Harlow
Economic Development Strategy
2023 – 2028

March 2023

Contents

This Strategy was approved by Harlow Cabinet on 23rd March 2023

Foreword

A more prosperous and thriving local economy is within the town's grasp. There are already solid foundations to build on as businesses support 44,000 jobs in Harlow and the local economy generates £2 billion in output annually.

Further progress can be made by providing the right economic environment for Harlow's residents to access employment, gain the right skills to achieve their career ambitions or consider starting a business. The council believes the business community can achieve more and one of its strategic priorities is to aid the growth of the private sector in the town. To support the growth ambitions of businesses in Harlow, helping the local workforce to be able to pursue roles where there is a skill gap to fill will aid the ability of employers to expand and take on new commercial opportunities. Both upskilling and reskilling local people to be better able to take on new roles in emerging growth areas will further strengthen the resilience of Harlow's local economy.

Launching this strategy following the economic shock of the COVID-19 pandemic and a tough outlook for the UK economy, compounded by international pressures, is not straightforward. It is pivotal that the council helps to steer a new course for the local economy and takes advantage of the changing operating environment many sectors in the town are currently contending with.

This strategy sets out Harlow Council's strategic vision, which aims to enhance the resilience of the local economy and position the town to be a major regional centre that can facilitate business growth. The council is determined to attract new business ventures to the town. Harlow is at the heart of the M11 corridor, sitting between Cambridge and London, so it is well-placed to accelerate a diverse base of business growth due to its improved road infrastructure, connectivity to London by rail and access to international markets given the close proximity to Stansted Airport.

It is also an advantage that Harlow forms part of the UK Innovation Corridor. The life science sector has been an important part of the town's economy for decades and with the relocation of the UK Health Security Agency to Harlow, the council is in a strong position to engage in helping to shape the long-term direction of the corridor.

If the council is going to play a more proactive role in supporting employers to capitalise on emerging growth opportunities, it must have a clear plan to help them boost productivity, understand what they need to succeed and be more ambitious about attracting businesses from sectors key to enabling regional economic growth to come and base their operational centre in the town. This also means the council needs to take a role in supporting supply chain resilience, so that businesses can secure the materials, services and access routes to convert commercial transactions efficiently.

I believe targeting green technological ventures is an exciting long-term target for the council to focus on, this will require investment to carry forward, but Harlow could become a national centre for delivering the environmental sustainability goals our society cares deeply about. This means attracting more research and development ventures and positioning Harlow as a hub for the country's green sector to base itself in the town.

A cornerstone of the town's future success is the Harlow Enterprise Zone and Innovation Park. Destinations for businesses specialising in science, technology, research and innovation that will help reorientate the local economy to capitalise on the growth of specific ventures in those sectors in the future.

Helping the town's small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to achieve their business goals is important. SMEs are the backbone of Harlow's local economy – the council wants to help by: offering networking events; sharing best practice; and helping employers to pursue new commercial opportunities.

There are some challenges to overcome. Local labour market conditions are impacting investor decisions, poor educational attainment is holding back opportunity and the need for more business start-up space is going to restrict the ability to deliver a wider base of employment. This strategy aims to overcome these, and other issues identified through a plan leading up to 2028 that works to improve the resilience of Harlow's local economy.

The council's ambition is clear: stimulate business growth; attract private sector investment into the town; and upskill the local population. If this can be achieved, Harlow will become the economic growth capital of the East of England.

Cllr Joel Charles
Cabinet Member for Business and Community Resilience

1. Introduction

This document sets out Harlow Council's Economic Development Strategy for the next five years. We are committed to working tirelessly to ensure Harlow has a thriving local economy and continues to develop into an economic powerhouse for the East of England and a key hub within the UK Innovation Corridor which links London, Stansted Airport and Cambridge.

Harlow is home to a growing population of 93,000 people and 3,300 businesses which together support 44,000 jobs and generates more than £2 billion in GVA (economic output) annually. As part of the Harlow Gilston Garden Town we have ambitious growth plans and want to enable all our residents to benefit from that growth.

Recent Achievements

Much has been achieved in the lifetime of the previous strategy, despite challenging economic circumstances arising throughout its duration including the global COVID-19 pandemic and latterly the threat of recession and inflationary pressures. Despite all of this, Harlow remains a place of opportunity where investment can deliver real outcomes for the town, its people and its businesses.

This strategy will build on recent achievements including the:

- M11 Junction 7a and the associated surrounding infrastructure works equating to a £76m investment;
- Wrights Flour HQ and state of the art milling facility equating to £47m investment;
- Private sector investment into new warehouse facilities including Icon (valued at £160m) and Midas on Riverway;
- Kao Data Centre campus opened in 2018 and hosts the Nvidia Cambridge-1 Supercomputer. Construction is underway on the second ten mw Data Centre facility at the campusi Kao Data has attracted over £130m worth of investment;
- Delivery of the NEXUS, MODUS and ARISE business units at the Harlow Innovation Park;
- £23.7m Government Towns Fund investment for town centre regeneration projects Including the redevelopment of the bus station area;
- £20m Government Levelling Up Funding for the redevelopment of the Playhouse Quarter;
- Successful £172m Government Housing Investment Grant (HIG) bid contributing to improving infrastructure for local businesses; and
- Establishment of the Harlow Growth Board which oversaw the development and submission of the successful Towns Fund and Levelling Up bids to government. The Growth Board Is key partnership of major strategic stakeholders driving the opportunity for economic success In Harlow.

Changing Context

We have prepared this strategy in a time of continued change and economic uncertainty which is not only impacting Harlow but the wider UK and global economy. It is important to recognise this backdrop, but also to ensure the strategy responds to it:

- We must respond to the current economic uncertainty. Over the last few years our economy has been impacted by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and war in Ukraine. These have created global economic challenges from which no local area is immune. We are currently faced with a cost-of-living crisis impacting both households and businesses, with high energy prices and rising rents particularly challenging as well as the ongoing supply chain challenges. The uncertainty means we need a flexible strategy that we can adjust and adapt as the economic environment changes. We also need to recognise that in the short term the focus of many businesses will be on surviving and becoming resilient rather than rapid growth;
- We are committed to capitalising on the economic opportunities arising from the transition to net zero and climate change adaptation. We must ensure we have an economy that is prepared for this transition and ready to capture the benefits from the huge investment in green jobs and industries that is already underway; and
- We need to adapt to the significant changes in the way local economic development is funded and managed. This creates both opportunities and new challenges that will need to be navigated. We have moved away from European Union funding, and now have a more direct relationship with central Government. This often means bidding competitively for funding, and reduced coordination of activities at regional and sub-regional level. During the life of this strategy there are further potential changes on the horizon with the emergence of a Greater Essex Combined Authority. The council backs further devolution and will continue to positively engage in discussions about it, particularly in terms of work to stimulate the local economy. Further devolution could provide more opportunities to invest in the local economy.

Purpose

This five-year strategy needs to address both the current position of the Harlow economy ensuring our activity responds to short term needs as well as ensuring the foundations are laid for further long-term development.

We also need to ensure our activity as a Council aligns to the wider policy and funding context to maximise the benefits for Harlow and effectively coordinate with our key partners. In particular, we must ensure that Harlow Council and Harlow Gilston Garden Town (HGGT) plans align to deliver maximum social and economic benefits for current and future residents and businesses. As a key HGGT partner, Harlow Council will be fully engaged in the development of the forthcoming HGGT Economic Development Growth Strategy.

The Harlow Economic Development Strategy will guide the actions of the Council's Economic Development team, but will also be used to influence and guide the activity of all areas of the Council and our stakeholders to deliver a stronger, more sustainable and more prosperous Harlow economy.

2. Vision, Ambition and Opportunity

Vision

This strategy will support the wider vision for Harlow to be the best town in the country to live, to work and to raise a family.

This strategy will focus on making Harlow the best place to work through providing a broad range of employment opportunities and the ability for our residents to access these. Through supporting a thriving economy and attracting ongoing investment in our town and education system, we will also make Harlow a better place to live and raise a family.

Need and Ambition

We have already established, in other work[1], the need to deliver significant jobs growth across Harlow and the wider HGGT to ensure a balanced and sustainable community.

The evidence used to inform the development of the Harlow Local Development Plan identified a requirement for Harlow to deliver around 8,500 jobs over the period 2016-33, equating to around 500 jobs per annum. The HGGT Employment Commission set out a need to add around 1,000 jobs per annum across the Garden Town for the same period. This is a significant step up compared to historic trends

[1] Harlow Gilston Garden Town Employment Commission and Harlow Local Plan

and baseline growth forecasts for Harlow. This reflects the expected population growth of the wider HGGT being built out resulting in an additional 50,000 residents.

Since 2016 ONS data suggests[2] Harlow has lost jobs, and the wider Garden Town sites are yet to deliver at scale, which makes creating jobs a key priority for this strategy. This five-year strategy period will be critical for securing the jobs required to meet the needs of the growing population and to enable a balanced community. To catch up with the identified need we will have to deliver more than 1,000 jobs per annum across Harlow alone, and around 1,500 jobs per annum across the wider HGGT area.

To make this happen we need to be able to capitalise on the strengths and opportunities we have, and at the same time tackle the weaknesses and threats we face.

Ensuring our local residents can access these jobs and share in the economic benefits of growth sits at the core of our ambitions.

Opportunity

The Employment Commission also identified a range of opportunities that have the potential to support this step change in economic performance across Harlow and the Garden Town. These include:

- The relocation of the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) to Harlow and the potential for further supply chain and co-location investments;
- Capitalising on Harlow's location at the heart of the UK Innovation Corridor and any overspill from London and Cambridge;
- The replacement of the Princess Alexandra Hospital[3] and supporting health sector investments;
- The presence of the Harlow Enterprise Zone including Harlow Innovation Park;
- The new junction on the M11 (junction 7a) enhancing strategic road access; and
- Major new job creation in close proximity including Stansted Airport (Uttlesford) and Sunset Studios (Broxbourne) offering employment opportunities for residents and wider supply chain opportunities and investments for Harlow businesses.

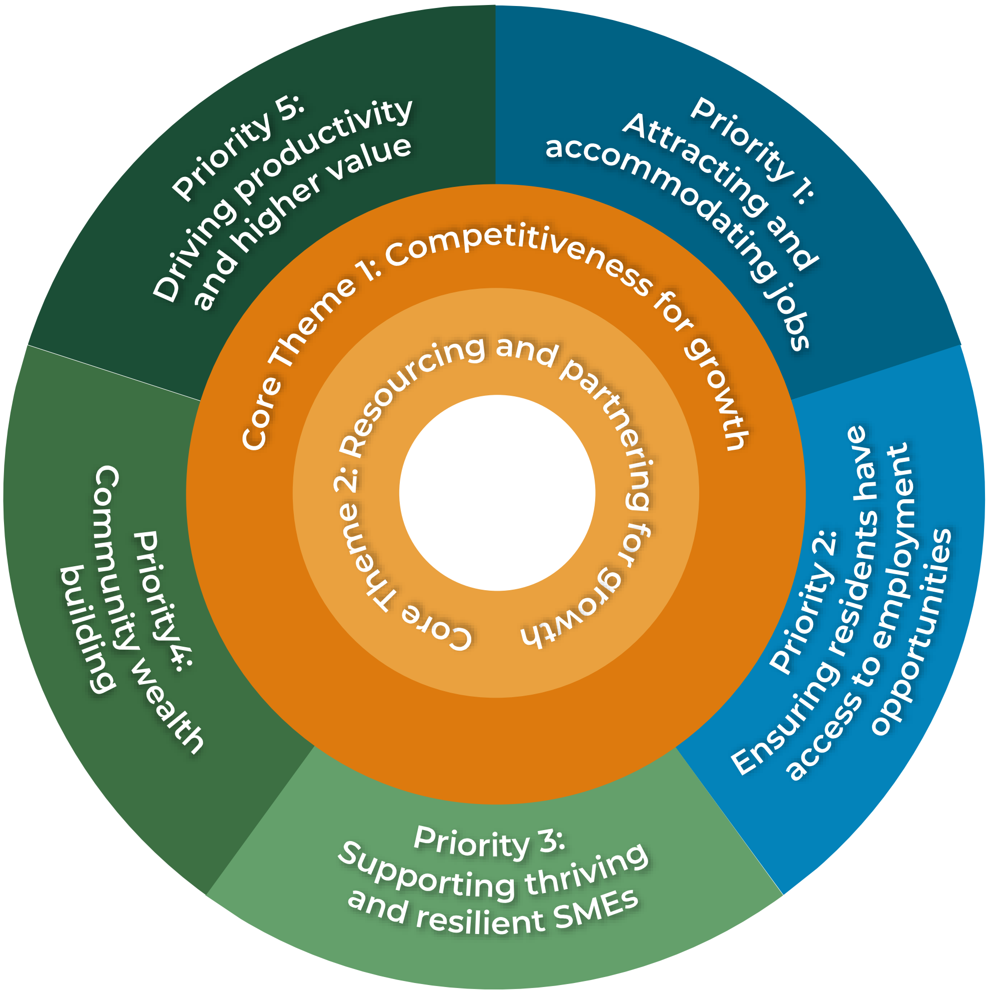
[2] Local area data can be volatile and statistical errors can affect the numbers for individual years. This may be the case for 2016 with a very high level of employment reported. However, since that point there has been a clear downward trend.

[3] The new hospital will actually be located outside the Harlow administrative area which may result in a drop in our employment statistics. However, functionally it will remain a key part of the Harlow economy.

Priorities for Action

We have identified five priorities for action which run throughout our strategy.

Figure 1 Summary of Priorities and Themes



3. Evidence and SWOT

This chapter provides a summary of the accompanying evidence base for the Harlow Economic Development Strategy alongside other contextual information. The accompanying evidence base reviews a range of socio-economic data, benchmarking Harlow against Basildon, Stevenage, the wider West Essex/East Hertfordshire Functional Economic Market Area (FEMA), the county of Essex and England.

Resident Demographic and Labour Market Analysis

Harlow has a resident population of 93,300 persons and there has been above national average growth in resident population over the last 10 years. A higher proportion of the resident population is working age in comparison to benchmark areas, and again, Harlow had the highest rate of working age population growth. This provides us with growing resources to support economic growth.

However, Harlow has low and more strongly declining economic activity and employment rates than the benchmark comparators. Unemployment is relatively low compared to benchmark areas but there is some evidence it was rising faster than in other areas before the COVID-19 pandemic. We need to ensure we keep unemployment low and increase the levels of participation so that more of our working age residents can benefit from the growth of our economy.

We also have much lower proportions of the working age population with Level 3 and 4 qualifications. Whilst there is some evidence of an upward trend in the proportion with Level 4 qualifications, attainment levels within the Harlow education system are below county and national benchmarks and the gap is widening rather than closing. This means our resident workforce is not always able to benefit from the best employment opportunities available in the town.

Harlow has a broad balance between in and out commuting, with around 16,000 persons commuting in and out of the local authority area for work[4]. The most significant origin and destination points are neighbouring local authority areas.

Earnings data shows that Harlow residents have the lowest wages of any of the comparator areas, more than 20% below the UK average. This reflects the skills and occupational profile of our workforce, and the fact that the workers that are commuting into Harlow are often capturing the higher paid, higher skilled jobs.

Workplace Economy, Employment and Business Analysis

The Harlow economy generates a little over £2 billion in output (GVA) each year and is home to around 44,000 jobs and 3,300 businesses. Harlow is categorised as one

[4] 2011 Census information. As 2021 Census was undertaken in extraordinary circumstances will be exploring other ways to get up to date understanding of commuting picture

of the fifteen major towns and cities in the East of England, albeit one of the smaller places in this group.

Changes in economic output over the last 10 years have largely tracked benchmark areas although performance since 2018 has shown some signs of weakness with larger falls in output than comparator areas. Alongside this Harlow has experienced deteriorating productivity performance, from being the most productive of the comparator areas 15 years ago, to being the least productive in the most recent data.

The three sectors generating the most GVA in Harlow are manufacturing, wholesale & retail, and health. There are also relative strengths in the construction and administrative & support sectors.

Data on total jobs suggests a fall in the number of jobs in Harlow over recent years, with weaker performance than comparator areas. Whilst there is some volatility and uncertainty in the data, there is consistency with the GVA data showing weaker performance in recent years and a failure to capture growth.

The largest single employer in Harlow is the PAH hospital. The largest sectors in terms of employment in Harlow are retail & wholesale, and health. A number of other sectors show greater concentrations relative to the national average. These include manufacturing, construction, transport & storage, information & communication, administration & support services, and education.

Workplace wage data has been volatile in recent years. The latest data ranks the district lower than all benchmark areas other than Basildon, with Stevenage the highest of the comparators;

The number of businesses in Harlow has been growing strongly and outperforming benchmark areas. This includes particularly strong performance in the construction, transport & storage and administrative & support services sectors. This is a result of strong business formation rates with business survival being largely in line with comparator averages.

Harlow has a higher proportion of larger businesses than comparator areas. Whilst the total numbers are small, these can be significant for the provision of employment opportunities. These are predominantly in the manufacturing and education sectors.

As is true across the UK economy, around 99% of businesses are SMEs (with almost 90% being micro businesses with fewer than 10 employees). This highlights the importance of the small business community for any local economy.

The Impact of Covid-19

The Harlow economy has been significantly impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. Whilst there were widespread effects across the UK economy Harlow experienced some notable impacts due to the structure and characteristics of the economy. In particular:

- A much lower proportion of the local workforce has been able to adopt hybrid or home working, reflecting the lower level of office-based employment across the town;
- Harlow lost an estimated 1,300 retail jobs, ranking it in the top 20 most severely affected towns of the 109 towns and cities analysed; and
- There were severe impacts on the wider visitor economy with a 23% decline in day trips and 44% decline in overnight trips. This has led to a 30% decrease in visitor economy employment.

Harlow's Wider Connections

Harlow is very well located with excellent strategic access. This includes two junctions on the M11 (linking London and Cambridge), connection to the M25 in 20 minutes and direct rail links to London Liverpool Street via the Stansted Express. London Stansted Airport is just 20 minutes away, providing a wide range of international connectivity which is a major asset.

Harlow is at the heart of the UK Innovation Corridor (stretching from London to Cambridge). Harlow is a key partner in the UK Innovation Corridor Core group of Local Authorities.[5] It is also part of the South East Local Enterprise Partnership area, and works in partnership with its near neighbours as part of Essex County, the West Essex and East Hertfordshire functional economic market area (FEMA), the Digital Innovation Zone (DIZ) and the Harlow Gilston Garden Town (HGGT).

Stakeholder Views

Recent business engagement has highlighted the current economic environment is a particular concern, specifically the significant cost rises facing businesses including energy and rent. This is creating an existential threat for many of our businesses, with very few reporting they are currently thriving.

Senior business leaders highlighted the weak connections between industry, education and young people, with a need to improve links and awareness. This was reflected in the views of the Harlow Youth Council which also asked for more information on the opportunities in the town.

There are widely recognised opportunities arising from the Enterprise Zone, the health and life sciences, visitor economy, ICT and advanced manufacturing sectors. The common understanding is valuable in bringing partners together around shared goals.

[5] The other members of UK Innovation Corridor Core group are Uttlesford Council, Epping Forest Council, East Herts Council and Broxbourne Council.

There is real concern about the supply of employment land across Harlow and the wider HGGT and whether there is sufficient capacity to meet the needs of the growth aspirations that have been set. The supply that is available is under pressure from land hungry logistics uses and wider commercial viability challenges. To enable economic success there is a need to maintain a balanced offer of employment land and premises within Harlow that reflects a range of quality and sizes.

There is strong ongoing commitment to working together across key stakeholder partnerships, particularly the UK Innovation Corridor and Core Area, Essex County, FEMA, DIZ and HGGT. This is also evident in the coming together of the Harlow Growth Board and the shared commitment to produce and promote a clear and ambitious vision for the Town aimed at supporting the mission to attract investment from across the private and public sector.

Other Policies, Strategies and Activities

This strategy has not been prepared in isolation. There are already a wide range of Harlow strategies and focused documents as well as wider evidence and strategies across our sub-regional partnership geographies. We are also aware of further ongoing research and strategy development that we will need to take into consideration.

We have not sought to re-present large parts of these other documents here. Some of the most critical include:

- Harlow Local Plan and its supporting evidence base;
- Harlow Levelling Up, Towns Fund and UK Shared Prosperity Fund investment programmes;
- Harlow Health and Wellbeing Strategy and evidence base;
- The Harlow Gilston Garden Town Vision and accompanying evidence;
- Essex County Council strategies including Sector Development Strategy and Levelling Up Paper; and
- UK Innovation Corridor Core prospectus and Herts and Essex DIZ (Digital Innovation Zone) collaborative activity.

Key Sectors

A number of key sectors have been identified within the research for this strategy and as part of previous research and strategy development. These include those with particular specialisms in Harlow, those which are important due to the number of jobs they provide, those which generate significant economic value, and those with significant growth potential. We will work with our partners to maximise the opportunities these sectors present and to put in place the sites, premises, skills and support they require to flourish and grow in Harlow.

These include:

- **Health** – this is a large and growing sector in Harlow and has strong growth potential related to our growing population and the planned replacement Princess Alexandra Hospital;

- **Life Sciences (including med-tech)** – this has historically been an important sector for Harlow and has huge potential with the planned relocation of UKHSA to the town and the wider UK Innovation Corridor. This sector has been identified by Essex County Council as a significant specialism for Harlow and official data shows scientific research and development has been one of our fastest growing employment sectors in recent years. There is potential to strengthen links across the health, life sciences, med tech and digital sectors in the town;

- **Technology and Advanced Manufacturing** – we have a number of significant businesses in these sectors generating high value employment opportunities and with the potential to grow;

- **Arts, Cultural and Creative** – the town has a number of assets to support the further growth of this sector, which formed the basis for our recent Levelling Up Fund bid. In addition to their economic value, these sectors are vital to making Harlow a more attractive place to both live and visit;

- **Construction and Retrofit** – we have a large and growing construction sector in Harlow, particularly those working specialised construction trades. With the scale of planned growth across the HGGT, and major planned investments, there is significant expansion opportunity, as well as the huge need for retrofit activities to support the transition to net zero;

- **Transport, Warehousing and Logistics** – this sector shows a high concentration in Harlow and has been growing strongly in recent years. Our strategic location and access is a key attractor; and

- **Green Industries** – as well as retrofit and energy efficiency there are major growth opportunities arising from the transition to net zero and adaptation to climate change. Primarily this reaches across renewable energy, sustainable transport, waste management and sustainable agriculture. However, there will be opportunities across all sectors for new technology and processes to aid society's adaptation, this will include Harlow's existing strengths in life sciences and med-tech.

SWOT Analysis

A summary analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats facing the Harlow economy, drawing on the evidence, is set out at Figure 2 SWOT analysis.

This has informed our priorities and themes for action set out in the next section.

Figure 2 SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
• Strategic location and transport access • Growing population • High proportion of working age • Low/average unemployment • Mix of key sectors • Strong business base growth • Attractive town layout with open spaces and cycle infrastructure	• Low economic activity rates • Low levels of NVQ3 and 4 qualifications • Low/negative jobs growth • Weak GVA growth • Under-represented in many high value services sectors • Reputation/perceptions/quality of place • Constrained employment land supply • Evidence of low levels of WFH/hybrid working among residents • Poor links between industry and education • Localised congestion issues
Opportunities	**Threats**
• Proposed new investments (incl. UKHSA, Princess Alexandra Hospital, Levelling Up Fund) • Maximising UKHSA supply chain/colocation and Life Sciences potential of the UK Innovation Corridor • Planned housing growth – growing the population and creating long term construction sector opportunities • Building on strength in health sector to develop the HealthTech element of the DIZ (fit with ARISE) • Town centre regeneration plans • Continued development of Harlow Enterprise Zone incl. Harlow Innovation Park • New additional motorway junction • Proximity to Stansted to capture benefits of 'Global Britain' focus • Green jobs growth including retrofit	• Skills profile could exclude Harlow from investor location search • Weak economic/business environment (recession, inflation, supply chain, rising interest rates) • Employment land under pressure from logistics operators • Poor development viability • Recruitment challenges

4. Priorities and Themes

We have identified five priorities and two core themes around which our strategy is structured. These respond to the SWOT analysis set out in the previous section. These are summarised below, with more detail on each set out in the following chapters. These will be developed further in a subsequent action plan and monitoring framework.

Figure 2 Summary of Priorities and Themes

Priorities

Priority 1: Attracting and accommodating jobs
We have established the clear need to provide jobs for a growing population. This will require growth well ahead of historic trends. We have identified a range of opportunities which promise the potential for significant jobs growth. But we recognise we have not secured the required level of employment growth in recent years meaning we must step up and concentrate efforts on securing employment opportunities and growing our economy.

To do this we need to work with our existing business community and key employers, and attract new investors. We must make Harlow a highly attractive investment proposition, offering access to a high-quality workforce, high quality sites and premises within the existing town and surrounding environs, with a high-quality environment and supporting infrastructure. We must also promote Harlow to ensure the range of opportunities the town offers are well known and understood.

Priority 2: Ensuring residents have access to employment opportunities
It is vital that the residents of Harlow are able to benefit from the economic opportunities in the town. Our evidence review has identified lower levels of participation in the labour market, lower skills and lower wages among our resident population as critical issues we need to address.

Not only will these issues affect our residents' potential to benefit personally, they will also affect the visibility and perception of the town when investors consider where to locate.

We must therefore work with our partners to raise aspirations, raise levels of achievement and raise participation across our communities.

Priority 3: Supporting thriving and resilient SMEs
99% of our businesses are SMEs. 90% are micro businesses employing fewer than 10 people. These are the lifeblood of our economy and must be enabled to thrive and grow. Our businesses have been telling us that in the short term the focus is on overcoming the current challenges of high inflation and rising costs. We will do everything we can to help our businesses overcome these challenges. We will also be exploring how we can maximise the potential of our SME community for the longer term. We will look to support further networking, making the links with key stakeholders and being able to find the workforce with the right skills.

Priority 4: Community wealth building
We want the benefits of economic activity taking place in Harlow to be retained and shared in the area, building a more sustainable and stronger community. We have already been working with anchor institutions (major employers) to look at how more of the money they spend on suppliers can be retained in the local area. We will continue this work, engaging with our business community to make sure they have the skills and knowledge to effectively compete to win these supply chain contracts.

We will also look at how we can best support the social enterprise sector and secure further social value from our own activities, and those of our key partners and businesses.

Priority 5: Driving productivity and higher value
Our evidence review has identified low wages and low productivity. Whereas once the Harlow economy was the leader of the pack (of our comparators) it is now lagging behind. We need to address this by securing higher value, higher productivity activities. We need to capitalise on the opportunities we have to boost R&D and innovation across our businesses and make the links between the existing innovation partners and infrastructure opportunities in Harlow and wider afield.

Core Themes

These core themes cut across each of the priorities and need to underpin and run through all the actions that we take.

Core Theme 1: Competitiveness for growth
The need to drive competitiveness for growth runs through each of our priorities as a consistent thread. Harlow has a heritage as a place of leading edge manufacturing and, technological and scientific research and development. The evidence highlights we have work to do to recapture this position. We will therefore focus on making Harlow a competitive and attractive location for investment and growth.

Core Theme 2: Resourcing and partnering for growth
The changing landscape in economic development means we need to direct resources to the key roles of coordinating with partners and securing resources. This will include preparing funding bids, business cases and project ideas.

Throughout the remainder of this strategy, we have highlighted a range of partners with whom we will need to work, and these lists are far from exhaustive. As a Council we have limited resource and limited influence. We must therefore use the resources and influence we do have wisely in partnership with others that can also play a role in strengthening and developing the Harlow economy to organise for success.

5. Priority 1: Attracting and Accommodating Growth

Key Issues

We have established the need to deliver significant jobs growth for a growing population. We have identified a range of opportunities which promise the potential to generate new jobs, but we will have to go further. Harlow has not secured the level of employment growth needed in recent years meaning we must concentrate efforts on securing employment opportunities and growing our economy.

To do this we need to work with our existing business community and key employers, and attract new investors. We must make Harlow a highly attractive investment proposition, offering access to a high quality workforce, high quality sites and premises, with a high quality environment and supporting infrastructure. We must also promote Harlow to ensure the range of opportunities the town offers are well known and understood.

The availability of employment land across the whole HGGT area to accommodate this growth is a key risk. Previous research highlighted the limited supply within Harlow and the need to protect and regenerate our key employment areas, ensuring a range of good quality business premises. It also identified the need for early delivery of 7-9 hectares of employment sites across the wider Garden Town area. Without this capacity the required employment growth levels cannot be accommodated. However, employment allocations across Harlow and the wider Garden Town are under significant pressure from land hungry market driven uses which is at variance to the aspirations for the higher value and quantum employment further risking the capacity to accommodate the required levels of growth.

SWOT

Strengths	Weaknesses
• Confirmed growth agenda • Excellent transport access including new motorway junction and proximity to London Stansted Airport • High growth in number of businesses	• Low levels of overall employment growth in recent history • Weak labour market metrics may impact inward investor location search analysis • Under representation in many office based financial, professional and business services sectors forecast to grow • Constrained employment land supply
Opportunities	**Threats**
• Planned UKHSA relocation to Harlow and potential supply chain opportunities • Major planned housing growth, wider investment and retrofit opportunities to drive construction sector • Existing strength in forecast growth sectors including health, education and construction • Confirmed funding for placemaking investment in town centre • Harlow Enterprise Zone and Harlow Innovation Park • Enhancing role of Harlow Town station	• Weak economic environment • Remaining employment land supply taken up by logistics operators • Reliance on regeneration of employment areas

Desired Outcomes[6]

- Minimum 1,000 net additional jobs per annum;
- Increased inward investment enquiries;
- Positive dialogue with UKHSA and PAH about wider economic opportunities of investment; and
- No investment opportunities lost due to lack of employment land.

Action Areas

Action Area 1.1: Inward Investment Promotion

Undertake activity to attract new business investment to Harlow:

- Working with partners including those in the UK Innovation Corridor Core and Essex County Council to support inward investment activity for Harlow;
- Launching the Harlow Business website which is aimed at attracting new business to Harlow;
- Inward investment campaigns including support for the UKIC Core website and activity;
- Promoting Harlow as a destination for investment in green industries;
- Ensuring adequate land available for businesses; and
- Ensuring public sector investment in town including regeneration projects in Town Centre and infrastructure acts as positive catalyst to attract private sector investment and as an attractor to new businesses to locate in Harlow.

Action Area 1.2: Sites and Premises

Work with a range of partners to deliver employment sites and premises to meet business needs:

- Continuing focus on Harlow Enterprise Zone investment priorities;
- Supporting an updated Employment Land Review;
- Protecting existing employment land supply;
- Exploring how to accommodate high demand land hungry uses across the FEMA;
- Supporting spatial planning strategy development to enable sustainable travel options and reduced emissions;
- Working with HGGT partners to secure required employment sites; and
- Exploring opportunities for new office and employment development for small businesses and start ups within Harlow town centre, the town's neighbourhood centres and around Harlow Town station.

[6] Further detail on outcomes will be set out in the action plan and monitoring framework.

Action Area 1.3: Placemaking

We will continue to invest in the physical regeneration of Harlow to make it a more attractive place to do business, ensuring employees will want to live in the town. This will focus on town centre and neighbourhood regeneration, reflecting the quality envisioned in the new HGGT developments:

- Ensuring the regeneration of the Town Centre complies with and supports the Town Centre masterplan;
- Delivering the Towns Fund, Levelling Up and UKSPF Government funded projects to improve the quality of the Town Centre by improved public realm, environment and sustainable transport infrastructure and connectivity;
- Attracting and developing an improved retail, leisure, arts, and visitor economy offer in addition to the development of a Cultural Strategy for Harlow;
- Developing appropriate long term investment funding and vehicles to ensure quality placemaking can continue to evolve; and
- Supporting the managed transition to sustainable travel, reduced car use and car parking provision.

Action Area 1.4: Maximising Benefits of Major Planned Investments

Whilst the opening of both the planned replacement Princess Alexandra Hospital and the relocation of UKHSA to Harlow may occur after this current strategy period, we will be taking action now to maximise the wider benefits of these investments for our residents and business communities. This will include:

- Exploring supply chain opportunities for local business development;
- Working with existing supply chain companies interested in relocating to Harlow to find suitable accommodation;
- Driving the take up of science based and supporting subjects in our schools and College; and
- Understanding and raising awareness of employment opportunities at replacement PAH, UKHSA, HGGT and Town Centre regeneration.

Action Area 1.5: Supporting our Key Sectors

We will look to create thriving ecosystems that foster innovation and growth, opening up access to the right premises, networks and expertise. We will provide responsive support to our key sectors, through ongoing dialogue and engagement, enabling businesses to engage with innovation support and resources and growth opportunities. Key areas of action focus are set out in the table below.

Sector	Activity
Health	• Supporting linkages between Princess Alexandra Hospital (PAH), primary care and private care providers to raise awareness of employment opportunities and develop appropriate labour market and skills responses; • Continued engagement with PAH to maximise wider benefits of replacement hospital investment through both construction and operational phases; and • Supporting engagement between the Health sector and skills providers including FE and HE.
Life Sciences including MedTech	• Continuing our work to maximise the benefits of planned UKHSA relocation to Harlow including opportunities for businesses to co-locate and appropriate business clustering; • Brokering conversations to explore digital health-tech opportunities; • Supporting the evolution of the ARISE facility on the Harlow Innovation Park; and • Exploring options for developing appropriate lab space that can encourage start up and innovative businesses in Harlow.
Technology and Advanced Manufacturing	• Working with partners and employers to promote STEM skills pathways; • Continuing our work to promote the Harlow Enterprise Zone and Harlow Innovation Park offer; and • Working with Harlow College to support employer engagement including via Harlow Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering Centre and Stansted College.

Sector	Activity
Arts, Cultural and Creative	• Diversifying the Town Centre offer and hosting a range of Town Centre events and activities via the UKSPF funding; • Implementing the regeneration of the Playhouse quarter through the Levelling Up Fund project and capitalising on its momentum to deliver a Cultural Strategy for the town; • Improving the welcome at key town gateways including the train stations helping to build links with the visitor offer; • Promoting Harlow's visitor economy including via membership of Visit Essex; and • Attracting investment in arts, culture and creative assets, businesses and organisations, and people.
Construction and Retrofit	• Ensuring positive engagement with the PAH, UKHSA construction projects and HGGT developers to ensure local employment and skills opportunities; • Working closely with Essex County Council and other partners to secure funding for retrofit activities; • Working with skills partners to ensure skills offer addresses emerging construction and retrofit requirements; • Engaging with construction SMEs to highlight opportunities in construction and retrofit, supporting skills acquisition and sub-contractor competitiveness; and • Exploring opportunities for MMC (Modern Methods of Construction) investment.
Transport, Warehousing and Logistics	• Ensuring that local businesses are able to benefit from the recovery and planned growth of Stansted Airport; • Working with partners to identify suitable sites within the FEMA to accommodate large scale logistics; • Supporting residents to acquire HGV and PSV driver skills and accreditation; and • Skills for advanced warehouse and logistics operations including retraining for automated systems, processes and machinery maintenance.

Sector	Activity
Green Industries	• Exploring and promoting opportunities for inward investment in green industries; • Supporting the life sciences and med-tech sectors to capitalise on the opportunities arising from net zero and climate change adaptation; and • Working with Harlow College and other education providers to invest in green industry skills, building on recent investments in electric vehicle maintenance.

Key Partners

- Local businesses and employers
- Harlow Gilston Garden Town;
- West Essex East Herts FEMA;
- UK Innovation Corridor;
- Essex County Council;
- ARU ARISE;
- Harlow College; and
- FE and HE Providers.

6. Priority 2: Ensuring Residents Access Employment Opportunities

Key Issues

Based on our review of the evidence, alongside the need to deliver jobs growth, this is our number one issue and feeds through all of the other priorities.

It is vital that the residents of Harlow are able to benefit from the economic opportunities in the town. The evidence identifies lower levels of participation in the labour market, lower skills and lower wages among our resident population as critical issues we need to address.

Not only will these issues affect our residents' potential to benefit personally, they will also affect the visibility and perception of the town when investors consider where to locate. We must therefore work with our partners to raise aspirations, raise levels of achievement and raise participation across our communities.

Our engagement with both the business community and our young people has found a lack of awareness of the employment opportunities that exist now and will exist in the future, and the skills needed to access these. However, we are also well aware that aligning the skills needs and vacancies of employers with the career aspirations and education pathways of young people is not straightforward. We need to improve the linkages between both groups so that there is far better awareness of the economic opportunities Harlow has to offer our young people. Aligned to this will be the need to influence how skills funding is delivered to meet these aspirations.

SWOT

Strengths

- Harlow College is both a 6th form and FE college with wide offer and is fully engaged in the town
- Number of active skills providers actively operating in the town with range of skills provision
- Harlow Skills Forum – existing partnership of local providers and agencies supporting people into employment
- Local MP is highly supportive of local skills and promoting Apprenticeships
- Consistent message over many years of looking to attract growth employment sectors (Health and Life Science, Advanced Manufacturing and ICT / Digital)

Weaknesses

- Very low local skills profile of the local residents / historic low skills attainment levels
- Low rates of progression to Level 3 qualifications
- Complexity of Harlow skills and education landscape (multiple providers with confusing offer)
- Lack of local employers supporting existing employees to skills up and progress within organisation
- Availability of funding for higher level training is often aligned to national need rather than local need

Opportunities

- Harlow College attracted funding and investment in local offer including development of Institution of Technology, Advanced Manufacturing Centre and Construction Hub
- Institute of Technology will support availability of higher level STEM training opportunities
- Harlow College has been instrumental in leading a bid for funding through the government Strategic Development Fund; and partnering with Essex Chambers of Commerce for the Local Skills Improvement Plan (which will enable employers to voice skills needs and potentially access funding)
- Delivery of two Harlow focused Community Renewal Funded pilot skills projects in 2022 (ran by Harlow College and ECC Adult Community Learning)
- UKSPF awarded with funds allocated for skills in year 3 – which will include Digital Skills funding linked to DIZ Digital skills group
- Essex Apprenticeship Hub – free recruitment hub with focus on Harlow
- Delivery of ECC Multiply (numeracy) programme has community focus in Harlow to try to engage with hardest to reach
- Potential Devolution Deal – Increased autonomy over Adult Skills budget

Threats

- Funding - Lack of funding / uncertainty of funding for skills generally and complexity of funding requirements
- Cost of living crisis and low wages within Harlow making it hard for residents to afford to train / acquire skills
- Difficulty getting local residents to sign up to and undertake training of any form
- Waiting lists for childcare acting as a barrier to enabling some females into work resulting in high level of female unemployed or economically active

Desired Outcomes

- Increasing levels of progression to L3 courses among Harlow young people, including increased enrolments on STEM related subjects;
- Closing the gap in terms of the national average associated with the proportion of the working age population obtaining L3 and L4 qualifications;
- Making progress in closing the economic activity rate gap with the national average; and
- Rising resident-based wage metrics leading to a reduced gap with the national average.

Action Areas

Action Area 2.1: Developing Skills for Growth

Low levels of level three and four qualifications are clearly evident among the Harlow resident workforce. Addressing this is our highest priority. This will contribute to the improved performance and productivity of our businesses, the employment opportunities and wages of our residents and the attractiveness of our town to potential inward investors.

There are multiple elements to this challenge, in terms of the aspirations and learning pathways of our young people as well as the range and choice of learning and training opportunities made available by our education providers.

The skills arena is already crowded and we want to work to enhance and strengthen what is already in development rather than to bring increased complexity and confusion. We will therefore be working with the full range of stakeholders to identify ways to add value and adapt our approaches, making new connections and securing enhanced resources to invest in the skills of our residents.

Our actions will include:

- Working with Harlow Futures and local education providers to improve educational attainment for young people under 19 years;
- Working with partners to support and promote the delivery of affordable skills opportunities for all adults;
- Supporting entrepreneurial skills development (enabling people to access self-employment);
- Supporting the delivery of affordable specialist skills provision supporting employment sectors with in-demand skills and growth sectors, particularly for green jobs;
- Working to increase the volume of Higher Education level learning opportunities within Harlow; and
- Maximising the value of the Institute of Technology, Advanced Manufacturing Centre and Construction Hub to support key sectors.

Action Area 2.2: Youth, Education and Industry Links

Both young people and business leaders have highlighted the lack of connection between the two groups. Young people are unaware of the employment opportunities that are available to them in Harlow and businesses are not finding young people with the right skills to meet their needs. Issues around STEM (science, technology engineering and maths) skills in particular were highlighted in business engagement.

Employer engagement has been a key theme of further and higher education for many years now. However, there are opportunities to strengthen the links between

Harlow's young residents, education providers (including schools, Harlow College and others) and the local business community.

This is not just about curriculum provision but about knowledge transfer and raising aspirations. Activities could include improved networks, increased work experience opportunities, and awareness raising.

The core ambition in this area is for the young people to be aware of the current and future employment opportunities in Harlow and the skills and qualifications needed to access these opportunities.

Actions could include:

- Supporting information, advice and guidance to make young people aware of career pathways to higher value employment in Harlow;
- Continuing to support Harlow College's efforts to meet employer-led skills needs including supporting the development of the Institute of Technology;
- Facilitating engagement between local employers and local skills providers to ensure delivery of skills provision that meets employers' needs including working with the Business Leaders Group;
- Creating pipelines of suitably qualified local people with skills required by local employers;
- Supporting the delivery of digital skills covering the full range from functional digital to high level specialist programming skills ensuring the needs of the growth sectors, anchor organisations and major planned investments are met;
- Supporting the delivery of skills for new green jobs to help meet net zero targets; and
- Promotion of STEM skills for all ages.

Action Area 2.3: Boosting Economic Participation

Whilst unemployment is in line with comparator averages, Harlow has lower economic activity and employment rates. This means too many people are not engaging in the labour market. Official data on the reasons why is not available for Harlow, but we do know that a higher proportion than is usual do want a job. So we need to tackle the barriers that are preventing people who want a job from participating in the labour market.

Activities will include:

- Undertaking further research to understand the most significant barriers to participation in Harlow;
- Working with partners to remove barriers to employment and progression within work including access to affordable childcare, cost of travel, health barriers, digital exclusion etc;

- Supporting all residents to gain employment (where appropriate undertake targeted activity such as support for young people, people with ill health and disabilities, and older people into work and those with other barriers);
- Supporting the delivery of skills that support people to access employment including employability, entry level skills, and functional skills including Maths, English, and digital skills; and
- Investigating opportunities that ensure those residents affected by the risk of declining employment or automation can engage in reskilling.

Key Partners

- Schools;
- Harlow College (including the Institute of Technology, Advanced Manufacturing Centre, Construction Hub and University Centre);
- Higher Education;
- Adult Community Learning Harlow;
- Essex County Council;
- Harlow Skills Forum;
- Job Centre Plus/DWP; and
- Local businesses and employers.

7. Priority 3: Supporting Thriving and Resilient SMEs

Key Issues

99% of our businesses are SMEs. The vast majority of these are micro businesses employing fewer than 10 people. These are the lifeblood of our economy and must be enabled to thrive and grow. Over recent years we have seen higher than average growth in our business community and this is a strength we can build on through this strategy period.

Our businesses have been telling us that in the short term the focus is on overcoming the current challenges of high inflation and rising costs. We will do everything we can to help our businesses overcome these challenges. Alongside this we will also be exploring how we can maximise the potential of our SME community for the longer term. We will look to support further networking, making the links with key stakeholders and being able to find the workforce with the right skills.

There are more than 2,000 SMEs in Harlow that have already taken the step of employing someone. Working to support the growth of these small businesses, which are already embedded in our community, can have a vast impact on our job creation ambitions.

However, the business support landscape is often confusing to businesses.

SWOT

Strengths	Weaknesses
• Growing numbers of SMEs • Opportunity Harlow (Community Renewal Fund) pilot project developed positive local network of SMEs • Access to good digital connectivity • Harlow Enterprise Centre offering quality space and virtual tenancies for local SMEs • Harlow Council's commercial portfolio supporting large numbers of SMES	• Lack of engagement with previously offered business support • Lack of affordable start up and grow on business accommodation • Difficulties recruiting appropriately skilled workers • Loss of business support from BEST Growth Hub
Opportunities	**Threats**
• Huge employment growth opportunity across the pool of SMEs • Funding for additional local business support ringfenced in UKSPF Investment Plan	• Weak economic environment and significant inflationary cost pressures • Lack of succession planning • Ongoing recruitment and skills issues • Failure to provide affordable business space

Desired Outcomes

- Well recognised SME business support service with increased engagement from Harlow SMEs;
- Popular and active SME networks;
- Increasing number of businesses in each size band with increasing proportions with 10+ employees; and

- Full recovery in visitor economy analytics to 2019 levels or above.

Action Areas

Our SME community will benefit from the actions taken under other priorities and themes including skills development, placemaking, community wealth building and climate change. Within this priority the focus is on core activities focused on SMEs.

Action Area 3.1: Developing networking activities

We will support business networking activities and continue to engage with our business community throughout the strategy period. This will form part of other action areas in this strategy but will also include:

- Launching the Harlow Business Website;
- Continuing as a key partner in the Harlow Business Forum and Newsletter;
- Facilitating the Business Leaders Group roundtables with key businesses;
- Sector focused activity including MedTech Networking Forum and other innovation support focussed events; and
- Supporting the Harlow Chamber.

Action Area 3.2: Business support

We are committed to ensuring businesses are able to access information, advice and guidance on how to start up, scale up and adapt to the challenges they face. Through this strategy period this is increasingly likely to include advice around changing working practices, the transition to net zero and innovation support.

The business support landscape is changing. However, we have secured funding via the UK Shared Prosperity Fund ringfenced for business support activities to plug some of this gap.

We will work with partners to explore how future business support can be structured and communicated so it is clear for businesses where to turn for advice, responding to the often confusing landscape. We will utilise the resources available to us to ensure support is targeted to Harlow businesses, addressing previous low levels of engagement.

We will also use the networking activities outlined above to raise awareness of these changes to ensure SMEs know how to access the support available to them.

Action Area 3.3: Resilience and recovery

At the time of preparing this strategy we are in a time of real economic challenge. This is the primary concern for many of our businesses and we need to ensure we are focused on responding to this, to support them through this difficult time. We do not know what the wider economic environment is going to look like for the remainder of the life of this strategy, so it may be that there continue to be short term issues which will require our attention. We must not lose sight of our other strategic priorities, but we must retain the flexibility to address the immediate context where appropriate, build a more resilient economy and recover the ground lost to the pandemic.

We know that our visitor economy has still not recovered to pre pandemic levels of activity and that the decline in the retail sector was accelerated during the pandemic. Our efforts to grow the Harlow economy will not be effective if we are losing ground elsewhere. Therefore , ensuring a resilient SME base is vital to our success.

Activities in this area will include:

- Supporting our SME base through the inflation crisis by ensuring regular opportunities to engage with business support offers;
- Supporting continued recovery of the visitor economy;
- Progressing town centre regeneration to adapt to changing market demand;
- Supporting SME adaptability to future change (including digital skills and net zero); and
- Highlighting new growth opportunities through net zero and climate change adaptation across all sectors but particularly in retrofit across the construction sector.

Key Partners

- Essex County Council;
- Harlow Chamber;
- Norfolk and Waveney Enterprise Services (NWES) at Harlow Enterprise Hub;
- The Prince’s Trust;
- FSB; and
- BEST Growth Hub.

8. Priority 4: Community Wealth Building

Key Issues

We want the benefits of economic activity taking place in Harlow to be shared and retained in the area, building a more sustainable and stronger community. We have already been working with anchor institutions (major employers) to look at how more of the money they spend on suppliers can be retained in the local area. We will continue this work, as well as working with our business community to make sure they have the skills and knowledge to effectively compete to win these supply contracts. We will also look at how we can best support the social enterprise sector and secure further social value from our own activities, and those of our key partners.

The development of the HGGT and other major regeneration projects provides us with significant opportunities to secure social value through construction investment. However, there will be wider opportunities to secure social value across both capital and revenue expenditure of anchor institutions.

We will also engage with significant anchor organisations in the wider economic area to obtain benefits for Harlow residents and businesses.

SWOT

Strengths	Weaknesses
• Strong support and active participation of Harlow Growth Board partners to Community Wealth Building principles and participation in CRF local procurement pilot project. • Harlow Anchor Network • Existing S106 Employment and Skills policy with previous experience of partnership work to support the delivery of local employment and skills benefits.	• Lack of Harlow Council social value policy • Understanding, willingness and experience of how to deliver additional value and social value is patchy across Harlow Council
Opportunities	**Threats**
• Building on CRF funded local procurement pilot project • Social value becoming embedded in Harlow Council and anchor institution procurement processes • Number of large scale regeneration contracts to be procured by Harlow Council creating local procurement and social value opportunities • UK SPF funding secured to develop third sector capacity	• Spiralling costs creating difficulties securing social value through procurement

Desired Outcomes

- Harlow Council adopting ambitious social value policy as a pathfinder example to anchor institutions;
- Increased social value secured through Harlow Council and anchor institution procurement;

- Higher local procurement spend across Harlow Council and anchor institutions;
- Higher proportion of procurement spend from Harlow Council and anchor institutions with SMEs; and
- Increasing public awareness of the value of supporting local businesses by buying local goods and services.

Action Areas

Action Area 4.1: Continuing work with Anchor Institutions

We will build on the successful Community Renewal Funded local procurement pilot project, maintaining engagement with existing participants. This includes both public sector and large private sector organisations with significant procurement activity with the potential to boost local spend and increased social value through enhanced procurement practices. Other activities will include:

- Continuing to develop and seeking to widen the number of participating organisations to develop the Harlow Anchor Network;
- Establishing the Harlow Meet the Buyers annual event; and
- Engaging with Manchester Airport Group (MAG) and Stansted Airport to explore supply chain and local employment opportunities.

Action Area 4.2: SME procurement readiness

We will work with our SME base to improve procurement readiness and awareness of contract opportunities. This will also include raising awareness of how SMEs can deliver social value to improve their procurement success and contribute to the wider development of the Harlow economy. Specific activities will include:

- Ensuring the new Harlow Business website includes up to date information, support focused on procurement and promotes the range of local businesses; and
- Ensuring the Harlow Business Forum annual programme includes advice and expertise on procurement.

Action Area 4.3: Developing the social enterprise sector

We have secured funding to deliver third sector capacity building activities through the UK SPF. We will use this, alongside our broader engagement activities across the Council to grow and develop the social enterprise sector. This will interlink with procurement readiness activities, to enable social enterprises to be better prepared to compete for contract opportunities. Activities will include:

- Working with Third Sector providers to ensure that they are able to successfully bid for potential local opportunities ensuring that they can access advise and expertise; and
- Exploring opportunities to work with the third sector to boost the circular economy.

Action Area 4.4: Securing greater social value

We will work with anchor institutions and our SME and social enterprise sector to secure additional social value. This will include the Council becoming a leader or pathfinder in developing an ambitious social value policy to make best value of our own procurement activities.

There are likely to be significant opportunities within the construction sector over the life of this strategy, and this will become a key focus to develop social value in procurement. This will include opportunities across the wider Harlow Gilston Garden Town and major regeneration projects within Harlow itself. We will use this learning to develop and roll out social value in procurement across our wider capital and revenue spending. Example activities include:

- Securing wider social value outcomes and supply chain adaptation to drive the transition to net zero through the Council using its own planning and procurement practices to lead by example; and
- Supporting business leaders to define and promote their social value offer to local SMEs, community, voluntary and education sectors.

Key Partners

- Anchor institutions (including Princess Alexandra Hospital, Harlow College and others);
- MAG/Stansted Airport;
- SMEs;
- Business representative organisations; and
- Social enterprise and voluntary sector.

9. Priority 5: Driving Productivity and Higher Value

Key Issues

Our evidence review has identified low wages and low productivity. Whereas once the Harlow economy was the leader of the pack (of our comparators) it is now lagging behind. The economy has never fully recovered from the losses of Nortel and GSK. We need to address this by securing higher value, higher productivity activities.

Research by Essex County Council has identified a lack of R&D investment to be a countywide issue. However, we can be encouraged by recent employment growth in the scientific R&D sector in Harlow. We need to further boost R&D and innovation across our businesses and make the links between the existing innovation partners and opportunities in Harlow and further afield.

This also links to Priority 2 in terms of ensuring we upskill our workforce at all levels to be more productive.

SWOT

Strengths	Weaknesses
• Strategic location between London and Cambridge • Superfast digital connectivity • Well recognised sector strengths in technology, advanced manufacturing, life sciences and med-tech • ARU ARISE developing health performance and wellbeing including MedTech ecosystem • Long standing local MedTech Networking Forum • Harlow Innovation Park and Kao Park to accommodate high value businesses	• Failure to replace loss of large high value employers • Lack of land to attract and enable businesses to grow within the town • Lack of breadth of visible local higher education offer • Lack of private sector investment in productivity enhancing activities (R&D, commercialisation, skills, capital)
Opportunities	**Threats**
• Affordable location at the heart of the UK Innovation Corridor • Potential convergence and synergy between key sectors • Maximising benefits of existing assets including ARISE, MedTech Forum, Harlow Innovation Park etc • ECC CareTech and MedTech Expression of Interest • Aligning Harlow College (including IoT) delivering educational offer to key sectors • Relocation of UKHSA to Harlow and associated supply chain opportunities • New digitally enabled Princess Alexandra Hospital	• Poor educational attainment profile for town putting off potential investors • Historic low R&D investment leading to weak culture of innovation and investment • Lack of funding

Desired Outcomes[7]

- Development of local R&D and innovation networks and partnerships;

[7] Whilst increased R&D expenditure is a clear desired outcome this cannot be monitored at the local level

- Increasing employment in high value, knowledge based sectors (including information and communication, and professional, scientific and technical);
- Increasing workplace-based wages, closing the gap with the UK average; and
- Increasing productivity data (GVA per filled job) with reduced gap with UK average.

Action Areas

Action Area 5.1: Engagement with UK Innovation Corridor

Harlow is located at the heart of the UK Innovation Corridor, with major innovation and high value economic hubs at London and Cambridge. Harlow offers an affordable location to accommodate growing companies emerging from these hubs. Example activities include:

- Continuing to play an active role as part of the UKIC and UKIC Core to promote Harlow as an investment location and to strengthen our links into activities across the wider corridor. This will be particularly focused around our key sectors.

Action Area 5.2: Encouraging greater R&D and innovation activity

We will undertake a range of activities to encourage greater R&D and innovation activity across Harlow businesses. This will include:

- Sector specific support linked to our key sectors and regeneration and growth agendas, including encouraging exploration of R&D and innovation opportunities in net zero and climate change adaptation;
- Continuing to work in partnership with ARU ARISE on programme of activity including development of MedTech cluster, development of sector network, developing links between PAH and MedTech businesses;
- Strengthening the Harlow Advanced Manufacturing offer linked to Harlow College's Advanced Manufacturing Centre;
- Utilising business engagement, networking and support activities to promote awareness of R&D and innovation support and opportunities;
- Helping to align local educational and skills provision to the needs of key sectors; and
- Promoting STEM skills and supporting the IoT as a key skills and knowledge asset for Harlow.

Area 5.3: Supporting collaboration across HealthTech/DIZ/ARISE

There are opportunities to strengthen the links between existing innovation and R&D activities and strengths in Harlow. We will seek to broker these linkages, in particular across the Health and Med Tech activities with the Digital Innovation Zone and ARISE.

There are likely to be other collaboration activities identified through the life of the strategy and we will retain the flexibility to play a connecting role to maximise opportunities for Harlow. We will:

- Foster an innovation ecosystem by joining up the public and private sector across health, MedTech, Digital and other sectors with relevant Higher Education (HE) expertise and other knowledge transfer programmes; and
- Explore opportunities for R&D and innovation convergence opportunities across life sciences, med/health tech, digital and advanced manufacturing sectors and those linked to net zero and climate change adaptation.

Action Area 5.4: Capturing UKHSA supply chain and co-location opportunities

The relocation of UKHSA to the town will create a significant asset around which further investment can be focused. We understand there will be additional capacity at the UKHSA campus (former GSK site) with potential for colocation opportunities for supply chain or other related organisations.

We will be focused on ensuring Harlow is ready to capitalise on this opportunity. Whilst the relocation is currently scheduled for beyond this strategy period we are focused on doing all we can to promoting this opportunity to secure wider economic benefit for Harlow, and enable our residents to be readied to access employment opportunities. Activities will include:

- Engaging in enhanced dialogue with UKHSA to understand as much detail on its plans and secure its relocation; and
- Engaging with UKHSA to ensure that the wider benefits of its relocation are realised for Harlow residents and businesses, particularly in relation to supply chain and local procurement opportunities, skills and education, and employment opportunities.

Action Area 5.5 Strengthening local infrastructure

Enabling businesses to operate effectively on a day-to-day basis is fundamental to their productivity. Local infrastructure can be an important factor, including transport and digital connectivity.

Within Priority 1 we have identified the need to ensure businesses can access the sites and premises they need to grow and be effective. In addition to this, we will use our influence to ensure the wider supporting infrastructure businesses need is in place, and any local blockages resolved.

We have already identified the need to improve transport connectivity between key business locations (e.g. the Pinnacles and London Road EZ site – Kao Park and HIP) and key transport gateways such as our train stations and town centre. Business leaders reported negative impacts on local congestion. We will work with colleagues within Harlow Council and Essex County Council to seek to resolve these issues and ensure transport investment and land use planning are aligned to support the performance of our businesses. This could include:

- Ensuring the operational needs and workforce travel needs of local businesses are understood;
- Ensuring the identified issues are raised with relevant bodies to explore solutions that help meet business needs, minimise congestion and promote sustainable travel; and
- Investing in and promoting the use of active travel and public transport infrastructure.

Key Partners

- UK Innovation Corridor;
- Digital Innovation Zone;
- ARISE/ARU;
- University of Essex Smart Health Technologies Group;
- Harlow College/IoT/Advanced Manufacturing Centre;
- UKHSA;
- Harlow Innovation Park;
- Essex County Council; and
- HGGT.

10. Core Theme 1: Competitiveness for Growth

The need to drive competitiveness and growth runs through each of our priorities as a consistent thread. Harlow has a heritage as a place of leading edge manufacturing and technological and scientific research and development. The evidence highlights we have work to do to recapture this position. We will therefore focus on making Harlow a competitive and attractive location for investment and growth.

This will include adopting a pro investment, employment and R&D growth position in all that we do. We will continue to promote and support the Harlow Innovation Park and the Enterprise Zone as priority locations for high value employment generation to support innovation and R&D activities. We will focus attention on securing the relocation of UKHSA to Harlow and putting in place the foundations to capture the wider economic benefits of this large scale investment. This will include through enabling our workforce and business base to access employment and procurement opportunities, as well as attracting supply chain and associated businesses to the town.

11. Core Theme 2: Resourcing and Partnering for Growth

The changing landscape in economic development means we need to direct resources to the key roles of coordinating with partners and securing resources. This cuts across each of our priorities.

We have been able to secure recent investment via the Towns Fund, Community Renewal Fund, UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Levelling Up Fund among others. If government funding continues to be allocated on the basis of competitive bidding processes, we need to be ready to respond to new funding opportunities, often at short notice. We will develop the compelling vision and narrative for Harlow's future outlining economic and wider benefits that will be achieved through further investment in the town. The narrative needs to make the case for investment across the public and private sectors and the opportunity of delivering greater value by programmed step change investment. Therefore we need well developed project ideas ahead of time, and put in place the ground work to enable funding bids and business cases to be developed within narrow time frames.

We must also be fleet of foot in working with partners for projects at different scales and on different topics. Maintaining good relationships and open dialogue with a wide variety of partner organisations will be vital in order to identify linkages and opportunities for collaboration. Throughout each of the priorities we have highlighted key partners, but the lists are far from exhaustive. We recognise the role of Harlow Council as just one of multiple stakeholders in the economic development of the town.

The most critical partners will be the Harlow Growth Board, Harlow Gilston Garden Town, West Essex and East Hertfordshire FEMA, Essex County Council and UK Innovation Corridor. We must continue to play an active role within and alongside these organisations throughout the life of this strategy and engage proactively with the emerging process of developing the Greater Essex Combined Authority to ensure opportunity here is recognised, and that Harlow secures the investment it needs to achieve its ambitions.

12. Implementation and Delivery

What is Council's role?

As Harlow Council we recognise that we have only limited influence over the performance of the economy. Global and national economic conditions, along with national policy decisions will have a much greater effect. However, we can play a role in identifying and tackling local issues, seeking to put in place the surest foundations for the Harlow economy to thrive and grow.

We also recognise that tackling the fundamental challenges we have identified is a long term endeavour. The underlying issues impacting growth, participation, skills, productivity and wages will not be fully resolved during the life of this strategy. But we will use this strategy to take steps towards that change.

As a Council we will work to achieve the vision through:

- **Direct delivery** – where resources, funding and capacity allow we will take the lead in delivering and funding a range of activities including physical regeneration, delivery of sites, business support and engagement, and skills initiatives;
- **A whole Council approach -** there is a role for all Council departments in supporting the economic development of Harlow, not just the economic development team. We will engage across the Council to raise awareness of how policy and decision making can be made to positively contribute to economic development;
- **Partnership, joint working and collaboration** – this is a core theme of our strategy and includes convening the Harlow Growth Board and working with others to reinforce and advocate the case for public and private investment and external funding opportunities, and demonstrate a collective and united voice for the town;
- **Promoting, signposting and raising awareness -** we can use our reach to promote Harlow externally, raise awareness of future changes and point in the direction of those that can help where we cannot;

- **Securing resources** – we will seek, apply for and access funding opportunities as arise and fit with priorities with the aim of maximising the resources available to support the Harlow economy; and
- **Leading by example** – whether it is shaping policy and strategy, using our spending power, or influencing our partners we will seek to lead by example to effect change.

Action and Resourcing Plan

This strategy sets out our key priorities and example action areas. However, we need to remain flexible to the changing economic and policy environment. Our economic development team will prepare a detailed Action and Resourcing Plan on an annual basis, reflecting the priorities and outcomes outlined in this strategy.

The Action and Resourcing Plan will programme activity to be undertaken to help implement this strategy. It will be a live document which will inevitably evolve over the duration of the strategy with additional activities added as new initiatives are introduced.

Monitoring Impact

The Action and Resourcing Plan will be a tool to actively monitor and support the delivery of this strategy. This will be reviewed annually. There will also be a formal mid-point review of strategy and evidence base data to understand progress.

These review points will be critical given the rapidly changing economic landscape and the potential for further changes to national policy, devolution arrangements and funding approaches.

Progress will be reported via the Council's Performance Monitoring process and to the Harlow Growth Board.

HARDISTY JONES ASSOCIATES

DRAFT EVIDENCE BASE

Harlow Economic Development

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Contents

Document control

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Tables and figures

Executive Summary

The analysis in this supporting evidence base for the Harlow Economic Development Strategy reviews a range of socio-economic data, benchmarking Harlow against Basildon, Stevenage, the wider West Essex/East Hertfordshire Functional Economic Market Area (FEMA), the county of Essex and England.

The analysis considers Harlow from two different perspectives. Firstly from the perspective of its resident population, and the demographic and labour market context that the Economic Development Strategy needs to respond to. Secondly, from a workplace perspective, considering employment and business data for Harlow.

Resident Demographic and Labour Market Analysis

- Harlow has a resident population of 93,300 persons.
- There has been strong growth in resident population over the last 10 years when compared to benchmarks
- A higher proportion of the resident population is working age in comparison to benchmark areas, and again had the highest rate of working age population growth.
- Harlow has low and more strongly declining economic activity and employment rates than the benchmark comparators.
- Much lower proportions of the working age population have Level 3 and 4 qualifications. Whilst there is some evidence of an upward trend in the proportion with Level 4 qualifications, attainment levels within the Harlow education system are below county and national benchmarks and the gap is widening rather than closing.
- Harlow has a broad balance between in and out commuting, with around 16,000 persons commuting in and out of the local authority area for work. The most significant origin and destination points are neighbouring local authority areas. However, this data is now old.
- The levels of home based working in Harlow are very low compared to the benchmark areas, highlighting the importance of workplace based employment and the relatively low levels of office based employment among the resident population, which have been most significantly impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic.

- Unemployment is relatively low compared to benchmark areas but there is some evidence it was rising faster than in other areas before the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Earnings data shows that Harlow residents have the lowest wages of any of the comparator areas, more than 20% below the UK average.

Workplace Economy, Employment and Business Analysis

- The Harlow economy generates a little over £2 billion in output (GVA) each year and is home to around 44,000 jobs and 3,300 businesses. This places Harlow as one of the smallest of the fifteen East of England major towns and cities.
- Changes in economic output over the last 10 years have largely tracked benchmark areas although performance since 2018 has shown some signs of weakness with larger falls in output than comparator areas.
- Harlow has experienced deteriorating productivity performance, from being the most productive of the comparator areas 15 years ago, to being the lowest in the most recent data. This performance has undoubtedly been impacted by the loss of major companies such as GSK and Nortel.
- The three sectors generating the most GVA in Harlow are manufacturing, wholesale & retail, and health. There are also relative strengths in the construction and administrative & support sectors.
- Data on total jobs suggests a fall in the number of jobs in Harlow over recent years, with weaker performance than comparator areas. Whilst there is some volatility and uncertainty in the data there is some consistency with the GVA data showing weaker performance in recent years and a failure to capture growth.
- The largest sectors in terms of employment in Harlow are retail & wholesale, and health. A number of other sectors show concentrations relative to the national average. These include manufacturing, construction, transport & storage, information & communication, administration & support services, and education.
- Workplace wage data has been volatile in recent years. Latest data ranks the district lower than all benchmark areas other than Basildon, with Stevenage the highest of the comparators. This accords with the productivity data.
- The number of businesses in Harlow has been growing strongly and outperforming benchmark areas. This includes particularly strong performance in the construction, transport & storage and administrative & support services sectors. This is a result of strong business formation rates with business survival being largely in line with comparator averages.
- Harlow has a higher proportion of larger businesses than comparator areas. Whilst the total numbers are small, these can be significant for the provision of employment opportunities. These are predominantly in the manufacturing and education sectors.
- However, as is true across the UK economy, around 99% of businesses are SMEs (with almost 90% being micro businesses with fewer than 10 employees). This highlights the importance of the small business community for any local economy.

1 Introduction

1.1 This document sets out a review of socio economic data which has been used to inform the development of the Harlow Economic Development Strategy 2023-28.

1.2 Throughout the analysis we present data for the local authority area of Harlow unless otherwise stated, and we have compared its performance to the following areas:

- Basildon;
- Stevenage;
- West Essex/East Herts FEMA (comprising East Hertfordshire, Epping Forest, Harlow, Uttlesford local authorities);
- Essex County; and
- England/UK.

1.3 The analysis is separated into two chapters.

- Chapter 2 provides a summary of demographic and labour market data for Harlow. This considers the perspective of Harlow's residents, the characteristics of the local population and their participation in the economy;
- Chapter 3 provides a summary of business and employment data for Harlow. This considers the perspective of Harlow as a workplace and economic hub;
- Chapter 4 provides a summary of key statistics on the impact of Covid-19 on the Harlow economy; and
- Chapter 4 sets out supporting data.

2 Demographics and the Labour Market

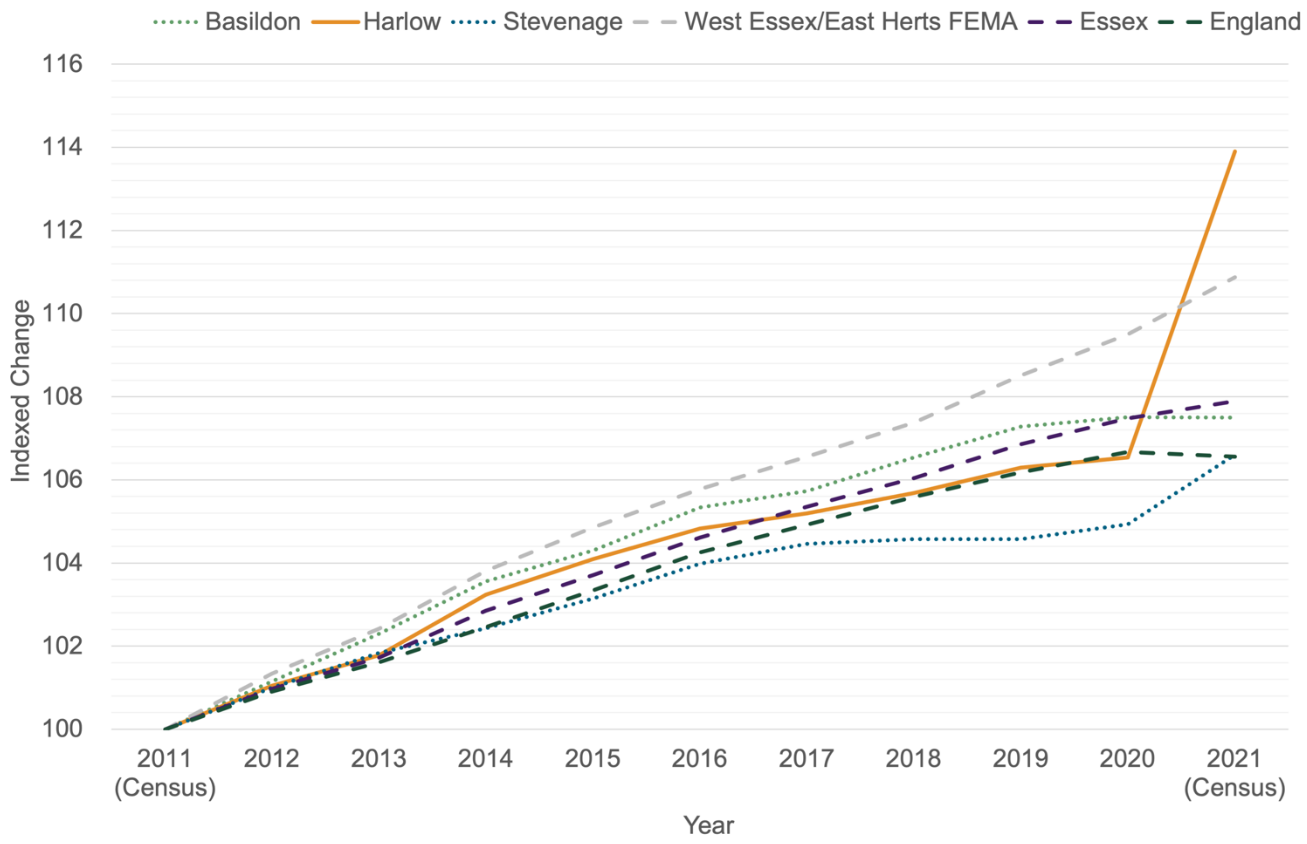
Population

1.1. The Census (2021) shows that Harlow has a resident population of 93,300.

1.2. Data for the intervening years has been obtained from ONS (Office for National Statistics) Population Estimates. This is shown in the figure below, indexed to 2011 (the previous Census) which allows for comparison across areas.

1.3. This figure shows that there was a significant jump in the population between 2020 (taken from Population Estimates) and 2021 (taken from the latest Census). This suggests that Population Estimates have under-estimated the population of Harlow in the intercensal period 2012 to 2020 inclusive.

Figure 1: Indexed Population Growth 2011 - 2021 (Census 2011 = 100) [Source: Census and Population Estimates]



1.4. To account for the likely undercount in the Population Estimates, the compound annual growth rate has been calculated between the two censuses. This calculates the average yearly rate of growth that has occurred between 2011 and 2021.

1.5. The total population of Harlow has grown at a compound annual rate of 1.3% since the 2011 Census. This is higher than all other comparator areas which had a compound annual growth rate between 0.6% and 1%.

Population Aged 16 - 64

1.6. The number of residents aged between 16 and 64 (commonly defined as 'working age') was 59,500 or, 64% of the total in 2021. This is at, or just above, the proportion seen in the comparator areas as shown in the table below.

Table 1: Proportion of Resident Population Defined as Working Age (2021) [Source: Census]

Location	Proportion Aged 16 - 64
Basildon	62%
Harlow	**64%**
Stevenage	64%
West Essex/East Herts FEMA	62%
Essex	61%
England	63%

2.1 Examining the compound annual growth rate of the working age population between 2011 and 2021 shows that Harlow had the highest growth rate of any comparator area. This shows that (unlike many other areas across England) population growth in the area is not being driven by increases in the older population aged 65 and over.

Economic Activity and Employment Rates

2.2 Data on economic activity and employment rates has been gathered from the Annual Population Survey. The three-year rolling average to 2021 shows that Harlow had an economic activity rate of 78%. This is below the rates seen in all comparator areas.

2.3 Analysis of the period 2017 to 2021 (shown in Figure 2) shows that Harlow has seen a downward trend in economic activity rates. This is in-line with the trend seen in the West Essex/East Herts FEMA (to which it is a contributor), but not any of the other comparator areas.

2.4 The three-year rolling average employment rate in Harlow in 2021 was 74%. This is below all comparator areas. The number of people in employment is a subset of the number of people that are economically active. Therefore, employment rates have followed a similar trend to economic activity rates. Figure 3 shows that Harlow has seen a decline in the employment rate since 2017. There was not a significant decline seen as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020.

Figure 2: Proportion of Working Age Residents that are Economically Active (Three-year Rolling Average) [Source: Annual Population Survey]

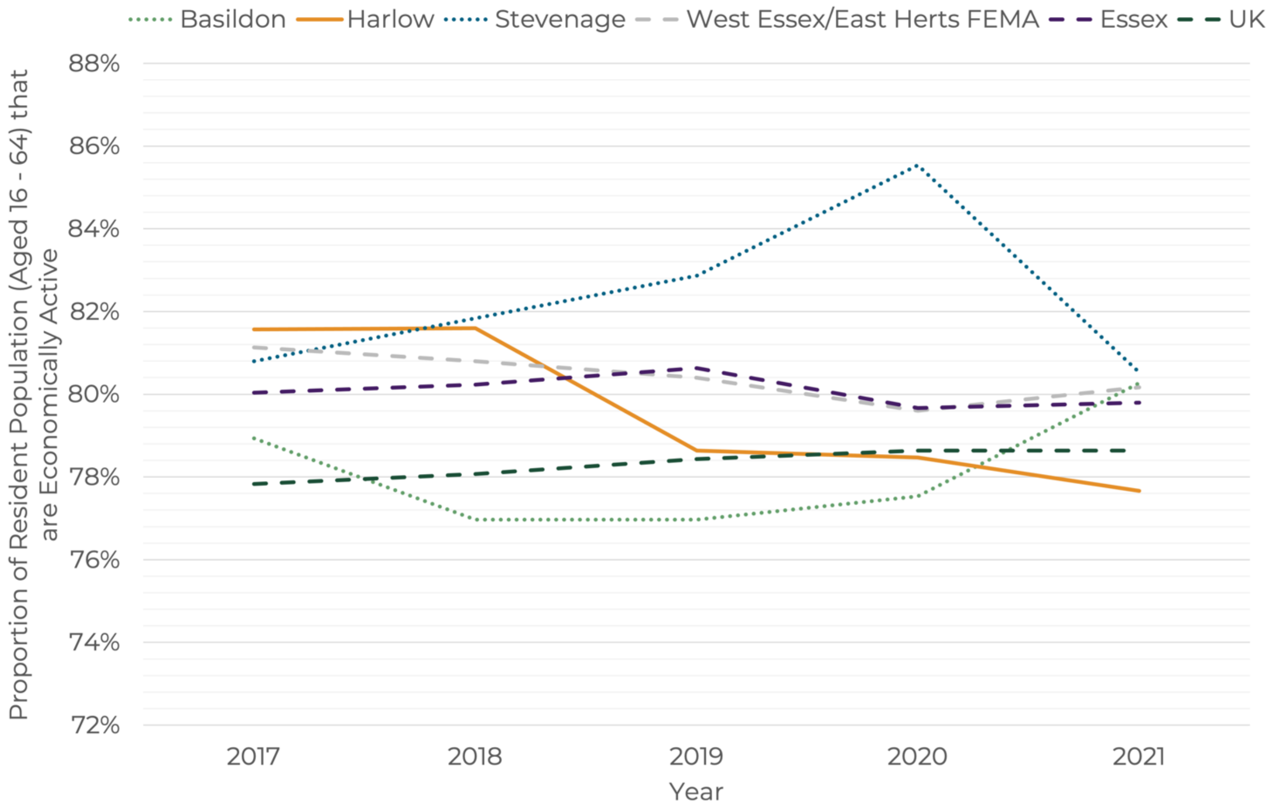
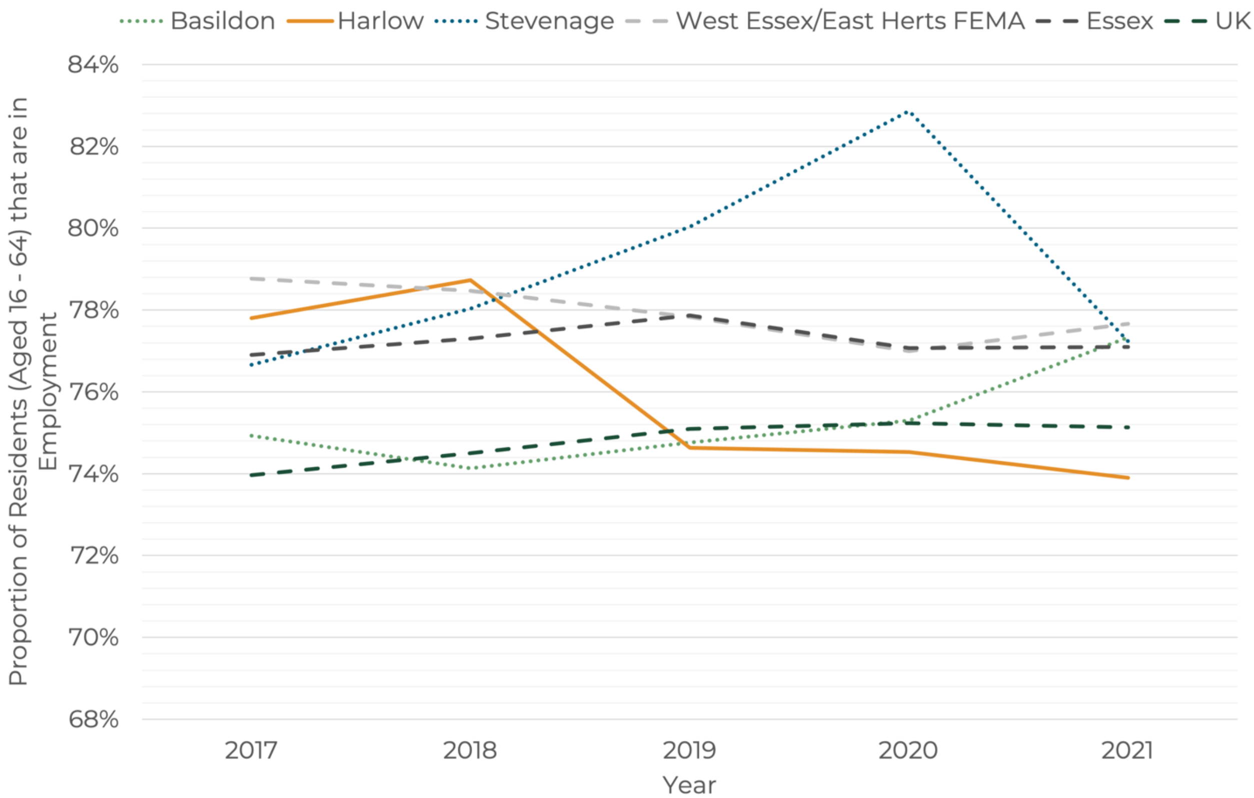


Figure 3: Proportion of Working Age Residents that are in Employment (Three-year Rolling Average) [Source: Annual Population Survey]



Qualifications

2.5 Data on the highest level of qualifications among the working age population has been collected from the Annual Population Survey. Data for 2021 (Figure 4) shows that the proportion of residents in Harlow that are qualified to the highest levels (NVQ4+) is lower than all comparator areas except Basildon.

2.6 Analysis of qualifications among the working age population in Harlow over the period 2015 to 2021 is shown in Figure 5. Figures presented are a three-year rolling average to account for the fluctuations in annual survey data.

2.7 The broad trend is for an increasing proportion of the population to be qualified to NVQ4+ in Harlow, with a decline in NVQ2. Proportions qualified to NVQ1 and NVQ3 have remained broadly stable.

Figure 4: Highest Qualification Level (NVQ) Among Working Age Residents (Three-Year Rolling Average to 2021) [Source: Annual Population Survey]

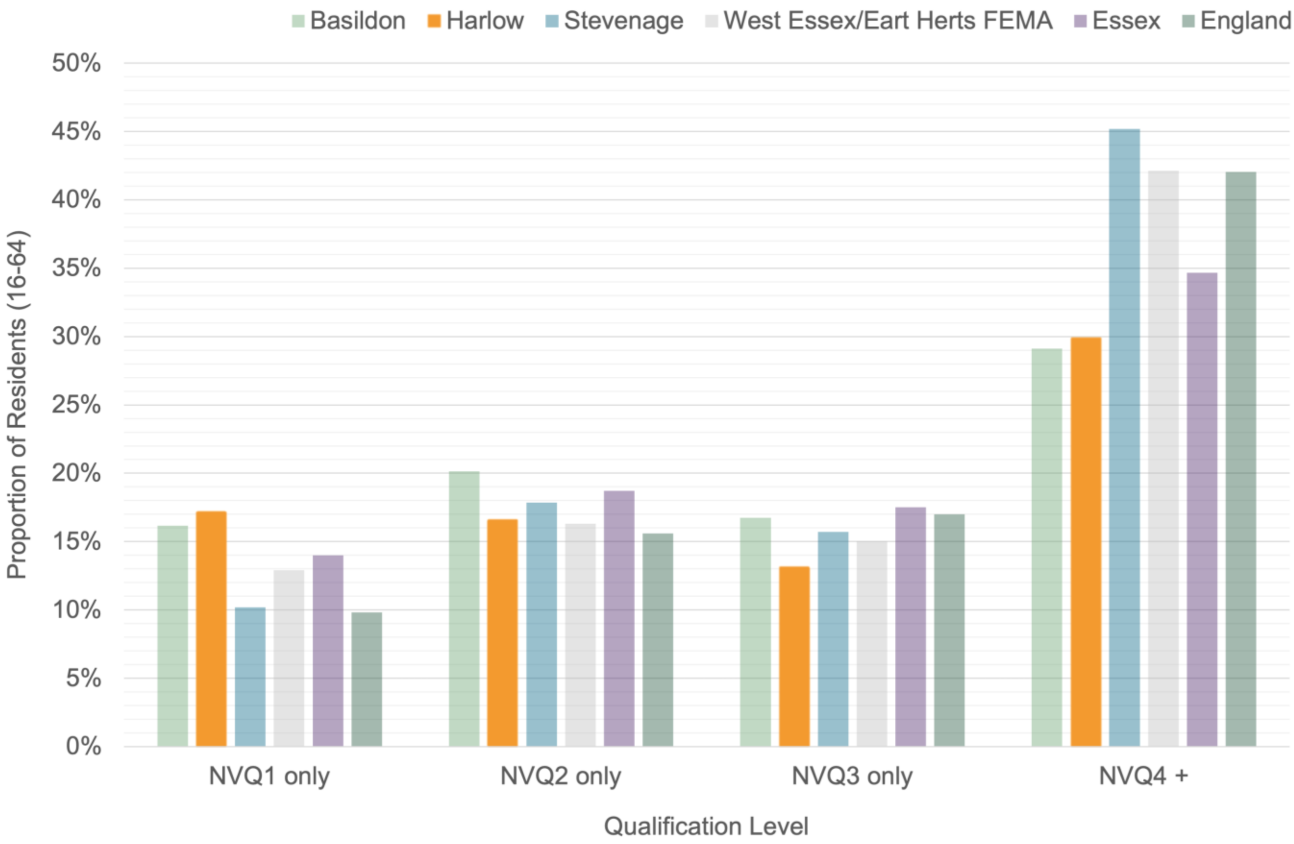
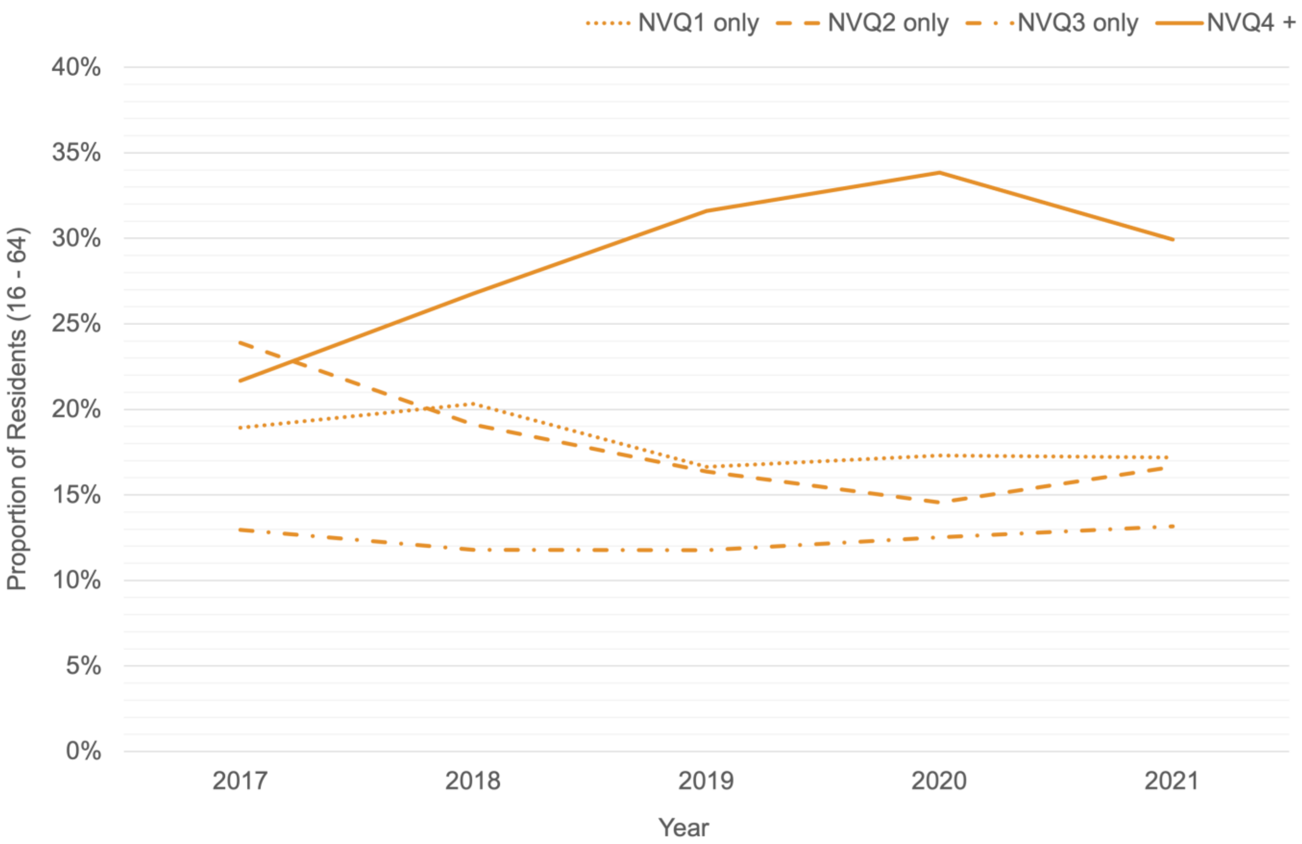


Figure 5: Change Over Time in the Proportion of Working Age Residents in Harlow (Three-Year Rolling Average) [Source: Annual Population Survey]



Attainment

2.8 Data on Level 2 and 3 attainment among those aged 19 has been obtained from the Department for Education. Across all years between 2016/17 and 2021/21 Harlow had the lowest attainment at Levels 2 and 3 compared to Essex and England, as shown in Figure 6.

2.9 The academic year 2020/21 saw a decline in attainment at Level 2 in both Harlow and Essex compared to all previous years analysed. However, Harlow saw a larger decline than comparator areas, and decline from a lower starting point.

2.10 There was an increase in attainment at Level 3 in the academic year 2020/21 in both Essex and England, but not in Harlow. Essex and England have experience a broad upward trend in attainment at Level 3 however, Harlow has seen broadly stable levels of attainment.

2.11 In Level 2 English and Maths attainment levels have been broadly stable across Essex and England, but have declined in Harlow. This is shown in Figure 7.

Figure 6: Attainment Among those Aged 19 2016/17 to 2020/21 [Source: Level 2 and 3 attainments – Ages 16 to 19 by Local Authority District]

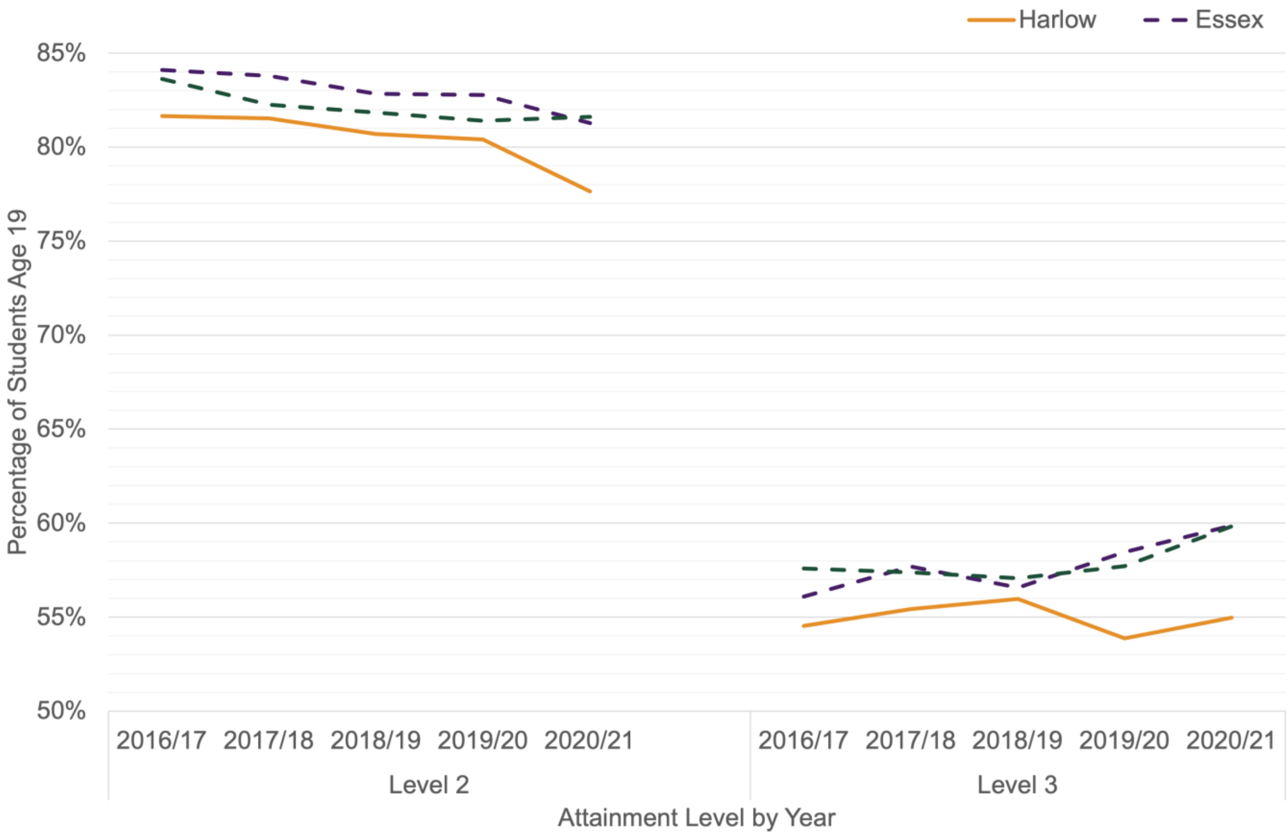
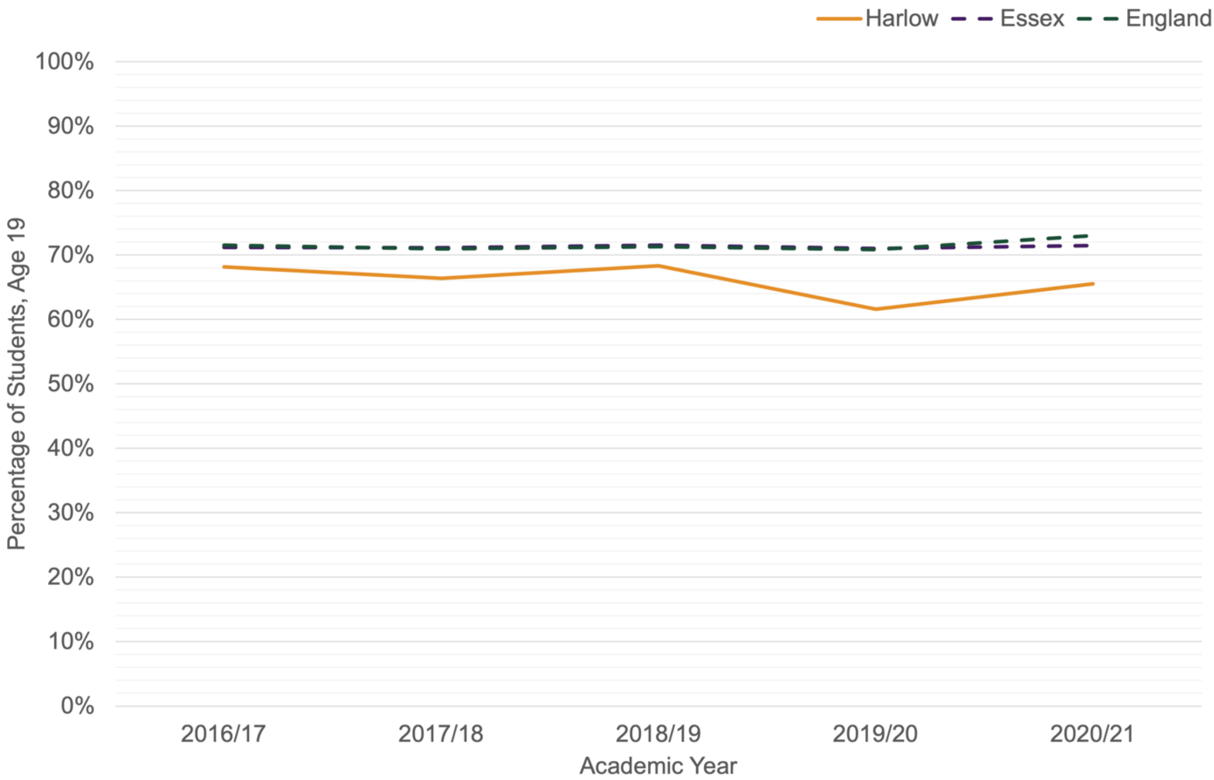


Figure 7: Level 2 Maths and English Attainment Among those Aged 19 [Source: Level 2 and 3 attainments – Ages 16 to 19 by Local Authority District]



2.12 Attainment in Maths and English particularly declined in Harlow in the academic years 2019/20 and 2020/21. It is likely that at least some of this could be attributed to the Covid-19 pandemic. However, attainment has not yet returned to pre-pandemic levels.

2.13 Examining both Maths and English separately shows that attainment in Harlow is lower than the comparator areas in both subjects. However, there has been a larger decline (and smaller recovery) in attainment in Level 2 English. This is set out in the table below.

Table 2: Attainment of Level 2 English and Level 2 Maths Among those Aged 19 [Source: Level 2 and 3 attainments – Ages 16 to 19 by Local Authority District]

	Average 16/17 to 18/19	2019/20	2020/21
English			
Harlow	**76%**	**70%**	**72%**
Essex	80%	79%	79%
England	80%	79%	80%
Maths			
Harlow	**75%**	**73%**	**76%**
Essex	76%	77%	78%
England	76%	77%	79%

Commuting

2.14 Commuting data is obtained from the Census (2011) as commuting data from the 2021 Census is not yet published and is likely to be unreliable due to the Covid-19 related public health restrictions[1].

2.15 Harlow sees a net outflow of 550 commuters. However, this figure masks significant flows of commuters with 16,010 people commuting into Harlow each day and 16,560 out-commuters.

2.16 East Hertfordshire and Epping Forest are the top two local authority destinations for those commuters that leave Harlow each day, and also the top two sources of commuters into Harlow.

2.17 The vast majority (80%) of Harlow residents commute to work somewhere within the East of England. Approximately 5,800 (17%) of residents commute to London for work each day.

Unemployment

2.18 Data on unemployment within local authority districts has been obtained from the model-based estimates (the official measure at local authority level) from the Annual Population Survey[2]. Data for larger geographies (Essex County and England in this case) has been sourced directly from the Annual Population Survey.

2.19 Model-based estimates are based on data from the Annual Population Survey. Given the issues surrounding the population estimates (detailed in para 1.3) it is possible that there is also an under-estimate of the number of unemployed people in Harlow. All percentages will be accurate (confirmed by the ONS) as any error will be present in both the numerator and denominator.

2.20 Model-based estimates suggest there were 2,000 unemployed people in Harlow in 2021. This equates to 3% of the resident population (from Census 2021). This is in-line with comparator areas as shown in the table below.

Table 3: Official Unemployment Estimates (2021) [Source: Model-Based Estimates of Unemployment and Annual Population Survey (2022)]

Location	Proportion 16 - 64
Basildon	3.6%
Harlow	**3.4%**
Stevenage	3.3%
West Essex/East Herts FEMA	2.9%
Essex	3.7%
England	4.6%

[1] The ONS is exploring ways to improve commuting data given the potential issues associated with the 2021 Census and the need to understand the impact of changing working practices, many of which have resulted from the pandemic, on how people are travelling to work. For more details see https://blog.ons.gov.uk/2022/12/08/understanding-commuting-patterns-from-census-2021/ (last accessed 27/01/2023)

[2] This supplements data obtained from the Annual Population Survey with Claimant Count data to provide more robust estimates for smaller geographical areas.

2.21 To account for a possible under-counting in the official unemployment estimates we have gathered data from the Claimant Count. This dataset is strongly correlated with unemployment as it provides data on those that are claiming benefits primarily for the reason of being unemployed. It also provides an age-breakdown of claimants.

2.22 Claimant count data is collected monthly. To facilitate examining the period 2015 to 2021 an average has been calculated for each year. Given the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on unemployment figures, we have examined the years prior to Covid-19 and after separately.

2.23 The figure below shows that during the period 2015 to 2019 (prior to the Covid-19 pandemic) Harlow experienced growth in the Claimant Count above the average for comparator areas.

2.24 The claimant count increased across all areas as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Harlow saw a smaller increase in the claimant count than comparator areas. This is likely due to the fact that Harlow had a relatively larger claimant count prior to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Figure 8: Total Claimant Count 2015 - 2019 (Indexed to 2015) [Source: Claimant Count by Sex and Age]

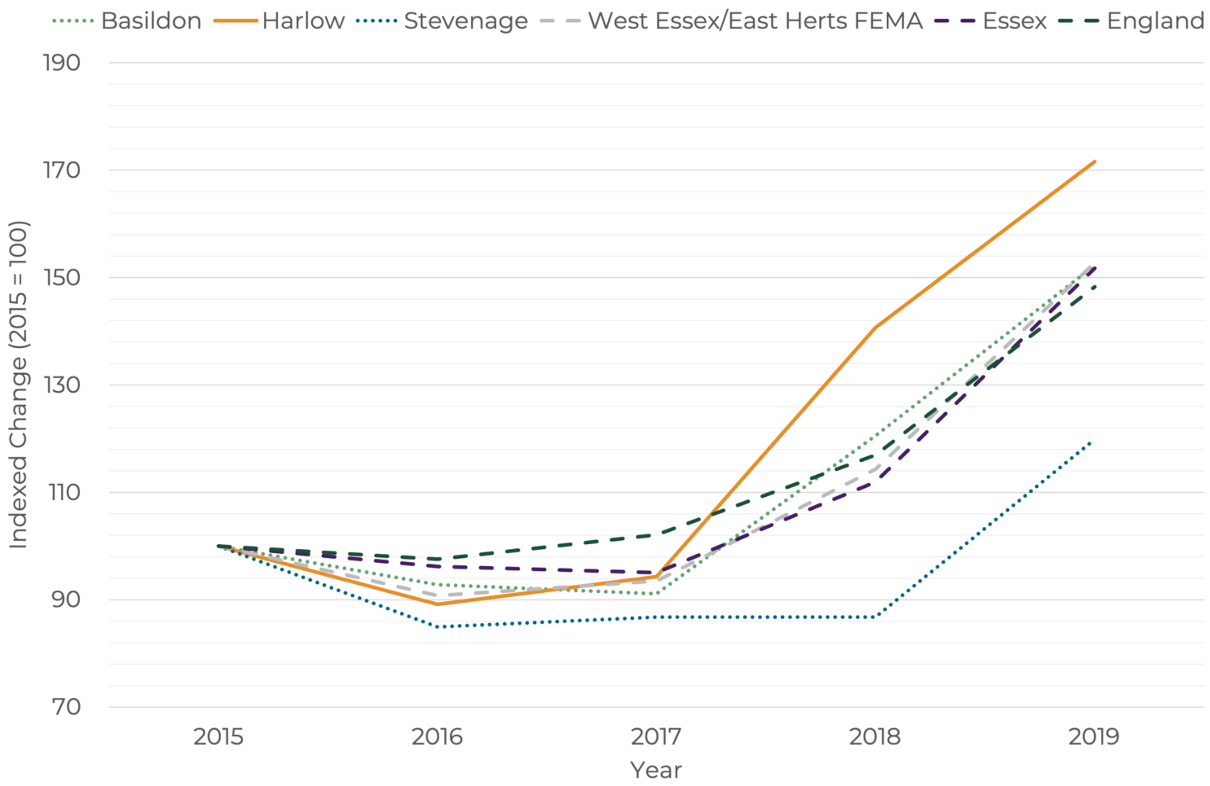
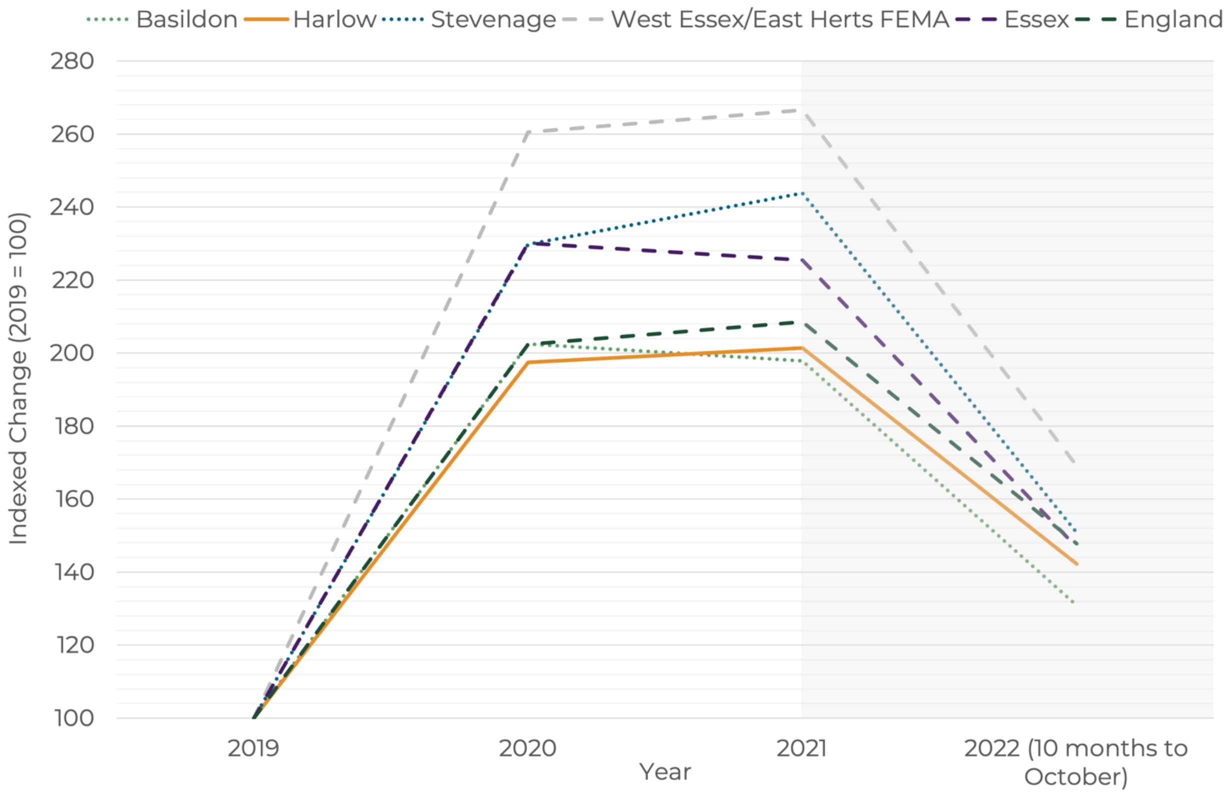


Figure 9: Total Claimant Count 2019 -October 2022 (Indexed to 2019) [Source: Claimant Count by Sex and Age]

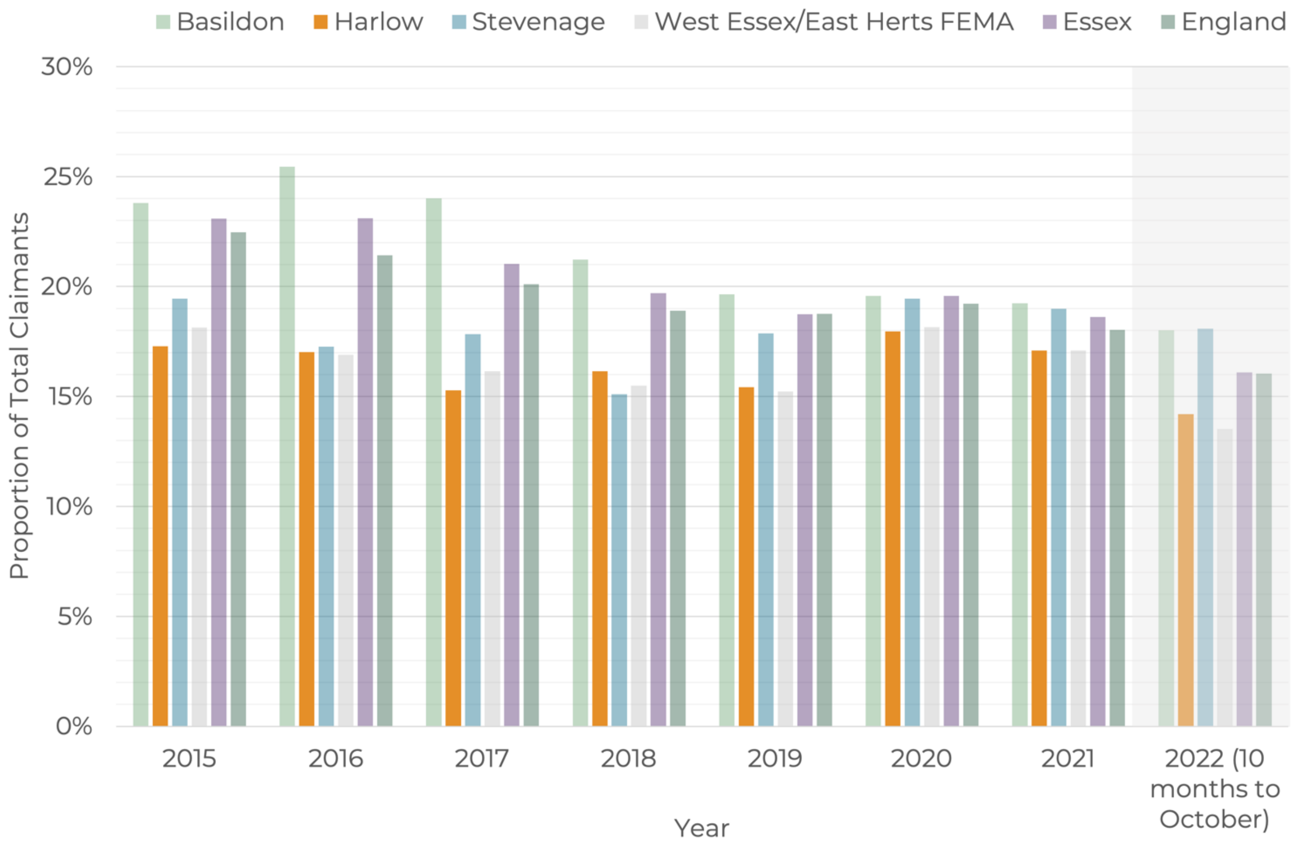


Claimant Count 16 - 24

2.25 The average claimant count in 2021 in Harlow among 16 -24-year-olds was 650 or, 7% of the population. This is above the West Essex/East Herts FEMA figure of 5% and the Essex and England averages of 6%. However, it is in-line with the proportions seen in Basildon and Stevenage.

2.26 The figure below shows that the number of younger people (aged 16 – 24) as a proportion of the total claimant count in Harlow has consistently been below or in-line with most comparator areas.

Figure 10: Claimant Count Aged 16 - 24 as a Proportion of Total Claimants [Source: Claimant Count by Sex and Age]



Deprivation

2.27 The Index of Multiple Deprivation[3] shows that there are no Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) within Harlow that are ranked among the 10% most deprived nationally.

2.28 Data is also provided on the average score for each District. A population weighted average score is calculated for each LSOA and aggerated to provide a single score for each District. The Districts are then ranked, where one is the most deprived, and 317 is the least deprived. This measure covers both deprived and non-deprived areas however, highly deprived areas do not average out meaning that highly polarised areas will score higher.

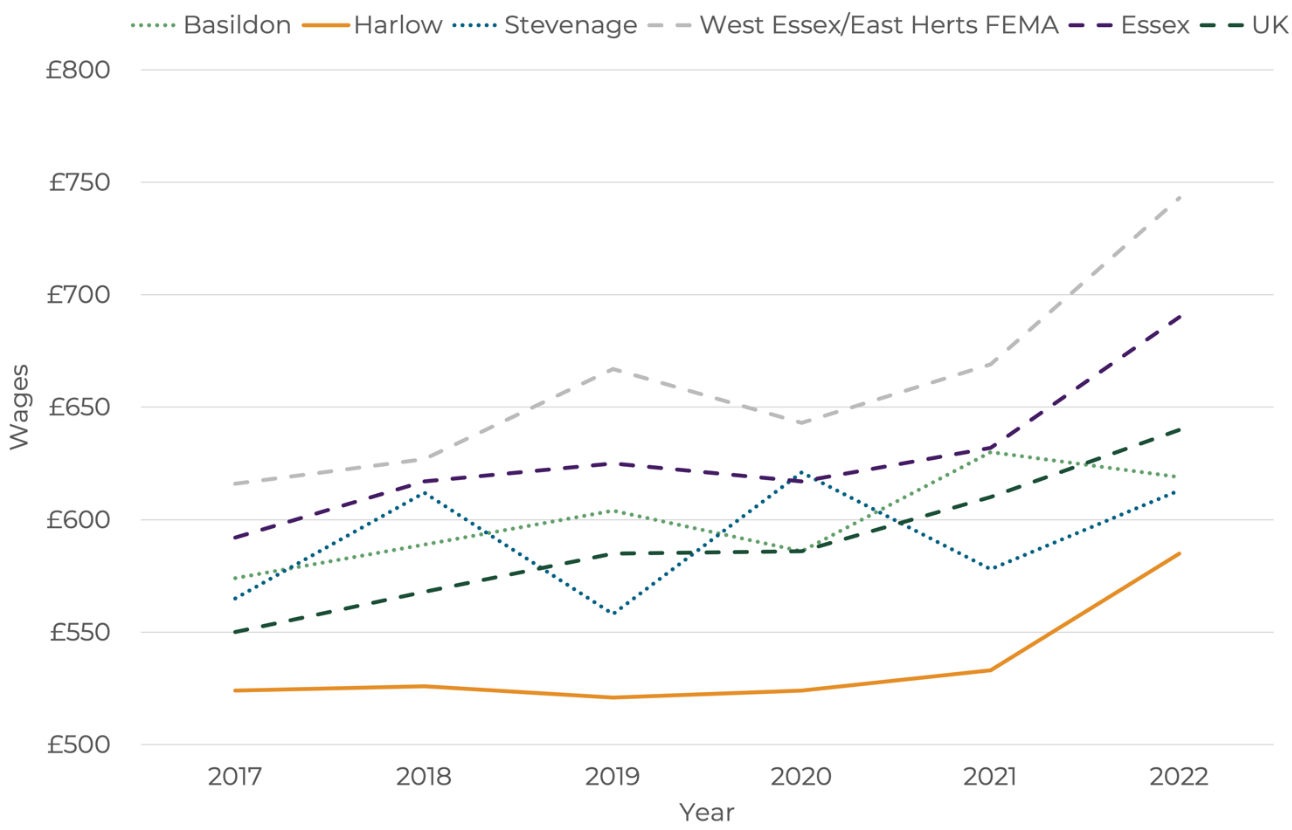
2.29 Harlow is ranked 124 out of 317 local authority districts based on the average multiple deprivation score.

Resident Wages

2.30 Gross median full-time weekly resident wages in Harlow were £585 in 2022. This is below all other comparator areas. Figure 11 shows that Harlow has consistently had lower wages for residents than comparator areas since 2017 and more than 20% below the UK average.

[3] Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (2019) English Indices of Deprivation: File 10 Local Authority District Summaries

Figure 11: Gross Median Full-time Weekly Resident Wages 2017 – 2022 [Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings]

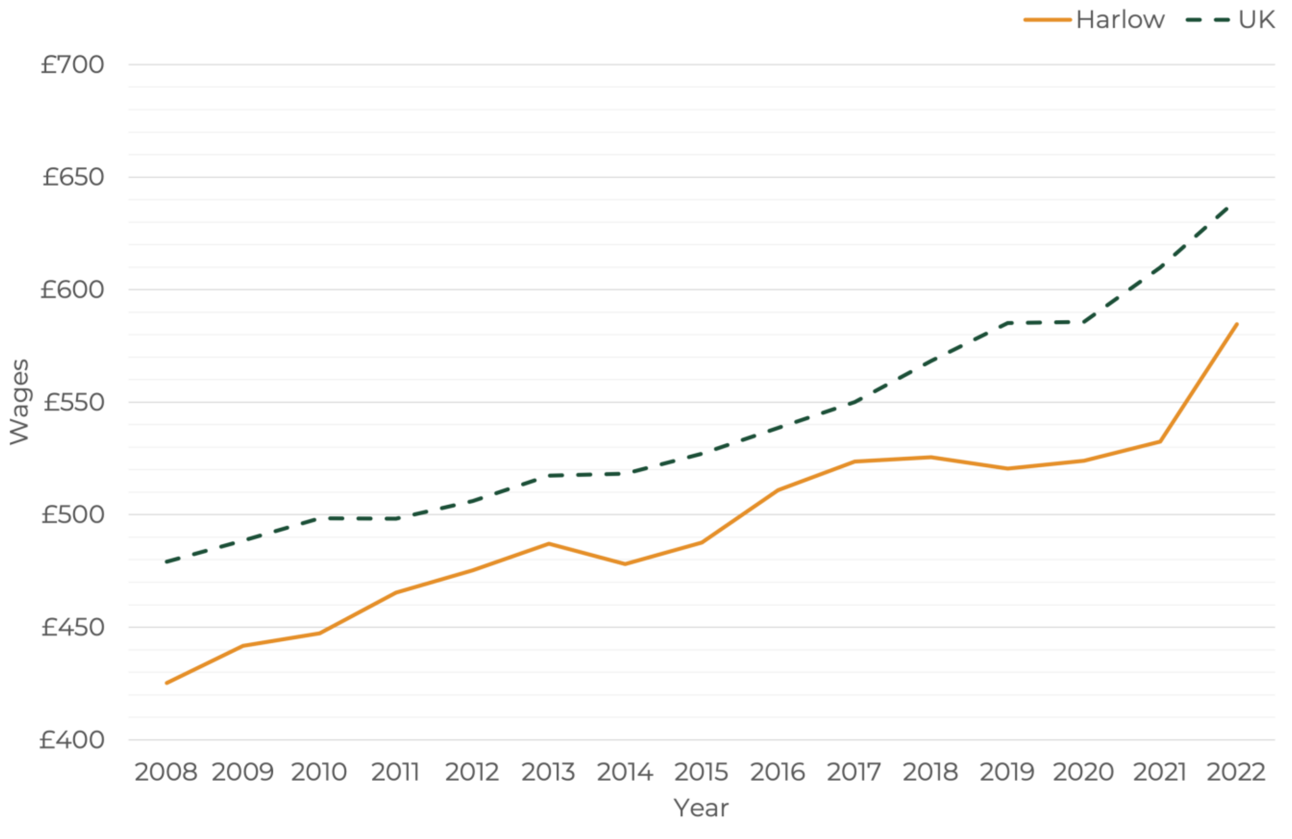


*West Essex/East Herts is the average of the four local authorities

2.31 We have examined resident wages since 2008 (the earliest data that is available) to assess whether the closure of Nortel and significant downsizing of GSK has had an impact on resident wages. We have compared wages to the UK to account for macro influences on wages.

2.32 The figure below shows that there was a deviation from the trend for increasing resident wages year-on-year in 2014. There is a potential that this is related as the same decline was not seen at a UK level. Wages recovered to the trend level by 2016.

Figure 12: Gross Median Full-time Weekly Resident Wages 2008 - 2022 [Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings]



3 Workplace Analysis

3.1 This section sets out data on the business base in Harlow. It includes analysis of Gross Value Added (GVA), employment and jobs, and business counts.

Harlow in Context

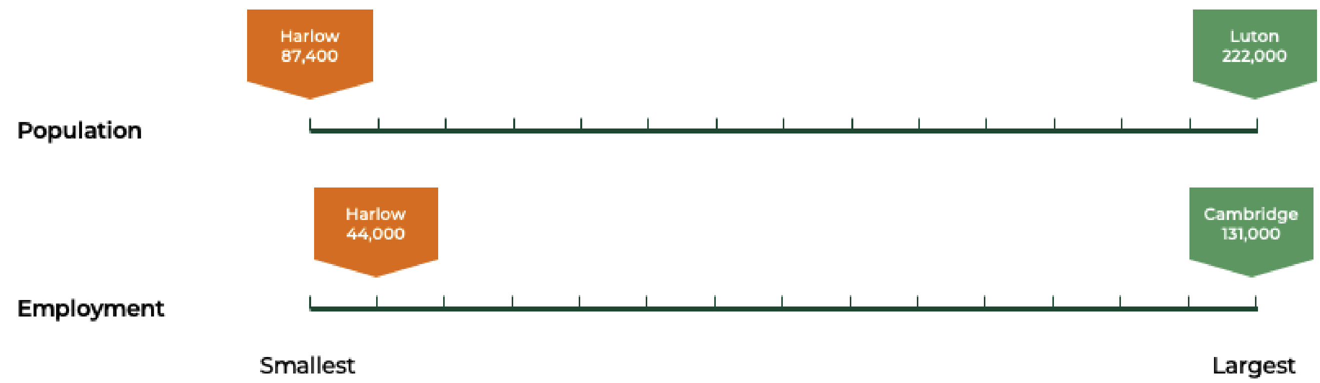
3.2 According to ONS data there are 15 major towns and cities in the East of England region. Towns and cities are defined as built-up areas with a resident or workday population of 75,000 or greater.

3.3 The figure below shows the population and employment in Harlow 'town' relative to the other major towns and cities in the East of England.

3.4 Harlow is the smallest of the 15 towns on the basis of population, and ranked 14th of 15 for employment.

3.5 The potential under-estimate of the population in Harlow in the intercensal period has been discussed in the previous section. The full Census data for major towns and cities will need to be released in order to understand if there is any change in Harlow's position as the least populous.

Figure 13: Population (2020) and Employment (2021) in Harlow Relative to Major Towns and Cities in the East of England [Source: Population Estimates and Business Register & Employment Survey]



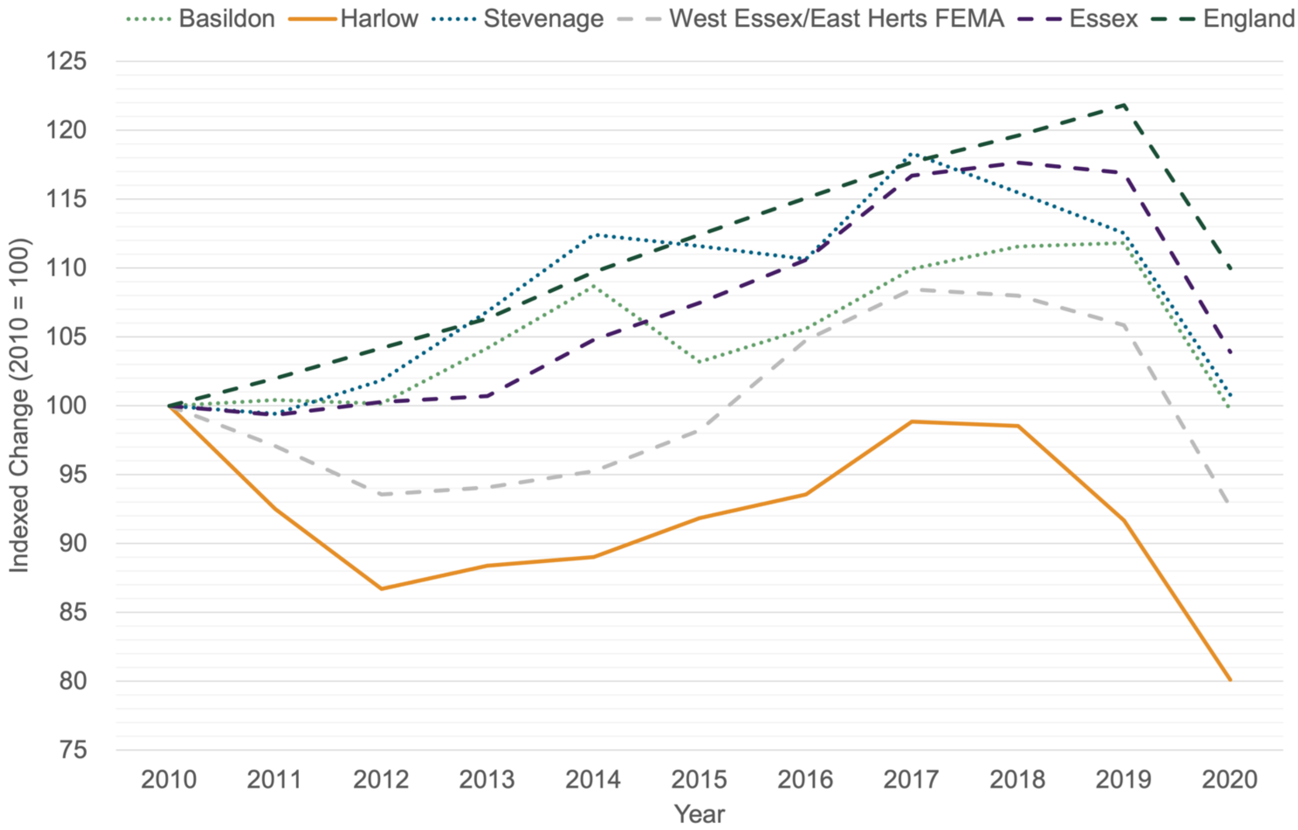
*Data presented is for Harlow 'town' not the District

Gross Value Added

3.6 Total headline GVA in current base prices in Harlow in 2020 was £2.1 billion.

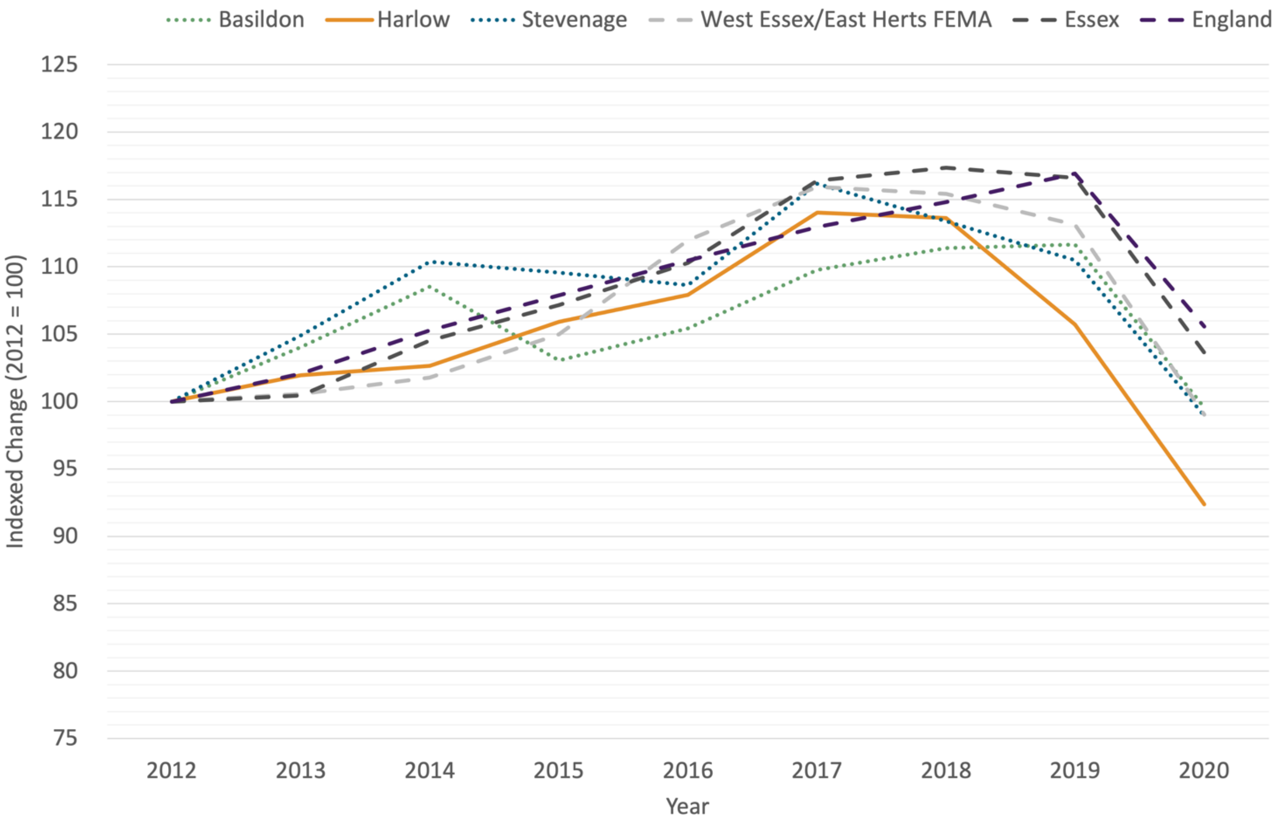
3.7 To understand the changes to output in Harlow over time we have analysed the chained volume measure (CVM). This holds prices steady and so movements reflect changes in the quantity or quality of output. These data are presented in 2019 money values, and so also remove the effects of inflation. The figure below shows the CVM data between 2010 to 2020.

Figure 14: Gross Value Added (CVM, 2019 prices) 2010 to 2020 (Indexed to 2010) [Source: Regional Economic Activity by Gross Domestic Product Dataset]



3.8 Data for the period 2010 to 2020 shows that Harlow has seen an overall decline in output volume over time. This is particularly pronounced between 2010 and 2012. This is likely driven by the loss of Nortel and significant downsizing of GSK operations in the area over this period. Analysis of the period 2012 to 2020 shows that Harlow is more in-line with other comparator areas, as shown in the figure below.

Figure 15: Gross Value Added (CVM, 2019 prices) 2012 to 2020 (Indexed to 2012) [Source: Regional Economic Activity by Gross Domestic Product Dataset]



3.9 All areas experienced a decline from 2019 onward (driven by the Covid-19 pandemic) however, the decline in Harlow was larger than comparator areas.

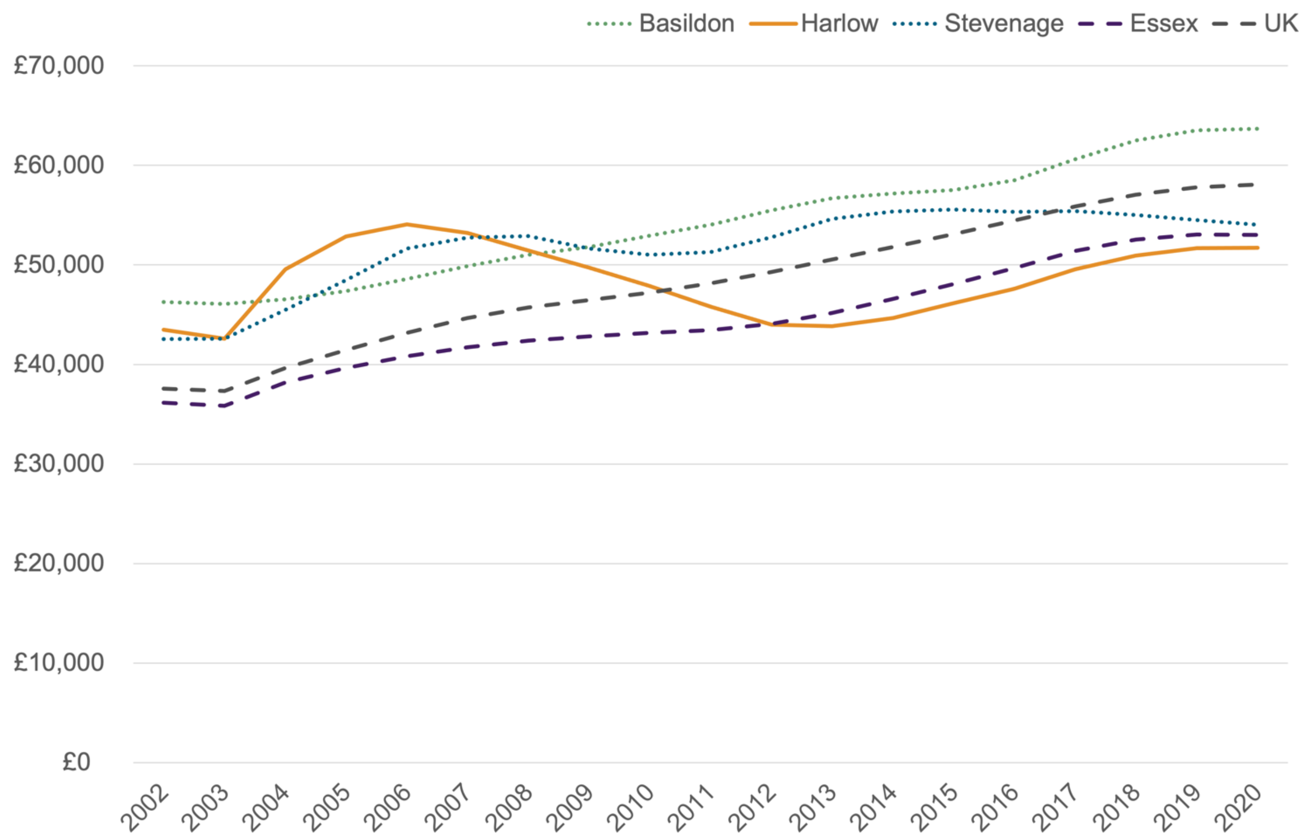
Gross Value Added per Filled Job

3.10 GVA per filled job data has been obtained from the Subregional Productivity data series. This data is only provided in current prices so cannot be directly compared to the data presented above.

3.11 Harlow had the lowest GVA per job filled in 2020 of all comparator areas (note that West Essex/East Herts FEMA cannot be calculated from this dataset).

3.12 As shown in the figure below, Harlow had the highest GVA per filled job between 2004 and 2007 inclusive. After this there was a period of decline, and since 2012, Harlow has had the lowest GVA per job filled of the comparator areas. After a period of significantly weaker performance 2005-2012/13 Harlow has performed more in line with comparator areas in recent years. However, the absolute level of GVA per job filled remains below comparator benchmarks.

Figure 16: Gross Value Added per Job Filled (2002 – 2020) [ONS Subregional Productivity July 2022 Release]



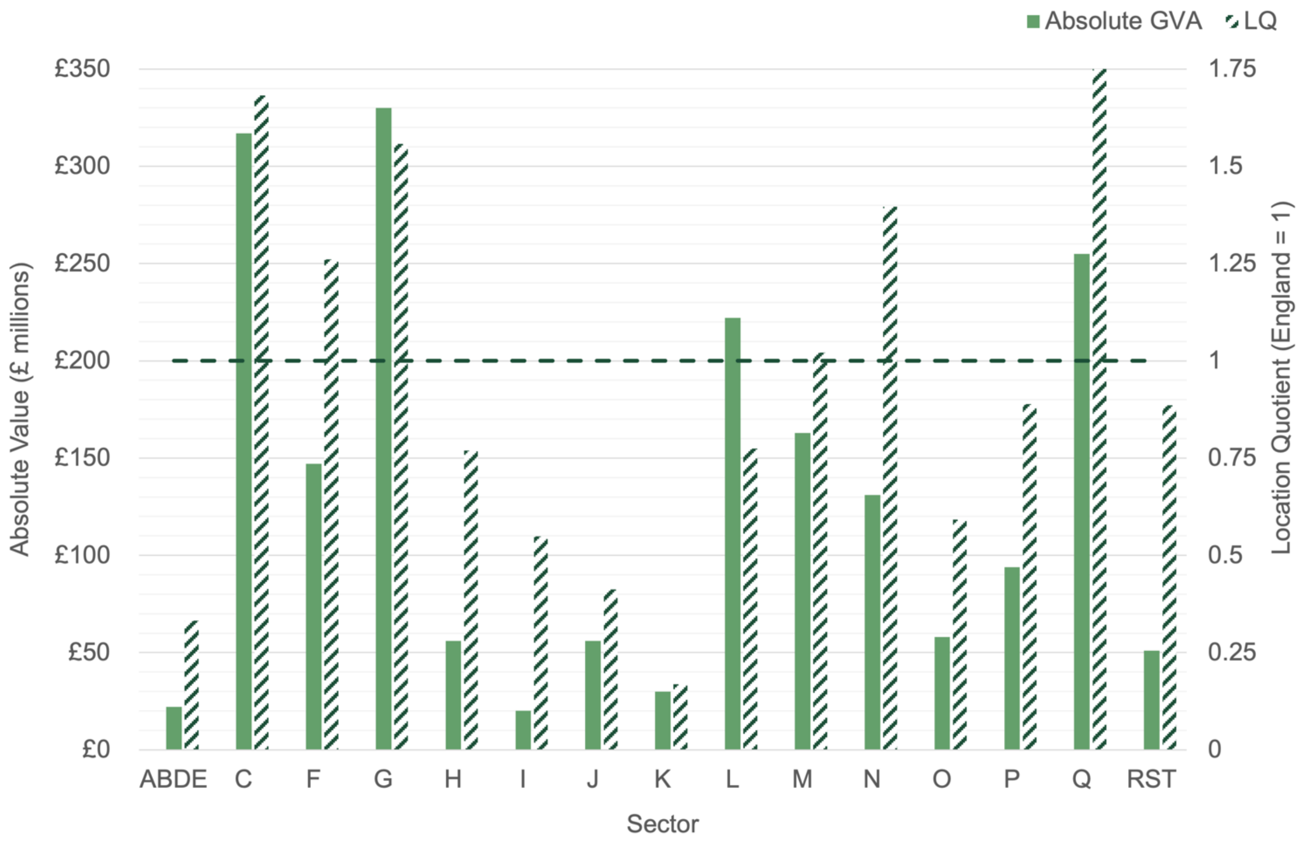
Sectors

3.13 The figure below shows 2020 GVA in Harlow by sector. Once again, this analysis relies on CVM data. The data is presented by Broad Industrial Group as defined by the Office for National Statistics, with some small groups aggregated to facilitate presentation. The Broad Industrial Groups in the figure are as follows:

- ABDE - Agriculture, Mining, Electricity, Gas, Water & Waste
- C – Manufacturing
- F – Construction
- G – Wholesale & Retail Trade
- H – Transport & Storage
- I – Accommodation & Food Services
- J – Information & Communication
- K – Finance & Insurance
- L – Real Estate
- M – Professional, Scientific & Technical
- N – Administrative & Support Services
- O – Public Services
- P – Education
- Q – Health
- RST – Entertainment, Other Services & Households

3.14 The absolute value of GVA is shown on the left-hand axis, using the green columns. We have also calculated a location quotient (LQ) which is shown on the right-hand axis, using the striped columns. The location quotient is the percentage of GVA in each sector in Harlow as a proportion of the same percentage in England. A figure above one indicates that a sector is more concentrated in Harlow than the England average.

Figure 17: Absolute Value and Location Quotient of GVA by Sector (CVM, 2019 prices) in Harlow, 2020 [Source: Regional Economic Activity by Gross Domestic Product Dataset]



3.15 The figure above shows that the Manufacturing, Wholesale & Retail Trade (including Repair of Motor vehicles), and Health sectors are the three largest sectors by output in the Harlow economy, and are more concentrated in Harlow than the England average.

3.16 The Real Estate sector has a large output value in absolute terms however, this is driven primarily by the value of housing in the area.

3.17 The Construction and Administrative & Support Services sectors are particularly concentrated in the area relative to the England average. Both contribute under 10% to the overall value of GVA in Harlow, and so are small sectors in absolute terms.

Sub-sectoral Analysis

3.18 Further analysis has been undertaken of those sectors that have a high location quotient. Namely:

- Manufacturing (C)
- Construction (F)
- Wholesale & Retail Trade (G)

- Professional, Scientific & Technical (M)
- Administrative & Support Services (N)
- Health (Q)
- Entertainment, Other Services & Households (RST)

3.19 Whilst the Professional, Scientific & Technical sector is only marginally more concentrated in Harlow than the England average (LQ = 1.02), we have included it for further analysis on the basis that it is often a high value services sector.

3.20 The table on the following page shows the absolute GVA (in chained volume measures) and location quotient for each of the sub-sectors of the six sectors above.

3.21 Harlow has particular concentrations across all sub-sectors in Manufacturing except for the manufacturing of food and drink and textiles.

3.22 Specialised Construction Activities are the only sub-sector in which Harlow has a particular specialism. This sector includes: Demolition & Site Preparation, Electrical, Plumbing & Other Construction Installation, Building Completion & Finishing, and other specialised activities such as roofing and scaffolding.

3.23 Harlow shows concentrations in both the Wholesale and Retail trade sectors, with the Wholesale sector the larger of the two in GVA terms.

3.24 Harlow has a particular concentration in the Legal and Accounting Activities sector. This sector accounts for 80% of all GVA in the Professional, Technical and Scientific sector.

3.25 Within the Administrative & Support Activities sector, the Employment Activities; Tourism & Security service sector is the largest sector in GVA terms, and is almost twice as concentrated as the England average.

3.26 Harlow has particular concentrations across both sub-sectors in the Health sector. This is likely driven by the Princess Alexandra Hospital.

3.27 The Other Service Activities sector is accounts for just over 65% of the Entertainment, Other Services & Households sector. Within this sector, the Other Services sub-sector has a location quotient of 1.16. The membership organisations; repair of household goods sub-sector drives the concentration of this sector.

Table 4: Absolute GVA (CVM, 2019 prices) and Location Quotient of Sub-Sectors in Harlow (2020) [Source: Regional Economic Activity by Gross Domestic Product Dataset]

	Absolute GVA	Location Quotient
Manufacturing		
Manufacture of food, beverages, textiles and clothing	£31,000,000	0.90
Manufacture of wood, petroleum, chemicals and minerals	£101,000,000	**1.68**
Manufacture of metals, electrical products and machinery	£143,000,000	**1.88**
Other manufacturing, repair and installation	£42,000,000	**2.39**
Construction		
Construction of buildings	£17,000,000	0.39
Civil engineering	£11,000,000	0.52
Specialised construction activities	£118,000,000	**2.30**
Wholesale & Retail Trade		
Motor trades	£31,000,000	1.09
Wholesale trade	£164,000,000	**2.03**
Retail trade	£135,000,000	**1.32**
Professional, Scientific & Technical		
Legal and accounting activities	£128,000,000	**2.14**
Head offices and management consultancy	£16,000,000	0.63
Architectural and engineering activities	£5,000,000	0.21
Other professional, scientific and technical activities	£14,000,000	0.28

	Absolute GVA	Location Quotient
Administration & Support Services		
Rental and leasing activities	£24,000,000	1.00
Employment activities; tourism and security services	£69,000,000	**1.96**
Services to buildings and landscape activities	£20,000,000	**1.72**
Office administration and business support activities	£18,000,000	0.79
Health		
Human health and residential care activities	£207,000,000	**1.77**
Social work activities	£47,000,000	**1.70**
Other Service Activities		
Membership organisations; repair of household goods	£21,000,000	**1.82**
Other personal service activities	£12,000,000	0.71

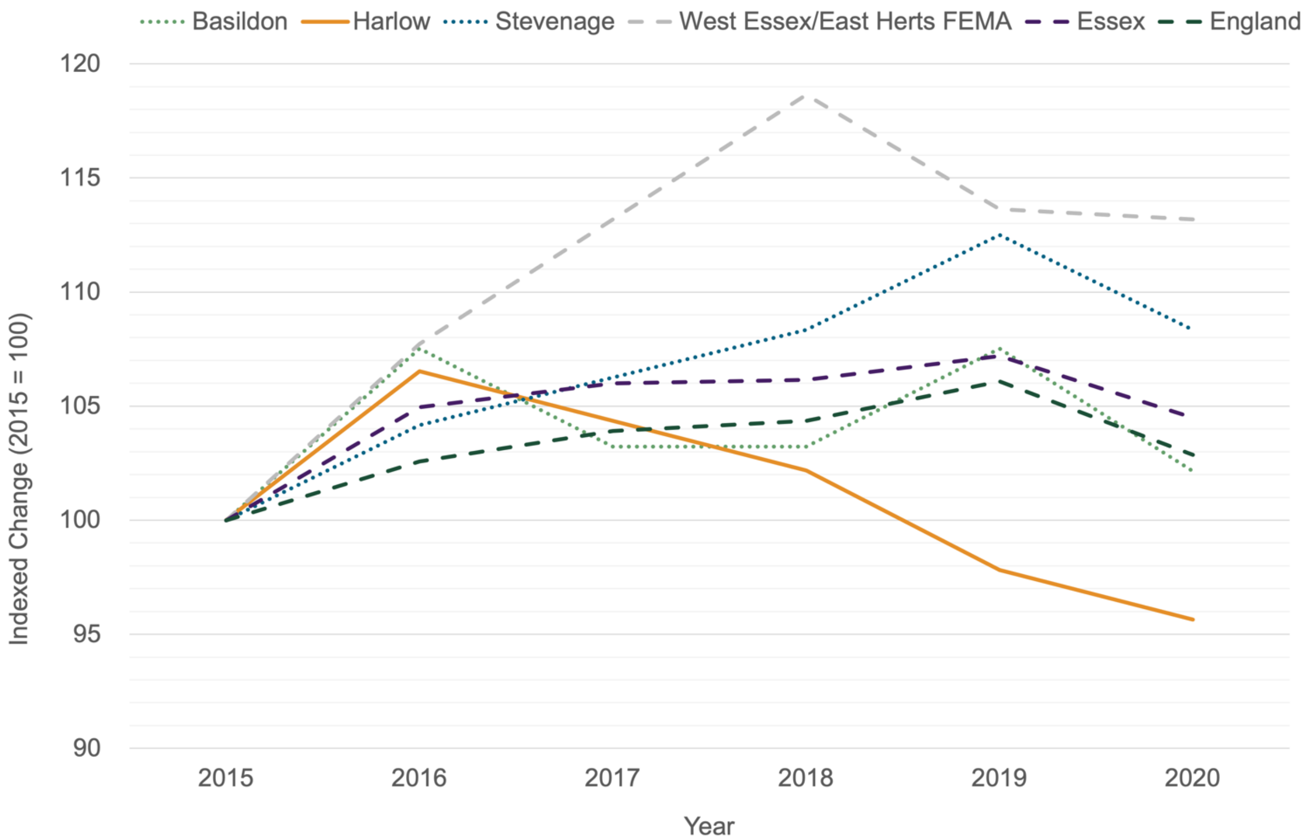
Jobs

3.28 Jobs Density is a workplace measure of jobs and includes employees, self-employed, government supported trainees, and HM forces.

3.29 Harlow had 44,000 jobs in 2020 according to Jobs Density data (2022). This is the lowest number of jobs in the area over the period 2015 – 2020. Indexed total job numbers are shown in the table below.

3.30 This shows that Harlow has experienced a greater decline in jobs numbers over the period analysed than comparator areas. Harlow is, however, not the only area to show some variability in total jobs numbers. The West Essex/East Herts FEMA is notable for the large increase in jobs figures over the same period.

Figure 18: Total Jobs 2015 – 2020 [Source: Jobs Density]



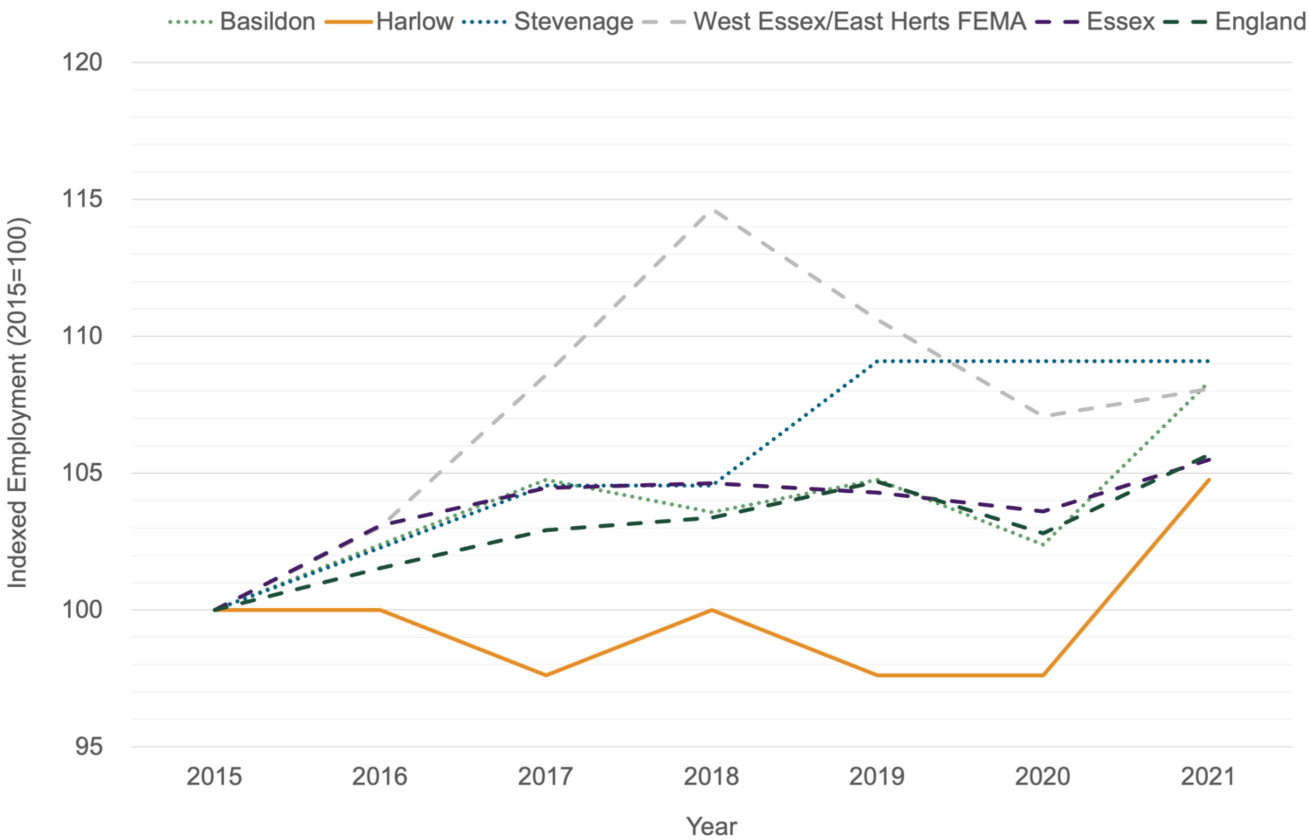
3.31 The self-employment numbers used to calculate total jobs is obtained from the Annual Population Survey. Given the potential for undercounting in the Annual Population Survey it is possible that number of self-employment jobs has been undercounted in Harlow. Workplace based Annual Population Survey data is not publicly available due to small sample sizes which means we cannot verify the data.

Employment

3.32 Data on employment (including both employees and working owners/self-employed workers registered for VAT or PAYE (Pay-As-You-Earn) schemes) has been obtained from the Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES).

3.33 This data shows that total employment in Harlow in 2021 was 44,000. This is the highest number in employment in Harlow over the period 2015 to 2021. The figure below shows employment in Harlow in relation to comparator areas.

Figure 19: Total Employment 2015 - 2021 (Indexed to 2015) [Source: Business Register & Employment Survey]



3.34 The figure above shows that employment was broadly stable in Harlow until 2021 when it grew by 2,500 above the average over the period 2015 to 2020. It will be necessary to wait until the data for 2022 is released to understand whether this is a sampling error or true growth in employment figures.

3.35 Employment growth in Harlow has not shown the same general upward trend as other comparator areas, and has the lowest growth over the period notwithstanding the jump in employment numbers in 2021.

3.36 This data contrasts with the total jobs figures (discussed in the section above, and shown in Figure 17) that show falling jobs in Harlow over the period. These datasets differ in their coverage; BRES only includes employees and working owners/those who are self-employed and registered for VAT or PAYE, whilst Jobs Density data also includes government-support trainees and HM Forces. As such, the BRES data provides only a partial employment figure.

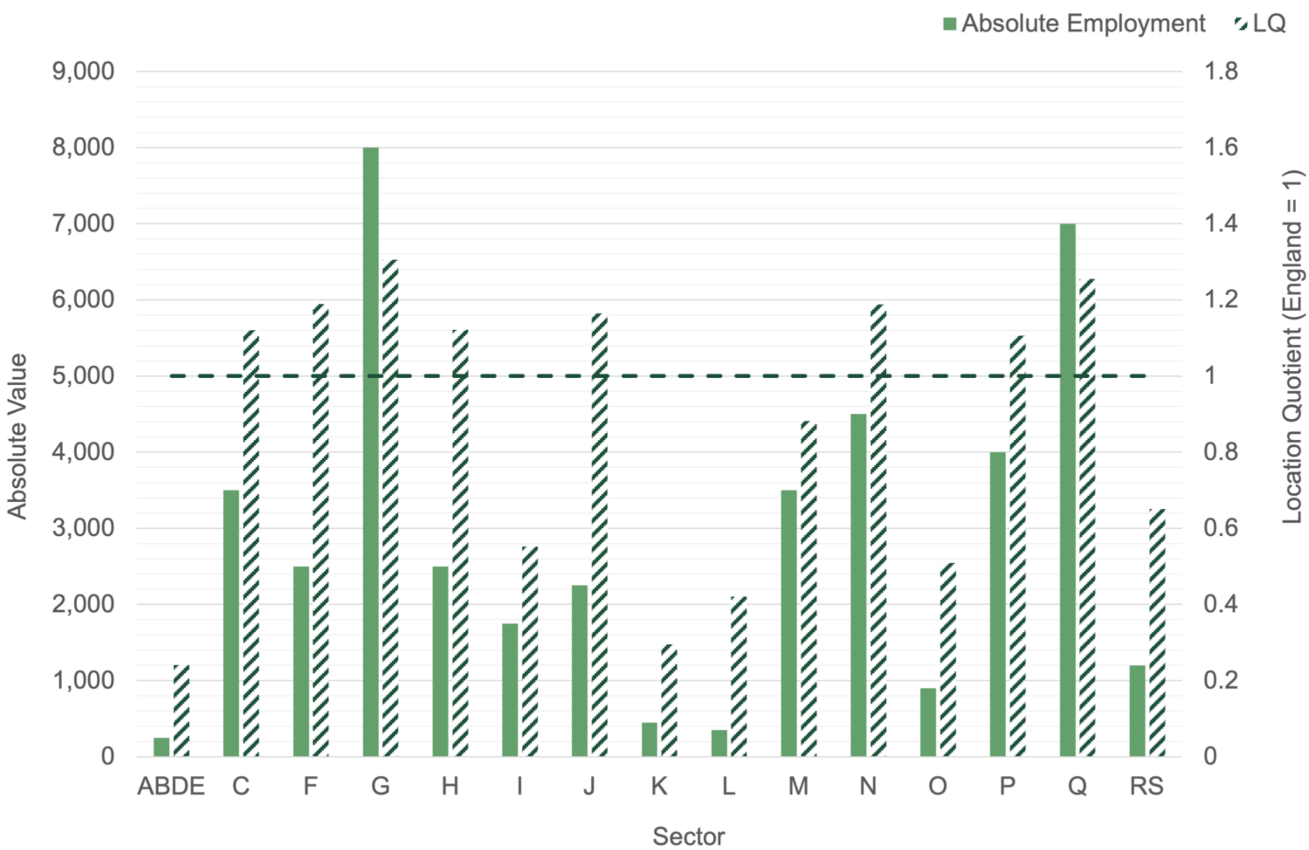
Sectors

3.37 The figure below shows total employment in Harlow in 2021, broken down by sector. As set out in Para 3.13 above, the Broad Industrial Groups in the figure are:

- ABDE - Agriculture, Mining, Electricity, Gas, Water & Waste

- C – Manufacturing
- F – Construction
- G – Wholesale & Retail Trade
- H – Transport & Storage
- I – Accommodation & Food Services
- J – Information & Communication
- K – Finance & Insurance
- L – Real Estate
- M – Professional, Scientific & Technical
- N – Administrative & Support Services
- O – Public Services
- P – Education
- Q – Health
- RST – Entertainment, Other Services & Households

Figure 20: Employment in Harlow by Sector (2021) [Source: Business Register & Employment Survey]



3.38 The Wholesale & Retail Trade (including Repair of Motor vehicles) and Health sectors are the largest employers in Harlow, accounting for 35% of employment in the area. When combined with the Administrative & Support Services sector (the third largest employer) these three sectors account for close to half the total employment in Harlow.

3.39 The Construction, Wholesale & Retail Trade (including Repair of Motor vehicles), Information & Communication, Administrative & Support Services, and Health sectors are all more concentrated in Harlow than the England average.

Sub-Sectoral Analysis

3.40 As with GVA, we have undertaken further analysis of those sectors with a high employment location quotient in Harlow. In this case we have examined:

- Manufacturing (C)
- Construction (F)
- Wholesale & Retail (G)
- Transport & Storage (H)
- Information & Communication (J)
- Professional, Scientific & Technical (M)
- Administration & Support Services (N)
- Health (Q)

3.41 The table (on the following page) sets of the total employment and location quotient for employment in the sub-sectors of these sectors in Harlow.

3.42 Employment in Manufacturing is particularly concentrated in the Manufacture of Wood, Petroleum, Chemicals & Minerals, and Other Manufacturing, Repair & Installation. Within the first sector, absolute employment in highest in the Manufacture of Chemicals and Chemical Products sector, in particular plastics (300 people). In the Other Manufacturing, Repair & Installation sector, absolute employment in notably high in the manufacturing of office and shop furniture (150 people), and manufacturing of medical and instruments (150 people).

3.43 Within Construction, employment is particularly concentrated in the Specialised Construction sector. Of the 2,000 people in employment in this sector, 700 (35%) are employed in Electrical Installation.

3.44 The Wholesale sector in Harlow employs 3,000 people. Over 40% of these people are employed in non-specialised wholesale (800 people) and the wholesale of electronic and telecommunications equipment (500 people).

3.45 Within the Transport & Storage sector there is a particular concentration of employment in the Warehousing and Storage sector. This highlights Harlow's attractiveness as a logistics destination.

3.46 Within the Information & Communications sector, the majority of employment is within publishing. Further analysis shows that all this employment is within the Other Publishing Activities sector. This sector includes the publishing (including on-line) of catalogues, photos and greetings cards, and posters and advertising material.

3.47 There is a particularly high concentration of employment in the Legal & Accounting and Scientific Research & Development sub-sectors in Harlow. Within the Legal & Accounting sub-sector the majority of employment (1,000 people) is within bookkeeping activities. Scientific Research & Development employment (700 people) is primarily within the research and experimental development on natural sciences and engineering sector.

3.48 Within the Administrative & Support Services sector there is a high concentration of employment in the rental and leasing sub-sector however, absolute employment is not particularly high. There are 900 people employed in private security activities within Harlow, making the Security and Investigations sub-sector concentrated relative to the England average. The Services to Buildings and Landscaping sub-sector is concentrated in Harlow due to high levels of employment in combined facilities support and building cleaning businesses.

3.49 Employment in Health is particularly concentrated in Human Health (driven by hospital employment) and social work activities.

Table 5: Absolute Employment and Location Quotient of Sub-sector in Harlow (2021) [Source: Business Register & Employment Survey]

	Absolute Employment	Location Quotient
Manufacturing		
Manufacture of food, beverages, textiles and clothing	305	0.47
Manufacture of wood, petroleum, chemicals and minerals	1,050	**1.39**
Manufacture of metals, electrical products and machinery	1,380	1.06
Other manufacturing, repair and installation	550	**1.30**
Construction		
Construction of buildings	500	0.72
Civil engineering	250	0.96
Specialised construction activities	2,000	**1.75**
Wholesale & Retail Trade		
Motor trades	700	0.95
Wholesale trade	3,000	**1.95**
Retail trade	4,000	1.04
Transport & Storage		
Land, air and water transport	935	0.99
Warehousing and support activities for transportation	1,250	**1.37**
Postal and courier activities	400	1.08
Information & Communication		

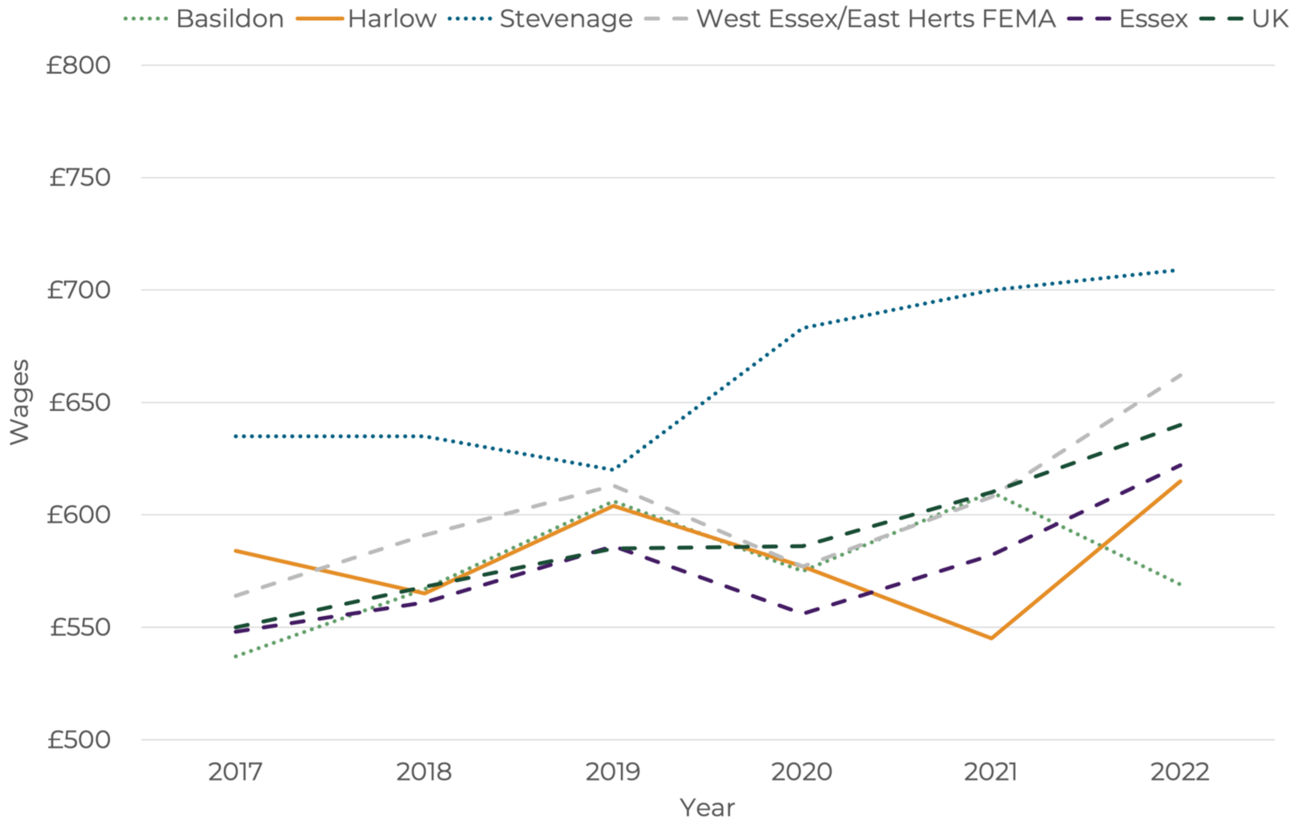
Publishing activities	1,500	**8.24**
Motion picture, video and television programme production, sound recording and music publishing activities	125	0.67
Programming and broadcasting activities	0	-
Telecommunications	125	0.42
Computer programming, consultancy and related activities	450	0.42
Professional Scientific & Technical		
Legal and accounting activities	1,500	**1.27**
Activities of head offices; management consultancy activities	600	0.50
Architectural and engineering activities; technical testing and analysis	400	0.56
Scientific research and development	800	**3.67**
Advertising and market research	40	0.15
Other professional, scientific and technical activities	150	0.51
Veterinary activities	50	0.54
Administration & Support Services		
Rental and leasing activities	350	**1.80**
Employment activities	1,000	0.69
Travel agency, tour operator and other reservation service and related activities	15	0.16
Security and investigation activities	900	**3.14**
Services to buildings and landscape activities	2,000	**1.94**

Office administrative, office support and other business support activities	500	0.67
Health		
Human health activities	6,000	**1.72**
Residential care activities	350	0.36
Social work activities without accommodation	1,500	**1.35**

Workplace Wages

3.50 Gross median full-time weekly wages for those working in Harlow were £615 in 2022. As shown in Figure 18 (below) this is below all comparator areas except Basildon however, over the period 2017 to 2022 wages have been more in-line with all comparator areas.

Figure 21: Gross Median Full-time Weekly Workplace Wages 2017 – 2022 [Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings]



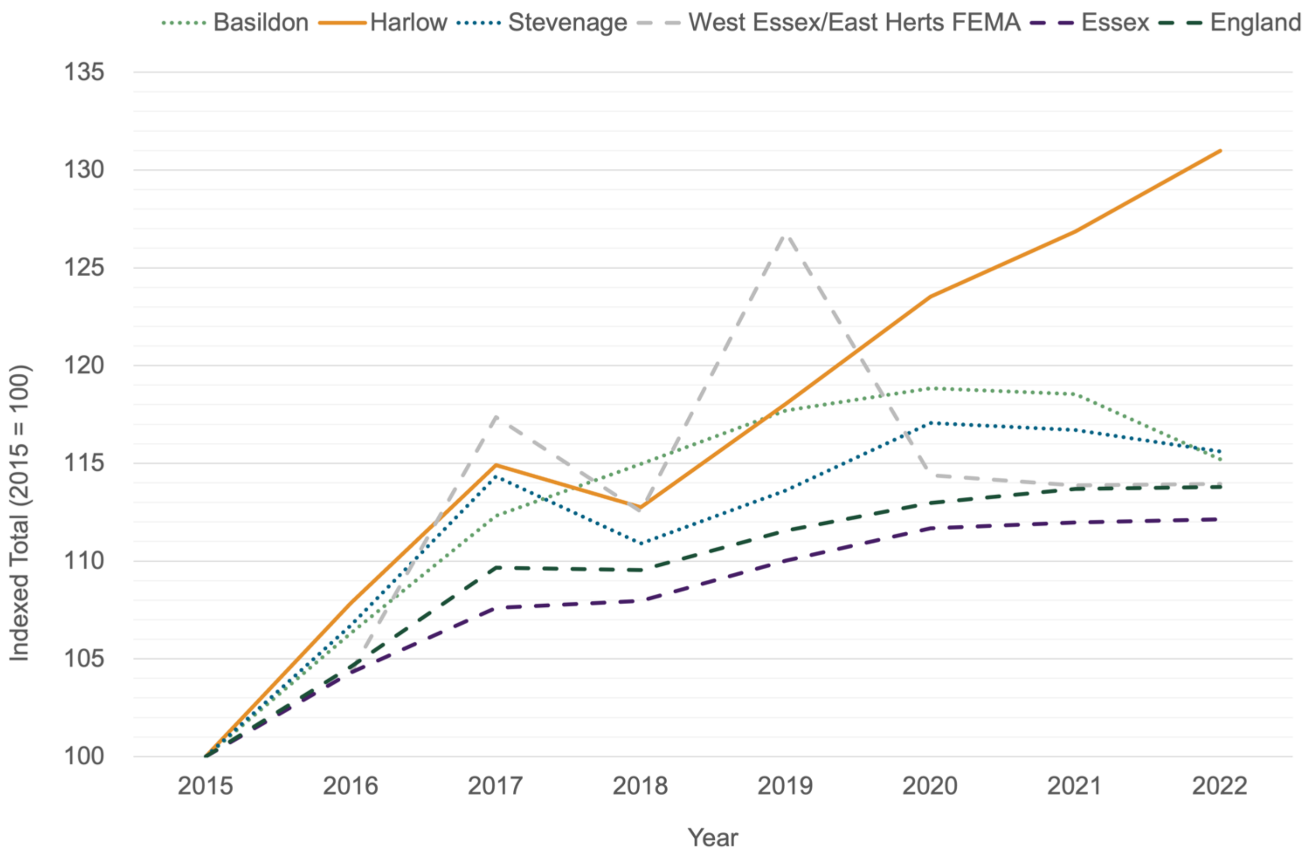
*West Essex/East Herts is the average of the four local authorities

Business Base

3.51 Data on the number of enterprises[4] has been gathered from UK Business Counts. In 2022, Harlow was home to 3,300 enterprises. The number of enterprises has been growing in Harlow over the period 2015 to 2022 as shown in the figure below.

[4] This is the smallest number of local units that has a degree of autonomy. For example, if a business had two separate office locations this would be considered one enterprise, with two local units.

Figure 22: Total Business Counts 2015 - 2022 (Indexed to 2022) {Source: UK Business Counts]



3.52 Harlow has seen a 30% (790) increase in the number of enterprises in the area since 2015. This is significantly above all comparator areas.

3.53 Analysis of the sectoral breakdown of this increase shows that over 50% of the increase was seen in three sectors: Construction, Transport & Storage, and Administrative & Support Services.

Size

3.54 The business base data has been analysed based on the number of employees in each enterprise. The proportion of businesses that fall into each size category has been calculated for the period 2015 to 2022. The table below presents the average in each category over this period.

3.55 Overall, the table shows that Harlow is home to a higher proportion of larger businesses than comparator areas. However, the business base is dominated by SMEs (including micro businesses).

3.56 Harlow had 2,955 micro businesses in 2022. Large businesses account for a large proportion of employment in the UK as a whole (39% of employment in 2022) however, micro businesses account for 32% of employment across the UK. Therefore, micro businesses play an important role in providing employment across the UK.

3.57 Harlow had 370 small and medium businesses in 2022. Just over half of these businesses are in the Manufacturing, Construction, Wholesale, and Administrative & Support Services sectors.

3.58 The Manufacturing and Education sectors account for the majority of the 15 large enterprises in Harlow.

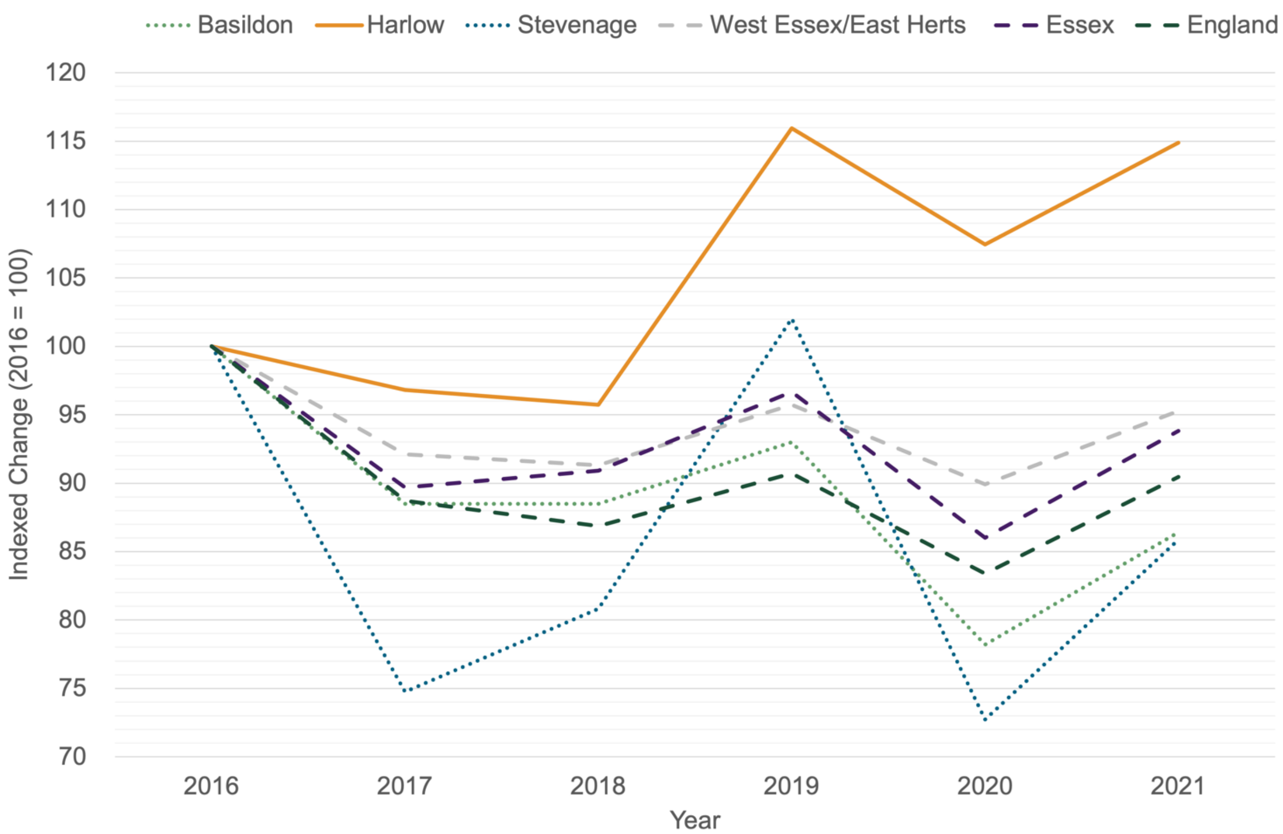
Table 6: Proportion of Businesses by Size (Average 2015 - 2022) [Source: UK Business Counts]

	Micro (0 – 9)	Small (10 – 49)	Medium (50 – 249)	Large (250+)
Basildon	88%	10%	2%	0%
Harlow	**88%**	**9%**	**2%**	**1%**
Stevenage	90%	8%	1%	0%
West Essex/East Herts FEMA	91%	7%	1%	0%
Essex	90%	8%	1%	0%
England	89%	9%	2%	0%

Business Births

3.59 As reflected in the rise of active businesses in Harlow, the area has also seen an increase in business births above that seen in comparator areas. This can be seen in the figure below.

Figure 23: Business Births[5] 2016 - 2021 (Indexed to 2016 = 100) [Source: Business Demography]



[5] East Hertfordshire had more than 500 businesses registered at a single postcode (detailed here: https://www.ons.gov.uk/businessindustryandtrade/business/activitysizeandlocation/methodologies/multiplebusinessregistrationsatasinglepostcode2018) over the period 2016 to 2018. These have been removed from the estimates for West Essex/East Herts FEMA.

3.60 Harlow (alongside Stevenage) saw relatively large fluctuations in the number of business births compared to other areas. This is because both areas start from a smaller base meaning that increases can be large in percentage terms. Over the period 2016 – 2018 Harlow had an average of 460 business births. This increased to 530 businesses over the period 2019 – 2021. However, this is provisional data which is subject to revision.

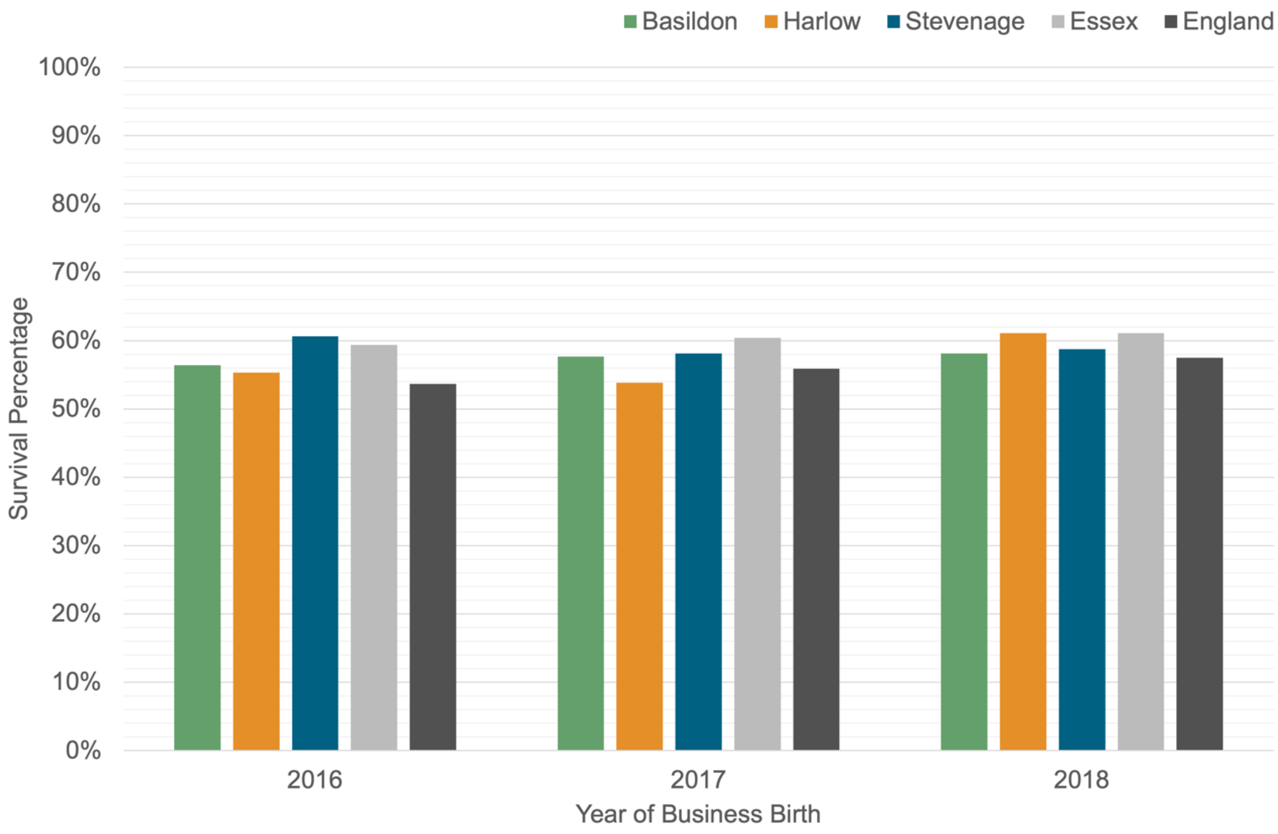
Business Survival

3.61 Data for the West Essex/East Herts FEMA has not been analysed in this section as the businesses registered in a single postcode[5] could skew the analysis of survival if removed.

3.62 Data for one-year survival over the period 2016 to 2020 shows that Harlow had an average survival rate of 94%. This is in-line with all comparator areas.

3.63 Data on three-year survival (for business births between 2016 and 2018) is shown in the figure below.

Figure 24: Three-Year Business Survival Rates [Source: Business Demography]



3.64 The average three-year business survival rate across the period analysed is 57% in Harlow. This is just above the England average, but in-line with or below other comparator areas.

4 Impact of Covid-19 Pandemic

4.1 The impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on the economy are innumerable. However, there are some points that have come out of the data analysis that warrant particular attention.

Working from Home

4.2 Origin/destination data is not yet available from the 2021 Census. However, information is available on the level of homeworking in the District. This data shows that just over 20% of Harlow residents worked from home. This is below all comparator area as shown in the table below and highlights the importance of workplace-based employment.

Table 7: Proportion of Residents that Work from Home 2021 [Census 2021]

Location	Percentage of Usual Residents (Aged 16+) that 'Work Mainly at or from Home'
Basildon	31%
Harlow	**21%**
Stevenage	28%
West Essex/East Herts	36%
Essex	32%
England	32%

4.3 This low level is likely to result from lower levels of office-based employment among residents, which are the job types most affected by the rise in home and hybrid working as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Furlough and Unemployment

4.4 In total, Harlow saw a cumulative total of 17,400 employments furloughed over the duration of this scheme.

4.5 Take-up rates (the number of employments furloughed as a proportion of all eligible employments) of the scheme in Harlow were in-line with the England average over the period May to September 2021.

4.6 Claimant count numbers peaked in May 2020 with just under 4,700 people claiming benefits primarily due to lack of employment. Over the period May 2020 to April 2021 the claimant count increased by 114% on the same period one year earlier. This was just above the 113% for England as a whole, and below all other comparator areas.

4.7 The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the claimant count have been discussed further in Chapter Two.

Impact on Local Economy

4.8 KPMG analysis of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on towns and cities across the UK found that Harlow lost approximately 1,300 retail jobs[6]. Out of 109 towns and cities, Harlow was the 16th worst affected area, with a loss of one-third of retail jobs in the area. This equated to just over 3% of total employment in Harlow.

4.9 Research on the visitor economy in Harlow7 showed that there was a 23% decline in day trip visitors to the area compared to 2019, and a 44% decline in overnight trips. Trip values have therefore also been impacted. The value of day trips has declined by a quarter, and the value of overnight trips has more than halved.

4.10 There has also been a decline in jobs in the visitor economy with a 30% decrease in employment between 2019 and 2021.

[6] Source: KPMG (2021) The Future of Towns and Cities Post COVID-19
[7] Destination Research (2021) Economic Impact of Tourism 2021 Results

5 Data from Graphs

Table 8: Figure 1 [Indexed Population Growth 2011 – 2021] Underlying Data

	2011 (Census)	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021 (Census)
Basildon	174,497	176,500	178,500	180,700	182,000	183,800	184,500	185,900	187,200	187,600	187,576
Harlow	**81,944**	**82,800**	**83,400**	**84,600**	**85,300**	**85,900**	**86,200**	**86,600**	**87,100**	**87,300**	**93,334**
Stevenage	83,957	84,800	85,500	86,000	86,600	87,300	87,700	87,800	87,800	88,100	89,501
West Essex/East Herts FEMA	423,733	429,400	434,000	439,900	444,300	448,200	451,500	455,000	459,800	464,000	469,815
Essex	1,393,587	1,407,100	1,417,600	1,433,300	1,445,300	1,457,900	1,468,200	1,477,800	1,489,200	1,497,800	1,503,520
England	53,012,456	53,493,700	53,865,800	54,316,600	54,786,300	55,268,100	55,619,400	55,977,200	56,287,000	56,550,100	56,490,045

Table 9: Figure 2 [Proportion of Working Age Residents that are Economically Active (Three-year Rolling Average)] Underlying Data

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Basildon	79%	77%	77%	78%	80%
Harlow	**82%**	**82%**	**79%**	**78%**	**78%**
Stevenage	81%	82%	83%	86%	81%
West Essex/East Herts FEMA	81%	81%	80%	80%	80%
Essex	80%	80%	81%	80%	80%
UK	78%	78%	78%	79%	79%

Table 10: Figure 3 [Proportion of Working Age Residents that are in Employment (Three-year Rolling Average)] Underlying Data

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Basildon	75%	74%	75%	75%	77%
Harlow	**78%**	**79%**	**75%**	**75%**	**74%**
Stevenage	77%	78%	80%	83%	77%
West Essex/East Herts FEMA	79%	78%	78%	77%	78%
Essex	77%	77%	78%	77%	77%
UK	74%	75%	75%	75%	75%

Table 11: Figure 4 [Highest Qualification Level (NVQ) Among Working Age Residents (Three-Year Rolling Average to 2021)] Underlying Data

	NVQ1 only	NVQ2 only	NVQ3 only	NVQ4 +
Basildon	16%	20%	17%	29%
Harlow	**17%**	**17%**	**13%**	**30%**
Stevenage	10%	18%	16%	45%
West Essex/East Herts FEMA	13%	16%	15%	42%
Essex	14%	19%	18%	35%
England	10%	16%	17%	42%

Table 12: Figure 5 [Change Over Time in the Proportion of Working Age Residents in Harlow (Three-Year Rolling Average)] Underlying Data

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
NVQ1 only	19%	20%	17%	17%	17%
NVQ2 only	24%	19%	16%	15%	17%
NVQ3 only	13%	12%	12%	13%	13%
NVQ4 +	22%	27%	32%	34%	30%

Table 13: Figure 6 [Attainment Among those Aged 19] Underlying Data

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Level 2					
Harlow	**82%**	**82%**	**81%**	**80%**	**78%**
Essex	84%	84%	83%	83%	81%
England	84%	82%	82%	81%	82%
Level 2					
Harlow	**55%**	**55%**	**56%**	**54%**	**55%**
Essex	56%	58%	57%	58%	60%
England	58%	57%	57%	58%	60%

Table 14: Figure 7 [Level 2 Maths and English Attainment Among those Aged 19] Underlying Data

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Harlow	**68%**	**66%**	**68%**	**62%**	**66%**
Essex	71%	71%	72%	71%	71%
England	72%	71%	71%	71%	73%

Table 15: Figure 8 [Total Claimant Count 2015 – 2019] Underlying Data

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Basildon	2,172	2,015	1,979	2,618	3,307
Harlow	**1,099**	**979**	**1,036**	**1,545**	**1,885**
Stevenage	1,015	862	880	880	1,217
West Essex/East Herts FEMA	3,070	2,786	2,869	3,508	4,688
Essex	12,289	11,821	11,676	13,754	18,645
England	632,634	616,863	645,933	739,583	937,998

Table 16: Figure 9 [Total Claimant Count 2019 -October 2022] Underlying Data

	2019	2020	2021	2022 (10 months to October)
Basildon	3,307	6,698	6,543	4,329
Harlow	**1,885**	**3,723**	**3,797**	**2,682**
Stevenage	1,217	2,796	2,966	1,836
West Essex/East Herts FEMA	4,688	12,211	12,494	7,931
Essex	18,645	42,894	42,042	27,363
England	937,998	1,897,987	1,955,832	1,386,200

Table 17: Figure 10 [Claimant Count Aged 16 - 24 as a Proportion of Total Claimants] Underlying Data

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022 (10 months to October)
Basildon	517	513	475	556	650	1,311	1,259	780
Harlow	**190**	**167**	**158**	**250**	**291**	**668**	**649**	**381**
Stevenage	198	149	157	133	218	544	563	332
West Essex/East Herts FEMA	557	471	463	543	714	2,216	2,134	1,073
Essex	2,838	2,732	2,455	2,710	3,493	8,394	7,823	4,404
England	142,146	132,084	129,855	139,817	175,879	364,622	352,784	222,262

Table 18: Figures 11 and 12 [Gross Median Full-time Weekly Resident Wages] Underlying Data

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Harlow	**£425**	**£442**	**£447**	**£465**	**£475**	**£487**	**£478**	**£488**	**£511**	**£524**	**£526**	**£521**	**£524**	**£533**	**£585**
UK	£479	£489	£499	£498	£506	£517	£518	£527	£539	£550	£568	£585	£586	£610	£640

Table 19: Figures 14 and 15 [Gross Value Added (CVM, 2019 prices)] Underlying Data (£ millions)

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Basildon	£5,388	£5,411	£5,396	£5,614	£5,856	£5,560	£5,689	£5,923	£6,011	£6,025	£5,372
Harlow	**£2,437**	**£2,254**	**£2,113**	**£2,154**	**£2,169**	**£2,238**	**£2,280**	**£2,409**	**£2,401**	**£2,234**	**£1,952**
Stevenage	£2,423	£2,409	£2,468	£2,589	£2,724	£2,704	£2,681	£2,867	£2,798	£2,727	£2,442
West Essex/East Herts FEMA	£12,016	£11,663	£11,242	£11,304	£11,443	£11,803	£12,588	£13,032	£12,975	£12,717	£11,133
Essex	£38,206	£37,948	£38,311	£38,480	£40,041	£41,058	£42,252	£44,588	£44,953	£44,667	£39,701
England	£1,425,005	£1,453,456	£1,484,720	£1,515,401	£1,563,176	£1,601,977	£1,640,046	£1,677,076	£1,704,609	£1,735,881	£1,567,374

Table 20: Figure 16 [Gross Value Added per Job Filled] Underlying Data

	Basildon	Harlow	Stevenage	Essex	UK
2002	£46,255	£43,493	£42,549	£36,163	£37,577
2003	£46,075	£42,593	£42,579	£35,850	£37,353
2004	£46,556	£49,581	£45,484	£38,184	£39,663
2005	£47,384	£52,851	£48,451	£39,661	£41,440
2006	£48,596	£54,067	£51,625	£40,834	£43,172
2007	£49,879	£53,203	£52,726	£41,725	£44,648
2008	£51,035	£51,465	£52,889	£42,396	£45,723
2009	£51,799	£49,725	£51,636	£42,819	£46,470
2010	£52,929	£47,890	£51,032	£43,173	£47,223
2011	£54,034	£45,809	£51,294	£43,456	£48,154
2012	£55,493	£44,014	£52,799	£44,088	£49,308
2013	£56,690	£43,850	£54,613	£45,179	£50,546
2014	£57,172	£44,677	£55,360	£46,568	£51,802
2015	£57,542	£46,175	£55,553	£48,091	£53,091
2016	£58,515	£47,618	£55,345	£49,683	£54,451
2017	£60,613	£49,547	£55,401	£51,413	£55,891
2018	£62,483	£50,940	£55,004	£52,542	£57,056
2019	£63,515	£51,699	£54,495	£53,063	£57,808
2020	£63,696	£51,730	£54,025	£52,997	£58,054

Table 21: Figure 17 [Absolute Value and Location Quotient of GVA by Sector (CVM, 2019 prices) in Harlow] Underlying Data

	Absolute GVA	Location Quotient
ABDE	£22,000,000	0.33
C	£317,000,000	1.68
F	£147,000,000	1.26
G	£330,000,000	1.56
H	£56,000,000	0.77
I	£20,000,000	0.55
J	£56,000,000	0.41
K	£30,000,000	0.17
L	£222,000,000	0.77
M	£163,000,000	1.02
N	£131,000,000	1.40
O	£58,000,000	0.59
P	£94,000,000	0.89
Q	£255,000,000	1.76
RST	£51,000,000	0.89

Table 22: Figure 18 [Total Jobs 2015 – 2020] Underlying Data

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Basildon	93,000	100,000	96,000	96,000	100,000	95,000
Harlow	**46,000**	**49,000**	**48,000**	**47,000**	**45,000**	**44,000**
Stevenage	48,000	50,000	51,000	52,000	54,000	52,000
West Essex/East Herts FEMA	220,000	237,000	249,000	261,000	250,000	249,000
Essex	667,000	700,000	707,000	708,000	715,000	697,000
England	29,219,000	29,972,000	30,359,000	30,492,000	30,999,000	30,055,000

Table 23: Figure 19 [Total Employment 2015 – 2021] Underlying Data

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Basildon	84,000	86,000	88,000	87,000	88,000	86,000	91,000
Harlow	**42,000**	**42,000**	**41,000**	**42,000**	**41,000**	**41,000**	**44,000**
Stevenage	44,000	45,000	46,000	46,000	48,000	48,000	48,000
West Essex/East Herts FEMA	198,000	204,000	215,000	227,000	219,000	212,000	214,000
Essex	583,000	601,000	609,000	610,000	608,000	604,000	615,000
England	25,934,000	26,330,000	26,690,000	26,809,000	27,149,000	26,659,000	27,407,000

Table 24: Figure 20 [Employment in Harlow by Sector (2021)] Underlying Data

	Absolute Employment	Location Quotient
ABDE	250	0.24
C	3,500	1.12
F	2,500	1.19
G	8,000	1.31
H	2,500	1.12
I	1,750	0.55
J	2,250	1.17
K	450	0.29
L	350	0.42
M	3,500	0.88
N	4,500	1.19
O	900	0.51
P	4,000	1.11
Q	7,000	1.25
RST	1,200	0.65

Table 25: Figure 21 [Gross Median Full-time Weekly Workplace Wages] Underlying Data

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Basildon	£537	£567	£606	£575	£610	£569
Harlow	**£584**	**£565**	**£604**	**£577**	**£545**	**£615**
Stevenage	£635	£635	£620	£683	£700	£709
West Essex/East Herts FEMA	£564	£591	£613	£577	£608	£662
Essex	£548	£561	£586	£556	£582	£622
UK	£550	£568	£585	£586	£610	£640

Table 26: Figure 22 [Total Business Counts] Underlying Data

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Basildon	6,580	6,995	7,390	7,565	7,745	7,820	7,800	7,580
Harlow	**2,550**	**2,750**	**2,930**	**2,875**	**3,010**	**3,150**	**3,235**	**3,340**
Stevenage	2,755	2,940	3,150	3,055	3,130	3,225	3,215	3,185
West Essex/East Herts FEMA	22,340	23,300	26,220	25,140	28,335	25,555	25,440	25,455
Essex	59,575	62,135	64,110	64,325	65,540	66,535	66,715	66,800
England	2,116,295	2,213,650	2,320,885	2,318,060	2,360,780	2,390,970	2,405,965	2,408,040

Table 27: Figure 23 [Business Births] Underlying Data

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Basildon	1,215	1,075	1,075	1,130	950	1,050
Harlow	**470**	**455**	**450**	**545**	**505**	**540**
Stevenage	495	370	400	505	360	425
West Essex/East Herts FEMA	3,170	2,920	2,895	3,035	2,850	3,020
Essex	8,580	7,695	7,800	8,295	7,380	8,050
England	358,680	318,240	311,580	325,355	299,115	324,485

Table 28: Figure 24 [Three-Year Business Survival Rates] Underlying Data

	2016	2017	2018
Basildon	56%	58%	58%
Harlow	**55%**	**54%**	**61%**
Stevenage	61%	58%	59%
Essex	59%	60%	61%
England	54%	56%	57%

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