mixed neighbourhoods providing places of choice for a range of ages and incomes.
- Well designed layouts with good communal and public spaces that retain the best of Gibberd's philosophy, but also reflect changes in lifestyles.
- Good quality of green space in terms of views, accessibility and security.
- Provide sustainable dwellings that are economic to run in terms of energy, waste and long term maintenance
- To enable lasting improvements to community facilities, education and well being through the development of partnerships.
- Appropriately connected and accessible neighbourhoods.

The priority now is to take the information gathered from surveys and studies, from consultation and community engagement, and from other data sources such as the Indices of Multiple Deprivation, and to use it to make recommendations about how best to deliver the agreed vision. This will enable the Council to make decisions in principle about the future of the estates, thus providing residents with much greater certainty about what is likely to happen in future.

To this end EC Harris, a built asset consultancy, have been commissioned to prepare an options appraisal, and make recommendations for action on each estate. They will:

- Test the completeness of the data and highlight any key considerations that could have fundamental implications on the planning and delivery of the project, and also identify any gaps in information or knowledge that should be filled to enable a robust and effective assessment of the capacity to deliver the Priority Estates
- Look at examples of how other Local Authorities have tackled similar issues, and to look at examples of best practice
- Identify a range of possible solutions and options, including refurbishment, improvement and comprehensive redevelopment
- Consider the financial implications of these and
- Make recommendations as to the way forward.

EC Harris has also been asked to ensure that their recommendations are compatible with the delivering rooms of a 'liveable' size. Officers are considering how this might best be defined – one option might be to adopt the HCA standards for affordable housing for all tenure types.

The work above was completed with a final report being received from consultants by October 2010.

Following completion of this independent report, officers will brief residents on the findings and recommendations for the regeneration of the Priority Estates, before bringing both the recommendations, and residents' reactions to them, to Council in December 2010. These recommendations are:

- The Briars, Cophalls Close & Aylets Field – redevelopment of the estates. An architect or similar specialist will be appointed to work with residents to write a development brief.
- Lower Meadow & Barley Croft - a programme of retrofit, reconfiguration of open spaces and garages and some new build. An architect or similar specialist will be appointed to work with residents to write a development brief
- Northbrooks – Further work be undertaken to establish a master plan for the estate that can be implemented when financially viable

4.2.3 Renewed neighbourhoods and neighbourhood centres

Harlow's original Masterplan provided for a town comprising of a series of neighbourhoods with housing, leisure and green spaces, community facilities, education, health, neighbourhood retail centres and hatches. The town has evolved and aged, and the way communities live has changed. Some areas of the town are faring and functioning better than others but require regeneration.

Harlow will take a fresh look at its neighbourhoods, and of what a modern neighbourhood needs to be successful. It will develop neighbourhood programmes of activity for identified areas to address social, economic and physical regeneration needs.

4.3 Decent Homes

4.3.1 Background to the Decent Homes Standard

In July 2000 the previous Government announced additional resources for housing, especially social housing. As part of its desire to link increased spending to better outcomes, the Government established a target to:

“Ensure that all social housing meets standards of decency by 2010, by reducing the number of households living in social housing that does not meet these standards by a third between 2001 and 2004 with most of the improvement taking place in the most deprived local authority areas.”

The Government's standard for public sector housing called the Decent Homes Standard states that a property must:-

- Not have any category 1 hazards as defined by the Housing Health and Safety Rating System
- Be in a reasonable state of repair
- Have reasonably modern facilities and services
- Provide a reasonable degree of thermal comfort.

The Coalition Government made £2bn available for Local Authorities to bid for in order to meet the decent homes standard in November 2010. Harlow is the only West Essex authority to have made a bid from this funding pot.

4.3.2 Decent Homes - Harlow

On 1st February 2007, responsibility for the delivery of the Council's repairs and maintenance programmes was transferred to the Joint Venture Partnership (Kier Harlow Ltd).

In previous years performance against the Decent Homes Standard was good and figures for non-decent homes were reducing. In the past, work to Harlow's housing stock was confined mainly to the external fabric of the properties (e.g.: roof recovering; window replacement; door replacement; structural repairs). The Decent Homes Standard changed the emphasis to key elements of the property and also the internal condition of the property.

In June 2005 it was reported to the Housing Committee that expenditure on Decent Homes would need to be £99.8m over the following 5 years to achieve the Decent Homes Standard, with £60.8m being funded directly from the capital programme and

the remainder being funded by revenue. Following this report funds were identified for other priorities and performance against decent homes slipped.

By March 2009 it was reported to Committee that the current non-decency level was 10.85% of the overall council housing stock. However, based on the stock data available, it is estimated that at quarter one 2010/11, non-decency had risen to approximately 18%.

Since June 2008, the Council has been informing the Government Office for the Eastern Region that the Council has reprioritised its Decent Homes target in line with its Regeneration Strategy and Local Plans and Strategies, Corporate Priorities and the Medium Term Financial Strategy. Changes in the financial situation of the Council, the reduction in Right to Buy sales and the reduction in other estimated property disposals have all had an effect on the Council's ability to fully fund the Capital programme to the levels required. This has also put added pressure on reducing revenue and capital budgets as more properties are being maintained than had originally been budgeted for.

A lack of capital investment also places more pressure on revenue budgets, and responsive repairs volumes will rise as a result of the lack of investment. Currently there is an annual deficit of £4,000,000 between need and resources and this will also affect the Decent Homes delivery.

Since 2006, no stock condition surveys have been carried out, other than on the Priority Estates, due to reductions in the budgets. In 2010/11, £50,000 has been allocated for stock condition surveys.

A project is under way to introduce a new, fully supported stock condition database that will provide accurate data on the condition of our housing stock. This will go live by the end of the financial year.

The agreed priorities of the revised Housing Asset Management Strategy are to:-

- Deliver Decent Homes
- Improve energy efficiency and reduce the carbon footprint of Council dwellings
- Target works to priority estates
- Undertake a stock condition survey and review of sheltered housing.

A visual survey is currently being carried on the properties from years 6-10 of the stock condition survey to re- assess the elements identified as having failed the Decent Homes Standard.

To monitor this and to ensure work is targeted accurately, it is essential that stock condition surveys are carried out annually to 20% of our housing stock, and that the new database is brought online as quickly as possible. An action plan to deliver decent homes by 2015 is now in place.

4.3.3 Decent Homes – Epping Forest

Epping Forest undertook its stock condition survey in 2000, just prior to the announcement of the Decent Homes Standard. The survey data were based on a cloned survey whereby 20% of the stock was surveyed internally and 100% externally. This meant that the database had to be analysed carefully and then validated to establish the number of currently and potentially non decent homes.

The exercise revealed a total number of 1,627 homes which were non decent, which equated to 22% of all the Council's housing stock. In addition, if the Council were not to undertake any further investment in the stock that number would have increased to

3,797 (54%) by the year 2010. There were therefore 2,170 properties that were potentially non-decent in addition to those currently non decent.

The key strategy which was employed was to look at where properties were failing and then only undertake work that was absolutely necessary to ensure that the Council met the Decent Homes Standard. For example, where properties fail on three or more categories under the “Reasonably Modern Facilities” heading, then just one category of work was addressed so that it was no longer non decent (since it had less than three failures).

Using this approach, as of 2001 it was estimated that a total of £14 million was required to tackle non-decent homes by 2010, which excluded the resources necessary to prevent properties becoming non-decent. This also excluded other improvements the Council wished to continue funding such as door entry security, estate enhancements, off street parking, estate regeneration, digital TV etc

Since 2001, one area which not only required significant investment, but also needed a whole new programme to prevent homes from becoming non-decent, was the replacement of kitchens and bathrooms under the ‘Reasonably Modern Facilities’ category. Since 2001, the Council invested £6.7 million to improve the quality and layout of bathrooms and kitchens.

To tackle the backlog, the Council trained its own Housing Assets surveyors and began collecting stock condition data for each of its properties. The on-going stock condition surveys informed annual programmes of work, which were then focused on meeting Decent Homes. The database has subsequently been updated each year to include work undertaken as and when contracts are completed.

The Council completed its Decent Homes Programme by eliminating all non-decent homes in May 2010, which was 7-months ahead of the Government target of the end of December 2010. Within the HRA Business Plan, there is a 30-year programme for planned maintenance to the Council’s housing stock in place, which is focused on making sure all potentially non-decent homes are improved, thus making sure all homes are Decent. Based on the investment needed, the Council can continue to maintain its housing stock and meet the Decent Homes standard until around 2037/38 (28 years).

4.3.4 Decent Homes – Uttlesford District Council

As at 31 March 2010 of the 2872 Council owned homes, 28 failed the Decent Homes Standard. This equates to 0.97% of the stock. These failures are mainly due to tenants’ refusal to have certain improvement works carried out.

Whilst the Council has already nearly met the target in advance of the Government’s target date of 2010 this does not mean that the stock does not need further work - it is estimated that between 4% and 5% of properties per annum become non-decent and these require investment.

The introduction of the Decent Homes Standard caused the Council to re-evaluate its strategy so that a balance could be struck between meeting the Government’s target and completing works identified in existing planned maintenance programmes. Spending priorities were identified and an investment programme tied to broad maintenance headings aligned to Decent Homes is now in place for the next 5 years.

5.0 Delivering Affordable Housing

5.1 Overview

One of the pressing reasons for producing this Local Investment Plan is to assess and understand the need for additional affordable housing within West Essex, and then to plan the most effective way of maximising its delivery.

There is a desperate shortage of affordable housing across West Essex, but synergy can result from the three councils planning and working together, in partnership with the Homes and Communities Agency and Registered Providers.

This section of the Local Investment Plan:

- Summarises the current assessment of the housing market and housing need across West Essex
- Sets out the aims and objectives of the three Councils for affordable housing provision within West Essex, together with some specific objectives for individual councils

A programme of affordable housing developments for all three Councils, together with an associated prioritisation of grant funding requirements from the HCA is set out in Section 6 of the document.

Housing Officers from the three Councils have worked together to formulate a common aims and objectives for affordable housing provision in West Essex, based on their Housing Strategies and the outcome of the recently-completed Strategic Housing Market Assessment which includes coverage of the Epping Forest, Harlow and Uttlesford Districts.

In relation to the housing market the common aim is 'to understand West Essex's housing market and to identify the amount of housing necessary to accommodate the population of each District, at appropriate minimum standards and of suitable size, type and tenure'

In addition the following common objectives have been agreed:

- Achieve a deeper understanding of the housing market in each District and across West Essex, in order to establish the level of need and demand for housing in each District and West Essex
- Establish the overall proportions of households that are likely to require market or affordable housing, now and in the future
- Develop a robust and credible evidence base to inform the planning process at regional (if appropriate), sub regional and local levels.

5.2 The Housing Market and Assessment of Housing Need Within West Essex

5.2.1 Housing Completions and Outlook

Data on yearly completion rates for West Essex since 2001/02 are shown in figure x.

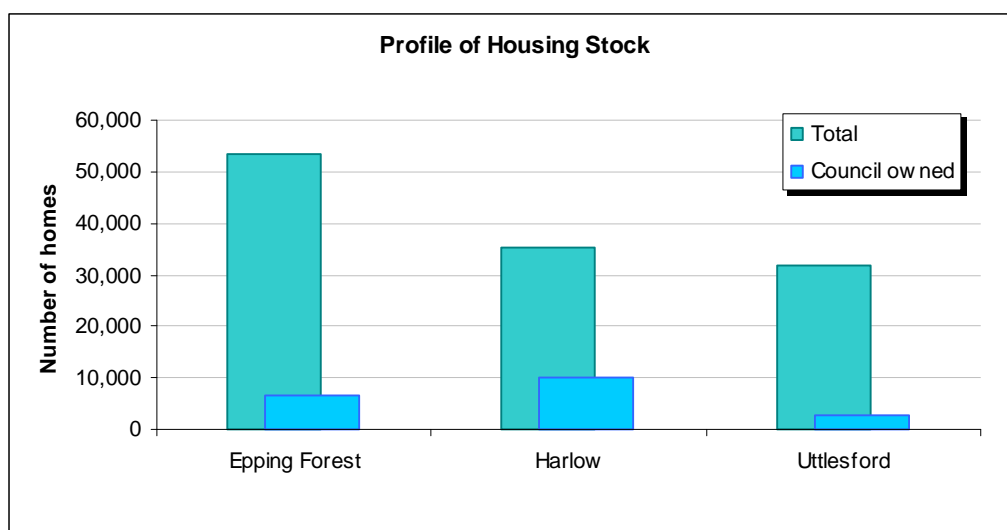
The West Essex area continues to be attractive to builders and developers, and although in recent years there has been a slowing in the completion rate, the situation seems to be slowly improving.

Net new housing units completed	
Financial year	
2001/02	357
2002/03	451
2003/04	329
2004/05	454
2005/06	816
2006/07	486
2007/08	309
2008/09	559
2009/10	375
Total	4136

The former East of England Plan target for the M11 Corridor was for 27,500 new homes by 2021. Of these, 16,000 were assigned for Harlow, 8,000 for Uttlesford and 3,500 for Epping Forest. (Note some of Harlow’s allocation was required to fall in neighbouring authorities, namely Epping Forest and East Herts).

5.2.2 Housing Need across West Essex

Within West Essex, there are 120,455 homes, of which 16% are council owned, 80% are within the private sector and 4% are owned by housing associations.



Harlow has 35,315 homes – of which 28% are Council-owned and a further 5% RSL-owned. This level of Council ownership is equal highest in the East of England. It should also be noted that a further third of the town’s housing stock are ex-Council properties that are now in owner-occupation.

Epping Forest has around 53,500 homes in the District, of which 87.5% are within the private sector, 12% are owned by the Council and around 3% are owned by housing associations.

In Uttlesford, there are around 31,600 homes in the District, of which 28,700 are within the private sector, 9% are owned by the Council and approximately 3% are owned by housing associations.

West Essex is within the London Commuter Belt (LCB) Sub Region for housing purposes. Six Districts of the Sub Region, joined to form the London Commuter Belt (East)/M11 Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) area. SHMAs do not provide definitive estimates of housing need, demand and market conditions. However, they do provide valuable insights into how housing markets operate, both now and in the future. Opinion Research Services (ORS) was commissioned to undertake a comprehensive and integrated SHMA. The other Districts in the SHMA area are Brentwood, Broxbourne and East Herts. The research used secondary data from sources such as the UK Census, the former Housing Corporation, HM Land Registry and the Office for National Statistics, along with a qualitative consultation programme with a wide range of stakeholders. The Key Findings of the (SHMA), relevant to this Local Investment Plan are:

The key factors that characterise the SHMA area:

- Its proximity to London;
- Its house prices;
- The diversity of the area that appeals to both residents and migrant households.

Between 2001 and 2006, the population of the area rose by 8.5% and the 2001 Census states that 5.5% of households in the SHMA area are overcrowded. It is estimated that around 16,700 households are considered to be 'unsuitably housed' in West Essex area, broken down as follows:

Epping Forest - 7,100 households
Harlow - 6,300 households
Uttlesford - 3,300 households

This term is used to encompass households that:

- are homeless or have insecure tenure
- are 'mismatched' to the dwelling they live in
- are living in dwellings that lack amenities or are in a poor condition
- have social needs that can only be resolved through a move.

Some unsuitably-housed households may choose to move elsewhere, but not all unsuitable housing problems require a move from the householder's current home. For example, a problem may be resolved by extending or repairing the home, or – where overcrowding exists – one or more member(s) of the household may be able to move out of the property. Where such solutions could not be applied, due to affordability or other reasons, a household is considered to be in 'housing need' (a much rarer event than being unsuitably housed). The draft SHMA estimates that, across the SHMA area there are 4,800 households in housing need, and 2,450 (51%) of these are West Essex residents, as follows:

Epping Forest - 1300 households

Harlow - 750 households
Uttlesford - 400 households

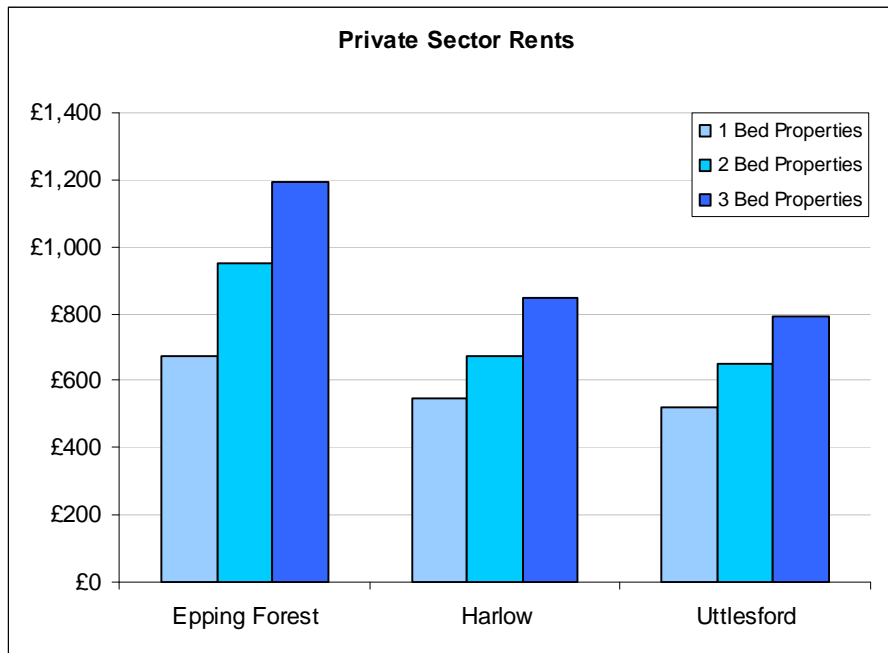
5.2.3 The Local Housing Markets

Local market factors can have a significant bearing on future housing demand and/or the sustainability of current rent structures. Indeed, the Council's future rent levels under the Government's proposed rent reforms are affected by property values. Property prices have significantly fluctuated in past years and their future is uncertain given the unstable economy. Figure shows house prices across West Essex, as at March 2010



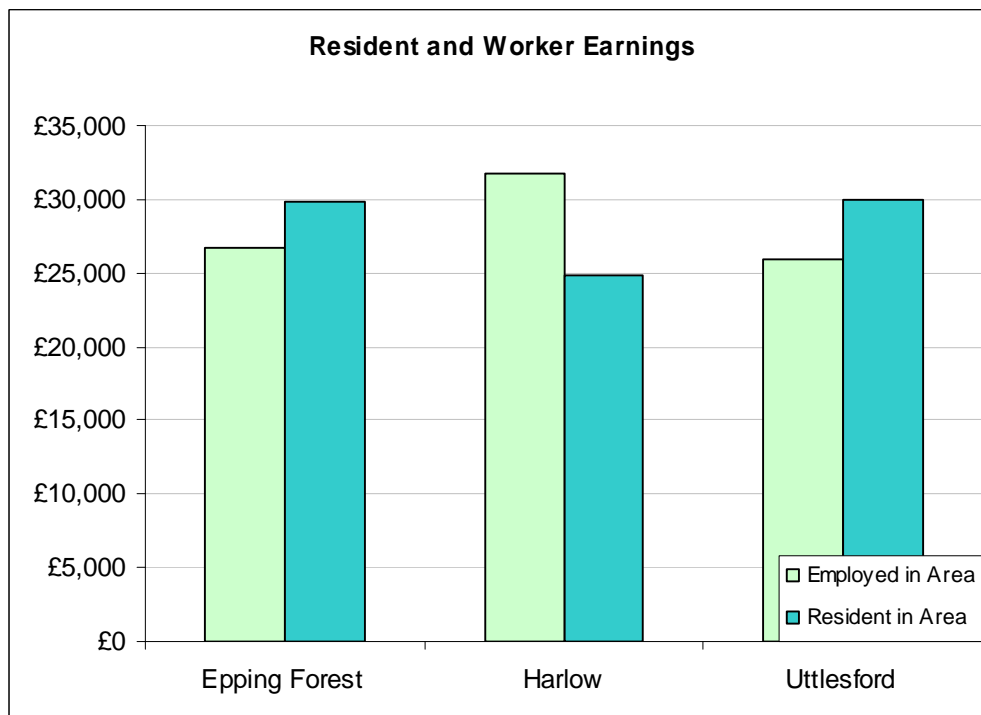
Source: Hometrack

Set out below are the average monthly private sector rents across the three Districts at March 2010.



Source: Hometrack

The table below shows the average earnings of those who work in each District compared to those both live and work in each District. Average house price to annual earnings ratio range from 8:1 in Harlow to 13:1 in Epping



Source: ASHE

5.2.4 The Councils' Housing Registers

The numbers of applicants on the Housing Registers of West Essex Councils confirm the levels of households seeking social housing in area. The table below illustrates the total level of people seeking council assistance over the past two years, based on

the numbers registered on the three Housing Registers. Between 2009 and 2010, the overall housing figure in West Essex decreased by 41%. This statistic is distorted however; as a review of the Housing Register by Harlow Council during late 2009 has seen a decrease in demand of nearly 4,000 caseloads. Demand in Uttlesford has fallen by 12% to 1,020 and Epping Forest has seen an 8% increase in demand in the past year to 5,008.

Housing Registers of West Essex Councils – March 2010

	Mar-10	Mar-09	Difference (09-10)	
			+/-	%
Epping Forest	5008	4611	+397	+8%
Harlow	2421	6165	-3744	-60%
Uttlesford	1020	1146	+125	-12%
Total	8449	11922	-3473	-41%

5.2.5 Social Housing Turnover

This table compares turnover of Housing Register, homeless and other applicants for vacancies in the sub-region's Councils' housing stock over the last two years.

	2008/09	2009/10
Housing Register (Inc Homeless)	1077	1322
Mutual Exchanges	239	281
TOTAL	1316	1603

In addition, 321 applicants were nominated and accepted in 2009/10 for vacancies in stock owned by Housing Associations, compared with 261 in 2008/9. All three Councils operate a Choice Based Lettings Scheme. Homeseekers on the Housing Registers can search for available vacant council properties across one or more Districts and for housing association properties where the Councils have 'nomination rights'. Vacant properties are advertised, and applicants can 'express an interest' in them (also known as bidding).

Tenants under-occupying their properties are encouraged to consider a mutual exchange. A maximum of only one spare bedroom is allowed as a result of any mutual exchange between Council and RSL tenancies.

All three West Essex Districts operate policies to incentivise under-occupying residents to move to smaller suitable properties offering both financial payments, practical assistance with moving and additional priority points within transfer schemes.

The authorities also take a pro active approach to bringing back into use empty properties within the Districts and will work with partner RSLs in tackling this issue with the assistance of the recently announced £100m funding set aside in the Homes and Communities Agency budget.

5.2.6 Homelessness

The three West Essex Councils' aim is:

“To prevent homelessness and to respond to homelessness applications in accordance with statutory requirements, efficiently, effectively and fairly, helping homeless people to secure appropriate accommodation and keeping the use of bed and breakfast accommodation to a minimum.”

Interim and temporary accommodation includes Bed and Breakfast (B&B) accommodation for households without children, and both self contained flats and rooms in hostels (where housing related support is provided) for households with and without children. The Councils aim to minimise the use of B&B accommodation, and seek to ensure that only single people are accommodated in B&B. All three Councils have successfully met the Government’s target to reduce the numbers of households placed in temporary accommodation by April 2010. This has been achieved by incorporating effective prevention measures and significantly reducing the numbers of households occupying temporary accommodation.

5.3 New Affordable Housing Provision

5.3.1 Provision of Affordable Housing and Tenure Mix

In relation to new affordable housing provision the common aim is to maximise and increase the amount of good quality affordable housing in West Essex, in the form of social rented housing and low cost home ownership”. The Government will be introducing a new flexible tenure in 2011 which will attract an ‘Affordable Rent’ set at up to 80% of local market rents. The three Districts will work closely with Registered Providers to set objectives around the use of this new tenure.

In addition the following common objectives have been agreed:

- a) Work with Registered Providers and developers to increase the number of affordable homes within West Essex;
- b) Seek to achieve the provision of 40% affordable housing (33% in Harlow) on large housing developments (over 0.5Ha or 15 properties) in urban areas through the use of agreements under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, with the affordable housing mix on such sites reflecting the private housing mix;
- c) In exceptional circumstances, where on-site affordable housing provision is inappropriate, seek either:
 - (i) the off-site provision of affordable housing, equivalent to the percentage of affordable housing that would normally be required to be provided on-site and at the off-site location combined; and /or
 - (ii) the provision of an appropriate financial contribution, equivalent to the amount of subsidy the developer would have needed to contribute to the affordable housing, if it was provided on-site;
- d) Seek an appropriate mix of social-rented housing and low cost home ownership for the affordable housing provision on Section 106 sites;
- e) In order for them to be affordable, ensure that – for shared ownership schemes:

- I. The average initial equity share sold to shared owners across all the shared ownership homes within any development is no more than 35%;
 - II. Shared owners are able to purchase a minimum initial equity share of 25% and a maximum initial equity share of 50% (75% in Uttlesford) for shared ownership schemes;
 - III. Shared owners are able to purchase additional equity shares (staircase) up to full 100% ownership, except for rural housing schemes for which a maximum of 80% equity can be purchased under current Homes and Communities Agency policy; and
 - IV. Shared owners pay an initial rent of no more 2.75% (2.5% in Epping Forest) of the unsold equity per annum, with subsequent rent increases determined in accordance with the relevant housing association's rent setting policy;
- f) Generally, seek up to 30% in Uttlesford and Epping Forest (apart from Green Belt sites) – and no less than 50% in Harlow – of the total affordable housing provided on Section 106 sites as shared ownership, to assist first time buyers to gain access to home ownership; and
- g) Seek to ensure that affordable homes meet the Homes and Communities Agency's Design and Quality Standard, and at least Level 3, but preferably Level 4, of the Code for Sustainable Homes.

The following Specific Objectives have been agreed for Epping Forest:

- a) In exceptional circumstances, where on-site affordable housing provision is inappropriate, seek the off-site provision of affordable housing within Epping Forest, equivalent to at least 40% of the combined total number of properties developed on-site and off-site provision, or the provision of a financial contribution equivalent to the amount of subsidy the developer would have needed to contribute to the affordable housing, if it was provided on-site;
- b) Generally, seek up to 40% of the total affordable housing provided in Epping Forest on Section 106 sites in the Green Belt as shared ownership, to assist first time buyers to gain access to home ownership; and

On an exceptional basis, consider planning applications for developments on land within Epping Forest, currently in the Metropolitan Green Belt, for which planning permission would not normally be granted, if they provide high levels of affordable housing (at least 80%) and are otherwise considered suitable for residential development.

The following Specific Objective has been agreed for Harlow:

In exceptional circumstances, where on-site affordable housing provision is inappropriate, the Council may require the contribution to be greater than the cost of providing affordable housing on site to reflect the additional costs incurred in providing affordable housing elsewhere. The calculation of any commuted sums will be based upon 75% of the current local market costs of acquiring properties of the required size and type, reflecting the broad findings of the current housing requirements.

The following Specific Objective has been agreed for Uttlesford:

In exceptional circumstances, where the provision of 40% affordable housing on a site is proved unviable, other options will be considered. In such circumstances, the Council may accept a commuted sum but this, and the amount to be paid, would have to be agreed in each case.

5.3.2 New Supported Housing Provision for Older & Other Vulnerable People

In relation to new supported housing provision for older & other vulnerable people the common aim is to help vulnerable people with special housing needs to live in homes suitable for their needs, with appropriate levels of support.”

In addition the following Common Objectives have been agreed:

- a) Work with other statutory and voluntary agencies to enable people with special housing needs to live in homes suitable for their needs, with appropriate levels of support;
- b) Work with the Essex Supporting People Team to ensure that supported housing and floating support services are provided to those in most need at an economic cost; and
- c) Seek the provision of the following amounts of “lifetime homes” within new developments in the three Districts:

Epping Forest - At least 10% of homes on sites in excess of 10 homes
Harlow - At least 5 homes, or 25% of homes
Uttlesford - All homes.

In addition the following specific objective has been agreed for Uttlesford:

In new housing developments of between 10 and 20 units, at least one dwelling should be built to wheelchair accessible standards and, in developments of 20 units and over, at least 5% should be built to wheelchair accessible standards.

5.3.3 Affordable Housing in Rural Areas (Epping Forest and Uttlesford only)

In relation to Affordable Housing in Rural Areas in Epping Forest and Uttlesford the common aim is to increase the amount of affordable homes within rural areas, in order to help meet the housing needs of local people, whilst safeguarding the essential qualities of rural life”

In addition the following Common Objectives have been agreed:

- a) Work with parish councils to assess the housing needs of local people living in rural areas and to identify sites suitable for the provision of affordable housing schemes; and
- b) Increase the amount of affordable housing in rural areas, by granting planning permission for small scale affordable housing schemes on appropriate sites within the Green Belt, adjacent to rural settlements, as an exception to normal planning policy, where there is a demonstrable local housing need, subject to:

- 100% of the dwellings being affordable and provided through a Registered Social Landlord
- The development meeting a particular local need that cannot be met in any other way
- The development being of a scale appropriate to the size, facilities and character of the settlement; and the site adjoining the settlement.

In addition the following specific objective specific objective has been agreed for Epping Forest:

In villages with a population of less than 3,000 people within Epping Forest, on new developments comprising;

- (a) two or more dwellings on greenfield sites – seek the provision of 50% of the homes as affordable housing; and
- (b) three or more dwellings on previously-developed land – seek the provision of at least 33% of the homes as affordable housing.

5.3.4 Gypsies and Travellers

Recent Government announcements have suggested that future allocation and development of pitches for Gypsies and Travellers is likely to be encouraged through the Government's proposed new home bonus which is expected enable Local Authorities to receive additional funding equivalent to their local Council tax rates for up to 6 years. Of the three Districts, Epping Forest has experienced significant recent activity in relation to the provision of Gypsy and Traveller sites.

Epping Forest

Gypsy and Travellers pitches are considered an "inappropriate" use of land in the Green Belt, which only adds to the difficulties of identifying potentially suitable sites. Two recent separate appeal decisions in Epping Forest District concluded that sites in the Green Belt were the only feasible options because of land values and other reasons.

The biannual caravan counts from about 2004 to 2007 consistently showed that about 25% of caravans were on unauthorised sites. The Labour Government concluded that this was such a high figure that urgent action was needed to address the problem. In October 2007 the Council was served with a Direction to prepare a separate Development Planning Document (DPD) on Gypsy and Traveller pitch provision ahead of the Core Strategy, with submission of the draft DPD timetabled for October 2009.

A public consultation exercise on potential sites was held from November 2008 to February 2009. There was a very significant negative response from the settled community. The quantity and complexity of the replies quickly made it apparent that the original timetable was quite unrealistic, and the Council entered into discussions with the Government Office about a more realistic timescale in July 2009. No conclusions had been reached by the time of the General Election in May 2010.

The travelling community chose to respond to the consultation in a different way – by submitting planning applications for sites which were either long-tolerated, had temporary permissions, or were otherwise unauthorised. The number of such

applications submitted in previous years had consistently been much lower, so the Council concludes that the consultation exercise (which included the use of specialist consultants, the preparation of DPDs explaining how to submit planning applications, and the process for preparing the DPD, and the staging of an exhibition solely for the local travelling community) was particularly successful in reaching the target community. The applications have been dealt with in accordance with current Local Plan policies – some have been granted, some refused and some granted on appeal. A conscious effort has also been made to contact some Traveller families individually to encourage the submission of applications, and to ask relevant planning agents to deal with some other long-standing unauthorised sites.

The overall result has been that, at July 2010, there were 103 pitches (comprising 127 caravans) with permanent permission (16 of those (pitches and caravans) are on a County Council managed site – the rest are privately owned and run), 16 pitches (36 caravans) with temporary permission, and at least 6 caravans which are unauthorised.

There are current applications and some in the pipeline for some of the temporary and unauthorised sites, so these figures may yet change. If all the outstanding/anticipated applications were granted, the Council would be very close to the 2016 target for authorised pitches in the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment. In July 2010, the coalition Government revoked the Direction so the Council has ceased further work on the preparation of a separate DPD. The issue will be included in the Core Strategy and relevant subsequent DPDs.

Harlow

In 2008 it was identified that all 36 official pitches in Harlow were fully occupied, but also that there was no use of unofficial pitches, suggesting that current need is being met. The report also identified that the formation of new family units and the need to tackle some overcrowding of existing pitches would lead to a requirement of an additional 12.7 pitches in the period to 2013. It is believed that this requirement can be accommodated within the two official sites at Fernhill and Elizabeth Way.

Uttlesford

In 2010, a total of 63 gypsy and traveller caravans were present in Uttlesford. It is estimated that 59 of these were on authorised sites with planning permission. 2 were recorded as on 'unauthorised gypsy owned land without planning permission and not tolerated' and 2 were on tolerated sites without planning permission.

6.0 Sustainability and Quality

The West Essex LIP is committed to the highest quality design and sustainability levels.

New affordable homes will be built to at least the minimum standards required to attract government funding currently set at the Code for Sustainable Homes level 3 rising to Code 6 by 2016.

Section 3 – Prioritisation and Outputs

7.0 Overview of the West Essex approach to Prioritisation

This section gives details of the scheduled programmes, required programmes and projects and their prioritisation based on their deliverability and agreement between the three Districts.

7.1 Prioritisation

Set out below are the priority areas for investment that have emerged from the evidence set out in the West Essex Local Investment Plan. The individual areas are set out as either themes i.e affordable housing) or by geographical location (i.e Harlow Town Centre) or a combination of both (i.e. (Uttlesford Decent Homes)

They have been prioritised in terms of both importance and timescale deliverability. These judgements have been made collectively by the West Essex LIP Steering group taking into account the following criteria:

- Existing prioritisation as agreed by individual Councils
- Deliverability and viability
- Funding availability
- Potential contribution to overall LIP vision.

Further details of each area are set out in section 7.2 below.

	Immediate – Now – 2 years	Medium term - 3 – 5 years	Longer term 5 years plus
Priority 1 *	Affordable Housing (Epping Forest & Uttlesford) Harlow Town Centre Regeneration Harlow Housing Growth		M11 Junction 7A
Priority 1	Loughton Broadway Regeneration Affordable Housing (Harlow) Harlow Decent Homes A414 road improvements	Harlow Priority Estates Project (Delivery) West Anglia main line railway upgrade Epping St John's Regeneration	Uttlesford Decent Homes Epping Forest Decent Homes
Priority 2	Harlow Neighbourhood Centre Regeneration	Supported Housing Harlow Town station area development Uttlesford Gypsies and Travellers site provision Harlow Gypsies and Travellers sites provision	Epping Forest Gypsies and Travellers sites provision

7.2 Growth and Regeneration projects

Growth project outputs in each District prioritised by as set out in 7.1

Issue	Partners	Project / scheme	Priority	HCA input sought				Progress/ Comments
				Investment ¹	Advice	Influencing	Property rights	
Harlow								
Town Centre Regeneration		Harlow Town Centre North	H*	ü Now - 2016	ü Now - 2016		? 2010 onwards	Top priority for HCA investment support. Would welcome advice on structure of delivery vehicle, and potentially on further value engineering. May require some covenant release.
Estate Regeneration		Priority Estates	H*	ü 2012 - 2018	ü Now – 2018?		? 2010 onwards	May suggest slight reshaping of green spaces and/or moving community facilities, which would require HCA covenant release.
Housing Growth		Ram Gorse	H	ü			ü 2010	Scheme contingent on transfer of HCA 'green wedge' land

¹ Excludes projects already allocated GAF3 funding

Issue	Partners	Project / scheme	Priority	HCA input sought				Progress/ Comments
				Investment ¹	Advice	Influencing	Property rights	
								to HDC for provision of new Rugby Club.
		Wych Elm redevelopment land	M	ü 2011/12 (for affordable element)			ü 2011/12?	HCA / HDC have jointly appointed agents to agree release of land to developer
		Harlow North	H					Up to 10,000 homes in conjunction with East Herts Council
Pitch Regeneration		As per Gateway scheme	H	ü 2010				Gateway scheme / pool receipts. The high priority reflects the fact that it is an already committed / publicised commitment that needs to be honoured
Town Park		Town Park Masterplan – HLF match funding	M	ü 2011			?	Offsetting clawback on sale Marshgate Farm (within Park) with equivalent grant to support

Issue	Partners	Project / scheme	Priority	HCA input sought				Progress/ Comments
				Investment ¹	Advice	Influencing	Property rights	
								Park regeneration. Covenant release?
Station regeneration		Implementation of emerging masterplan	M	?	?			
Neighbourhood Centres		Staple Tye Regeneration	H	?			ü 2010	Harlow Renaissance study underway. Possible investment in social housing elements? Release of covenant on Lister House Health Centre to allow redevelopment for housing / mixed use; health centre being replaced under GAF2
		Stow	M	? 2011 onwards			? 2011 onwards	3 land owners keen to redevelop area, as yet no clear master plan. Could have a significant number of home

Issue	Partners	Project / scheme	Priority	HCA input sought				Progress/ Comments
				Investment ¹	Advice	Influencing	Property rights	
								and business units built. May require buy out of private sector landowners keen to sell. May require covenant release s.t. detail of proposals
Sewage Treatment Capacity		Increase capacity at Rye Meads STP	H			ü		Environment Agency
		Pipework upgrades						Assumed developer funded
Epping Forest								
Loughton Broadway	Epping Forest District Council Essex County Council Stobarts Broadway Town Centre Partnership HCA	To provide a new supermarket, a sustainable mix of new residential housing (with higher proportions of affordable housing than usually required), a new bus interchange at	H	2011				An EFDC Officer Project Team is currently being established to take the project forward. Stobarts are in discussion with EFDC planning and estates officers about the provision of a new

Issue	Partners	Project / scheme	Priority	HCA input sought				Progress/ Comments
				Investment ¹	Advice	Influencing	Property rights	
		Debden Underground Station and environmental improvements						supermarket.
St John's Regeneration	Epping Forest District Council Essex County Council Epping Town Council Urban Practitioners HCA	To provide either a retail-led, leisure-led or combined retail/leisure regeneration scheme, together with the provision of new residential housing (including affordable housing) and other environmental improvements	H	2011				A draft Design and Development Brief is under consideration and a public consultation exercise on the options will be undertaken in early 2011.
Transport								
		J7A	H*			ü No w - ?		Need to lobby now to secure delivery by 2020
		A414-J7A Link Road	H					Longer term priority
		Southern Way / Second Avenue	H					Need to address problems with

Issue	Partners	Project / scheme	Priority	HCA input sought				Progress/ Comments
				Investment ¹	Advice	Influencing	Property rights	
								Southern Way to facilitate urban extensions to S and W. GAF funded study kicking off shortly.
		Crossing the Stort – Burnt Mill	M		?	?	?	To facilitate growth within Harlow. HCA own adjacent land.
		Crossing the Stort – Other North	M		?	?		To facilitate growth to north?
		Crossing the Stort – East	M		?	?		To facilitate growth to north?
		Crossing the Stort – Pinnacles	M		?	?		To facilitate growth to north and/or increased employment at pinnacles?
		Public transport improvements			?		ü	To ensure RFA commitment is honoured.

7.3 Affordable Housing – 2010 – 2015

7.3.1 Overview

Prior to the production of this Local Investment Plan, the three West Essex Councils have been working with land-owners, developers and housing associations to facilitate the provision of additional affordable housing, and will continue to do so over the period of the Local Investment Plan.

Generally, the proposed affordable housing provision is in the form of either social rented housing or shared ownership (sometimes referred to as low cost home ownership – LCHO). Social rented housing is generally offered to those housing applicants who have expressed an interest in a housing vacancy through the choice based lettings scheme, and have the highest assessed level of housing need - and have been waiting on the Housing Register the longest - compared to other applicants who have also expressed an interest.

Shared ownership is sometimes referred to as “part rent - part buy”, and enables first time buyers to join the property ladder when they would otherwise have insufficient income to purchase a property. A housing association owns the freehold of the property and provides a shared ownership lease to the housing applicant. The housing applicant purchases part of the equity (e.g. 25%) from the housing association through a mortgage and, possibly, savings, and then pays the housing association a rent for the equity remaining with the housing association – this is usually around 2.5%-2.75% of the value of the equity retained by the housing association per annum. Overall, the combined cost of the applicant’s mortgage and rent for a shared ownership property is far less than the cost of a full mortgage for the same property. The shared-owner can then purchase additional tranches of equity, usually up to 100% (in urban areas) - often referred to as “stair-casing”.

As set out above, the three Districts will need to take account of the new flexible tenure, ‘affordable rents’ and other social housing reform proposed by the Government and which is likely to be introduced in 2011

7.3.2 Schedules of Affordable Housing Sites

Set out below are the Schedules of Affordable Housing Sites for each District, and provides the following information for each site:

- A list of affordable housing sites in development, separated into:
 - Development schemes on-site;
 - Sites with both planning permission and grant from the HCA or other sources, but which have not yet started on-site;
 - Sites with planning permission, but grant is still required from the HCA or - other sources before the development can commence;
 - Sites with planning permission, that do not require any grant from the HCA or other sources; and
 - Sites without planning permission, but are under consideration by developers;
- The site location and name of the housing association (“registered provider”) undertaking the affordable housing (if decided);

- Whether the site is owned by the District Council, Essex County Council or a developer, or whether the site is privately-owned (usually prior to a sale to a developer);
- The actual or forecast number of affordable homes to be provided as social rented housing, or through shared ownership (LCHO)
- Whether the site is within a Designated Protected (Rural) Area, whereby certain requirements apply to shared ownership schemes and/or where a rural development is being provided through a “planning exceptions scheme”
- Whether the accommodation will provide “supported housing” (e.g. for older people, people with physical or learning disabilities or young parents). In these cases, appropriate levels of revenue funding from the Essex Supporting People Commissioning Body will also be required
- Whether or not grant from the HCA or other sources has already been allocated and, where it is still required, the amount of grant required to provide the proposed amounts of affordable housing with the proposed tenure
- Where grant from the HCA or other sources is still required, the relevant District Council’s ranked prioritisation of the site for funding
- The year in which the proposed development is expected to be completed, and the percentage of the total housing provided on the site that will be in the form of affordable housing.

In addition, the Schedules of Affordable Housing Sites also provide:

- A forecast of the amount of affordable housing (social rented and LCHO) that will be provided in later years through “windfall” sites. These are sites where new housing is not currently planned or known about, but subsequently come forward by developers who have identified a development potential for the site. The assessment is primarily based on historical data
- A summary of the anticipated affordable housing completions by year, including anticipated windfall sites
- An estimate of the total grant required from the HCA or other sources over the five-year period (excluding grant already allocated)
- The *average* amount of grant required each year for the proposed affordable housing developments in the District the five-year period.

7.3.3 Summary of Anticipated Affordable Housing Provision across West Essex

Page 51 provides a summary of anticipated affordable housing completions for the whole of West Essex, broken down by current site status (e.g. developments on site, developments with and without planning permission, with and without grant), together with a summary of the anticipated numbers of affordable housing completions for the next 5 years, including from windfall sites.

7.3.4 Current of the Schedules of Affordable Housing Sites and Funding Priorities

It is important to note that, whilst the aims and objectives for affordable housing provision within this Local Investment Plan are expected to be enduring over the life of Plan, the Schedules of Affordable Housing Sites are “working documents” that will be updated by the three Councils – in partnership with the HCA - on a bi-monthly basis, taking account of:

- New developments coming forward
- Developments that have been completed
- Outcomes of planning applications
- Negotiations with developers and housing associations
- New information coming forward from developers and housing associations undertaking the developments
- Grant allocations made by the HCA and other sources.

It should also be noted that as:

- Current developments progress and complete
- New developments come forward
- The status of sites change (e.g. receive planning permission).

each District Council’s ranked prioritisation of sites for funding is likely to change, to reflect the changing deliverability of each scheme.

Therefore, the following schedules should only be regarded as a “snap-shop in time”, based on the status and deliverability of sites at the time of the Local Investment Plan’s publication.

As can be seen from following Schedules, 2241 affordable housing completions are forecast across West Essex over the next 5 years, representing an average of 548 per annum;

**West Essex Joint Investment Plan
Schedule of Affordable Housing Sites**

EPPING FOREST

Funding Priority	Site	Registered Provider	Prev/Current Landowner	Rent	LCHO	Rural?	Supported Housing?	Grant Allocated	Grant Required	Completion Year	Afford Housing %	Comments
On-Site												
	Young Parent Scheme, Ongar	East Thames	Barretts	13	0		X	Y		2010/11	100%	Nominations to be shared with Brentwood BC and Harlow DC
	School Lane, Abbess Roding	Hastoe	Private	4	2	X		Y		2010/11	100%	Rural exceptions scheme
	Merlin Way, North Weald	Home	EFDC	20	7	X		Y		2010/11	40%	Must be completed by 31st March 2011 (to ensure Kickstart funding)
	Acres Avenue, Ongar	Estuary	EFDC	0	12			Y		2010/11	100%	Former EFDC land
	White Lodge, Waltham Abbey	Hastoe / Genesis	Private	57	38	X		Y		2010/11-2012/13	80%	Green Belt - To be completed in phases over three years
	Gt Stony (Zinc), Ongar	East Thames	Zinc	9	0		X	Y		2011/12	100%	For people with learning disabilities
	Meadow View, Station Approach, Ongar	East Thames	Barretts	2	4			Y		2011/12	12%	
	Eppinf Forest College (Phase 2)	Moat	Redrow	15	0			Y		2011/12	30%	
	Epping Forest College (Phase 2)	Home	Redrow	15	9			Y		2011/12	30%	
Total				135	72							
With Planning Permission and Grant - Not Yet Commenced												
Total				0	0							
With Planning Permission - Grant Required & Not Yet Commenced												
2	Jennikings Nursery, Manor Road	Moat	Private	37	17			TBA		2012/13	80%	Green Belt
3	Nursery Site, Manor Road, Chigwell	To be decided	Private	17	0			TBA		2012/13	80%	Green Belt
1	St. Johns School, Epping	L&Q	ECC	27	11					2013/14	25%	Higgins (developer) finalising legal agreements with Essex CC - School construction due Summer 2011
Total				81	28				£0			
With Planning Permission - No Grant Required & Not Yet Commenced												
Total				0	0							
No Planning Permission - Under Consideration												
4	Millfield, High Ongar	Hastoe	EFDC	4	0	X		TBA		2011/12	100%	EFDC-owned land - Proposed straw bales development
5	Merlin Way, North Weald	Home	EFDC	7	3	X		TBA		2011/12	100%	EFDC-owned land. To be considered by EFDC Cabinet in March 2011
6	Leader Lodge, North Weald	To be decided	EFDC	0	6	X		TBA		2011/12	100%	EFDC-owned building - Options currently being reviewed
7	Theydon Place, Epping	Moat	Private	29	19			TBA		2012/13	80%	Green Belt - all houses. Outline planning application received and under consideration
8	Knollys Nursery, Waltham Abbey	East Thames	Private	106	29		X (Partly)	TBA		2013/14	80%	To include 50-home Extra Care Scheme, 12-home wheelchair housing
9	St John's Regeneration, Epping	To be decided	ECC	77	33			TBA		2013/14	40%	Former ECC school site - Subject to proposed Development Brief (under consultation)
10	Broadway Regeneration, Loughton	To be decided	EFDC	54	36			TBA		2013/14	100%	Dev't Brief approved (Supp. Planning Guidance). On various EFDC land holdings
Total				277	126				£0			

Forecast of Affordable Properties Completed as a Result of Windfall Sites - Not Currently Identified				Summary of Completions by Year and Windfalls (Planned)		
	Rent	LCHO	Total	Planned	Windfall	Total
2010/11	0	0	0	2010/11	135	0
2011/12	0	0	0	2011/12	141	0
2012/13	70	30	100	2012/13	131	100
2013/14	70	30	100	2013/14	373	100
2014/15	70	30	100	2014/15	0	100
5-Year Total	210	90	300	5-Year Total	780	300

Total Grant Required - 5 Years	TBA
Average P/A over 5-Year Period	TBA

**West Essex Joint Investment Plan
Schedule of Affordable Housing Sites**

Harlow

Funding Priority	Site	Registered Provider	Prev/Current Landowner	Rent	LCHO	Rural?	Supported Housing?	Grant Allocated	Grant Required	Completion Year	Afford Housing	Comments
								(£000)	%			
On-Site												
	Joseph Rank House	Luminus	Luminus	40	12			Y		2011	40	159 units in total - grant already awarded for 122 units. Have assumed 159 tot AH
	Gateway 5th Avenue	Various	Barratt	19	18			Y		2011	or	
	Newhall s106 next 5 years assuming 150 unitstotal per year @ 20% affordable	to be decided	Private	15	15			N		2011	20	
	Total			74	45				0			
With Planning Permission and Grant - Not Yet Commenced												
	Old Harlow	Moat	Harlow council	3	9			y		2011/2012	33	GAF 2 Regen Site
	Clifton Hatch	Moat	Harlow Council	7	3			y		2011/2012	33	GAF 2 Regen Site
	Carters Mead	Moat	Harlow Council	5	6			y		2011/2012	33	GAF 2 Regen Site
	Prentice Place	Moat	Harlow Council	24				y		2012	33	GAF 2 Regen Site
	Total			39	18							
With Planning Permission - Grant Required & Not Yet Commenced												
3	Gateway Swimming Pools Site	to be decided	Croudace	11	11			n	TBA	2013	33	% affordable subject to variation
4	Newhall s106	to be decided	private	100	100				TBA	2015	20	
2	Gateway 5th Avenue	various	Barratt	38	37				TBA	2013	31	
	Total			149	148				£0			
With Planning Permission - No Grant Required & Not Yet Commenced												
	Total			0	0							
No Planning Permission - Under Consideration												
5	Yorkes	Moat	SAHP	5	3		possibly		TBA	2012	100	POD 3 site
7	Wych Elm	to be decided	Harlow & HCA	20	20				TBA	2014	33	
14	Latton Bush Centre	to be decided	Harlow Council	10	10				TBA	2015	33	
1	Priority Estates Project - 1st phase	to be decided	Harlow	150	150				TBA	2013	various	Regeneration Site - figure are estimates for first of many phases
12	Tyson's Gate	Moat	Private	6	6				TBA	2012	33	
8	Slacksbury Hatch	to be confirmed	Harlow Council	5					TBA	2012	100	Regeneration Site
9	Katherines Htch	to be confirmed	Harlow Council	5					TBA	2012	100	Regeneration Site
7	Newhall SAHP/POD	to be confirmed	Harlow Council	20	20				TBA	2011	33	
8	Manor Hatch	to be confirmed	Harlow Council	5					TBA	2013	100	Regeneration Site
10	Pollards Hatch	to be confirmed	Harlow Council	5					TBA	2013	100	Regeneration Site
14	Gilden Way Nursery	to be decided	Harlow Council	200	200				TBA	2015	33	
14	Stow Neighbourhood Centre	to be decided	Harlow Council	20	20				TBA	2014	33	Regeneration Site
13	Staple Tye Depot & Risdens	to be decided	Harlow Council	20	20				TBA	2013	33	Regeneration Site
11	Kingsmoor hse, Wissants, Maples Land & Milwads	to be decided	Harlow Council	20	20				TBA	2013	33	Regeneration Site
14	Berecroft current use = LD scheme	to be decided	Harlow Council	3	3				TBA	2013	33	
14	Rivermill Adult Education Centre	to be decided	Harlow council	5	5				TBA	2015	33	
14	Northbrooks House	to be decided	Essex CC	3	3				TBA	2014	33	
14	Westfield Schools Site	to be decided	Essex CC	3	3				TBA	2014	33	
14	Fern Hill Lane	to be decided	Harlow Council	66	66				TBA	2015	33	
14	Sherrards House	to be decided	Harlow Council	3	2				TBA	2015	33	Currently a TA unit
6	Town Centre North Resi	to be decided	Private	100	100				TBA	2015	33	Estimates
	Total			674	651				£0			

	Forecast of Affordable Properties Completed			Summary of Completions by Year		
	Rent	LCHO	Total	Planned	Windfall	Total
2010/11	0	0	0	170	0	170
2011/12	10	10	20	42	20	62
2012/13	10	10	20	120	20	140
2013/14	10	10	20	92	20	112
2014/15	10	10	20	567	20	587
5-Year Total	40	40	80	991	80	1071

Total Grant Required - 5 Years	TBA
Average P/A over 5-Year Period	TBA

**West Essex Joint Investment Plan
Schedule of Affordable Housing Sites**

Uttlesford

Funding Priority	Site	Registered Provider	Prev/Current Landowner	Rent	LCHO	Rural?	Supported Housing?	Grant Allocated	Grant Required	Completion Year	Afford Housing %	Comments
On-Site												
	Bell College (Lancaster House)	Hastoe	Ashwell	13	12	N	N	Y		2010/11	25/62	
	Holloway Crescent, Leaden Roding	East Thames / UDC	UDC	5	0	Y	N	N		2010/11	5/5	
	Coney Acre, Rickling	Flagship	UDC	3	0	Y	N	Y		2010/11	3/3	
	Waldgrooms, Dunmow	Flagship	UDC	6	0	N	N	Y		2010/11	6/6	
	Rochford Nurseries, Stansted (Blake Mews)	Moat	Croudace	6	6	N	N	N		2010/11	12/	
	Tye Green, Wimbish	Hastoe	Exception	10	4	Y	N	Y		2010/11	14/14	
	Total			43	22							
With Planning Permission and Grant - Not Yet Commenced												
	Frambury Lane, Newport	Flagship	UDC	1	0	Y	N	Y		2011/12	1/1	
	Pinkneys, Chrishall	Flagship	UDC	3	0	Y	N	Y		2011/12	1/1	
	Rosemary Lane, Dunmow	Flagship	Barratts	12	0	N	N	Y		2011/12	12/30	
	Warwick Road, Priors Gn, Takely	Flagship		18	8	Y	N	N		2012/13	26/	
	Total			34	8							
With Planning Permission - Grant Required & Not Yet Commenced												
1	Friends School, Saffron Walden	Hastoe	Hill Partnership	22	9	N	N	N	TBA	2011/12	31/76	
2	Bell College, Saffron Walden (Ph. 2)	Hastoe	Hastoe	24	10	N	N	N	TBA	2011/12	34/86	
4	Carnation Drive, Saffron Walden	Hastoe	Hastoe	4	0	N	N	N	TBA	2011/12	4/4	
5	Rochford Nurseries, Stansted (Blake Mews)	Moat	Croudace	37	12	N	N	N	TBA	2012/13	49/	
6	Oakwood Park, Felsted	Moat	Colonnade	28	18	Y	N	N	TBA	2012/13	46/	
3	Manor Road, Stansted	Flagship	UDC	2	0	N	N	N	TBA	2011/12	2/2	
11	Woodlands Park, Dunmow	TBA	Wickford	61	0	N	N	N	TBA	2012/13	61/	
11	Springfields, Dunmow	Flagship	Zog	7	3	N	N	N	TBA	2013/14	10/	Estimated grant
11	Meadow House Nursery, High Roding	TBA	Savills	10	0	Y	N	N	TBA	2013/14	10/25	Estimated grant
7	Maunuden,	ERHA	Exception	4	0	Y	N	N	TBA	2011/12	4/4	Estimated grant
11	Kiln Court, Saffron Walden	CHP		22	10	N	N	N	TBA	2012/13	32/32	Estimated grant
9	Lt Walden Rd / Ashdon Rd, Saffron Walden	TBA		28	12	Y	N	N	TBA	2012/13	40/	Estimated grant
	Total			249	74			£0				
With Planning Permission - No Grant Required & Not Yet Commenced												
	Total			0	0							
No Planning Permission - Under Consideration												
8	Frambury Lane, Newport	Hastoe	Exception	26	8	Y	N	N	TBA	2012/13	34/34	
10	Frambury Lane 2, Newport	Flagship	UDC	5	0	Y	N	N	TBA	2011/12	5/5	Estimated grant
11	Canfield Service Station	CHP		10	5	Y	N	N	TBA	2012/13	15/	
11	Everitt Road, Saffron Walden	Hastoe	Hastoe	8	0	N	Y	N	TBA	2012/13	8/8	Estimated grant
11	Wedow Rd, Thaxted	TBA		13	6	Y	N	N	TBA	2013/14	19/	Estimated grant
11	Ongar Rd, Dunmow	TBA		22	9	N	N	N	TBA	2012/13	31/	Estimated grant
8	Canmbridge Rd, Newport	Flagship	Exception	26	8	Y	N	N	TBA	2012/13	34/34	Estimated grant
11	Aythorpe Roding	Hastoe	Exception	10	0	Y	N	N	TBA	2012/13	10/10	
11	Debden	Hastoe	Exception	8	2	Y	N	N	TBA	2012/13	10/10	
11	Chrishall	Hastoe	Exception	6	2	Y	N	N	TBA	2012/13	8/8	
11	Arkedon	Hastoe	Exception	4	0	Y	N	N	TBA	2012/13	4/4	
11	Hatfield Heath	Hastoe	Exception	15	0	Y	N	N	TBA	2012/13	15/15	
11	Rickling	ERHA	Exception	8	0	Y	N	N	TBA	2011/12	8/8	
11	Gt Chesterford	ERHA	Exception			Y	N	N	TBA	2012/13		
11	Felsted	Hastoe	Exception	7	0	Y	N	N	TBA	2011/12	7/7	
	Total			168	40			£0				

Forecast of Affordable Properties Completed as a Result of Windfall Sites - Not Currently Identified				Summary of Completions by Year (Planned and Windfalls)		
	Rent	LCHO	Total	Planned	Windfall	Total
2010/11	0	0	0	65	0	65
2011/12	0	0	0	121	0	121
2012/13	0	0	0	413	0	413
2013/14	50	20	70	39	70	109
2014/15	50	20	70	0	70	70
5-Year Total	100	40	140	638	140	778

Total Grant Required - 5 Years	TBA
Average P/A over 5-Year Period	TBA

**West Essex Joint Investment Plan
Schedule of Affordable Housing Sites**

SUMMARY

Site	Rented	LCHO	Total
On-Site			
Epping Forest	135	72	207
Harlow	74	45	119
Uttlesford	43	22	65
	252	139	391
With Planning Permission and Grant - Not Yet Commenced			
Epping Forest	0	0	0
Harlow	39	18	57
Uttlesford	34	8	42
	73	26	99
With Planning Permission - Grant Required & Not Yet Commenced			
Epping Forest	81	28	109
Harlow	149	148	297
Uttlesford	249	74	323
	479	250	729
With Planning Permission - No Grant Required & Not Yet Commenced			
Epping Forest	0	0	0
Harlow	0	0	0
Uttlesford	0	0	0
	0	0	0
No Planning Permission - Under Consideration			
Epping Forest	277	126	403
Harlow	674	651	1325
Uttlesford	168	40	208
	1119	817	1936

	Planned Completions by Year					
	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	Windfalls
Epping Forest	135	141	131	373	0	300
Harlow	170	42	120	92	567	80
Uttlesford	65	121	413	39	0	140
Totals	370	304	664	504	567	520
	2409					

Section 4 - Budgets and Funding

Section on finance including local budgets, committed funding, required funding, reaction to October CSR announcements to be written after the CSR announcement etc

Section 5 - Governance Arrangements

The development of the Local Investment Plan (LIP) has been led by a joint steering group made up of Housing, Planning, Regeneration and Economic Development teams and Members within the Councils and supported externally by the Homes and Communities Agency, East of England Development Agency, Go East, Essex County Council and the Environment Agency.

The Steering Group has met frequently during the development of the LIP to steer the process and to ensure that the LIP fully reflected all partners' interests. A consultation awayday attended by all partners was held in September 2010 and the outcomes helped inform the development of the LIP.

The LIP will be taken forward and monitored by the Steering Group with frequent updates provided to all partners.

Membership of the Working Party and partners consulted are set out in Appendix 2.

Section 6 – Appendices

Appendix 1 – Joint letter to Grant Shapps



***From the Leaders
East Herts, Epping Forest, Harlow & Uttlesford District Councils***

Grant Shapps
Minister for Housing
Department for Communities & Local Government
Eland House
Bressenden Place
London
SW1E 5DU

By email:
david.waterhouse@communities.gsi.gov.uk

Please direct enquiries to:
Cath Shaw
Assistant Chief Executive
(Growth and Regeneration)
Harlow Council
Civic Centre
The Water Gardens
Harlow
Essex CM20 1WG
www.harlow.gov.uk

Date: 30 July 2010

Dear Minister

A NEW APPROACH TO HOUSING GROWTH

1. Thank you for your letter of 2 July, seeking comments from local authorities on our approaches to housing growth. This response has been prepared on behalf of the London-Harlow-Stansted Programme of Development Partnership, particularly the district councils of Harlow, Epping Forest, East Hertfordshire and Uttlesford. It focuses on Harlow as a town which has an aspiration for growth but which recognises the importance of a wider sub-regional partnership.

A vision for Harlow

2. Following consultation with Harlow Council's 'People's Panel' in 2008, *Regenerating the Town* has been identified as Harlow Council's top corporate priority. Neighbouring authorities also support the regeneration of Harlow town because of the benefits this will bring to the wider area. Delivering housing and economic growth is central to delivering this much-needed regeneration, as set out in paragraph 9. Ongoing informal consultations associated with the preparation of the Core Strategy reinforce the need to improve the range of housing within the District, supported with appropriate levels of infrastructure provision and environmental enhancements in order to meet community needs.
3. Built with a bold vision and aspiration, Harlow now suffers from high levels of deprivation, ageing infrastructure and a poor range of housing. Nonetheless, the town's unparalleled location close to London, Cambridge and Stansted Airport, and connections to strategic transport links, mean it is ideally placed for the growth that will ensure its long-term regeneration. The town, which saw the birth of fibre-optic cable, the development of cutting edge radar equipment and which has been home to significant research and development activity, has the potential again to create a vibrant future.
4. Harlow's vision is to create a place that is economically thriving and with the positive attributes and vibrancy of a city – the place to choose for a better way of life, and a smarter place to do business. The cornerstones of this vision are:
 - Harlow as a place of aspiration and a University town
 - Harlow as a prime business location
 - Harlow as a cultural hub
 - Harlow as a sub-regional centre and retail destination
5. Regeneration and growth of the town needs to recognise and respect its setting in the Metropolitan Green Belt, and the purposes for including land in the Green Belt. The whole of Epping Forest District and the southern part of East Herts District, which together surround Harlow, are within the Green Belt, with only towns and larger villages being excluded.
6. Realising this vision for Harlow will be fundamentally dependent upon the continuation and extension of partnership working between the public, private and voluntary sectors, and the local community. It is also dependent upon delivery of new homes and associated infrastructure, for which there is cross-party political support in the town, to create the broad based economy and society that will deliver sustainable prosperity.

London-Harlow-Stansted

7. Harlow is part of a broader sub-regional partnership which has collectively delivered a programme of housing, economic development and environmental projects over the last two years. The London-Harlow-Stansted Programme of Development Partnership (LHSP) comprises Broxbourne, East Hertfordshire, Epping Forest, Harlow and Uttlesford District Councils along with Essex and Hertfordshire County Councils and a number of other key stakeholders including Harlow Renaissance Ltd, British Waterways and the Harlow Area Green Infrastructure Partnership. The LSHP aims to:
 - a. ensure that the delivery of new homes, infrastructure and economic growth play a major role in the regeneration of Harlow and the Lee Valley
 - b. ensure that development in the area meets the highest possible quality, sustainability and design standards, is supported by the necessary services and infrastructure, and is well integrated with existing communities
 - c. protect and enhance the rural character of the majority of the area and the character of smaller and historic towns
 - d. recognise the important role that historic buildings, conservation areas and other features can play in creating communities with a sense of place
 - e. make the most of existing, and create new, green infrastructure as a resource for local communities, and in particular promote cycling and walking for recreation and transport
 - f. use growth at Harlow, and its proximity to London, Stansted Airport and Cambridge, to promote its role as a substantive sub-regional centre and as a catalyst for a fundamental change in its image
 - g. establish Harlow as a key location for airport-related employment and housing, and as a university town
 - h. tackle the significant transport issues facing the area, particularly congestion at Harlow, by appropriate management of existing and provision of new infrastructure and by a major increase in the provision of facilities for and use of public transport, walking and cycling
8. To deliver this vision, growth will need to be concentrated at Harlow –to support the regeneration of the town, to respect its setting within the Metropolitan Green Belt and to protect and enhance the rural character of much of the rest of the area. The remainder of this submission therefore focuses on Harlow.
9. All future growth will be determined through the LDF processes where it has the support of local communities. The Partnership will continue to support such growth where it is locally supported.

The needs

10. Harlow's needs have been well documented in recent years: the town centre needs to be rejuvenated as a catalyst to wider regeneration; a wider housing mix needs to be encouraged; the town's transport infrastructure needs a significant upgrade; an increase in the business base must be facilitated with all of this contributing to a change to the image and perception of the town.

11. We need to tackle the following issues through growth:

- A population that has stagnated over the last two decades at a time when surrounding areas have seen steady population growth. Without positive action to support growth, ONS population projections see this trend continuing over the next 20 years with Harlow's population forecast to grow by only 3% with surrounding districts forecast to grow between 11% and 14%.
- An economic mis-match, with Harlow resident's earning on average 23% less than those who commute into the town to work. This is in large part because Harlow's highly paid workforce does not choose to live in the town because of a lack of high quality housing, weak town centre offer, and negative image.
- Changing the image of the town to move away from perceptions of deprivation and Council estates to one of attractive places to live with excellent connections to London and Cambridge.

12. Whilst the delivery of growth at the level proposed in the RSS is not achievable by 2021, substantial new housing numbers are both desirable and deliverable in that timeframe. Planning permission has already been granted for 3,000 new homes at Newhall, in the eastern part of the town, with a number of developers considering proposals within and around the town. The precise level of growth appropriate to Harlow, and options for the location of that growth, will be the main ingredients of community engagement starting this autumn, as the first stage in the preparation of Local Development Frameworks for the wider area. Attention will need to be paid to the differing housing needs of the partner authorities – Harlow has identified a need for more aspirational housing, while the more rural authorities of Epping Forest, East Herts and Uttlesford require significant numbers of affordable homes.

13. Harlow Council and its partners believe that Harlow has an unparalleled opportunity to renew and reinvigorate itself. Together the partners will seek to support both aspiration and achievement to provide a compelling case for the private sector to invest in the town and for people wanting to live in the town. The delivery of new housing, and in particular a wider mix of housing, is essential to lift the town from a long period of stagnation and for it to deliver valuable benefits for the wider area.

Community support

14. Widespread community support for growth has been evidenced in Harlow over many years. It has long been seen that growth, combined with the appropriate infrastructure provision, can deliver the wider regeneration of the town. The CLG funded GAF 2 projects have all been subject to extensive local community consultation through dozens of residents meetings to discuss community needs and project design. At these meetings, a common theme has been the need to provide new housing for current and future generations combined with improved local retail and health facilities, which are now being delivered through these projects.
15. Last year's consultation process on the proposals for the re-development of Harlow Town Centre saw more than 2,500 people visit the exhibition with 90% of those responding supporting the need for regeneration, and over 80% supporting the proposals.
16. Access to good quality housing and regeneration are two of the key themes to have emerged from informal consultations associated with the preparation of Harlow's Core Strategy. This will be delivered through the Council's growth aspirations. The Council's recent 'Call for Sites', and other technical work, has revealed considerable interest from landowners, developers and other interested parties to develop land. This has indicated potential for future development opportunities in and around the town.
17. The Council is preparing to formally consult on its Core Strategy Issues and Options in the autumn to ensure the community is involved in developing an appropriate policy base to underpin Harlow's growth and regeneration aspirations.

Enabling delivery

18. To date, Harlow Council and its partners have been able to use Growth Fund money to stimulate housing delivery, provide the infrastructure needed to facilitate growth, and to deliver wider packages of community benefit to complement growth. This has seen, and continues to see, the following activities:
 - Delivery of local neighbourhood based mixed use projects, affordable and market housing, new shops, health centres and other community facilities.
 - Development of a major town centre scheme
 - Development of renewal plans for some of the town's poorer estates
 - The launch of an inward investment and re-branding campaign
 - Acquisition of sites for new affordable housing
 - Completion of the funding package to bring Anglia Ruskin University to the town
 - Completion of the necessary evidence base to support the growth plans


- Development and delivery of transportation proposals designed to support growth
- Delivery of a range of enhancements to the green infrastructure of the town and the wider area of the Stort and Lee Valleys.

19. The Partnership intends to complete this programme over the next year, utilising the existing Growth Fund allocation, whilst developing plans for future activity from 2011/12 through the community consultation processes to be undertaken this autumn on the respective Local Development Frameworks. These will determine the preferred extent of and locations for growth as well as the range of additional measures required to facilitate this growth. Details of the nature of any future growth cannot be quantified until the local authorities within the partnership have completed their community engagement processes. This consultation will also determine the way in which the individual authorities within the Partnership implement any incentive schemes.


Incentives

20. We have always sought to balance the requirements to deliver housing growth with packages of measures that will provide the necessary benefits to existing residents. For Harlow, the key requirements have been to deliver the necessary transport infrastructure to tackle the existing infrastructure deficit as well as to accommodate future growth. The current works to widen the A414 into Harlow is a good demonstration of this. Equally, the local community has been very concerned to retain and enhance the strong green infrastructure which was endowed to Harlow through the original new town masterplan of Sir Frederick Gibberd.

21. We welcome the Government's intentions to deliver incentivised growth. We would support the innovation of local retention of Council Tax match funding but would point out that much delivery of incentives will need to take place in advance of housing delivery. This particularly relates to the provision of infrastructure. For this reason we would urge the retention of Growth Funding as a non-ringfenced block grant as we have found this to be invaluable as a mechanism for stimulating delivery.



Yours sincerely



West Essex District Councils Group

Memorandum of Understanding

Epping Forest, Harlow and Uttlesford District Councils when acting together agree to be known as the West Essex District Councils Group.

Whilst each Council has its own sovereignty and characteristics, which each partner will continue to recognize and respect, they are committed to working together to promote the interests of West Essex and to improve their organisational economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

The Councils collectively recognise:

- **The need to promote and to protect the interests of West Essex.**
- **The need to work together to develop ways to improve their value for money, the performance of their services and their responsiveness to the needs of their communities.**
- **That significant and continuing constraints on public sector resources mean that there is an increasing need to work collaboratively as the West Essex Councils with each other and with other public, voluntary and private sector organisations to achieve economies and efficiencies.**
- **The need to maintain their individual roles as community leaders but to work together to develop strategic responses to pan West Essex, sub-regional and national issues.**
- **Individually, where appropriate, they may need to look beyond West Essex for a solution to a problem affecting their area.**

The Councils agree to:

- **Jointly provide a strong West Essex voice to ensure that its interests are heard at the highest level and that the resource investments and the commissioning of services by others meet the needs of its communities.**
- **Work jointly on strategic issues where it is appropriate and will benefit the residents and businesses of, and visitors to, the communities of West Essex.**
- **Develop opportunities to achieve economies of scale, improved efficiency and improved effectiveness through partnership working together.**

The Councils therefore undertake to:

Always give consideration to a West Essex District Councils Group approach to the influencing, commissioning and delivery of services for the benefit of the communities they serve wherever it would facilitate best practice, best outcomes and best value.

.....
Cllr D Collins
Leader
Epping Forest District Council



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Cllr A Johnson
Leader
Harlow District Council



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Cllr J Ketteridge
Leader
Uttlesford District Council

