



# HARROW

## ECONOMIC STRATEGY

### 2021 – 2030



Harrow Square, a winner of the 2021  
ULI Europe Awards for Excellence

# Contents

3

## Foreword

*Councillor Keith Ferry*

4

## Introduction

5

## Strategic vision

6

## Covid-19

*The impact of the pandemic*

*Our response to Covid-19*

8

## Harrow economy

*Our people*

*Our businesses*

*Our strengths*

*Our challenges*

13

## Skills and employability

16

## Business growth and job creation

19

## Sustainable place making

24

## Connecting communities

27

## Working in partnership



## Councillor Keith Ferry

Portfolio holder for Business, Property and Leisure

**H**arrow is a great place to live and work. We are one of the safest boroughs in London, one of the most diverse in the country and with five Green Flag awards, our parks are among the best green and open spaces.

The borough is incredibly well connected to a global airport hub and the City of London. This Economic Strategy builds on the Council's existing ambitions to make Harrow a great place to do business and to enjoy life, as set out in the Borough Plan 2020-2030.

The impact of Coronavirus in Harrow has been deep and wide-ranging, and the immediate response to mitigate the economic consequences of the pandemic now needs to be built upon to deliver inclusive and sustainable economic growth.

There are complex inter-related challenges to address. These immediate challenges include unemployment, business closure and the long-term issues of low skills, low pay and low productivity, combined with the need to attract new investment, deliver affordable homes, re-energise our town and district centres, and create jobs.

This strategy aims to combat these key challenges and deliver corporate priorities to

address disproportionality, helping people move into sustainable and better paid employment, tackling socio-economic disadvantages, poverty and racial disparities experienced by our residents while achieving our ambition of a net-zero carbon borough by 2030.

Our Strategic Development Partnership provides an opportunity to boost our local economy and make a difference to the lives of our residents.

We are committing to an ambitious plan for 15-minute neighbourhoods, where residents, can live, work, shop and enjoy leisure activities without travelling far. This will deliver an improved infrastructure; strengthen our local high streets; reinforce a sense of community; promote health and wellbeing; and improve Harrow's liveability, providing greater opportunities for everyone.

We want to support local businesses and local jobs through the way we purchase goods and services and help leverage more money into the borough.

This strategy has been informed by an extensive programme of sector and community engagement, involving many contributors, and we are very grateful to all of them.



‘We want to support local businesses and local jobs through the way we purchase goods and services’

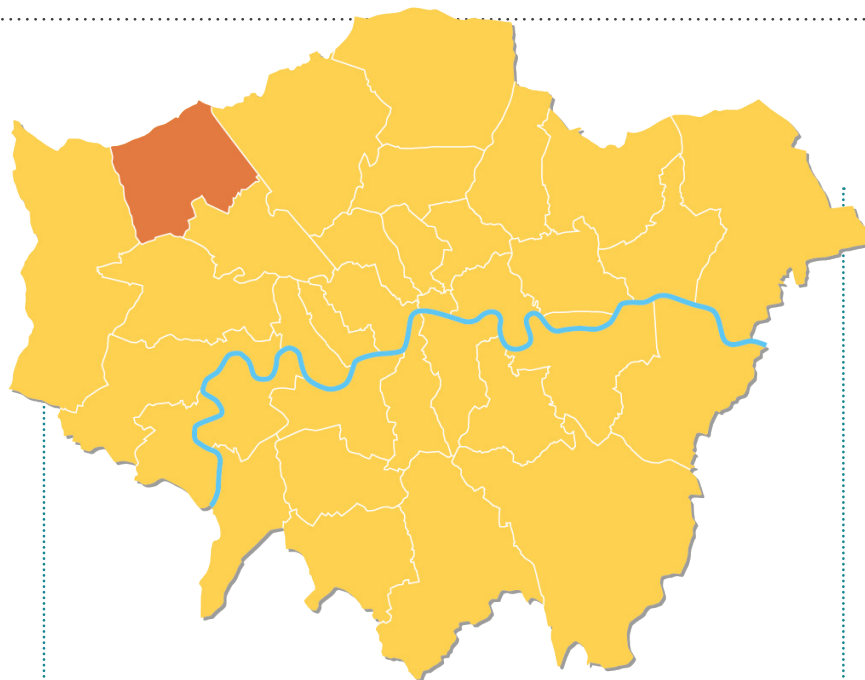
# Introduction

**S**ituated on the outskirts of London, Harrow's accessibility makes it an attractive location for business investment and a critical driver of the modern economy. It is one of the most culturally diverse local authorities in the UK, with around 60% of residents from Black, Asian and Multi-Ethnic backgrounds and a fast-growing Eastern European community.

Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, Harrow benefited from low unemployment due to its location and good transport links, making for an easy commute into central London and other destinations for our highly skilled residents. However, those working in the borough have tended to earn less than those commuting out of Harrow. The dominance of low paid jobs and low skills are mirrored in low productivity, which reflects a business base dominated by micro-businesses.

## 15-minute neighbourhoods

A neighbourhood concept where everything a resident needs can be reached within 15 minutes by walking or cycling, requiring minimal travel among housing, offices, restaurants, parks, hospital and cultural venues – making neighbourhoods more complete and more liveable.



The pandemic accelerated long-term trends in the UK and Harrow's economy. These include automation and the growth of e-commerce. Consequently, those with low digital skills or little access to the internet were left behind, widening the digital divide. The migration to online trade has significantly impacted the retail sector and small businesses, accelerating the loss of jobs in retail, hospitality, and elementary occupations such as cleaners, unskilled labourers, and factory workers.

This strategy is our framework to address some of the root causes of poverty and inequality, by addressing low skills and

wages through the prism of delivering inclusive growth. We aim to replace lost jobs and address inequalities exacerbated by the pandemic by improving the skills and employability of our residents; and stimulating business growth and job creation.

We are building on the central idea of a healthy community by creating 15-minute neighbourhoods, which will enable a deeper, stronger recovery from the pandemic and help foster a more local, healthy and sustainable way of life – building a Harrow that residents are proud to call home.

We are committed to developing the borough by building our growth sectors, investing in the knowledge economy, regenerating our high streets, accelerating the green economy to grow jobs, and creating meaningful opportunities for our young people.

This forward thinking and outward looking strategy will ensure that Harrow's residents and businesses benefit from sustainable and inclusive growth through to 2030. In doing so, we will work with our partners to ensure the implementation of the strategy tackles inequality and promotes racial equality across the borough.



# Strategic vision

**O**ur Borough Plan sets out a vision for Harrow to build an inclusive, sustainable, and thriving economy, with flourishing local enterprises, providing well-paid employment opportunities for our growing and diverse population.

The Economic Strategy builds upon this central vision through the facilitation of 15-minute neighbourhoods, enabling residents to work and shop locally, enjoy cultural and leisure facilities, and invest in our local economy.

We will achieve this by setting the foundation to re-structure Harrow's infrastructure by kickstarting the low carbon economy, taking advantage of altered working patterns to revitalise our town centres and building on our entrepreneurial presence.

Our outcomes are framed by the need to consider the impact of climate change and our work towards achieving net zero carbon by 2030. We recognise growth and prosperity at any cost is not a viable option; and will ensure a just transition to a sustainable and equitable low carbon future for all, thereby reducing inequality in the borough.

The objectives and key outcomes of this strategy are to deliver the economic priorities as set out within the Borough Plan:

## High earning jobs within the borough

- Addressing low paid employment in the borough

## Micro, Small and Medium sized enterprises grow sustainably within the borough

- Addressing employment and encouraging entrepreneurialism

## Employment opportunities to match skills available in the borough

- Addressing need to travel for suitable employment

## Local learning / skills opportunities match business needs / sectors

- Delivering skills and employability training to meet employer needs and resident aspiration

## Vibrant town and district centres

- Maintaining the Town Centres and District Centres as commercial hubs

Leisure opportunities are part of our 15-minute neighbourhoods'

*Pictured: Kenton BMX park*



## The impact of the pandemic

**H**arrow is one of the most culturally diverse local authorities in the UK, with around 60% of residents from Black, Asian, and Multi-Ethnic backgrounds and a growing Eastern European community.

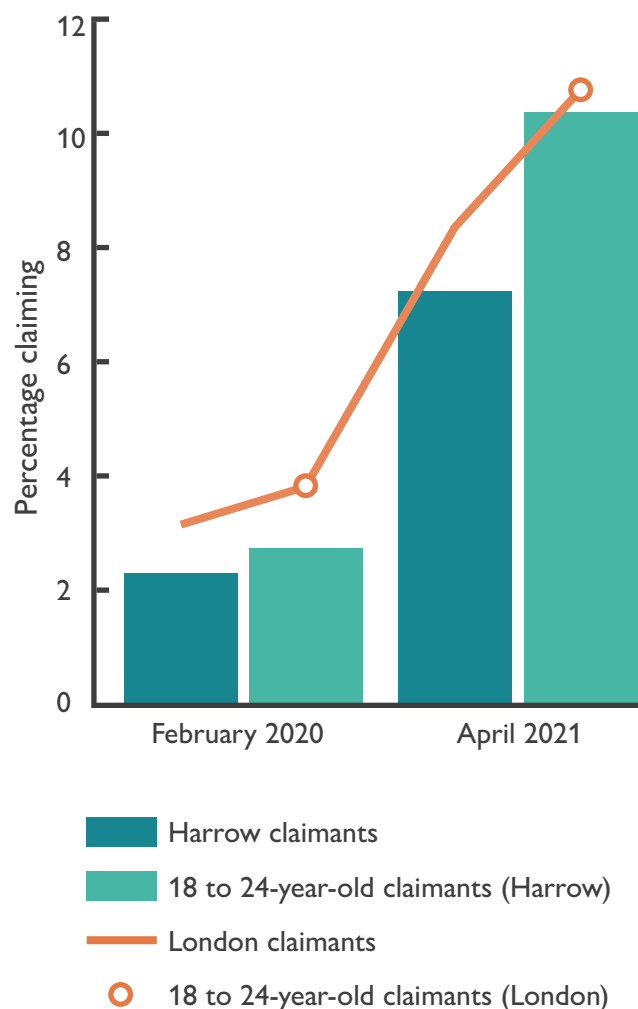
The graph (right) shows that 18 to 24-year-olds have experienced the highest growth in unemployment.

National data show that rates of unemployment for people with White backgrounds increased from 3.3% to 4.5% and for people with Black, Asian and Multi-Ethnic backgrounds experiencing an increase from 7.5% to 9.5%. It is likely that a similar disproportionate impact was experienced in Harrow. Since the pandemic, Harrow (like the rest of London), has seen a significant increase in unemployment.

Local data show the greatest job losses in elementary occupations impacting the lowest paid and lowest skilled workers.

The loss of jobs in this area should not be unexpected, 60% of Harrow businesses were

Percentage of overall unemployment benefit claimants in pandemic, compared with 18 to 24-year-old claimants



unable to trade when trading restrictions were at their peak.

It is too early to understand the immediate impact of the pandemic on Harrow's Metropolitan town and district centres.

However, the April 2021 Harrow Metropolitan Town Centre survey (which took place after non-essential shops were permitted to open) showed the total vacancy rate based on shop frontage as being 11.5%.

With further restrictions on trade compounded by lockdown, this figure is estimated to be around 13% in July 2021 compared to 7.2% in January 2020.



Harrow town centre during lockdown





## Skills and Employability

- Increased job brokerage, supporting those who became unemployed to work in sectors with immediate needs and launched vacancy bulletin.
- Transferred apprenticeship levy funding to Small and Medium-sized Enterprises to create new apprenticeships in care, health, construction, and digital sectors.
- Expanded English for Speakers of Other Languages and employability provision to deliver outreach services.

**£62m** distributed in grants to more than 900 local businesses.

## Business Growth and Job Creation

- Distributed £68 million in government grants to more than 900 local businesses.<sup>1</sup>
- Provided businesses with free 1:1 business advice, training and health checks through the business diagnostic programme.
- Invested in a Business Skills Accelerator programme, helping 250 local micro-businesses trade online.



## Sustainable place making

- Carried out physical and visual improvements to Harrow town and district centres: enabling safe trading, maintaining local spend and supporting social distancing.
- Provided business advice and guidance to support the viability of the town and district centres.
- Implemented transport initiatives to encourage sustainable travel to local centres.

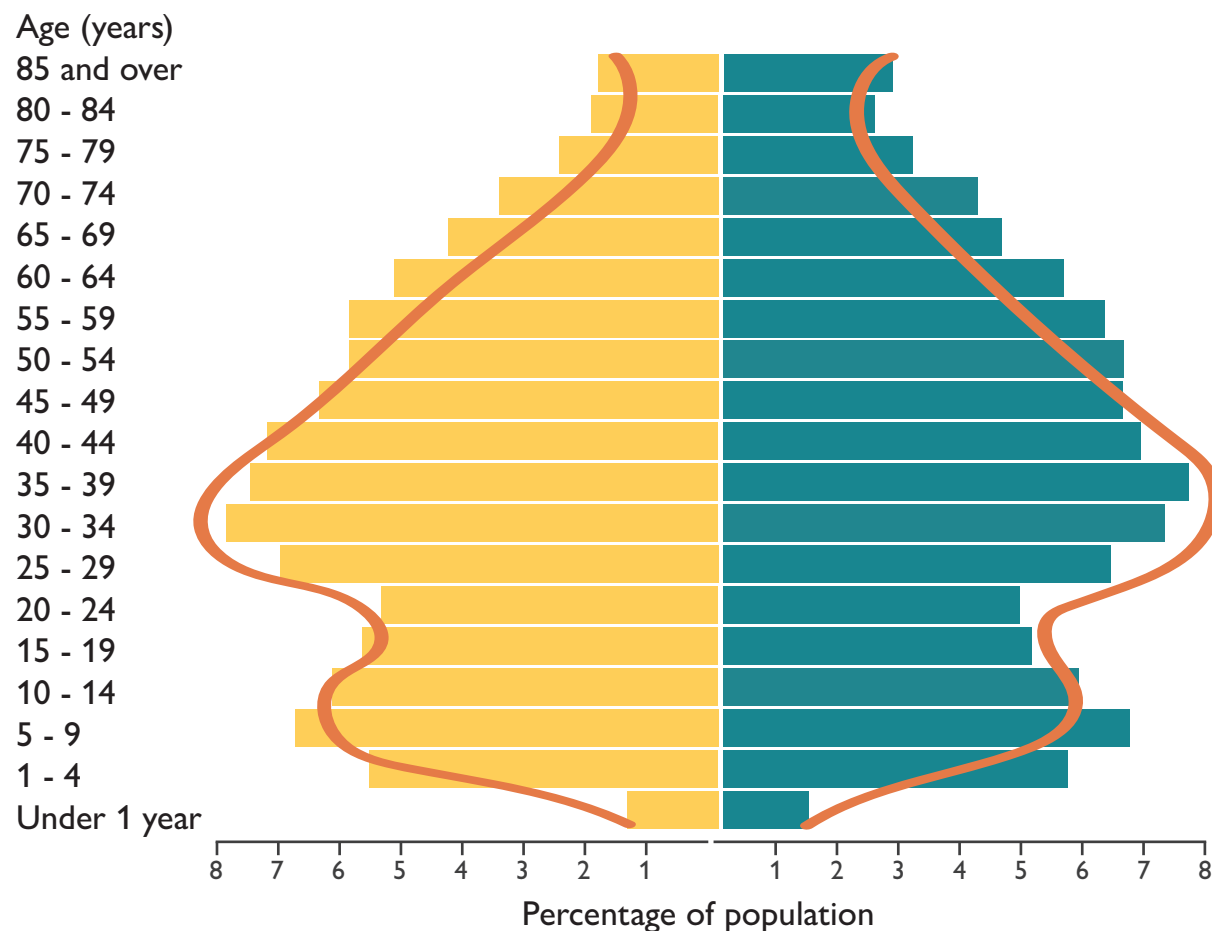
## Connecting communities

- Launched the 'Harrow Basket', to encourage residents to buy goods and services online from local businesses.
- Helped businesses to trade online and develop their digital capability.
- Provided training to "digitally excluded residents" to mitigate social exclusion.

<sup>1</sup> Data as of August 2021

## Our people

SOURCE: Population estimates – local authority  
based on five year age band, Nomis API 2019



Male Harrow  
Female Harrow  
Male/Female London

**2** Harrow is one of only 2 London boroughs which has a growing population of children and young people.

Our resident population is 251,160 including the fastest growing and proportionately largest Romanian population in the UK at 39,510 out of 68,050 EU settlement applications.<sup>2</sup>

Harrow is one of only two London boroughs with a growing population of children and young people.

Self-employment accounts for around 14% of total employment in the borough.

Residents experience a difference in earnings, with those working in the borough on average earning £519 per week and those working outside of the borough earning £727.

Economic activity among Harrow's male population (86%) is higher than the London average (83%). However, economic activity among the female population (72%) is lower than the London average (76%).

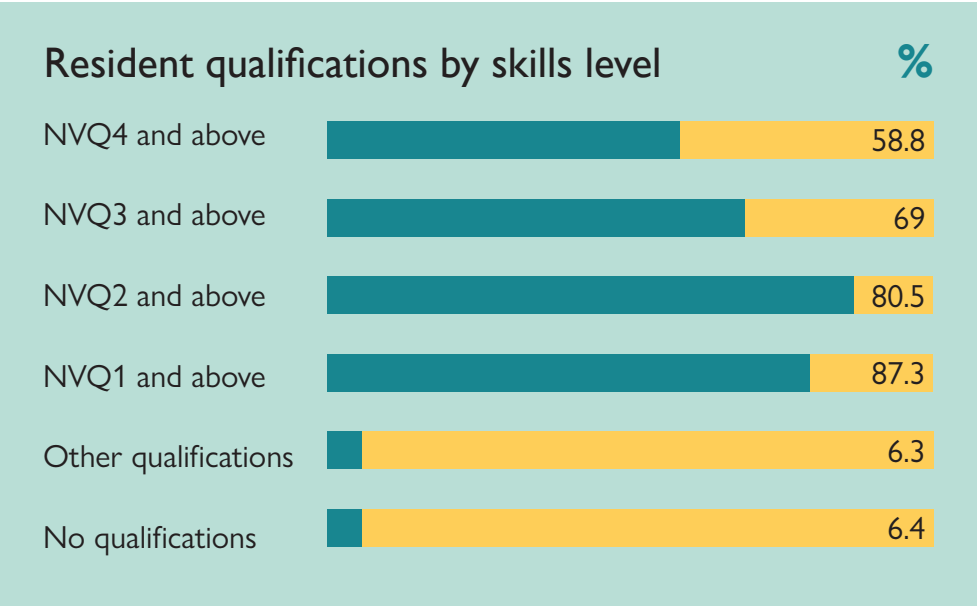
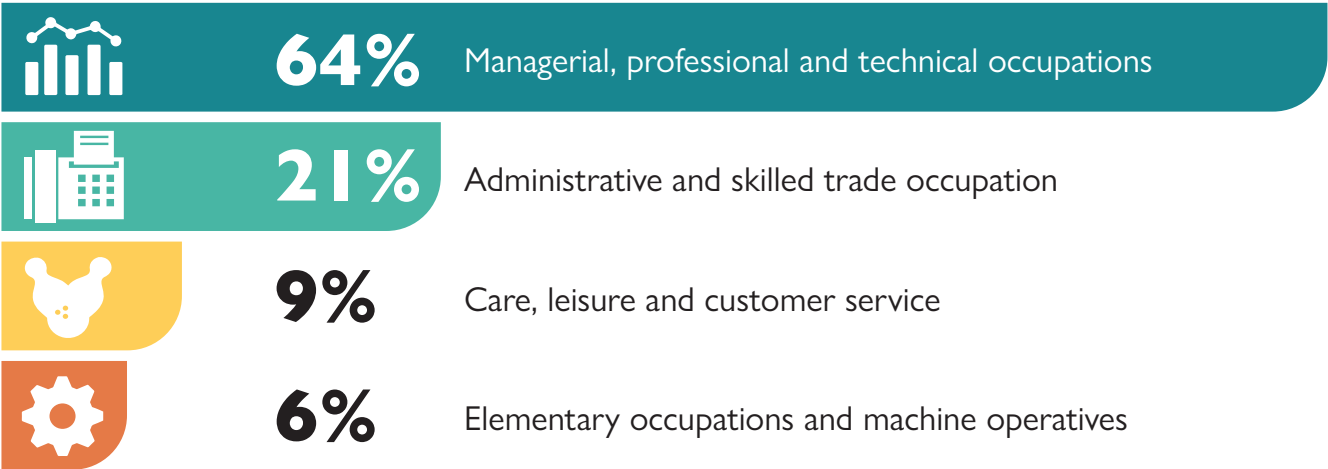


<sup>2</sup> 2019 ONS Population estimate, Home Office September 2021



# Our people

Employment by occupation<sup>3</sup>



**Harrow**  
High streets  
contain more  
than 1,200  
businesses,  
providing retail,  
hospitality and  
office space.



Harrow businesswoman Shalini Gupta-Patel from Red Dot Jewels

<sup>3</sup> Nomis labour market profile 2020



## Our businesses



94% of the 15,280 companies in Harrow are micro-businesses, employing fewer than 10 employees.



High streets contain more than 1,200 businesses, providing retail, hospitality, and office space, with many of our businesses benefiting from low business rates.



High business diversity in: professional and technical information technology and communications construction industries.<sup>4</sup>



32% of businesses are in the knowledge economy.



Ancona Italian Coffee House

## Knowledge economy

The Knowledge-based economy supports advances “towards greater dependence on knowledge, information and high skill levels, supporting other businesses and the public sector”.<sup>5</sup>

Harrow-based Shout Out UK promotes media and political literacy and is a former Harrow Business Den winner

## Growth sectors



Information Technology: Developing a strong base of tech sector businesses in the borough to create a Harrow tech hub.



Professional: Providing higher skilled roles for our residents and increasing sustainable employment opportunities.



Construction: Accelerating home building and the green economy to create jobs and investment opportunities over the next decade.



Creative: Generating new opportunities linked to investment at Harrow Arts Centre and our wider cultural offer.

<sup>4</sup> Beauhurst; <sup>5</sup> Eurostat definition



## Our strengths



Harrow is in the top 10% in the UK for residents with high level skills.



98% of 16 to 17-year-olds are in education, employment or training, one of the highest rates in London.<sup>7</sup>



Harrow has excellent schools and educational institutions, with over 92% judged to be outstanding or good.<sup>6</sup>



The borough has one of the best business survival rates in London, with over 44% of start-ups continuing to trade after 5 years.<sup>8</sup>



Excellent rail and underground links: 5 tube lines and 15 minutes into Central London.



60% of Harrow jobs are in Knowledge based industries, with Harrow ranking in the top 10% UK competitiveness index.



Harrow has the highest percentage of start-up seed companies compared with its west London neighbours.<sup>9</sup>



Harrow has a significantly lower proportion of children living in workless households than much of London.



<sup>6</sup> London Economic Assessment 2019; <sup>7</sup> NEET and participation: local authority figures (Department for Education, 2020 average); <sup>8</sup> ONS 2020; <sup>9</sup> Beauhurst (March 2021)

## Our challenges



More than 10% of residents with low functional abilities require support with improving English, Maths, and digital skills to address exclusion.



Below average workplace earnings for residents working in the borough increasing disparity in income.



18 – 24 year-olds have been adversely impacted by Covid-19, with 1 in 10 now unemployed.<sup>10</sup>



Jobs are at risk with the advancement of automation and reduction of elementary occupations.



Social housing shortages and housing affordability is a major cause of deprivation, having an impact on health, work, and quality of life.



Current employability and training programmes across the sub-region have insufficient capacity to meet growing demand.



Part time work has grown by 8% over the past three years, leading to loss of sustainable employment and causing income insecurity.



Harrow has the second highest average household size in England with many homes being overcrowded.



Functional skills courses offered by Learn Harrow

<sup>10</sup> ONS Claimant Count (April 2021);



# Skills and employability

## Employment opportunities to match skills available within the borough.

The pandemic has exacerbated unemployment and poverty among Black, Asian and multi-ethnic residents, young people, families, and disabled people, particularly in the most deprived areas.

We recognise this challenge and want to work with residents to improve their social mobility by breaking down barriers to learning, training and employment.

We are focusing on upskilling residents for roles that are fit for the future and targeted towards our growth business and employment sectors.

We have seen job losses in administrative, hospitality, retail, and entry-level occupations; therefore, our challenge will be in replacing those lost jobs with better paid sustainable employment.

Mapping current skills and demand for

Objectives			
	Developing skills across the borough	Increasing employment opportunities	Matching skills of our residents to jobs
Short-term 1 year	Support stakeholders, SMEs, and the voluntary sector to provide apprenticeships and training opportunities, utilising the apprenticeship levy to ensure take-up in key sectors.	Develop job brokerage with key growth sectors and micro-businesses: facilitating the entry of young people into the labour market.	Secure inward investment through external funding for skills and employment initiatives, that closely align with the needs of local employers and the local labour market.
Medium-term 2-4 years	Develop routes into vocational qualifications in Health, Social Care, IT and growth sectors.	Support residents to secure job opportunities created through our Harrow Strategic Development Partnership and other construction programmes.	Build on links with Further Education training providers and local businesses to match employment needs for appropriate training and upskilling.
Long-term 4+ years	Address skills shortages in Social Care, Construction, and the knowledge economy.	Maintain the borough's reputation as a low unemployment borough including access to employment for disabled people.	Develop entry, conversion and higher-level learning and work placements that support the green and digital economies.

future skills and vocational qualifications will be an early focus, engaging with our strategic development partner, so that we can inform curriculum development and

access to training through local education providers. Our Adult Learning strategy will be key to raising the skill levels of the local community, including mature residents –

widening access to English language skills and increasing access to basic and advanced digital skills training.

We want to ensure that all young people have a better understanding of careers services and their options on leaving school, including moving into

apprenticeships and employment, as well as help increase access to skills and support for disabled people, linking with the ‘No Wrong Door’ approach. This forms part of our wider work to address poverty and tackle issues of unemployment, homelessness and improving life chances for our residents.

How will we measure this?

What we will measure	Indicator	Baseline	Target
Apprentices in the borough	Number of people completing an apprenticeship in the year	460 (2020)	483 (2023)
Young people in employment, education, or training	Percentage of young people (aged 16-17) Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)	1.8% (Feb 2021)	0.8% to pre-Covid levels (2024)
Qualifications at NVQ level 3 and above.	Percentage of population with qualifications at NVQ level 3 and above.	69% (2020)	71% (2024)
Unemployment rate	Percentage difference of Harrow and London Claimant Count	7.3% (April 2021)	1.1% above London average (2024)





# Case study: Xcite Apprenticeship

Working in partnership with Harrow College and several intermediaries, including the London Progression Collaboration (LPC), the Xcite team have helped many young people make the transition into work, by transferring the Council's levy to small businesses to help them recruit apprentices.

Kashif Mirza, London Progression Collaboration said:  
“The size of Harrow Council's levy pledge and speed of decision making has enabled the London Progression Collaboration to support a range of apprenticeships across the borough. The LPC are thankful to Harrow Council for their continued support, and for leading by example in demonstrating how Local Government can play a critical role in supporting apprenticeship creation through transferring their unspent levy funds.”

At Harrow Council we will continue to support local businesses to recruit young people into apprenticeships and employment, as well as create apprenticeship opportunities within our own workforce.

‘The size of Harrow Council's levy pledge and speed of decision making has enabled the LPC to support a range of apprenticeships.’  
– *Kashif Mirza, London Progression Collaboration*



## Business growth and job creation

### Helping micro, small and medium-sized enterprises grow sustainably within the borough

**H**arrow has a multi-faceted business profile; led by micro-businesses, the Borough is not dependent on any one employer or sector to generate wealth.

There is a large share of Business to Business (B2B) service sector companies in Harrow, trading locally and internationally, offering outstanding opportunities for economic growth. The vast majority of businesses concentrated in the town, district and industrial centres are serving their local communities.

Since the onset of the pandemic, we have been working with local businesses to equip them with the skills and knowledge to transform their trade, in line with the changing economic landscape and enabling employers to sustainably safeguard jobs.

Post Brexit, uncertainty regarding trading regulations and tariffs may impact Harrow

Objectives			
	Supporting businesses to survive and grow	Developing and growing local supply chains	Encouraging inward investment
<b>Short-term 1 year</b>	Establish a micro-business forum and develop programmes to deliver tailored support to businesses and traders' groups to increase their capacity and growth.	Strengthen the Council's sustainable procurement activities and develop local supply chains to stimulate growth in the green and circular economy.	Develop an investment plan and marketing campaign to promote opportunities available across commercial sites, town centres, district centres and industrial estates.
<b>Medium-term 2-4 years</b>	Encourage growth businesses in our Town and District centres through providing business support and partnership working opportunities.	Develop business-to-business mentoring programmes to support small businesses in competing for larger contracts.	Work alongside our strategic development partner to bring businesses into new and existing commercial space.
<b>Long-term 4+ years</b>	Deliver accelerator and incubation projects into empty shops, supporting businesses and facilitating community use.	Revise procurement policies to prioritise local businesses in accessing second and third tier supplier opportunities and their wider networks.	Establish Harrow's global presence as a well-connected location for overseas businesses to use as a base for satellite offices.

micro-businesses in their ability to trade with the EU and globally.

Moving forward, our focus will be on stimulating growth of businesses to

address low productivity, enhancing social value within our supply chains, increasing businesses' ability to pay London Living Wage and addressing income inequality. With more people working from home,



we want to enable everyone to take advantage of opportunities in the town and district centres.

By focusing on sectors and places, we are reimagining Harrow as a place for economic activity and in doing so, we will identify growing businesses, and support

them with their recruitment, property, and infrastructure needs. We will work with partners to sustain our high business survival rates, support business growth within the borough to provide local jobs for our residents and raise local earning levels for Black, Asian and Multi-Ethnic residents.

## How will we measure this?

What we will measure	Indicator	Baseline	Target
Business births and deaths	The survival rates of businesses relative to the London average	44% (2020)	Increase positive differential between Harrow and London annually
Local spend in the supply chain	Percentage of 3rd party spend in local supply chain	22% (2021)	25% annual spend by Harrow Council
Number of jobs	Number of new jobs created	70,000 jobs (2019)	1% annual increase
Residents earning London Living Wage	Percentage of residents earning London Living Wage	38% (2018)	1% annual increase



Harrow Business Den winners  
Danny and Tenesia Pascal of  
Earth to Earth Organics



## Case study: Trinity Bar

One of Harrow's longest standing independent businesses, the Trinity bar, a grassroots music venue has been entertaining locals since 1992. From hosting acts including Kate Nash, Chase & Status and Example, to upcoming artists and open mic nights, Trinity's ethos has always been about bringing the community together

In March 2020 when the Covid-19 pandemic hit, like many others, owner Chris Perdue struggled to keep his business afloat. "The Council have been hugely supportive. We were lucky enough to receive two discretionary grant payments which helped us pay our rent and bills. They were essential in keeping Trinity alive".

The pandemic has had a significant impact on small businesses, but with the business support programmes we have helped our local economy thrive again – not just through funding. The Council have been working alongside Harrow's Business Improvement District to help local retailers become Covid secure – that means full compliance with Government safety guidelines. We've also been working with local businesses and residents to provide the latest jobs, training, and volunteering opportunities.

“ [Harrow Council] were essential in keeping Trinity alive.”

– Chris Perdue, Trinity Bar





## Sustainable place making

### Creating vibrant town and district centres

**O**ur well-connected high streets offer opportunities for infrastructure investment for housing, schools, and health centres: with a green grid linking homes to town centres, parks and open spaces. With around 8,000 new homes to be built over the next decade, we are well placed working with our strategic development partner, to encourage a shift in behaviour towards sustainable and inclusive economic growth of our town and district centres.

The ambition in creating 15-minute neighbourhoods across the borough is to help high streets and independent businesses flourish and prosper, making it easier for residents to live, work and enjoy their local surroundings.

This localised approach will enable the borough to deliver improved air quality, more liveable neighbourhoods, improved accessibility to town or district centres and increased

opportunities for active travel – reducing reliance on car journeys.

These improvements will deliver healthy streets, improve access for disabled people, and facilitate a balanced use of our town centres between retail, employment, living accommodation and leisure.

Our plans for Harrow's development support our wider goals towards achieving carbon neutrality by 2030: aiding delivery of our Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy and supporting the Local Plan to redefine town centres and neighbourhoods as low carbon, low pollution economic hubs.

Our neighbourhoods will be responsible communities and support the growth of a vibrant and sustainable good food economy, providing our communities with healthy and affordable options.

Building on our work to improve energy solutions for our council and school buildings and our fleet of vehicles, we will be retrofitting our own housing stock, working with social housing providers, and encouraging private homeowners to do the same, creating a more sustainable and lower carbon borough.



Objectives				
	Improving energy efficiency	Enhancing sustainable transport infrastructure	Creating vibrant town and district centres	Growing the circular economy
<b>Short-term 1 year</b>	Ensure new developments wherever possible are carbon neutral and designed to provide long term environmental and community sustainability.	Improve the public realm, introducing healthy streets and liveable neighbourhoods: enabling active and safer travel.	Work with partners to develop high street action plans: to increase footfall and improve the public realm: making surroundings safer, cleaner, greener, and pleasant.	Develop an online directory of repair, reuse and upcycling businesses or social enterprises: supporting changes in consumer habits.
<b>Medium-term 2-4 years</b>	Ensure take up of opportunities to cut carbon emissions through renewable energy, the installation of solar panels and other emerging opportunities.	Encourage a modal shift towards more sustainable forms of transport, enhancing the green grid and connecting housing areas to town and district centres.	Establish town and district centres as venues for retail and good food economies: enhancing uses of community assets.	Develop a sustainable procurement policy to drive waste reduction and low carbon outcomes through our supply chain.
<b>Long-term 4+ years</b>	Increase income by reducing fuel poverty through the delivery of low energy new homes and a district energy network.	Significantly increase availability of electric vehicle charging networks throughout the borough.	Maximise the benefits of physical regeneration, leisure, housing, and cultural offer across the borough.	Increase use of renewables and environmental sustainability, including supporting enterprises and providing sector-specific education and training for young people.



## How will we measure this?

What we will measure	Indicator	Baseline	Target
House building	Number of new homes built	593 (2019/20)	802 per year
High street vacancy rate in Harrow town and district centres	Percentage of vacant premises (based on shop frontage)	6.7% per year (2020/2021)	5% (2025)
Air quality	CO2 emissions (tonnes per Capita)	2.39 tonnes per capita (2019)	Net zero emissions (2030)

Harrow View (former Kodak site)  
– 1,800 homes, landscaped space, care home, primary school, retail, employment and healthcare space





# Case study:

## Harrow Strategic Development (HSDP) Partnership

The Council's partnership with Wates Residential is set to unlock the borough's future through the delivery of an ambitious £690 million regeneration programme. The Partnership will deliver 1,500 quality homes, a new civic centre, commercial space as well as green public spaces for the people of Harrow to enjoy. This investment will see new jobs and business opportunities to offer a much needed economic boost at no cost to the taxpayer.

The development will focus on three large underused urban sites in and around the Wealdstone area, with their transformation over the next 10 years set to contribute significantly to local growth and Harrow's prosperity. The three council owned sites referred to as: Byron Quarter; Peel Road; and Poet's Corner have huge potential to support new neighbourhoods, commercial premises and community facilities. Together they represent one of the largest brownfield developments in west London.

The partnership will deliver £13.8m of social value across the borough and present a significant opportunity for residents to benefit from new skills and employment opportunities. Through its work with schools and colleges, the HSDP will share knowledge, increasing students' awareness of the diverse roles available. It will support economic development by building on inward investment in the local economy and procuring local services from local businesses, driving economic growth making a stronger local economy and creating more sustainable communities.





## Connecting communities

### Enabling digital inclusion of residents and access to high earning jobs within the borough

The pandemic has created significant challenges for local businesses, particularly in the hospitality and retail sectors, which have been the hardest hit. The cultural shift to online trading and leisure pursuits has meant that businesses have had to adapt rapidly to survive. It has also been a driver for innovation and creativity as enterprises look to capitalise on new opportunities to expand and diversify.

The transition to digital engagement has been swift, with businesses and residents relying more on digital technology and good broadband connection. For Harrow's vulnerable, disadvantaged residents and migrant communities, lack of affordability, no access to technology and the limited digital skills can lead to increasing levels of social exclusion, and reduced access to employment opportunities.

The development of digital infrastructure is at the heart of our response to support

Objectives			
	Improving digital infrastructure	Advancing digital inclusion	Enhancing our knowledge economy
<b>Short-term 1 year</b>	Commence the roll out of full fibre broadband across the Council's social housing stock.	Ensure people can get access to internet through libraries and community buildings.	Support businesses to develop an on-line presence and move towards digitally enabled operations allowing them to market goods and services online.
<b>Medium-term 2-4 years</b>	Work with providers to deliver the digital connectivity programme for the availability of 4G or 5G in town centres across the borough.	Improve access to good connectivity, basic digital skills and for residents to have access to devices, through a family learning approach.	Utilise the advancement of digital infrastructure to attract new tech companies into the borough and to deliver smarter services.
<b>Long-term 4+ years</b>	Ensure that all businesses, social housing and private rented properties in the borough have access to full fibre broadband or 5G and all new developments have full fibre installed.	Deliver a revised digital skills programme to reflect changes in functional skills of the community.	Develop a strong base of tech sector businesses in the borough to create a Harrow tech hub.

the advancement and growth of the local economy as a whole and key sectors within it such as the knowledge economy. Led by the Council's Digital Infrastructure Strategy, we aim to improve opportunities for individuals and businesses by coordinating

investment in broadband and mobile phone technology, whilst ensuring residents and businesses have the necessary skills, equipment, and infrastructure to take advantage of new opportunities and Smart City technology.

## How will we measure this?

What we will measure	Indicator	Baseline	Target
Borough wide full fibre availability	Percentage of Harrow residents with access to full fibre	12.3% (summer 2020)	18.2% (2024)
Council housing with access to full fibre connectivity	Percentage of council housing stock with access to full fibre connectivity	0% (summer 2020)	100% (2024)
Businesses surviving in the digital sector	Percentage of businesses in the digital sector surviving five years or more	54% Harrow, 48% London (2019)	Increase the differential between Harrow and London by 2% (2025)





## Case study: Community Fibre

Our work to reduce digital exclusion within the borough has led to the agreement with Community Fibre Limited, to provide full-fibre broadband to all our council housing, linking in almost 5,000 properties.

As well as connecting these homes, Community Fibre will initiate a programme to upskill our residents, create digital champions and increase connectivity across the borough, ensuring that many more people can access digital opportunities.

Work will start in 2021/2022 and will include the creation of 10 free Community Centre connections, three digital drop-in sessions per year and free online training sessions for Harrow residents.

This will create employment opportunities to work for Community Fibre themselves as well as enabling more people in the borough to have a suitable connection to enable them to work from home or access digital services.



## Working in partnership

### To deliver and resource the strategy

**T**he Economic Strategy is a key driver in the delivery of the Borough Plan. It recognises the involvement

of educational institutions, the voluntary and community sector, our strategic development partner, local businesses, and neighbouring boroughs across north-west London as being vital to achieving the objectives set out in this document.

We commit to working with our partners to deliver a series of prioritised and targeted interventions to grow and attract businesses. As well as working locally, we

will also work with the Greater London Authority and the West London Alliance to ensure Harrow's businesses and residents can access other programmes, enabling business growth; safeguarding and creating new jobs; growing skills of our residents; and supporting residents to enter new or better paying employment.

In delivering our priorities, we will also deliver sub-regional, regional, and national priorities:



Harrow town centre

Harrow's Economic Strategy	West London Build and Recover Plan	London Recovery Plan	UK Government Build Back Better
Skills and Employability	Skills and Employment	A New Deal for Young People	Skills
Business Growth and Job Creation	Micro-business and Self Employed Growth	Helping Londoners into Good Work	Innovation Green Industrial Revolution Global Britain
Sustainable Place Making	Town Centres Housing and Infrastructure  Low Carbon Economy	High Streets for All	Levelling Up High Quality Infrastructure Green Industrial Revolution
Connected Communities	Housing and Infrastructure	Digital Access for All	High Quality Infrastructure



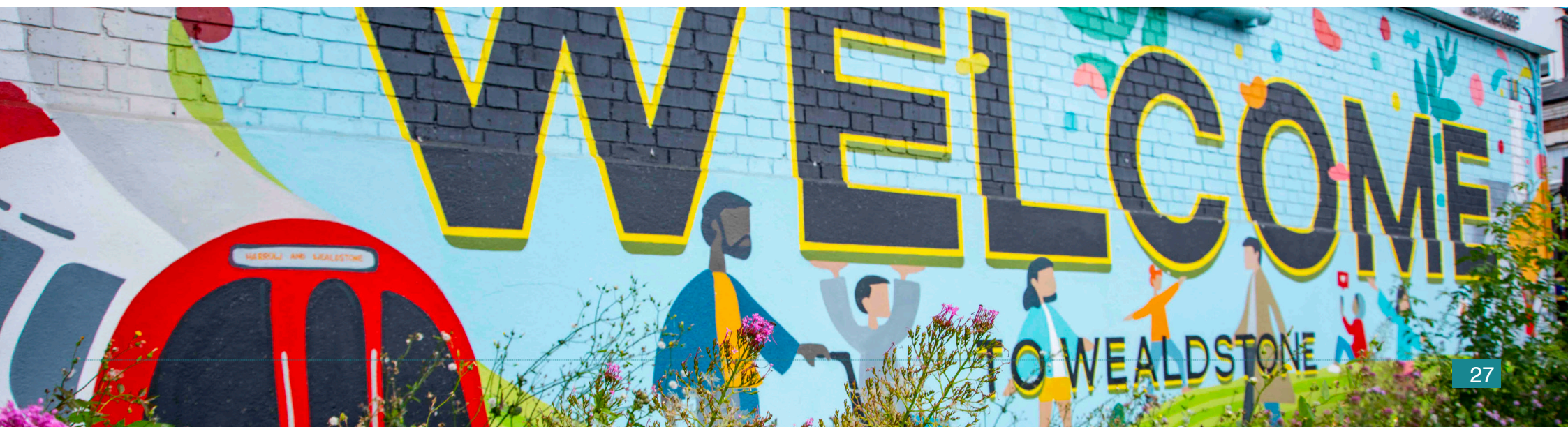
An action plan is being developed and will be taken forward by the Council, in conjunction with local stakeholders and partners that are already delivering existing programmes.

The Council has access to funding from internal sources and from the Mayor of London. However, we recognise that to deliver the strategy in full, further investment and public funding will need to be leveraged.

Delivery of the strategy will also attract private investment to enable long-term sustainable and inclusive growth in the borough. We will work with partners across the public and voluntary sectors to capitalise on funding opportunities, supporting the economic development and growth of the borough.

To achieve our priorities, we will:

- Utilise our purchasing powers, supporting development of our supply chains to stimulate business and job growth locally.
- Build a Harrow Economic Recovery Stakeholder group.
- Leverage added social value from contracts, developing a greater reach into our communities to support upskilling of residents.
- Use our abilities as a planning authority to have some influence on decisions to help support improvements to the borough's infrastructure, building of new homes, improving transport and digital connectivity: making the borough a pleasant and attractive place to live and socialise.
- Work across council services to ensure holistic engagement with stakeholders.
- Develop an Inward Investment Strategy and funding plan to support delivery of the priorities within this Economic Strategy.





# Harrow Economic Strategy

Harrow Civic Centre, Station Road  
Harrow HA1 2XY



[edo@harrow.gov.uk](mailto:edo@harrow.gov.uk)



[www.harrow.gov.uk](http://www.harrow.gov.uk)

