

# **LONDON BOROUGH OF HAVERING**

*Shaping Growth and Delivering Opportunity*

**Havering's Inclusive Growth Strategy**

**2025 – 2030**

**V2.4 – 2025 Refresh**

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## Foreword from the Leader of the Council

Representing the very best of being both part of a global city and retaining an Essex spirit of independence and entrepreneurialism, Havering is a fantastic place to live, work or set up a business. Easy access to the city and the wider South East via the M25, relatively affordable housing, and a wealth of green and open space has made Havering an attractive haven for businesses and residents.

Thanks to our ambitious regeneration programme, as well as extensive support for local businesses and start-ups, we have already seen significant pay-offs in terms of growth. Regeneration is intricately linked to economic development, and we want to capitalise on that link by supporting businesses to locate and expand within the borough, and make sure our residents are the first to benefit from such growth with the wide range of jobs this will create.

As one of the most diverse boroughs in London in terms of our range of business bases – from cultural and creative industries to logistics, constructions and engineering – there has never been a better opportunity to demonstrate Havering as *the* place for your business needs.

We are proud of our business community, and have worked closely with them when putting this strategy together, in order to address the very real challenges facing businesses today.

This Inclusive Growth Strategy provides an analysis of Havering's economy, identifies the types of employment growth and locations for growth over the coming years, and sets out the Council's approach to inward investment and business support. The strategy also links to the regeneration programme, ensuring the large-scale developments generate social value, benefiting those that need it most.

We will also engage Central Government and the Mayor of London in order to facilitate the investment in infrastructure that is so critical to growth in Havering. It is going to take willingness from all the public agencies as well as the private sector, to achieve the growth and development that we all want to see for the benefit of residents and businesses over the coming years.

The Strategy identifies the tactical and operational interventions that the Council will take to facilitate growth, and the part that other agencies must play if we are to fulfil our bold ambitions. Over the coming years, Havering will lead the way in pursuing a prosperous future for businesses and residents, using innovative regeneration and development programmes to facilitate meaningful growth and an even brighter future for Havering.

**Councillor Ray Morgon**  
**Leader of the Council**

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## Executive Summary

Havering features high quality of life, award-winning parks and green space, and these attributes are attracting growing numbers of people and businesses to locate in the Borough. The opportunities for continuing growth in Havering are substantial. Over 18,900 new homes will be built in the Borough by 2031. The Elizabeth Line now supplements the already good rail links into Central London and to Heathrow. Town Centre regeneration will transform Romford back into a destination of choice, building on the growing creative and office-based business sectors. The potential for growth in housing and employment in Romford has led to its designation as an Opportunity Area in the London Plan. We will continue to review this strategy as external events emerge and consideration will be given to how Havering and its business community responds to the new working environment.

The Borough offers the advantages of a London location, alongside excellent road connections to the South East and the rest of the country. Rainham and Beam Park is part of the London Riverside Opportunity Area which includes extensive land in both Havering and adjoining Barking and Dagenham. The London Riverside Opportunity Area Planning Framework (2015) identifies that the wider area has the capacity to provide 26,500 new homes and 16,000 new jobs across the two boroughs. In Havering, the focus will be on the intensification of industrial land in the Rainham Employment Area and the creation of new residential communities served it is still hoped by a new railway station at Beam Park.

A comprehensive body of evidence was commissioned to inform the Council's approach, including an economic evidence base, a survey of 400 businesses, interviews with a wide range of local businesses and organisations, and stakeholder workshop discussions. The findings from the analysis of the evidence are that Havering has significant potential for additional investment and growth, but currently is projected to become a residential base for increasing numbers of commuters, with housing growth outstripping business growth.

The business base is diverse. Industrial sectors such as logistics, engineering, manufacturing and construction are important, as is retail, although this is vulnerable to the impact of online and other changes in shopping dynamics, and is likely to consolidate over the coming years. There are also a number of new sectors, growing rapidly - professional, scientific and technical, IT and creative. Health, education, and social care are the biggest employers. Productivity is relatively low, and despite good GCSE performance in the Borough's schools, skills levels post-16 are also low, and we will need to work to co-ordinate provision under the new Further Education (FE) reforms.

Romford will be the subject of intensive programmes of regeneration and housing development, improvements to the Market, the Ring Road, and the shopping centres. Romford's Business Improvement District will bring benefits to the local trading environment. This strategy complements and aligns with the Romford Masterplan which sets out a vision for Romford to maintain its strategic role within Havering, North East London and Essex over the period to 2041.

The Rainham Strategic Industrial Area has a diverse industrial base and, as part of the London Riverside Opportunity area, is part of one of the few remaining areas of this type in London. It serves the Borough well in providing a wide range of jobs for all skills levels. It has new workspace at SEGRO Park, and the Centre for Engineering and Manufacturing Excellence (CEME) at its core. Growth sectors such as construction and e-commerce are becoming increasingly significant. Its growth needs to be driven by high quality spaces, and connectivity through ultra-fast broadband, and multi-modal physical access. It provides low, medium and high skilled jobs and the opportunity to work close to relatively low cost housing and high quality green space. It benefits from established and collaborative partnerships with businesses through the successful Business Improvement District, and key business and agency partners.

The first of the strategy's priorities for action is providing the foundations for continued growth. Businesses need adequate transport and digital infrastructure and access to skilled labour to function efficiently and grow. Improvements in this infrastructure are needed, particularly in certain sectors and in the Rainham employment area. This strategy will complement the work of the Infrastructure Team within the Planning Service and recognises that infrastructure needed to support communities will also play a central role alongside infrastructure to support businesses.

The second priority for action is support for enterprise and innovation. Havering is a great place to start a business, and we will continue to encourage business startups through the Invest in Havering inward investment service. Subject to resources, we will target our business growth programme to support those businesses that want to develop and grow. We will also boost productivity through a new innovation support programme and working with key partners to develop sector-based innovation hubs. We will encourage and support the local construction sector through public sector supply chain initiatives to ensure local businesses can access opportunities to tender for contracts and benefit from development.

Our third priority is the delivery inward investment to the Borough. We recognise that Havering as a brand is not widely recognised and that winning investment will require us to partner with other stakeholders – with other London boroughs and London more broadly, and with Essex to the East - networked as we are with London and Partners, Local London and the Thames Freeport. Our inward investment work will make sure that Havering benefits from new investment from overseas companies, UK based companies outside of the Borough and also from local occupiers that choose to expand within the Borough where decision are made elsewhere – so-called 'investor development'. We need to seize opportunities as they arise by carefully marshalling our partners and the unique advantages of our programmes and location. We will work with our partners more effectively to maximise the potential benefits of technological changes within public and private sectors. The development of health technologies, for example is particularly important given the size of the health and care sectors in the Borough in the context of the 10-year plan of the NHS to migrate from analogue to digital delivery. We will improve our marketing and promotion through our website and promotion activity and our enquiry handling, and co-ordinate activity with our partners. We will also work more effectively with commercial agents in



London as well as maintaining our links with those in the Borough. We will target key sectors for investment, and identify mechanisms to incentivise investment where possible.

The fourth priority for action is support for boosting our key growth locations through regeneration. Romford is the location for a Business Improvement District, and will be the focus for major regeneration and development, as well as improvements to the trading environment and infrastructure. Expanding on its role as a major retail centre, we will turn Romford into a major new destination, and support the growth of professional, creative and IT industries. Similarly we will support the creation of a Business Improvement District in Hornchurch and continue to support the established industrial Business Improvement District at London Riverside in Rainham. We will support Upminster, Elm Park, Harold Hill, Collier Row and Rainham Village centres by strengthening existing businesses, and encouraging diversification. The Rainham Strategic Industrial Area will become a highly competitive industrial location with a strong partnership of agencies working with the business community. Together they will enhance infrastructure, innovate, improve productivity, and provide the right training to residents to put them in the best position to access the area's jobs. New, focused partnerships with businesses and agencies will be the key to achieving our ambitions in both these areas, and across the Borough.

# 1. Shaping growth and delivering opportunity

## 1.1 Vision and ambition

Havering is London's big opportunity. We are proud of the Borough's heritage, and the new developments coming on stream will open a new chapter in Havering's story. With our culture and leisure offer, easy links into London and the wider South-East, high quality homes, extensive town centre regeneration programmes and our award-winning parks and open spaces, ***Havering will be an even better place to live, work and visit.***

As we deliver that vision we are committed to the benefits of growth being shared equitably by all, and that the opportunity to participate is available to all. This is why this strategy claims to be 'inclusive'. Inclusion though cannot be just a hope or a wish; to be real we need to make positive choices to grasp opportunity not just for those easiest to include but also those furthest from sharing in growth. Inclusion is attitudinal. The Council has set out its priorities within its corporate plan, and is seeking to provide its existing and new residents with vibrant culture and leisure facilities, and thriving town centres. The strategy will complement private housing development across the borough and the Council's housing regeneration programmes including the 12 Estates Regeneration programme which will deliver 3,500 new homes into the Borough in the period to 2035.

The Inclusive Growth Strategy will translate these priorities into actions that will secure its vision. We will support sustainable economic growth that generates local wealth and opportunities, as well as securing investment in high-quality skills and careers.

We want to capitalise on our location with fast and accessible transport links into Central London, Essex and the South East, and the world. These include the M25, A12, A13 and A127 and rail links including the Great Eastern Mainline railway (GEML), Essex Thameside line (the C2C), London Overground, TfL Rail, the London Underground District Line and the Elizabeth Line. There will be improved public transport access to Central London via the Lower Thames Crossing, the new railway station at Beam Park and the Superloop bus service linking residents to employment opportunity. Within the Borough we want improved local accessibility, including north-south routes and into the Rainham Strategic Industrial Location. We will continue to improve digital connectivity for businesses as well as residents. Enhancing our connections will strengthen the Borough's offer as a business hub.

This vision provides the framework for the Inclusive Growth Strategy. The Council has set up joint venture development companies in order to contribute to the achievement of significant housing growth. We are committed to a major transformation of Romford through delivery of the now finalised masterplanning process, restructuring of the ring road and Market Place, and with our partners will also see improvements to the town centre through the now established Romford Business Improvement District and the redevelopment and improvements to the shopping centres.

The Inclusive Growth Strategy provides the mechanism to match the growth in the population with business and employment growth. To complement that, the Inclusive Growth Strategy sets out how the Council can achieve:

- A higher profile for the Borough with the business community, potential investors, government and partners; and,
- A more diverse and sustainable economic environment with increased footfall in Romford and other town centres.

## 1.2 Opportunity for growth

Havering will undergo significant change over the coming decade with major regeneration programmes, improvements to infrastructure and an expected 18,900 new homes to be built by 2031. The resulting population growth will increase local spending power, and the attractiveness of the Borough as a business location, but the Council also wants to support the growth of the local economy, to provide more jobs and improve productivity. This will help to maintain and improve the opportunities available in the area, and counter the increasing need for our residents to commute into Central London to work.

Havering's strategic industrial locations are key economic assets. The Borough has strengths in transport and distribution, construction, and the traditional sectors of manufacturing and engineering, and new sectors including professional, scientific and tech sectors are growing strongly. The borough has the advantage of being within London with proximity to Europe alongside excellent road connections to the south east and the rest of the country.

The Borough is also supporting growth in its town centres although the scale of growth varies across the town centres – Romford, Hornchurch, Upminster, Elm Park, Harold Hill, Rainham Village, and Collier Row - which provide a location for businesses as well as providing local services for our communities. Romford is recognised in the London Plan as a Metropolitan Centre and has the potential to be a main destination for shoppers and visitors. The ambition for Romford is that through planned regeneration and development it becomes a focus for the growth of professional, tech and creative businesses within Havering.

Those areas that have a long-term vision, and implement programmes designed to encourage investment, will have a better chance of harnessing the impact of wider social and economic changes. Havering has that vision, and strong local partnerships, and we will secure the economic future over the Borough through our actions over the coming years.

## 1.3 A Note on Baseline Data

The development of this strategy has been undertaken over many months and to a large extent our proposals are based on baseline data gathered in 2017 which itself may rely on primary data from earlier periods. In reviewing the strategy we gave careful consideration to whether it might be appropriate to bring this baseline data up to date but took the view

that the impact of the referendum to leave the EU has had a destabilising effect on many of the measures upon which we comment, and thus any revised data might be considered to be less reliable than the previous 'steady-state' analysis to which it is not unreasonable to suppose that in time we will in future return. Commissioning further studies in order to generate more 'up to date' data is therefore considered not necessary. The strategy will remain under constant review.

In refreshing this strategy in 2025 the Council remains unconvinced that recent statistics can be meaningfully extrapolated to inform better its policy choices with global instability caused by conflict in Ukraine, Iran, and Israel. It is recognised that this position may not be shared by all but has also to be read in the context of the very high cost of such analysis especially in the case of new primary research.

## 2. Economic and policy context

There is considerable uncertainty about the future of the UK economy, and growth forecasts remain relatively modest. It is worth noting some of the external factors that are likely to impact on the prospects for growth for Havering businesses over the coming years.

### 2.1 Immediate and long-term economic trends

PWC in their July 2024 economic outlook predicted UK growth was forecast to improve from 1% in that year to 1.7% in 2025. It was anticipated that growth would accelerate yet further in 2026 with the UK's ranking among the G7 nations to be in third place behind the US and Canada.

The retail sector is experiencing continuing structural change with the inexorable rise of online shopping, and the consumer desire for a shopping experience being catered for within a smaller number of major centres. Continuing technological changes, especially in the context of COVID, will continue to transform business and societies, enabling increases in productivity, but eliminating jobs in some areas. Unless society, and the people working in these industries, are able to adapt by gaining new skills and/or using their time in a different way, their incomes will be seriously impacted.

These issues raise a number of potential priorities for the Council, including supporting increased productivity within local businesses, and rethinking skills infrastructure. We need to recognise the significance of health and social care both for the ageing population and because of the scale of employment in that sector. As Havering and the rest of the country learn lessons from its vulnerability to economic and pandemic shocks, the council needs to support the local economy and business community to be resilient in the face of national and global economic upheaval.

### 2.2 Industrial Strategy

Productivity improvements are central to current Government policy. The Government's Industrial Strategy <sup>1</sup> seeks to improve living standards and economic growth by increasing productivity and driving growth across the country. It emphasizes the need to improve productivity and support key growth sectors where there is a comparative advantage. It also emphasizes the need to close the gap between the most and least productive places in the country.

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<sup>1</sup> Invest 2035: the UK's Modern Industrial Strategy, Building a Britain fit for the future, HM Government, 2024 <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/invest-2035-the-uks-modern-industrial-strategy/invest-2035-the-uks-modern-industrial-strategy>

### 2.3 The London policy context

The Mayor of London has adopted the 2021 London Plan, which provides the framework for London's growth and development. The London Riverside Opportunity Area Planning Framework (2015) identifies capacity for 26,500 new homes and 16,000 new jobs across Havering and Barking and Dagenham. In Havering, the focus will be on the intensification of industrial land in the Rainham Employment Area and the creation of new residential communities at Rainham and Beam Park. The scope for this is as a result of the provision of a new station at Beam Park and the opportunity to provide space for essential local services.

The Mayor's economic development strategy for London<sup>2</sup> aims to support the conditions for growth through providing employment space, digital and transport infrastructure, education and entrepreneurship. It identifies sectors where growth offers opportunities to achieve the vision. These are advanced urban services (eg architecture, engineering, property), cultural and creative industries, finance and business services, life sciences, low carbon and environmental goods and services, technology and digital industries, and tourism.

Employment growth, productivity and resilience in Havering is an integral and important component of the overall growth of London and the national economy. As such it is in the interests of regional and national governments to ensure that the infrastructure to support that growth is in place.

### 2.4 Havering Adopted Local Plan

Havering adopted the Local Plan (2016-2031) in November 2021. The Adopted Local Plan identifies both Romford and the Rainham and Beam Park area as 'Strategic Development Areas' which are the main areas for accommodating Havering's growth over the plan period to 2031. Both areas have been identified as Opportunity Areas within the London Plan and have Housing Zone status. The plan states that the Council places a very high priority on ensuring that Havering has a prosperous economy. The Plan's Spatial Strategy includes a number of objectives for the borough including protecting and enhancing employment across the Borough. The Local Plan is underpinned by the infrastructure delivery plan and references are made in the plan to improving the north south connectivity issue in the borough between Romford and Rainham.

In particular it identifies the following objectives:

- Regeneration of Romford Town Centre, providing a more diverse and higher quality retail, leisure, cultural and employment offer. The Romford Town Centre Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document was adopted in March 2025.
- Directing an appropriate scale of retail, culture, service industries and office development to the Borough's network of town centres

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<sup>2</sup> The Mayor's economic development strategy for London, draft for consultation Dec 2018  
<https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/business-and-economy/economic-development-strategy>

- Protection of the Borough's Strategic Industrial Locations (SIL) (Rainham Employment Area, Harold Hill Industrial Area, King George Close Estate and Freightmaster Estate) for continued industrial use
- Protection of the Borough's Locally Significant Industrial Sites (LSIS) (Harold Wood, Hillman Close, Lyon Road and Crow Lane) for continued industrial and employment use, with the Seedbed centre being proposed for mixed development.
- Intensification and modernisation of the Borough's designated industrial areas to optimise the use of the land and support transformational new developments which maximises the economic benefits for the Borough

### 3. Evidence and Issues for the Strategy

Within the policy context set out above, a comprehensive body of evidence has informed the content of the Strategy. This includes:

- An evidence base commissioned from SQW and BBP consultancies, on the local economy and labour market – February 2018
- A survey of 400 businesses, commissioned from BMG in 2018
- Interviews with a wide range of local businesses and organisations, along with discussions with Council service providers
- Stakeholder workshop discussions

The key issues emerging from the evidence and conclusions informing the Strategy are set out below.

#### 3.1 The local economy and business base

Havering's economic position needs to be understood as a function of its geographical location on the eastern boundary of London forming a bridge into greater Essex, and its historical development as one of the key industrial bases in the region. Studies and policies underpinning this document include the employment land review and leisure studies that were prepared for the local plan.

Havering has seen substantial growth over the last twenty years in terms of employment, business stock and population (including the working age population). These trends relate to the expansion and increasing national dominance of the London economy, and notwithstanding the current economic uncertainty, are expected to continue in the years to come.

Havering's population grew from 224,248 in 2001 to 276,300 in 2024<sup>3</sup> and based on current trends, the population is projected to grow to almost 278,000 by 2037<sup>4</sup>. While the working-age population rose by 12% between 2001 and 2016<sup>5</sup>, the Borough has more recently seen faster growth among other older and younger age groups since 2008. The implication is that dependency ratios are increasing, which could pose increasing challenges for the Council in the future, and also means that the pattern of demand for local services are likely to change in the future.

The Borough's ethnic diversity is also increasing. The proportion of the population of the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) heritage grew from 16.7% to 25.4% between 2011

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<sup>3</sup> ONS Census and Population Estimates

<sup>4</sup> GLA 2022 Demographic Projections

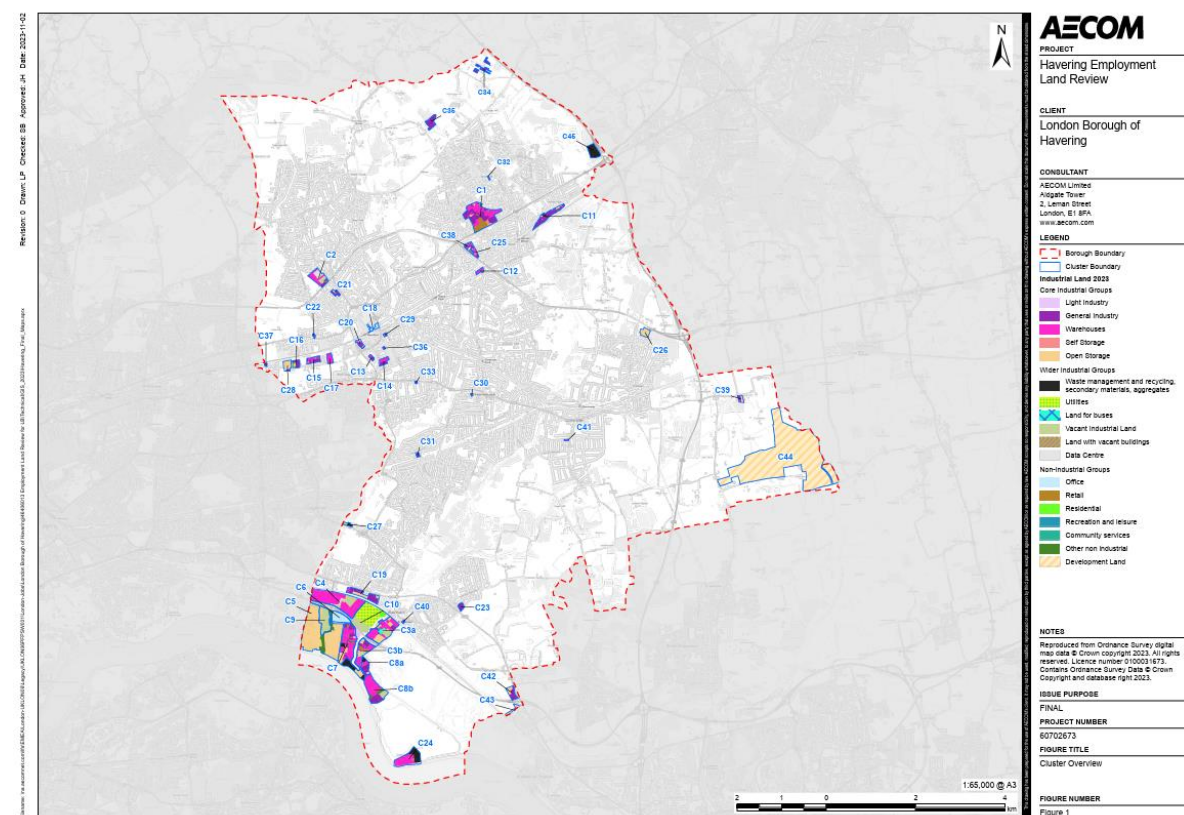
<sup>5</sup> GLA Population Projections



and 2021 and is forecast to grow yet further to 29.5% by 2030<sup>6</sup> however Havering is expected to remain significantly less diverse than many other London boroughs. National Insurance number registrations suggest there also has been an increase in the EU-born population, especially from Eastern Europe<sup>7</sup>.

The main business locations in Havering are shown in the figure below. The largest industrial locations are at Rainham Riverside and in Romford, with other industrial areas around the Borough including Harold Hill. The business base has grown quickly since 2010, from 6,700 enterprises then to 10,325 in 2024<sup>8</sup>, largely. This growth is largely among small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

#### Havering Employment Land Review (Nov 2023)



Link to ELR 2023: <https://www.havering.gov.uk/planning-3/planning-policy/15>

Growth has been particularly strong among firms in the professional/scientific/technical sector, where numbers have risen by 75%, and information/communications, where numbers grew by 96% (and creative, a cross-cutting sector, where numbers more than doubled)<sup>9</sup>. Construction, the largest sector in terms of business numbers also grew strongly

<sup>6</sup> Havering JSNA 2024

<sup>7</sup> Department for Work & Pensions, National Insurance Number Registrations of Overseas Nationals, Borough and MSOA

<sup>8</sup> ONS UK Business Counts, 2024

<sup>9</sup> ONS UK Business Counts, 2017

(+35%). By contrast, other sectors saw modest growth in business numbers. Examples include retail, which saw a 6% growth in enterprise numbers, and manufacturing (10%).

The sectors in which the Borough's jobs are distributed provides a different picture of the local economy. The biggest sectors in terms of jobs are health (13,000 employee jobs), retail (10,000), education (8,000), business administration and support (8,000), and construction (7,000)<sup>10</sup>. Professional, scientific and technical (4,500 employee jobs), and information and communications (2,250), were both more modest sources of employment. However, these areas are now growing rapidly, and have the potential to support the growth of new, office-based industries in the Borough, and particularly in Romford.

Productivity in Havering stands at 78% of the London average, although 106% of the England average<sup>11</sup>. This is reflected in lower wages for people working in the Borough than the London average. However, the majority of Havering residents commute out of the Borough to work. They commute principally to neighbouring boroughs with many commuting into Central London, and bringing home higher wages than they would obtain in Havering<sup>12</sup>.

The employment rate in Havering is (December 2023) very high, at 81.6% having fallen from 85.4% the previous year, and unemployment correspondingly low<sup>13</sup>. However, despite the good schools, adult qualification levels in Havering are relatively low. This reflects at least in part, the industrial heritage of the Borough, as well as a perception that formal qualifications are unimportant. Those achieving top grades at A level are only half the average proportion for the country<sup>14</sup>. Occupations of residents are becoming increasingly polarised, with higher numbers in professional occupations, but also higher numbers in service occupations. This is likely to become an increasing trend, and its social implications could be exacerbated unless the skills system is able to support more people to increase their skills levels.

### 3.2 Business Survey

The BMG business survey results from 2018 show that businesses in Havering are positive about their prospects. 40% of businesses at the time of the survey were trading as expected with 33% stating that they were trading reasonably or extremely well, with a similar number expecting improvements over the subsequent 12 months. Businesses in Rainham are most likely to have taken on additional staff and be aiming to grow further in the coming year. However, transport infrastructure is cited as the most significant barrier to growth. Half of businesses had not provided any training for staff. Yet 40% of businesses recruiting find that applicants don't have the required level of skills. There is a considerable amount of local trading amongst the Borough's businesses, and nearly one third are considering moving over

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<sup>10</sup> ONS Business Register and Employment Survey: open access, 2016

<sup>11</sup> SQW Analysis of ONS Jobs Density 2015, ONS Regional GVA (Income Approach) by Local Authority in the UK, 2015 and ONS Sub-regional Labour Productivity: Nominal (smoothed) GVA per filled job (£): NUTS 3 sub-regions, 2015

<sup>12</sup> ONS Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings

<sup>13</sup> ONS Annual Population Survey 2024

<sup>14</sup> Department for Education, A level and other 16-18 results (provisional): 2016/17 - Local Authority and regional level tables

the next 12 months. It is recognised that significant time has now passed and as a result the weight attached to this historic feedback has been reduced.

### **3.3 Business and agency views**

There were a number of strong messages provided by partners during the consultation interviews and workshop discussions. In summary these were:

- Havering is a good place to invest, with low property prices and the Elizabeth Line enhancing access, but the Council should protect office space and encourage better quality
- The Council should facilitate the development of grow-on space for existing businesses and inward investors, and a wider offer, including culture and leisure
- The Council should be more flexible on changing from retail uses in South Street
- The environment around Romford Station is a key gateway into the town centre and needs improving
- The market should provide a broader and more attractive offer
- In Rainham the Council should co-ordinate work with partners on intensifying and marketing sites; and consider which types of businesses we want to attract
- Transport routes north-south need improving – particularly into and around the Rainham SIL area
- The Council should identify ways of providing opportunities for local businesses through supply chain and procurement interventions

There is enormous support from the business community, and across public sector partners who are keen to work with the Council on achieving these improvements.

### **3.4 Key issues arising from the evidence**

Havering has experienced significant population and employment growth in recent years, and its industrial structure is changing, with the growth of service industries and in particular creative industries. As sectors of the economy will be affected by economic changes in different ways, and the implications vary for particular places across the Borough, sector dynamics and place issues need to feature in the Strategy. Population growth is projected to grow at a faster rate than employment growth.

#### ***Havering has a need to deliver additional homes to support economic growth***

Havering is experiencing significant development pressure and there is a need to increase the supply of housing to meet the demands of the growing population. The London Plan sets a 10 year minimum housing target for Havering of 11,701 new homes between 2015 and 2025 (1,170 per annum). The Adopted Havering Local Plan sets out how this target will be met and commits to the delivery of at least 17,551 new homes between 2016 and 2031 including over 6,000 new homes in the Romford Strategic Development Area and over 3,000 new homes in the Rainham and Beam Park Development Area.

The Council is committed to ensuring that residents have access to high quality, affordable new homes. The emerging Local Plan requires 35% of new homes to be affordable.

***Romford must make significant improvements to its offer, the provision of commercial space, and the overall trading environment in order to realise its potential as a diverse and thriving metropolitan town centre***

Romford has seen the loss of around 118,144 sq ft of office space under permitted development rules as office space has been converted for residential use. Romford has become over-reliant on the retail sector, which is facing major restructuring due to the growth of online shopping. It needs to improve its offer and its appearance. Although there is a real opportunity to attract creative businesses and other new sectors, Romford doesn't have the high quality, flexible, serviced business space that businesses want. Romford has the potential to benefit from its accessibility to Central London and its relatively low commercial property costs. It is the focus for the projected growth in offices in the Borough, cannot realise this growth without an increased supply of appropriate space. It is clear from the evidence that major improvements are required to make Romford an attractive destination. This needs to include improvements to Market Place, a better offer in South Street, transformation of the area around the station to provide the gateway to Romford, and fit for purpose office accommodation as part of mixed-use schemes. The market will need to operate differently in order to respond to changing demand.

***Smaller town centres are relatively healthy, but are increasingly vulnerable to continuing change in retail***

The district centres of Hornchurch, Upminster, Elm Park, Harold Hill, Collier Row and Rainham Village all provide important local service and retail centres for local residents, as well as a base for many independent retailers. Regular health checks are undertaken and we know that despite relatively healthy performance to date, in the future they will need to develop a broader offer and adapt to new circumstances. This should include continuing to develop the retail offer, and promote cultural assets such as the Queen's Theatre and other arts centres as part of the Borough's cultural and creative offer. There are few development opportunities in these town centres but it will be important to take any opportunities that arise to consolidate retail functions and promote alternative uses including leisure and providing business space possibly as part of mixed-use schemes. The town centres also have the potential for residential development which may help to support the delivery of innovative mixed use developments that provide flexibility and support for start-ups and existing microbusinesses. Research has shown that 95% of UK businesses are microbusiness and most are or have been run from the owner's home. They generate a third of all employment and a fifth of all turnover (Reuschke & Houston - 2016 - Microbusinesses and the city). The COVID pandemic resulted in more home working and with the delivery of new homes in Romford and Beam Park in Rainham there is the potential to support the delivery of new housing/working typologies to support start-ups and existing new businesses.

### *Havering has significant potential for additional investment and growth*

Havering has key locational advantages, which are often under-sold. The access to Central London and the M25, combined with relatively low land values relative to inner London, make Havering an ideal location for a wide range of industrial activities, and increasingly now also professional and creative firms. The availability of relatively low cost housing and access to open space make it an attractive residential location for people moving into the Borough. London Riverside SIL, along with the other industrial areas in the Borough, is both protected and supported by the GLA for development. Major regeneration programmes are taking place across the Borough, and will provide increased opportunities for new and existing communities and businesses including potentially the build out of the East Havering Datacentre Campus subject to LPA approval

### *Jobs growth is not keeping up with projected housing and population growth*

The Council is committed to housing regeneration through a coordinated strategy that promotes sustainable development with the correct balance of services that a growing population needs. However, it does not want to become a dormitory for London commuters. It is proud of its heritage as an industrial location and high profile market town, and of its close work over the years with, and in support of, the business community. To ensure continuing high levels of employment in the Borough, the Council's ambition is to increase the rate of employment growth over and above that forecast by the GLA to match its population growth rate.

### *Havering is still a key location for London's remaining manufacturing, logistics, engineering and construction industries, but infrastructure is a barrier to growth*

Havering has 442.8 ha of employment land, with 320.6 ha allocated as Strategic Industrial Locations. Much is functioning very effectively and providing a location for these industries, along with waste and motor trades for example, that benefit from its access to the national as well as London road networks, relatively low land values, and the availability of reasonable quality premises. The majority of the land in Rainham SIL is open storage and has the potential to be used more intensively. Significant areas are vacant despite the strong demand for premises, raising questions about the match between demand and supply. The industries in these areas provide a good range of employment, and are an increasingly important source of business rates. Existing occupiers and land-owners are seriously concerned about the quality of digital and transport infrastructure, which are acting as barriers to growth. If it is not possible for staff to access the area, businesses will be unable to locate or expand in the area.

### *Havering has a diverse business base, comprising sectors with different support requirements*

**Industrial sectors such as Logistics, Engineering, Manufacturing** – which have not demonstrated recent growth, but remain the foundation of the Borough's industrial base.

These businesses need to be supported to intensify land use and increase employment, as well as to upskill staff and innovate in order to improve productivity levels

**Construction** – a major sector for Havering, with potential to link into the regeneration programmes across the Borough

**Retail** – vulnerable to the impact of online shopping, and likely to consolidate over the coming years, meaning that as well as supporting existing independent retailers to increase their resilience, different approaches to supporting town centres are required. The decline of many household names has affected the high street and suggests a change in shopping habits. Often these retail business were also significant employers and their decline may have an effect on employment levels throughout the borough.

**New growth sectors** - professional, scientific and technical, IT and creative – growing, locating in Romford, but lacking appropriate office space; creative industries need support to grow, and connections to local markets and support services. The potential for the delivery of the East Havering Datacentre presents the biggest opportunity for growth across these sectors offering bring potentially 1800 job opportunities.

**Health, education, social care** - the biggest employers – and sectors with potential for strategic alliances to increase technology and higher education presence in the Borough; and to collaborate in up-skilling, recruitment and retention of staff. Health and social care integration, and the need to develop a sustainable social care market are critical sector change requirements over the coming years, and will also impact on labour market demand. The 10-year NHS Plan offers opportunity to link existing health expertise with tech growth as it moves from analogue to digital offers.

### *Productivity is relatively low*

Productivity is low compared with the London average. The presence of the London Riverside Business Improvement District and other partners in the area including the GLA and SEGRO, the New City College Group and the Centre for Engineering and Manufacturing Excellence (CEME) will provide the basis for an increased emphasis on increased innovation and productivity improvements as well as support for business growth.

### *Tackling disadvantage*

The challenge for Havering is making its case for investment for government funding. Havering has relative wealth and is without the same scale of disadvantage (in terms of numbers of people affected) as other areas within its devolved sub-region. Despite this, there are areas of the Borough in which residents experience multiple forms of disadvantage. There are many unknowns about the future, but we fully recognise the now established negative impact of the London housing market and low value employment sectors in the Borough (like others) on the cost of living and homelessness.

Combined, and if left unaddressed, these factors will inevitably create greater polarisation and inequity between wealth and disadvantage, and leave those already stuck in long term

unemployment or poor quality jobs further behind. Ultimately it will also sustain increased demand on Council services and budgets in the short and longer term.



## 5. Priority For Action 1 - Foundations for growth

### 5.1 Transport Infrastructure

One of the key attractions of business locations in Havering is the connectivity provided by its strategic transport connections and routes. However, it is clear from the evidence that transport infrastructure improvements are needed to enable business growth. The lack of north-south connections between Rainham and Beam Park, Romford, Collier Row and Harold Hill, and in particular the almost complete absence of public transport routes within the Rainham SIL is a key barrier to growth. Lack of public transport in the London Riverside Business Improvement District (BID) area is a key problem for many businesses in terms of staff recruitment and retention. The Council is developing proposals for remodelling the A1306 through the Beam Parkway scheme this will be in conjunction with Transport for London (TfL) and dependent on funding from them. The Council also supports the proposals developed by the London Riverside BID in relation to electric vehicle charging points.

The Romford Ring Road is a barrier to accessing the town centre from the neighbouring housing areas in particular for pedestrians and cyclists. It also gets heavily congested, particularly at the weekend with shoppers trying to access the main car parks in the town centre. The Liveable Neighbourhoods scheme is a key part of our response to tackling the Ring Road barrier again this initiative will be in conjunction with TfL and reliant upon funding from them.

The level of growth forecast to be delivered in East London generally and in Havering over the next 10 years is expected to put additional pressures on the local and strategic highway network. The Lower Thames Crossing will afford opportunities for Havering and the wider South East of England and address these issues to an extent.

Though the pressure on the local and strategic highway network will remain and this issue will need to be addressed with strategic partners such as Transport for London as well as neighbouring local authorities outside the GLA boundary. Havering will continue to work closely with Transport for London because of the key role that it has had in ensuring that the growth envisaged in the London Plan for East London and, in particular, London Riverside, can be accommodated on the existing network or with specific interventions.

Improvements in transport infrastructure are a key requirement for employment as well as housing growth, and continuing to push for them is therefore a key priority for the Strategy.

### 5.2 Digital Infrastructure

The Council recognises the growing importance of the need for modern, effective communications systems to serve local residents and businesses and their crucial role in both the national and local economy. The benefits of enhanced digital connectivity are far reaching with wider access to broadband not only encouraging local enterprise, but also



paving the way for flexibility so residents can work from home, save on transport costs and reduce congestion.

Our Strategic Industrial Areas including the London Riverside BID area suffer from very poor digital connectivity, which does not enable proper functioning in a modern business environment, particularly in industries that need to develop and innovate, as in engineering, manufacturing, logistics and construction. Businesses consistently report problems with digital infrastructure. Providing ultra-fast broadband is a key priority, particularly within the Rainham SIL where there have been consistent complaints from the business community about digital connectivity. The first steps towards implementing improvements have now been made through the use of funding secured by the Borough and Local London partner boroughs.

We will also explore other potential improvements appropriate to the business environment there and elsewhere in the Borough, and in particular the potential to secure access to 5G. In order to maximise the innovation potential of the area, we aim to future-proof the area by early adoption of hyperfast or gigabit broadband speeds where the opportunity arises, and we will seek to secure these improvements through the Council's Digital Strategy. In the context of the fast pace of technological development, and the high levels of market penetration of mobile data, we no longer feel that town centre Wi-Fi delivery represents a good use of public funds.

### **5.3   Workspace**

We will promote opportunities for start-up and small enterprises by expecting commercial and mixed-use schemes to provide a minimum of 10% of its floorspace as affordable workspace within the Borough's network of town centres, and employment areas. This will be a mechanism to strengthen local growth sectors and enable local people to thrive. The Council intends to use affordable workspace as a key driver to support a flourishing local economy, and the provision and preservation of affordable and suitable workspaces that can easily be sub-divided for different uses will increase the opportunities for small business which are essential to Havering's economic vitality and a catalyst for regeneration. In common with other local authorities, we will encourage the development of suitable commercial and industrial workspace.

## **6. Priority For Action 2 - Enterprise and Innovation**

### **6.1 Business starts**

Haverling is a good place to start a business – it was the Start-up Capital of Britain in 2015<sup>15</sup>. Supporting business starts and encouraging incubation space has been a core element of the Council's business support programme. It will continue to be an element of future programmes, while support for businesses with potential for high growth becomes increasingly important. We want to make sure that we have a diverse business base across the economy, and will ensure our support programmes help to achieve that. We need to balance the need to build of pipeline of companies with the potential to grow, with the very much higher cost of supporting early growth opportunities – companies with around 10 employees offer opportunity for growth at much lower support cost.

### **6.2 Business support and growth**

Many businesses are content to maintain their current level of trading into the future. In the current uncertain economic climate, we want to encourage businesses to consider their growth potential and diversification into new technology, and to access the advice and support that would help them to achieve it. The business survey identified a number of priorities, and we are also aware that bespoke and specialist advice is often critical for growth businesses. We want to make sure that we are able to help businesses access specialist advice (such as business finance, marketing and exporting) where this is needed.

### **6.3 Innovation and productivity**

Logistics, engineering, manufacturing and construction firms are all experiencing major competitive challenges, and are the focus of significant information, data and AI developments. Increasing productivity through innovation and training is essential for the Borough to maintain and grow its key industrial sectors.

We need to make sure that we access the benefits of wider developments and technological enhancements in these sectors, and promote them across our business community. We will continue to work with CEME, to support provision for early stage and growing businesses.

### **6.4 Business networks and engagement**

A large proportion of small businesses in Haverling rely on trade within the Borough. Business to business trading can be promoted by the Council with its business networks, and we will focus on this and on ensuring that local businesses can access public sector supply chains. This will include improving information, advice and access to contracts. Local trade networks are particularly important for the emerging cultural and creative industries. We

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<sup>15</sup> Experian Start-up Capital of Britain 2015

will help connect these businesses to local markets and support services. In construction, where the potential for links into the regeneration programmes could be particularly beneficial for the sector, and networking and information opportunities will be developed.

## 6.5 Sector Development

Havering is home to over 10,000 enterprises, provides 11,100 commercial units, and 92,000 jobs<sup>16</sup>.

The key employment sectors in Havering are Construction, Health, Retail, Tech, Professional, and Scientific.

### *Construction*

The Construction sector remains Havering's largest sector. It grew substantially between 2010 and 2017<sup>17</sup> and this growth is expected to continue over the next decade due to Havering's ambitious regeneration programme. With availability of industrial land at affordable prices, Havering has strong competitive advantages for the construction sector.

### *Health*

The Health sector is a vital market for Havering and the leading sector by employment due to Queen's Hospital being located in Romford. It is a premier acute hospital providing complex care and specialist services for the population of North East London and Essex. The Borough has the largest population of people aged 65 and over in London – and we are committed to working with providers to develop a stimulating, diverse and active market ensuring that our residents needs continue to be met.

### *Finance and Professional Services*

Romford is Havering's key hub for office-based employment and is home to over three quarters of the Borough's Class B1 Business property. The majority of this is concentrated within the Romford old office quarter, mainly in the Western Road and Eastern Road areas, which despite being conveniently located in close proximity to the town's main line railway station and major bus interchange facilities, has suffered under the Government's Permitted Development Rights and is now a mix of residential and office uses. Moreover, the office accommodation is dated and not necessarily well suited to modern working practices.

The town centre benefits from very high levels of accessibility. This accessibility contributes considerably to the importance and significance of the Romford old office quarter in employment and economic terms, and could deliver good quality office space within a business orientated environment to mainly professional services, with rental rates that are low in comparison to central London boroughs. With an impressive and very extensive range of town centre facilities on the doorstep, plus numerous amenities, public transport

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<sup>16</sup> ONS UK Business Counts, 2024 and ONS Job Density, 2015

<sup>17</sup> ONS UK Business Counts, 2024

links, road connectivity and services, the area is considered a key location by many businesses.

### **Tech**

The exploitation of opportunities in tech has been one of the most important drivers of productivity growth over past decades. All new technologies essentially rest on an interconnected 'smart world', where objects, machines, people and the environment are increasingly closely interlinked.

The Tech sector is an enabler of economic progress and also an important driver for the future development of the digital economy. It integrates the digital ecosystem, which is a network of economic and social activities, such as the Internet, mobile and sensor networks. Technology brings change to virtually every sector – offshoring in accountancy, cloud computing, autonomous machine reasoning, high frequency algorithmic stock and options trading, etc. Traditionally, Central London and the City have been the most attractive locations for Tech companies, however the increase in flexible and serviced office accommodation in Romford, the comparative low rental rates, the high speed public transport links into the City, and high quality data links, have enabled Romford to host this growing sector.

### **Retail**

The retail sector share in Havering is one of the largest in London. Havering has seven designated town centres; a Metropolitan town centre and six district town centres. Romford is the Metropolitan town centre within the Borough and is the 5th largest within the London region. Hornchurch, Upminster, Collier Row, Elm Park, Harold Hill and Rainham are the district town centres within the London Borough of Havering.

Romford town centre has a diverse range/special mix of national high street shops/brands, unique specialist independents, restaurants, cafés plus a traditional outdoor market dating back to 1247. The restaurant offer within the town centre remains vibrant and busy, though the offer is largely aimed at the value end of the market rather than high end dining. As a metropolitan centre within Greater London we will look to create a vibrant safe night economy by liaising with developers and entertainment venue operators and town centre groups via the community safety team.

Romford has three large vibrant shopping and leisure malls plus a shopping arcade; The Brewery, The Liberty, The Mercury and The Romford Shopping Hall. Recognising Romford's location between significant mall-shopping offers at Stratford, Lakeside and Bluewater, Romford needs a distinctive proposition in order to thrive.

Hornchurch, Upminster, Collier Row, Elm Park, Harold Hill and Rainham offer a diverse range of multiples and unique specialist independent shops and restaurants all within conventional high streets and historical locations.

We recognise that retail is changing at a faster pace than since the 1970s. Footfall on the high street continues to decline with online retailers able to offer better price competition built on lower premises costs outside traditional retail centres. As customer choice takes them towards online retailers, our retail centres must adapt by offering the customer something which can only be had by spending time on the high street; by delivering an experience without sacrificing the convenience of limitless choice and almost immediate availability for delivery to the customer's home. While we can encourage an emphasis on service sector offers on the high street to reduce our dependency on take away products – we can do this through the provision of a mix of traditional retail with leisure, food and drink, entertainment, and animation – we must also address the demand for immediate availability. We will thus need to innovate and Havering is no less well placed than other locations to experiment in new retail models. Alongside this, we are prepared to support innovation in the taxation of retail to mitigate the advantage that 'e-tailers' have over the high street. The recommendations for a new retail offer and experience for consumers will be consistent with existing land use policies and a commitment towards high quality urban design.

We note the anecdotal evidence that the withdrawal of retail banking service from some of our high streets is having a perceived negative impact on footfall. The same might be said of the closure of Crown Post Offices. We see both these perceptions as part of the undoubted evolution of the high street but cannot be sure whether this impact is real or merely perceived. We can however be sure that for our high street to survive, we need to develop a forensic understanding of the current state of our high streets, the factors which are driving change, and ways in which we can optimize our response to these changes in the 21 century. The analysis we will undertake will inform the interventions that are recommended.

### *Other Key Sectors:*

#### *A Key Manufacturing Hub*

The Havering Riverside Employment Area at London Riverside in Rainham is a key hub for manufacturing businesses and employment opportunities in the Thames Gateway development zone. It is home to more than 500 firms ranging from small and medium sized businesses across a variety of sectors to major international companies. It is also home to important centres of learning and business support such as the Centre of Engineering and Manufacturing Excellence (CEME) and Havering College's Southern Campus. It also has the largest available supply brownfield strategic industrial land in London. The CEME campus offers a fantastic education centre for young people interested in manufacturing, engineering, design and technology has been created and delivered in partnership with distinguished businesses such as Ford and Network Rail and universities including University College London. Through these initiatives and others of a like kind, we will continue to work to broker connections between industry and academia to bring new technologies, processes and products to market to improve our productivity and thus our attractiveness on the national and international stage.

### *Logistics*

Like other sectors, we recognise that the logistics sector is changing as processes are automated and productivity increases. This will likely lead to larger facilities with smaller head counts. With land at a premium, we will give priority to logistics businesses with higher levels of added value and thus yielding opportunities for high levels of employment.

Beyond this however, we regard the logistics sector as offering opportunities for real innovation and growth. In particular, while online commerce might present itself as a threat to our high streets, it offers an opportunity for the development of modern and sustainable mode for 'last mile' delivery in a manner that can mitigate the impact of higher volumes of deliver being undertaken using efficient point-to-point paradigms. Our key location serves us well from our position at the gateway between London and Essex but also at the key lowest crossing point of the Thames and close to the launch point of the anticipated and hoped for, new Thames Crossing. Finally, we see our riverside location as potentially playing a significant role in the development of freight consolidation models for the carriage of goods into Central London using the Thames as a key arterial route. We are already in discussion with the Port of London Authority in scoping out this potential.

## **7. Priority For Action 3 Increasing inward investment**

### **7.1 Role of Inward Investment for Havering - the why?**

We recognise that Havering as a brand is not widely recognised and that winning investment for Havering will require us to partner with other stakeholders – with other London boroughs and London more broadly, and with Essex to the East.

Our inward investment work will make sure that Havering benefits from new investment from overseas companies, UK based companies outside of the Borough and also from local occupiers that choose to expand within the Borough yet where decisions are made elsewhere – so-called ‘investor development’.

We need to seize opportunities as they arise by carefully marshalling our partners and the unique advantages of our programmes and location. We will work with our partners more effectively to maximise the potential benefits of technological changes within public and private sectors. The development of health technologies, for example is particularly important given the size of the health and care sectors in the Borough.

We will improve our marketing and promotion through our website and communication activity and our enquiry handling, and co-ordinate activity with our partners. We will also work more effectively with commercial agents in London as well as maintaining our links with those in the Borough. We will target key sectors for investment, and identify mechanisms to incentivise investment where possible.

There needs to be a more acute understanding and clarity on why Havering needs inward investment and a realistic assessment of what can be achieved in the short, medium and long-terms. This is ‘the why’ of inward investment and is the driver for all subsequent activities. For our communities it is all about supporting local people into work with higher skills and wages; and achieving a game-changing shift in perceptions.

### **7.2 Place brand, awareness and inward investment - the where?**

Promotional activity is not always a requirement for inward investment success but proactive business engagement based on use of corporate tracking and intelligence tools most certainly is.

There is a complex and often misunderstood relationship between branding, awareness and inward investment. While it seems logical that the better known a location, the more likely they are to attract investors however this is not the case. Some of the best known place brands in the UK, like Liverpool or Sheffield, receive far less inward investment than the less famous brands of Milton Keynes, Reading and Slough. It would be a mistake to focus on awareness raising activities in the hope that it will translate into investment success.

The issue of place brand is further exacerbated by the fact that Havering has poor brand recognition while our actual brands like Romford lack positive resonance. This is not as much a problem as it might appear. From a branding perspective, Havering should be seen as very much part of the London brand for inward investment and all collateral and communications should reflect this fact. It also means that relationships with London & Partners and others in the capital is a fundamental part of the approach which Havering will adopt.

Havering enjoys a great strategic location at the gateway to London from the East and to Essex from London. It also sits alongside the current lowest crossing point of the Thames. This characteristic that could be leveraged further to support activities including distribution and passenger transport. Havering is also situated on a key transit route around London's outer fringe linking the Midlands and the East of England with key markets in mainland Europe. More than this though it also forms part of the M11 corridor in the development of high end technological development. These locational benefits and the wider recognition of its strengths in key sectors of logistics, construction; finance and professional services, care, manufacturing, and importantly, retail, offer considerable opportunity to attract significant inward investment. Havering's brand identity is respected but weak – Rainham, Romford, Hornchurch and Upminster are better known but still lack identification as preeminent in any particular field. Establishing the identity and recognition of our place must therefore sit high on our list of challenges and opportunities.

### **7.3 Targets: markets, sectors, types - the who**

What and who is Havering for? Coming up with a clear targeting plan is a necessary precursor to inward investment activity. The targeting plan will articulate the geographic markets that are to be prioritised (eg London, South East, UK, Europe, USA etc) as well as the sectors (healthcare, professional services, technology, manufacturing) and the types (start-ups, scale-ups, SMEs, large firms). Following the targeting plan, there will be compelling propositions developed and tailored to suit each market, sector and type.

### **7.4 London opportunities**

In the pre-COVID world, there were on average between 2 and 5 new inward investment projects each week which land in London. In most cases, these new arrivals would tend to take space in short-term flexible offices or serviced offices. From the outset, the high-costs, congestion and lack of available grow-on space in places like Paddington and Shoreditch is rarely an issue. As these companies grow, however, they recruit more staff and the challenges of growing in central London become more evident. Before new inward investors establish deep roots in their first landing location, there are opportunities for Havering to engage and explain the benefits of a more affordable London location with space to grow.

### **7.5 Process - the how**

Creating an inward investment service that is fit-for-purpose, proactive and customer-focussed does not cost millions. In fact it has very little to do with financial resources.



Havering recognises that there is an opportunity to create a ‘best-in-class’ service that outshines all other London Boroughs and teams across the wider South East.

Havering will set out its ambition to be:

- *‘London’s most welcoming borough’*
- *‘London’s most business friendly borough’*
- *‘London’s most ambitious borough’*

All of these mantels are achievable as they are within the control of the council and are not a result of current performance or future funding. It requires having a small, effective and agile inward investment team that uses free online tools for research and intelligence, coupled with high proficiency in using social media platforms like LinkedIn to engage with potential targets. Most importantly though, it requires a business culture and customer-service ethos. It also needs the council to guarantee an element of independence and autonomy in order for the team to focus on attracting business and not be diluted or distracted by broader issues.

## **7.6 Business Retention & Expansion (Investor Development)**

The importance of working with existing businesses in the Borough is not just good for local companies, it is an essential part of inward investment too. According to Department for Business and Trade (DBT) figures for inward investment (2018-19), some 60% of foreign direct investment projects are from existing investors already in the UK and 31% are expansions of an existing facility. It is reasonable to suppose that these proportions are typical. Working with the existing firms in Havering is the best way of securing future jobs growth for the Borough. Local firms also represent an opportunity to engage with suppliers and customers of existing investors, who are located outside of the area; this can be a lucrative source of potential leads.

## **7.7 Leveraging Partners**

Leveraging partner resources and support central to our plan. This includes public and private sector organisations that are active in advising companies - such as Department for International Trade, London & Partners and intermediaries such as bankers, lawyers and accountants.

The relationship with DBT is particularly important as there is a perceived tendency to pigeon-hole ‘London’ as the place for financial services, new technology and big headquarters - and to refer more back-office and manufacturing opportunities to places in the ‘Midlands Engine’ and ‘Northern Powerhouse’. This strategy aims to convince partners and intermediaries that there is a place, inside London, which has the demographics, space and cost-base to attract a wider array of projects than those currently choosing London.

## 8. Priority For Action 4 – Regeneration

The Council has established three joint venture companies and a wholly-owned subsidiary, Mercury Land Holdings, in order to play its part in delivering housing growth, and these will create £3 billion of development activity in the Borough over the coming years. We want businesses to benefit from this and contribute to the development itself, through supporting access to local supply chains (as discussed in the previous section), and through providing apprenticeships, and increasing the range of jobs available locally.

The Council wants to see economic growth keeping pace with the housing growth projected for the Borough. The Romford masterplan acknowledges the need to create new and better types of business space and within future developments, and we will increase our inward investment activity to market available space. We will consider any opportunities to develop and improve business space, including direct intervention through joint ventures with the private sector, and work with partners, developers and through existing regeneration programmes to support the incorporation of employment space.

Business and employment growth will be encouraged across the Borough. However, in Rainham Employment Area and Romford Town Centre, employment growth features within Opportunity Area Frameworks and larger scale growth is more likely to take place. District Town Centres are also key priority areas for the Council, and could provide locations for both housing and employment growth. There are three principal geographical areas for business growth and investment, set out below.

### 8.1 Romford Town Centre

Romford Town Centre is a key location for growth, but currently under-performing. Major improvements in the operating environment are needed, and significant transformation is already planned through works to the ring road, investment in the Market Place, the redevelopment and improvements to the shopping centres, and investment in events, signage, and community safety through the Romford Business Improvement District. As previously stated the Romford masterplan adds value and will enhance the town centre. This strategy aims to align with the masterplan. This includes a commitment towards delivering a major public scheme linked to the reconfiguration of the Romford ring road.

We need to improve the quality and supply of appropriate and flexible office space in Romford. There is unmet demand for high quality grow-on space and wherever practicable, the Council's regeneration programmes should incorporate business space through incorporation of mixed use schemes, and this features in the Romford masterplan.

The Romford Town Management Partnership secured agreement of businesses to establish a Business Improvement District for the Town Centre in June 2018. The Council will continue to work with the now-established Romford BID to co-ordinate improvement plans for Romford.

## 8.2 District Town Centres

The District Centres of Hornchurch, Upminster, Harold Hill, Elm Park, Collier Row and Rainham Village provide vital centres for local businesses and communities. We want to maintain a network of thriving town centres across the Borough to provide good access to services for local communities, increase sustainability and convenience by reducing the distance needed to travel, and improve trading opportunities and business resilience.

In the context of the structural changes impacting on the retail sector, it is vital to understand the dynamics of the centres, and to support them to adapt to changes and to respond in order to continue to meet local needs. District Centres may need to adapt to social and economic changes, and the Council will support this process by developing bespoke plans for each of these centres. The plans will set out, for each of these centres, the potential for strengthening and diversifying their offers, and promoting workspace development as well as housing growth where appropriate.

We will continue to undertake regular health checks within the Town Centres across the Borough, incorporating vacancy and classification analysis. The health checks will also incorporate a broader approach considering a holistic view of the uses of the town centres including analysis of dwell time, use of parks and green spaces and quality of visitor experience. An audit of the public realm in the town centres will also inform policy relating to the accessibility and inclusivity of the town centres for all residents.

We will continue our programme of town centre support and capacity building, and work to increase the effectiveness of local town partnerships to increase trading. We will also help to improve the trading environment in town centres through marketing, branding and improved signage

We will look for opportunities to diversify the local offer by increasing leisure, services, and space for business where that is viable. Any diversification of leisure services will incorporate changes to maintain the physical and mental health of residents. We will develop a strategy for each town centre that takes account of social, economic and cultural inward investment opportunities, to place the town centres on a more sustainable footing for the future

We will also look at the feasibility of supporting an additional Business Improvement District in Hornchurch as a mechanism for sustainable funding for improvements into this town centre by consulting with our business partners and town teams.

## 8.3 Strategic industrial Locations

The strategic industrial locations in the Borough are essential locations for growth. In that context we will continue to identify potential barriers to growth and to tackle them where possible, or work with partner agencies to address them. However there are a number of critical and immediate priorities.

**Rainham Riverside:** Alongside the new community to be housed at Beam Park as part of the Council's regeneration programme, the south of the Borough is a premier business destination. The area suffers from poor connectivity although it is highly competitive compared to other areas within London. A number of sectors have grown in this environment, particularly in the logistic, transport and distribution sectors. Manufacturing and engineering are also key sectors for Havering where we want to see intensification, development and innovation.

This is the key location for intervention to support the intensification and growth of the Borough's industrial firms. East Plus by Segro has now completed two phases of development with a third about to commence delivering a new innovation village created alongside larger units creating up to 1700 new jobs. We will develop a programme of interventions with our key partners in the area – notably the Greater London Authority and SEGRO, the London Riverside Business Improvement District and CEME. Intensification may mean strategic targeting of investment in particular locations in order to maximise the potential for growth and retaining existing businesses where appropriate.

We need to seize strategic opportunities for support in the area – for example, resources from the GLA to support regeneration and development in key areas like Salamon's Way. We are also working with our partners to support wider investment, for example the development of innovation hubs to support productivity improvements. A strong partnership exists in the area, including the London Riverside BID, the GLA and SEGRO, and CEME. We will strengthen the partnership and incorporate the New City College Group and wider business community, and agree an updated action plan for the area.

**Harold Hill:** Harold Hill Industrial Estate, at almost 31 hectares in size is one of Havering's strategic industrial locations. It is just off the A12, which has direct access to the M25, making it a very convenient and attractive location for businesses. Harold Hill Industrial Estate has a number of detached warehouse and industrial units, many of which include high quality office facilities. There is also a mixture of new and established properties currently used for business purposes including offices, factories and retail outlets. Much of the area's commercial real estate is well located with sufficient distance away from residential developments. We will monitor the continuing growth and prosperity of the area and tackle specific local barriers to growth here and in other industrial locations where possible.

## **10. Delivering the strategy**

This is a five year Strategy, but designed to put in place programmes and approaches to economic growth that will achieve significant growth over the coming decades. We cannot achieve our ambitions without the involvement of our partners, and we need to have structures in place to agree joint interventions, co-ordinate activity and monitor achievements. The following paragraphs set out how we propose to do this.

### **10.1 Partnership and co-ordination**

The Council is proud of the relationship it has developed with business in Havering, and is committed to maintaining and strengthening it in order to deliver its growth ambitions. Regular business network discussions have helped to inform the contents of this Strategy. We have now agreed with our key partners that with the increased complexity and intensity of regeneration programmes and economic interventions in the Borough, we need to develop partnership arrangements that can meet current challenges and engage a range of appropriate partners.

### **10.2 Demonstrating achievements**

This will be done at the strategic level through monitoring key performance indicators relating to the high level objectives set out in the Strategy. The high level indicators are:

- Employment growth year on year (matching the rate of population growth)
- Growing the business base year on year
- Improving productivity rate
- Improving business perceptions of the operating environment in Romford and Rainham SIL
- Minimising town centre vacancy rates

More detailed indicators will be put in place for programmes and projects implemented through council and partnership management structures.

### **10.3 Delivering Havering Council Corporate Themes**

In developing this Inclusive Growth Strategy we have throughout borne in mind the delivery of the Council's overarching vision for its stewardship of Havering.

We recognise that the Council does not have control of all of the levers in influence: we have the power to convene our communities to work together to deliver change for the better.

For all that is good about Havering, we recognise that we can perform better and be better; we can optimise our performance to play our part economically on the national and

international stage while at the same time bringing the regeneration and reimagining of our built environment – our Places.

Finally, we know that our performance can only be optimised if we address the need to improve the communications infrastructure that makes our success and growth sustainable and inclusive – highways, transport, data and workspace.

These are times of great challenge and great opportunity. It is the core purpose of this strategy to support this development so that the benefits can be felt by our entire community.