

Introduction

This document is Maldon District Council's *Economic Prosperity Strategy*, 2013-2029.

This Strategy sets out the Council's approach to supporting local economic development.

The policies contained within this document are based on an assessment of independent evidence set out in the *Evidence Base Report* associated with this Strategy.

Delivery of this Strategy will be through a series of sequential, three year *Economic Prosperity Implementation Plans*.

The Strategy aligns with the Maldon District Local Development Plan and the Essex Growth Strategy, and supports the Renewed Maldon District Sustainable Community Strategy.

Economic Prosperity Strategy 2013-2029

Foreword

Maldon District Council is committed to supporting businesses and creating private sector employment in the local area. This Economic Prosperity Strategy outlines our vision for the future and reflects our determination to create a vibrant and prosperous local economy by responding proactively to changing economic conditions and addressing key drivers of economic growth.

The Council will work with a range of local partners to implement this strategy and turn policy into reality. Together we can ensure the Maldon District continues to be a great place to live, play, work and do business.

Councillor Penny Channer

Chairman of Maldon District Council's Planning and Licensing Committee with responsibility for Economic Development

Economic prosperity can bring many benefits to our District and is an important area in which the Council will continue to focus its efforts, both as an organisation and in partnership with sub regional partners and local businesses. This Strategy clearly sets out the areas that we see as important to help local businesses thrive and we will continue to measure our performance to gauge whether our actions are making a difference.

Fiona Marshall

Chief Executive
Maldon District Council

Adopted by Maldon District Council 13 September 2013

Maldon District Economic Prosperity Strategy 2013-2029

1.1 A Snapshot of the Maldon District

- 1.2 Conveniently located near London, the Maldon District is a great place to live, do business and enjoy life.
- 1.3 Despite being an hour's drive from the Capital, Maldon is an attractive and predominantly rural District. It retains an unspoilt nature and its own special character, forged largely by the principal waterways the Blackwater and the Crouch estuaries. Much of the District's isolated coastline and diverse habitats, including tidal salt marshes and mudflats, provide a home for internationally recognised flora and fauna.
- 1.4 One of the District's greatest economic strengths is its quality of life. Resident satisfaction is high and the District enjoys a rating of 5th out of 405 in the Halifax Quality of Life Survey (2013). The District mixes old and new and is characterised by diverse and distinct natural, historic and built heritage, making a significant contribution to overall quality of life on offer. Many opportunities exist for wildlife watchers, artists and walkers to explore the coast and countryside via an extensive network of footpaths. The scenic environment provides a rich backcloth against which to enjoy a round of golf, horse riding or angling for instance, all of which are well catered for in the District.
- 1.5 The District is steeped in history, with the ancient market town of Maldon developed as an important Saxon port and in 991AD was the site of the famous Battle of Maldon where Viking invaders were victorious. Hundreds of years later the District became known as a centre for oyster fishing, timber processing and the production of agricultural machinery. The Hythe Quay, the old port of Maldon, is the foremost modern-day centre for Thames Sailing Barges. In the neighbouring parish of Heybridge, canal-side buildings, locks and bridges are a reminder of the area's industrial heritage.
- 1.6 Burnham-on-Crouch, the second largest town in the District, like Maldon, boasts a rich maritime heritage. The 15 mile stretch of fine sailing water between the Town and the open sea has led it to become renowned in sailing circles as the 'Cowes of the East Coast'. The Town has a rail link to London Liverpool Street, with a journey time of just over one hour.
- 1.7 Charming villages and hamlets are dotted across the District. The historic core of a number of these villages are designated Conservation Areas and the District is guardian to over 1030 listed buildings of architectural and historic importance.
- 1.8 The District's strong links with its maritime past are further evident through the marinas, docks and boatyards, and a colourful calendar of traditional barge matches, regattas, races and festivals has put the area on the map as a destination for maritime leisure and water recreation.
- 1.9 The Maldon District covers some 138 square miles and has a population of over 62,500. 38,400 of the resident population are of working-age. With one of the lowest population densities in Essex, the District offers a wide range of residential properties, from period country cottages to brand new executive homes. With a crime rate well below the national

[Type text]

average, the District is one of the safest places to live in Essex, and the County itself is also below the national average.

2.1 Economic Context

- 2.2 Enjoying a strategic location, the District is within easy reach of the A12, M11 and M25, as well as the airports of London Stansted and Southend. Businesses in the District have access to the ports of Harwich, Felixstowe, Tilbury and the new London Gateway port in Thurrock.
- 2.3 The District has a legacy of innovation. At the turn of the 20th Century, some of the first cars made in Britain were produced in the parish of Heybridge. Today, the settlements of Burnham-on-Crouch and Tollesbury, for instance, specialise in marine engineering.
- 2.4 There is a vibrant business community in the area, which has a longstanding tradition of producing, and attracting, highly entrepreneurial people. As such, a higher proportion of residents in Maldon District choose to start their own businesses than elsewhere in the UK and Essex. For a rural District, Maldon is exceptional for the breadth and diversity of its business base. The local economy contains businesses in a wide range of sectors which include world-class advanced manufacturing companies, designing and building products at the cutting edge of technology, a cluster of niche marine businesses and high-tech engineering providers. There are specialist construction businesses, dynamic ICT firms and a thriving community of professional services companies.
- 2.5 The busy visitor economy, alongside the resident population, is well served by an eclectic mix of local independent and specialist retailers. The District has an excellent reputation for hospitality and there is a host of restaurants, inns, and cafes, together with a range of quality assured accommodation providers. Amongst the diverse range of visitor attractions is the only surviving World War I airfield and the Combined Military Services Museum displaying artefacts from Britain's proud military history, to numerous historic architectural gems such as the 7th century Chapel of St Peter-on-the-Wall at Bradwell which is among the oldest largely intact Christian church buildings in England, and the Moot Hall, Beeleigh Abbey and Plume Library in Maldon. The District's most popular park, the Edwardian Promenade Park, located on the sloping bank of the River Blackwater in Maldon, provides a great family day out. The network of other parks, open gardens and nature reserves in the District appeal too. The District is famous for its world renowned Maldon Sea Salt production and is recognised for its vineyards and breweries, seafood and top quality food producers.

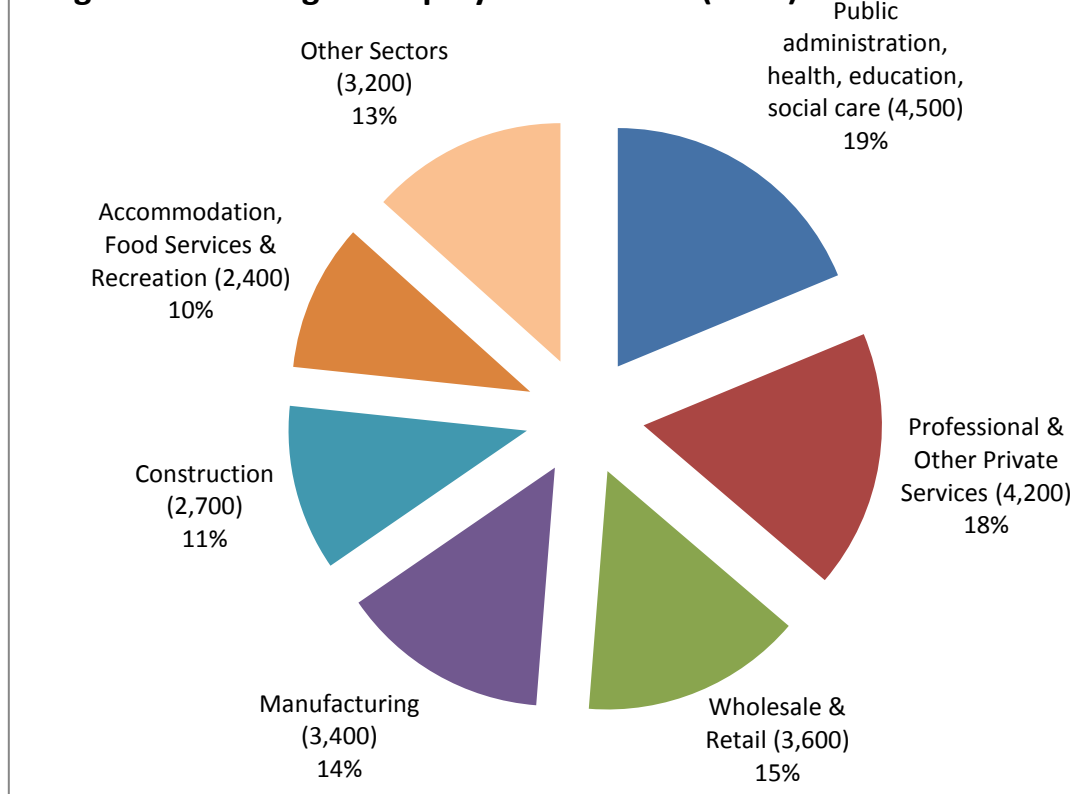
2.6 Key Employment Sectors

- 2.7 There are over 4,300 businesses located in the Maldon District; in total creating nearly 24,000 local jobs. There are several larger employers, including long established local businesses operating in the agricultural, engineering and manufacturing sectors. However, the economy is characterised by small and medium enterprises (SMEs). 75% of companies in the Maldon District employ 4 staff or fewer. A summary of key business sectors is set out below, but further detailed information can be found in the accompanying Evidence Base report in paragraphs 4.1 to 4.63.
- 2.8 Maldon District supports a wide range of businesses that generate a diverse range of jobs. However, employment is concentrated in several broad sectors. Figure 1 provides a

[Type text]

snapshot of the largest employment sectors in the District in 2012. The 6 largest employment sectors account for some 87% of local current jobs. Service-sector employment is well represented. In total, the sectors of wholesale and retail, transport and storage (not shown in the chart), accommodation, food services, recreation and public services, account for over 48% of jobs. Tourism is not shown as a single sector as it intersects across several different sectors. However, the visitor economy is linked to over 10% of jobs in the District and visitor spending (in 2010) contributed approximately 5% of total output. Businesses operating in tourism related sectors provide valuable employment and contribute to sustaining the good quality of life that is on offer within the district.

Figure 1. The Largest Employment Sectors (2012)



- 2.9 The District has a strong and diverse range of professional and private services businesses. These are composed of many small firms, but together they create 4,200 jobs (or 17.6% of all jobs in the District). Similarly 400 jobs are provided by the information & communications technology (ICT) sector (not shown in the chart). Many of these businesses serve a local market, but others are attracted by the good quality of life and rents that are comparatively lower than (for example) nearby Chelmsford.
- 2.10 There is a concentration of small-medium sized manufacturing and high-tech businesses. These operate in a range of fields, but there are identifiable clusters in electronics and light marine engineering, and design. In total, manufacturing supports over 3,400 jobs (14.3%) in the District. In addition, the construction sector, which contains a range of specialist civil engineering businesses as well as conventional builders, electricians etc., supports 2,700 jobs (11.32% of jobs in the District).

- 2.11 Bradwell Nuclear Power Station has been a significant local employer since construction began in the 1950's. However, in 2015 the station will enter into a care and maintenance phase, and routine employment at the site will cease. Looking forward, land near the existing decommissioning power station has been identified by Government as a preferred future location for a new nuclear power station. Due to the fact that such a facility would provide significant, long-term economic benefits to the District, the Council will be making representations to Government, expressing its support for the construction of a new nuclear plant at Bradwell.

3.1 The Three Economies of the Maldon District

- 3.2 Looking at the Maldon District in greater detail, it is possible to characterise it as having three distinct economies. A summary of the three areas is contained below, while further details are contained in the Evidence Base report paragraphs 4.80 to 4.88.
- **The Core:** The towns of Maldon and Burnham-on-Crouch are local economic centres, containing concentrations of industry, service sector businesses, transport links and local amenities. Through the Local Development Plan (LDP), the Council has designated 'growth areas' around these towns. In collaboration with landowners, developers, businesses and other partners, the Council will seek to bring forward new employment opportunities in these areas.
 - **The Rural Hinterland:** Primarily encompassing areas south east of Maldon and north/east of Burnham-on-Crouch, this economy consists mainly of small businesses that service a local market and a few larger employers, such as Dengie Crops Ltd and Desch Plantpak Ltd.
 - **The Commuter Economy:** Located within easy reach of London, Chelmsford and Colchester, out-commuting is a prominent feature in Maldon District, and out-commuting exceeds in-commuting by 8000 people a day. Out-commuting can provide residents with access to higher-income employment; the gross weekly pay of Maldon District residents with full-time jobs outside the District is some 30% higher (£655) than that of residents who work in the District (£500). Whilst the benefits of this higher income trickle down through local spending in the District, there is however an opportunity to generate greater local economic benefits by reducing the outflow of highly skilled residents through the creation of more highly skilled, and highly paid, jobs within the District. Currently, 35% of residents employed in the most senior and highly skilled occupations (officially classified as '*managers, directors and senior officials*') commute out of the District to work. These are people who have often made a choice to live in the Maldon District due to the high quality of life offered. By promoting local business growth and creating a supportive environment to help people set up new businesses, the District can capitalise on this existing pool of talented people, giving them the chance to work locally and increasing the size of the local business base.

3.6 **Strategic Economic Framework**

3.7 This Strategy does not sit in isolation, but operates within a wider policy framework that operates across Essex and the wider region. Aligning this strategy with the policies in the strategic framework is essential to maximise access to funding and support for businesses.

3.8 **The South East Local Economic Partnership (SELEP)**

3.9 The SELEP is a business led, strategic body, focusing its efforts on areas of cross-border economic importance where there is added value in working together. The single goal for the SELEP is to promote steady, sustained economic growth over the next two decades. The SELEP Board has agreed four strategic objectives, two of which are particularly pertinent to Maldon District;

- Promote investment in our coastal communities;
- Strengthen our rural economy

3.10 The SELEP is emerging as a key advocate for economic development across the counties of Essex, Kent and East Sussex. It is responsible for developing new financial instruments and will manage funding pots previously coordinated through the regional development agencies. It is therefore important that implementation of this Strategy should seek to align with the SELEP agenda.

3.11 **Essex County Council (ECC)**

3.12 Essex County Council plays a significant role in promoting economic growth. As the transport authority, ECC has significant influence of the development of transport infrastructure. The County Council hosts Invest Essex which seeks to attract inward investment to the county, and Visit Essex promotes the development of tourism opportunities. The County Council's economic development service supports existing businesses and promotes new business growth.

3.13 The Essex Growth Strategy (EGS) sets out how the County Council will lead efforts to promote economic growth, building on Essex's proximity to London and excellent international transport links. The EGS suggests the County Council will regenerate key towns in Essex and seek to support sectors in which Essex has a competitive advantage;

- Advanced Manufacturing and Technology
- Health and Care Economy
- Transport, Ports and Logistics
- Renewable Energy/Low Carbon Technologies

3.14 The County Council is developing support mechanisms to enable growth of these key sectors, and has put in place financial implements (such as a revolving investment fund) that can provide loans to support major investments that promote economic growth.

3.15 **The Heart of Essex and Haven Gateway Sub Regional Partnerships**

3.16 Maldon District Council promotes economic development through collaboration with surrounding local authorities in what are termed sub-regional partnerships. The Heart of Essex covers Maldon District, Brentwood and Chelmsford; the Haven Gateway includes Maldon District, Colchester, Braintree and Tendring.

3.17 Sub-regional partnerships are important vehicles that allow Maldon District Council to collaborate to develop larger economic interventions, give the local area a greater voice in key forums (e.g. the SELEP) and enable local authorities to adopt a joined-up approach to; infrastructure, planning and housing; skills and education, business support, inward investment, the rural economy, tourism and international trade.

3.18 **An Economic Prosperity Strategy for the Maldon District**

3.19 In facing the global recession, the Maldon District has proved itself more resilient than other parts of the UK. Unemployment remains low and new businesses continue to be established at an above average rate. Yet, the challenging economic climate requires all local authorities to look at ways to promote business growth. Maldon District Council is setting out its plans to develop the local economy in two complementary documents:

- The Maldon District Local Development Plan (LDP) which sets out the spatial planning vision for **where** and **when** housing and physical business space (e.g. offices) will be delivered; and
- This document – the Maldon District Economic Prosperity Strategy – which sets out a vision for **how** long-term business growth can be achieved.

3.20 The Strategy makes the case that to maintain the high standard of living currently enjoyed, the Maldon District should play to its strengths. The Council recognises the need to support growth that is sustainable and compatible with the rural character of the District, yet flexible enough to meet the needs of modern businesses.

3.21 The overarching ambition of this Strategy is therefore to:

Maintain a vibrant and competitive economy, balancing the needs of industry and prosperity whilst sustaining a high quality of life, increasing incomes and promoting the Maldon District as a great place to live, play, work and do business.

4.1 **The Way Forward**

4.2 **Enabling Future Growth**

4.3 The Maldon District has many strengths and the local economy responded relatively well during the recession. To make future prosperity a reality, the District Council, together with a range of public and private sector partners, will need to consider making interventions, either directly or through exerting leadership and influence. The following pages set out Maldon District Council's preferred approach to promoting economic growth in the District. The approach is based on the recommendations of the Evidence Base (paragraphs 7.12 to 7.22) and is fully integrated with policies in the LDP.

4.4 **Promoting the Maldon District**

4.5 Like a famous company, a well-known town, city or area finds it easier to sell its products

[Type text]

and services, recruit the best people, and attract visitors, investment and events. The Council will work with a number of partners, and support widespread community engagement, to continue to develop of the District's brand and actively market the area.

- 4.6 More needs to be done to encapsulate, within the District's brand, our entrepreneurial culture and local strengths in innovation, creativity, design and manufacturing, recognising these capacities as central to the District's continued economic success. Equally, the Maldon District brand must continue to take advantage of the high quality of life by celebrating the District's history, coastline, maritime culture, the array of local independent shops and specialist services on offer and the 'Old English' character of its towns and villages. The objective should be that the Maldon District becomes identified as a centre for business growth, where cooperation, support, advice and innovation are a by-word and where the way in which the Council works with its business partners becomes highly regarded.

4.7 **Business Growth, Earnings and Housing Affordability**

- 4.8 A significant element of future employment growth is likely to come in the form of lower income jobs in the care, leisure, and food or accommodation sectors. These jobs will provide a welcome boost to employment levels and give people access to part-time work. However, to secure future prosperity the Council needs to build a 'core economy' that supports high-skill and high-value companies, which provide greater income and more secure employment. The long-term increase in average house prices in the South East of England means that people experience difficulties in affording homes. Part of the solution is to deliver more affordable housing and bring homes back into use (this is being addressed through Maldon District Council's Housing Service and through policies developed as part of the LDP). In addition, the Council will need to promote the growth of higher paid, more secure jobs. To do this, the Council will work to support, retain and develop our innovative, high-tech businesses and seek to identify the District as a centre of creativity, production and design.

4.9 **Key Growth Sectors**

- 4.10 Though the Council will continue its policy of supporting all businesses that need its help, the Council will work with Invest Essex to identify businesses with the greatest potential and seek to attract investment into key sectors, which independent forecasts have indicated have strong growth prospects. The Heart of Essex Economic Futures Report (2012) identified several sectors with strong growth prospects in the Maldon District, and further information about projected growth is contained in Evidence Base paragraphs 6.33 to 6.41. However, in summary the sectors identified as having the greatest potential are:

- High-tech manufacturing, low carbon engineering and design;
- Professional Services;
- ICT;
- Administrative & Business Services;
- Education and training services;
- Leisure, food services and short-stay accommodation services;
- Residential Care & Health Care;
- Agriculture related activities;

[Type text]

Employment Land and Premises

- 4.11 There are approximately 100 hectares of employment land in the District. However, only 25% of employment sites can be considered high quality. Many local businesses, particularly high-tech companies, have cited limited availability of land or appropriate, high-quality premises, as a barrier to their expansion plans. To allow business growth and attract inward investment into the District this strategy will seek to influence the supply of high-quality commercial and industrial space (with amenities such as parking and super-fast broadband).
- 4.12 Maldon District Council will promote the regeneration and improvement of existing industrial zones in viable locations. The Council will also seek to influence the development of new employment sites, especially in accessible areas, to increase the quality and range of available business premises. These are likely to be within the growth areas identified in the LDP, but the Council may be consider additional employment land allocations in order to respond to changes in the supply of, and demand for, development land.

Skills and Workforce Development

- 4.13 In the Maldon District, workforce skill levels and educational attainment have historically been lower than the UK average. Improvements over the past decade have been dramatic, but if the District is to compete with other parts of Essex, skills levels must continue to rise. Raising skill levels plays an important part in reducing long-term unemployment and lowering the volume of young people who can become categorised as not in employment, education or training (NEET). Some businesses have suggested there is a growing mismatch between the needs of local businesses and the skill sets of the workforce. Moreover, as the District's businesses become more high tech, more highly skilled workers will be needed. To provide local residents with access to good local jobs, the development of the economy must go hand in hand with development of workforce skills (please see Evidence Base paragraphs 4.69 to 4.78 for further details on skills)
- 4.14
- 4.15 To raise skills and address the skills mismatch, Maldon District Council will continue to work with employers, schools and training providers to improve the availability of vocational training, and further increase engagement between employers and young people. The Plume School and Ormiston Rivers Academy already work with the Council to support businesses to engage with young people. This activity raises young people's understanding of the workplace and builds consistent links between schools and businesses. The Council will continue to support this and will work with schools to increase the volume of people studying toward technical and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) courses, needed by local employers. In addition, the Council will support businesses to improve workforce training and aim to increase the supply of workers with recognised qualifications in technical fields, project management, marketing and other highly transferable business skill areas.
- 4.16 There is a need to increase the availability of adult re-skilling / up-skilling programmes and the Council will work closely with Job Centre Plus and Essex County Council to make better use of existing adult and community learning provision. This will improve access to growing

employment opportunities in the health and care sectors that are expanding as a result of the aging population.

- 4.17 To address the pay equality issue for female workers, the Council will work with partners to encourage greater female enrolment in traditionally male dominated fields such as ICT and engineering.

4.18 **Connectivity (roads)**

- 4.19 Maldon is a rural district, with constraints regarding transport infrastructure. Whilst there are likely to be road infrastructure improvements linked to housing development, major improvements to the road infrastructure network are not likely to occur within the timeframe covered by this Strategy.

- 4.20 Given the constraints described, this Council will coordinate with Essex County Council and private sector providers to encourage an expansion of demand responsive transport programmes (such as the Dengie Dart dial and ride transport service) and car share initiatives. This will enhance the local transport network and improve integration with the railway, and trunk road network, and increase access to employment opportunities.

4.21 **Connectivity (broadband)**

- 4.22 In addition to transport infrastructure, another key influence on business location is the availability of superfast broadband.
- 4.23 Maldon District Council will work with Essex County Council to support their superfast broadband campaign (*Making the Connection*) and the national BDUK programme to improve broadband capacity in the District.
- 4.24 The Council will continue to engage with providers using alternative broadband technologies (i.e. Wi-Fi broadband) to create choice and competition, and to ensure that both residential and commercial users have access to affordable high-speed broadband

4.25 **How Maldon District Council and Partners can Influence the Local Economy or Delivery through Partnership**

- 4.26 A key theme running through this Strategy is that continued economic prosperity is vital to everyone in the District; local residents, businesses large and small, and the District Council. The Council will play its part in providing leadership and direction as well as acting as a catalyst for change. Nonetheless to ensure the effective delivery of this Strategy the District Council will need to collaborate with a range of partners who share the same ambitions.
- 4.27 The Council will work with the SELEP, Essex County Council, Invest Essex and the sub-regional partnerships of Haven Gateway and Heart of Essex for instance, and utilise the skills and expertise in these partnerships to develop and deliver the strategic interventions in this Strategy.
- 4.28 The Council will work with business organisations such as the Essex Chamber of Commerce, the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB), the Maldon Business Association and the Burnham

Chamber of Trade and Commerce. In addition, Maldon District Council will work closely with the not-for-profit organisation, Think Local (Maldon District) Limited. This business-led organisation will be supported and developed as a key vehicle for engaging, and representing businesses, ensuring that investment is returned to the local business community.

- 4.29 By adopting a joined-up approach, the Council will ensure a holistic approach to economic development, increase access to external funding opportunities and enable this Strategy to have the greatest possible impact.

4.30 **The Role of Maldon District Council**

- 4.31 The Council's pursuit of economic well-being is to promote improvement in the quality of life for all local residents. The Localism Act 2011 offers new opportunities to work in different ways and places greater emphasis on the private sector and the community to take on additional responsibility, as power and responsibility is devolved to the lowest level. There is also a legal duty to co-operate placed on local authorities which reinforces the need to work in partnership.

- 4.32 Local government cannot however directly deliver economic growth and prosperity, and like all local authorities, the Council faces higher costs with reduced grants from Central Government. In short, the Council will have less money to fund projects. However, local government and partner organisations have a clear role in facilitating private sector expansion by using the levers available to them. These levers include:

- **Strategic Leadership:** The Council has a crucial role in leading on issues important to its local communities, working with them to help shape their aspirations and explore ways in which they can be delivered. It has a democratic mandate to allocate resources to contribute towards, and articulate, through strategic interventions, the case for economic growth and prosperity. It can facilitate a vision for the local economy.
- **Brokerage:** The Council has a broad network of contacts, which allows it to explore business opportunities and influence or develop projects through partnerships. It has a good track record of partnership working to deliver services and secure improvements for local communities.
- **Local Planning Authority:** The Council can and will advocate on behalf of the District at national, regional and sub-regional levels and it will shape, plan and safeguard the future of the District and its communities. It is within the powers of Elected Members and planning officers of the Council to prioritise economic growth, and commercial need in planning decisions, and as such the economic policies within the Local Development Plan (LDP) reflect this strategy.
- **Service Provider and Buyer:** In addition to the Council's planning functions, it can contribute to, and support, the development of the local economy - directly through the Economic Development service and through a range of other services and functions including Leisure, Environmental Health, Housing, Community Development and Licensing, for example. In addition to providing services, the Council is a significant purchaser of goods and services within the local and regional economy. In some circumstances, the Council may be able to prioritise localised procurement to increase

economic resilience.

- **Tax Collector:** The local authority's income is linked to the long-term growth of the business base. To promote business growth in the short-term, the Council will publicise national business rate relief programmes and consider developing targeted local incentives, if viable.
- **General Power of Competence:** As a result of the Localism Act 2011, local authorities have far fewer restrictions on their actions. For example, there is no overt legal impediment to the Council buying land or making investments.
- **Sustaining Quality of Life:** Through the Renewed Maldon District Sustainable Community Strategy, the Council will; support the natural and built heritage of the District, maintain an attractive public realm and encourage the growth of strong communities.

4.33 **The Role of Partners**

4.34 By providing a leadership and brokerage role, Maldon District Council is able to coordinate a broad set of partner organisations. A joined-up partnership approach will maximise the impact of interventions and provide access to specialist skills. The roles of partners within the delivery of this strategy are:

- **Business Engagement and Networking:** Business led organisations, such as Think Local (Maldon District) Ltd, have a clear role working with local businesses to develop a strong sense of business community, building the area's commercial identity and brand.
- **Local Supply Chain Development:** Think Local (Maldon District) Ltd is well placed to work with the business community to increase awareness of other companies within the area. This will lead to new opportunities for growth and collaboration to (for example) jointly procure services such as energy.
- **Marketing the District:** Working with Maldon District Council, partners such as Think Local (Maldon District) Ltd, Visit Essex and Invest Essex, are well placed to promote the District as a place to visit, do business and invest.
- **Business Support:** Private sector providers are well equipped to deliver business to business support and guidance for small, medium enterprises (SMEs).
- **Growth of Existing Businesses:** The Council and partners will continue to raise awareness of business services provided by UK Trade and Investment (UKTI), the Essex Chamber of Commerce, Essex County Council and others.
- **Workforce Training and Skills Development:** The South East Local Enterprise Partnership, Essex County Council, Job Centre Plus, training providers and third-sector organisations have a clear role in leading the development of skills to match business needs now, and in the future.

5.1 **Supporting Economic Prosperity**

5.2 The following pages set out the actions that Maldon District Council will support, to promote future economic prosperity. The private sector is the driver of economic and employment growth. However, through targeted interventions and by working with partners, the Council can help to create an environment that allows businesses to innovate and grow, and can set out a clear vision which sets out the direction of travel for economic development in the Maldon District.

5.3 The ambition is to develop the Maldon District as a great location for businesses, where more jobs and better quality employment opportunities are created. By reducing out-commuting, retaining more wealth within the District, and by promoting local spending and investment, the Council seeks to support the growth of a sustainable, resilient and diverse economy. This will be an economy where innovation thrives and where new, and growing, companies have access to the premises, skilled staff and support they require.

5.4 **Strategic Interventions**

5.5 Set out below are the high-level strategic interventions that the Council will undertake, with the support of partners, to promote economic growth and prosperity in the District. The actions reflect both the analysis contained in the accompanying Evidence Base Report and consultation with businesses. These strategic interventions are intended to contribute to the long-term targets described at the end of this strategy.

5.6 **Strategic Intervention 1 - Increase the Supply of High Quality, Flexible Premises**

5.7 This is the most pressing economic challenge facing the District. The Council and partners will address this challenge of increasing the supply of modern, high-quality premises through the following proposed actions:

5.8 **Action 1.1 - The Causeway Regeneration Programme**

5.9 To realise the area's full potential the Council will influence a coordinated redevelopment of the Causeway industrial area in Heybridge, which will bring forward modern, high-tech industrial and office space and promote diversification into broader commercial uses where appropriate. The objective is to meet the needs of existing businesses, whilst improving the quality of commercial / industrial stock. This will ensure that the District retains and attracts businesses that are more likely to create higher income jobs (as supported by LDP policies S4 and E1).

5.9 **Action 1.2 - New Employment Areas**

5.10 To enable development of high quality premises, strategic employment sites/allocations must be protected and new employment sites should be developed, especially in the most accessible parts of the District that are closer to the A12. The Council will seek to influence development on land to the south of Maldon, to the north of Heybridge and along the A414 and B1019. These are 'growth areas' identified in the Local Development Plan (LDP policy E1). Over the duration of the LDP period, the Council will seek to deliver approximately 6

hectares of new employment land in these accessible locations. However, the Council will release approximately 14 hectares of poorly rated employment land (for further details of employment land requirements see Evidence Base paragraphs 6.1 to 6.36).

5.11 **Action 1.3 - Regeneration of Other Employment Sites**

5.12 Renewal, improvement and expansion of significant employment areas in the District will be supported where it brings forward new space for SMEs or supports the retention of an existing employer.

5.13 **Note:** *Evidence suggests that demand for office space will be driven by growth in the small business market. Demand for high-tech and industrial space will come mainly from existing companies seeking to rebuild their premises. Long-term demand for B2/B8 will be mostly for properties of up to 5,000 sq/ft. We expect less frequent demand for properties of up to 20,000 sq ft and infrequent demand for very large industrial units (see Evidence Base paragraphs 4.93 to 4.102 for details).*

5.14 *Where rebuilds are constructed, the Council will encourage developers to provide an additional element of speculative business space to help attract investment to the District. The Council will work with landowners, developers and Invest Essex to attract companies to modern business units (see action 2.3).*

5.15 **Strategic Intervention 2 - Support Diversification and Enterprise**

5.16 Capitalising on opportunities to increase economic growth will increase prosperity and generate local employment opportunities. This will be supported through the following actions:

5.17 **Action 2.1 - The Dengie Gateway Programme**

5.18 The Council will enable rural innovation that will seek to support the visitor economy, promote a vibrant business community and improve transport links whilst protecting the unique landscape character of the Dengie Peninsular. The visitor offer will be promoted through the use of the Southminster Branch Line, offering Burnham-on-Crouch as a gateway to attractions such as the Wallasea Island Wetland Project, the Coastal Trail and other local places of interest. Further afield the unique offer of wild-space, local food trails and a landscape rich in heritage will be the cornerstone of our approach to encourage rural diversification (LDP policies S1, S6, E1-N2).

5.19 **Action 2.2 - New Business Pathway**

5.20 With a private sector partner, the Council will establish a 'new business pathway' that offers guidance for first time entrepreneurs. In addition, the Council will seek to secure a supported incubation / enterprise centre for high potential start-ups (LDP policies E1, E6).

5.21 **Action 2.3 - Inward Investment Gateway**

5.13 Working with Invest Essex, the Council will maintain a database of available strategic employment land and premises, and support an on-going dialogue with major landowners and developers. This will improve the position of the District as a location for attracting inward investment.

- 5.14 **Action 2.4 - Support for Existing Businesses**
- 5.15 Supporting the growth of existing businesses is as important as helping new enterprises. The Council will continue to work with private and public sector partners such as University of Essex, Anglia Ruskin, UKTI, Invest Essex and Think Local (Maldon District) Ltd, Essex Chamber of Commerce, FSB and others, to provide access to (for example) seminars, knowledge transfer partnerships and meet the buyer events.
- 5.16 **Action 2.5 – Promote Discretionary Business Rates Relief Schemes**
- 5.17 To promote business growth in the short-term, the Council will publicise national business rate relief programmes and consider developing targeted local incentives, if viable.
- 5.18 **Action 2.6 - Develop Think Local (Maldon District) Limited**
- 5.19 The Council will support Think Local (Maldon District) Ltd, to develop as a formal, business-led delivery vehicle for business support and promotion. The Council will advocate it as an independent organisation to represent businesses and business organisations across the district.
- 5.20 **Action 2.7 - Build the District's Brand**
- 5.21 Continued development of a strong brand, which embodies a collection of positive perceptions in the mind of consumers, will emphasise the distinctiveness of the District making it a more attractive location to live, visit and do business.
- 5.22 Business led organisations have a clear role in leading the development of the brand, and the Council will support these partners by facilitating a wider engagement with the community.
- 5.23 **Action 2.8 - Enhance the Visitor Offer - Encouraging visitors to stay longer and spend more.**
- 5.24 Focusing on improving the day visit, and short-stay offer, the Council will support the growth of the visitor economy. The attractive historic and natural environment, the maritime leisure offer and renowned sailing events, already attract a significant numbers of visits to the District.
- 5.25 The Council wants to support the development of the visitor economy by; expanding the range of cultural events on offer in the main public open spaces (i.e. Promenade Park) and by improving support for existing businesses in the visitor economy. The Council will encourage coordination between venues, accommodation providers, and promotional agencies, and support the use of destination management plans. The objective is to encourage people to stay longer, especially out of the main tourist season.
- 5.26 To achieve growth in the visitor economy, the Council will coordinate with range of organisations, including Visit Essex, Visit England and other third, and private, sector organisations. In addition, the Council will explore opportunities to develop a Tourism Business Improvement District (TBID), giving the local businesses community greater capacity to develop the visitor offer (LDP policies S1, E5).

5.27 **Action 2.9 – Lobby for a New Nuclear Power Station near Bradwell**

5.28 Bradwell has been selected as a preferred site for a potential new power station. While the government has not yet made the decision to build, the construction and operation of a nuclear power station will create a major economic stimulus for the Maldon District, and Essex. Working with a wide range of partners, the Council will campaign to secure a new nuclear power station near Bradwell (LDP policy D2).

5.29 **Strategic Intervention 3 - Improve Skills and Training Provision**

5.30 Increasing the availability of training provision in the District, expanding links between schools and employers, and developing opportunities for adult re-skilling will create a foundation for long-term improvements to skills levels. Work in relation to this strategic intervention will involve the following actions:

5.31 **Action 3.1 - Develop Employer-Led Training**

5.32 Providing residents with skills that match the needs of local and regional employers will reduce unemployment and increase competitiveness. The Council will work with partners to increase the provision of employer focused training and support close links with local schools.

5.33 **Action 3.2 - Extend Employer / School Engagement Projects**

5.34 Addressing the mismatch between the skills young people are equipped with and the requirements of local employers, will support business growth and reduce youth unemployment. The Council will work with partners to intensify existing employer-school projects and develop new projects as required.

5.35 **Action 3.3 – Promote Apprenticeships and Pre-Apprenticeship Programmes**

5.36 Apprenticeships provide a vocational pathway for people to develop the skills and experience required by businesses. The Council will work with businesses, and a range of partners, to expand the breadth of apprenticeship opportunities on offer in the District and increase uptake of these opportunities through promotional activity.

5.37 The Council will work with partners to promote pre-apprenticeship programmes, which equip students with the core work-skills that employers expect of all staff. Where appropriate, contributions from businesses or developers towards apprenticeships opportunities in the District will be sought.

5.38 **Action 3.4 - Enable Adult Up-skilling / Re-skilling**

5.39 The modern economy requires a flexible, skilled workforce and residents will be better able to secure employment if they are able to retrain. The Council will work with Essex County Council and other providers to increase the provision of adult education, and training, focused on increasing access to local employment (LDP policy E6).

5.40 **Strategic Intervention 4 - Improve Connectivity**

5.41 Maximising the potential of the existing public transport network will increase access to employment opportunities, while improving super-fast broadband provision will boost business growth. The Council will seek to influence connectivity through the following actions:

5.42 **Action 4.1 - Support the Rollout of Super-fast Broadband**

5.43 Working with Essex County Council, the Heart of Essex and Haven Gateway Partnerships and other partners, Maldon District Council will support the rollout of the BDUK and the 'Essex Making the Connection' campaign.

5.44 By working closely with partners, the Council will seek to influence super-fast broadband infrastructure provision to ensure that both commercial and residential premises are effectively serviced. In addition, the Council will continue to promote alternative (e.g. radio) broadband provision to support competition and choice.

5.45 **Action 4.2 - Extend Demand Responsive Transport**

5.46 The Council will work with partners to influence the extension of existing demand responsive transport provision, with an emphasis on integration with the conventional public transport network (bus routes and rail) and improving access to employment centres. (LDP policies S1, T1, T2)

6.1 **Implementation and Monitoring**

6.2 A series of sequential, three year, Implementation Plans will be developed through the lifetime of the Economic Prosperity Strategy. These plans will be structured so as to align with the strategic interventions set out in this Strategy. They will expand on specific actions, and contain details relating to projects such as deliverability, indicative costs, timescales and outcomes. These plans will be agreed through the Council committee responsible for economic development and will demonstrate the commitment from all partners to make their contribution to the continuing success story for the Maldon District.

6.3 The duration of this Strategy mirrors the duration of the LDP, and as such runs to 2029. As a long-term strategy, this document will be subject to regular monitoring and review, and long-term targets will support on-going evaluation. It is important that this strategy is treated as a living document, which should be adapted to reflect changing imperatives resulting from technological developments and new economic circumstances. To facilitate changes to the Economic Prosperity Strategy, it will be appropriate to re-examine the Evidence Base Report and update it to reflect new intelligence.

6.4 **Long-Term Targets (2013-2029)**

6.5 To support the implementation of this strategy, a series of targets have been proposed. These are informed by independent evidence and reflect the aspirations of the Council. They are designed to ensure that the interventions proposed within this Strategy support long-

term outcomes. Because of the challenging economic climate the targets are conservative, but realistic. As a result, some of the targets seek to achieve growth, whilst others seek to maintain our existing position.

	Target	Existing	Rationale	Index and Source
Support the creation of 2,000 net additional jobs (See Evidence Base paragraphs 6.1-6.32)	26,000	24,000	<p>A growth target of 2,000 net additional jobs reflects an ambition to increase good employment opportunities and reduce out-commuting, by developing the local economy.</p> <p>The interventions in this strategy, together with the support of the SELEP, Essex County Council and other partners, will help to create the environment in which this level of long-term job creation is possible.</p>	<p><i>ONS Jobs Density Index</i></p> <p><i>Experian</i></p>
Increase the supply of high-quality commercial, and industrial, premises	35% of developed employment sites are rated as 'good'	25% of developed employment sites are rated as 'good'	The employment land review and other studies point to a need to improve the supply of high-quality commercial premises to achieve growth. It is expected that the Causeway Regeneration Project and the delivery of new employment sites will support this target.	<i>Employment Land Review</i>
Promote diversification and growth	The total business stock in the Maldon District grows at a rate which places the district in the middle 20% of districts nationally.	Maldon is within the bottom 40% of Districts nationally	<p>The growth of the business base is central to the delivery of the jobs target. Between 1998 and 2008 (a period of growth), the total business stock in Maldon increased by 14.01%. This change places the area in the bottom 40% of districts nationally.</p> <p>While business growth is largely determined by the health of the wider economy, many of the interventions in this strategy aim to increase support for new businesses.</p>	<p><i>Local Futures Place Profile Report; Business Base Index</i></p>
	Average gross weekly workplace pay matches the trend national average.	In 2012 pay was marginally lower in Maldon District (£503.7) than the UK average (£507.6).	GWWP in Maldon District fluctuates around the national average. By providing support for sectors such as advanced manufacturing and professional services, this strategy will support an increase in the number of good quality local jobs. This will increase incomes and increase housing affordability.	<i>ONS; Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings - Workplace Analysis</i>
Improve Skills and Training Provision	Maldon District has a resident workforce that performs in the middle 20% of districts by national standards, in terms of human capital.	Maldon is within the bottom 20% of Districts nationally	<p>Workforce skills are a key enabler of economic growth, and access to a skilled workforce will become more important as the economy becomes increasingly high-tech. The Local Futures composite measure for skills (2010) suggests that Maldon District currently has a resident workforce that performs in the bottom 20% of districts by national standards, in terms of human capital.</p> <p>Interventions in this strategy seek to develop the skill base by supporting the provision of employer-led workforce training, and by promoting adult re-skilling, and apprenticeship, opportunities.</p>	<p><i>Local Futures Place Profile Report; Workforce Skills Composite Index</i></p>

Connectivity	90% of the District's businesses and households have the option to access high-speed broadband (24Mbps+)	68.9% of Essex business and households have the option to access high-speed broadband (24Mbps+)	The provision of high speed broadband has the potential to support businesses in urban areas and may open-up rural areas of the District to economic development.	<i>Essex County Council; Making the Connection Campaign Monitoring</i> <i>Ofcom; Broadband Coverage Survey</i>
---------------------	--	---	---	---