Kirklees

Inclusive Economy Strategy

2025

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Foreword

Kirklees stands at a pivotal moment. As we look ahead to 2030, we are determined to shape an economy not only stronger, but fairer and more sustainable – one that works for everyone, in every part of our district, and which guarantees a good future for our children and grandchildren. This Inclusive Economy Strategy sets out our shared ambition: to build a resilient, productive and sustainable economy where all our residents can thrive. It is a strategy rooted in the belief that economic growth must go hand in hand with social justice and environmental responsibility.

We are proud of our heritage and confident in our future. Kirklees is home to world-class manufacturing, a growing health innovation sector, and a vibrant network of communities with deep resilience and creativity. But we also recognise the challenges we face: persistent inequalities, rising economic inactivity, and the urgent need to transition to a low-carbon future.

This strategy is our response. It is bold in its vision and practical in its delivery. It focuses on three clear priorities: supporting our people to develop the skills they need to access good jobs; enabling our businesses to grow, investing and leading the way in inclusive and sustainable practices; and investing in our places – our towns, villages and infrastructure—to unlock opportunity and improve quality of life. Our ambition is rooted in the values and priorities of the Council Plan 2025-26: getting the basics right, protecting the most vulnerable, and enabling thriving communities. We are focused on delivering real change!

We will not achieve this alone. This is a strategy for everyone in Kirklees. It is a call to action for all of us—public, private and voluntary sectors – to work together. It reflects the voices of our communities and the strengths of our partnerships. Together, we will ensure that Kirklees is not just a place where the economy grows – but a place where everyone can share in that growth.

For too long, the North of England has been held back by underinvestment – its people, places and potential overlooked in favour of short-term gains elsewhere. In Kirklees, we know that this has come at a cost: to our economy, to our communities, and to the life chances of too many of our residents. This strategy is therefore also an invitation to Government to support our ambitions – both the specific actions identified in this document but also to redress the balance through long-term change to core funding approaches. We invite all our partners to join us in delivering this vision. Now is the time to invest in Kirklees. Now is the time to deliver the inclusive, sustainable and prosperous future our communities deserve.

Leader of the Council, Councillor Carole Pattison

Portfolio Holder for Finance and Regeneration, Councillor Graham Turner

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Executive Summary

This is the first Inclusive Economic Strategy for Kirklees, developed by Kirklees Council.

Inclusive growth is defined by the Royal Society of Arts Inclusive Growth Commission as 'enabling as many people as possible to contribute to and benefit from growth.' This can be both social – benefitting people across the labour market spectrum, including groups that face high barriers to high quality employment – or place based, addressing inequalities in opportunity between different localities[1].

The Inclusive Economy Strategy sets out how, working with a wide range of public, private and voluntary sector partners we will create the conditions for economic growth across Kirklees – and how, working together, we will ensure that as many communities and residents as possible both contribute to and benefit from growth.

The Inclusive Economy Strategy covers the period from 2025-2030. It sets out a vision, objectives and high-level priorities for action under three main themes:

- supporting our People to have the skills they need and to access jobs where those skills will be put to good use, including helping those residents who are furthest from the labour market to re-enter and remain in work
- supporting businesses, including social enterprises to start up, grow and invest so they create more good jobs, improve their productivity and increase wage levels whilst contributing to wider inclusive growth aims
- investing in our diverse Places and the physical and digital connections between them to increase access to job opportunities for Kirklees residents, widen the talent pool for local businesses and ensure that Kirklees remains a fantastic place to live, work and do business.

The strategy is aligned with the Government's emerging Industrial Strategy and Get Britain Working white paper, and with the West Yorkshire Local Growth Plan. The Inclusive Economy Strategy forms part of a wider suite of 'top tier' strategies developed by the Council and its partners – the Inclusive Communities Framework, the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the Environment Strategy.

1 Inclusive Growth Commission – Making our Economy Work for Everyone, RSA, 2017

Socio-economic context

Introduction

Perfectly placed between the core cities of Leeds, Manchester and Sheffield, Kirklees is an exceptional business location with strong connections to the UK's strategic road and rail network offering ready access to international airports and seaports.

Perfectly placed

Part of West Yorkshire, Kirklees is strategically located at the heart of the UK and the centre of the Leeds, Manchester and Sheffield City Region triangle – a pivotal central location within the UK's £339billion Northern Powerhouse.

Excellent transport networks include:

- Easy access to the M62, M1 and A1
- Direct rail links to Manchester and Leeds in 30 minutes, through to London in 2 hours
- Manchester and Leeds Bradford airports within 45 minutes, and a direct train to Manchester airport
- Seaports at Liverpool, Hull, Immingham and Teesport within 2 hours.

Figure 1: Map showing Kirklees' position within the northern region

Why Kirklees

Kirklees is the perfect place for businesses to grow, innovate and improve efficiency. We have industrial property solutions for investing businesses, including priority areas offering incentives and opportunities for development of employment space.

An integral part of Kirklees' £8.35 billion GVA economy, 15,000 local businesses benefit from:

- commercial property rents up to 15% cheaper than competitor destinations
- Grade A office space costing up to c63% less than nearby cities
- potential incentives to support delivery of employment space
- fast access to world-leading research and innovation centres
- affordable gigabit-speed internet services across 91% of the district
- a highly developed sector supply chain and easy access to exporting
- access to 7 million consumers within one-hour's travel
- dedicated business support via Business Kirklees
- a skilled local workforce, with significant labour-saving costs
- a beautiful, vibrant place to live and work.

Our diverse network of larger towns – Huddersfield and Dewsbury – and local centres (like Batley, Cleckheaton, Heckmondwike, Holmfirth and Marsden) – are evolving as centres for shopping, leisure and community activity and offer a wide range of housing with easy access to beautiful surroundings, including part of the majestic Peak District National Park which lies within the Kirklees boundary.

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Figure 2: Interesting facts and figures about Kirklees (please see the appendix on page 47 for an accessible version of this information)

Connecting Kirklees

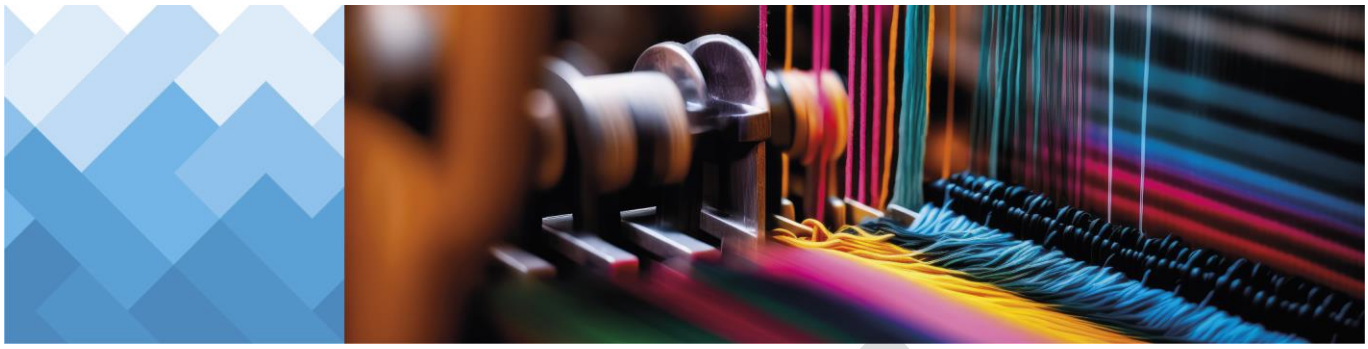
Connectivity within Kirklees and to the core cities beyond is being transformed through unprecedented levels of public investment in infrastructure projects like the TransPennine Route Upgrade, reducing journey times between Leeds and Manchester from over an hour to just 40 minutes.

Figure 3: TransPennine Route Upgrade

Alongside planned improvements to the Penistone Line connecting Huddersfield with Sheffield, these investments will increase access to job opportunities and widen the talent pool for local businesses. Bus franchising also offers significant opportunities to connect more people with jobs and learning. In the long-term, the regional Mass Transit programme aims to improve connectivity between Leeds and Dewsbury. We also need continued improvements to our strategic road network, and to build on our active travel infrastructure to deliver a cohesive network that offers a safe and viable alternative to car use for short journeys.

Despite these improvements, we have yet to realise our full economic potential. This section of the IES sets out some of the opportunities and challenges that will need to be addressed over the next five years.

Our business stock



The Kirklees economy comprised 17,450 separate ‘business units’ in 2024. 84.1% of these were microbusinesses employing fewer than 10 staff – slightly below the England average of 84.6%. Just 60 businesses in Kirklees have more than 250 employees.

The number of new business start-ups in Kirklees increased from 1,735 in 2017 to 2,155 in 2022, or 18.4% of all start-ups in West Yorkshire, in proportion to our share of the West Yorkshire business stock. Business startup data suggests that entrepreneurs from neighbourhoods in Kirklees falling into the 20% most deprived nationally are now responsible for 40% of new businesses.

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Key sectors

Manufacturing remains a key driver of the local economy, accounting for 25,000 employee jobs in 2023 or 15.8% of all jobs in Kirklees, more than double the England average of 7.4%. This figure has remained consistent since 2015.

With twice the national average concentration of **manufacturing and engineering industry**, and an established global reputation in multiple fields, Kirklees retains a pivotal role in the UK supply chain – with many businesses demonstrating their resilience by supplying a wide range of different sectors. Key specialisms include:

- **Textiles:** which has been synonymous with Kirklees for over 300 years and still employs over 3,500 people locally. The home of textile innovation, Kirklees leads the way in sustainable fashion and design, textile and product manufacturing, supplying fabric to world's most prestigious and best-known fashion brands.
- **Advanced precision engineering:** producing gears, bearings, valves, pumps, motors, turbo chargers and other critical components for diverse markets. Global automotive manufacturers, niche precision engineering supply chain companies and leading-edge innovators combine precision manufacturing with data analytics, artificial intelligence and robotics. This is reinforced by the presence of the National Physical Laboratory at the University of Huddersfield which provides world leading measurement capability.

Alongside these sectors, exciting new opportunities are emerging in **health and life sciences**. Huddersfield is emerging as a key regional hub for health, wellbeing, medical and digital technologies. The University of Huddersfield's National Health Innovation Campus (NHIC) will create the largest and most dynamic centre for workforce transformation and health and social care innovation in the North of England, building on the University's world leading research and innovation expertise in areas such as clinical diagnostics, skin integrity and infection prevention.

With the benefit of **Investment Zone status**, the aim is to curate a unique mix of research institutions, public health facilities and businesses seeking to co-locate alongside the NHIC to access its expertise and facilities. This will act as a catalyst for the regeneration of the Station to Stadium Corridor which connects Huddersfield's iconic railway station with the John Smith's Stadium to the east of the town centre.

Kirklees also has a **thriving voluntary, community and social enterprise sector**. As well as contributing directly to our local economy it creates a significant number of good jobs, provides training and voluntary opportunities, delivers a range of public services and contributes to achievement of outcomes beyond the reach of public organisations and mainstream businesses.

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Productivity

Productivity is a key measure of an area's economic effectiveness and over the last decade Kirklees has seen a significant improvement. ONS estimate that the Kirklees economy generated Gross Value Added of some £8.5bn in 2022 – representing a 31% increase over 2015 levels and in line with GVA growth for England as a whole over the same period.

Whilst individual measures of productivity have seen significant improvement in recent years - GVA per hour worked in Kirklees has risen from £22.20 in 2012 to £30.70 in 2022, or 77% of the UK average – a significant gap remains. Factors affecting productivity include workforce skills, workforce participation, access to capital, diffusion and adoption of innovation and 'market dynamism' – the gradual movement of capital and labour from less productive to more productive firms.

There is also a strong correlation between productivity improvements and increased wage levels and household income. Gross weekly pay for full-time workers in Kirklees (based on place of residence) was just 89% of the England average in 2023 – representing a gap of more than £70 per week for the average full-time worker.

West Yorkshire has seen lower investment as a share of GVA than the already low national average. Performance has particularly diverged since 2013 at which point the region's productivity also diverges from the national average. Closing the investment gap would have required an additional £2.5bn of investment in West Yorkshire in 2019 alone.

Our economy has seen significant transformation over the last twenty years through automation, and this will continue to be a factor in driving up productivity. This takes different forms across sectors through robotics in manufacturing to self-checkouts in retail. This progress is set to continue, as is the uptake of artificial intelligence. Whilst this undoubtedly means that some jobs roles will be at greater risk of redundancy moving forward, there is also an opportunity to create new, skilled roles to support greater use of automation, digitisation and AI.

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Demographics and the labour market

Kirklees had a population of 433,500 residents in 2021. In the ten years from 2011, the population increased by 2.5% – a slower growth rate than for Yorkshire and Humber (3.7%) or England (6.6%) as a whole. In 2021, 62.2% of the Kirklees population was aged 16-64 or of working age, slightly lower than the working age population of England as a whole (63%).

Kirklees is a net exporter of labour to other parts of West Yorkshire, with 2021 (pre-COVID) data highlighting significant net outflows of commuters to Leeds in particular (-13,564 commuters) but also to Bradford, Calderdale and Wakefield. There is a small net inflow of less than 1,500 commuters from Barnsley.

Commuting patterns partly explain why the number of jobs available in Kirklees relative to the number of working age adults (the 'jobs density') is low – at just 0.66 in 2022, compared to the England average of 0.88. Job density is also higher in the adjoining local authority areas (e.g. Wakefield 0.80, Calderdale 0.83, Leeds 1.03) which suggests there is scope to increase employment and economic activity rates in Kirklees as long as residents have the necessary skills and the right environment for business growth is in place.

There has been a significant reduction in the number of adults holding no qualifications – in December 2023 this equated to 6.6% of residents aged 16+, only marginally higher than the England average of 6.2%. The proportion of Kirklees residents qualified to at least Level 2 (equivalent to 5 GCSEs at grades A-C) also mirrors the England average, but there is a significant divergence at Levels 3 and 4.

41.2% of Kirklees residents hold a degree or higher qualification (RFQ Level 4) – significantly lower than the England average. Closing the gap would require almost 15,000 Kirklees residents to achieve a Level 4 qualification.

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Poverty, worklessness, and health and wellbeing

Economic inactivity has increased both locally and nationally since the COVID pandemic, especially for residents aged 50+. In June 2024 there were 64,600 economically inactive residents of working age (23.5% of the working age population compared with 21.0% for England as a whole) – 10,000 of which want to work.

The overall picture of economic inactivity is worse for women as the gap to the national average is wider (around 4%) than for men (around 2%) and continues to diverge. Poor health and wellbeing, and worklessness are inextricably linked, with a high proportion of economically inactive residents suffering from one or more limiting health condition. This is especially the case for residents aged 50+.

Health inequalities are especially acute in our most deprived neighbourhoods – with males living in our most deprived wards experiencing a difference in life expectancy of 8.6 years than those living in our most affluent wards. Health Equity North found in their Health for Wealth report that ill-health in the North of England:

- reduced the probability of remaining in employment by 4.9% (3.5% in rest of England),
- reduced relative weekly wages by 32.4% (19.5% in rest of England),
- reduced household income by 13.3% (no effect in rest of England), and
- amongst those who remained in employment, reduced hours worked by 5.6% (7.9% in rest of England).

Kirklees has three neighbourhoods within the wealthiest quarter in England but also a quarter of neighbourhoods fall within the poorest 10%. Nationally we know that disposable income – our best measure of living standards – for the bottom 10% of households barely changed over the 20 years to 2020 while all other groups saw improvements of around 25%.

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Alternative business models

A healthy and resilient economy is one which has a range of business types and broad ownership. Community ownership and worker ownership have been demonstrated to be beneficial in improving long-term decision making and increasing investments in research and development as well as improving employee terms and conditions and environmental impact.

Employee ownership is seeing a rapid increase nationally and there have been some recent examples of Kirklees businesses taking up this option to ensure succession. This option may be attractive to more SMEs moving forward. There are also opportunities to extend cooperative approaches in key areas including rolling out digital infrastructure, renewable energy generation and home energy efficiency.

Creative and digital

Kirklees has a diverse cultural offering and growing number of creative businesses, freelancers, and cultural organisations that contribute to local employment, innovation, and place-making. Simultaneously, Kirklees has seen the information and communication sector grow by 167% in the 10 years to 2023. While development of Our Cultural Heart in Huddersfield will promote creative industries in Kirklees and draw on our heritage to attract people to spend time in the area, application of digital skills and technology are core to innovation in our wider economy.

We are committed to creating new cultural infrastructure – such as venues, galleries, studios, and festivals—that will animate public spaces, increase footfall, and support the night-time economy. We also recognise the role culture can play in tackling inequality by engaging communities, improving wellbeing, and creating pathways into employment.

Sustainability and net zero

Human activity since the industrial revolution – particularly the burning of fossil fuels – has driven climate change. The 2015 Paris Agreement created a legally binding international treaty on reducing greenhouse gas emissions to limit climate change to 1.5ºC above pre-industrial levels.

Kirklees Council declared a climate emergency in 2019, and following analysis by the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change agreed to reach net zero – i.e. no longer adding to the total amount of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, including carbon dioxide (CO2) and methane – and be climate ready by 2038. This is in line with the 2038 net zero targets agreed by the West Yorkshire Combined Authority and Yorkshire Leaders Board.

In 2022, the transport sector accounted for 28% of UK emissions with industry accounting for a further 19%. Business therefore has a critical role to play in meeting net zero targets – in the transition away from fossil fuels to sustainable energy sources, in reducing waste and use of resources and in developing more sustainable solutions to transport goods and employees.

There are significant economic opportunities for Kirklees businesses arising from the transition to net zero. This includes being part of the renewable energy supply chain and developing sustainable construction methods as well as developing the role of the circular economy which reduces waste and supports refurbishment and recycling of materials and products.

Capitalising on this opportunity will require more businesses and their employees to acquire green skills. For Universities, Colleges and training providers delivering appropriate training courses can be challenging as there is often a lag in business/learner demand which drives funding.

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Conclusion

Kirklees is a great place to start and grow a business – but we have yet to fully capitalise on its economic potential. Unprecedented levels of infrastructure investment, particularly in improving rail connectivity, are opening up new opportunities for housing and commercial development and widening access to skilled labour from across West Yorkshire and Greater Manchester.

Manufacturing and engineering continue to play a vital role in our economy, alongside new opportunities in the health and life sciences. We are truly ‘the supply chain’ to the nation, with many of our most resilient and dynamic businesses supplying a wide range of sectors.

Productivity is improving, but there is still a significant gap to the UK average, and this impacts not only on our economic performance but also on wage levels and household incomes. In addition, levels of economic inactivity are rising, often linked to poor health and wellbeing, particularly in those aged 50 and over. Tackling these challenges together is essential if Kirklees is to be a genuinely inclusive economy affording all residents the opportunity to both contribute and benefit from growth.

Figure 4: Working in partnership

Policy Framework

The Inclusive Economy Strategy (IES) has been developed during a period of change in the national policy landscape, with a new Government adopting a renewed focus on economic growth with the publication of a series of strategic documents including the UK's Modern Industrial Strategy, the 10-Year Infrastructure Strategy and the Get Britain Working White Paper.

This section of the IES presents an overview of the national, regional and local policy frameworks and the related policy drivers that will impact on the delivery of the strategy.

The UK's Modern Industrial Strategy

The Government published The UK's Modern Industrial Strategy in June 2025. The strategy outlines the Government's plans to deliver its priority mission "to deliver strong, secure, and sustainable economic growth to boost living standards for working people in every part of the UK".

The Industrial Strategy describes a new world era that is "more volatile, with new threats to our security and living standards" but also "a world of enormous and exciting possibility". It argues that we "need a new relationship between business and government, where government provides the strategic certainty that allows businesses… to create wealth". The strategy seeks to create "ease, speed, and long-term stability for business" by "supporting the UK's city regions and clusters… supporting our frontier industries… [and] creating an enduring partnership with business".

While inventors, entrepreneurs and tech adopters being able to attract private investment is at the heart of the strategy, there is a clear strategic and coordinating role for the Government who recognise the need to prioritise the interventions and investments that will deliver the largest growth benefit.

The Industrial Strategy focuses on creating "an independent, high-skilled, dynamic, and economically prosperous country, where opportunity, skills, and wealth are abound and are spread fairly; where jobs are high-quality, accessible, and secure; and where every person and every business have the chance to succeed". It also establishes net zero as a consistent priority, creating good clean jobs" while "boost[ing] green manufacturing, services, innovation, exports, and the circular economy".

The Industrial Strategy identifies eight growth-driving sectors, as well as enabling foundational industries, supported by Sector Plans. These are:

1. Advanced manufacturing
2. Creative industries
3. Life sciences
4. Clean energy
5. Defence
6. Digital and technologies
7. Professional and business services
8. Financial services.

There is a strong correlation between the Government's priority sectors and those that are high performing or display future growth potential in Kirklees. The Industrial Strategy creates important opportunities to see the national policy and regulatory framework better support local business growth and investment, and the IES complements this at the local level.

West Yorkshire Local Growth Plan

The Industrial Strategy Green Paper highlights the significant disparities in regional economic growth rates that have resulted in what is estimated to be a £47bn productivity gap for the eight largest cities outside London.

In this context Mayoral Combined Authorities have been invited to develop Local Growth Plans that will set out how they can unlock regional growth potential. In West Yorkshire, developing a Local Growth Plan (LGP) was also an earlier Mayoral manifesto commitment.

The LGP aims to tackle the barriers to growth – investment, skills and connectivity – that are holding back growth in West Yorkshire. It sets out five high level priorities:

1. **Unlocking growth in priority sectors** – creating an important interface with the sector-focused Industrial Strategy and the LGP identifies digital and tech, financial and professional services; health and life sciences, advanced manufacturing and engineering -including textiles, chemicals, food and drink, green economy, modern methods of construction and space – and the creative industries as key regional opportunities to drive growth
2. **Enabling all businesses to succeed** – which details how public/private sector support for businesses will be developed; support for alternative business models and promoting good business practices including the Fair Work Charter
3. **A region of learning and creativity** – this sets out how West Yorkshire's education and training system will be enhanced, including new technical pathways; improving the transition between different stages of education/learning; boosting the availability of early years childcare provision and increasing employer investment in skills
4. **Transport and connectivity** – which sets out the Combined Authority's plans to develop a Mass Transit network, initially focused on connecting Bradford with Leeds and Leeds and the White Rose shopping centre; development of a deregulated, franchised bus network across West Yorkshire; and highlighting the importance of rail infrastructure investment including the Transpennine Route Upgrade and Penistone Line
5. **Supporting thriving places** – acknowledging that vibrant places drive economic growth, the LGP identifies a series of 'Corridors of Opportunity' that seek to strengthen connectivity between the core city of Leeds and the adjoining communities; the 'Southern Corridor' extends from Leeds South Bank to include the major Dewsbury Riverside housing site, Dewsbury Town Centre and the Station to Stadium Corridor in Huddersfield.

As the Local Growth Plan continues to inform engagement with Government – particularly around the Industrial Strategy – the Council will continue to ensure that opportunities for investment in Kirklees are showcased.

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Local Policy Framework

Kirklees Shared Outcomes

The Council and its partners have a shared vision for Kirklees – for it to be a district that combines a strong, sustainable economy with a great quality of life – leading to thriving communities, growing businesses, high prosperity and low inequality where people enjoy better health and wellbeing throughout their lives.

Our vision for Kirklees is underpinned by eight Shared Outcomes. Whilst the IES primarily impacts directly on Sustainable Economy and Aspire and Achieve we recognise that our health and nature of our economy will impact on all of the Outcomes. A population that is healthier means a stronger workforce and a more sustainable economy, and a sustainable economy means more disposable income to help children to have the best start in life.

Our Shared Outcomes are:

- Shaped by people
- Independent
- Safe and cohesive
- Best start
- Aspire and achieve
- Clean and green
- Well
- Sustainable economy

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Top-Tier Strategies

The Inclusive Economy Strategy is one of four top-tier strategies for Kirklees – the others being the Inclusive Communities Framework, the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy, Inclusive Economy Strategy, and the Environment Strategy. They are based on shared principles or 'building blocks,' namely:

- tackling inequalities must be at the heart of all we do
- working together we can achieve more than as individual organisations and must use all the levers we have available to us as anchor organisations
- one size does not fit all and the approach we take must reflect the different assets and needs of our places, residents and businesses
- change must be made sustainable through partnership, by sharing power and where possible 'getting out of the way' where appropriate
- our environment is important, and we need to think 'green' and think local
- fair work is a vital way to enable good mental health.

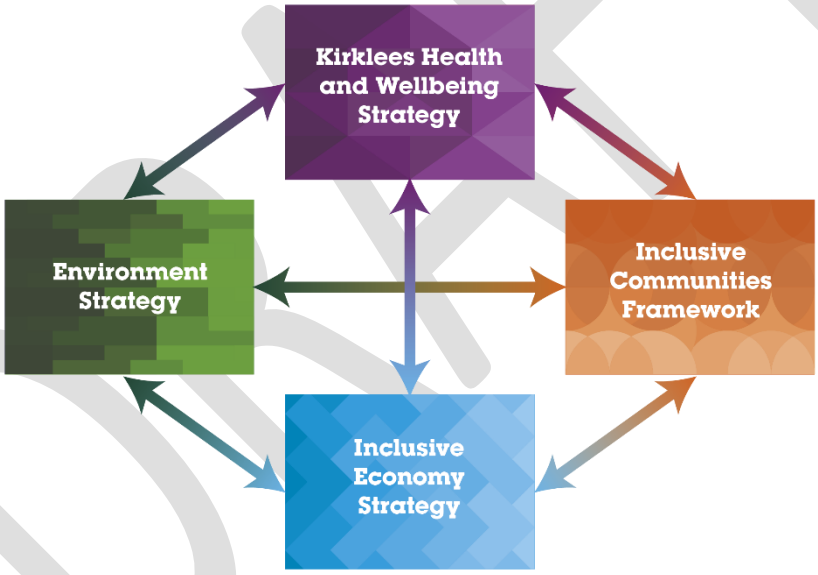

Figure 5: Our four inter-related top-tier strategies for Kirklees

Kirklees Local Plan

Local economic development is dependent on a supportive local plan. One that creates space for new quality housing in sustainable neighbourhoods but also space for businesses to start and grow. Under the current Local Plan adopted in 2019 we have seen an increase of around 930 jobs per annum but we know that land supply has remained a limiting factor on business growth. Specifically, there is high demand for business premises in parts of the district where it cannot currently be met due to limited availability of land and premises suitable for the needs of modern businesses. The Council is currently updating our Local Plan. The new plan will create opportunities for development of new business and industrial premises, in the right places, to address this demand, and support an even greater rate of job creation.

Vision and objectives 2030

Vision 2030

We have a clear vision for an inclusive economy in 2030:

- We aspire to have a resilient and inclusive economy, in which everyone can take part and benefit from growth. We aim to equip all our residents to fulfil their potential.

- We will take advantage of investments in our towns and villages and strong connections to surrounding cities and beyond to make Kirklees one of the best places to live, work and do business in the North of England, acknowledged for our exceptional quality of life.

- We will be known for our strengths in advanced manufacturing, precision engineering, textiles, and health and life sciences – and as the supply chain for the nation.

- We will contribute positively to achieving net zero and the transition to a low carbon economy and protect and enhance our natural environment as a vital economic asset.

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Our objectives

How will we realise the vision, in partnership with private, public and voluntary sector partners?

We know we must continue to work with business to improve productivity in Kirklees. This is the primary route to increasing workers' wages, improving household incomes and wellbeing.

We must also work with the private sector to improve sustainability - how much we make and consume, how much new resource is required for this, how things get from A to B and the energy used to do it. We must also seek to capitalise on the economic opportunities arising from sustainability and net zero.

We must improve inclusion as there are significant differences in how residents experience our economy and the extent to which they can participate in it and benefit from it, strongly linked to health and wellbeing outcomes.

As resources become increasingly constrained, the Council will seek to prioritise investment in activities that achieve productivity, sustainability and inclusion outcomes.

Figure 6: Our objectives

Building on this framework, we have identified three simple objectives to achieve progress towards a more inclusive economy in Kirklees:

- supporting our **People** to have the skills they need and to access jobs where those skills will be put to good use, including helping those residents who are furthest from the labour market to re-enter and remain in work
- supporting **Businesses**, including social enterprises to start up, grow and invest so they create more good jobs, improve their productivity and increase wage levels whilst contributing to wider inclusive growth aims
- investing in our diverse **Places** and the physical and digital connections between them to increase access to job opportunities for Kirklees residents, widen the talent pool for local businesses and ensure that Kirklees remains a fantastic place to live, work and do business.

The following sections of the Inclusive Economy Strategy set out the priorities for action to achieve each of these objectives, and how we will measure success.

Supporting people to acquire the skills they need

Overview

Ensuring that Kirklees residents have the skills they need to access good work, and progress within work at all stages of their career, lies at the heart of our ambition for an inclusive economy. Accessing a skilled workforce is also essential for businesses to drive up productivity and increase wages. Increasingly this means creating a supportive environment for those who are furthest from the labour market to regain the confidence and resilience to return to and remain in work. This includes those who have been out of work or at risk of losing employment, due to long-term ill health and deskilling while on NHS waiting lists. In line with the Get Britain Working White Paper we aspire to achieving an economic activity rate of 80% and setting a trajectory to create 27,800 additional jobs by 2043 – the life of the refreshed local plan.

The challenges and opportunities facing our education and skills system are described above. This embraces every stage of learning and work – from early years childcare, through primary and secondary school, further/higher education, adult learning and work. To truly fulfil the potential of our residents and businesses, each stage needs to operate effectively and deliver a high-quality experience for learners. The transition between the stages is also vital.

The Inclusive Economy Strategy is focused on post-16 learning and work, complementing other strategies and plans – particularly Our Kirklees Futures – focused on earlier stages of learning.

Success Measures

- Employment rate
- Median disposable household income.
- Percentage of working age adults qualified to NVQ levels 2 and 4.
- Percentage of working age adults economically inactive, including 16-24 year olds and over 50s.

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Actions

Empowering our young people

We will continue to take a partnership-approach to creating an inclusive jobs market for young people in Kirklees, building on our existing offer that includes Employment Kirklees and provision from C+K Careers. This enhanced support will ensure all young people are able to benefit from opportunities in Kirklees and the surrounding area, as our economy transitions towards greater sustainability and increased digital automation. We will seek to enhance support for care leavers, young people with learning disabilities and other priority groups.

- Increasing young people's skill levels and removing barriers to employment is a key enabler of increasing productivity and reducing economic inactivity.
- Incorporating green skills and awareness of green jobs and industries into training programmes and employment support will contribute to Kirklees having a workforce that is ready for a new economy.
- We will work with employers and training partners to guarantee opportunities are available for all young people particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Strengthening digital skills

Working in partnership we will continue to deliver digital skills training for all. Local delivery will provide accessible support and interventions tailored to the specific needs of Kirklees residents and businesses. Our training providers will continue to incorporate new technology into their courses in order that Kirklees is at the vanguard of digital technology enabling all businesses to adopt technology that is appropriate for them.

- Digital technology is central to delivering productivity gains in the modern economy. Uptake of this technology however requires a workforce at every level in organisations that can apply it and work with it.
- Digital technologies are delivering significant gains in the efficient use of resources and contributing to avoiding travel, all of which supports reduced emissions and net zero targets.
- Automation and AI can be seen as risks to jobs particularly those in lower skilled roles. Incorporating digital skills in all employment support will allow individuals to gain skills at an appropriate level and provide a foundation they can continue to build on.

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Progression for all in the workplace

We will support employers to develop their workforce, with advice and guidance around skills training for those seeking to progress in work. This could be through Skills Bootcamps or other training programmes. In work support for both the employer and employee is provided where an opportunity has been brokered for a participant on one of our employment programmes.

Increasing skills is essential for adoption of new technology and improving management practices. We expect productivity to increase with enhanced workforce skills.

Refreshing and developing new skills is an important way in which individuals and businesses are exposed to new approaches. As courses increasingly incorporate new sustainable practices, we expect these to be adopted within businesses' operating models and governance frameworks.

We will continue to build inclusive practices in supporting progression and training within local employers through sharing good practice and by promoting the West Yorkshire Fair Work Charter and the Disability Confident scheme.

Supporting communities to learn and progress

We will build on our successes in adult and community learning and engagement with local communities by the University of Huddersfield and Kirklees College to expand our provision and see Kirklees recognised as a place of excellence for community-based learning.

We will focus more of our activity in neighbourhoods that fall within the bottom 20% of deprivation nationally, ethnic minorities and other under-represented groups.

By engaging with our communities, particularly those in our most deprived neighbourhoods, we expect to see individuals supported to overcome barriers to employment and to thriving more broadly.

This intervention will have a strong focus on our most deprived neighbourhoods in which we know Black and Asian residents are twice as likely to live in as the wider population. Low income has a significant impact on individuals' health and wellbeing outcomes, impacting on their ability to participate in society fully and adult learning can be a vital first step in re-engaging.

Transitioning to a new, greener economy is going to require new skills and new ways of living and working for all of us. Helping our communities to gain those skills and build on existing assets is key to everyone in Kirklees being able to thrive while living within the limits of our planet's resources.

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Tackling poor health and wellbeing, and economic inactivity

Levels of economic inactivity have increased rapidly in recent years, linked to poor health and wellbeing. Tackling this challenge is vital not only to individual wellbeing but also to addressing skills shortages and increasing productivity.

We will work with the Department for Work and Pensions, West Yorkshire Combined Authority, the Integrated Care Board and other partners to deliver programmes from the Get Britain Working white paper. This will include the Trailblazer, Accelerator and 'Connect to Work'. Additional employment support and skill programmes will run alongside to complement/fill any gaps in provision.

Improving participation rates in the Kirklees labour market will have a positive impact on productivity whilst boosting health and wellbeing outcomes.

Low income has a significant impact on individuals' health outcomes impacting on their ability to participate in society fully and adult learning can be a vital first step to re-engaging.

Transitioning to a new, greener economy is going to require new skills and new ways of living and working for all of us. Helping our communities to gain those skills and build on existing assets is key to everyone in Kirklees being able to thrive while living within the limits of our planet's resources.

This intervention will have a strong focus on economically inactive residents experiencing ill health/disabilities to participate in the labour market.

Case Studies

Adult Learning Kirklees

The Council's Adult & Community Learning service offers a range of courses, enabling people to achieve their ambitions through education, training, employment and lifelong learning.

Through working closely with local partners, we deliver courses directly into our communities, tailored to our learners, their circumstances and their needs. We strive to ensure that learning is accessible for all, allowing every resident the opportunity to develop their life and work skills.

Having recently obtained a 'Good' rating in our latest Ofsted inspection (February 2025), this positive grading highlights the high-quality education, life-changing opportunities, and the strong support we provide to adult learners across Kirklees.

REAL Employment

The Council's REAL Employment team currently delivers the Local Supported Employment programme within Kirklees. This programme aims to support adults aged 18+ with learning disabilities, autism and/or additional needs, into paid, sustainable employment.

REAL are members of BASE (the British Association for Supported Employment) and follow their 5-stage model; Customer Engagement, Vocational Profiling, Engaging Employers, Job Matching, and in work support and Career Development.

The model is person centred, with allocated work coaches providing continuous support to job seekers throughout their employment journey. Those on programme are supported to find job roles that match their aspirations, interests and strengths, and through working closely with local employers, we strive to highlight the importance placed, and benefits which can be seen, from inclusive recruitment practises. REAL will continue to be a key local delivery partner as the Government rolls out the new work and health initiatives trailed in the Get Britain Working White Paper.

C+K Careers

Wholly owned by Calderdale and Kirklees Councils, C+K Careers has over 30 years' experience in delivering high quality, impartial, careers advice and guidance services. Through their work with local authorities, they deliver a range of integrated services designed to reduce the number of young people and adults who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) or at risk of becoming NEET.

C+K is a delivery partner for the Councils Employment West Yorkshire providing practical one to one support to our residents aged between 16-24, to help them find work or change careers. The support provided is tailored to the individual's needs, helping develop their employability skills, supporting them with CV writing, completing applications, interview skills, job search and much more.

Minimising the number of young people and adults who are NEET not only provides a financial benefit for communities. It also has positive social benefits including improved mental health and reduced levels of crime.

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Supporting business to start, grow and invest

Overview

Ensuring that Kirklees continues to be attractive as a location to start, grow and invest in business is a key objective of the Inclusive Economy Strategy. Despite a series of global economic shocks over the last five years, our local business base has remained resilient.

Manufacturing and engineering continue to underpin our local economy – accounting for just under 16% of jobs but 26% of GVA – and some of our most successful firms supply into a diverse range of sectors, reducing their dependency on individual markets. Textiles remains a key part of the Kirklees economy as it has for the last 300 years, with many businesses moving up the value chain.

Productivity is improving but continues to lag the UK average. Securing further productivity improvements – through developing the skills of the workforce, applying innovation and increasing capital investment – is a key priority and is, ultimately, how our key employers can sustain increased wages and, in turn, improve household incomes.

There are risks – and opportunities – associated with the rapid development of automation/digitisation and AI, but they will also drive productivity growth. Whilst some roles will undoubtedly be at risk, new, skilled jobs will also be required to ensure that businesses take advantage of their potential.

The vast majority of Kirklees firms are microbusinesses employing 10 or fewer staff. Start-ups, microbusinesses and smaller SMEs often need support – including in some cases grant finance – to capitalise on growth opportunities, deploy innovation or implement productivity improvements.

The public sector – both regionally and locally – will continue to play a key role in widening access to the support that is available, alongside private sector advisors.

Moving forward, the business support 'ecosystem' will balance support for those sectors with the greatest potential for productivity growth with increasing access to support for all businesses, including those in the foundational economy where there are opportunities to create entry level jobs.

Many of our business owners are also residents who care about their communities. We also understand that cooperatives, social enterprises and community businesses drive increased employment and investment while considering their impact on the environment.

Success Measures

- Number of start-ups.
- Percentage of start-ups surviving 3 years.
- Number of jobs created.
- Productivity improvements (measure TBC).
- Number of cooperatives, social enterprises and employee-owned businesses.

Actions

Build on the success of local start-up support

The Council's gateway model ensures there is no wrong way to access support and that each business gains the right support tailored to their needs. Local delivery of the West Yorkshire-wide Ad:Venture programme has been successful along with UKSPF-supported Thrive health and wellbeing incubator.

Moving forward, there is a need to retain locally embedded start-up capacity and develop more effective marketing campaigns and accessible role models to achieve a step change in the number of people considering starting their own business. It will also be important to ensure appropriate referral routes are in place for unemployed or economically inactive residents, and for those seeking to explore social enterprise or cooperative business models.

New businesses formed around innovative goods and services are one of the main ways our economy progresses. Timely access to the right support will see an increase in new, more productive business startups in Kirklees.

Increasingly, new businesses, products and services will take advantage of more sustainable approaches and respond to consumer and business demand for these. Providing rapid access to support will be key to their success in transforming markets.

Data shows more business startups are coming from our more deprived neighbourhoods, and from an increasingly ethnically diverse backgrounds. By providing tailored support, businesses of different types will be able to reach their potential, delivering benefits for local communities as well as the wider district.

Maintain an effective and streamlined business support system

SMEs often need access to a range of business support to fulfil their growth potential. The support ecosystem includes professional advisors, business networks and public sector-funded support.

WYCA's recent business support review has highlighted the need to develop a more compelling, universal online offer to increase engagement levels whilst maintaining essential advisor capacity at local level to sustain business relationships.

Working with partners, we will continue to simplify and streamline access to business support whilst seeking to widen and deepen engagement with microbusinesses and SMEs in particular.

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Businesses across a broad range of types and sectors must be given opportunity to reach their growth potential. Removing barriers to investment, supporting innovation and promoting export readiness will contribute to growth.

Increasingly those businesses able to grow are those that demonstrate their goods and services are socially and environmentally sustainable.

Balancing a targeted approach to high growth sectors and a universal approach that enables foundation economy businesses to access support– our offer will guarantee all businesses with growth potential can benefit. By building on existing support requirements we expect to create more good jobs accessible to all local residents.

Developing the role of the University of Huddersfield as an anchor for Research and Development (R&D) and inward investment

The emerging National Health Innovation Campus (NHIC) will become one of the largest UK centres for teaching nurses and other allied health professionals, and for research in key areas of specialism including clinical diagnostics.

The inclusion of key public health facilities – including the first NHS Community Diagnostic Centre on a university campus – creates a significant opportunity for the co-location of businesses seeking access to facilities and research expertise.

The NHIC is a compelling example of a university aligning its teaching and research activity to address both global challenges and local needs. We will work with the University to explore wider opportunities to align research expertise with local business needs and inward investment. The National Physical Laboratory may provide an early opportunity to pilot this approach.

Building on existing mechanisms like Knowledge Transfer Partnerships, there is a significant opportunity to align research and innovation activity with local/regional business needs. Developing new products and processes and diffusing innovation will drive up productivity and market dynamism.

There is a significant opportunity to align research and teaching to support the transition to net zero and the development of new low carbon products and services.

The University can play a key role in developing a more inclusive economy in its role as an anchor institution through inclusive recruitment, local procurement and through research into inclusive growth.

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Attracting inward investment and supporting the expansion of existing employers

In recent years we have developed our ‘place narrative’ on the unique benefits of locating in Kirklees and will continue to do so. We will deliver on this ambition by understanding the needs of incoming businesses, building effective partnerships and developing our lead generation capability, linked to key sectors.

If we are to compete successfully with other locations within and beyond West Yorkshire this will require a significant increase in the scale, quality and choice of employment land and premises across Kirklees. Market conditions dictate that there is little or no speculative industrial or commercial development in Kirklees and this is a significant barrier to growth.

We will capitalise on the unparalleled investment in rail connectivity to promote key development opportunities including the Station to Stadium Corridor in Huddersfield, underpinned by the University’s NHIC.

Increasing productivity is dependent on increasing investment levels that allow development of new floorspace to support growth, adoption of new technology and the acquisition of new plant/equipment.

We are keen to see investment from firms adopting new, more sustainable approaches and creating more green jobs. Many of our existing precision engineering and manufacturing businesses are already part of the supply chain for green products.

The new jobs created through inward investment will serve to reduce unemployment and economic inactivity. Often inward investment can take the form of the expansion of large or foreign-owned businesses already established in Kirklees. This helps embed those businesses in the area and creates the opportunity to work in partnership to achieve inclusive growth objectives and other corporate social responsibility benefits.

Socially-committed businesses

The vast majority of Kirklees business owners are local people who are invested in their local communities. We know that many of them want to see their local places thrive by doing more to serve their neighbourhoods, being more sustainable and supporting other local businesses. We will continue to increase support to businesses to do these things in ways that complement and support their own business activities.

Both younger employees and investors are increasingly seeking social engagement and impact from the organisations they work for. Attracting and retaining workforce and investment will therefore rely on demonstrating and supporting community participation.

The processes we develop to support SV – building on existing assets – will also be available for local businesses that want to engage in their communities. The same emphasis on places that might struggle to mobilise resources will also apply.

Both business leaders and communities see the environment as a key priority for local engagement. By providing clear information to businesses we expect to see positive impact in this area.

Support for alternative business models

We know that there continues to be strong interest in promoting diverse business models, including those with a clear social purpose.

Often specialist advice and support is required by entrepreneurs seeking to establish social enterprises, cooperatives or other alternative business models as corporate structures and governance frameworks may differ from more conventional business forms. Nonetheless, their founders share an entrepreneurial skillset and attitude with more conventional start-ups.

Employee ownership is also an increasingly relevant option for business succession. We will work with partners to build on and extend the existing support offer.

Productivity has been demonstrated to be higher in European countries with higher levels of cooperatives. This is in part explained through longer term thinking and increased investment in R&D. Employee-ownership is also likely to be important for the retention of well-established local businesses and related jobs.

Increased democratic ownership is expected to support benefits to the environment as decision makers consider the longer-term impacts for themselves rather than the short-term priorities of shareholders.

Alternative business models are often shown to provide better terms and conditions for employees and to have a focus on recruiting those with barriers to employment.

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Case Studies

Huddersfield Health Innovation Incubator

Building on the success created by the Huddersfield Health Innovation Partnership and Kirklees Council's Thrive project, previously funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), the new Huddersfield Health Innovation Incubator (HHII), welcomes a next chapter of support for start-ups, microbusinesses and growing SMEs in the fast-growing Health and Wellbeing sectors across our region.

Now funded through the West Yorkshire Health Innovation and Digital Tech Investment Zone, the new programme will support businesses in three core phases: Start, Grow and Connect.

In partnership with NHS and local stakeholders, the Incubator aims to drive innovation, create high-value jobs, and support the regional health innovation ecosystem, including the University of Huddersfield's National Health Innovation Campus (NHIC).

Figure 7: Medical professional using advanced software on a portable IT device in a healthcare setting

Business Start-up Gateway

The Council provides free, expert advice for pre-start, new and young businesses up to three years old via our Business Kirklees service, helping support new business creation, economic growth and the creation of innovative entrepreneurs across our region.

Figure 8: Start-up business owner despatching an order

Dedicated account managers provide tailored information and guidance in key business areas such as mentoring, research, business planning, employment, premises/workspaces and marketing.

New startups are encouraged to build their knowledge, ideas and confidence, grow their networks, form relationships with other key services and are also supported to access funding opportunities.

Kirklees Top 100

The Kirklees Top 100 Companies initiative aims to shine a spotlight on the district as an attractive destination for inward investment, business start-up, scale-up and growth. It is a joint venture between the University of Huddersfield, Kirklees Council and the 3M Buckley Innovation Centre (3M BIC) and is designed to celebrate and measure business growth across the region.

Published annually every autumn, the list is compiled using a set of consistent metrics that include a combination of turnover, profit, employee numbers and growth, all derived from published company accounts of locally registered firms drawn from the Bureau Van Dijk - FAME database.

Spin-off editions of the brochure include the Careers edition, that goes into schools and colleges to be used as a tool by careers leads, to inspire our local talent, and future workforce, by highlighting careers opportunities that exist right here in Kirklees.

The initiative also aims to bring together the Kirklees business community through collaborative opportunities, events and sharing best practice. We have built a successful group of HR professionals from across the region that regularly meets to discuss challenges and topics of interest, including hybrid working, apprenticeships, international recruitment and graduate development.

Figure 9: Business leaders at the Kirklees Top 100 celebration event

Investing in our Places

Overview

Kirklees is a diverse mix of larger towns and smaller towns and villages, set against the incredible backdrop of the Pennines and Yorkshire Dales and benefitting from the exceptional connectivity afforded by the motorway network and the most important east-west rail link in the North of England. Together these attributes make Kirklees a highly competitive location for investment.

We know that place does matter when it comes to the investment decisions made by businesses and skilled, mobile workers. At the same time, we need to rethink the future role of our urban centres and some of the adjoining towns and villages; as their traditional shopping role changes, they will need to become mixed use, multi-functional places with leisure, cultural, housing and community uses to the fore.

Some of this change was accelerated by the pandemic – with places like Holmfirth and Marsden attracting more visitors and investment, driven by increased homeworking. Improved connectivity with Leeds and Manchester can strengthen the residential role of some communities, including places like Dewsbury and Batley.

Our visitor economy – underpinned by our cultural offer and heritage and beautiful landscapes – remains relatively untapped compared with other locations in West and North Yorkshire and there is a significant opportunity to unlock its potential.

Success Measures

- Percentage of residents who are satisfied with their local area.
- High street vacancy rates.
- Retail/commercial rental levels.
- Housing affordability index.
- Number of neighbourhoods in 20% most deprived in England.

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Actions

Vital and vibrant town centres

The Council is leading the delivery of a series of major capital projects that, when realised, will change resident, visitor and investor perceptions of our major centres.

In Huddersfield, this activity is focusing on the Our Cultural Heart project that will transform the town's cultural offer; the reopening of the George Hotel; revitalising the Huddersfield Open Market; and the Station to Stadium Corridor.

In Dewsbury, the Towns Fund programme will deliver the refurbishment of the iconic Dewsbury Arcade and Dewsbury Market. Investment is also underway in Batley, Cleckheaton, Heckmondwike, Holmfirth and Marsden.

Delivering improvements to our principal town centres will create places our residents want to spend time in and where businesses are proud to be based. Public investment will attract private investment, so we bring our vision into being in partnership.

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Our town centre plans include increasing infrastructure for walking and cycling and creating town centre living supporting more sustainable lifestyles. In addition, increasing the quality of the local offer will reduce the need for travel to more distant centres, providing more services close to home.

All of our places merit investment and need to develop to support affordable living in order that they are viable places to live for those on lower incomes. Our development plans include improvements to active travel infrastructure and will support public transport improvements.

Our plans for our town centres seek to break down barriers, making them places all our different communities can enjoy and feel comfortable in. This will support every individual being able to thrive.

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Improving the night-time economy

Strengthening the night-time economy in all our centres with a focus on Huddersfield and Dewsbury is part of our vision for modern centres.

To do so we must work with evening economy venues, the Police and other agencies to significantly improve community safety and tackle negative perceptions of our places.

The culture and leisure sectors form an important part of our economy in their own right while a thriving cultural life is important to the attractiveness of our place for those considering living or starting a business in Kirklees.

Developing a sustainable night-time economy will be an important consideration for the partnership. Direct impacts such as energy efficiency and waste management but also sustainable transport and noise pollution management will be integrated.

The culture and leisure sectors are a major source of entry level jobs providing routes into employment particularly for young people. Our cultural offer will continue to build on and celebrate our diversity.

Housing growth strategy

Nationally and locally we have challenges around accelerating housebuilding. Meeting the housing needs of our population is important so families have the foundations on which to thrive. We also need to significantly increase the delivery of affordable homes.

We will deliver our Housing Growth Strategy to meet rising need and improve the quality of our stock. This includes projects on large sites such as Chidswell and Dewsbury Riverside, town centre living in Huddersfield and Dewsbury, and working with mid-size SME developers to diversify the range of providers delivering new homes.

Through the update of the Local Plan we will identify a range of new housing sites to meet future needs in line with the latest government guidance and evidence from the Council's updated Strategic Housing Market Assessment. This will include exploring development opportunities associated with the proposed Mass Transit line between Leeds and Dewsbury subject to agreement at full council in September.

High-quality housing underpins good health and wellbeing, and residents' ability to go out to work and study. An attractive housing offer that meets a range of needs also contributes to attracting new people to Kirklees.

Provision of energy efficient homes within neighbourhoods that enable and encourage sustainable lifestyles will reduce energy demand and decrease living costs.

Improving the availability of affordable housing for those wishing to buy or rent is central to our strategy. Increasing supply contributes to stopping our housing affordability ratio rising further from reach.

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Transport strategy

We will develop a new Transport Strategy in which the TransPennine Rail Upgrade and Penistone Line Upgrade are complemented by development of mass transit for West Yorkshire, shifts to active travel and public transport, seeing improvements to bus services and bus stations, and delivery of key major projects such as the Cooper Bridge Corridor Improvement Scheme to resolve long standing challenges.

Effective transport that connects individuals and businesses to the full breadth of opportunities underpins an effective economy. Our location between three core cities requires top class transport to maximise the possible benefits.

Shifts towards active travel and public transport form an essential part of sustainable lifestyles. By reducing reliance on private cars we will see reduced emissions and improved air quality.

Our strategy will allow all individuals to access the work and training they need to thrive including through low-cost options such as active travel and buses.

Thriving rural communities

We will ensure we support thriving rural areas served by gigabit connectivity and high-quality public transport services.

Supporting a mixed economy including agriculture but also cultural businesses and others taking advantage of high-quality digital connectivity.

Kirklees contains many small rural communities. Each of these has a role to play in the wider productivity of Kirklees. Physical and digital connectivity supports this.

Rural communities are often more car-reliant than urban ones. Providing high quality bus services will reduce this while world class digital connectivity will reduce the need for journeys to the office or to meet with clients in person whether close by or far afield.

While our rural areas are generally more affluent than our major towns, maintaining good connectivity contributes to older people and those with limited mobility being able to take advantage of all Kirklees has to offer.

Visitor economy and heritage

Kirklees has significant untapped potential as a tourism destination, including part of the Peak District National Park and a diverse mix of urban and rural centres. We will further develop our culture and leisure offer including outdoor activities both enhancing quality of life for residents and attractions for visitors. This will be done through the Local Visitor Economy Partnership and delivery of our Heritage Strategy and Kirklees' strong programme of events and festivals.

Building on our culture and leisure offer – alongside other elements of this strategy – will contribute to attracting people to Kirklees and making it an enjoyable place to live, work and spend time.

The environment is increasingly a focus of and a concern in cultural events and businesses. Kirklees has a strong heritage in practices relevant to growing a more sustainable economy. We will build on this to create a unique offering.

A varied cultural offer will see Kirklees being a place where everyone can participate in and enjoy a range of events. It will provide economic opportunities for all our communities.

Social value

A number of large, locally rooted organisations have worked hard over recent years to embed social value (SV) approaches in how they operate – particularly in their procurement, including Kirklees Council.

Moving forward we will continue to adopt a more proactive approach to securing social value benefits from major capital and other projects and share best practice with other partners where we can. We will increasingly adopt a longer-term focus, considering social value opportunities across wider programmes rather than on a project-by-project basis. This will increase the effectiveness of our large, locally rooted organisations at buying locally and delivering social value.

SV allows organisations to maximise the benefits of their own spending power. Using this mechanism to full effect will contribute to other areas of this strategy including the skills development needed for greater productivity.

Environmental impact is one of the key themes considered through SV approaches. In this way we will continue to encourage best in class practice from our suppliers.

We will increasingly target SV benefits towards deprived neighbourhoods to focus the efforts of our suppliers as well as our public providers where there is most need.

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Case Studies

The Transpennine Route Upgrade

Kirklees features significantly as part of the £11.5bn TransPennine Route Upgrade (TRU) with substantial investment in our rail infrastructure. Delivered by Network Rail and the TRU consortium, the game-changing project will bring cleaner, greener and more reliable railways, improving connectivity across towns and villages in Kirklees.

As well as investment in stations across Kirklees, the TRU will see more frequent, and faster trains, cutting down on journey times to cities across the Northern Powerhouse including Manchester, Leeds, York and beyond, creating more opportunities for employment, training and education for people who live and work in Kirklees.

Figure 10: TransPennine Route Upgrade works in Huddersfield

Our Cultural Heart

An ambitious centrepiece for Kirklees' largest town, landmark regeneration project Our Cultural Heart will build on and celebrate the character and culture of Huddersfield. The project will deliver a new library; food hall; a repurposed museum/gallery, new venue and events space/public realm.

Figure 11: Artists' impression of the 'Our Cultural Heart' regeneration of the centre of Huddersfield.

With a focus on experiences and making the town a more attractive place to live, study, work and visit, in line with today's market demands and the public's changing expectations, it will act as a major catalyst for growth of the local economy.

Sitting right in the middle of some of the North's most powerful cities, Huddersfield benefits from excellent connections attracting visitors from far and wide.

Dewsbury Riverside

Kirklees' most ambitious housing project in living memory, Dewsbury Riverside is crucial to address the need for more quality, affordable housing outside the north's expensive major cities and will be transformative for the local area.

Up to 4,000 new homes across multiple new neighbourhoods will be created in phases, each with a unique sense of place and complete with the necessary amenities. TRU investment will help serve the development, supported by additional investment in highway infrastructure.

The scheme is currently going through procurement of a Master Developer and there will continue to be community engagement throughout the project.

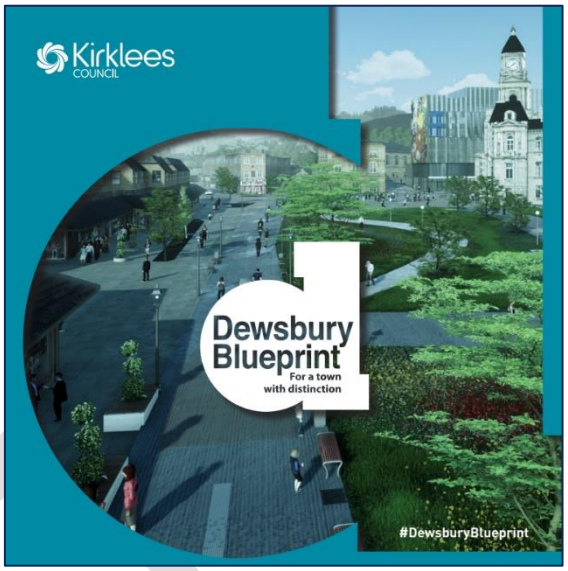

Figure 12: Dewsbury Blueprint - artists impression of the proposed 'greenway'.

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Appendix – Accessible version of infographic

Facts and figures about Kirklees:

- Strategically located in West Yorkshire
  - Third-largest metropolitan district in England with 23 Wards
  - 157 square miles
  - Huddersfield is the 10th largest town in the UK
  - Central location within the UK's £339billion Northern Powerhouse
- A beautiful and vibrant place to live and work
  - 11% of Kirklees is within the Peak District National Park
  - Over 3,000 listed buildings
  - Population of 440,000
- £8.55billion GVA economy
  - 15,000 businesses
  - Diverse and skilled workforce of 275,000
  - Affordable gigabit internet speeds across 91% of the district
  - Key industry sectors: manufacturing, advanced precision engineering, creative industries, textiles, health innovation.

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