


We are Colchester

WE ARE COLCHESTER

Colchester Town Investment Plan

AN AMAZING HISTORY AND A BRIGHTER FUTURE

October 2020





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FOREWORD

I am delighted to submit this investment offer to central Government on behalf of the **We Are Colchester Board**. The board reflects the diversity of our perspectives and talents in Colchester, bringing together our communities, businesses and anchor institutions.

Colchester has a rich and varied history - the first Roman capital of Britain and site of Boudica's rebellion. This heritage is still prominent today through the town's castle, ramparts and River Colne that runs through Colchester to join the North Sea just 10 miles away near Brightlingsea.

That is only part of the story. It's a place where the aspirations of younger people are valued; where whatever a person's background they have opportunities to succeed. The town is welcoming, unique and proud of its arts scene. Home to great employers and a leading University.

But ... we believe Colchester can achieve so much more, and the opportunity to put forward our plans (short and much longer term) through the Towns Fund could not have come at a more opportune moment. This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity for Colchester, local and national government to work together and stimulate regeneration in our town.

The **We Are Colchester** Board had only just been established in early 2020 to embark on the journey of listening to what our community of residents and local organisations wanted and needed to make the town an even better place; building on years of close collaboration and our shared passion to transform the chances of our people. Then the Covid-19 crisis arrived. We kept listening and learning, to ensure we kept in mind what our communities here have told us they were hoping for before the pandemic – and what now needs to be done to make Colchester a stronger place after it.

The Board passionately believes that the focus on the themes of **How We Live, How We Grow and How We Connect** remains crucial, at the same time recognising the importance of focusing on things which deliver positive and measurable outcomes. We are mindful that the Towns Fund is only part of the solution so also sets out not only evidence of previous success stories but our plans for further investment from a variety of sources to ensure a greater return on investment.

We cannot deliver our entire vision in the next five years. But we can create the right conditions for growth and greater investment and contribute towards greater generational renaissance.

We will improve essential infrastructure, boost the physical and digital connectivity of the town, and lay the groundwork for developments that will attract new households and business. We will tackle head on the challenges of COVID-19, deprivation and climate change; and realise the potential of our most deprived communities. But most importantly we will re-ignite the ambitions of our young people that here is a place they can thrive in a town which is harnessing, sharing and growing its substantial assets for the benefit of all; creating unbeatable opportunities for them.


Signed,



Simon Blaxill, Chair,
We Are Colchester Board.
On behalf of all Board members.

[Watch this short video to introduce the ambitions for Colchester](#)





COLCHESTER TOWN PLAN – A PROSPECTUS FOR GROWTH

Our investment offer to Government –
executive summary

Colchester is primed for growth. We have a highly-educated workforce, a competitive digital offer to employers and entrepreneurs, and a top-class university specialising in data analytics and artificial intelligence. All set in an attractive and historic townscape that is strategically located at the node of the A120 North Essex Economic Corridor & A12/Great Eastern Main Line transport corridor.

It is no surprise that we are one of the fastest growing towns in the country, aided by our excellent track record in creating jobs and building homes.

We are proud of what we have achieved, and are even more ambitious for the future. We need to lay the groundwork for growth over the next 25 years, tackling pockets of deprivation, to ensure that everyone benefits from increased growth and prosperity.

Our ability to deliver that kind of sustainable and equitable growth is currently constrained. Our economy is heavily reliant on a small number of sectors and we need to up-skill sections of our workforce. Our transport infrastructure is outdated, and investment is needed to reduce congestion through supporting people to move to sustainable/active modes. Our public realm is tired and in need of revitalisation. There are limitations on enabling people to fulfil their potential.

We will dismantle these barriers and create the right conditions for growth through three strategic investment programmes. Through these investment programmes coupled with existing and wider work under our leadership; we will also support the local economy to **recover from COVID-19** and, longer term, to take advantage of new ways of living and working in a post-pandemic world.

At the same time, we will accelerate our actions to **adapt to the consequences of climate change** in line with [Colchester's Climate Emergency Plan](#) launched in January 2020.

We will address the evidence presented in the context, challenges and opportunities sections of this proposal, amplified by the outputs from significant local engagement; to design and shape our Town Investment Plan allowing us to address these specific challenges and opportunities, and provide a major catalyst for transformation and future growth.



OUR INVESTMENT OFFER

To deliver these improvements we make this investment offer to central Government.

We seek the full £25m from the Towns Fund (further accelerated £1m already received). We will match this with £68m, creating a total investment package of £94m, generating by 2025/26

150-200 NEW NET FTE JOBS CREATED

PLUS 76 CONSTRUCTION PHASE JOBS.

IN ADDITION, OVER 2500 PEOPLE WILL BE SUPPORTED INTO EMPLOYMENT.

£3.36M

GVA PA WIDER UPLIFT;

17,014

SQM OF NEW OR IMPROVED PUBLIC REALM;

3,055

SQM NEW COMMERCIAL SPACE;

359

NEW HOMES (OF WHICH 20-50% ARE AFFORDABLE);

4.8KM

NEW HIGH-QUALITY CYCLEWAY.

Without investment, we will not make as great a contribution to the UK's economic resurgence, and the benefits of growth locally will not be felt by all. Our ambition does not stop with Town Deal. We will use it as a lever to attract substantial further and longer-term investment for our Town from partners, and crucially from the private sector.

WHAT'S IN THIS TOWN INVESTMENT PLAN

This document sets out the context of our Town concluding with a summary of its key strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. It then demonstrates the outputs from the extensive consultation, undertaken and the vision that we developed in response. It then establishes a firm, coherent and realistic vision for our Town in the year 2045, detailing an optimum package of projects and programmes which individually but most importantly together will drive significant transformation for our town and for our people. It concludes with our approaches to leading, managing and delivering this comprehensive programme over the short, medium and longer terms.

CONTEXT - COLCHESTER TODAY

a short description

- ▶ **THE POPULATION HAS GROWN RAPIDLY.** Over the last 20 years, our average growth has been 25.6%. This is far faster than the Essex average of 16.5% and twice the national rate of 12.3%.



THE POPULATION IS RELATIVELY YOUNG.

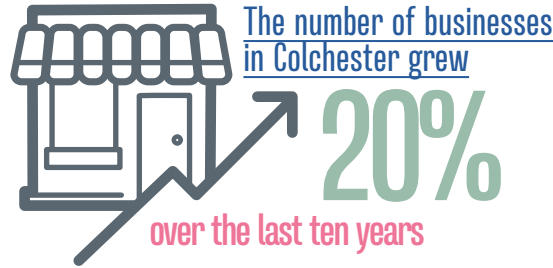
Colchester has a higher proportion of residents aged 20-39 than the UK. However, despite being relatively well qualified, wages and productivity are comparatively low in Colchester. One reason for this is due to the prevalence of part-time workers in Colchester and that higher paid workers often commute into London.



More than **65,000** work in the town

with concentrations of jobs in the town centre, business park and Tollgate shopping centre.

The town also contains public sector anchor institutions including a major University hospital, Colchester Garrison, Colchester Institute and the University of Essex.



Most of those businesses are SMEs, which employ 38,000 people and generate £3.9bn in turnover.

- ▶ Growth in the number of start-ups in Colchester in recent years has been similar to the UK as a whole. The digital sector and creative industries were the most common sectors for start-ups with around 1100 new businesses being started between 2013-2018.



Earnings within Colchester also grew over the same period, though at a rate significantly below that of house price growth.

Therefore, affordability is a key issue. In 2000 the ratio of house prices to median earnings was 4.2:1. In 2019 that had risen to 9.5:1.



COLCHESTER

Colchester town, as defined by the Towns Fund boundary, is home to 136,300 people (2018) with 195,000 living within the Borough as a whole.

COLCHESTER IS A DESTINATION.



CONTRIBUTING



The Roman Walls, the Town Hall and the Dutch Quarter are all important heritage sites. The town centre is characterised by distinctive pedestrianised shopping streets, lanes and small squares.



Looking more widely, Colchester occupies a **strategically important place in the wider Essex, South East and East of England economies.**

Colchester is the largest town in the county of Essex, with a commuting catchment area that stretches from Clacton in the east to Braintree in the west. The town's mainline railway station offers regular services to central London in less than an hour.

**ECONOMICALLY,
DEMOGRAPHICALLY,
GEOGRAPHICALLY,**

**we are in the right
place to grow** and
make a significant
contribution to the
region's economic growth.



Going forward Colchester has been and is expected to be in the [top 3 fastest growing places in the region](#). Ambitious housing targets have been met and a new Local Plan identifies sites to deliver over 18,000 new homes by 2033.

One example of that potential is the proposed [Tending Colchester Borders Garden Community](#) at the eastern edge of the town.

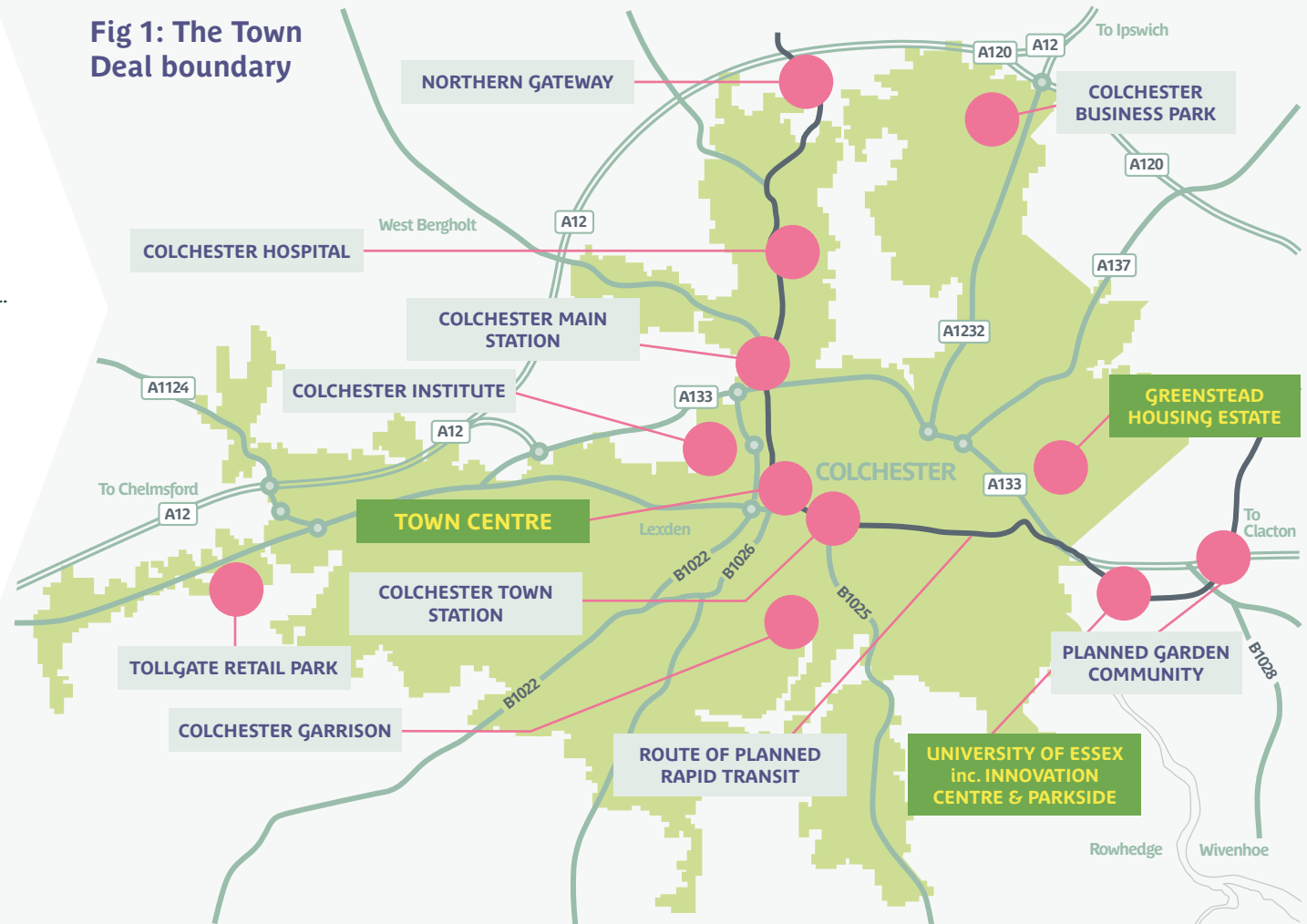


The proposal has already unlocked investment in new transport infrastructure and will further stimulate the creation of at least 5,000 new jobs and 7500 new homes. The planned [Rapid Transport System](#), enabled by £100m secured via the Housing Infrastructure Fund, will connect the town centre, major transport hubs, the University of Essex as well as the planned new garden community.

Like all places, Colchester has been affected by [Covid-19](#) so a range of organisations are supporting communities, businesses and specific services to adapt to the pandemic, whilst the interventions outlined in this Town Investment Plan will bring extensive further support and remediation enabling and driving sustainable socio-economic recovery.

We also face the challenge of dealing with climate change. We have announced a [Climate Emergency Action Plan](#), including the aim of reaching carbon neutrality by 2030. We will advance this goal, and the others in our plan by embedding these priorities within each and every project.

Fig 1: The Town Deal boundary



ASSETS AND STRENGTHS

Colchester has many of the advantages and qualities of a successful, sustainable town.

A ROBUST AND GROWING ECONOMY

Overall, the local Colchester economy is resilient and well-set for future growth.

According to the [Centre for Economics and Business Research \(Cebr\)](#) detailed economic evidence base, the key to our “recent successes has been the fostering of a business-friendly environment”. This led to a significant **increase of 19% in the number of businesses** between 2010 and 2019.

Colchester was included within the top ten in the [LSH Vitality index 2019](#), for towns and cities outside London; representing ‘locations best placed to support growth and provide opportunities for businesses to expand’. Within this we are listed at no. 4 in their ‘fastest growing’ sub index.

We have **growing clusters of businesses in high-value sectors** including creative, digital and tech; advanced manufacturing; and financial and professional services. Growth in these sectors has been facilitated in recent years by public intervention to deliver new office space. [The Cebr evidence base report](#) describes us as “an emerging technology hub” with a concentration of businesses in hi-tech sectors that “exceeds most other areas in the region”.

We have **an excellent skills pipeline**, supplied by graduates from the highly respected University of Essex and the Colchester Institute. The University is the leading institution in the East of England and London for Knowledge Transfer Partnerships, with 36 partnerships across seven academic departments contributing to a portfolio worth £8.7m.

Taking together all of these factors, Colchester is recognised as a primary driver of the regional economy of Essex.

A WELL-EDUCATED AND GENERALLY PROSPEROUS AND HEALTHY POPULATION

Most people in Colchester have a good quality of life.

Colchester comprises 105 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs), 17 (16.2%) of which rank among the 30% most deprived nationally and 34 amongst the 30% least deprived nationally. Given Colchester’s relatively lower levels of productivity and earnings the town far exceeds those for the County and region in terms of residents’ qualifications and skills. In the 12 months to December 2019 36.8% of Colchester residents aged 16-64 had NVQ4+ qualifications which is better than the County’s 8.1% and also the East of England region at 4.1%.

Health. [The health of people in Colchester](#) is broadly good compared with the England average. However for the whole Borough, about 14.7% (4,915) children live in low income families. Life expectancy for men is higher than the England average. However, in the most deprived areas of Colchester, life expectancy is 8.6 years lower for men and 8.0 years lower for women than in the least deprived areas; and this gap continues to widen.

This combination of advantages and assets has made Colchester **one of the fastest growing towns in England** with an estimated [195,000 people living within the borough in 2019](#) up from 155,000 in 2000 – a growth rate of 25.6%. This far exceeds growth rates for other Local Authorities in the East of England (16.5%) and nationally (12.3%). Our growth has also been driven by **sophisticated local partnership** working and a strong track record of **delivering on our growth commitments**. We are one of the very few places in the South East that has consistently met housebuilding targets. The [emerging Local Plan](#) identifies sites that will deliver 18,400 additional homes by 2033 and the larger sites will continue to deliver beyond that period.

AN HISTORIC AND ATTRACTIVE PLACE

The national and built environment make Colchester a destination of choice

We have a rich local history, reflected in the heritage assets that are studded across the town, from the Roman Walls through the world's largest Norman keep to the Victorian Jumbo Water Tower within the oldest recorded town in the country – history is unsurpassed and a major attractor now and in the future.

We have a thriving cultural, creative and arts scene in venues that offer residents and visitors exciting and affordable experiences. Four Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisations are located in the town centre, making it the cultural hub in the county.

Colchester's attractiveness, its location close to the capital, coast and countryside (including the Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) complements the recent multi-million-pound investments in new housing, hospitality and retail developments in the town. Together these have improved the quality of experience and provided more choice for local people and visitors alike

Fig 2: Summary of investment and economic Impact 2014-2019:

Total value of identifiable Investment in Colchester	£273.7m
new jobs created	140
jobs retained	242
new office space created	78,000 sq. ft
Number of start-up businesses accommodated in new space	94

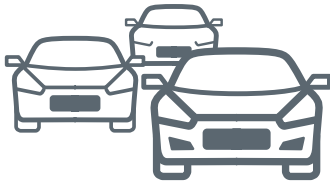
Looking ahead, we are very well placed, both geographically and in terms of our offer, notably attractiveness, access to coast and countryside and good connectivity; **to attract households leaving London**, especially post-COVID-19.

In terms of digital connectivity, we are a leader in **infrastructure delivery** to widen access to Ultrafast fibre Gigabit Broadband and develop heat networks and micro-grids.



CHALLENGES

COLCHESTER SUFFERS FROM AN INFRASTRUCTURE DEFICIT WHICH IS MANIFESTED IN DIFFERENT WAYS.



In the past, the pace of providing enabling infrastructure was not always matched to the pace of the development and growth of Colchester; resulting in new houses being built without immediate proximity to high quality and sustainable local services, and a patchy transport network that does not connect all parts of Colchester old and new effectively and consistently, and perpetuates high car dependency.

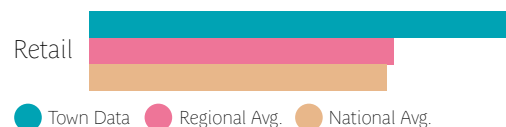
GROWTH CHALLENGES

The local economy is overly reliant on four sectors. Retail, tourism, hospitality, and healthcare are and will remain important parts of the Colchester economy. Currently, however we are too reliant on them for growth. Of these, retail is significantly higher than the national average.



Fig 3: Employment and Labour. Source – Towns Fund Data Dashboard (Colchester).

Employment by Sector (2018)



Whilst we have demonstrated we have an ideal platform to realise significant opportunities in terms of growth, as a community we are clear and honest with ourselves and our citizens about the challenges we face. Some of these are historic, while others have arisen more recently.

Before outlining specific issues, it is important to highlight the major challenges facing the town.

Whilst retail is already seeing a declining trend due to online shopping, tourism, leisure, health and care are now being adversely and materially impacted by Covid-19. Colchester's reliance on these industries sets it apart from similar towns in the East of England region which have economies based on more productive, higher paid sectors. Large businesses make up just 0.35% of enterprises in the town, which is significantly fewer than [local comparators like Norwich and Ipswich](#). Thus, whilst central Colchester has attractions including nationally significant heritage, existing trends sped up by Covid-19 mean a proactive effort is needed to support and evolve the town.

Many of the jobs in these four core sectors of our economy are relatively low paid and low-skilled.

Nearly four in ten jobs (36.8%) in Colchester are in the retail and care sectors, which are amongst the least productive sectors in the economy. As Cebr put it:

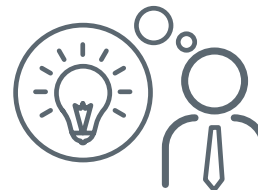


Colchester's reliance on these industries sets it apart from similar population hubs within the East of England region, which see prominent employment levels in other, more productive, industries.

Furthermore, COVID-19 has underlined the danger of relying on a small number of predominantly face-to-face sectors.

COLCHESTER IS NOT AS ENTREPRENEURIAL AS OTHER PARTS OF ESSEX.

The total number of start-ups in Colchester is slightly lower than in [Chelmsford, Norwich and Braintree](#). We are also less productive than our near neighbours and the data suggests we are continuing to [fall behind the rest of Essex](#).

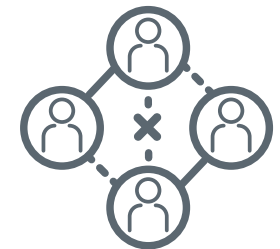


THERE ARE SKILLS GAPS ACROSS MANY SECTORS that threaten to impede future growth. Seven of Colchester's eight employment sectors identified as core to the economy or providing the future for economic growth, are in the top ten for skills shortages. Amongst these health and care, manufacturing, hospitality and retail appear highest. The impact on Colchester's predominantly SME-based economy is that companies are spending more on recruitment, recruiting at a lower level than required, having to pay a higher salary, leaving the post vacant or having to hire temporary workers to cover the gap. This affects the potential for company growth as staff can be overstretched, unproductive and the company less agile therefore unable to capitalise on commercial opportunities.



WE HAVE LITTLE IN THE WAY OF BUSINESS ECOSYSTEMS

through which innovation and ideas exchange and skill swaps can occur. This is evolving, but inchoate and fragmentary.



THE POTENTIAL DOWNSIDE OF OUR STRONG ASSOCIATION WITH HERITAGE IS THAT WE ARE PERHAPS NOT SEEN AS A MODERN PLACE TO DO BUSINESS.

In connectivity terms, transport in and out of the town is poorly integrated while the high street and town centre is congested. The public realm is showing its age and compares poorly to similar towns.

▶ CONNECTIVITY CHALLENGES

As an historic but growing rapidly expanding market town, we have outgrown our current road capacity. This has led to congestion and poor air quality in a number of key pockets of the town.



- ▶ The preponderance of low-skilled jobs, especially in the centre of town, as described above, generates further traffic congestion as workers are forced to commute out of town.

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT IS ALSO SHOWING ITS AGE.

Too much of our public realm is tired. Retail and in particular office space now need adaptation. There are high vacancy rates in places around the town centre, with Colchester now close to national average vacancy levels from a position of doing better than elsewhere. While none of these problems are chronic, they signal a place in need of additional care and revitalisation heightened by the Covid pandemic.



IT IS GETTING HARDER FOR SOME PEOPLE TO BUY THEIR OWN HOME IN COLCHESTER.

While house prices grew by 147% between 2002 and 2019, earning increased by 34.7%. As a result, the ratio of median house price to median earnings went from nearly 5:1 to 9:1 in 2019.



While ultrafast broadband is increasingly available, business broadband access is generally poor.



THE OPPORTUNITY

The opportunity in Colchester is the chance to create the right conditions for good growth and greater investment and contribute to generational renaissance. By tackling the infrastructure deficit, radically improving connectivity and developing the capacity and resilience of our communities.

We are already doing a great deal to seize that opportunity.

CURRENT AND PLANNED INVESTMENT

Success to date includes £273.7m of identifiable local investment in the period 2014 to 2018. More recently the confirmation of a new Garden Community, the newly launched Innovation Centre at the University of Essex, and completion of the first phase of the Colchester Northern Gateway together compliment and re-enforce Colchester's investment in iconic facilities.

We are already doing a great deal to tackle these challenges and **create the right conditions for growth and greater investment in future.**

The new [rapid transit system](#) will be operational by 2024...

as well as improving connectivity, this will unlock new employment and residential sites and add value to existing developments, supported by wider work to improve local connections through our emerging [Transport strategy](#).

We continue to invest in Colchester's cultural capital...

with significant recent renewal and investment evident in this sector.

Our Town Deal will empower us to address these known challenges and maximise the opportunities we face; providing a strong catalyst for future growth. The overarching strategic investment programme themes presented here address these challenges and opportunities very clearly and specifically; re-igniting the future hopes and aspirations of our young people eroded by the pandemic, helping them believe that they will get the jobs they love, right here – precisely by stimulating jobs growth right here; providing a townscape that is truly modern whilst also historic. The Town Deal takes a bold approach to active travel which will reverse our residents' currently poor health and wellbeing outcomes arising from low levels of physical activity and exercise. The Town Deal will boost jobs and prosperity, and the investment will go a long way towards helping stall any further deterioration in the neighbourhoods in greatest need.

NOW, AND FOR GOOD.

Fig 5: **SWOT analysis**

STRENGTHS

- ▶ Buoyant local economy
- ▶ Resilient high street
- ▶ Heritage assets and cultural strengths enabling emerging visitor economy.
- ▶ Proximity to London and location in the North Essex and broader South East and East of England economies is attractive to high earning commuters
- ▶ Access to countryside, coast, and local high-quality green space
- ▶ Ultra-fast Broadband network and strong tech cluster enabling rapidly growing creative and digital economy and upcoming 5G investment
- ▶ Prestigious and growing university
- ▶ Relatively young, skilled population is a source of economic potential (36% of Colchester residents have NVQ4+ qualifications, 33.5% in Essex; 4% have no qualifications, 8% in Essex)
- ▶ Lack of severe deprivation overall, though pockets in the east of the town
- ▶ History of local partnership working

OPPORTUNITIES

- ▶ Full-fibre broadband rollout and Covid 19 may increase the number of high-earning home workers living in Colchester and their spending in the economy. It could also fuel business creation and development
- ▶ Continued growth, including scale-ups, in the creative and digital sectors could drive employment and productivity growth
- ▶ A120 dualling or orbital rail investment, unlocking significant opportunities from Stansted and Cambridge
- ▶ New rapid transport network providing connections between the town centre, garden community, the university and mainline train station
- ▶ Maximising benefits from planned mixed use developments in the town centre could maintain it as an employment centre and support growth
- ▶ Growth of economic opportunity in Colchester could help address deprivation across North Essex

WEAKNESSES

- ▶ Since 2010, number of businesses has grown slowly (by 19.95%, compared to 27.2% in the East of England)
- ▶ Concentration of jobs in four low-paid sectors
- ▶ Productivity and earnings remain low (GVA/hour is 87.7% of the East of England's) due to prevalence of low-productivity sectors, part-time work and out-commuting of skilled workers
- ▶ Reliance of small and micro-enterprises – few large employers (0.35%)
- ▶ Lack of broad economic base across a range of sectors and specialisms
- ▶ Tired public realm included empty properties and historic buildings at risk of disrepair. Compares unfavourably to neighbouring destinations
- ▶ Poor east-west connectivity limits opportunities from proximity to Stansted and Cambridge
- ▶ Local transport challenges, including between the most deprived areas and emerging employment centres

THREATS

- ▶ The large leisure and hospitality sector is very vulnerable to Covid 19
- ▶ Exposure to external shocks stemming from Brexit / COVID-19 downturn, especially the specific impacts of Covid-19 in accelerating decline of retail in our town centre, and short-term impacts on tourism and hospitality.
- ▶ Setbacks to planned expansion of Stansted Airport which has also been affected by Covid 19
- ▶ Changes to the immigration system following Brexit may create labour supply issues, particularly in creative and digital sectors, and intensify existing issues in hospitality, health and social care and retail sectors
- ▶ Full fibre rollout nationally will make the ultrafast broadband network a less distinctive asset
- ▶ Increase in poverty including child poverty, and declining life expectancy in neighbourhoods within the most deprived LSOAs
- ▶ Skills shortages in key sectors identified for growth.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

How we engaged

OUR RESIDENTS KNOW MORE THAN ANYONE ABOUT WHAT IS GREAT ABOUT COLCHESTER, what needs to be improved, what makes them proud of the town, and what is missing. Our understanding of these aspects of Colchester and the resulting proposals have all been shaped by local people.

Notwithstanding the restrictions imposed by lockdown, we offered **different ways for people to share their views and ideas:**

- ▶ In February we launched an [online public survey](#), 216 responses were received to this qualitative questionnaire.
- ▶ A half-day town Assembly meeting was held in March to which 143 stakeholders were invited. The meetings purpose was to introduce attendees to **We Are Colchester** and to give them the opportunity to put forward possible project ideas.
- ▶ In August, we conducted two further surveys, one designed for Assembly members and one for [the wider community](#). 351 questionnaires were completed. Responses produced both qualitative and quantitative information. The aim of the surveys was to identify popular project themes and to allow us to see if these had changed since the earlier survey. Questions were also asked about the impact of Covid-19.
- ▶ In August, [face-to-face surveys](#) were conducted in four locations across town (the town centre, Greenstead, Prettygate, Old Heath and St John's). These were carried out according to social distancing rules, and 400 people participated. The information sought was as the online survey (although in a shortened form due to social distancing considerations).
- ▶ Over the summer, follow-up online, telephone and face-to-face meetings were carried out with a variety of groups and stakeholders. This included 3rd sector representatives, local business owners, members of the local youth council, the towns' former MP and members of the wider community.

- ▶ Two online town assembly sessions were held in early September, to update members on developments with **We Are Colchester** and to discuss the project themes that were emerging, based on stakeholder and community engagement. Members were encouraged to submit their own project ideas both in advance and at the sessions. This process was repeated at a meeting with the local youth council, to ensure that the voice of young people was represented.
- ▶ We have also considered the 59 responses logged onto the [MyTown website](#). These were qualitative statements concerning Town Deal. These views were submitted between January and March 2020.

At each stage, we reviewed what we had heard, and refined the next stage, so we were constantly probing responses and generating further intelligence.



THE WE ARE COLCHESTER VISION

Building on the direct engagement outputs outlined above, in early 2020 the ‘We Are Colchester’ Board developed [the vision](#) to set out the aspirations of the partnership including the political leaders of the partner Local Authorities; in order to come together and drive forward a collective long-term ambition for economic prosperity and opportunity for Colchester. The vision provides a platform for strategic intervention at a scale which will achieve transformation, whilst complimenting local economic and place-making activity which the partners deliver.

This **We Are Colchester** vision was prepared through consultation with the general public via a Town Assembly, further online engagement, and finally shaped and finalised by the Board in the spring of 2020. It sets out three themes or workstreams and a suite of sub-statements that underpin these:

Fig 7: We Are Colchester: Vision

▶ HOW WE GROW	▶ HOW WE LIVE	▶ HOW WE CONNECT
Colchester will be an engine for inclusive economic growth, personal opportunity and community wellbeing.	Colchester will be a place where people are proud to live in a historic town that is welcoming, healthy and unique.	Colchester will be a place where people feel connected to each other.
This means that:	This means that:	This means that:
...Colchester will be a destination of choice for businesses in the creative, digital and knowledge sectors , with a world class education system that helps support these sectors to grow.	...Colchester will be a town that enables children and young people to have the best start in lifeColchester will be a town that prioritises green, affordable and sustainable travel that remain accessible to all, with public transport and active modes seen as a key part of the campaign to make the town carbon neutral .
...Colchester will be home to a dynamic skills system that adapts to changing business requirements, helping the town attract larger firms to the area.	...Colchester will be at the heart of a regional cultural, heritage and arts scene that provides alternative career opportunities for local peopleColchester will maximise the opportunities of digital and mobile technology that enables businesses and residents to create communities that foster social connections and inclusivity .
...Colchester will be a place with a proud entrepreneurial spirit , where growing businesses can access high quality and affordable business space , advice and guidance.	...Colchester will be a town with an unforgettable visitor experience , with high quality public realm that celebrates its history and a town centre full of independent businesses retailers and food experiencesColchester will be a place where the natural environment is a prominent feature in the urban streetscape .

STRATEGY

Taking together the key points of insight outlined in the context section above, coupled with key feedback we received via the extensive public consultation; culminating in the **We Are Colchester** vision above, we set out here a strategy which best addresses the Town's weaknesses, builds on its inherent and proven strengths and assets; identifies what the impacts and effects of both Covid-19 and Climate Change will be on all residents; notably our younger people, in the short, medium and long terms; then translates these into a suite of strategic actions; investment programmes and specific projects. Together, we believe this package will have a transformational and lasting impact on our town, shift the fortunes of all those worst affected by the current crises, and set Colchester on a path towards strong, sustained, and sustainable growth.

BUILDING A LONG-TERM VISION FOR COLCHESTER

We have a long-term vision for Colchester – **By 2045, Colchester will be a town where:**

- ▶ The local economy generates well-paid jobs in a wide range of sectors, from traditional hospitality and tourism, to emerging sectors in green energy, digital and artificial intelligence.
- ▶ Students from across the UK and beyond come in search of a world-class education, and young people in Colchester are engaged in their local town and can access the opportunities created by growth.
- ▶ Investment in high quality jobs and the further development of our well established entrepreneurial culture sees our young people equipped with the specific skills and training to enter key sectors which thrive here; both as employees; and starting thriving, innovative new enterprises of their own; notably in the tech-related sector.

- ▶ The benefits of good growth including wellbeing and quality of life are felt by all.
- ▶ Residents and visitors experience an outstanding place; appreciating and understanding Colchester's long and important history. Our forward thinking and innovative spirit connect old and new through using digital and augmented reality to engage people in our rich heritage assets and culture.
- ▶ The town is an exemplar of environmental / climate change measures and changes in behaviours where greener/more sustainable environment and world class public realm combined with our built heritage create one of the most attractive towns in the country to visit, work and live.
- ▶ All parts of the town are connected by integrated transport systems offering a range of modes to get around and powered by sustainable energy. Active modes of travel become an attractive lifestyle choice whilst an enabler to inclusivity and choice.
- ▶ Our Digital connectivity and infrastructure provide outstanding competitive advantage for business, and great convenience for all working studying and living here.

FROM VISION TO REALITY

We cannot deliver all of this vision over the next five years, so we are taking a phased approach out to 2045.

We will deliver this vision in three phases:

- ▶ **Phase 1: The Town Investment Plan: 2020 – 2025** – Resetting the town to adapt to the Covid-19 new normal whilst creating the right conditions for growth and even greater investment in future. Reflecting our key life chances, livelihoods and growth challenges.

- ▶ **Phase 2: 2025 - 2035** – Attracting wider investment and leverage; notably from the private sector through building a stronger and more cohesive voice for the town.
- ▶ **Phase 3: 2035 – 2045** – Reviewing and renewing; notably with an accelerated focus on adapting to Climate Change.

Phase 1, which will be the catalyst to phases 2 & 3, will be delivered through three strategic investment programmes. These build on the challenges and opportunities as presented above and are set out below.

Together these form a holistic and coherent package of interventions. While each programme will deliver benefits on its own terms, the entire package will deliver the maximum benefits to Colchester, Essex and the wider South East of England and East of England regions.

The projects build on what is already happening and the strong assets already here – but go much further and equip Colchester for its new role supporting jobs and employment growth in the town and in the sub region. They stimulate the most rapid and effective possible recovery from CV-19, then set Colchester on a trajectory of strong and sustainable growth.

In doing so they bring substantial and immediate benefits in jobs and skills associated with a significant construction programme, then embed this throughout the implementation period of the Town Investment Plan.

They create the conditions needed to address the challenges set out in the context and SWOT sections above; connecting the town its urban satellites and key infrastructure; whereby people will naturally choose attractive and suitable travel options for journeys in the urban area; see an inspiring, seamless and holistic skills employment and enterprise development infrastructure, and help young and working age people adapt to rapid changes in lifestyles and

Fig 8: Project preparation, assessment, shortlisting and development process:

Who?	What?	When? (all 2020)	Outcome?
We are Colchester Board	Invite all organisations in and beyond the partnership to develop and submit project proposals	Mid-August	16 initial project concepts received by Programme Team
Independent Assessor	Considered all 16 concepts against key eligibility criteria	Late August	2 projects did not meet basis eligibility
Senior Officers partner local authorities; on behalf of Board	Remaining 14 projects considered within the framework of Grow/Live/Connect and the three strategic investment programmes	Early September	Recommended all 14 projects to be taken forward but brought together to make fewer, stronger, more coherent projects
Programme Team	Held workshops with the project concept authors to adapt & strengthen projects	Mid-September	8 projects; developed and refined further
Independent Assessor	Considered and score all 8 projects against key eligibility criteria	Late September	All projects delivered acceptable or good outcomes: (see appendix 4)
Programme Team	Consider wider project suggestions received via community engagement and Advisory Group	Late September	These were aligned to the emergent project themes where relevant and adding value
Programme Team	Further refine projects as part of preparing development of Town Investment Plan part 1	Early October	Projects presented within the TIP1 which was distributed to Board members
We are Colchester Board	Consider draft Town Investment Plan including suite of specific projects therein and financial parameters	Mid October	Town Deal Board 12-10-20 gave in principle agreement to the suite of projects contained in Town Investment Plan
Programme Team	Develop project parameters for Town Investment Plan parts 1 & 2 including outcomes, outputs, etc.	Mid October	Final versions of Town Investment Plan parts 1 & 2 prepared for final Board approval & submission to MHCLG

employment– signposting significant opportunities in economic sectors that can provide extensive high-pay and high skill jobs, making Colchester the place to be.

They demonstrate to our young people in practical ways how connectivity, active transport, health & wellbeing and environmental/climate change are all interlinked in Colchester. They see this for example in how their own travel behaviours notably walking and cycling directly and tangibly impact the quality of their physical environment now and into the future, whilst forming good life choices for their and future generations health. These opportunities are put within reach of the majority.

TOWARDS STRATEGIC INVESTMENT PROGRAMMES AND SPECIFIC PROJECTS

The ‘We Are Colchester’ vision was developed in early 2020 by Town Deal Board, Advisory Group, a town assembly and wider engagement. This culminated in the development and adoption of the projects which were required to meet the vision, the [MHCLG prospectus](#) outcomes, and respond to needs expressed by local communities and businesses through ongoing and extensive engagement.

This process has involved all our partners and key sectors – supported by independent check and challenge and facilitation to ensure development of a suite of projects which people can identify with and which respond to long-standing needs. **Fostering the recovery from COVID-19** and **responding to the urgent challenge of climate change** are interwoven throughout our strategy and each individual project and intervention which will deliver it. We target investment where it will have the greatest impact in a coherent manner.

The projects recognise the town’s current and established role, but also optimally position it; not just to recover but to take advantage of new ways of living and working in a post-pandemic world.

The financial dimensions of the projects including the Town Deal 'ask', other funding which will deliver the project (full detail provided in Town Investment Plan part 2), and the overall project values are as follows.

Fig 9: Phase 1 Projects; Delivery 2020/21 to 2025/26.

Projects	Town Deal ask	Other funding	Total value
Strategic Investment Programme 1 – Our Town, Your Future Potential			
Digital working hubs with Grow-on Facility	£1m	£4.68m	£5.68m
Transformed youth facilities in Colchester (e.g. enhancements to existing/new facilities such as a Youth Zone).	£2.42m	£6.35m	£8.77m
Wilson Marriage digital skills hub	£900k	£100k	£1m
Strategic Investment Programme 2 – Building a Better Town			
Town Centre and Gateways consisting of:			
▶ Vineyard cultural Gateway	£1m	£14m	£15m
▶ Essex County Hospital: public realm	£500k		£500k
▶ St Nicholas Square (Funded by accelerated £1m)	£650k		£650k
▶ Balcerne Gate Phase 1 (Funded by accelerated £1m)	£350k		£350k
▶ Balcerne Gate Phase 2	£1.1m		£1.1m
▶ Jumbo (contribution to funding package)	£1m		£1m
▶ Holy Trinity Church – community hub	£517k	£23k	£0.54m
▶ Holy Trinity Square	£500k		£500k
▶ Kerbless and Green Streets	£1.5m		£1.5m
Heart of Greenstead	£6.7m	£33.3m	£40m
Strategic Investment Programme 3 – Connecting Ahead			
5G	£1.5m	£500k	£2m
Walking & Cycling link: Town Centre to Greenstead and University. With Town Centre Secure Cycle Parking.	£2.95m	£1.3m	£4.25m
Liveable Neighbourhoods and school streets	£2.1m		£2.1m
Walking & cycling at St Botolph's Roundabout	£1.313m	£7.6m	£8.9m
Totals: (note TD figure includes accelerated £1m)	£26m	£67.8m	£93.8m

The following two illustrations demonstrate the physical locations of the projects and investments outlined above on 1) Wider Town Deal Area map and 2) Town Centre area specific map.

Fig 10: Investment Locations

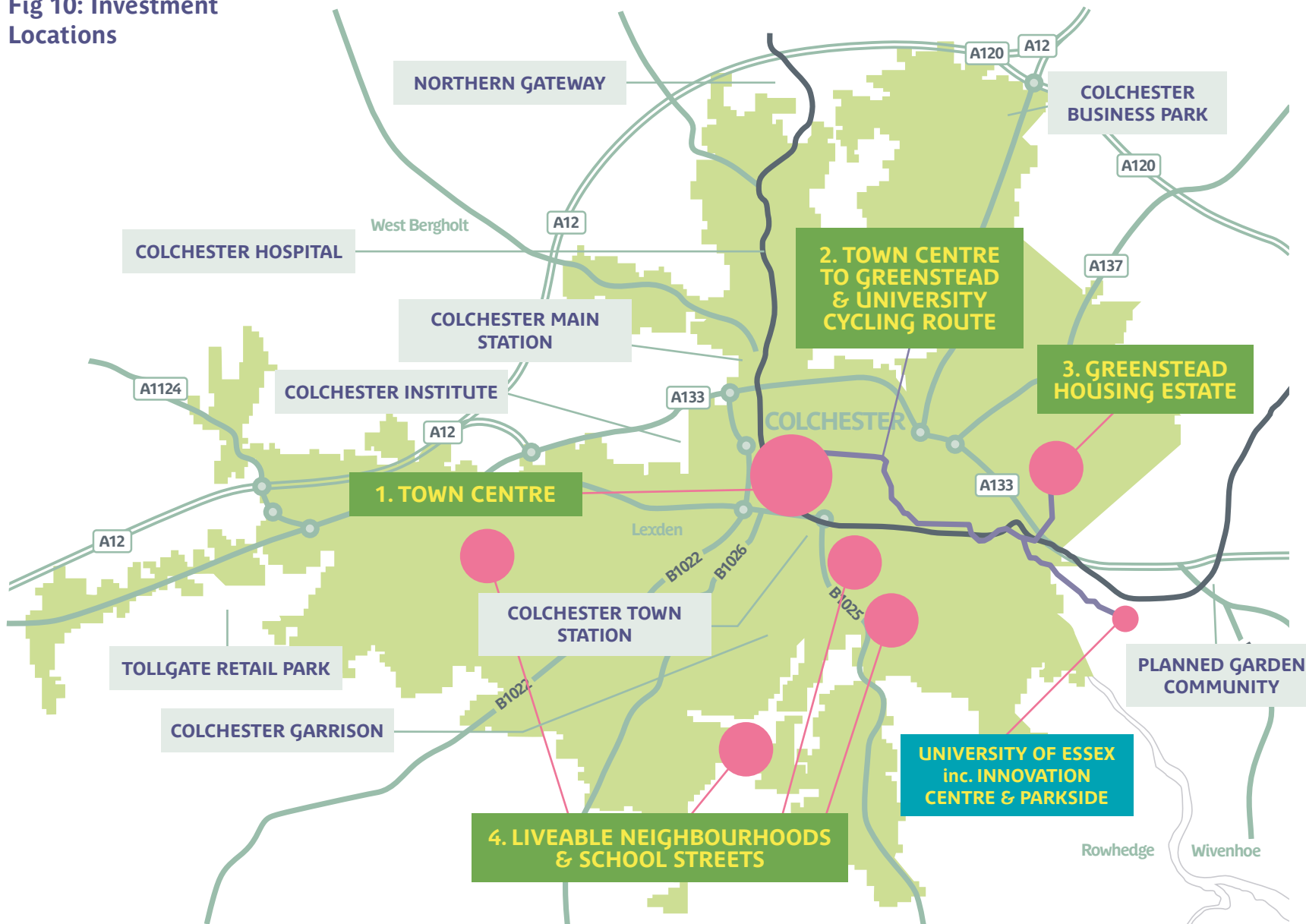
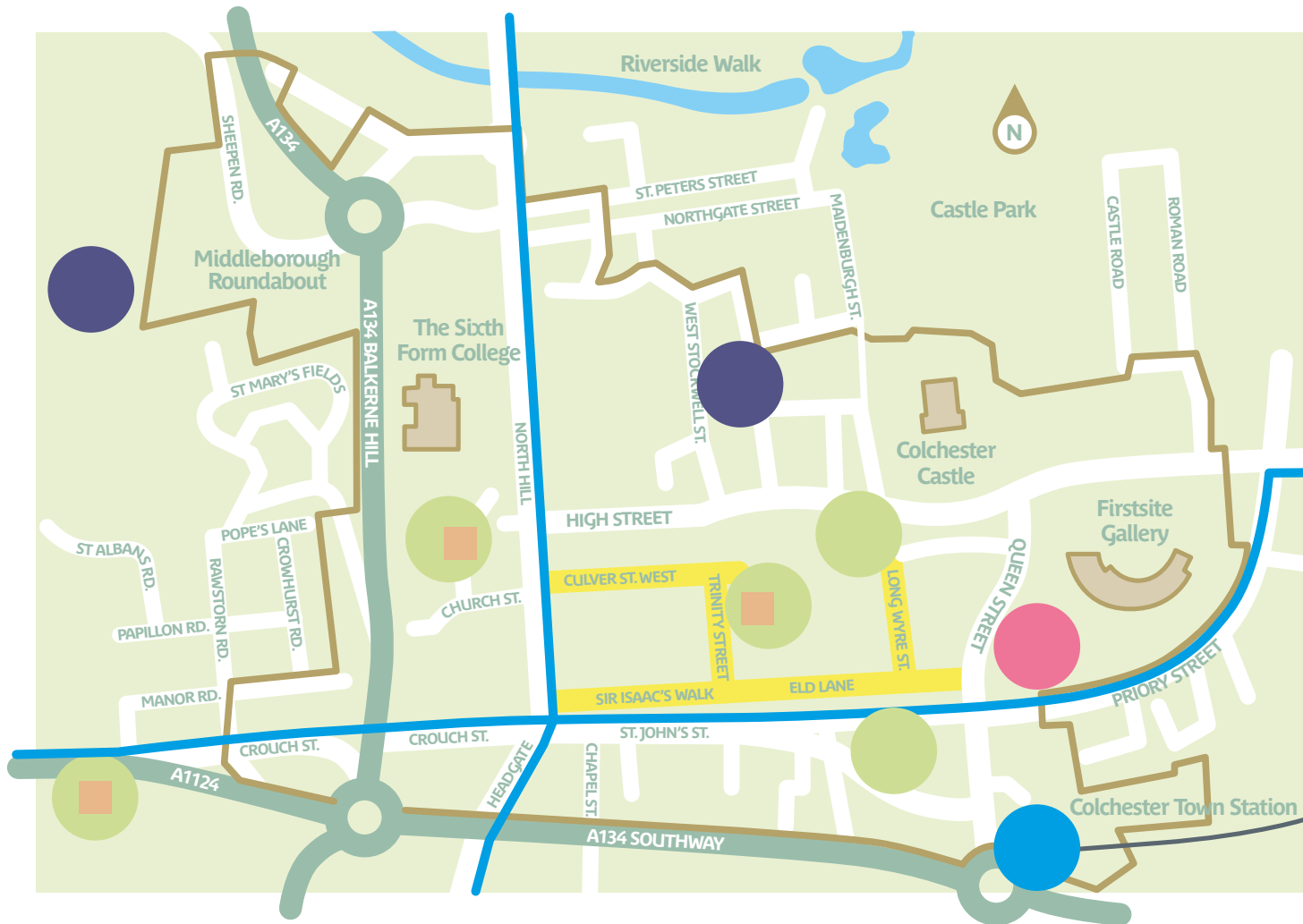


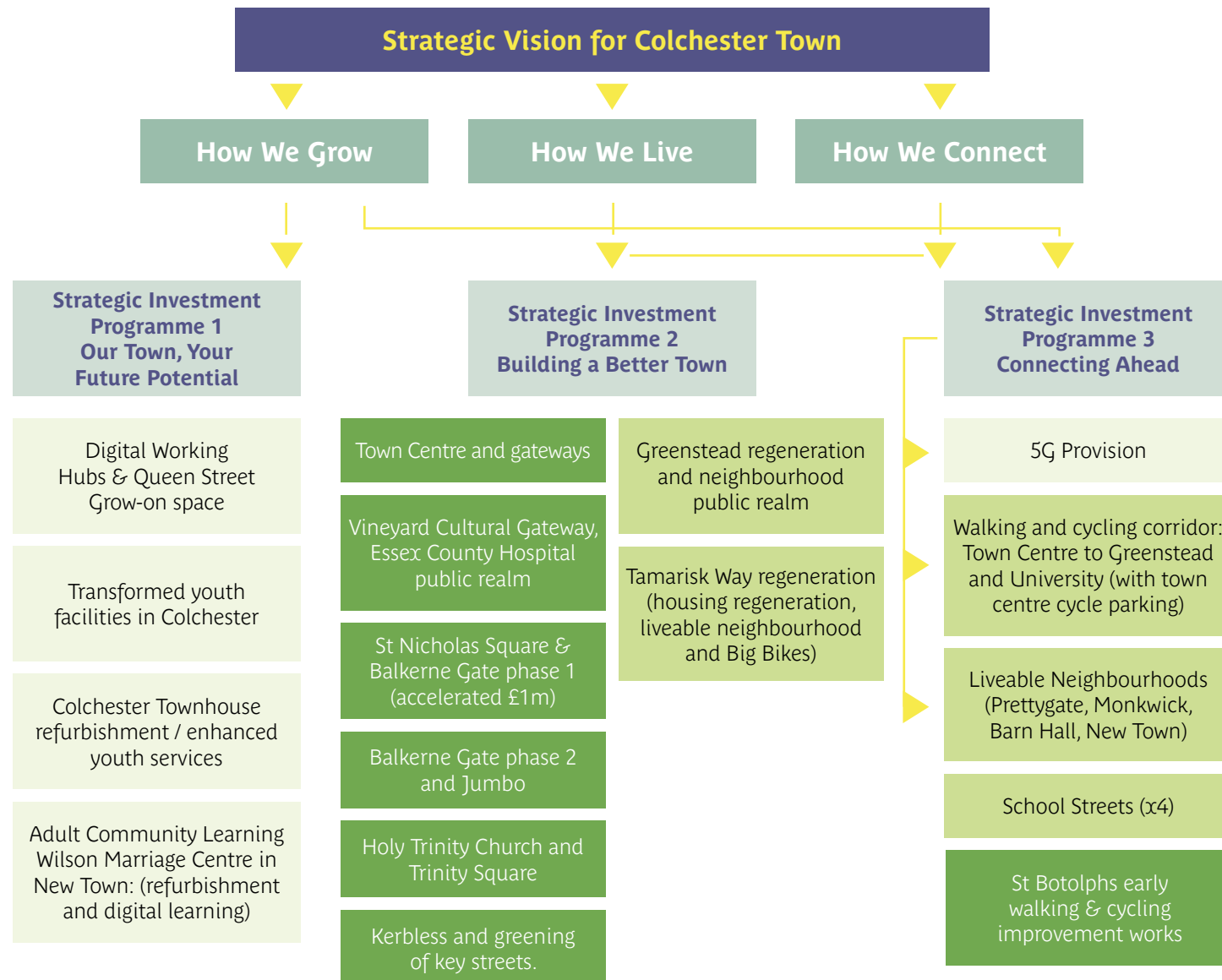
Fig 11: Town Centre Detail



- Youth and Skills ● New / Improved Public Spaces ● Kerbless & Green Streets
- Digital Working Hub (within new Grow-on facility) ● Improved cycling corridor or gateway
- Historic Building Restored

Fig 12: The three Strategic Investment Programmes and Phase 1 Projects.

This illustration shows how the specific projects fit within the overall Strategic Investment Programmes and bring complementarity to each other:





STRATEGIC INVESTMENT PROGRAMME 1 – OUR TOWN, YOUR FUTURE POTENTIAL

Recognising the significant challenges facing particularly young people in Colchester at this time, through attractive and iconic solutions this programme bridges the gaps between current youth provision and training opportunities which do not appeal to all, the further skills now needed to thrive in these challenging times, and the vibrant employment and enterprise opportunities available here. It does this recognising that young people in deprived communities need further support and inspiration to engage and benefit from the exciting future Colchester faces. The programme will also boost our skills and employment infrastructure in the town centre.

▶ PROJECT PROFILE: DIGITAL WORKING HUBS & QUEEN STREET GROW ON SPACE

Colchester's working population includes a significant number of out-commuters, with recent evidence revealing a significant proportion preferring to work in a local office space over commuting every day. One or more digital working hubs will provide high quality, local workspace in the heart of our communities. These new high-quality co-working spaces will be connected by gigabit broadband (and potentially 5G). The initial hub would be designed as an element within a planned new grow-on facility for expanding businesses in the creative, digital and tech sector; in itself a vital piece of planned enterprise infrastructure with funding identified.

Engagement feedback from the community in support of this project included

“Create spaces. WiFi and other technology will dominate working life. Working from home in isolation means the need for public domain spaces where creativity can flourish”, “More job opportunities, there's nothing going on in the town centre, it always feels very dormant and boring”



▶ THEORY OF CHANGE:

Objectives Helps retain local talent. drives footfall and reasons to visit (and spend) in our town centre, reduces unsustainable patterns of travel (through reducing need to commute out of Colchester), and helps create the conditions for thriving tech, digital and creative businesses, boosting the wider knowledge economy which is crucial to Colchester's success and development.

Inputs Provision of a high-quality working space at the heart of the town centre's core regeneration zone.

Outputs 105 sqm Digital Working Hub (within 1,145 sqm grow-on facility) in a key Town Centre Location. 48 NET FTE jobs created, based on 15-year economic appraisal.

Outcomes This project supports the diversification of uses of the town centre (and other locations with local hubs), responds to social and economic changes accelerated by Covid-19, blends well with high-quality town centre spaces and improved walking/cycling infrastructure. It stimulates clean and sustainable growth and delivers wider health & wellbeing and economic benefits through increased town centre footfall and spend.

▶ PROJECT PROFILE: TRANSFORMING COLCHESTER'S YOUTH SKILLS & ENTERPRISE INFRASTRUCTURE

Building on existing youth provision in Colchester, significant investment in facilities for young people will transform current youth provision linking the social aspects of youth provision with skills; inspiring all young people and better supporting our most deprived and vulnerable young people. Feasibility work will be carried to develop detailed proposals to this, which are likely to include major enhancements to existing youth facilities and the development of a new facility, with a particular model of exploration being Youth Zones. This improved provision will be bold and transformative; building on and complementing existing and established local youth provision whilst addressing the challenges around population growth in the area and the added pressures that Covid-19 has placed on young people. It would be developed and operated working with local organisations and related partners, the local Business Improvement Agency and FE College.

Engagement feedback from the community in support of this project included

“What would make you go? “A safe supervised environment – somewhere they can go without worry of bullying or judgement. Lots of different activities from physical i.e. sport, dance based to maybe board games and gaming”, “Gave useful support for part-time job hunting and independent living”, “If I could actually do things that I didn’t have the opportunity to do at home”, “Needs to present an opportunity to do something unique and fun”, “The concept of having everything under one roof is a good thing”, “more things for kids to do, more kids clubs, youth clubs, more apprenticeships”, “Improved engagement with the young people of Colchester and look to support existing youth organisations”.



▶ THEORY OF CHANGE:

- Objectives** These facilities would provide ongoing, essential wrap around community based services and support; deliver targeted support to vulnerable young people; provide high quality facilities for young people to enjoy and build their engagement in culture, sports and community; as well as building up young people’s skills and aspirations, linking in with and influencing the sectors and companies developing higher pay and skilled jobs in key sectors.
-
- Inputs** Refurbishments to the existing Townhouse Youth Centre in the town centre, alongside a new facility using a Youth Zone as a potential model.
-
- Outputs** Potential new 2,500 to 2,750 sqm new facility. 21 NET FTE jobs created. 2250 people are supported into employment (based on 15-year economic appraisal).
-
- Outcomes** Significantly improved opportunities and life chances for Young People in Colchester including those from deprived communities, through raising their confidence and aspirations. Links are strengthened between Youth facilities, local employers and further & higher education; leading to more young people supported to enter a more accessible local employment market, undertake relevant training, and develop their own enterprises locally.

▶ PROJECT PROFILE: THE WILSON MARRIAGE DIGITAL SKILLS HUB

Redevelops part of the Wilson Marriage centre in New Town as a digital skills hub and community space. The facility will support training, development, provide digital access and community activities. Adult Community learning will also expand digital skills development at other targeted locations throughout the town.

Engagement feedback from the community in support of this project included

“more environmental aspects, electric charging points and bike storage”,
“having a lack of maths and English skills”,
“more apprenticeship opportunities”,
“Somewhere for a music hub”, “Artistic space”,
“significant pockets within Colchester where residents do not have the required level of maths and English to access or improve job opportunities”.



▶ THEORY OF CHANGE:

Objectives Provides adults across Colchester with substantial opportunities to re-skill and re-train (notably with enhanced digital skills), given the significant and rapid changes to several key local economic sectors.

Inputs Redevelopment of a currently underused space to create a new facility. As well as expanding delivery of training, the refurbishment will allow for state-of-the-art IT suites that will enable video editing (green screen), rentable space for business and community groups e.g. meetings, conferences and exhibitions. The main hall would be equipped with a large screen and projector for teaching and conference purposes but also to provide a small community cinema.

Outputs 210 people are supported into employment (based on 15-year economic appraisal) through local people being prepared and supported to undertake different and potentially higher-paid roles.

Outcomes Residents will have increased levels of relevant qualifications and will be better able to meet the needs of local employers, through improved digital skills. This will boost job prospects including career entry and progression. Accredited online courses will be delivered enabling people wishing to undertake one of these courses the opportunity to do so in a flexible way within a facilitated setting with tutor support. Through being equipped with good digital skills, residents will be able to benefit from and use the new digital hub infrastructure.



STRATEGIC INVESTMENT PROGRAMME 2 – BUILDING A BETTER TOWN

Ensuring the benefits of good growth are enjoyed by all; the strategic prioritisation for intervention and investment of our town centre (as a key economic driver and social/cultural hub) and one specific neighbourhood outside the town centre; will transform these areas that are tired to make them attractive; realising their roles as centres for their local communities, adapting to the myriad of changes seen including people wanting to spend more time living and working close to their homes. They couple greening and making public spaces more vibrant, attractive, sustainable and resilient showcasing heritage whilst forming key elements within coherent walking and cycling infrastructure.

▶ PROJECT PROFILE: TOWN CENTRE AND GATEWAYS

This project delivers an optimised package of quality public realm improvements which build on the initial £1m accelerated monies and previous investment, providing attractive public spaces which together dramatically improve the look and feel of the whole Town Centre and key gateways into it. These are specifically at Vineyard Gateway, Essex County Hospital site, Balcerne Gate (phase 2), and Holy Trinity Square. Several key pedestrianised streets are made fully Kerbless to green and sustainable principles. The Grade 1 listed Holy Trinity Church; Colchester's oldest standing building is brought back as a new community hub, and the first phases of restoring the locally loved 'Jumbo' water tower is supported.

Engagement feedback from the community in support of this project included

“ 86% (online public) strongly/agree that a more attractive public realm would encourage more people into the town centre, 83% (online public) said that Colchester should be “greener”, “making the town look cared for and looked after will be such a boost”, “A greater recognition of the towns past, and weave that into the experience of the town”, More arts and cultural events. Do everything to put Colchester in the premier league of tourist destinations”



▶ THEORY OF CHANGE:

- Objectives** Boosting quality of life for residents and strengthening the towns attractiveness to businesses; encouraging more people to live and work in our Town Centre. These targeted investments will enhance Colchester as a destination; with early tangible improvements providing a strong and visible signal of our ambition and intent for the town. They support us in proudly promoting Colchester's rich heritage as a key asset and unique selling proposition.
-
- Inputs** Redevelopment of a suite of 5 key sites and gateways in the Town Centre, enhancements to 5 key pedestrianised streets, investment in 3 historic buildings.
-
- Outputs** 17,014 sqm of new or improved public realm created, 40-70 new Net FTE jobs, wider uplift of £3.36m GVA pa, three key historic buildings preserved, further important historic features are enhanced and recognised, 220 high-quality homes created in or adjacent to the core town centre.
-
- Outcomes** This intervention will have an immediate impact on our town; driving local economic recovery in the light of Covid-19 including supporting our retail and hospitality sector, supporting the creative and cultural sector, and helping to protect other town centre jobs. The new spaces created will provide play opportunities for children, and outside theatrical and creative activity will animate the new public space, which acts as an enabler to pop-up businesses and stalls which form a vital part of our local enterprise infrastructure providing test-and-learn opportunities. The investment provides safe, popular, vibrant and attractive hubs for people to meet and sit outside, develops our café culture, helps to blend the day and night-time economies, and boosts footfall and sustainability. Innovative and inviting through-routes are created, encouraging people towards the quality experiences in the core Town Centre. Together this project is a powerful catalyst to attracting wider investments. It interweaves improving public spaces with showcasing and protecting heritage assets and historic buildings, fuses old and new through potentially digital and augmented reality interpretation, provides new attractive places where people can meet, hospitality sector businesses can serve customers safely, and attractive walking and cycling routes encourage people to pop in to town regularly and more conveniently; spending time and money there.

▶ PROJECT PROFILE: HEART OF GREENSTEAD

The renewal of the heart of Greenstead, which includes Colchester's only LSOA in the 10% of England's most deprived is a long-standing ambition of partners and is vital in order to help this community participate in the successes coming. This scheme would build iconic new housing, a community hub and very attractive public space in the centre of this community whilst helping those furthest from employment and training to participate including through much better physical and digital connectivity; a 'liveable neighbourhood' which gives freedom by making walking and cycling easy and safe and providing bikes. Alongside and interwoven with these physical assets, digital infrastructure, a digital working hub, digital skills development, a new Civic Universities Agreement, and further health and wellbeing interventions will together inspire this left-behind community through a once-in-a-generation investment.

Engagement feedback from the community in support of this project included

“*'The Centre'; - Poor lighting and dark alleyways, No activities for young people, Unfriendly looking building 'Community Centre'; - Tired, boring not eye catching, faded, bland, Not used very often, Potential for more facilities on the site. 'Entrance to Tamarisk Way'; - looking ugly, cold and uninviting. 'General comments'; - "The centre needs to be a destination", "Looks "thrown together", "Centre design does not encourage positive social interaction"; "Creation of a "community hub" bringing all services together – popular", "super-hub where everyone can find all the services, housing office, library etc.", "No real 'pull' to come into the area."*



▶ THEORY OF CHANGE:

Objectives To make a dramatic and lasting impact, reversing the fortunes of this long-overlooked community.

Inputs Delivery of new housing and high-quality, iconic new public space in a new hub developed with the Community according to Asset Based Community Development principles; transforming existing and tired community facilities. Development includes new high-quality housing development and many wrap-around facilities and interventions.

Outputs 3,640 sqm of new or improved public realm created to 'liveable neighbourhood' principles, 4 direct FTE jobs created, 68 people supported into employment, 139 high-quality homes created of which 30% to 100% will be affordable, up to 1620 bikes delivered; coupled with significant investment in key routes to/from Greenstead notably the Town Centre.

Outcomes Delivery of high-quality and re-purposed community facilities with eye-catching design which are inspiring will provide the framework and the infrastructure for more effective and joined-up delivery of public services on this priority estate. This will include community and health, employment skills and enterprise infrastructure. Local social prescribing in connection with a bike loan scheme will help people become economically and socially active as part of a new model of health and wellbeing at the heart of the community which puts as much emphasis on prevention as possible.



STRATEGIC INVESTMENT PROGRAMME 3 – CONNECTING AHEAD

Ensuring business and residents have access to the latest and best innovations is vital to keep the town at the forefront of development and attract investment, noting in particular the strength of the tech sector and the potential to build on this platform. This programme looks to the future of how and where people work – noting the changes seen during the pandemic which may become embedded, the greatly increased need for access to the very best digital connectivity to thrive or even survive in this new age; the benefits of good and clean growth supported by high quality infrastructure, and the opportunity to boost the productivity and profitability of every business in Colchester, building on recent and significant digital infrastructure investment here to stay ahead. This programme also provides coherent walking and cycling infrastructure addressing current deficits. It physically links the town, the University and a key urban area together making travel by the greenest, healthiest option also the best most attractive, convenient and natural choice.

▶ PROJECT PROFILE: 5G.

Whilst it is anticipated that the commercial market will deliver 5G (the next generation of telephony connectivity) in the long term, there are opportunities to bring forward accelerated, targeted 5G infrastructure here in a way that will create competitive advantage for our town and leverage possibly significant private sector investment.

Engagement feedback from the community in support of this project included

“ Consultations identified 8 use cases where 5G would play a transformation role in the delivery of public services; Tech hub, Digital retail, Connected tourism, Smart parking, Digital signage, Building management, Construction, Health and care.



▶ THEORY OF CHANGE:

- Objectives** To date, the deployment of 5G has been stymied by the high capital costs of building the fibre networks required to power them. However, Colchester has a standout opportunity to accelerate the deployment of 5G having already built the core fibre infrastructure, after securing significant Government and private sector investment in new telecoms infrastructure. Harnessing both this and our significant tech, creative and digital sectors, we seek to create a distinct competitive advantage for investment from the mobile operators in a regional showcase project focused initially on tech hubs, connected tourism, digital retail and smart traffic management. We will also invest in 5G in other parts of town which will not see investment under market forces.
-
- Inputs** Targeted investment in a new 5G infrastructure covering the core town centre and other specific places where appropriate, plus development of 'use cases'.
-
- Outputs** A new 5G network covering the core Town Centre and other smaller targeted deployments where most appropriate. At least 15 new Net FTE jobs created (15-year economic appraisal). Specific 'use cases' where 5G will play a transformative role in the delivery of public services which will include one or more of; tech hub, digital retail, connected tourism, smart parking, digital signage, building management, construction, health and care.
-
- Outcomes** Further support for the established and strong local tech cluster through 5G investment building on previous ultra-fast broadband deployment. Better and more reliable access to the internet through 5G and improved access to appropriate workspace through new working hubs, will help support incubators and start-ups in the local areas as well as attracting new businesses to set up in Colchester from elsewhere.

▶ PROJECT PROFILE: WALKING AND CYCLING LINKS: 1) TOWN CENTRE TO GREENSTEAD AND UNIVERSITY 2) ST BOTOLPH'S ROUNDABOUT

There are currently inconsistent links between the Town Centre, Greenstead and the University. Pedestrians and cyclists also currently face significant constraints at St Botolph's Roundabout; a key gateway to the town centre.

Improving the accessibility and permeability of these key places is crucial to the town's development and renewal. Joining them up in a coherent way is vital to building the local skills base and integrating the town and campus; adding value to the student experience.

Engagement feedback from the community in support of this project included

“I would love to cycle more with the family, but the local roads are not safe for children on bikes. I wish we could learn from the Dutch model of having cycling paths on most roads which are physically separated from the road.” “I know of many more people who say they would prefer to cycle but are fearful of traffic driving too close or riding around a busy roundabout.”



▶ THEORY OF CHANGE:

Objectives This project provides a safe, attractive and fast cycling link between the Town Centre, Greenstead and the University and overcomes the long-standing and significant constraints facing pedestrians and cyclists at St Botolph's Roundabout.

Inputs Investment in high-quality walking and cycling infrastructure including a new or upgraded route corridor and new secure cycle parking in the Town Centre.

Outputs Significantly easier, safer, faster and more attractive cycling routes serving these priority communities including new or upgraded 4.8km route. New secure cycle parking. Doubling of local journeys by walking and cycling modes (and corresponding reduction in car movements), improvement in number of residents who increase/maintain their physical fitness, improved air quality, increase in local spend as people travel short distances sustainably and to shop locally. Inequalities are tackled effectively improving wider social and economic outcomes, focussing on areas of deprivation, families, older people and those with poor mental health. Reduced car movements will lead to improved air quality, reduced traffic congestion and form a key and visible step towards climate change mitigation.

Outcomes Coupled with the wider investments in Greenstead described elsewhere this project joins it and the town centre in a coherent way; providing vital enabling infrastructure to help the residents of this neighbourhood participate socially and economically. The New Town and Barn Hall areas which are close to the Town Centre will be made very accessible on foot and bike coupled with Liveable Neighbourhoods described below. Students at the University of Essex will be provided with an attractive and safe travel option; adding value to the student experience and supplementing the planned [Rapid Transit System](#). The link will also form the first part of a route to the nearby planned garden community to the East of Colchester.

▶ PROJECT PROFILE: LIVEABLE NEIGHBOURHOODS.

This project will create four specific Liveable Neighbourhoods in Prettygate, Monkwick, Barn Hall and New Town; these will see through traffic reduced to improve the neighbourhoods; closing roads to through traffic and introducing street furniture – planters, seating and improvements to the public realm. School Streets' follow similar principles but from roads within the vicinity of a school(s) and tend to be operational during school start and finish times only.

Engagement feedback from the community in support of this project included

Cycle lanes should be improved: Assembly (online) 83.3%, Community (online) 85.3% "Create better cycling facilities and make it safer for people to cycle!" "Cycling infrastructure!!

“Make it safe to cycle. Cycling is fun, good for you and good for the environment". *"tackle the school run car driving - ensure school places are where needed, ban all parking near schools, improve cycle routes to all secondary schools and other initiatives to encourage children to walk / cycle to school"*

▶ THEORY OF CHANGE:

Objectives	Recognising that many people want easier access to, and to spend time in, their local community hub, seen during the pandemic but also a long-term trend, these targeted investments will make it much easier, safer and quicker for people to be able to access all the services they need, on foot or by bike. Taking this further, School Streets in 4 specific places in the urban area will make it safe and attractive for young people to travel to school on foot or by bike, starting good habits at a young age, reducing the need for people to use, or desire to have cars; dramatically improving air quality and reducing journey times.
Inputs	Specific interventions in four neighbourhoods within the Colchester urban area chosen for their proximity to the Town Centre and/or existing cycling routes and infrastructure. Other walking and cycling infrastructure will also be developed through other funding streams and investments.
Outputs	Doubling of local journeys by walking and cycling modes (and corresponding reduction in car movements), improvement in number of residents who increase/maintain their physical fitness, improved air quality, increase in local spend as people travel short distances sustainably and to shop locally. Inequalities are tackled effectively improving wider social and economic outcomes, focussing on areas of deprivation, families, older people and those with poor mental health.
Outcomes	The project contributes towards the delivery of a cohesive walking network and a cycling network which includes a series of prioritised route enhancements. Key communities become optimally connected to and from the town centre overcoming key infrastructure deficits and boosting the town centre's role in providing quality walking and cycling experiences, in turn helping people access local jobs and services. The project aligns with the emerging Colchester Transport Strategy , the emerging Local Plan and the Colchester Cycling Delivery Strategy and aligns with many of our authorities' policies on improving health, cutting carbon emissions.

ALIGNED INVESTMENT AND INTERVENTIONS

WIDER WALKING AND CYCLING INVESTMENT NOTABLY EATF2;

Whilst specific priority interventions are included as projects within the Town Deal strategic investment programmes, wider walking and cycling investment notably Emergency Access Travel Fund 2 and ECC's [‘Safer, Greener, Healthier’ strategy](#) will provide specific infrastructure which supports the Town Deal investment including cohesive East-West and North-South high quality walking and cycling routes across the town centre, and enhancements between the town centre and main railway station. It also improves onwards access to other key assets including the main hospital, Northern Gateway, and significant existing residential areas.

SPORT ENGLAND LOCAL DELIVERY PILOT (LDP);

Colchester is one of three Essex districts together awarded £10m from Sport England to develop a blueprint to lift a number of key target groups out of inactivity and tackling the inequalities which prevent hundreds of thousands of people in Essex from enjoying the physical, social and mental health benefits of an active lifestyle. Specifically, in Colchester, the [LDP](#) will align to the investments in improved walking and cycling infrastructure; helping to promote their use and drive positive behaviour change.

COLCHESTER'S FUTURE TRANSPORT STRATEGY;

[This recently launched strategy](#) creates a new overarching approach for how we put health and wellbeing at the heart of our thinking on transport and travel. It sets out a new transport vision for Colchester: “To transform Colchester into a place which prioritises active and safe sustainable travel to bring about health, environmental and economic benefits”. It recognises the impacts of CV-19 on how people travel and how this has transformed our streets including recognising a move towards more sustainable forms of transport. However – specific interventions are now needed to prevent Colchester reverting to its heavy reliance on cars. This new strategy will be vital to underpinning some of the interventions set out here in our Town Investment Plan.

RAPID TRANSIT SYSTEM (RTS);

With funding already committed under the Housing Infrastructure Fund the new [Rapid Transit System](#) (RTS) will be opened in 2024 within the Town Investment Plan period and will see transformative sustainable transport infrastructure connecting key parts of Colchester Town including the town centre, main railway station, University and planned Garden Community. Using latest hybrid or electric technologies, it will help the town centre transition away from diesel buses; connecting with these at the periphery of the town centre where necessary.





TENDING COLCHESTER BORDERS GARDEN COMMUNITY;

Located approximately 3 miles to the East of the Town Centre, this major development will include housing (>7,500 units) and employment land (24.5 Hectares) as well as community infrastructure. It will connect seamlessly into existing and planned active and sustainable travel infrastructure ([including RTS](#)), providing a further natural home for the types of business we want Colchester to attract, with focus on technology (allied to the neighbouring University of Essex with its innovation centre and Parkside / Knowledge Gateway). In addition, there will be benefits arising for residents of the nearby Greenstead housing estate.

UNIVERSITY EXPANSION AND PARKSIDE EMPLOYMENT SITES;

Although the established strategic investment plans for the University will be affected by the pandemic, the significant Parkside employment site within the campus boundary which has future phases identified will be a further major attractor for larger businesses (addressing one of the needs clearly identified within this strategy) in the tech sector, where they will benefit and link to the specific areas of research and innovation at the University. This site is also located on the RTS route.

COLCHESTER NORTHERN GATEWAY;

This significant and highly innovative development scheme includes a new sports park, leisure attractions, residential development and crucially c. 46,000 sq. m. of high-grade commercial development space. This site benefits easy access to the A12 whilst also being located on the planned RTS route and adjacent Park and Ride.

QUEEN STREET GROW-ON FACILITY (DIGITAL, CREATIVE AND TECH SECTOR);

This planned facility, responding to long-standing need to provide significantly more space for smaller businesses to expand, will be located in the creative quarter of the Town Centre, and close to several of the planned investments set out in the TIP for a high quality town centre. It also provides the platform for the prototype town centre digital working hub.

WIDER HOUSING GROWTH

The borough of Colchester is expected to deliver high levels of new housing growth over the coming years. As well as the proposed Garden Community detailed above, there is significant growth expected elsewhere. Within the Town Centre the focus will be on the redevelopment of brownfield sites which will deliver mixed use developments incorporating large numbers of new dwellings. In south Colchester an existing MOD site will be redeveloped to deliver 1000 new homes in addition to two medium sized sites which will deliver a further 300 units. The north of the town centre has long been the focus of large-scale new housing and this will continue to be the case as two large sites will be built out and the Northern Gateway housing site has commenced. To the east, the Hythe area is an established regeneration area which is expected to continue to deliver high numbers of new homes in addition to the new accommodation planned at the University. To the west, Stanway has also been the subject of much change as a result of both residential and commercial developments. Further schemes are underway and expected to come forward which will see a further 1500 new homes created. New housing will incorporate a range of types and tenures to meet existing and future needs.

SUPPORTING POLICIES;

Economic, planning, corporate and partner strategies including emerging Local Plan Policy, transport strategy, travel planning/clubs, policies and economic development frameworks which support and safeguard employment land and ensure consistent design language in all development are established. Fig 13 illustrates the key strategies relevant and the strategic fit between them and the TIP.



Fig 13: Colchester Town Investment Plan Strategic Fit

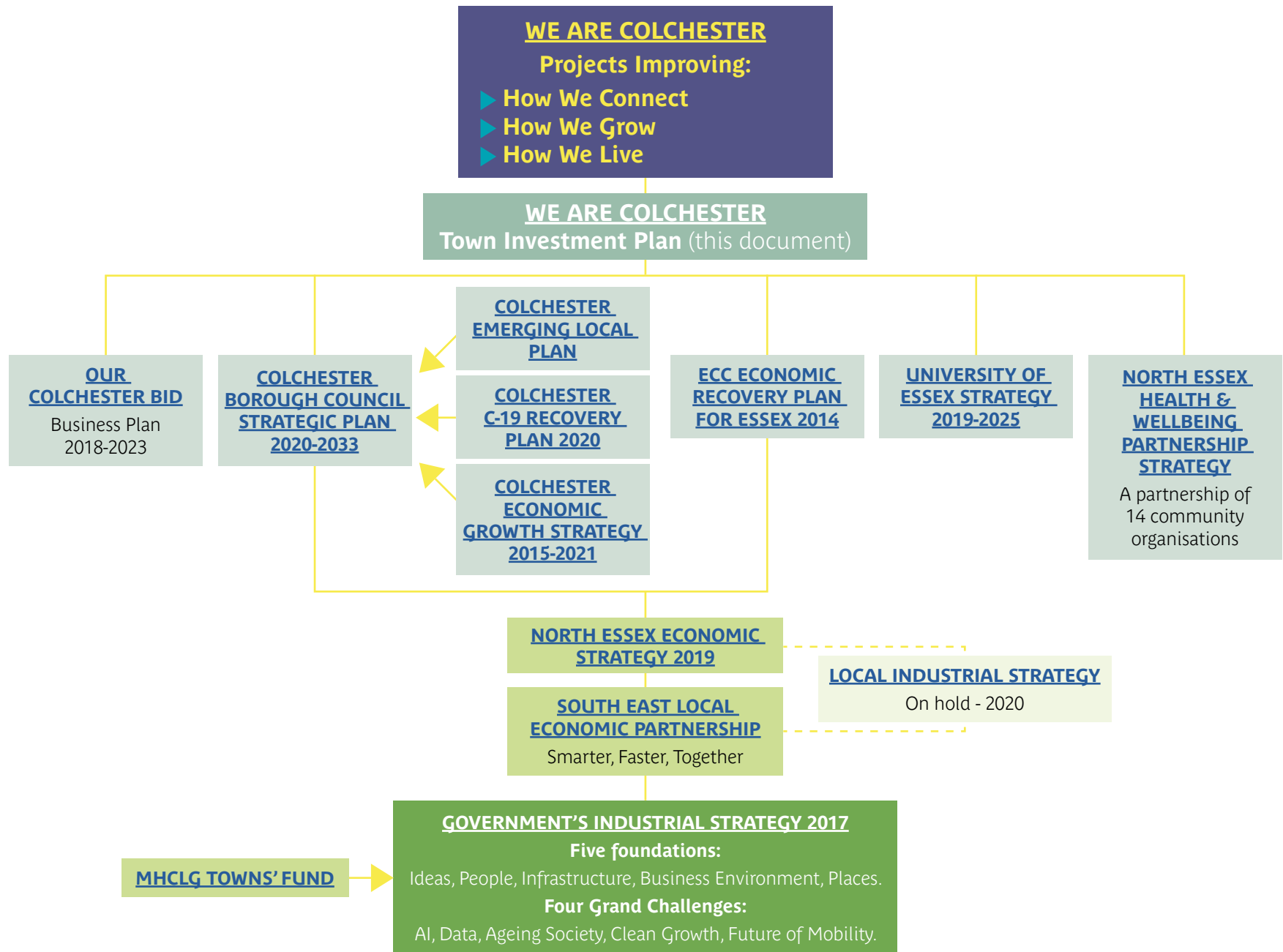


Fig 14: Intervention Logic Model

	Rationale – what is the problem / opportunity?	Intervention – what are we going to do about it?	Outputs – what short-term change will we see?	Outcomes – what lasting difference will we make? (2045 Vision Headings)
How we Grow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Need to diversify the local business base and up-skill the workforce. Several key employment sectors experiencing significant decline, whilst others have significant growth potential ▶ High-earning commuters now likely to spend more time locally ▶ Young people most significantly affected by Covid-19, notably those in deprived neighbourhoods. 	<p>‘Our Town: Your Future Potential’ strategic investment programme:</p> <p>Town Deal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ With £4.3m Town Deal funding and a further £11.1m of aligned funding we will invest in significant new skills and enterprise infrastructure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ New and improved skills and enterprise facilities stimulate and inspire our young people, connecting them to local jobs, training and business start-up opportunities in sectors witnessing resilience and growth. ▶ Attractive new workspaces present an option for people in the knowledge economy looking for a blended model of home-working, commuting and work in a local hub – maximising local secondary spend and footfall including in our town centre. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Investment in high quality jobs and the further development of our well established entrepreneurial culture sees our young people equipped with the specific skills and training to enter key sectors which thrive here; both as employees; and starting thriving, innovative new enterprises of their own; notably in the tech-related sector. ▶ The benefits of good growth including wellbeing and quality of life are felt by all.
How we Live	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Tired public realm, whilst neighbouring towns have seen significant investment to halt decline ▶ Historic Buildings in need of restoration and sustainable future uses ▶ One community remains in 10% most deprived in England and has been unable to attract capital investment to transform the physical environment. ▶ Increase in poverty including child poverty, and declining life expectancy in neighbourhoods within the most deprived LSOAs. 	<p>‘Building a Better Town’ strategic investment programme:</p> <p>Town Deal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ With £7.1m Town Deal funding and a further £14m of aligned funding we will invest in a targeted and comprehensive package of new & improved public realm, restore and repurpose historic buildings and showcase heritage assets. ▶ With £6.7m Town Deal funding and a further £33m aligned funding we will transform the heart of Colchester’s most deprived community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ New high-quality public spaces inspire confidence in our town, signal our pride and ambition, provide opportunities for new business start-ups and test-and-learn trading, and help our hospitality sector operate safely during the pandemic. ▶ The Renewal of the heart of Greenstead, Colchester’s most deprived community will help people become economically and socially active as part of a new model of health and wellbeing at the heart of the community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Residents & visitors experience an outstanding place; appreciating and understanding Colchester’s long and important history. ▶ The town is an exemplar of environmental / climate change measures and changes in behaviours where greener/ more sustainable environment and world class public realm combined with our built heritage create one of the most attractive towns in the country to visit, work and live. ▶ The benefits of good growth including wellbeing and quality of life are felt by all.

	Rationale – what is the problem / opportunity?	Intervention – what are we going to do about it?	Outputs – what short-term change will we see?	Outcomes – what lasting difference will we make? (2045 Vision Headings)
How we Connect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Covid-19 has seen an upsurge in walking and cycling as people make more use of their local hubs: Opportunities to improve levels of physical activity, improve health, whilst addressing long-standing over reliance on cars for short journeys. ▶ Following significant recent investment in fibre network, we now need investment in 5G to stay ahead, and stimulate the competitive advantage of local businesses. 	<p>Connecting Ahead' strategic investment programme</p> <p>Town Deal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ With £6.3m Town Deal funding and a further £8.9m of aligned funding we will create dedicated high-quality walking & cycling infrastructure overcoming current constraints. ▶ With £1.5m Town Deal funding and a further £0.5m of aligned funding we will invest in core 5G infrastructure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ New walking and cycling infrastructure connect people with their local community hub and town centre, reduce traffic congestion, improve air quality, but most importantly improve physical health and help people in deprived communities become socially & economically active. ▶ New 5G infrastructure will support our established and strong local tech cluster, support new and innovative workspace, help support incubators and start-ups and attract new businesses to set up in Colchester from elsewhere. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ All parts of the town are connected by integrated transport systems offering a range of modes to get around and powered by sustainable energy. Active modes of travel become an attractive lifestyle choice whilst an enabler to inclusivity and choice. ▶ Our Digital connectivity and infrastructure provide outstanding competitive advantage for business, and great convenience for all studying and living here. ▶ Our forward thinking, innovative spirit connects old and new through using digital and augmented reality to engage people in our rich heritage assets and culture. ▶ Benefits of good growth including wellbeing & quality of life are felt by all.

DELIVERY

Programme delivery and assurance - **We Are Colchester**

We will deliver our vision by galvanising partners and mobilising the community. Colchester has a strong and long-standing track record of facilitating growth and delivering major capital projects and programmes.

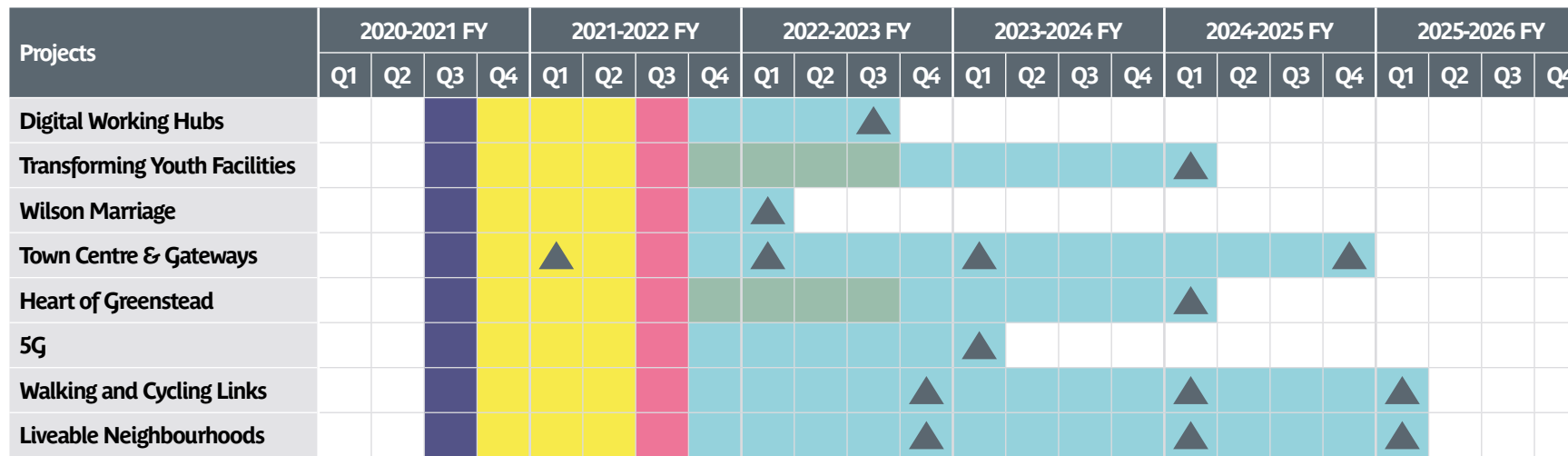
As the lead local authority and accountable body for this programme, Colchester Borough Council has formally agreed to undertake on behalf of the **We Are Colchester** Board 1) development of business cases that build on the project concepts submitted within the Town Investment Plan; throughout 2021; 2) the delivery and financial assurance for the resultant £25m capital programme including S151 approval in the programme delivery timeframe of 2021-2026 in line with the Councils' established and agreed principles for major capital projects; and 3) continuing to provide the secretariat to Town Deal Board including commitment to managing external relationships including with the members of the partnership, local MPs, the public and other key stakeholders.

In the next stages of work to develop full business cases; full consideration will be given to the ongoing revenue implications of for example the maintenance and management of physical assets created through this programme, notably enhanced public realm and green infrastructure.

A full delivery plan will be prepared which links all the individual projects that are taken forward. Delivery arrangements for specific projects will be selected at Business Case stage according to the specific parameters of the project, and may include service level agreements, contracts, and specific bespoke delivery vehicles where appropriate; using wherever possible existing and established delivery mechanisms including our in-house development management companies.

Fig 15. An indicative delivery plan for the projects within the Town Investment Plan.

Colchester Town Investment Plan: Indicative Project Timeline (to be confirmed at business case)



Key: ■ Heads of Terms agreed ■ Business case ■ Funding Award ■ Preparatory Work, Planning ■ Construction
▲ Completion/Delivery (multiple delivery points where projects have multiple deliverables)



STAKEHOLDER INCLUDING PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND SUPPORT - WE ARE COLCHESTER

As we move from planning to delivery, we will engage residents in three further ways.

We will keep people informed and updated through newsletters, the website weare-colchester.com,

We will continue to seek ideas and input through various methods including a [potential] Citizens' Assembly, alternative digital platforms and more creative engagement methods aimed at hard-to-reach / seldom heard groups.

We will energise and mobilise all parts of the community to deliver. Our approach in Colchester is to do things with people, not to them. This is easier when we can show clearly that what are trying to do what local people have told us they want to see.

Both at a whole-programme level, and at a specific project-by-project level, through the development of Business Cases (throughout 2021) and then delivery (2021 onwards) we will undertake significant and on-going engagement and consultation.

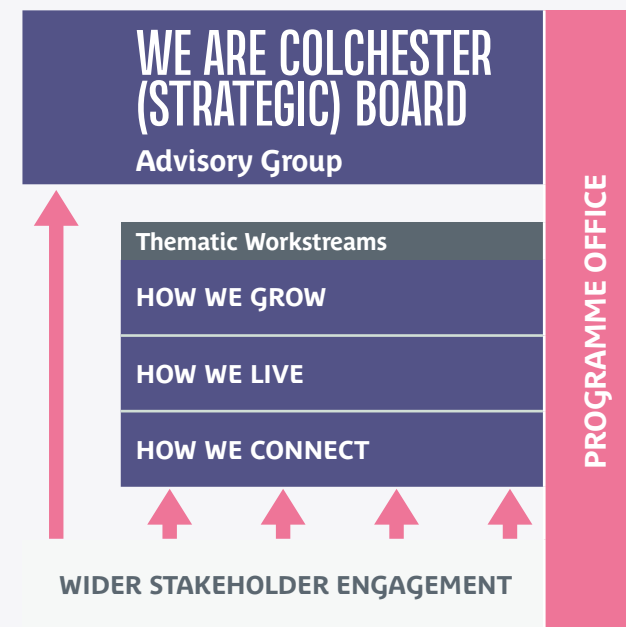
This will take account of all groups, but specific engagement work tailored to the specific project example will be undertaken with key groups including for example the private sector, Voluntary and community groups, especially those working in deprived neighbourhoods, Youth groups.

GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP: 1) START-UP TO TIP SUBMISSION

Currently '**We Are Colchester**' has a **three-tier governance structure**

This comprises of the Board, the Advisory Group, and wider stakeholder engagement for example the Town Assembly;

Fig 16 Partnership Diagram



This Board includes representation by all the key types of organisation set out by MHCLG including Colchester's MP.

Figure 17: We Are Colchester Board – organisations represented



Colchester Borough Council:
Leader and Chief Executive



CHAIR
Our Colchester (Business
Improvement District):



Essex County Council:
Cabinet Member for
Economic Growth and
Executive Director



South East Local Enterprise
Partnership



North Essex Health Alliance



Colchester 360 (representing
the community and
voluntary sector)



Colchester Business and Enterprise
Agency (representing small businesses)



University of Essex



Hiscox (representing larger
businesses)

Will Quince

MP for Colchester

GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP: 2) FOLLOWING TIP SUBMISSION UP TO END OF DELIVERY PHASE 1

In its next phase, Town Deal Board will need to provide leadership including for example further developing our strategic relationships with BID, University, Health and Business – to drive investment in Colchester in a strong, coherent and visible ‘whole place’ manner.

Whilst the specific projects outlined above within our Town Investment Plan together demonstrate strong delivery against our strategy, will act as a catalyst to other sources of public funding, and in some cases demonstrate direct private sector investment and wider GVA uplifts in the initial 5-year window, a key principle of the Towns Fund is to demonstrate significant longer-term private sector investment.

In this Town Investment Plan, we position the Town Deal Investment (2021-2025) to create the short-term conditions in which the private sector will be attracted to Colchester in the second and third phases thereafter (2025-2045 and beyond) through investing in enabling infrastructure and tackling the key inhibitors to economic growth.

To fulfil this strengthened role in attracting the significant wider private sector investment needed in these later phases, we will during the business case phase of Town Deal (2021) develop the role of Town Deal Board, acknowledge the current wider bodies and interests which currently champion Colchester (for example Colchester Ambassadors, University of Essex, Business Improvement Districts; Individual existing larger businesses and organisations), and prepare and launch an Investment Board within the Town Deal Board, the vehicle that will set out this strong holistic, strategic and long-term view on the development of employment land, assets, and development in and adjacent to the Colchester Town Deal boundary.

As well as supporting notable existing and emerging major employment sites in a synergistic way, CBC and ECC in their joint roles as local authorities, along with notable local leaders in Higher Education and industry will prepare and launch a delivery vehicle which is broader and longer-term than vehicles we currently have; bringing together and unifying a current array of organisational and sectoral boards which play in Colchester, along with North Essex Economic Board, Success Essex and SE LEP. Together, and with one strengthened collective voice unified by this Town Investment Plan; these will deliver the unwavering, constant and consistent leadership required to identify and unlock the funding opportunities which could be available in the window out from 5 years to 25 years from now.

Therefore, the intention is that the TOR, membership and representation of **We Are Colchester** Board will be updated and reviewed in 2021 as part of developing the next stages of the programme. Aside from the Investment Board, further boards will be developed as dictated by the needs of the programme as it evolves into the delivery phase. They may merge or fuse with other, established partnerships, groups, activists and boards where this is most expedient to drive the Town Investment Programme and our stated ambition forward.

GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP: 3) PHASES 2 AND 3 AND BEYOND

Given its long-intended life and wide remit, the arrangements for the governance, leadership and management of this programme will be reviewed at the end of each phase, with TOR and board membership updated annually or when significant changes occur. The ambition outlined in this Town Investment Plan will be published and maintained. Progress against it will be reviewed and monitored by the **We Are Colchester** Board.



We are Colchester

WE ARE
COLCHESTER
Colchester Town
Investment Plan