

Memorandum of Understanding between the University of Essex, Colchester City Council, Tendring District Council, Essex County Council and North East Essex Health and Wellbeing Alliance

Parties

The University of Essex (The University), Colchester City Council (CCC), Tendring District Council (TDC), Essex County Council (ECC), North East Essex Health and Wellbeing Alliance (HWA)

Purpose

To improve the prosperity and wellbeing of communities through partnership working across North Essex on shared objectives

This agreement sets out a framework for collaboration between the parties in order to promote the economic interests, health, wellbeing and prosperity of communities in North East Essex. The University as a key anchor institution is a significant economic asset and driver for the area and it was founded for the benefit of people and communities. The importance of having a research intensive University in the region to deliver innovation in enterprise and stimulate economic growth is recognised as being a vital ingredient in the well-being of local residents and businesses. The socio-economic benefits it provides communities include skills and workforce support, direct employment and local spend via procurement and its associated social value. The University supports economic growth in Essex through collaborations on major strategic initiatives such as Freeport East, innovation and the development of key sectors of the economy, including digital health, creative and cultural, care and medical technology enabling further inward investment, business support and expansion, and skills development.

Background

The University, with over 2500 staff, is one of the largest employers in the City of Colchester and District of Tendring. It has over 15,000 students at its Colchester campus. It is a charity with an academic mission and its strategic plan centers on educational and research excellence. This plan also envisages further expansion by 2025 and beyond, building on growth to date. Student numbers are set to reach around 20,000 in the next five years with a further 30 percent growth in researcher numbers predicted on top of the greater than 100 percent growth from 2014 to 2021. The Knowledge Gateway, a 40 acre business research park is home to over 25 established businesses and start-up housed in the Innovations Centre and the Institute for Analytics and Data Science. The University's new Institute for Public Health and Wellbeing will also be based on the Knowledge Gateway in a new building currently under construction that will be home to health related businesses. This new Institute will include the Centre for Coastal Communities that will provide focused support to our coastal areas in Essex, with the aim of setting up a satellite base in Clacton. The Knowledge Gateway has established itself as a regional hub for innovation support and access to finance through the angels@essex investment network.

Colchester City Council is the local authority for Colchester and for the University's Colchester campus. The Council's strategic plan outlines how the Council will address key challenges and opportunities facing the City of Colchester. It also has an adopted Local Plan (to 2033) that outlines future development of the area to guide planning and place making decisions. Its recently adopted economic development strategy (2022 – 2025) outlines how the Council will work alongside partners and businesses to enable job creation and skills, reduce inequalities, improve income and allow businesses to flourish.

Tendring District Council is the local authority for Tendring District. The Council seeks to foster community leadership through partnerships, build sustainable communities for the future and grow an inclusive economy, as set out in its corporate plan to 2024. The Council's Economic Strategy to 2024 aims to improve employment, business creation, and job creation within Tendring. One of the routes to achieving its economic ambitions is through Freeport East Ltd, a hub for global trade with huge ambitions in Harwich, across the district and the region. The Council gained over £25m in 2023 to support levelling up capital projects in the towns of Clacton and Dovercourt and will collaborate with government on a Levelling Up partnership.

Essex County Council is the upper tier authority for the districts of Colchester and Tendring. The Council set out its twenty commitments for the County in 'Everyone's Essex', including good jobs, levelling up the economy, future growth and investment. Economic growth is a key priority for the Council, The Knowledge Gateway at the University of Essex and the university's role in innovation is recognised as a key area for economic growth, as set out in the Sector Development Strategy.

Suffolk and North East Essex Integrated Care Board (ICB) is responsible for improving health and care outcomes for the population of North East Essex and is required to plan to meet the health needs of the population and allocate NHS resources accordingly. The plan will deliver the Integrated Care Partnership Strategy, which is joint across Suffolk and North East Essex. The ICB uses its allocated budget to 'commission' or buy health and care services. It is also responsible for ensuring that services are safe and perform well. The ICB delivers some functions through Place Based Partnerships (called Alliances) to ensure local decision making where appropriate. Suffolk and North East Essex ICB has three Alliances 'Ipswich and East Suffolk Alliance', North East Essex Alliance' (NEE) and 'West Suffolk Alliance'.

Key stakeholders in North East Essex form the executive of the Alliance. These organisations include partners from the health and care sector, County and District councils and Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise sector.

All the MOU partners work to improve the educational attainment and aspirations of young people locally as well as identify the skills needed for future growth.

The future aspirations and forward strategies of each of the parties share much common ground and have the potential to be mutually supportive. It is this common ground which has prompted the partners to set out a structure for collaboration.

The parties agree to work together on the following priorities

1. To work together as anchor institutions to tackle challenges in health inequalities, deprivation, and skills to improve the opportunities available and regeneration outcomes that are particularly relevant to local communities in Colchester, such as Greenstead, and areas within Tendring, especially our coastal communities. This work includes drawing on the capability of the University's Institute for Public Health and Wellbeing and the opportunity to locate the Centre for Coastal Communities on the coast in Tendring.
2. To support economic growth in Essex through collaborations on major strategic initiatives such as Freeport East, Levelling Up, Colchester City Status, supporting innovation and the development of key sectors, including digital health, creative and cultural, care and medical technology sectors enabling further inward investment, business support and expansion, and skills development.
3. To work together on the Centre for Coastal Communities, as an institution which can help to understand, and engage with, the challenges and opportunity facing coastal locations including Tendring.

4. To contribute to the growth of the University both in its student body and its consequent expansion of the facilities and accommodation, with a focus on the expanding Knowledge Gateway as a key economic driver. This includes maximising the social capital inherent in having a large student population, to the advantage of both students and local citizens.
5. To ensure the developing Tendring / Colchester Borders Garden Community close to the University represents an opportunity for growth in jobs, improved transport links, economic prosperity and well planned housing as well as providing skills development and opportunities for residents in Tendring District and Colchester City.
6. To further develop opportunities and a programme of work that contributes to each organisation's strategies for net zero and reduces carbon emissions, acknowledging urgent action is needed to limit the environmental impacts produced by global warming.

The parties to this MOU **will** strive at all times to:

- a. work together positively and constructively
- b. collaborate in order to harness support and contributions from all other relevant partners (for example South East Local Enterprise Partnership and Freeport East)
- c. be transparent and open, sharing information and intelligence relevant to the activities covered by this MOU
- d. be flexible and adaptable in responding to new challenges and opportunities where they arise
- e. pursue interests that will help to further the aims of the MOU
- f. seek to collaborate on media announcements that relate to the issues covered by this MOU, so they are made known to the other parties, prior to their release where possible

However, the parties also acknowledge that this MOU:


- g. is not intended to be legally binding, or to create, evidence or imply any contract or obligation, partnership, joint venture or any other corporate form

- h. cannot fetter the statutory or other responsibilities of the parties as local authorities in the case of Colchester City Council and Tendring District Council. or as a charity and an academic institution in the case of the University
- i. cannot commit any party to expend any sum or deploy any resource other than at its discretion

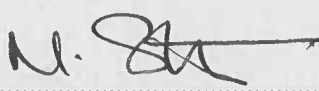
In the case of any disputes between the parties they will negotiate in good faith to achieve a satisfactory resolution.

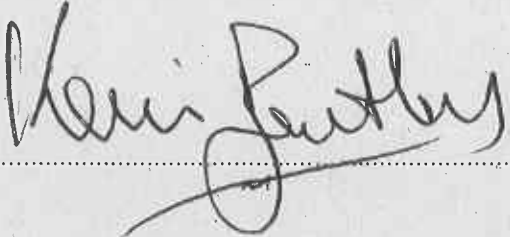
Declaration

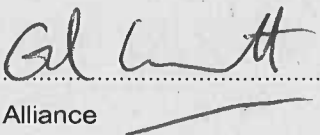
We hereby agree to work in accordance with these principles towards the agreed objectives:

Signed.....  For and on behalf of the
University

Signed.....  For and on behalf of the
CCC

Signed.....  For and on behalf of the
TDC

Signed.....  For and on behalf of the
ECC

Signed.....  For and on behalf of the
Health Care Alliance

Date: Monday 30 October 2023

