



EXTRAORDINARY
ESSEX

GREATER ESSEX PROPERTY MARKET REVIEW

APRIL 2025

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WELCOME

The publication of the Greater Essex Property Market Review has a great sense of pride and optimism, signalling that Essex is opening a bold new chapter, enabling investment and growth across the region.

As Chair of the newly established Greater Essex Business Board, I am privileged to represent a forward-thinking business community committed to unlocking the region’s full potential. Having worked and spent time in Essex over a number of years, I am delighted that the Review brings together opportunities for growth as a beacon for investors across the development sector. More than a snapshot of market activity, the Review is a call to action for those with the vision to invest in one of the UK’s most exciting and fast-evolving economies.

Positioned between London, Cambridge, and global markets, **Greater Essex is a place where innovation meets opportunity.** From advanced manufacturing and MedTech to clean energy, data infrastructure, and logistics, our sector strengths are matched only by the scale of our ambition.

This Review showcases the real momentum behind our growth – from major infrastructure investments and freeport developments, to thriving innovation hubs. It also reflects the growing confidence of investors, developers, and businesses who recognise Essex as a place where ideas take root and enterprises flourish.

The launch of the Extraordinary Essex platform spotlights the opportunities available and the partnerships driving them forward. I encourage you to explore these prospects and join us in shaping the future of our region.

Now is the time to invest in Greater Essex. **The foundations are in place, the energy is palpable, and the opportunities are extraordinary!**



Julia Gregory,
Chair, Greater Essex
Business Board

The first edition of the Greater Essex Property Market Review reveals the county’s strongest and fastest-growing real estate sectors, recent successes, and investment-ready opportunities.

Created with insights from Lambert Smith Hampton and other local experts, it showcases investment and development activity across six real estate sectors, offering insights into the region’s key markets.

Essex is more than just a county – it’s a beacon of opportunity. From the regeneration of key hubs like Harlow and Basildon, world-class innovation along the Thames Estuary, and the UK’s largest garden communities programme, Essex offers a rare blend of growth potential and long-term stability.

With its strategic location, thriving economy, and unparalleled connectivity to London, Essex is one of the UK’s most dynamic property markets. This is reflected in the surge of private sector investment – from Manchester Airports Group’s £1.1 billion transformation plans at London Stansted Airport (page 12), to DP World’s aspirations for London Gateway to become Britain’s largest container port in five years (page 31).

We’re a magnet for the industries that will define the UK’s economic future. Essex is a key contributor to the UK’s AI growth ambitions, with Google among the global names looking to invest in our county. The Essex energy coast is playing a vital role in the UK’s clean energy transition, with Longfield Solar Farm - the second-largest facility of its kind in the UK – leading the way.

This Greater Essex Property Market Review sets out the facts, the figures, and the future. **The opportunity is here. The question is: will you be part of it?**

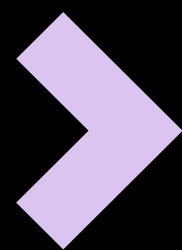


Cllr Louise McKinlay,
Deputy Leader of
Essex County Council



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INDUSTRIAL



Essex's strategic location, access to cutting-edge innovation, and thriving supply chain make it a powerhouse for key sectors within the industrial space, from advanced manufacturing and engineering to national logistics and freight services.

ADVANCED MANUFACTURING

A hub for innovation and production excellence, Essex's advanced manufacturing industry is a cornerstone of its economy. Home to the UK's second-largest cluster of advanced manufacturing and engineering companies, it hosts 4,200 businesses and employs approximately 47,000 people.

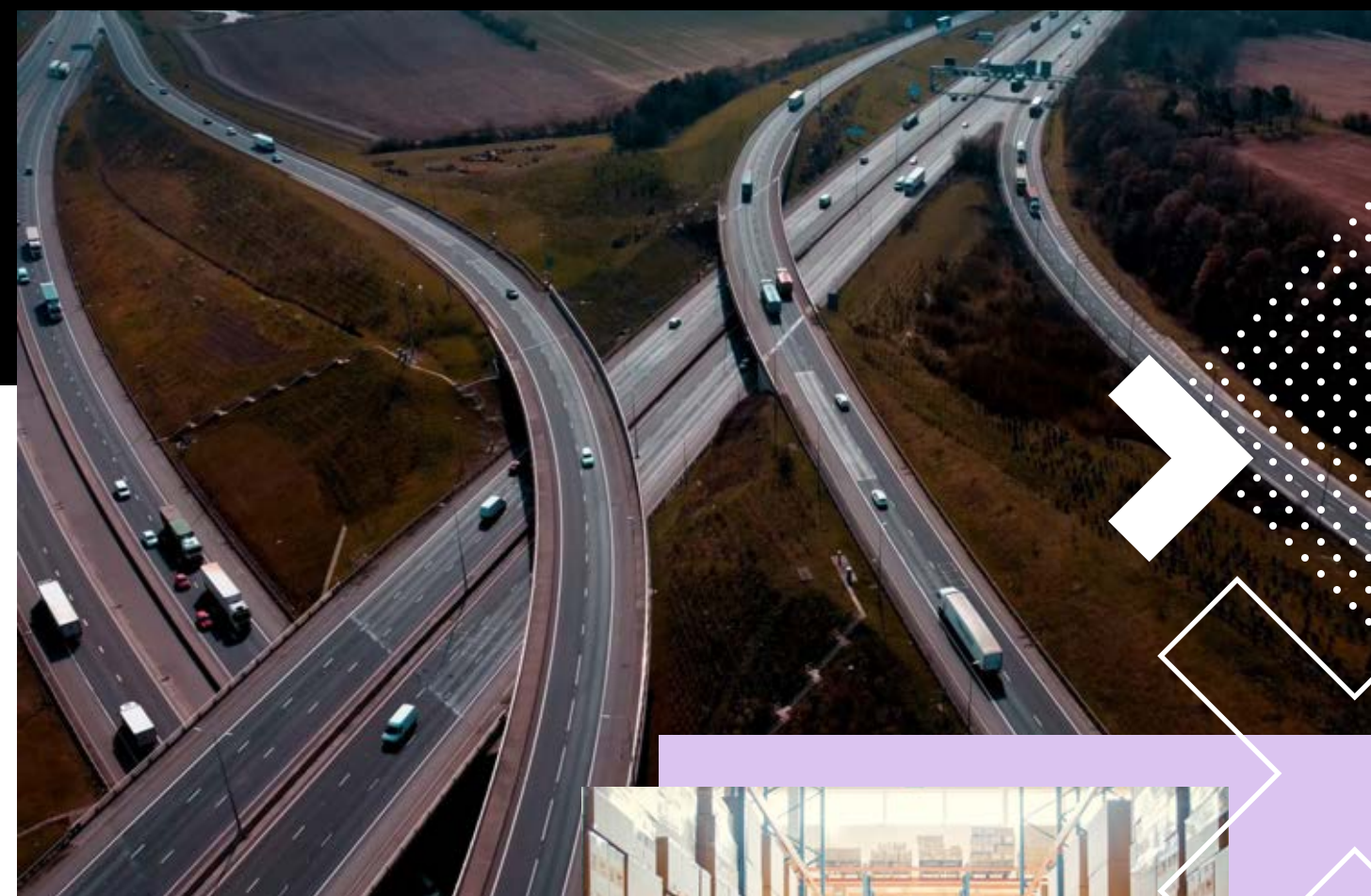
The region's advanced manufacturing capabilities have attracted some of the UK's leading manufacturers, including those in the aerospace and zero-emission vehicle industries. Notable companies such as Raytheon UK, Leonardo, and Teledyne e2v are leaders in the global defence and security market, providing products

to the Ministry of Defence. In addition, Basildon is home to New Holland's tractor manufacturing plant, as well as the Ford facility, which is at the forefront of research and development for the next generation of electrified vehicles.

- ✕ ESSEX'S ADVANCED MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY IS A **CORNERSTONE OF ITS ECONOMY**
- ✕ HOSTS **4,200 BUSINESSES**
- ✕ EMPLOYS APPROXIMATELY **47,000 PEOPLE**

Strengthening connections

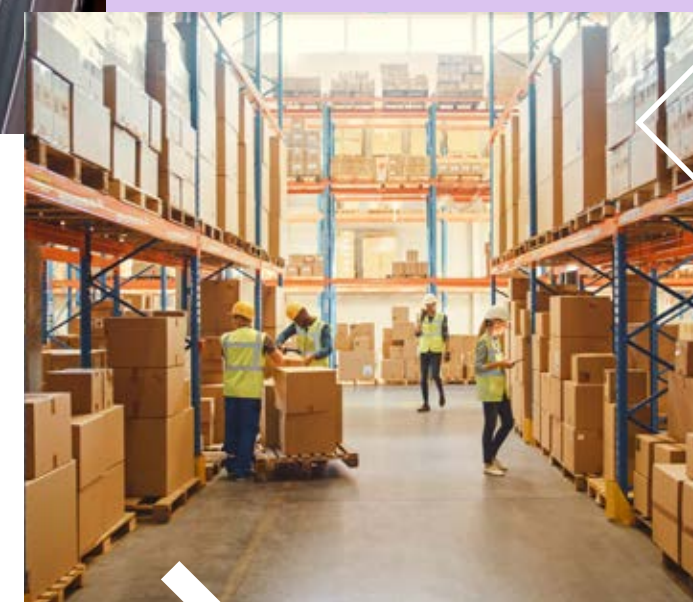
The Essex Manufacturing Alliance brings together businesses from every corner of the manufacturing sector at regular events. This initiative helps create an environment where local manufacturers, suppliers, and innovators can collaborate and strengthen connections.



FREIGHT AND LOGISTICS

Essex is recognised as a national hub for import and export freight and logistics, with a thriving sector which employs a 55,000-strong workforce. It has a strong track record for attracting Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) projects, outperforming all other sectors in the county.

With access to two of the UK's busiest freeports, Freeport East and Thames Gateway, direct links by car and train, and a coastal geographical advantage for offshore energy, Essex offers a competitive edge for national and international freight and logistics. It also has access to two international airports, London Stansted Airport and London Southend Airport.



A stock image of a distribution facility

AMONG THE NOTABLE FDI PROJECTS IN ESSEX IS AMAZON'S DISTRIBUTION FACILITY IN TILBURY, **EMPLOYING 1,500 STAFF.**

KEY MARKET:**M25/M11 CORRIDOR**

The M25/M11 corridor is a significant economic and transportation route, connecting London to Cambridge, and serving many key areas in Essex.

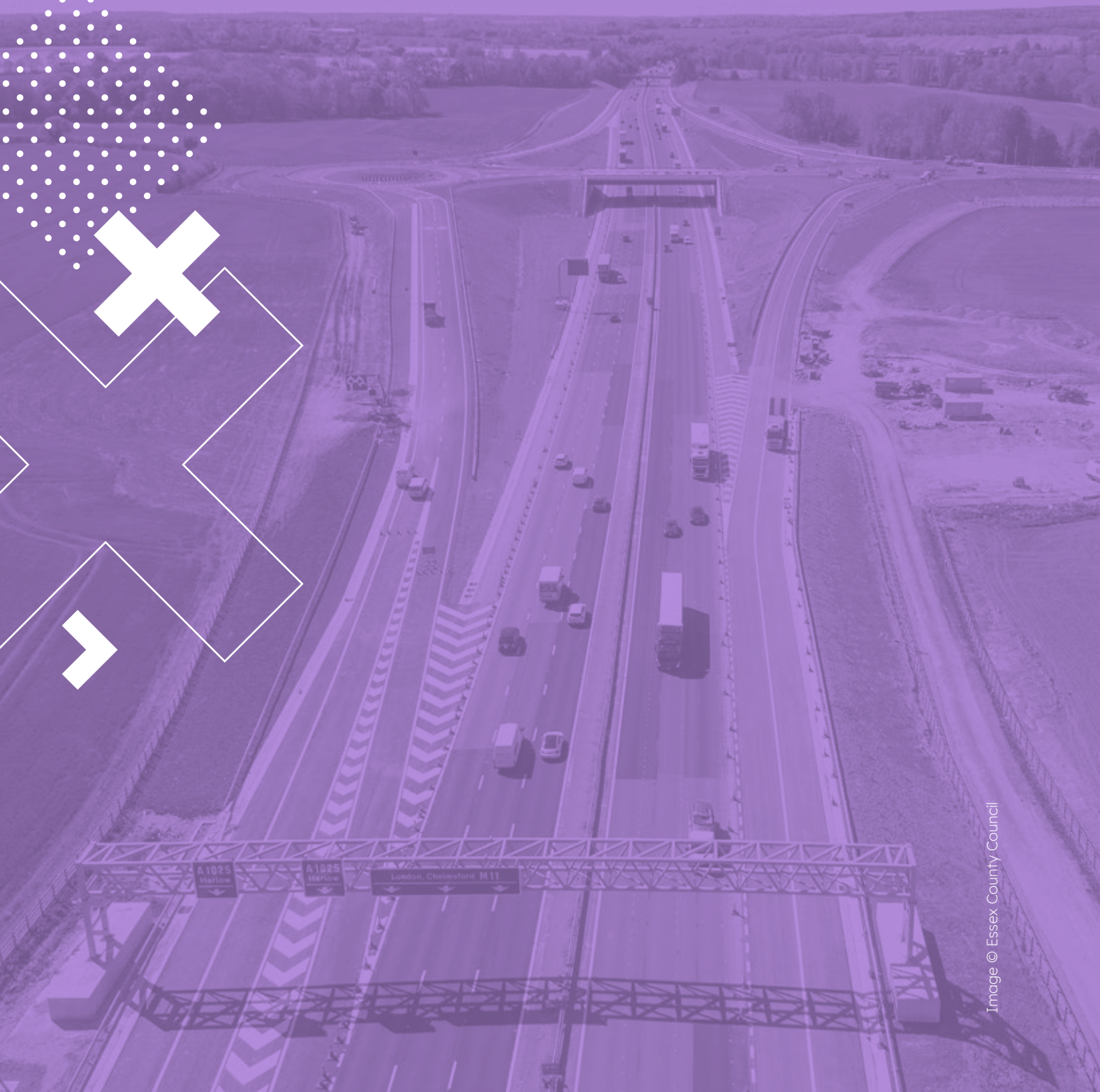
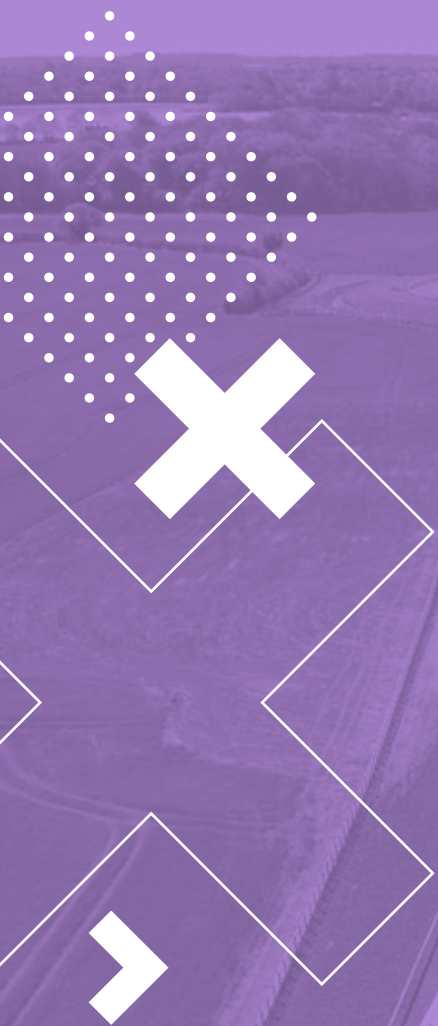


Image © Essex County Council

**Harlow**

At the heart of this corridor is Harlow, a vibrant town known for its excellent connectivity and burgeoning business environment.

Located just 30 miles from central London and 36 miles from Cambridge, Harlow is strategically positioned to support global, cutting-edge industries. It has also benefitted from the opening of Junction 7a on the M11 in 2022, which provides motorway access to Harlow's town centre within minutes. Stansted Express provides access to central London in under 35 minutes.

The town has several key industrial estates, well-connected to the national motorway network and train stations, and home to specialist companies within engineering, manufacturing, logistics, and delivery. Prime industrial rents are in the region of £13-14 per sq ft.

The Pinnacles, in the east of Harlow, is one of the town's dedicated employment areas. It features industrial units, warehouses and office space, with major occupiers including wholesale foods supplier Brakes.

Templefields is another key industrial estate, located on the outskirts of Harlow town centre and close to Edinburgh Way's retail parks, as well as the M11 junctions, 7 and 7a. It is within the Harlow Enterprise Zone. Templefields is within walking distance of Harlow Mill train station, which offers regular services to London, Stansted and Cambridge.

The estate includes manufacturing and distribution space, a trade counter, and motor trade locations, attracting numerous national and specialist occupiers. Notable businesses here include cosmetics brand Clarins' distribution centre, Astro Lighting, and New Era Energy, which has the UK's largest distribution network of renewable fuels.



In 2023, global food company LT Foods established its first UK facility at a 100,000 sq ft warehouse in River Way, Templefields. Currently the leading rice brand in India and one of the top speciality food brands in the US, **LT Foods invested an initial £7 million in the new facility, with plans to invest up to £50 million in the coming years.**

Other prime industrial locations in the town include ICON, on Third Avenue. Wincanton, a leading logistics and supply chain provider, has occupied the site since 2022.

Image © LT Foods



Brentwood

Brentwood is a town on the London commuter belt, minutes from the M25 which connects to the East Anglia via the A12. It is connected to Crossrail and the London transport network.

With close access to major road networks, Brentwood is an attractive destination for industrial and logistics operations. The area offers a small selection of industrial units and warehouses including the well-established Prospect Way Industrial Estate, which is a short distance from central Brentwood and provides easy access to the A12 and M25.

In December 2023, Brentwood Council granted planning permission for a new industrial site to be built beside Junction 29 of the M25 motorway. Known as Indurent Park Brentwood, the site will total 1.2 million square foot on 63 net developable acres. The development will include a new link road to Junction 29 of the M25.

The development by Indurent is expected to meet around 40 per cent of Brentwood's employment needs for the next decade or more.

Image © Indurent



Once complete, the new logistics site is anticipated to create up to 2,370 direct full-time jobs. It is also estimated that employees from the development will spend up to £6.9 million in the local area each year.

Brentwood is also set to benefit from the proposed Lower Thames Crossing, which is expected to join the nearby M25 to the Indurent Park Brentwood site and offer additional connections to wider functional economic areas.

- ✕ TOTAL OF **1.2 MILLION SQUARE FOOT** ON 63 ACRES
- ✕ CREATION OF UP TO **2,370 DIRECT FULL-TIME JOBS**
- ✕ EMPLOYEES ESTIMATED TO SPEND UP TO **£6.9 MILLION ANNUALLY** IN THE LOCAL AREA



London Stansted Airport

London Stansted Airport, the fourth busiest airport in the UK which connects to nearly 200 destinations, is located in Uttlesford. Situated just off the M11 motorway, it connects to several major road networks, including the A120 and M25, and offers rail links to London Liverpool Street and Cambridge.

Acquired by Manchester Airport Group (MAG) in 2013, London Stansted has experienced significant growth over the past decade. Passenger numbers increased from 17.5 million in the year to March 2013 to 29.3 million in the year to September 2024. The airport is also the largest single-site employer in the East of England, with over 10,200 people working for 200 on-airport companies.

On the doorstep of Stansted Airport is Stansted Business Park, a 45-acre site that hosts established businesses and offers bespoke design and build opportunities. MAG Property – the property and development arm of MAG – has outline planning consent to offer design and build packages for specific requirements. These

include warehouse, industrial and office buildings ranging from 10,000 to 400,000 sq ft, with various lease and purchase options available.

In 2023, planning permission was granted for a 150-acre industrial estate with approximately two million square foot of commercial development, adjacent to the north of Stansted Airport. Most of the site will consist of units for storage and distribution, with five per cent allocated for mixed business use.

The site, known as Stansted Northside, is being developed by Columbia Threadneedle. Strategically located between London and Cambridge, close to Junctions 8 and 8A of the M11, it offers excellent proximity to the air freight and passenger facilities offered by Stansted Airport.

The development is expected to create over 2,500 jobs during the construction phase and more than 2,000 long-term career opportunities once completed.

Images (left to right): The current London Stansted Airport; illustrating the airport's transformation plans © London Stansted Airport; (bottom): Stansted Northside © Columbia Threadneedle



NEWS FEATURE:



London Stansted Airport’s £1.1 billion investment to create jobs and boost economy

Investment programme expected to double airport’s economic contribution to £2 billion a year.

London Stansted Airport is set to enter a new era with a five-year, £1.1 billion investment, which will see it become the UK’s second highest capacity airport.

The UK government has welcomed plans by Stansted owner Manchester Airports Group (MAG), which will create 5,000 jobs and strengthen connections to major business and holiday destinations.

The airport’s existing terminal will be extended by a third to improve the passenger experience. The plans include more check-in desks, a larger security hall equipped with next-generation scanners, additional seating areas, and new shops, bars and restaurants.

The upgrades will also include a reconfiguration of gate rooms, creating more space for passengers before they board their flights.

The airport expects to welcome 43 million passengers a year once works are completed by 2030. In 2024, London Stansted welcomed a record-breaking 29.76 million passengers – the busiest ever year in the airport’s history.

The investment will also fund a 14.3MW on-site solar farm to support the airport’s current and future energy needs. This is a significant step towards sustainability and energy security for Stansted, reducing its reliance on fossil fuels and minimising its impact on the environment as it continues to grow.

Over the past year, London Stansted has seen increased activity with a number of new airlines, including Royal Jordanian and Sun Express, choosing to operate flights from the airport for the first time. Passenger numbers were also boosted by the return of British Airways in 2024, which began offering scheduled services from the airport for the first time since the pandemic.

5,000
JOBS CREATED

43 MILLION
PASSENGERS A YEAR
BY 2030

14.3MW
ON-SITE SOLAR FARM



“Aviation is an essential enabler of the success of the UK’s key high-value industries, and we look forward to helping the government achieve the highest sustained growth in the G7 through the sustainable growth of our airports.”

Ken O’Toole,
Chief Executive Officer of MAG

“London Stansted provides vital underpinning for the current £189 billion per annum GVA of the UK Innovation Corridor, and this new investment will be crucial for our shared mission to double the size of our economy by 2040.”

Jackie Sadek,
**Independent Chair of the UK
Innovation Corridor**



TIMELINE

October 2023:
Planning permission secured



October 2024:
Plans announced at UK Government’s International Investment Summit



January 2025:
London Stansted reports record-breaking passenger numbers in 2024



2025:
Construction set to begin



2030:
Works expected to complete



KEY MARKET: NORTH EAST ESSEX

Image © Freeport East



Freeport East Harwich

Freeport East is a government-backed special economic growth zone. It covers an area of over a thousand square kilometres and is part of the UK's East Coast Green Energy cluster.

Based around three ports, including the UK's biggest container terminal at Felixstowe, it offers access to more than 190 countries and 700 destinations worldwide, alongside a range of investment incentives, a special freezone custom model, and wider link to universities and research institutes.

One of 12 new freeports in the UK, Freeport East has a particular focus on supporting offshore wind, green hydrogen and other clean energy developments. It has already attracted over £250 million of private sector investment and created over 2,000 jobs in the local region.

Freeport East already includes Harwich International Port, which is home to the O&M base for the Galloper Offshore Wind Farm and regularly used for a range of other offshore wind and clean energy projects. Other businesses active in the port include Clarksons, RWE, DSV, Stena Line and Fred Olsen. The freeport is also attracting innovative new businesses such as Australia-based Rux Energy, who are using Harwich as a base for development of new hydrogen storage technologies.

Freeport East Harwich is also developing a new Green Energy Hub (Bathside Bay) which will provide a new deep-water 300-acre port expansion to provide new quay facilities, extensive laydown areas for assembly and marshalling, as well as associated manufacturing and business support spaces.

Planning permission for the green energy hub, including land reclamation and new quay wall, was secured in 2024.

Manufacturing space includes over 91 acres of currently available plots with access to existing quay and the national

road network. Freeport East and local partners are funding new power grid and transport improvements to support a range of manufacturing activities as well as investment in associated innovation and skills facilities.

Image © Freeport East

ACCESS TO
**OVER 190
COUNTRIES**

**OVER £250
MILLION**
OF PRIVATE SECTOR
INVESTMENT

2,000 JOBS
CREATED IN THE
LOCAL REGION

To **read more**
about the
opportunities at
Freeport East,
turn to page 87.



Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community

Colchester and Tendring district are set to welcome a new sustainable garden community, which includes a significant amount of land for new business premises, in addition to 7,500 homes.

The Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community is a joint project between Tendring District Council, Colchester City Council and Essex County Council.

The principle of the development was ratified through the adoption of local plans from Tendring District and Colchester City councils in 2021. If amendments to the masterplanning approach consulted on in late 2024 are approved shortly, there is hope that scheme delivery could commence in early 2027.

The Strategic Local Plans have allocated 62 acres of employment land, including a new business park and knowledge-based employment site, leveraging opportunities from the adjacent University of Essex. The project aims to create at least one job per

household within or in close proximity to the Garden Community.

Approximately 42 acres of land adjacent to the A120 is currently earmarked for general employment purposes and will be connected to the planned light rapid transit route. A further 20 acres of land north of the A133, opposite Wivenhoe Park (University of Essex), is identified for knowledge-based employment purposes.

The Planning Inspectorate found the Development Plan Document for the Garden Community to be sound and it is now due to be adopted by Tendring and Colchester councils before planning applications are expected later in 2025.

THE TENDRING COLCHESTER BORDERS GARDEN COMMUNITY PROJECT AIMS TO CREATE **AT LEAST ONE JOB PER HOUSEHOLD**

Image © Tendring District Council

Investment opportunity:

X Build to suit plots at Southend Airport Business Park

Industrial and warehouse units from 16,000 sq ft to 55,000 sq ft, available now for delivery in 15 months.

Airport Business Park offers high-quality accommodation adjacent to London Southend Airport.

Six plots are available, spanning up to 2.97 acres each, capable of accommodating units ranging from 16,000 to 55,000 sq ft.

An electricity supply of up to 7mVA and planning consent for E(g), B2, and B8 uses enable a wide range of business activities from light industrial to general industrial and storage/distribution.

Opportunity at a glance

Type of opportunity:
Build to suit

Real estate sectors:
Industrial & warehouse

Local Planning Authority:
Rochford District Council

Site areas: Plots up to 3 acres

Tenures: Freehold, long leasehold

Lead promoter: HBD

For more information:

extraordinaryessex.co.uk/opportunities/southend-airport-business-park

Images © HBD



KEY MARKET: CENTRAL ESSEX

Image © Witham Industrial Watch Ltd



Witham

Witham is a town in the heart of Essex, situated between Chelmsford and Colchester.

Strategically located with excellent access to the A12 and M25, it is an attractive destination for logistics companies, which occupy the town's selection of industrial estates. A train station near the town centre provides a regular service to London.

Witham's industrial estates have held Business Improvement District (BID) status since 2009 through Witham Industrial Watch Ltd, collectively representing approximately 350 businesses in a variety of sectors. The funding has paid for crime prevention measures, including security equipment upgrades, monitoring and safety training. As a result, it is considered a safer low crime industrial area by Essex Police.



Situated adjacent to the A12 is Freebournes Park, a development of 10 warehouse and industrial units ranging from 4,400 to 7,100 sq ft, which are combinable up to 23,900 sq ft. Completed in 2023 by developer Chancerygate, the estate features environmentally friendly technologies, including photovoltaic panels on two of the units, electric vehicle charging points, secure cycle parking, and 15 per cent roof lighting.

The development has achieved a **BREEAM rating of Very Good** and all units have a minimum **EPC rating of B**. Its occupiers include B2 Live Events, an events company which has worked with Amazon, Lacoste, and Absolut Vodka.



Image © Crittall Windows

Freebournes Industrial Estate is the largest commercial area in Witham and consists of a mixture of warehouse/industrial and office blocks. Notable occupiers include Crittall Windows, Britain's oldest manufacturer of steel-framed windows, which won a Queen's Award in 2010 for Enterprise in International Trade.

Another well-established estate is the Crittall Road industrial area, which is home to long-term occupier Simarco. The logistics firm, formed in 1997, has its UK head office and two distribution centres in the town, and reported a turnover of £94 million in 2024. Simarco also occupies other units in Witham and, in 2024, announced the expansion of its Moss Road warehouse, on Freebournes Industrial Estate, to increase capacity.

Other notable areas include Eastways Industrial Estate, which has convenient access to the A12, and Briarsford Industrial Estate, a multi-let modern industrial development. Prime industrial rents in Witham are around £11-12 per sq ft.

There are plans for further development of warehouses in Witham, with the sale of an eight-acre site fronting the A12 to Aquila Holdings. Planning permission has been granted for 160,000 sq ft of B2/B8 warehousing at Burghey Brook, Witham. Phase 1a is nearing completion.

Braintree Town and Great Notley

Approximately eight miles from Witham is the market town of Braintree, which features a mix of historical buildings and modern facilities.

The town is bypassed by the A120, which connects to the M11 and provides fast access to London Stansted Airport. Braintree's two train stations also provide regular services to London Liverpool Street.

Less than a mile from the town centre is the well-established Springwood Industrial Estate, which is home to at least 80 businesses, including those in the automotive, manufacturing and logistics industries.

Image © Caisson IO



Sitting within Springwood is **Bradbury Park Industrial Estate**, a development of 11 units ranging in sizes from 7,700 sq ft to 60,000 sq ft, which completed in 2020. Suitable for B1/B2/B8 and Class E usage, the development achieved a **BREEAM rating of Excellent**. Its occupiers include Foxway UK, formerly Global Resale – a technology resell and reverse logistics business, which received the Queen's Award for Enterprise in the International Trade category in 2021.



Images: (above) © The Marshgate Group; (right) © Braintree District Council

Horizon 120 Business, Innovation and Logistics Park is another key industrial area, located by the A131 in Great Notley, a village in Braintree District. The 65-acre employment site was developed following £24.3 million invested by Braintree District Council into the land and infrastructure, in partnership with commercial developer The Marshgate Group.

Horizon 120 benefits from a strategic location which provides easy access to major cities, airports and freeports. It is 15 miles from London Stansted Airport and 16 miles from Junction 8 of the M11.

At least 30 per cent of energy supplied to buildings at the eco-friendly site is from renewable sources, such as solar panels and air source heat pumps, with highly efficient thermal cladding and low energy lighting and controls. Adjacent is Gridserve, the UK's first electric vehicle charging forecourt.

Across nine commercial units, Horizon 120 provides more than 750,000 sq ft of high tech, industrial, office and logistics space. Of the nine units, three are in the Hyperion development, the largest speculative 'mid box' development in Essex comprising three units totalling 159,300 sq ft.



Occupiers at Horizon 120 include **mobility equipment retailer CareCo**, which has its main distribution centre and warehouse at the development, **Medequip**, **provider of community equipment services** to councils and NHS Trusts across the country, and **British Offsite**, a subsidiary of **Weston Group**, which **manufactures and distributes components for the new homes industry** from the site.

In 2024, planning permission was granted for Phase 2 of Horizon 120, for an additional 592,000 sq ft of industrial warehousing, aimed to achieve a BREEAM status of Excellent and an EPC rating of A+.





Maldon

Close to the town of Maldon, Oval Park is a 29 acre business park, which is set to be transformed into a state-of-the-art employment hub, housing offices, warehousing and research and development facilities.

Oval Park is situated three miles from Maldon town centre, within a district that offers a mix of office and industrial floorspace. Notable businesses Maldon Salt, Mighty Oak Brewing Company and Wilkin & Sons run their operations in Maldon. Oval Park is also three miles from a railway station, with the fastest service providing direct connections to London Liverpool Street in 40 minutes.

The site, owned by manufacturer CML Microsystems Plc for many years, is designated employment land in the Maldon District Local Development Plan. CML Microsystems specialises in developing mixed-signal, RF, and microwave semiconductors for the global communications market. The company's headquarters are located at Oval Park.

In 2023, CML signed an agreement with the UK's leading premium salt brand, Maldon Salt, to develop approximately 13 acres of land, subject to the company gaining planning permission.

Founded in Maldon in 1882, Maldon Salt holds the Royal Warrant as official purveyors of sea salt. Today, it exports to more than 60 countries worldwide and is a prominent player in the global sea salt market. The site will house Maldon Salt's headquarters, including office space, packing hall, warehousing, and distribution facilities.

The remaining land within Oval Park is expected for development pending the finalisation of an agreement.

Images © Maldon District Council



STATE-OF-THE-ART
EMPLOYMENT HUB HOUSING
OFFICES, WAREHOUSING
AND R&D FACILITIES

Investment opportunity:



Industrial & logistics employment land, Harwich Valley

15 acres of land for
commercial uses.

Harwich Valley is a mixed-use development which includes approximately 430,600 sq ft of commercial floorspace.

The employment land has consent for B2 and B8 warehouse units (258,900 sq ft GIA) and business units (26,500 sq ft GIA) in Phase 3. The roundabout infrastructure design is nearly complete, paving the way for development. The anticipated unit sizes range from 1,000 to 105,800 sq ft, providing flexibility for various business needs.

Images © Q+A Planning Ltd

Opportunity at a glance

Type of opportunity:
Employment land

Real estate sector:
Development land – Employment

Local Planning Authority:
Tendring District Council

Site areas: Plots up to 15 acres

Tenures: Freehold, long leasehold

Lead promoter:
Harding Estates (East Anglia) Ltd



For more information:
[extraordinaryessex.co.uk/
opportunities/harwich-valley](https://extraordinaryessex.co.uk/opportunities/harwich-valley)



KEY MARKET: THAMES ESTUARY



Basildon

Basildon is a key centre for advanced manufacturing in south Essex, with excellent connectivity to road, rail and air transportation links.

Basildon has a number of industrial estates, developed in a phased basis due to it being a new town. These estates provide strategic access to the A127, A13, and M25, with prime rents currently at £14 per sq ft.

Burnt Mills Industrial Estate is home to a variety of businesses, offering warehousing and industrial units to occupiers including manufacturers, logistics companies, and scrap metal merchants. The Pipp's Hill industrial area is another prominent industrial estate, which offers a well-connected and convenient location for businesses, providing modern warehouse and industrial units.

The Cranes Farm Road industrial area includes a mix of office/business units, as well as high-specification modern warehouse and industrial units at the nearby Carnival

Park. It offers quick and easy access to the national motorway network, while the Southfields industrial area includes a business park offering flexible office space solutions and is home to a variety of businesses. Laindon railway station is situated approximately a mile from Southfields.

Development in Basildon has focused on refurbishing and redeveloping older units on existing industrial estates. This includes a refurbishment programme at the well-established Kierbeck Business Park, which provides direct access to the A13. The seven-acre site, sold by St Modwen (now Indurent) to Petchey Holdings in 2024, comprises six industrial/warehouse units and four yards.

Other recent development includes Basildon 117, a 117,000 sq ft building by European logistics real estate developer Panattoni. It was sold in a £23.3 million deal to investment firm Aberdeen Standard Investments in 2021.

Elsewhere, Indurent has submitted a planning application to Basildon Council for 1.3 million square foot of industrial and logistics warehousing, on land east of Burnt Mills Industrial Estate, south of the A127. If plans are approved, the new business park could lead to more than 2,000 jobs, add £50 million to Basildon's economy, and deliver significant funding and contributions for local infrastructure.

Basildon is well known for its affiliation with Ford, which has had its Dunton campus in the town since 1967. In 2024, the automotive manufacturer launched a new £24 million Propulsion Development Laboratory to develop and test electric vehicle powertrains.

The laboratory comprises eight vehicle-size rooms capable of testing electric power units and propulsion systems. It underpins Ford's European electric vehicle plans. The research and development facility in Dunton is also home to the Ford Transit which has been the UK's top-selling van for 58 consecutive years since its 1965 launch.

Basildon is also home to New Holland – a brand of CNH Industrial – which in 2024 celebrated 60 years of tractor manufacturing. The same year it built its

two millionth tractor – a 225hp T7.225, one of the most popular T7 models produced at the Basildon plant.

The plant is recognised as one of only two major tractor manufacturing plants in the UK and has the capacity to assemble a complete tractor every five minutes. Offering 10,000 different product specifications, it appeals to the global market, exporting to 180 countries around the world. The New Holland Basildon plant is also CNH's Alternative Fuels Centre of Excellence.

Basildon has particular strengths in the digital, creative and tech sectors. International technology players like US fintech Fiserv and American software giant, SS&C, have made Basildon their UK headquarters.

Defence company Leonardo employs more than 1,000 people at its site in Basildon which has produced notable firsts, including the UK's first military standard production thermal imager and the Phoenix unmanned military surveillance vehicle. Leonardo won a £41 million contract in 2022 from the Ministry of Defence to provide digital protection against remotely triggered explosives.

✕ PRIME RENTS ARE CURRENTLY AT **£14 PER SQUARE FOOT**

✕ A NEW BUSINESS PARK COULD LEAD TO MORE THAN **2,000 JOBS** AND ADD **£50 MILLION** TO BASILDON'S ECONOMY

✕ FORD HAS HAD ITS DUNTON CAMPUS IN THE TOWN **SINCE 1967**

✕ BASILDON IS HOME TO NEW HOLLAND – WITH OVER 60 YEARS OF **TRACTOR MANUFACTURING**

✕ DEFENCE COMPANY LEONARDO EMPLOYS MORE THAN **1,000 PEOPLE**

✕ BASILDON HAS PARTICULAR STRENGTHS IN THE **DIGITAL, CREATIVE AND TECH SECTORS**



Canvey Island, Castle Point

Canvey Island lies off the southeast coast of Essex in the Thames Estuary, approximately 35 miles east of central London.

The A130 connects the island to the A127 and A13, providing access to the M25 and other motorways. The nearest train station is Benfleet, which connects to south Essex and East London stations. Southend can be reached in 15 minutes, while London Fenchurch Street is a 50-minute train journey.

Canvey Island has strong links to the petrochemical industry, with the operator Oikos having operated a bulk liquid storage facility on the island since 1936. With a 70-acre facility boasting a tank capacity of 300,000 cubic metres, along with two marine jetties and access to the

deep waters of the River Thames, Oikos plays a key role in providing essential fuel supplies to UK industries, including major airports such as London Stansted.

The island also has a main well-established industrial area, which is within easy reach of the A130 and major locations including Basildon and Southend.

Charfleets Industrial Estate includes a mix of industrial units, warehouses and office spaces. It is also home to International House – Canvey Island's first dedicated co-working business space, which comprises offices, workspaces, and meeting rooms. Amber Business Park sits within the estate and is home to a varied mix of businesses trading from the park.

Image © Inner London Group

Opposite Charfleets Industrial Estate is a new development, **Thamesview 130, consisting of commercial units built to a high specification.**

Located 20 minutes from Junction 30 of the M25 motorway, the business park counts nationwide companies Screwfix and Howdens among its occupiers. Units of 2,800–40,000 sq ft are currently available, including on freehold basis, with many benefitting from full planning permission.



Image © Inner London Group



Southend-on-Sea and Rochford

Situated at the mouth of the Thames Estuary, Southend-on-Sea is one of the UK's newest cities.

It benefits from two trainlines that feed directly into the heart of the City of London and a road network that connects to the M25 and Dartford Crossing in 25 minutes.

By air, London Southend Airport connects to more than 15 major locations across Europe and northern Africa.

To the north of Southend's urban area, Rochford district benefits from access to an east-west strategic highway network into London, M25 and beyond, and north-south links to Chelmsford.

Among Southend and Rochford's key sectors is advanced manufacturing, which plays a significant role in their economic landscape. Across both areas are a number of business parks and industrial estates, which accommodate a wide range of industrial, business and commercial premises.

This includes the Temple Farm Industrial Estate and Stock Road Industrial Estate, well-established estates north of Southend town centre, and Vanguard Way, located three miles east of Southend, which features the Seedbed Business Centre with 42 serviced business units up to 1,500 sq ft.

Purdeys Industrial Estate is a large employment area offering easy access to Rochford, Southend, the A127, and London Southend Airport. Its occupiers include recycling and waste companies, food suppliers, and manufacturers.



NEWS FEATURE:

New easyJet base at London Southend Airport

In March 2025, easyJet opened its 10th UK base at London Southend Airport, creating 140 direct jobs for pilots and crew in the UK and supporting many more indirect jobs.

Three A320neo aircraft are now based at the airport, which will collectively serve 122 flights per week on 20 routes from London Southend to leisure destinations across Europe and North Africa.

Approximately 10,000 passengers took off on flights and holidays during the first week of easyJet's London Southend Airport operations. The airline will also add three new routes from London Southend to Barcelona, Lanzarote and Salzburg from October 2025.

“

“The opening of easyJet's 10th base at London Southend Airport marks a significant milestone for both the airport and the local community. The creation of wider employment for 1,200 jobs in the region, including 140 new jobs for airport colleagues, reflects the positive momentum we are seeing as we head into our biggest summer for six years.”

Jude Winstanley,
Chief Executive Officer of
London Southend Airport

”

Airport Business Park Southend is a 52-acre multi-use business park that is being delivered through a joint venture between HBD and Southend-on-Sea City Council. Located three miles from Southend city centre, it is six miles from the A130/A127 junction which links to the M25.

Notable has been a 140,000 sq ft freehold design and build unit delivered in 2023 for Ipeco Holdings, one of the world's leading manufacturers in aircraft seating – this more than doubles their existing occupation at Airport Business Park. There are opportunities for units between 3,500 sq ft and 77,600 sq ft.

Images © HBD



KEY MARKET: THAMES FREEPORT

Thames Freeport is an economic zone located in the Thames Estuary, which provides connectivity to every continent – by rail, road, river and international maritime routes.

Situated along the A13 corridor in south Essex, it has been designated as a Freeport tax site since 2021.

In addition to 1,700 acres of development land along the Thames River, this hub for trade and industry is home to:

➤ Port of Tilbury

One of eight ports owned by Forth Ports Limited, the Port of Tilbury is currently the largest multi-modal port in London. Home to 56 operational berths, 31 independent working terminals, 10.2km of quay and five million square foot of warehousing, it handles an annual throughput of 16 million tonnes of cargo per year. In 2020, a new multi-million-pound port terminal – Tilbury2 – was built adjacent to the current port, on a 152-acre site which was part of the former Tilbury Power Station.

➤ DP World London Gateway

The UK's largest logistics facility, London Gateway is a container port with capacity to handle over three million units per year, a rail terminal with over 60 weekly services, and a 9.25 million square foot logistics park. Its facilities include four deep-sea berths, with two additional berths planned by 2030. The port handles the world's largest vessels. Read more about DP World's £1 billion investment at London Gateway on page 31.

➤ Ford Dagenham

Located 15 miles east of London, Ford Motor Company's manufacturing plant at Thames Freeport is its sole diesel engineering and manufacturing location in Europe. The 44-acre site is also the largest manufacturing site in London and benefits from its proximity to regional manufacturing clusters, suppliers, and the end market. It also has direct river access via a dock.

Thames Freeport is a partnership between Forth Ports, DP World and Ford, who joined forces in 2021 to gain Freeport status. Its location places it closer to Europe's largest and most economically important consumer market than any other enterprise zone. It provides access to air travel from four airports, and multi-modal transport onto the UK's networks via road, river and rail.

NEWS FEATURE:

➤ London Gateway aims to become 'Britain's largest container port' within five years

Investment totalling £1bn at Essex terminal will boost volume and resilience of international trade, says owner DP World.

Significant investment planned at London Gateway will revolutionise the UK's shipping industry, with the Essex terminal equipped to service the world's largest container ships.

Global logistics firm DP World plans to build two new shipping berths at the development in Stanford-le-Hope, Thurrock, boosting its operational capacity. The expansion is also expected to create 400 permanent jobs, alongside over a thousand temporary jobs during the construction phase.

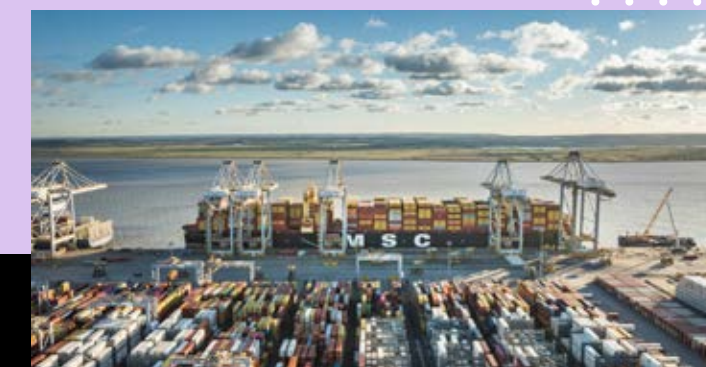
If approved, the expansion would take the full quayside at London Gateway to more than 2.5km in length, making it capable of being able to receive six of the world's biggest vessels at the same time.

The terminal would feature Europe's tallest quay cranes, comparable to the height of Big Ben. A second rail terminal would also be added to handle the anticipated increase in containerised trade.

This expansion, subject to planning approval and regulatory requirements, would take DP World's total investment at London Gateway to more than £3 billion. Since opening in 2013 as part of the Thames Estuary hub, London Gateway has been a catalyst for economic regeneration in south Essex. If the plans are approved, it could greatly increase the amount of trade at the port, which currently handles nearly two million twenty-foot equivalent units (TEU) each year.

In line with DP World's commitment to achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050, London Gateway launched a £350 million fourth berth in November 2024 – the first all-electric berth at a port anywhere in the world.

Images © Miru Visuals



“

“DP World London Gateway will help make Britain's trade flow in the future by connecting domestic exporters with global markets and delivering vital supply chain resilience for the whole economy. I am proud of this major investment which underlines DP World's long-term commitment to the UK.”

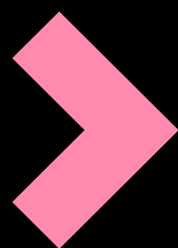
**Sultan Ahmed bin Sulayem,
DP World Group Chairman
& Chief Executive Officer**

”

A person wearing a lab coat and a face mask is working in a greenhouse. They are holding a handheld device, possibly a sensor or a small pump, and are interacting with a large plant. The background shows other plants and the structure of the greenhouse. The entire image has a pinkish-red tint.

2

SCIENCE AND HIGH TECH



With access to universities, research institutions, science and technology parks, as well as collaborative industry networks, Greater Essex has all the ingredients of a leading hub for science and high tech.

Its proximity to world-renowned research institutions, both within Greater Essex and in Cambridge and London, makes it an attractive location for businesses and talent from around the globe.

Among its offerings is the University of Essex, celebrated for its expertise in social and data science research, and ranked in the top 20 for research intensity in the latest Research Excellence Framework (REF). Its institutes, including the Institute of Public Health and Wellbeing, bring together academics to deliver research, knowledge exchange, and inform policy and practice.

The university's School of Life Sciences is home to a £3.5 million Smart Technology Experimental Plant Suite (STEPS) laboratory, which allows researchers to test the impact of climate change on plants. Using the facility, they can replicate real environments from anywhere in the world and assess and control crop water use.

Anglia Ruskin University (ARU) was named University of the Year at the Times Higher Education (THE) 2023 awards. Its six research institutes have been recognised for the impact their research has on people's lives.

ARU is home to Essex's first School of Medicine which provides high-tech teaching facilities for healthcare training. The university also boasts a £3 million 'SuperLab' where students can perform practical sessions and experiments using advanced technology.

SCIENTIFIC DISCOVERY AND INNOVATION

Greater Essex is part of the East of England region, which boasts the largest technology cluster in Europe – the Cambridge Cluster – and is at the forefront of scientific discovery and innovation. It is also in the UK Innovation Corridor, which is recognised as a growing hub for technology and life sciences, and benefits from links with London and Cambridge.

In addition to close links with university research and hospitals including Addenbrooke's – a leading centre for medical research and clinical trials – Greater Essex has several collaborative networks. This includes Health Innovation East, which brings together industry experts and leaders to drive forward healthcare innovations.

Image © University of Essex



Chesterford Research Park

Set within 250 acres of parkland, Chesterford Research Park offers advanced laboratory and office space for biotechnology, pharmaceutical and technology R&D companies. It features a low-density scheme with natural environments, an arboretum, and wide-open spaces, alongside research facilities. The park is owned by Aviva Investors alongside Uttlesford District Council.

The site is located close to Junction 9A of the M11, which connects with London and the East Midlands and beyond, as well as London Stansted Airport. Cambridge City Centre can be reached within 13 miles, with the fastest rail links from the city providing access to King's Cross in under an hour.

The park's Nucleus building provides amenities that foster collaboration within the life science community. With 24/7 security, including manned patrols and ANPR technology, the park ensures peace of mind for its occupiers.

Chesterford Research Park sits within the UK Innovation Corridor, linking Cambridge and London. It is also part of the South Cambridge Biocluster, joining other

organisations nearby to form a world-leading cluster of life sciences research institutes, including Addenbrooke's Hospital and Cambridge University. In addition, it is in the Oxford-Cambridge corridor, which spans multiple counties and accounts for over seven per cent of total UK GDP.

Currently around 350,000 sq ft of commercial floorspace at the park is occupied by 27 tenants, including global biopharmaceutical business AstraZeneca, along with biotechnology organisations Isogenica, Microbotica and Biomodal.

There are substantial plans for growth with a masterplan for around one million square foot for research and development uses. This includes development of the Sidney Sussex Building, which will deliver 56,000 sq ft of laboratory and office space, split into suites starting at 2,200 sq ft.

FUTURE DEVELOPMENT AT THE PARK COULD ACCOMMODATE AROUND 1,700 ADDITIONAL JOBS.



Images © Aviva Investors





Knowledge Gateway, Colchester

The Knowledge Gateway research and technology park is set within 200 acres of mature parkland at the University of Essex's Colchester Campus.

The site is located off the A113, three miles west of Colchester, providing easy access to the city centre and the major road network, including the A12. A rapid transport bus route launching in 2026 will connect the site to key locations, including the University of Essex, railway stations, the hospital, and the city centre.

Since its inception in 2010, the Knowledge Gateway has secured £60 million of investment and is now home to more than 60 businesses across Parkside, Clingoe House and the Innovation Centre, Knowledge Gateway (ICKG). Many Knowledge Gateway businesses employ Essex graduates while also offering internships and placements to students.

The Knowledge Gateway has become a hub for science, technology, and digital creative companies. Established businesses include Above, a market leader for solar photovoltaic (PV) drone inspection and software solutions.

The Knowledge Gateway site benefits from being located on the University of Essex's Colchester Campus. The university is recognised internationally for research in the social sciences, science and health, and the arts and humanities.

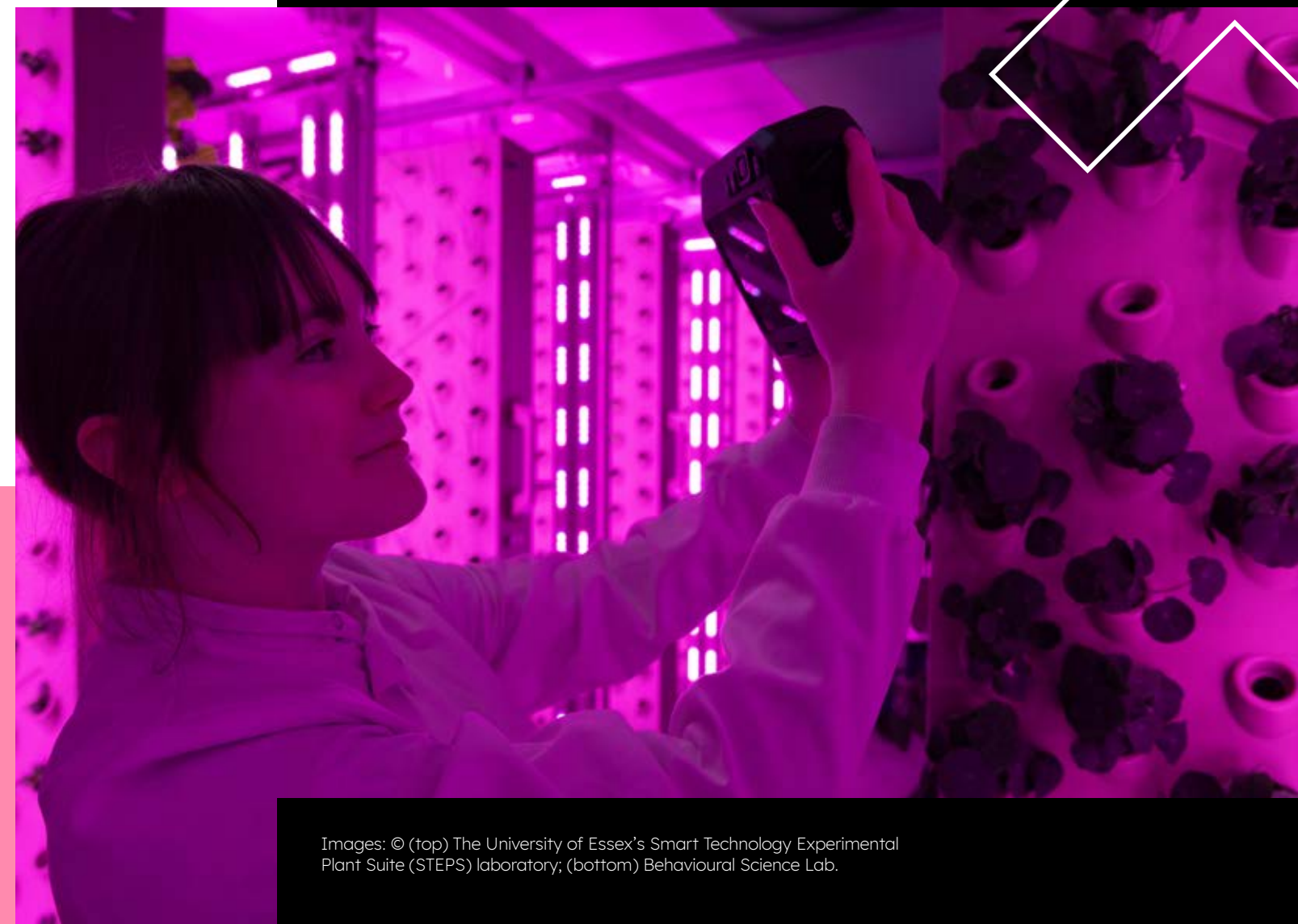
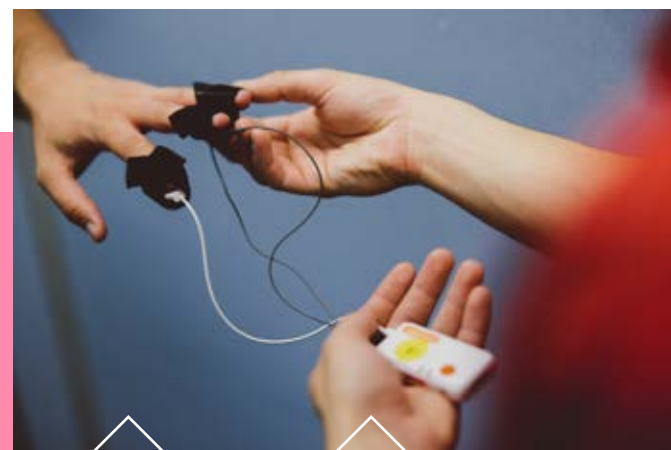
TO READ MORE ABOUT
THE INNOVATION CENTRE
KNOWLEDGE GATEWAY
(ICKG), **TURN TO PAGE 48**

The UK's first Regius Professorship of Political Science and the world's first UNESCO Chair in Analytics and Data Science are based at Essex. The university is also one of the leading universities in the UK for active Innovate UK-funded Knowledge Transfer Partnerships with businesses.

The Knowledge Gateway provides access to research and laboratory facilities, including the university's Behavioural Science Lab, as well as links to leading researchers across key sectors including artificial intelligence (AI), data analytics, health, finance and logistics.

The Knowledge Gateway site is adjacent to the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community, with significant knowledge-based employment land allocated just north of the A133 to support business and employment.

The first phases of Parkside offer flexible suites and buildings from 1,200 sq ft to 5,700 sq ft. Clingoe House, which opened in 2024, is a 41,600 sq ft office complex, which is already home to leading technology company MSX International. Availability includes suites from 2,000 sq ft through to single floors of just under 11,000 sq ft. The nearby ICKG offers further space and support for up to 50 companies.





Horizon 120, Braintree

Horizon 120 Business Innovation and Logistics Park is a 65-acre employment site developed following a £24.3 million investment by Braintree District Council into the land and infrastructure, in partnership with commercial developer The Marshgate Group.

The park has attracted a number of high-tech businesses, including Essex X-Ray, a globally recognised supplier of core cable and component parts for high-voltage systems, which has a 60,000 sq ft unit.

Read more about Horizon 120 on page 21.



Cell and Gene Therapy Catapult, Braintree

Cell and Gene Therapy Catapult's (CGT Catapult) Braintree Manufacturing Innovation Centre is focused on supporting the development of manufacturing operations for advanced therapies. It is part of the CGT Catapult's work to build a world-leading cell and gene therapy sector in the UK.

A £100 million investment from the government allowed for the purchase of the site in 2020. The existing facility was upgraded to create a fully-licensed manufacturing centre consisting of quality control laboratories, warehouses, development laboratories and a team of staff with expertise in Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) manufacturing. It secured regulatory licensure from the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) in early 2024.

The long-term focus of the 49,800 sq ft site is to advance the growth of the UK cell and gene therapy industry, by bridging the gap between scientific research and full-scale commercialisation.



Images © Cell and Gene Therapy Catapult



Harlow Innovation Park and Kao Park, Harlow

Situated within the Harlow Enterprise Zone at the heart of the UK Innovation Corridor, Harlow Innovation Park and Kao Park are science and technology business parks adjacent to each other. Both parks benefit from being connected to the highest available broadband speed because of their location alongside Kao Data.

Harlow Innovation Park is a 27-acre site that provides office, research and development, and mid-tech workspaces for businesses focused on all areas of science, technology, research and innovation. David Lloyd health club is opening a brand-new state-of-the-art facility on the site in winter 2025. Owned by Harlow District Council and delivered in partnership with Vinci Developments UK, the park has one remaining plot available, totalling approximately 2.27 acres. There is already active interest in this build-to-suit opportunity, which is ideally suited for mid-tech industrial units, laboratories or offices.

Other developments on the park include the Nexus building, which provides 30,000 sq ft of office and sharing working space across three floors, and Modus, a development providing 45,000 sq ft of mid-tech research and development and production space. Nexus's primary occupiers include electronics manufacturer Renesas and



Image © Harlow District Council



Image © Kao Data

UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), while Modus counts water technology provider Xylem among its occupiers.

Harlow Innovation Park is also home to Anglia Ruskin University's Arise Harlow – a hub for innovation, where entrepreneurs and start-ups work alongside students and academics in a collaborative environment.

Adjacent to Harlow Innovation Park is Kao Park, a 36-acre development which is home to several innovative businesses including technology providers Arrow and Raytheon UK. It has historical significance as the former location of Standard Telecommunications Laboratories, where fibre optic telecommunications technology was first developed in the 1960s.

Data centre operator Kao Data has a significant presence at the park, spanning 15 acres with a campus that will eventually comprise three data centres engineered for AI and advanced computing, and will provide a combined capacity of 40MW.

Both parks benefit from road, rail and air connections, with a strategic location that places them 30 miles from central London and 36 miles from Cambridge. Access to the M11 from Harlow has been further improved with the opening of the new Junction 7a, making it possible to reach the motorway within five minutes.

TO READ MORE
ABOUT KAO PARK
TURN TO PAGE 77



Chelmsford Garden Community Innovation Hub

A masterplan for the 2,065-acre Chelmsford Garden Community (CGC), set to significantly grow the county town, outlines the development of an innovation hub which will provide employment space for high-tech sectors as well as key growth sectors, including creative, digital, media, and business and professional services.

The CGC Innovation Hub is planned for delivery during Phase 2 and will provide around 430,000 sq ft of floorspace. It will benefit from close proximity to a key transport corridor, including the adjacent park and ride site and access to public transport services.

CGC is a mixed-use development delivered in partnership between Countryside (now part of Vistry Group), L&Q, Ptarmigan Land, and Halley Developments/Greycoat Real Estate. The site has the potential to accommodate approximately 10,000 new dwellings and around 610,000 sq ft of employment floorspace.



Chelmsford has a rich history of invention and innovation, which includes being the birthplace of radio. In 1899, technology pioneer Guglielmo Marconi opened the world's first wireless factory in Chelmsford, before going on to develop Morse code machines for ship and transatlantic communication. His equipment saved many lives at sea, earning him the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1909 alongside Karl Ferdinand Braun, for their contributions to the development of wireless telegraphy.

In 1920, one of Marconi's engineers was involved in the first live worldwide radio broadcast from Chelmsford, which led to the foundation of the BBC in 1922.

Investment opportunity:



Various opportunities, Chesterford Research Park

Research and technology (including laboratory) units from 2,200 sq ft to 75,500 sq ft, available from October 2025.

With a masterplan for around one million square foot, of which approximately 350,000 sq ft is already occupied, there are a variety of sites available for new, bespoke laboratory and research and development buildings at Chesterford Research Park, the ideal environment for innovation and growth.

Build to suit options within three years.

Opportunity at a glance

Types of opportunity:

Build to suit & available floorspace

Real estate sectors:

Science & high tech

Local Planning Authority:

Uttlesford District Council

Buildings:

Units from 2,200 sq ft to 75,500 sq ft

Tenure:

Leasehold

Lead promoter:

Cheffins and Savills

Image © Aviva Investors



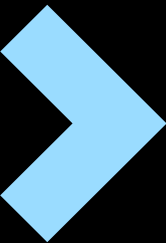
For more information:

extraordinaryessex.co.uk/opportunities/chesterford-research-park-sidney-sussex-building

A scientist with long dark hair, wearing safety glasses and a white lab coat over a striped shirt, is looking through a microscope. The image is overlaid with a blue tint and geometric white patterns in the top right corner, including a large diamond shape and a circular dot pattern.

3

INNOVATION CENTRES



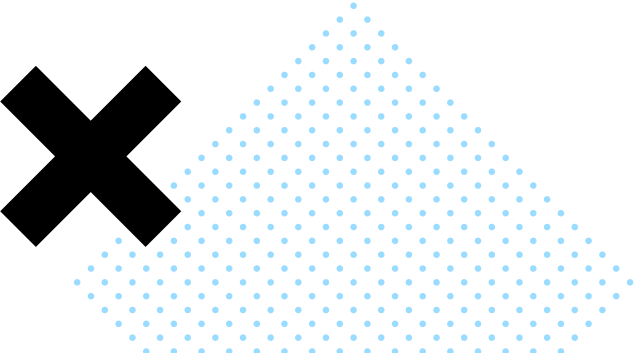
Greater Essex is home to several innovation centres that provide on-site support and networking alongside high-quality floorspace and facilities.

In recent years, Essex has become a centre of innovation and entrepreneurial spirit. Armed with a business community ready to take advantage of innovation and technology, physical connectivity, and sociable communities for knowledge transfer, Essex is well-positioned to benefit from a wide range of opportunities for growth.

**PHYSICAL
CONNECTIVITY
AND KNOWLEDGE
TRANSFER**

A strategic location, with proximity to major transport links affording easy access to London, Cambridge, and the wider UK motorway network, makes Essex an attractive location for businesses looking to connect with major economic hubs.

This is backed by access to world-class research, resources, and learning, with strong links between business and academia. At the centre of this are Essex’s universities which are recognised for their cutting-edge research, ranked among the top 40 universities in the UK, and have innovation centres supporting early-stage businesses and start-ups. These strong connections create sociable communities for knowledge transfer, translating innovative research and academia into practical applications.



**SUSTAINABLE
INNOVATION**

With its status as the sunniest county in the UK, in addition to having the second longest coastline in the UK, Essex has the potential to capitalise on innovations in decarbonisation – promoting more sustainable technologies such as ground and air-source heat pumps and solar, moving away from reliance on fossil fuels. In doing so, the county is positioning itself as the place to build sustainably.

Essex can also take advantage of other aspects of its natural landscape, including large, flat open spaces and access to coast and waterways.

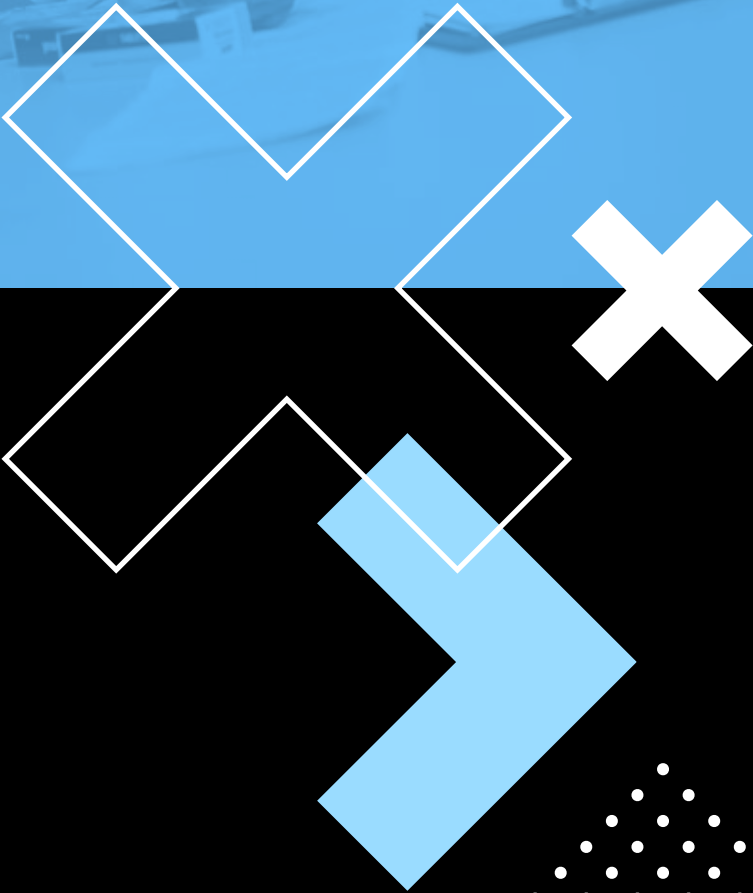
**DRIVING
COLLABORATION
AND GROWTH**

Essex’s ambition to harness its thriving clusters of innovation aligns closely with the government’s focus on tech growth and realising its potential to encourage collaboration between the public and private sectors, attract top talent, and drive economic growth.



**Exploring innovation in the
business community**

Essex held a business summit in October 2024, exploring the innovation and potential amongst the county’s business community. Hosted at Hylands House in Chelmsford, the event led by Essex County Council united over 175 businesses and organisations under the themes of grow, innovate and connect.





Arise Chelmsford

Arise Chelmsford is an innovation hub for businesses specialising in the health, performance and wellbeing sectors, and is part of Anglia Ruskin University (ARU). It is located on ARU's riverside campus in Chelmsford, next door to the state-of-the-art School of Medicine and benefitting from the excellent amenities and facilities of this modern university. A 15-minute walk from Chelmsford city centre, Arise Chelmsford provides access to rail links that connect to the heart of London in 30 minutes.

Arise Chelmsford opened its doors in 2014 as a partnership between ARU and Essex County Council, with support from Chelmsford City Council, to promote business growth in Essex. It comprises more than 10,000 sq ft of office and innovation space over three floors and is currently home to more than 45 businesses specialising in the health, performance and wellbeing sectors.

Its business accommodation offers meeting rooms, a kitchen area, and innovation space, bringing together academics, researchers, and students, with access to supporting facilities.

The hub is supported by the expertise and resources of ARU, providing skills, talent, innovation and business support, including the academic community comprising more than 1,200 expert members of staff. This connection promotes the exchange of knowledge, skills, and innovation.

Arise continues to provide cost-effective and economic co-working opportunities, offering excellent flexibility, access to 30-day rolling terms, and a wide level of collaboration. For information on availability and pricing, email ariseinnovation@aru.ac.uk

Recognition and accolades

Research at ARU is recognised for having a real-life impact. In the most recent Research Excellence Framework, the university achieved world-leading impact in nine out of 16 subject areas, meaning ARU research demonstrated a significant and impactful effect on areas like the economy, society, culture, public policy, services, health, the environment, and quality of life. It signifies that ARU research has achieved a level of originality, significance, and rigour that is recognised as **the best in the world**.

In 2024, ARU became the first institution in the UK to receive the **Entrepreneurial University Award from the National Centre for Entrepreneurship in Education (NCEE)** – a five-year accreditation in recognition of commitment to fostering enterprise and entrepreneurship.



Arise Harlow

With a history of technological advancements, Harlow is considered a significant hub for innovation. The town is the birthplace of fibre optic telecommunications technology, which was invented by two electrical engineers in the 1960s and led one of them – Sir Charles Kao – to win the Nobel Prize for Physics in 2009.

Harlow is located within the UK Innovation Corridor – the fastest-growing and most sought-after area in the UK for science, technology, research and innovation. Connecting London and Cambridge, the Corridor is known for transforming research and ideas into commercial products and services. In 2024, Harlow was named the UK's number one tech hub by TalkTalk Business, offering the ultimate combination of high salaries and affordable living for tech professionals.

Harlow is home to ARU's second Arise innovation hub, which opened in 2022 and is located on Harlow Innovation Park. It is ideally positioned for those wanting to be part of a growing science community that is well connected to research clusters in both London and Cambridge.

Funded by ARU and Essex County Council, with support from Harlow Council, the £6 million building provides 10,000 sq ft of office space and innovation over two floors. This includes professional meeting rooms, a welcome area, kitchenette and collaboration spaces.

Arise Harlow is also connected to ARU's academic expertise, interns, live briefs and knowledge exchange. Currently, it is home to 25 innovative and entrepreneurial businesses, specialising in the health, performance and wellbeing sectors.

It also benefits from strong community networks and high-quality digital infrastructure, as well as Harlow's rail, road and air connections. The M11 and M25 motorway networks are nearby, with London Stansted Airport less than 20 minutes away.

There are opportunities to occupy a dedicated space at Arise, as well as co-working and virtual office opportunities – all on flexible, rolling 30-day terms. For information on availability and pricing, email ariseinnovation@aru.ac.uk



IN NUMBERS...

✕ **230** JOBS SUPPORTED

✕ **70** BUSINESSES SUPPORTED



Innovation Centre, Knowledge Colchester

Located to the east of Colchester and set within 200 acres of parkland is the Innovation Centre, Knowledge Gateway (ICKG), a thriving hub for innovators, entrepreneurs and businesses with space for up to 50 enterprises.

The 38,000 sq ft centre sits at the heart of the University of Essex's Knowledge Gateway research and technology park and is managed in partnership with Oxford Innovation, the UK's largest innovation centre operator.

ICKG has achieved over 80 per cent occupancy and is home to more than 30 businesses from the creative and digital sectors, as well as Software as a Service (SaaS), fintech, health-tech, education and recruitment. ICKG provides office space, co-working areas and meeting rooms, as well as services such as professional mentoring and strategic

business support. There is also a busy programme of networking events run by ICKG and partners such as the Essex Chambers of Commerce and Federation of Small Businesses.

The University of Essex is consistently recognised internationally for the quality of its research, and ICKG businesses are ideally placed to benefit from collaborations with leading academics in key fields including artificial intelligence (AI), embedded systems, plant productivity, logistics, health, finance and data analytics.

ICKG occupants also benefit from having the university's Business Engagement team based on-site. The team supports entrepreneurs to connect with university researchers to develop their products and services. Alongside having access to a pipeline of graduate talent, ICKG businesses have offered 90 internship and work placement opportunities to Essex students over the past five years.

IN NUMBERS...

Between 2019 and 2024,
ICKG companies...

PROVIDED MORE THAN
500 JOBS

RAISED OVER
£6.5 MILLION
IN GRANTS AND
INVESTMENT

ADDED OVER
£20 MILLION
IN VALUE TO THE
LOCAL ECONOMY

Images © University of Essex



ICKG offers flexible all-inclusive serviced packages for suites which can accommodate between 3-11 people. For information on availability and pricing, submit an enquiry at www.knowledge-gateway.co.uk/contact



Launchpad

Southend-on-Sea has undergone steady investment and development over the last two decades, capitalising on its proximity to an international airport, as well as a large talent pool. The development of Southend Airport Business Park marks significant investment by Southend-on-Sea City Council. The business park benefits from a Local Development Order, offering a simplified planning process for applicants.

At the heart of the business park stands Launchpad – an £8 million innovation hub for entrepreneurs, startups and scale-up businesses. Its road network provides access to Southend-on-Sea city centre and London Southend Airport.

Owned by Southend-on-Sea Council and managed by Oxford Innovation Space, Launchpad opened in 2022 following local grant funding. The building was constructed in partnership with HBD and achieved an Outstanding BREEAM status, in recognition of its sustainable design and construction.

Situated in Rochford, Launchpad spans 34,000 sq ft over three floors, providing 17,600 sq ft of lettable space, including offices, co-working space and meeting rooms. The hub also has breakout areas, privacy pods, kitchens on each floor, a café, secure internal cycle storage space and changing rooms with shower facilities. Its office spaces can be tailored to suit occupiers' needs, providing a range of sectors with access to state-of-the-art facilities. Occupiers benefit from three-phase power, drainage and water supply.

Currently, Launchpad is occupied by 30 businesses from sectors including IT, pharmaceuticals, design and marketing, architecture, as well as retail, finance, and accountancy. Additional businesses also use the co-working space on a flexible basis.

In addition, an on-site Business Growth Manager provides free-of-charge business support, including skills workshops, access to networking and events, and signposting to funding opportunities. They also provide access to exclusive tools from Oxford Innovation, including diagnostic tools to help businesses reach their ambitions and the Beauhurst data platform, which offers insights into the economy.

Images © Oxford Innovation

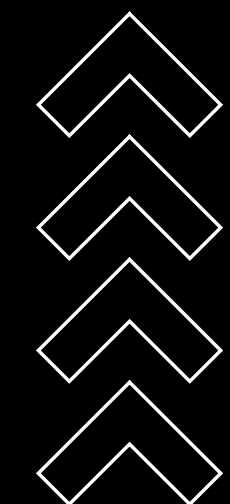
Launchpad has a flexible tariff-based approach to co-working and serviced offices, with daily rates also available. For availability and pricing, contact rlaunchpad@oxin.co.uk



IN NUMBERS...

23 JOBS
CREATED

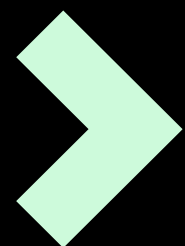
UP TO **91%**
OCCUPANCY
IN THE LAST SIX
MONTHS





4

MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENTS



Many of Greater Essex's major settlements benefit from rail access to the capital in under 45 minutes, making them attractive to homebuyers and private renters.

The four Garden Communities across Greater Essex will realise the Town and Country Planning Association's (TCPA) Garden City Principles, bringing together high-quality, sustainable homes, dedicated employment spaces, integrated transport systems, and places where people want to live, work, visit and do business. Collectively, over 24,000 new homes will be delivered within Greater Essex's Garden Communities, with more schemes likely to come forward in the coming years.



Regional shopping destinations include Chelmsford, Lakeside Shopping Centre, Eastgate Shopping Centre, Southend-on-Sea, and Braintree Village. These provide extensive commercial floorspaces, including prime shopping centres. Many places in Greater Essex have a strong evening and night-time economy, offering a mix of restaurants, cinemas, and public spaces.

Several key centres in Greater Essex have been identified as prime locations for regeneration and growth. This offers potential for higher density mixed-use developments, where people can live, work, and play.

Subregional centres providing well-used retail spaces, community uses and schools, are also often well-connected via rail, local bus routes or the strategic road network.

With steady population growth over the past decade and 30 per cent of domestic migration coming from London in 2024, there is potential to capitalise on the increased spending of new residents in local businesses and services.

✗ **OVER 24,000 NEW HOMES** WILL BE DELIVERED WITHIN GREATER ESSEX'S GARDEN COMMUNITIES

✗ **30 PER CENT** OF DOMESTIC MIGRATION CAME **FROM LONDON** IN 2024

✗ IT WAS RANKED IN THE **TOP 20** OF THE MOST VIBRANT UK RETAIL LOCATIONS IN 2023



Chelmsford

Granted city status in 2012 as the first city in Essex, Chelmsford has undergone substantial investment in recent years. It is known for being a prime destination to live, work and visit, with its fast train service connecting to the City of London in less than 40 minutes.

A new train station will open at Beaulieu Park later in 2025 to serve the new Chelmsford Garden Community, which will comprise around 10,000 homes, employment land and extensive public green spaces.

As the county town of Essex, Chelmsford is rich in history and is blessed with heritage architecture, including an early 18th-century stately home at Hylands House, and Chelmsford Cathedral, one of the smallest in England yet celebrated for its unique charm and historic significance.

The city centre has the busiest high street in Essex in terms of footfall, offering a mix of shopping, dining, and entertainment options. Chelmsford's evening and

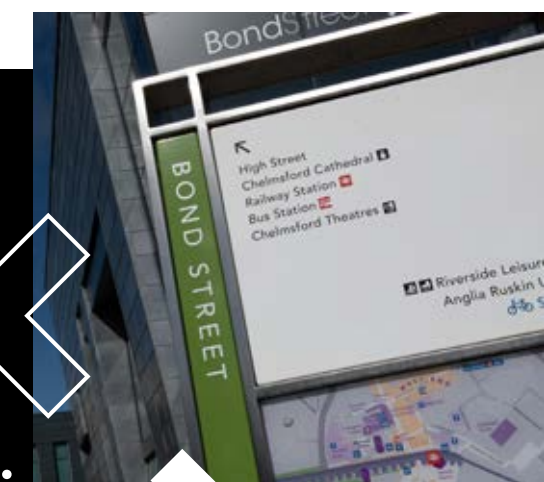
night-time economy has been recognised with the Purple Flag accreditation for 12 consecutive years.

PROMIS reports that top prime retail rents in Chelmsford City Centre were £115 per sq ft ITZA in mid-2024.

Linking to existing retail on the High Street is Bond Street Chelmsford, a 300,000 sq ft retail and leisure development by Aquila Holdings, which sits next to the River Chelmer. The precinct offers a combination of open-air shopping, riverside restaurants, cinema and public spaces, as well as a basement car park. Essex's first John Lewis anchor store occupies a 90,000 sq ft building over three floors.

Further development proposals within Chelmsford City Centre are being promoted and encouraged to create a diverse mix of retail, food and drink, leisure and entertainment, cultural, community, business and residential uses where they positively contribute towards increased footfall, activity and vibrancy.

Images © Essex County Council



In 2023, the city unveiled the new traffic-free Tindal Square at the top of the high street in front of the landmark Grade II* listed Shire Hall building. The scheme removed traffic from the area with prioritised pedestrianised space, a cycle link, trees and seating. Previously, the square was separated from the High Street by a road. The area now provides a location for a range of cultural activities and to maintain the setting of Chelmsford Cathedral, while adding to the vitality of the high street.

The regeneration and diversification of the Meadows Shopping Centre has been proposed in the emerging Local Plan to provide a mixed-use development that builds on the successful transformation of the city centre, further enhancing its vibrancy and taking full advantage of its waterside location. This site will be used to test the effectiveness of greater

car-reduction in a high-volume mixed-use development, maximising active and sustainable travel.

In 2021, developer Dominus acquired the leasehold interest of the site, comprising of the shopping centre, former Cater House offices, the Chelmsford City Council-operated Meadows surface car park, and Q-Park car park. In 2024, Dominus submitted a planning application for a phased redevelopment of the site, including replacing the shopping centre and some of the surrounding areas with a retail, commercial and community spaces, along with 537 dwellings. It also includes redeveloping the Meadows surface car park and modifying the Q-Park multi storey.

Image (left) Tindal Square © Chelmsford City Council
Image (right) Vision for the Meadows © Dominus



LOCATED LESS THAN A FIVE-MINUTE WALK FROM THE CITY CENTRE, **CHELMER WATERSIDE** IS A FORMER GAS WORKS SITE BEING REDEVELOPED INTO A **VIBRANT RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL AREA** BY DEVELOPER TAYLOR WIMPEY AND CHELMSFORD CITY COUNCIL.



Image: Bow Bridge Road © Chelmsford City Council

Improved accessibility to Chelmer Waterside and the local area is being provided by a wide range of infrastructure across different scales, including:

- **The new Bow Bridge Road**, enabling enhanced walking, cycling and restricted vehicle access linking to Wharf Road and Parkway (to be open in spring 2025)
- **The Army and Navy Sustainable Transport Package**
- **Upgrades to the Springfield Road/Navigation Road** junction as part of the planning agreement for the Peninsula site

These will enable the delivery of up to **1,100 new homes** and make the **best use of the city's waterways**. Taylor Wimpey has already completed more than 400 homes in the area.

The development will also include a mixed-use element, delivering space for flexible commercial use, and a new public open space which will utilise the waterfront. Proposals are underway to relocate the gas pressure reduction compound and the high-pressure gas pipelines, which will increase the site's capacity potential.



Image © Essex County Council

Chelmsford Garden Community

Chelmsford Garden Community is a large sustainable urban extension that is being delivered to the north-east of the city. It is a joint project between Countryside (now part of Vistry Group), L&Q, Ptarmigan Land, and Halley Developments/Greycoat Real Estate. The Garden Community incorporates the award-winning Beaulieu Park development, building on its success in delivering high-quality new housing. The development is supported by £218 million of Housing Infrastructure Fund investment that will deliver the new Beaulieu Park Station and the first phase of the Chelmsford North East Bypass.

The new community will provide around 10,000 new dwellings, around 46 acres of employment land, a new country park/destination parks, and new community facilities including primary and secondary schools. Some 2,500 homes have already been completed.

The new development will deliver two employment hubs with prospects for an innovation park, which will appeal to leading businesses in the research and development and high-tech sectors and could help place Chelmsford at the forefront of 21st-century economic development in Essex and beyond. The new employment development will be in addition to existing commitments for significant new office and business floorspace in Chelmsford Garden Community at Beaulieu and Channels, including Beaulieu Exchange business park.

The development will be supported by a Stage 1 Masterplan comprising three independent core documents: the approved Development Framework Document (DFD), the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) and the Planning Framework Agreement (PFA). Three outline planning applications and a full application for the Northern Radial Distributor Road, which will be critical to the operation of the Chelmsford North East Bypass, have been submitted pending determination.



THE NEW COMMUNITY AND THE NORTH OF CHELMSFORD AND ITS SURROUNDINGS WILL BENEFIT FROM THE PROVISION OF **MAJOR TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENTS.**

The development will take its main vehicular access from Essex Regiment Way, Beaulieu Parkway, and a new vehicular access via the Northern Radial Distributor Road. Additional access to the site will be from Chelmsford North East Bypass (Phase 1A). Improvements will be made to Boreham Interchange, along Essex Regiment Way and other junctions on the A1016 and A131 main road corridors.

The development will also provide an extension of on-site Chelmsford Area Bus Based Rapid Transit (ChART) connecting with the city centre and Chelmsford and Beaulieu Park railway stations. When Beaulieu Park station becomes operational, subsequent phases of ChART will create a link to serve the station.

To read more about transport infrastructure developments, turn to page 60.



Images © Essex County Council

NEWS FEATURE:



On track for transformation

New transport links in Essex’s county town to connect the city like never before.

Transport links in Chelmsford are set to be transformed with the expected opening of Beaulieu Park station at the end of 2025, unlocking opportunities for growth.

The new station, the first on the Great Eastern mainline in over 100 years, marks a significant investment in the county’s infrastructure.

Connecting commuters and train users to London Liverpool Street in just 40 minutes, the station features three platforms, car parking, a public transport interchange, cycle facilities and a new track for passing trains.

Beaulieu Park will relieve pressure at Chelmsford’s existing station, improve journey reliability, act as an interchange for sustainable travel and reduce car journeys into the city, in turn reducing congestion and pollution on local roads.

The station will be complemented by the Chelmsford North East Bypass, which will be built in stages in order to have infrastructure in place when it is needed. Section 1A of the bypass, which will join with a new east-west link road (Northern Radial Distributor

Road), is expected to be completed by spring 2026. The bypass will provide easier access to the A12 and a direct route to the new train station, helping to ease congestion and pollution on local roads.

These essential transport links are key to enabling planned and future housing and economic growth at the new Chelmsford Garden Community and wider afield.

KEY DELIVERY PARTNERS

- Essex County Council
- Chelmsford City Council
- Network Rail
- Countryside and L&Q
- J Murphy & Sons
- Octavius



“Beaulieu Park station is a great example of how the rail industry can work together to enhance the railway for local communities and future generations of rail users.”

Amy Farmer,
Network Rail sponsor for Beaulieu Park station

“When the first phase of the new bypass has been completed, along with the new railway station at Beaulieu, this essential infrastructure will be the catalyst for bringing people together and improving lives.”

Jamie Harrison,
Delivery Director for Highways at Octavius

“Chelmsford North East Bypass and Beaulieu Park Station will support future growth to the north of the city, notably through the Chelmsford Garden Community. Along with other strategic sites in the local plans, this will deliver thousands of new homes, significant new business space, schools and community facilities.”

Councillor Tom Cunningham,
Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Sustainable Transport at Essex County Council



FUNDING FACTS

Essex County Council, working in partnership with Chelmsford City Council, has secured a £250 million funding package to deliver Beaulieu Park station and Chelmsford North East Bypass.

The £172 million secured for the new station is made up of:

- £131.5 million from the government’s Housing Infrastructure Fund
- £12 million from the South East Local Enterprise Partnership
- £22 million from Chelmsford City Council and developers Countryside and L&Q
- Up to £7.5 million from Essex County Council

A TOTAL OF
£78 MILLION HAS BEEN
SECURED FOR THE NEW
BYPASS.



Harlow

Set on the border of Essex and Hertfordshire and located between London and Cambridge, Harlow is a fast-growing town that has seen significant investment and regeneration in recent years.

Alongside infrastructure upgrades, there are plans for large-scale housing growth through the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town (HGGT) project. HGGT will deliver 23,000 homes through £1.3 billion of infrastructure upgrades, enabling the population to grow from about 85,000 to around 140,000.

Located in the west of Essex, Harlow has a vibrant town centre offering a range of retail, dining, and leisure and cultural facilities, including two shopping centres. It benefits from two train stations, providing rail links to London Stansted Airport in 20 minutes and the city of London in 40 minutes. The town is also served by a network of local buses and has one of the most extensive segregated cycle networks in the country.

Images © Essex County Council



In 2021, Harlow Council commissioned the development of a masterplan, developed by Allies and Morrison Urban Practitioners, to provide guidance on the future planning, growth and design of the town centre.

Significant long-term investment to transform Harlow town centre is being brought forward through the Harlow Regeneration Partnership (HRP), a joint venture formed by The Hill Group and Harlow Council in 2023. Harlow Council's plans to regenerate the town centre into a mixed residential, retail and leisure district include the development of council-owned sites for regeneration, in addition to other sites. The partnership is formed on a non-exclusive basis, allowing Harlow to explore the right development route for the right projects.

Regeneration is also underway at several sites following successful bids for government funding.

HGGT WILL DELIVER
23,000 HOMES
THROUGH **£1.3 BILLION** OF
INFRASTRUCTURE
UPGRADES,
ENABLING THE
POPULATION TO
GROW **TO AROUND**
140,000

Image: the vision for the new transport hub © Harlow District Council

➤ **A Harlow Arts and Cultural Quarter** at Playhouse Square and College Square will be created through the £20 million from the Levelling Up Fund. Planning permission has been approved for a mixed-use building, consisting of affordable dwellings and ground floor commercial space. Major upgrades will be made to Harlow Playhouse Theatre, including an extension to provide space for live entertainment, a music school and recording studio, a contemporary cafe, a restaurant, and a bar.

➤ **A new sustainable transport hub and interchange** will replace the existing bus station using £23.7 million through the government's Town Deals programme. Once complete, the hub plans to improve links with commercial locations, the nearby railway station, and the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Sustainable Transport Corridor.

➤ **The regeneration of the town centre over the next 10 years** will be supported with £20 million through the Plan for Neighbourhoods programme to support the regeneration of the town centre. It brings the total amount of government funding secured by Harlow Council to more than £70 million.



Basildon

Located 25 miles east of central London, Basildon is the largest economy in Essex and the second largest employer in the Thames Estuary after Canary Wharf.

Ranked the 10th largest urban conurbation for private sector jobs, Basildon was established as a new town in 1949 and now has a population of around 180,000.

It has a transport hub with a bus station and a train station offering rail links to the City of London in 35 minutes, while benefitting from additional railway stations in the neighbourhood areas of Laindon and Pitsea.

The town centre and surrounding borough offer a range of retail, dining, leisure and recreational options, including a recent new cinema complex. The Basildon Sporting Village on the outskirts of the town centre includes the South Essex Gymnastics Centre used by Olympic gymnasts and noted for having a 50m swimming pool.

Basildon Council is preparing a new local plan which promotes the borough

Image © Essex County Council

as a catalyst for growth in south Essex, proposing around 27,000 new homes and employment over the next 20 years up to 2043. Basildon town centre is at the core of growth plans, with its potential to accelerate regeneration across the borough and wider parts of the county.

There are opportunities to enhance Basildon's evening economy, with redevelopment beyond the new cinema and recent residential and mixed-use permissions. This redevelopment aims to offer a broader range of activities within a well-designed, resilient and multi-functional

- ✕ POPULATION OF AROUND **180,000**
- ✕ RAIL LINKS TO THE CITY OF LONDON IN **35 MINUTES**
- ✕ AN EMERGING LOCAL PLAN PROPOSES AROUND **27,000 NEW HOMES** BY 2043



public realm, with ambitions to enhance connectivity and movement.

Westgate

The draft masterplan identified three opportunity areas around Westgate – the retail park, car park, and the car park to the rear of Towngate Theatre.

In 2024, Basildon Council acquired the Westgate Shopping Park for £18.5 million to explore redevelopment plans. One of the town's retail parks, Westgate opened in 1999 and currently offers a car park, and independent and major retail shops. Located on the western edge of Basildon town centre, the 13 acres of land includes the Towngate Theatre and the Basildon Centre – a civic centre which houses the council services.

In early 2025, a public consultation on the redevelopment was run by Basildon Council, with the first phase of the masterplan expected to be submitted in June 2025, bringing a new hotel, retail, and residential development to Basildon town centre, with a new arena and office space proposed by December 2025.

Town Square and East Square

In March 2022, hybrid consent was gained for a mixed-use development at Town Square, brought forward by Marson Property and Basildon Estates. The scheme could see the former Marks and Spencer building demolished to accommodate 495 dwellings and 215,300 sq ft of commercial and retail space.

Image © Essex County Council

Basildon East Walk

Basildon Council granted planning permission in 2022 for JD Wetherspoon to change the use of retail units to a public house together with new external openings and provision of external terrace at East Walk. Building work on the 'Sigered, King Of Essex' pub in Basildon town centre is to start in May 2025. Wetherspoons will spend £2.75 million on the development, which is planned to open in September 2025.

Eastgate

Built in two phases during the 1980s, the Eastgate International Shopping Centre was once the largest indoor shopping centre in Europe, bringing 2,000 jobs to the area. The centre wraps around the south-east side of the town centre, dominating the area while providing significant retail space.

In 2023, Galliard Homes and DVS Ground Rent acquired the shopping centre through a joint venture. Plans were approved by Basildon Council in 2024 to bring forward the development of a private medical centre at the former three-storey Debenhams retail building, acquired by Basildon Health Centre Ltd.

Backed by the healthcare development team at Fenton Whelan, the facility is expected to be equipped with diagnostic capabilities including MRI, CT, X-ray, and ultrasound, in addition to treatment rooms for endoscopy procedures, operating theatres, overnight hospital bedrooms for patient stays, and a range of outpatient services.

A further planning application in progress is for the development of up to 86 residential units at Eastgate Shopping Centre. The application is requesting for the change of use from Class E to C3 on the second to fourth floors and construction of new floors, taking the building up to an overall height of 11 storeys.

Great Oaks and Broadmayne

The development of a former retail park being brought forward by Donard is set to include an 11-storey building consisting of 245 dwellings, commercial and community floorspace, space for public artwork, rooftop gardens, and extensive cycle parking. Located at the former site of Staples and Carphone Warehouse, the Great Oaks development will be on the doorstep of Basildon town centre's amenities and transport links.

Laindon town centre

Laindon Centre Regeneration, delivered by Sanctuary, includes a community hub, retail space, more than 200 high-quality homes with parking, and public spaces. A new Lidl and 15 local shops will be provided, along with an option for an improved medical centre and a Sanctuary office. Public spaces will be provided to house the Laindon War Memorial and fountain.

Pitsea redevelopment

The development will see a new library, diagnosis centre, and community spaces at the former site of The Place, Pitsea Leisure Centre. The new building will offer services including X-rays, phlebotomy, CT scans and MRI machines. With plans to serve over 250,000 people annually, it aims to reduce waiting times and improve access to healthcare.

Basildon Market Square and Market Pavement

In 2024, Toronto-based investor Starlight acquired a three-block, mid-rise property north of Market Square, Basildon town centre, with planning permission for **492 dwellings**. The build-to-rent (BTR) project is being funded by a **£74 million** development loan from Maslow Capital. The scheme has commenced and will be delivered by a joint venture between Orwell Real Estate and Housing Growth Partnership (HGP). It will include around **13,100 sq ft of shared residential amenities**, and **17,800 sq ft of commercial space**.

INVESTING IN A £9 MILLION HUB TO BOOST SKILLS AND EMPLOYMENT

In 2021, a partnership led to the delivery of a £9 million campus in the heart of Basildon town centre.

The Centre for Digital Technologies, part of South Essex College, is a £9 million technology campus in the heart of Basildon town centre. Set over three floors, it spans teaching areas, break areas and a café.

The campus, developed through a partnership between Basildon Council, South Essex College and government funding, is a significant addition to Basildon. It is set to boost future job opportunities and skill development in technology, attracting students and young professionals to the town centre.

Image © Basildon Borough Council



Dunton Hills Garden Village

Dunton Hills Garden Village, in Brentwood district, is in the Homes England Garden Communities Programme and will deliver around 4,000 new homes, community and education facilities within close proximity to the town of Brentwood and the mainline railway station at West Horndon.

The scheme is genuinely landscape led, with 50 per cent of the site given over to green and blue infrastructure. Development on site is expected to start in 2026.



Colchester

One of the UK's fastest-growing places, Colchester is a diverse urban centre in the north of Essex which gained city status in 2022.

It provides employment to around 24,000 people, many of which travel to Colchester from the surrounding area. The city is also home to more than 13,000 students who study at the University of Essex's Colchester campus.

Colchester has a rich heritage that has set the scene for major tourism investment in recent years. With many new hotels across a variety of price points, investment in new and existing attractions, plus a range of retail, dining, leisure choices and easy access to coast and countryside, the city of Colchester is now firmly on the short break wish list.

Images © Essex County Council



Multi-million-pound investments are bringing new space for growth, new business space for tech firms, new road access and the latest in gigabit and 5G connectivity, all enabled by a forward-thinking council, strong partnerships, networks and a great location, not least being within the boundary of Freeport East.

The city has two railway stations, with the fastest services connecting to London Liverpool Street in 47 minutes. By road, the A12 is within proximity, providing links to London and the East of England.

Team Colchester, a partnership between Essex County Council and Colchester City Council, revised the Colchester City Centre Masterplan in 2023, setting out ambitions for regeneration.

A creative hub and collaborative workspace – the Digital Forum – is being developed with £6.25 million investment from the government's Town Deals fund. The hub focuses on attracting new and emerging businesses and technologies from Cambridge to Colchester. Located at the site of Colchester's former bus depot, the hub will feature 5G connectivity and will open in early autumn 2025. It will also be on the doorstep of Colchester's cultural quarter, comprising Colchester Castle Museum and Castle Park, the new St Botolph's Quarter heritage trail, St Botolph's Priory, the Roman Wall, the Curzon Cinema and creative business centre SPACE Studios at 37 Queen Street, and the award-winning contemporary visual arts gallery, Firstsite.

In recent years, Colchester has attracted significant investment and growth, with more than £40 million in government funding and millions more in grants to regenerate the city centre:

Redevelopment and repairs at the Grade II listed Balmerne Water Tower, known locally as Jumbo, are being funded by an £8 million grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund. In partnership with North Essex Heritage, the restoration plans include converting the space into a restaurant, event venue, and visitor experience. Colchester City Council granted listed building consent in January 2025.

A new public square behind Colchester Town Station to create a space for events, including markets, and a heritage trail to increase tourism, is being developed at St Botolph's Quarter, funded by a £7 million investment from the government. Following public consultation, construction is expected to commence in summer 2025.

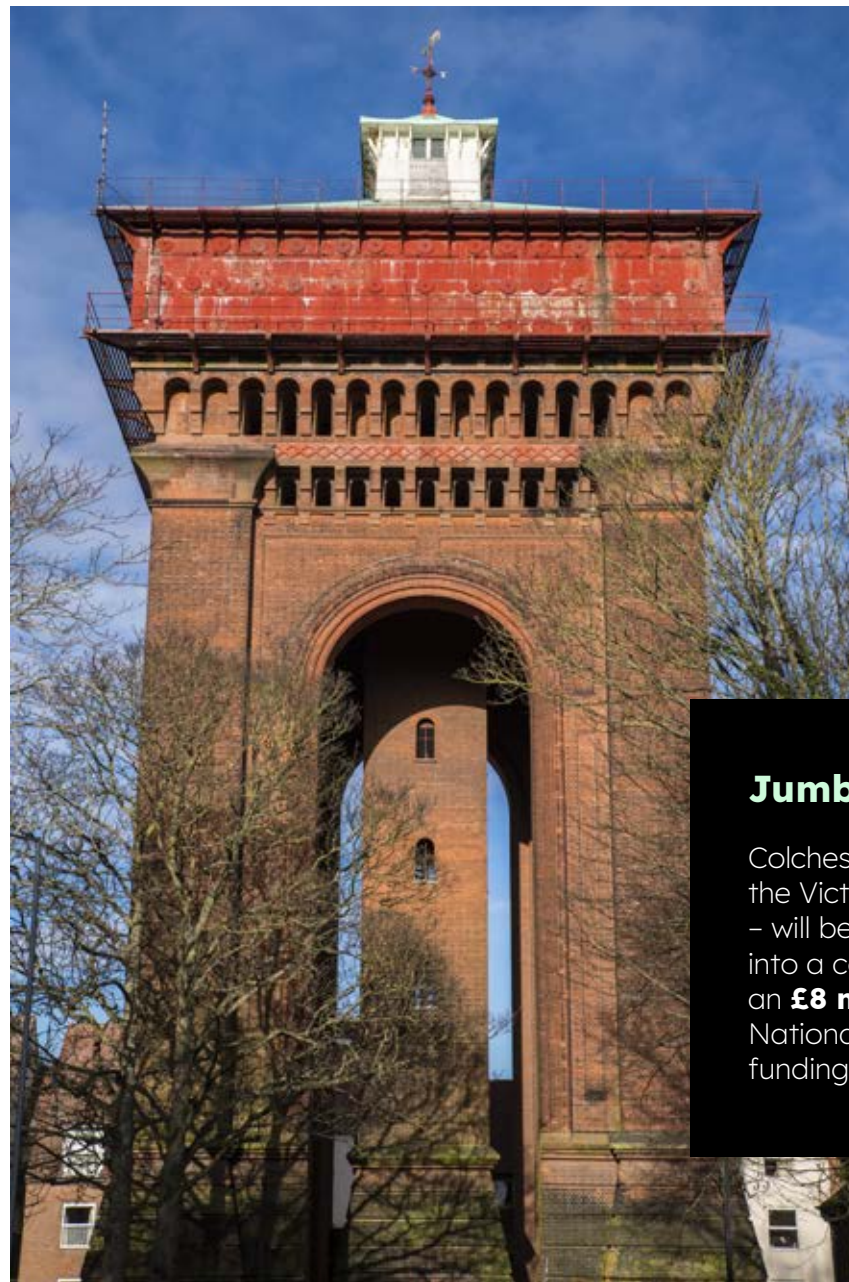
A lively space for outdoor events, markets and leisure is being developed at St Nicholas Square with a £1.6 million government grant, due for completion by spring 2025.

Upgrades at Mercury Theatre, including LED stage lighting and digital cameras and equipment to live stream performances and other events, are being funded through a share of £24.2 million through Arts Council England's Capital Investment Programme in addition to a £500,000 capital grant from the government's Getting Building Fund. The theatre reopened to the public in June 2021 after an £11.9 million extension and refurbishment, funded by Arts Council England, Colchester City Council, Essex County Council, European Regional Development Fund and local funding, plus generous public and private donations.



Images (clockwise): the vision for the Digital Forum; the vision for Colchester Town station; the station as it currently is

The redevelopment of a key gateway into Colchester city centre – St Botolph's Circus – are among the city centre works funded by a £19.6 million investment from the Levelling Up Fund. The proposals for St Botolph's Circus will see the area regenerated into a multi-mode transport hub, including new plaza areas and improved accessibility for pedestrians, wheelchair users and cyclists. Work is anticipated to begin by spring 2026.



Jumbo Water Tower

Colchester's tallest building – the Victorian Jumbo water tower – will be repaired and redeveloped into a commercial attraction with an **£8 million grant** from the National Lottery Heritage and funding from the city council.

➤ Outside the city centre, **Colchester Northern Gateway** is a phased development which has planning consent for 300 new homes, healthcare provision with older persons accommodation, and commercial floorspace.

➤ Property developer Turnstone has brought forward a **leisure development** on 10 acres. Located off Junction 28 of the A12, the park will include new homes, a healthcare hub, commercial floorspace, bowling alley, cinema and restaurants, in addition to a Travelodge hotel.

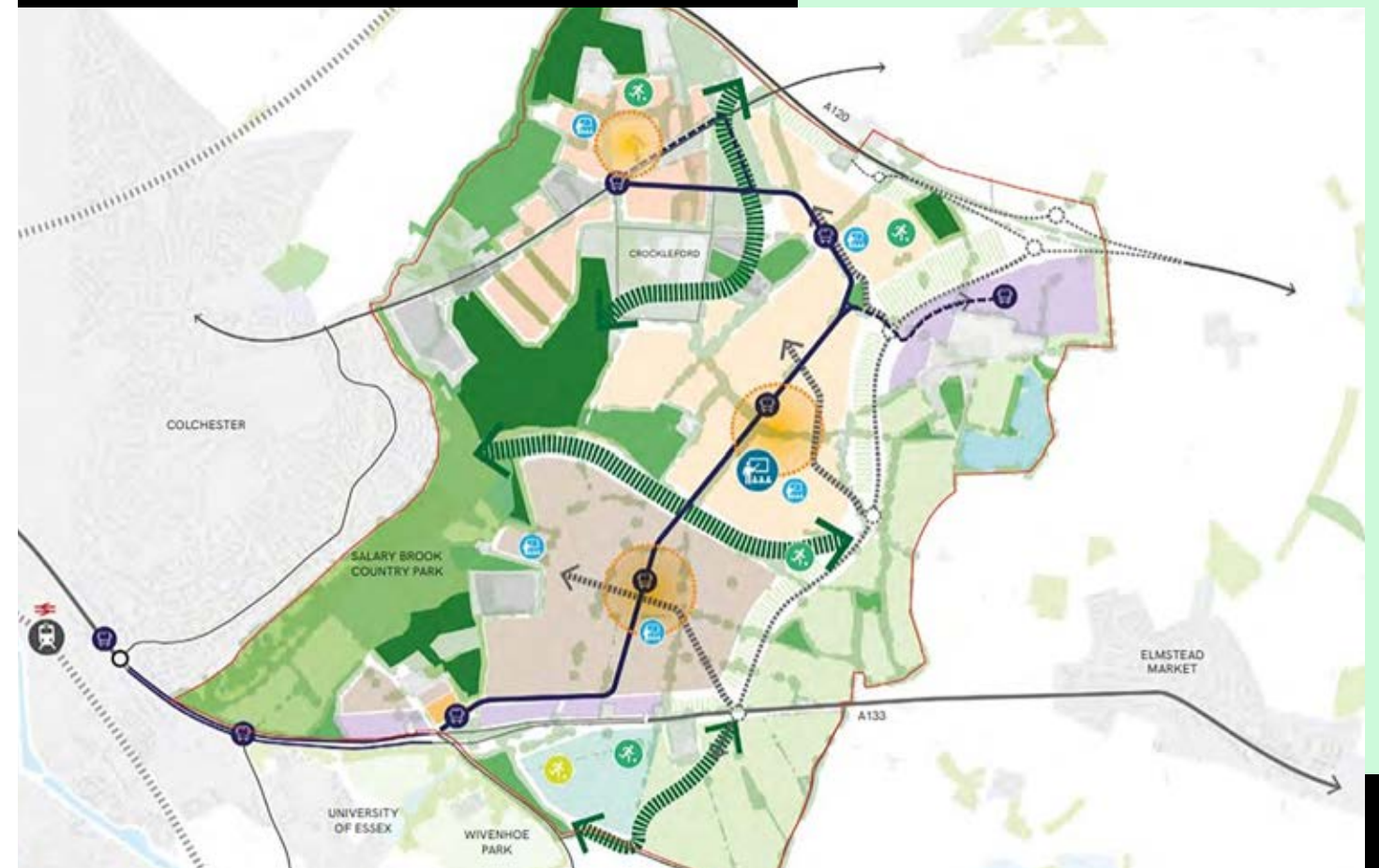
➤ It joins the **76-acre Northern Gateway Sports Park**, which was developed by Colchester City Council and opened in 2021. The park's facilities include a sports hall, the East of England's longest cycling track, outdoor pitches, a gymnasium, a coffee shop, and meeting rooms.

Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community

The Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community will include over 7,500 new homes to the east of Colchester, supported by new dedicated employment spaces, a new country park, and community facilities.

A transformational new public transport system – known as the Colchester Rapid Transit System (RTS) – is being funded as part of £99.9 million grant funding awarded by Homes England's Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF). The RTS will link key destinations, including Colchester's park and ride, the mainline railway station, the city centre, the University of Essex, Colchester Hospital, and the new Garden Community itself. Additionally, HIF is funding the first phase of the A1331, which will eventually connect the A133 with the A120 as part of the new development.

- ✕ OVER **7,500 NEW HOMES** TO THE EAST OF COLCHESTER
- ✕ NEW DEDICATED **EMPLOYMENT SPACES**, A NEW **COUNTRY PARK**, AND **COMMUNITY FACILITIES**
- ✕ TRANSFORMATIONAL **NEW PUBLIC TRANSPORT SYSTEM** – KNOWN AS THE COLCHESTER RAPID TRANSIT SYSTEM
- ✕ **£99.9 MILLION GRANT FUNDING** AWARDED BY HOMES ENGLAND'S HOUSING INFRASTRUCTURE FUND





Clacton-on-Sea

Clacton-on-Sea is a traditional seaside town on the Essex coast with a population of 55,000.

The town offers a variety of attractions for day trippers, including a pier and three beaches. It is also home to a range of retail, dining, and leisure facilities, catering to both residents and visitors.

A railway station in the town offers links to Chelmsford and Colchester. By road, the A133 provides access to the town from the A12. Bus services connect to a number of locations, including Harwich – another coastal town with a rich maritime history, three railway stations, an international port, and ferry services. Adjacent to Harwich International Port is Freeport East Harwich – a new port terminal development.

Clacton-on-Sea has been the focus of significant public sector investment aimed at town centre regeneration and improving the quality of life for residents.

An investment of £20 million through the Levelling Up Fund will support the development of a nearly £30 million Civic Quarter scheme, comprising the Clacton Hub and new dwellings proposed adjacent. In 2024, Tendring District Council ran two consultations on the scheme.



The Clacton Hub is a multi-storey skills and learning hub at the existing Clacton Library site. Led by Essex County Council, it will include a brand-new library, learning spaces, an Adult Community Learning Centre, local registration services, and space for the University of Essex's new Centre for Coastal Communities and the Clacton and District Local History Society Museum.

Adjacent is the site of the former Carnarvon House building on Carnarvon Road, which Tendring District Council plans to replace with a mixed-use civic and community space, including new creative workspaces for entrepreneurs, as part of the **Clacton Civic Quarter**. The plans, which were approved by the district council in March 2025, include a small number of dwellings and improvements to the existing High Street car park. The Civic Quarter will also include a new publicly-accessible urban realm, which will benefit from a range of hard and soft landscaping features.



Clacton and neighbouring coastal village Jaywick have also been **awarded £19.7 million through the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's Community Regeneration Partnership**.

In Clacton, this will fund the £3 million redevelopment of Clacton Leisure Centre into a **new Active Wellbeing Centre**. The centre will provide sustainable sports facilities and integrated health and wellbeing services, as well as an outdoor facility on the site.

An additional £5 million will be spent acquiring and repurposing a disused town centre building for community and cultural use.

Hartley Gardens is a new development in the north of Clacton, which could see around 1,700 new homes, up to 17 acres of employment land, and community facilities including a new primary school and nurseries.

Homes England and Greenwich Hospital (a Crown body and the oldest provider of Royal Navy charity) are working with Tendring District Council to promote the development of the site. Following four engagement events in 2023, Homes England and Greenwich Hospital are jointly preparing a framework masterplan which will be submitted as part of an outline planning application.

Images: Computer generated images of the Carnarvon Terrace site



Image: Clacton Leisure Centre
© Tendring District Council

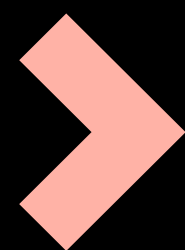


£3 MILLION REDEVELOPMENT OF CLACTON LEISURE CENTRE INTO A **NEW ACTIVE WELLBEING CENTRE**



5 DATA CENTRES

This is an artist impression of what a new hospital could look like;
not a design of the new hospital. Image © Gilling Dod Architects



With the boom of interest in artificial intelligence (AI), the demand to develop data infrastructure to harness this technology has reached an all-time high across the globe. At the heart of this are the data centres that will house the infrastructure that store, process and manage vast amounts of data, and are expected to see unprecedented growth in the development of larger, more powerful facilities.

Greater Essex is among the regions in the UK seeing significant investment in the development of data centres, with a £2 billion project in Loughton set to play a pivotal role in the country's AI ambitions. The site will also form part of an emerging data centre cluster along the M11 corridor, being 10 miles from Kao Data – part of the UK's largest data centre campus currently under development.

The region also benefits from a cross-sector public-private partnership led by the Essex + Hertfordshire Digital Innovation Zone (DIZ), which brings together local authorities, industry, and the private, health, voluntary and education sectors, to explore digital infrastructure opportunities. Among its members is the Princess Alexandra Hospital in Harlow, which is planned to be one of the most digitally advanced hospitals in the UK.

The UK government recognises data centres as key infrastructure needed for future industries and, in 2024, made changes to the National Planning Policy Framework to facilitate their development. In addition, changes to the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) consenting regime now include business and commercial projects of national significance, including data centres.



Kao Data Centre, Harlow

Located in Harlow, Kao Data opened in 2018 and is part of the UK's largest data centre campus currently under development. In 2023, its second data centre, KLON-02 – a 10MW facility powered entirely by 100 per cent certified renewable energy – become operational.

Spanning 15 acres, the Kao Data campus will eventually comprise three data centres engineered for AI and advanced computing, offering a total capacity of 40MW. In 2025, Kao Data announced the construction of its third data centre – a 17.6MW liquid-cooled facility expected to be operational by 2026.

The campus also includes Kao Park, a science and technology business park that counts Raytheon UK and Arrow Electronics among its occupiers. The site has historical significance as the former location of Standard Telecommunications Laboratories, where fibre optic telecommunications technology was first developed in the 1960s.

Strategically located within the Harlow Enterprise Zone and the UK Innovation Corridor (UKIC), the campus benefits from close proximity to London and Cambridge's AI and tech ecosystems, London Stansted Airport and the M11 motorway. Harlow is also central to the Essex + Hertfordshire Digital Innovation Zone (DIZ).

Kao Data has partnered with Jisc, Light Blue Fibre, euNetworks and other carriers to establish a full-fibre network connecting Cambridge research institutions and enterprises to global sites. This collaboration allows Kao Data's Harlow campus to provide life science and scientific research companies in the UKIC with a direct fibre connection to research institutes and science parks, both locally and globally.



Kao Data's second data centre, KLON-02 © Kao Data



Nscale AI Data Centre, Loughton

Nscale – a London-based AI hyperscaler – has committed to building the country’s largest AI data centre at a site acquired in Loughton, investing an overall £2 billion in the UK’s data centre infrastructure. The plans will support the UK government’s AI Opportunities Action Plan and ambition to become a global leader in generative AI.

The 50MW site in Loughton is set to be operational by late 2026 and can be scaled up to support up to 90MW of AI capacity. It will include the infrastructure to provide generative AI tools to businesses, researchers, and government.

Construction is expected later this year, creating 500 jobs during the build, and up to 250 full-time roles once operational.



Wickford Data Centre, Basildon

An outline planning application for a data centre was lodged with Basildon Council in April 2025.

If approved, it will create 400,800 sq ft GIA space, with office/storage, a substation as well as 34 acres of green space for the community.

With an estimated £1 billion construction cost, the data centre will create employment during construction phase as well as 120 full-time, permanent jobs once operational.



THE UK’S LARGEST AI DATA CENTRE



50MW SITE IN LOUGHTON SET TO BE OPERATIONAL BY LATE 2026



500 JOBS TO BE CREATED DURING CONSTRUCTION



UP TO 250 FULL-TIME ROLES ONCE OPERATIONAL



Thurrock Data Centre, Purfleet

Acquired on behalf of Google’s parent company Alphabet from London Strategic Land Partners Limited (LSL) in 2023 for a reported £47 million, Thurrock Data Centre is a proposed data campus at a former chalk quarry at Lakeside Basin.

The 129-acre site is strategically located close to Junction 30 of the M25 motorway and offers rail connectivity to London’s Docklands in 20 minutes.

It currently lies within the London Green Belt but benefits from a draft allocation for Tier 1 employment use in the draft Thurrock Local Plan (2023).

Iceni Projects, on behalf of Mallory Land Ltd, made a request in August 2024 for an Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Opinion to build a data centre on part of the site and undertook public consultation.



North Weald Data Centre

In early 2024, Epping Forest District Council sold 52 acres at North Weald Airfield for £88.2 million (£1.7 million per acre) to Alphabet – the parent company of Google – for the potential development of a data centre.

Google carried out public consultations in July 2024 on the potential development of the data centre, which set out its proposals to use around half of the total area allocated for employment use. The plans are set to refined following feedback from the community, ongoing environmental assessments and technical work.

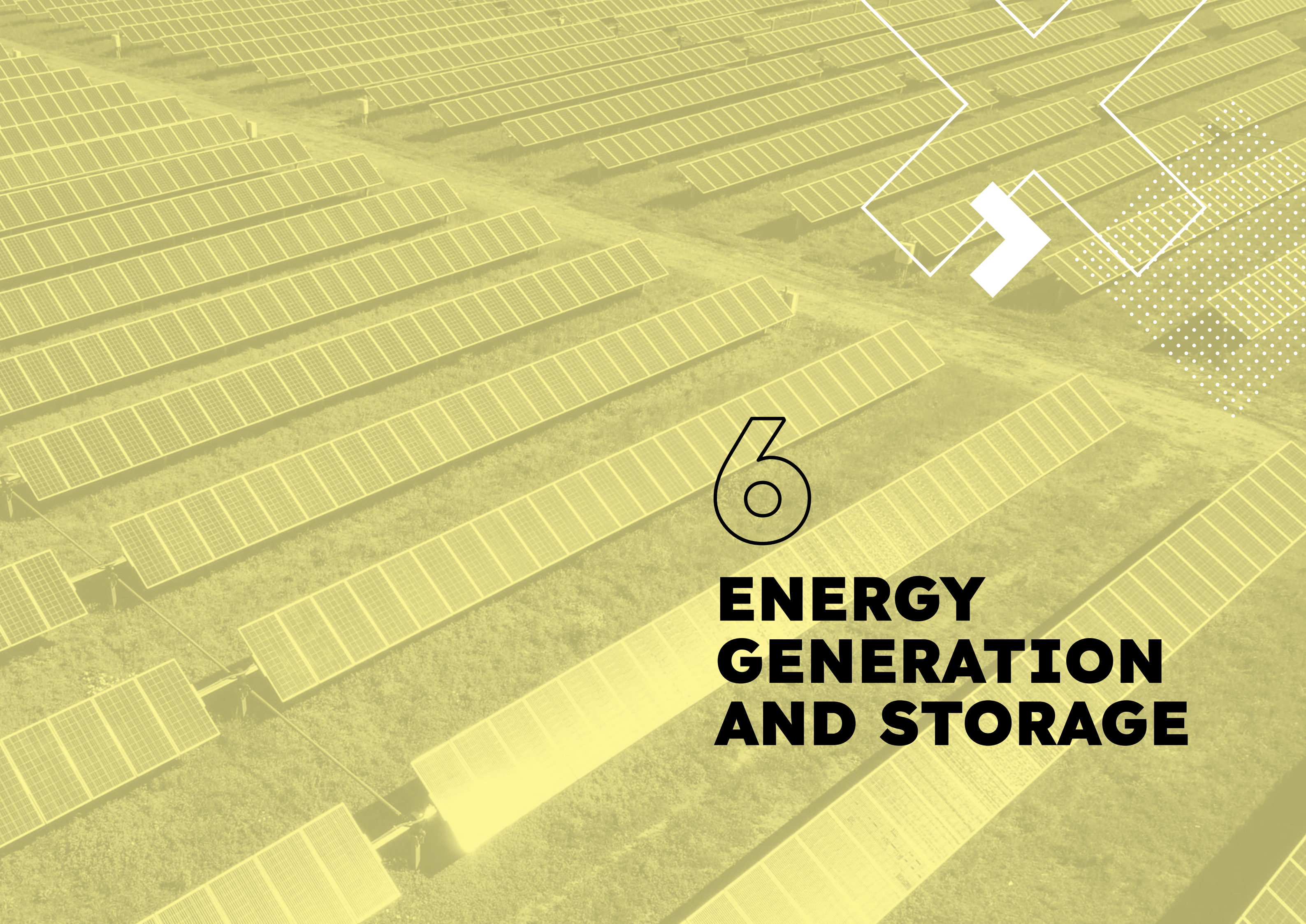
The airfield sits within the UKIC linking London to Cambridge, and the Essex + Herts DIZ, a public-partnership which works to ensure it has the infrastructure to support the digital needs of businesses and public services. The area benefits from high-speed digital connectivity, following a multimillion-pound investment to upgrade broadband infrastructure.

The vision for North Weald Airfield encompasses both employment land and a new extension to the existing village. A landscape-led masterplan will deliver 1,200 new highly sustainable homes, a local centre with community facilities and shops, a new primary school, sporting facilities and extensive green open spaces. It will be a key employment location, with around 100 acres of land to the east of the airfield designated for employment uses.

A masterplan published in March 2023 supported a range of potential uses for future development at the airfield, including data processing. The airfield will continue to function as an operational aerodrome, with the construction of a new control tower to incorporate new facilities for fire and rescue services.

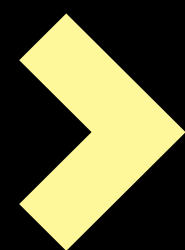
Image: Illustrative masterplan





6

ENERGY GENERATION AND STORAGE



Greater Essex's natural assets make it a powerhouse for the renewable energy sector. With the second-longest coastline in the UK, benefiting from strong North Sea winds, the county sits at the heart of one of the world's largest markets for offshore wind and continues to attract investment, including more than 5GW of offshore wind farms already in development in the Southern North Sea.

As one of the sunniest regions in the UK, Greater Essex is also at the forefront of significant solar energy development, including Longfield Solar Farm – the second-largest facility of its kind in the UK – along with arrays at Crays Hall, Birch, Ockendon and Crouch solar farms. Applications are also being progressed for the Grasslands and Hedgehog Grove solar farms.

Aside from solar, investment in onshore renewable energy infrastructure such as hydrogen, biomass and battery storage is growing. This includes Thames Estuary's vision to become a leading hydrogen ecosystem, with Thurrock and Purfleet, Tilbury and Southend all recognised for their potential. RWE is currently planning two green hydrogen electrolyzers in Essex, one at Port of Tilbury and one at the Haltermann Carless facility in Harwich.

Freeport East Harwich is home to Greater Essex's other major port and offers potential for clean energy production with supporting business and infrastructure. With the development of its Green Energy Hub (Bathside Bay), the freeport will provide critical port infrastructure, boost the region's renewable energy capacity, as well as provide access to markets in the rest of the UK and Europe.

FUTURE-PROOFING GREATER ESSEX

In addition to these developments, Greater Essex is attracting significant investment through several Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs). These projects aim to reinforce the electricity network in the region, boosting energy security and future-proofing the transportation of clean energy to support the transition to net zero.

They highlight the critical role of long-term renewable energy infrastructure projects in supporting sustainable housing and economic growth in Greater Essex and beyond.

With the rise of data centres to support advances in artificial intelligence, there is a greater need for renewable energy to power them. Sustainable housing growth also depends on having the renewable energy infrastructure, including a decarbonised grid, to fully harness the potential of clean energy production and power homes with clean energy.



Among the NSIPs planned in Greater Essex are the Norwich to Tilbury, Twinstead Tee and Sea Link projects, which will reinforce the electricity network in the East Anglia region. Another project, the Tarchon Energy interconnector, will create a direct power link between the UK and Germany.

The Norwich to Tilbury project includes a new substation in Tendring district, benefitting nearby onshore and offshore wind projects. The project has been granted early construction funding from Ofcom. If approved by the government, it is expected to be completed by 2031.

Twinstead Tee is a proposal to build new overhead and underground network cables and is expected to be completed by 2028. The Sea Link project will see the construction of new infrastructure needed to connect clean energy, due for completion by 2030.

The Tarchon Energy Interconnector is a significant initiative that will allow 1.4GW of electricity to move in either direction between the UK and Germany. The project benefits from the proximity of Essex's east coast to mainland Europe, increasing the security and reliability of energy demand.

Image © Freeport East

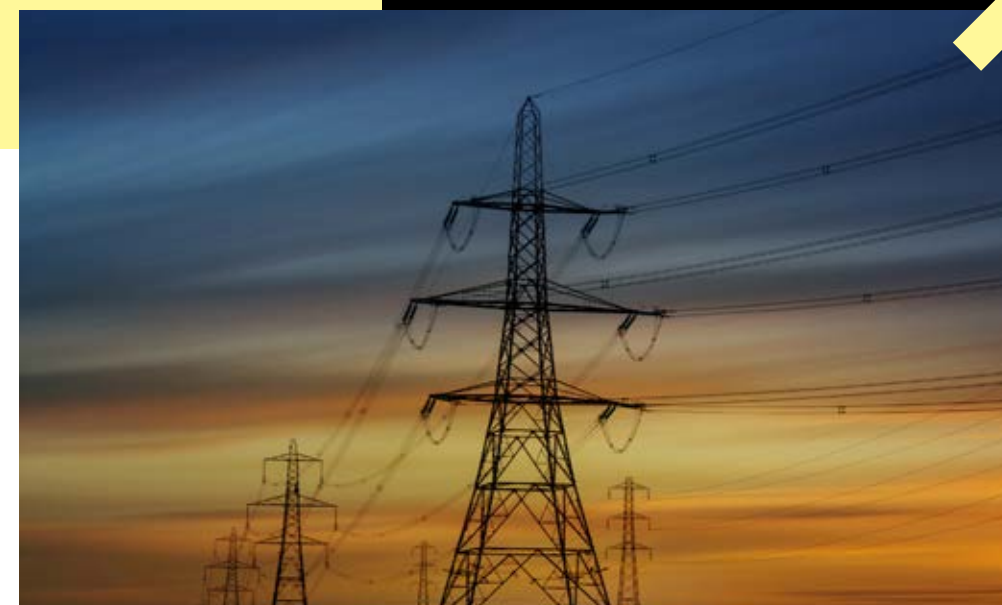


REACHING CLEAN ENERGY AMBITIONS

With a high number of green energy and offshore wind development opportunities, Greater Essex is driving a greener economy and is key to the UK government's ambition for the country to be powered by clean energy by 2030. Targets for the UK include generating 45-47GW from solar by 2030 and connecting 43-50GW of offshore wind by 2030.

The infrastructure provided by schemes in Greater Essex makes the region fertile ground for investors to contribute to and benefit from the clean energy transition.

Investments in clean energy could bring up to 56,000 new jobs to the East of England. In Greater Essex, the Essex Green Skills Hub has been developed by Essex County Council and its partners to deliver the skills needed to help the county transition to a net-zero future. The free resource for residents, businesses, schools and training providers provides information on training, jobs and insights to remove barriers in the green sector.



ESSEX ENERGY COAST: RENEWABLE ENERGY PROJECTS

1 Longfield

 **500MW**
solar farm  Chelmsford
 In build

 Power equivalent to the consumption of **96,000 homes**

2 Five Estuaries

 **300MW**
offshore wind farm  Under application / in planning

 Power equivalent to the consumption of up to **380,000 homes**

3 Gunfleet Sands

 **172MW**
offshore wind farm  Operational since 2010

 Power equivalent to the consumption of **125,000 homes**

4 North Falls

 **100MW**
offshore wind farm  Under application / in planning

 Power equivalent to the consumption of **400,000 homes**

5 Hedgehog Grove

 **98MW**
solar farm  Braintree
 Pre-application

 Power equivalent to the consumption of **45,000 homes**

6 Ockendon

 **59MW**
solar farm  Thurrock
 Operational since 2024

 Power equivalent to the consumption of **15,000 homes**

7 Grasslands

 **49.9MW**
solar farm  Rochford
 In build

 Power equivalent to the consumption of **16,500 homes**

8 Layer

 **49.9MW**
solar farm  Colchester
 Operational since 2024

 Power equivalent to the consumption of **16,500 homes**

9 Birch

 **40MW**
solar farm  Colchester
 In build

 Power equivalent to the consumption of **12,800 homes**

10 Crays Hall

 **36MW**
solar farm  Billericay
 Pre-construction

 Power equivalent to the consumption of **10,000 homes**

11 Crouch

 **25MW**
solar farm  Brentwood
 Operational since 2024

 Power equivalent to the consumption of **8,300 homes**

12 Middlewick

 **20.7MW**
wind farm  Dengie Peninsula
 Operational since 2014

 Power equivalent to the consumption of **9,200 homes**





Case study:



Longfield Solar Farm



Longfield Solar Farm is a solar energy and battery storage facility located northeast of Chelmsford, being brought forward as a joint venture by EDF Renewables and Padero Solar.

As part of the agreement, the developer Longfield Solar Energy Limited (LSE) will contribute £2.1 million to Essex County Council in education, supply chain, skills and employment funding. Another £50,000 a year will be used by local authorities Braintree District Council and Chelmsford City Council to support training and apprenticeships in the renewables sector.

Essex’s voluntary sector will also benefit from a £5.72 million community benefit fund over the facility’s 40-year lifespan. Essex County Council will work with Essex Community Foundation and LSE to manage the fund of £130,000 a year.

In 2024, EDF announced an academic partnership with the University of Exeter’s Environment and Sustainability Institute, which will allow researchers to study the ecological effects of large-scale solar farms. A 124-acre experimental area within the site will be used to explore the potential for land under solar farms to generate net benefits for biodiversity, carbon and soil quality.

The construction of Longfield Solar Farm is due to commence in 2025, and it is estimated that construction will take two years. The site will be operational for 40 years.

Investment opportunity:



Green Energy Hub, Freeport East Harwich

Port infrastructure for green energy projects and supporting uses, on plots from 5 to 79 acres, available from 2027.

Forming part of the Harwich Tax Site at Freeport East, the 301-acre site offers plots of up to 79 acres that are ideal for green energy projects and supporting uses.

With significant scalability for pre-assembly, construction, and O&M activities, the site benefits from existing planning consents and a 1.4km waterfront, including a 450-metre heavy-duty berth.

Opportunity at a glance

Type of opportunity:
Build to suit

Real estate sector:
Renewable energy and storage

Local Planning Authority:
Tendring District Council

Site areas: Plots from 5 to 79 acres

Tenure: Leasehold

Lead promoter: Hutchison Ports UK



For more information:
[extraordinaryessex.co.uk/
opportunities/bathside-bay](https://extraordinaryessex.co.uk/opportunities/bathside-bay)

Image © Freeport East



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