



# Observatory PASCAL

Place Management, Social Capital and Learning Regions

PURE Regional Briefing Paper (RBP)

ESSEX, UNITED KINGDOM

Part 1

1. Clarify what is meant by the region in this project e.g. historical and cultural, long-term administrative and legal, or specially created for a particular development purpose. Comment on the advantages and difficulties of the nature and understanding of the region involved. [One general benefit from the PURE project should be to gain a better understanding of what kind of region is effective for what purposes.]

**For the purposes of this project, the 'region' refers to the Greater Essex area. This encompasses the administrative areas of Essex County Council (hereafter ECC) with Southend-on-Sea Borough Council and Thurrock Council.**

Historically, the Essex economy has been intrinsically linked with London, in terms of waste management and energy production, and also the provision of people to work in the service sector and the construction industry. Essex has a proven track record in the engineering industry and in manufacturing, both these sectors still have a strong hold in the south of Greater Essex, spanning the Thames Gateway South Essex area. Essex has benefited – and will continue to benefit – from advantageous geography in terms of ports and gateway functions. Our businesses should take every opportunity to maximise the benefits of our proximity to continental Europe.

The Greater Essex 'region' has sound historical origins as both Southend-on-sea Borough Council and Thurrock Council were previously part of the ECC area (1889 -1998). More significantly, Greater Essex's existence also has a strong rationale from a pragmatic policy perspective. This position is outlined in detail in the ECC policy pamphlet *City Limits* ([see link](#)); where ECC employ the logic behind city-regions to 'county-regions' such as Greater Essex. ECC argue that the drivers behind city-regions' economic potential – such as scale, productivity, clustering, and infrastructure - are characteristics which could equally be applied to Greater Essex. In fact *City Limits* demonstrates on a sample of the relevant data, the Essex county-region meets any economic definition that might be applied to city-regions with Essex's commuting flows, migration patterns, and retail footprint all being sufficiently coherent for the county to be validly classified a functional economic area. ECC subsequently argue that Greater Essex is the most appropriate level for 'regional' policy making, to support the functioning sub-regional economies operating at North, Mid, West and South Essex levels.

The relative simplicity of the term 'Greater Essex' does hide many layers of sophisticated governance arrangements that lie underneath and alongside the partnership. Essex County Council is part of a two tier structure and thus is split between the district and boroughs of Harlow, Epping Forest, Brentwood, Basildon, Castle Point, Rochford, Maldon, Chelmsford, Uttlesford, Braintree, Colchester and Tendring. Southend-on-Sea Borough Council and Thurrock Council are unitary councils. Other statutory partners include five Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) Essex Police, Essex Fire Service, the Learning and Skills Council (LSC).

In addition there are two significant growth areas in the county which allow us to direct locally specific initiatives and straddle the administrative boundaries described above, and in some cases our borders with neighbouring authorities. Thames Gateway South Essex (TGSE) in the south of the county includes the Essex districts of Basildon, Castle Point and Rochford. The Haven Gateway is a shared endeavour with Suffolk County Council and engages the Essex districts of Tendring and Colchester and is based around the ports of Harwich and Felixstowe and the town of Colchester in Essex. ECC chooses to work through a combination of structures

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to enable clear focus on economic conditions and not admin boundaries. In working through these structures, it is clear that the focus is the economy and not administrative boundary.

Outside of these, two other 'policy areas' are developing. We have a strong facilitation role to play 'Harlow and West Essex', otherwise known as the 'M11 corridor' encompasses Harlow, Epping Forest and Uttlesford, whilst a less formal, fledging, partnership called 'Heart of Essex', which builds on the 2006 'Mid Essex Economic Futures' report ([see link](#)), is emerging in Mid Essex bringing together the relatively affluent areas of Brentwood, Chelmsford, Maldon and Braintree.

Southend-on-Sea is the largest conurbation in the East of England and the closest seaside resort to London located within the Thames Gateway - the Government's top priority for regeneration and growth. It is home to around 160,000 people in 71,000 households. There are 17 electoral wards in the Borough and more than 6 million visitors come each year, bringing in £200 million to the local economy.

Thurrock is an area of contrasts with a long history of change and adaptation. In an area of 165km (squared) of which over half is green belt, Thurrock has semi-urban population to the south and scattered rural communities to the north. The Borough is divided into 20 electoral wards and is home to around 150,000 people.

In terms of the English regional policy framework, Greater Essex falls under the auspices of the East of England region. However ECC argue a regional approach is often not sufficiently sensitive to the diversity of economies across the East. The regional level can ignore, due to its scale, the distinctive local resources, challenges and opportunities facing sub-regional areas. The dangers of an overly regional approach are no clearer than in the East of England's Regional Economic Strategy (RES). The RES describes the region as a global leader in research and development, and it is. However, those strengths lie in Essex – not just in Cambridge, for example, with vast numbers of researchers based around Ford at Dunton and the significant levels of innovation emanating from Basildon Hospital (see link to [Health Enterprise East](#) which documents this).

Greater Essex has traditionally been viewed as part of the 'South East' of England. Indeed, many of the policy positions taken by Greater Essex Councils are very much aligned to the South East region; this is facilitated by very good working relationships at officer and member level in Greater Essex with the South East.

2. Set out briefly the key characteristics of the region in terms of geography, economy, demography, social structure, trends and changes, as these affect PURE and the development agenda.

## Demography

Mid 2007 estimated population figures:

Area	Total population	Of which working age
Essex	1376000	833000
Southend	162000	96000
Thurrock	150000	95000
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,688,000</b>	<b>1,024,000</b>

- Greater Essex's overall population has been on a steady rise since 1981's census (according to estimated figures 1,481,900 people lived in the county at that time). Although past birth

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patterns have contributed, inward migration, especially from London, has continued to be the key driver of population growth. This migration kept Greater Essex's population growing faster than England's in the 1970s and 1980s.

- The Office for National Statistics has charted a slightly steeper pattern of steady growth in the lead up to 2031. At that point it expects that Essex County Council's administrative area alone will be home to 1,685,000 residents, and Southend and Thurrock to 179,900 and 183,200 respectively. On this basis we might expect that Greater Essex will account for 2,048,100 people.
- According to the last Census, in 2001 only 2.9%, 6.9% and 9.1% of Essex, Southend-on-Sea Borough Council and Thurrock Council's respective populations belonged to Mixed, Black, Asian or Chinese ethnic groups. This is a lower proportion for all three partners than the national average which in England in 2001 was 11.3%.
- However as Essex continues to grow it is becoming more diverse. The county's black and minority ethnic (BME) population is growing in line with national trends. Those in Essex identifying with Mixed, Black, Asian or Chinese ethnic groups increased from around 2% of the population in 1991 to 3% in 2001 –approximately 22,000 residents. BME residents tend to live in the south and west of the county; however no district had a BME population of more than 13% of its total. The report *Ethnicity in Essex*, which delivered this analysis, can be found via [this link](#).
- Greater Essex has an ageing population. This nation-wide phenomenon is magnified in Essex. Over 13% of local people are within ten years of their sixty-fifth birthday; over 26% are within twenty years. As more people retire, we will see a step-change in the ratio of older people to working-age people. There were 3 working-age people for every older person in 2003; we can expect to see only 2.2 in 2028. This "age-shift" is largely due to past birth patterns – high birth rates post-war, and lower rates in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s. The shift also owes a lot to older people living longer - Essex will see increases not just in the over-65s, but in the over-75 and over-85s too. By 2028, Essex's over-85 population will have doubled from 26,800 to over 58,200, Southend and Thurrock's is likely to follow a similar trend.

## Deprivation

- At County level, Essex is within the 20% least deprived upper-tier authorities in England. Although quality of life for most Essex residents is good, 5% of Essex residents live in seriously deprived small areas.
- Deprivation is generally low in Thurrock; however, pockets of high deprivation do exist. Six wards have Super Output Areas (SOAs) which fall within the 10% most deprived in England. Southend accounts for 106 SOAs, of which 8 are reported as being within the most disadvantaged in England. Four of these are contained in three town centre wards. One SOA in the Kursaal ward is recognised as the 93<sup>rd</sup> most deprived in the Country.
- Essex itself contains 39 Super Output Areas that are seriously deprived, falling in the 20% most deprived areas nationally. These areas fall within Basildon, Chelmsford, Colchester, Epping Forest, Tendring and Harlow. Coastal Jaywick in Tendring is the 3<sup>rd</sup> most deprived area in England.
- District level deprivation figures show that Tendring, Harlow and Basildon districts are the most deprived in the county, falling within the 38% most deprived districts nationally.

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Uttlesford remains the least deprived district in Essex, within the 3% least deprived areas nationally.

- The report *Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2007* can be found be following [this link](#).

## Geography

- Essex is large. It covers 1,300 square miles, bordering Suffolk and Cambridgeshire in the north, Hertfordshire in the west and four London Boroughs in the south. It also borders the North Sea and the Thames in the south.
- The county has a rich mixture of urban and rural environments: the abundance of green space, with almost three-quarters of the land being used for agriculture, contrasts with Essex also being home to four large towns with populations exceeding 100,000 (Basildon, Chelmsford, Colchester and Southend). The county boasts numerous national nature reserves, over 300 miles of coastline and over 75 sites of special scientific interest. Risks associated with flooding and coastal erosion are as prevalent in Essex as in other parts of East Anglia.
- The county is served by busy road and rail networks, London's third airport – Stansted; the developing London Southend Airport, and the international seaports of Harwich and Tilbury. The A12 trunk road, which runs through Essex, has recently been the subject of a public inquiry and the focus for much planned investment.
- The road and rail network in Essex already takes over half a million people to and from work every day. The volume of road traffic in the county is high (13,747 million vehicle kilometres per annum) and levels of car ownership are also high – 1.3 cars for every household compared to the national average of 1.1. Transport demand is projected to rise in the future across the country, and it is likely that increasing demands will be placed on the transport infrastructure in Essex, particularly if the proposed programme of housing development goes ahead in the county.

## Housing

- Over the next 25 years, Essex's total population could increase by 13%. The county will have to absorb some 175,000 additional residents – twice the population of Harlow. A clear challenge for Greater Essex will therefore be that of creeping urbanisation. Some districts are forecast to become as densely populated as Manchester is today.
- Reflecting this, Essex, Southend and Thurrock face mounting pressures in terms of the numbers of households required to cope with growth and may need to build up to 200,000 new dwellings in the next two decades.

Area	H'holds 2006	H'hold projection 2029	Difference
Essex	578,000	739,000	161,000
Southend	72,000	86,000	14,000
Thurrock	61,000	79,000	18,000
Total	711,000	904,000	193,000

- Housing affordability is still poor as compared to national levels – typical of the Greater South East. The longer term house price trend indicates that Essex house prices reflect the national picture (including a sharp fall in 2008), but continues to track consistently above the

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national average. The average house price for England and Wales is around £30,000 less than Essex, currently standing at £156,753 compared to Essex's £185,377.

## Economy

- **Essex** is 72% rural, predominantly in the north of the county. Consequently, our industry is largely limited to the south of the county, with the Thames Estuary having historical economic significance. Businesses in Essex are a mix of light engineering, logistics and the service sector. Electronics is a particularly important industry to Harlow and Chelmsford. Ford, Marconi and Britvic all have their roots in the county. The public sector is, typically, a significant employer, particularly in Chelmsford and Colchester reaps some economic benefit from being a garrison town.
- **Southend-on-Sea** follows a similar pattern, although the manufacturing, particularly advanced manufacturing, sector is more significant than in the Essex CC area.
- **Thurrock's** economy has a similar reliance upon employment in distribution and in public services, but there is also significant employment in 'transport and communications', underlining the importance of the logistics industry to the area.
- **Greater Essex** has around 54,300 VAT registered businesses, although these figures are facing some decline in the current circumstances.
  - There are over 45,500 VAT registered businesses in Essex, with the majority in the 'real estate, renting and business activities' sector.
  - Thurrock had 3,620 VAT registered businesses operating in 2007.
  - However, Southend has seen a decline over the past 3 years in VAT registered businesses and now has 5,185 operating in the area.
- The make up of Essex's businesses in terms of size is as follows:
  - **86.6%** have 1-10 employees.
  - **10.7%** have 11-49 employees.
  - **2.2%** have 50-199 employees and
  - just **0.5%** have 200 or more employees.
- Greater Essex's top 5 companies by turnover have a combined turnover in the order of £15m per annum.
- Greater Essex's top 5 companies by employee numbers employ a total of around 55,000 people. This does not include the public sector, as PCTs and councils are significant employers.
- A key document in this respect is the [Greater Essex Economic Framework](#).

## Employment

- Greater Essex's economy benefits from its proximity to London. Around 20% of Essex residents work in the capital, bringing wealth into the county through higher salaries and increased spending. This masks low levels of productivity within Essex itself.
- Essex's Gross Value Added per head – a measure of each resident's contribution to production – was £15,123 in 2005, significantly lower than both the regional and national average.





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- London's location in relation to Essex also masks the scarcity of local jobs within the county. In 2005 there were only 750 local jobs for every 1,000 people of working age in the county. This is despite the strong entrepreneurial spirit of Essex - the rates of self-employment and business start-ups in the Greater county are high. Maximising the opportunities associated with our proximity to London, while at the same time ensuring the people of Essex are able to make a positive contribution locally, is a challenging paradox.
- 78% of Essex's working age population are in employment.
- 72% of Essex residents work in Essex.
- 76% of Southend's working age population are employed and 62% of Southend of these work in Southend with a further 20% working in Essex and 15% commuting to work in London.
- 77% of Thurrock's working age population is employed and 57% of these residents work in Thurrock, with 11% working in Essex. 28% travel to London for work.

## Unemployment

- The latest unemployment figures indicate that the recession is hitting hard in Essex.
- Essex's Job Seekers Allowance unemployment figures for February 2009 reached 26,923 - up 4,225 (18.6%) on January's figure. This figure rises to 35,563 when we take into account the figures from Southend and Thurrock.
- JSA unemployment has doubled year on year - from 13,179 in February 2008. The majority of the increase has occurred in the last six months - rising 88.6% since August 2008.
- Whilst JSA figures do start from a relatively low level a year ago, these figures exclude at least 57,000 people on 'inactive' working age benefits (incapacity benefits and income support for lone parents) in the ECC area alone.

## Skills

- Essex, Southend and Thurrock compare very poorly, regionally and nationally on the levels of basic skills. This is a prime concern for the local economy and requires significant levels of investment from the public sector.
- In 2007, the Annual Population Survey uncovered that 14.4% of the working age population of the Essex CC area had no formal skills or qualifications at all. This figure is 11.7% in Southend, and 18.2% in Thurrock.
- By comparison, the England figure for people of working age with no qualifications is 12.9%.
- Whilst people in Essex are more likely to work and live in the same place than travel outside of the district boundary for employment, it is important to note that one fifth of Essex's working age residents work in London. This figure may relax slightly as the financial sector contracts, but as in other parts of the South East, we are always likely to be reliant upon London for job opportunities.

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3. Identify and draw together a reference list of the main data sources available on the socio-economic, environmental, etc. condition of the region, and recent trends.

- For the **ECC area**, recent policy and strategy has been formulated around the data analysis and assumptions contained within 'Essex Trends'. This document can be accessed through [this link](#).
- The Sustainable Community Strategies for **Thurrock** and **Southend**, set out their vision and ambitions for the future, providing long term road maps of how they aim to achieve this. The documents set out the current condition of the areas, including education and economy statistics:  
[http://www.thurrock-community.org.uk/lsp/pdf/sustain\\_strategy\\_2007\\_full.pdf](http://www.thurrock-community.org.uk/lsp/pdf/sustain_strategy_2007_full.pdf)  
<http://www.southend.gov.uk/resources/sustainablecommunitystrategy.pdf>
- The **East of England Economic Participation Study** Report provides a comprehensive statistical baseline showing economic participation levels in the East of England. The appendix contains specific economic indicators for Essex, Thurrock and Southend, detailing the levels of economic participation for that area:  
[http://www.eeda.org.uk/files/East\\_of\\_England\\_Economic\\_Participation\\_Study.pdf](http://www.eeda.org.uk/files/East_of_England_Economic_Participation_Study.pdf)  
[http://www.eeda.org.uk/files/LAA\\_Appendix\\_Final\\_Report.pdf](http://www.eeda.org.uk/files/LAA_Appendix_Final_Report.pdf)
- The **Local Needs Assessment** reports on resident learners in the Essex area, including key statistics in terms of demographics, economic activity, industrial profile and future population changes. It assesses young people's educational achievement, participation and demand for skills. It also looks at adult educational participation and rates of success:  
[http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/EastofEngland/LNA\\_Essex\\_08.pdf](http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/EastofEngland/LNA_Essex_08.pdf)
- Our **Skills Sector Reports** submitted by the LSC, and relevant to Greater Essex, provide a detailed analysis and assessment of key priority skill sectors for the region: Construction, Logistics, Retail, Hospitality, Manufacturing and Health & Social Care.  
[http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/EastofEngland/CONSTRUCTIONSectorEssex\(externalversion\).pdf](http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/EastofEngland/CONSTRUCTIONSectorEssex(externalversion).pdf)  
<http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/EastofEngland/LOGISTICSSectorEssex.pdf>  
<http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/EastofEngland/RETAILSectorEssex.pdf>  
<http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/EastofEngland/HOSPITALITYSectorEssex.pdf>  
<http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/EastofEngland/MANUFACTURINGSectorEssex.pdf>  
<http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/EastofEngland/HealthSocialCareSectorEssex.doc>

4. Summarise any existing efforts to monitor and benchmark progress against purposes and targets. Please comment on any interest in and pressure for the measurement of quality and outcomes, including value for money auditing, that you are aware of in the region. [It is hoped that the project will assist an understanding of what kinds of indicators and quantitative measures of regional development and the contribution of HEIs to this work and are useful.]

- All local authorities are regularly examined by government to establish value for money and the impact of our work on our communities. The clearest means by which to benchmark performance is through the Local Area Agreement process, where targets are agreed across all areas of an upper tier council's operation with a range of local partners and stakeholders. Essex's LAA is known to be the most all-encompassing LAA in the country due to the size of the county and the scale of the agenda.



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- All upper tier authorities are statutorily obliged to develop and measure themselves against an LAA, so in this context we are performing against three, viz. Essex, Southend and Thurrock. Local authorities and partners are statutorily bound to perform against targets from the National Indicator Set (NIS). Such targets are interspersed in LAA documents with other, more locally derived, targets.
- Essex, Southend and Thurrock's LAAs can be accessed here via the following three links:  
  
Essex County Council (accessed through the Essex partnership website)  
<http://www.essexpartnership.org/vip8/com/Community/dis/content.jsp?channelOid=18399>  
  
Southend-on-Sea Borough Council  
<http://www.southend.gov.uk/resources/051laa2008finalsept08.pdf>  
  
Thurrock Council  
[http://www.thurrock.gov.uk/community/pdf/laa\\_2007\\_final.pdf](http://www.thurrock.gov.uk/community/pdf/laa_2007_final.pdf)  
[http://www.thurrock.gov.uk/community/pdf/laa\\_2008.pdf](http://www.thurrock.gov.uk/community/pdf/laa_2008.pdf) (more up to date version).
- There is no single document that links Essex County Council's, Thurrock Council's and Southend-on-sea Borough Council's objectives. However all three have strategic frameworks which are regularly examined by government to establish value for money and the impact of our work on our communities. Local authorities and partners are statutorily bound to perform against targets from the National Indicator Set (NIS). Such targets are interspersed in LAA documents with other, more locally derived, targets.
- On the East of England level. EEDA is responsible for delivery against targets defined in the [Regional Economic Strategy](#).
- EssexWorks is ECC's strategic vision for the county with a very clear ambition: to deliver the best quality of life in Britain. This vision for Essex stems directly from the development of the [Essex Strategy](#) - an 'umbrella' document for the activities of all the key partners in Essex.
- EssexWorks is structured around three cross-cutting delivery programmes, with 'Putting our customers first' sitting over the entire programme as our most important priority. The three delivery programmes are:
  - Our People: policies and services which enable people to reach their potential and enhance residents' quality of life.
  - Our Economy: policies that invest in key services, provide better value for the county's taxpayers and enhance the county's infrastructure; and
  - Our World: policies which promote sustainability and ensure the county's physical environment is protected.
- The Council works proactively with partners and others to compare and evaluate. For example, ECC belong to the PricewaterhouseCoopers benchmarking club and have been working with a range of councils to pilot a value-for-money benchmarking initiative for waste and adult social care services. Within the Essex Partnership, ECC have established a Performance Management sub-group, chaired by the Assistant Chief Constable of Essex Police, which reports directly to the Essex Management Board, which helps to promote cross-organisational evaluation and action.
- On the economic development side, in 2006, InvestEssex was created as part of Essex Development and Regeneration Agency to drive this forward with the result that the number



of jobs created as a result of foreign direct investment rose from 23 jobs in 2006/7 to 393 in 2007/8.

- Similarly, both Southend-on-sea Borough Council and Thurrock Council both have Local Strategic Partnerships (LSP) - [Southend Together](#) and [Shaping Thurrock](#) which abide to the linked Sustainable Communities Strategies.
- Both Sustainable Community Strategies are then underpinned by the Local Area Agreements – the priority setting documents which were mentioned earlier.
- The University of Essex also follows its own key performance indicators, which are available through [this link](#).
- Local university progress along the innovation agenda is documented by Insight East, [here](#).

5. *List the main existing forms of collaboration between HEIs and the region. You may need to consider the region as a single administrative entity, but also note and include more localized and specialized significant HEI partnerships with other stakeholders - public, private, and NGO or third sector.*

- It is not common for HEIs and Greater Essex public sector agencies to work collaboratively on major projects. There are small examples, such as Essex County Council's programme for interns in the corporate policy team, which spun out of a successful partnership between ECC and the university specifically.
- ExDRA have been running 'Essex Innovation Programmes' with which institutions such as IfM are involved. The scheme works to create the best possible environment within Greater Essex that allows both new and existing businesses to exploit to the full potential of their new ideas and creativity.
- The work of Essex universities, relevant to the PURE agenda, is introduced below (please note that this list is not comprehensive):

### Anglia Ruskin University

- Anglia Ruskin's contribution to business is detailed in their corporate plan: [http://www.anglia.ac.uk/ruskin/en/home/your\\_university/about\\_anglia\\_ruskin/corporate\\_plan\\_2009-2011.html](http://www.anglia.ac.uk/ruskin/en/home/your_university/about_anglia_ruskin/corporate_plan_2009-2011.html)  
Within this, objectives 8 and 10 are particularly interesting and touch on knowledge exchange and employer and community engagement, including:
- **Higher Skills @ Work**  
This initiative at Anglia Ruskin University offers free consultancy to employers to establish the higher education skills that will help your employees and your business to prosper. [http://www.anglia.ac.uk/ruskin/en/home/central/higher\\_skills.html](http://www.anglia.ac.uk/ruskin/en/home/central/higher_skills.html)
- Anglia Ruskin University's 'Commercial Support' information is available via the following link: <http://www.anglia.ac.uk/ruskin/en/home/business.html>

### University of Essex

- Information on the university's Strategic Plan can be found on their website through the following link: <http://www.essex.ac.uk/about/strategic/default.aspx>

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- **Examples of collaboration include:**
  - The shared commitment to raise aspirations and enhance access to high quality higher education from part of the region with low participation. The university is involved in outreach and educational activity for example through AimHigher, to encourage applications from non-traditional groups and low participation postcodes.
  - Through its partnerships with FE/HE colleges, its campus in Southend, University Campus Suffolk and through the Thurrock Learning Campus, the University will continue to provide new HE opportunities in parts of the region with low participation and will lever demand for HE study by offering high quality programmes in areas of vocational relevance.
  - The university are active in exploring new vocational programmes in Health, Education and in the Creative Industries where the University has the expertise and the professional networks to help meet student and employer demand. New foundation degrees and work-based learning routes are intended to help provide new pathways to employment and to help meet skills shortages, especially in the NHS.
  - The university is in collaboration with Kaplan Online Learning and is now exploring new online, distance model which meets the needs of people in work, for whom attendance-based HE provision is not appropriate or accessible.
  - The University has a strong record of business engagement and support and has been particularly successful in achieving HE Innovation Fund (HEIF) support for leading and participating in collaborative regional and national knowledge transfer projects. It has established business innovation and business support centres in Southend which are set to expand as University of Essex Southend capital plans come to fruition. Plans for a 30-acre Research Park on the Colchester campus are progressing and planning permission has been granted.

## Writtle College

- Information on the Writtle College strategic vision can be found through accessing [this link](#).
  - The Schools and Colleges initiative, which is now in its seventh year, is designed to introduce school and college students to Writtle College and the range of further and higher education opportunities and ultimately careers that are available in specialist industries. Throughout the academic year, schools and colleges from across the region are invited to take part in a series of events and initiatives, related to art and design, sport, animals and equine, horticulture and floristry, agriculture, business, science and technology and the environment. All activities are linked closely to students' current curricular studies.
6. *If there are any examples of good practice in HEI-regional engagement that you think of special interest, perhaps for inclusion later in a PURE Good Practice Manual, please make a note of them to call to the attention of the CDG.*



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## Part 2

### 1. What are?

#### 1.1 The main problems and challenges?

#### 1.2 The main development aspirations that are shared by stakeholders in the region?

Please consider the full spectrum of civil, economic, social, cultural, and environmental factors, including issues of sustainability, where these apply.

In particular, what impact is the current global financial and economic crisis – and the global environmental crisis (global warming etc) - having on your thinking and long-term planning as a region and different stakeholders? What has really altered (or is changing) in your policy planning since one year ago?

**The main challenges faced by Essex stakeholders are addressed in the three LAA documents and have some basis in the regional framework offered by the Regional Economic Strategy. The ultimate problem in PURE's terms for Greater Essex is addressing the skills divide. All three LAA documents share this common theme.**

**ECC have developed 'EssexWorks' – a programme which gives us our corporate steer for the years to come. It is likely that many of these key areas are equally relevant to Southend and Thurrock, although they have their own operating styles and local priorities as defined by their LAAs an corporate plans, readily available on their respective websites.**

**For Essex, EssexWorks has ten priorities caught below an overarching aim to 'put the customer first'. These ten priorities are:**

#### **Our People**

- Increasing educational achievement and skills
- Promoting health and leisure
- Supporting vulnerable people

#### **Our Economy**

- Improving transport
- Promoting sustainable economic growth
- Delivering value for money

#### **Our World**

- Protecting the environment
- Reducing and recycling waste
- Making communities safer

### 2. What are the main changes that are looked for in taking part in PURE?

#### 2.1 For the region as a whole, and for particular communities and interests within it?

**To ensure that a stronger HEI / Local Authority partnership can start to address the significant skills deficit in Greater Essex, through promoting participation in higher education and demonstrating the increasing importance of having a strong skills set. We want to create an Essex where people enjoy a high quality of life and businesses want to be based – these two things are not mutually exclusive. By working more with HEIs to develop the best graduates in the subject matters that matter to local employers, we could**

at once retain our graduates in the county and provide our businesses with the highly skilled staff they need to survive in an increasingly competitive *international* market.

We need Essex businesses to be increasingly competitive in their own right and to address any hindrances to growth. We might then expect that Essex businesses will be better equipped to trade internationally and establish the international trading links that will be essential to their survival.

2.2 *Within and on the part of higher education institutions i.e. sought by the HEIs themselves, and looked for by other stakeholders from HEIs?*

We would be keen to secure the interest of the higher education institutions in sealing such a partnership.

2.3 *In terms of how regional and local government are managed?*

We expect that the most realistic impact that the project could have on the management of local government, would be for us to develop stronger partnerships with our colleagues in HEIs. We have already begun to acknowledge this through the development of a dedicated skills unit at Essex County Council. PURE could help us understand what an engagement strategy might look like. We should also take the opportunity to introduce the programmes developed by ExDRA to universities across the country, and seek relationships with universities with particular strengths in areas relevant to Essex's own economy. We have links with bodies such as IfM and Cranfield University and we hope the PURE project will be able to demonstrate the benefits of rolling these out further.

2.4 *In terms of the role and policies of central government?*

It would be useful for central government to explore what it could do to facilitate relationships between local authorities and higher education institutions which would be directly beneficial to the UK economy.

3. *What key issues do you wish to discuss with the CDG when it visits your region?*

- How we could work with Essex's HEIs to retain more graduates in Essex and reduce the 'brain drain' into London.
- What we could do to assist knowledge transfer and encourage closer working relationships between our local businesses and our HEIs.
- How we could increase the propensity of university spin outs and encourage our institutions to exploit their IP, creating economic value through transactions of all types and creating jobs for local people and local students.
- To determine the sectors with growth potential where it might be possible to accelerate the growth or, conversely, understand why we are poor performers in some sectors and identify what measures we could put in place to increase performance.
- Use international examples to uncover the very best examples of economic development arising from an Olympics and find out how we could work with HEIs to increase the positive financial impact of the Olympics on the business sector in Essex.



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- Help illustrate how useful an ECC-HEI strategy or joint prospectus of work could be.
- Do HEIs have a role to play in helping local authorities encourage their local businesses to trade internationally?
- Within this, how do we help local businesses to understand local markets and how could we help put these businesses in a position where they can better respond to the changes in their existing market areas?