**Essex welcomes major investment in new National Biosecurity Centre**

Essex County Council is pleased to see a reconfirmation today by the Department of Health and Social Care and the UK Health Security Agency of a multi-billion-pound investment in a new National Biosecurity Centre (NBC) in Harlow.

The original business case was first approved in 2015.

The centre will be the largest of its kind in Europe and play a vital role in protecting the UK from future pandemics and biological threats.

It will also bring significant economic benefits to Essex, creating around 1,600 new jobs and placing the county at the forefront of global health innovation.

The NBC will consolidate cutting-edge research currently carried out at Porton Down and Colindale into a single, state-of-the-art facility.

It will also strengthen collaboration between scientists, industry, and government, with Harlow set to become a key hub within the Oxford-Cambridge innovation corridor.

Councillor John Spence, Essex County Council Cabinet Member for Health, Adult Social Care and ICS Integration, said: “This is a landmark moment for public health in Essex and the UK. The National Biosecurity Centre will not only place Harlow at the heart of our national resilience against future pandemics, but also create a hub of scientific excellence that will benefit generations to come.

“As someone who has seen first-hand the impact of COVID-19 on our communities, I welcome this investment with open arms. It represents a bold step forward in how we prepare for and respond to health threats, and I am proud that Essex will play such a pivotal role in safeguarding the nation’s wellbeing.”

Councillor Louise McKinlay, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Communities, Economic Growth and Prosperity, added: “This is fantastic news for Harlow, for Essex, and for the UK economy. The National Biosecurity Centre will create high-quality jobs, attract world-class talent, and drive innovation right here in our county.

“It’s a clear vote of confidence in Essex as a place to invest and grow, and it aligns perfectly with our ambitions to grow the economy, spread opportunity and create a future ready workforce.

“We will work with government and partners to ensure this opportunity delivers lasting benefits for local people and businesses.”

Work to prepare the site for operation will begin shortly. The first facilities are expected to open by the mid-2030s and be fully operational by 2038.

Essex County Council will continue to work closely with national partners to support the development and ensure local communities benefit from the transformative investment