



**REPORT of  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

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**to  
COUNCIL  
12 FEBRUARY 2026**

**NORTH ESSEX LOCAL GROWTH PRIORITIES**

**1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To seek Member approval of the amended North Essex Councils, North Essex Local Growth Priorities document attached at **APPENDIX 1**.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- (i) That Members acknowledge the amendments made to the document further to feedback;
- (ii) That the North Essex Local Growth Priorities (**APPENDIX 1**) be approved for the socio-economic benefit of the region and District.

**3. SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES**

- 3.1 On 11 December, the Council considered the report of the Chief Executive seeking Members' approval of the North Essex Councils (NEC), North Essex Local Growth Priorities document (the document) attached at **APPENDIX 1**.
- 3.2 Members raised concerns regarding several key areas, which would require further dialogue and amendment before the document could be adopted by the Council.
- 3.3 A recommendation was approved that the North Essex Local Growth Priorities be deferred and sent back to NEC to consider inclusion of the items raised by this Council including, St. Peter's Hospital, tourism, specific transport and skills & training.
- 3.4 Further to the meeting, Officers arranged for the Director of the NEC to attend the Council's Group Leaders meeting on 16 January 2026.
- 3.5 During the meeting, the Director of NEC noted they are keen to take on board the feedback from Maldon and confirmed that he had also reviewed the concerns raised at the previous full Council meeting. He noted the collaborative nature of this work across the nine councils.
- 3.6 The Director of NEC reiterated that the ambition is to develop a unified North Essex position and stressed that although there will be no Mayor in place until 2028, the strategic planning must begin now and NEC want to ensure that the priorities are credible.

- 3.7 Attendees of the meeting requested clarity on some of the content of the proposed plan;
- Clarification was sought on references to 'Maldon', is the document referring to 'Maldon Town' or 'Maldon District', particularly in relation to transport and population density. The officer confirmed for rapid transit population density is required. This would then link into the other areas within the district.
  - Concerns raised regarding hospital provision. The officer confirmed the wording would be refined with input from Members engaged with the St Peter's Hospital work.
  - Concerns raised that the risk of flooding in Maldon District is not noted in the original draft document. The Director will take forward an action to ensure the flooding risk within Maldon District is included.
  - Members recognised that this is a high-level document but emphasised the need for Maldon District's voice to be clearly reflected, particularly around transport connectivity and district-wide priorities.
- 3.8 The officer agreed to incorporate feedback and to return to the Council with the revised document, which is included as **APPENDIX 1** of this report.

## **4. CONCLUSION**

- 4.1 The feedback provided by Members has been incorporated to the North Essex Local Growth Priorities. By identifying shared priorities for the region now, NEC members are laying the groundwork for coherent, joined-up economic planning that can support stronger, more strategic local leadership in the years ahead which will be helpful for any new Mayor taking up office in May 2028.

## **5. IMPACT ON PRIORITIES AS SET OUT IN THE CORPORATE PLAN 2025 - 2028**

### **5.1 Supporting our communities**

- 5.1.1 The North Essex Local Growth Priorities shared vision is 'creating a more productive, better-connected and more resilient North Essex where everyone can thrive'. This is underpinned by the outcome of 'A more inclusive North Essex' which supports this priority.

### **5.2 Investing in our District**

- 5.2.1 The North Essex Local Growth Priorities shared vision is 'creating a more productive, better-connected and more resilient North Essex where everyone can thrive'. This is underpinned by the outcome of 'A better-connected North Essex' which supports this priority.

### **5.3 Growing our economy**

- 5.3.1 The North Essex Local Growth Priorities shared vision is 'creating a more productive, better-connected and more resilient North Essex where everyone can thrive'. This is underpinned by the outcome of 'A more productive North Essex' which supports this priority.

## 5.4 Protecting our environment

- 5.4.1 The North Essex Local Growth Priorities shared vision is 'creating a more productive, better-connected and more resilient North Essex where everyone can thrive'. This is underpinned by the outcome of 'A more resilient North Essex' which supports this priority.

## 6. IMPLICATIONS

- (i) **Impact on Customers** – The North Essex Growth Priorities bring together a shared vision for sustainable, inclusive growth that reflects the distinct strengths and ambitions of our cities, towns, coastal areas and rural communities, whilst ensuring residents across North Essex benefit from this growth.
- (ii) **Impact on Equalities** – The North Essex Growth Priorities will ensure everyone has access to opportunities and will address deep-rooted disparities across parts of the region. As inclusion and health are inseparable, reducing deprivation, improving access to opportunity and delivering healthy homes are among the most effective wider determinants of health for closing gaps between communities.
- (iii) **Impact on Risk (including Fraud implications)** – None.
- (iv) **Impact on Resources (financial)** – None.
- (v) **Impact on Resources (human)** – None.
- (vi) **Impact on Devolution / Local Government Reorganisation** - The North Essex Growth Priorities seek to take full advantage of the opportunities Devolution will offer to our residents and businesses as we continue towards the unitarisation of local Government in Essex, ensure that the priorities identified by North Essex Councils are understood and supported by the future Greater Essex Mayor and enable the new unitary authorities to have a 'head start' and deliver early success by laying the foundations for these priorities to progress before new authorities are created.

### Background Papers:

[Minutes of Council meeting 11 December 2025, agenda item 12 North Essex Local Growth Priorities](#)

**APPENDIX 1** – Revised North Essex Local Growth Priorities

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