

County Durham Inclusive Economic Strategy
Delivery Plan 2023 – 2025

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Better for everyone

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Inclusive Economic Strategy – Delivery Plan 2023-2025

This is the first of a series of delivery plans that sets out how we will deliver the Inclusive Economic Strategy for County Durham.

The Inclusive Economic Strategy is an ambitious economic strategy to 2035. It has a clear overarching focus to deliver **more and better jobs in an inclusive, green economy**.

The strategy sets out our vision for a new economic future, creating a strong identity for the county, developing our strengths, addressing inequalities, and better connecting residents to existing and new opportunities. It aims to raise aspirations in our young people and deliver a step-change in our economic growth with all our partners and activity aligned to delivering an agreed future vision.

To make this a reality will require new ways of working, close collaboration with our partners, strengthening existing partnerships and developing new ones and coordinating activities what will help to achieve the shared ambition. We need to leverage as much external investment as possible through bids into relevant funding calls, by attracting private sector investment, and by creating the conditions for local growth and investment.

Our strategy sets out the strategic framework to deliver this through the 5 Ps, of People, Productivity, Places, Promotion and Planet. Reflecting feedback through the process, Planet priorities are embedded into the other Ps, recognising the importance of Planet and net zero in all our activity and future plans.

The Delivery Plan is framed around these Ps and sets out the practical steps partners are taking together in the first three years of the IES period to deliver the strategy. These actions provide a strong foundation to build on and develop future delivery plans. The plan has been co-developed by partners, building commitment from them and it sets out the roles and responsibilities of its delivery, identifying who is leading on the activities and when. The activities within the plan are coordinated to ensure that we maximise the impact of our actions. The Delivery Plan also establishes a performance framework, setting out what success looks like, and the approach being taken to measure impact and achievement of the IES.

This Delivery Plan will be the first of a series within the IES period, enabling us to regularly review and respond to economic changes; allowing priorities to be reassessed and recalibrated and actions refined based on whether outcomes are being achieved. This will ensure the IES and the Delivery Plan remain a relevant and live document throughout its lifespan. It may also lead to reviews of the Inclusive Economic Strategy as circumstances and opportunities change up to 2035. An Investment Plan will be produced to align with this Delivery Plan to identify investment priorities and secure external funding for strategic projects and support regional devolution.



Strategic Alignment

Our IES sits within a framework of partnership strategies and plans. The over-arching partnership strategy is the County Durham Vision 2035 which has the three ambitions of:

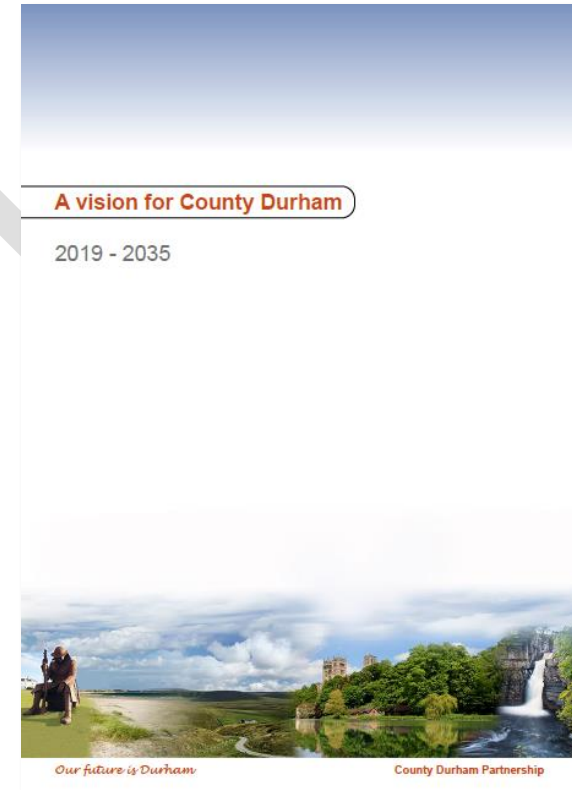
- More and better jobs
- People live long and independent lives
- Connected communities

The more and better jobs ambition is the main focus of the County Durham Economic Partnership (CDEP) and includes six objectives which align with the IES priorities. The IES ambition for 'more and better jobs in an inclusive, green economy' expands the County Durham Vision ambition by balancing the need for more and better jobs with the need to ensure communities across the county benefit from growth. This aligns with the other ambitions of the Vision, other thematic partnerships, and the ambitions of delivery partners. This forms a strategic policy framework that ensures priorities are aligned and activities are coordinated in delivery.

The IES ambition also aims to ensure that growth contributes towards the commitments in the county's [Climate Emergency Response Plan](#) which is overseen by our Environment and Climate Change Partnership. The actions within this Delivery Plan complement activity being undertaken through the CERP as well as other key strategies – including the County Durham Local Plan, Poverty Action Plan, Digital Inclusion Strategy and Housing Strategy. We have not sought to include all of these actions in this Delivery Plan. Instead, our focus is on economic development activities aligned to our shared ambition.

Devolution

Durham County Council is due to join a new North East Mayoral Combined Authority in 2024 which will lead to some significant changes in the resources and support for strategic economic and regeneration projects. Together the IES and its evidence bases, Delivery Plan and Investment Plan will support County Durham's engagement with the devolution process, our regional partners, and the government. Devolution will lead to the development of new economic analysis and evidence and strategies and may lead to the need for new evidence and updates to our strategies and plans.



Governance

The County Durham Economic Partnership is one of five thematic partnerships that sit under the umbrella of the County Durham Partnership.



Our Inclusive Economic Strategy has been codeveloped with partners and will be delivered by a wide range of partners - businesses, community groups and key stakeholders, led by the County Durham Economic Partnership. We will also continue to work with our regional and national partners to identify additional actions that will contribute to achieving the strategy's ambition.

CDEP owns the IES and will be responsible for driving forward the implementation of this delivery plan. We have identified where help is needed to create an inclusive economy. Alongside the broad support, there are some people and places who need additional support. In this way we will make this strategy – and the growth and prosperity it generates – inclusive for all. We will review the Delivery Plan regularly to ensure that we are still targeting activity in a way that will achieve maximum impact. We will work with different partners to broaden participation where possible.

Economic Performance – What does success look like

Our Inclusive Economic Strategy states that “by 2035 the county will bridge the gap with national performance across key measures around employment, unemployment, higher level skills, and higher-level occupations”. Our overall ambition is to support the creation of more and better jobs across the county. Bridging the performance gap in the employment and unemployment rates will lead to more than 10,000 more residents in work. Supporting residents to achieve higher level skills and occupations will lead to productivity improvements, wage growth, and new business opportunities across the county and more innovation. It will also make the county’s economy more stable and more resistant to future economic recessions. It is proposed that our high level target is to bridge the gap with national performance across the following key measures.

The scorecards below will be used to highlight where the County’s performance is below national rates and where the gaps exist between the performance of local areas and that of the county. This evidence will help us to target actions and opportunities for further research. The scorecards will be updated annually and used alongside performance data for individual projects and actions. This is vital given that some of the data is based on relatively small sample surveys which can be unreliable at county level and more so at smaller geographies such as parliamentary constituencies.

Headline targets:

In order to match the England average we need to achieve the following targets by 2035, although it will be necessary to regularly review and adjust these targets as conditions change.

- **More jobs: 11,600 more people in employment or self-employment (5% increase)**
- **Better jobs: 32,900 more people in managerial, professional and associate professional occupations (35% increase)**
 - **Close the £6,426 gap with national performance on Gross Value Added Per Filled Job (up to 12% improvement)**
- **Inclusive growth: Higher levels of employment or self-employment in all parts of the county (particularly in the Bishop Auckland, Easington, Durham City, and Sedgefield constituencies)**
- **Green growth: Approximately 400,000 tonnes of CO2 emitted from transport, heat, and electricity (80% reduction)**

County Durham Scorecard (grey cells highlight poorer performance than England)

Indicator	Employment <i>(more jobs)</i>							Unemployment						Skills <i>(better jobs)</i>					
	Jobs ^a	Economically active residents ^b	Jobs per worker ^{a/b}	Economically active residents (%)	Employment (%)	Full time employment (%)	Self-employment (%)	Unemployment (%)	Claimant Count (%)	Aged 18 to 24 (%)	Aged 25 to 49 (%)	Aged 50+ (%)	Long-term sickness*	Highest skilled jobs (%)	Lowest skilled jobs (%)	NVQ4+ quals (%)	NVQ3+ quals (%)	No quals (%)	Weekly pay (£)
England	29m	32m	0.9	79	76	68	10	4	4	5	4	3	25	52	15	43	61	6	646
Co. Durham Compared to Eng.	182k	254k	0.7	76	72	65	8	4	3	5	4	2	34	39	19	33	53	8	575
NEMCA	820k	937k	0.9	74	70	66	7	5	4	5	5	3	31	44	19	35	54	9	580

* Long-term sickness is a proportion of economically inactive residents.

Additional measures (grey cells highlight poorer performance than England)

Indicator	Gross value added	Gross value added Per Filled job	Number of businesses	Economically inactive but want a job	Workless households	Green jobs	Green businesses
England	£1,365 billion	£52,671	2,408,040	18%	14%	97,800 (UK)	1.7m (UK)
Co. Durham Compared to Eng.	£8.8 billion	£46,245	14,725	22%	18%	11,478**	600**
NEMCA	£46.2 billion	tbc	55,340	20%	19%	49,000	2,500

** Based on the County Durham Green Economy Report, 2023. Further work is planned to define the sector as part of action 2.1.2.

Inclusive Growth Scorecard (grey cells highlight poorer performance than England / County Durham)

Indicator	Employment (<i>more jobs</i>)							Unemployment						Skills (<i>better jobs</i>)						
	Jobs ^a	Economically active residents ^b	Jobs per Worker ^{a/b}	Economically active residents (%)	Employment (%)	Full time employment (%)	Self-employment (%)	Unemployment (%)	Claimant Count (%)	Aged 18 to 24 (%)	Aged 25 to 49 (%)	Aged 50+ (%)	Economic inactive: Long termsickness*	Highest skilled jobs (%)	Lowest skilled jobs (%)	NVQ4+ qualifications (%)	NVQ3+ qualifications (%)	No qualifications (%)	Weekly pay (£)	
Co. Durham Compared to Eng.	182k	254k	0.7	76	72	65	8	4	3	5	4	2	34	39	19	33	53	8	575	
Compared to Co. Durham (inclusive growth)	Bishop Auckland	30k	38k	0.8	69	65	67	13	6	4	6	4	2	44	31	20	32	56	7	563
	City of Durham	58k	48k	1.2	77	74	64	6	4	2	1	3	2	24	46	21	44	65	9	574
	Easington	25k	41k	0.6	72	69	68	7	5	4	7	5	3	42	33	24	28	49	11	561
	North Durham	21k	41k	0.5	78	76	67	9	n/a	3	6	4	2	39	34	16	27	47	9	593
	North West Durham	23k	53k	0.4	82	78	65	9	4	3	6	3	2	36	44	26	35	55	5	593
	Sedgefield	35k	43k	0.8	75	71	74	7	5	3	6	4	2	42	43	24	28	43	7	605

To view a map of parliamentary constituencies [click here](#). n/a means data is not available due to small sample survey sizes. * Long-term sickness is a proportion of economically inactive residents.

1. People

Support people into education, training, jobs and to excel in their careers

Ensuring we support the growth of an inclusive economy to ensure everyone has the opportunity to gain the education and skills they need to succeed in the economy. This includes providing access to quality early childhood education, clear opportunities for further and continued learning and job training and access programs.

Skills are one of the main drivers of economic growth. By investing in skills, we expect to see a boost to business productivity, attract more investment and businesses, and provide improved individual life chances, which in turn help create a more inclusive economy. When people have the skills, it helps them to get good jobs, they are more likely to be able to participate in the economy and contribute to their communities. This can help to reduce poverty and inequality.

Historically County Durham's working age population has a lower level of qualifications than the national average. We will focus on addressing this with specific reference to the skills and qualifications required to support our key and growth sectors, improving the information and access to services to help people acquire skills and identify rewarding and productive employment.

Our skills focus won't simply help to prepare for the future of work. As we can see from our productivity and place themes, the world of work is changing rapidly, with new technologies and industries emerging all the time and an increasing focus in many sectors on digital skills. By investing in skills, people can not only prepare for the future of work but also ensure that they are equipped to secure good jobs.

Summary of Priorities, Activities and Impacts

Priorities	Activities	Impacts
<p>Skills levels: Raise skills levels, including higher and green skills, directly targeted to what employers need</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New training support programme through County Durham’s UKSPF programme which will prepare residents for the new opportunities • Develop a Digital Inclusion skills Strategy to ensure residents have the appropriate digital skills to sustain employment and access services • Increase confidence in numeracy and literacy and basic digital skills through the delivery of Multiply and the new Communicate Programme • Develop a range of skills intervention to support the growth of the Low carbon sector • Deliver Skills for modern methods of construction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased numbers of residents with basic skills –numeracy, literacy, digital • Increased number of residents achieving technical qualifications of higher • Reduce the number of residents in vulnerable employment
<p>Barriers to employment: Overcome barriers into employment, including work readiness, skills, improved careers advice and guidance, and addressing poor health</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a comprehensive, client centred employment support infrastructure enabling residents to access and progress in work • Develop an all-age careers guidance framework and programme, enabling young people and adults to make informed decisions on careers paths. • Deliver the Reaching Out Across Programme • Develop an apprenticeship brokerage resource enabling employers to maximise the use of apprenticeships and available levy funds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the number of residents accessing careers advice / support • Increase the number of apprenticeships starts across all levels
<p>Progression and upskilling: Increase in-work progression and upskilling linked to new opportunities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver a new workplace skills development programme addressing skills gaps for key and emerging sectors • Shape the support the roll out of skills for jobs programme • Embed the findings of the Local Skills Improvement Plan to ensure we can improve the number and relevance of training opportunities which support our key growth sectors • Delivery Skills Bootcamps for Green Skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the number of residents in employment with associated health support programmes
<p>Health and wellbeing: Ensure good health and wellbeing leads to economic inclusion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver the Durham Help employment support programme • Anchor Institutions provide clear routeways supporting the employment of residents through a Community Wealth Building approach • County Durham employers support employee's health and well-being through a recognised Better Health at Work scheme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the numbers of people employed in the green economy

Ambitions	Action No.	Actions	Lead Partner	Links to other Priorities
1.1 Skills levels: Raise skills levels, including higher and green skills, directly targeted to what employers need				
Address skills gaps and raise skills levels	1.1.1	Commission and deliver a new training support programme through County Durham’s UKSPF programme, including delivery of short courses, bootcamp programmes and the delivery of employment routeways	Durham County Council £4m of UKSPF secured until the end of March 2025.	Productivity: These actions will support actions to grow opportunity sectors, innovation, business start-ups, and business growth.
Raise skill levels to meet business needs	1.1.2	Ensure residents skills needs are articulated in emerging regional Skills strategies and AEB commissioning programmes for devolved skills funding	Durham County Council and North East Mayoral Combined Authority [Regional allocation of £64m per annum from 2024/25 academic year	Promotion: These actions will improve our ability to attract inward investors. Places: These actions will drive the demand for local premises in town and village centres and employment land. Planet: These actions will increase green skills attainment.
Improve numeracy, literacy, basic, and digital skills	1.1.3	Deliver the Multiply programme for 19+ year olds	Durham County Council £2.8m secured up to the end of March 2025	Productivity: These actions will be beneficial to local businesses.

	1.1.4	Deliver the Communicate programme to support literacy and basic digital skills	Durham County Council, funded through UKSPF.	Places: These actions will support businesses in town and villages centres and drive demand for better broadband.
<p>Ensure residents are equipped with the skills to access services and progress in work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increase digital literacy • combat digital exclusion 	1.1.5	Develop a 'Digital Inclusion Skills Strategy' for County Durham, to address: Parallel issues such as access to ICT equipment, broadband, and training	Durham County Council	<p>Places: These actions will drive demand for better broadband and help to overcome some forms of deprivation related to poor access to training, jobs, and services.</p> <p>Productivity: These actions will support local businesses and may lead to the creation of new businesses.</p> <p>Planet: These actions will help to reduce the need to travel and reduce transport-based carbon emissions.</p>
	1.1.6	Improve access to online benefits advice		
	1.1.7	Link with Community Hubs initiative to provide better access to ICT equipment and upskilling at a local level		
	1.1.8	Link to the digital elements of the Local Skills Improvement Plan		

1.2 Barriers to employment: Overcome barriers into employment, including work readiness, skills, improved careers advice and guidance, and addressing poor health				
Support people who are economically inactive and long term unemployed overcome barriers to employment and into work	1.2.1	Implement the Reaching Out Across Durham (ROADII) scheme	Groundwork £500,000 of UKSPF secured until the end of March 2024	<p>Productivity: This action will support growing businesses with jobs to fill and seeking to have a positive local impact (e.g. good business practices).</p> <p>Places: These actions may help people to overcome some of the connectivity barriers related to accessing jobs and training.</p> <p>Promotion: These actions will support routes into work in the visitor economy and creative sector.</p> <p>Planet: These actions will support the development of skills that will support the green economy.</p>
Engage residents with low / no qualifications in learning and provide opportunities to develop their skills to enhance their life chances	1.2.2	Maximise the take up of the Adult Education Budget provision through <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved labour market intelligence driving commissioning and curriculum and curriculum development Ensuring timely referrals to skills provision through employment support programmes Improving resident access to skills courses through online and community-based provision 	Durham County Council and North East Mayoral Combined Authority Regional allocation of £64m per annum from 2024/25 academic year	
Improve 'soft skills' to enable residents to progress towards paid work	1.2.3	Develop a joint approach, similar to 'passport', with accredited learning	Durham Community Action	
	1.2.4	Work with North East Youth Alliance to ensure a routeway for young people		
Support businesses to increase the number of apprenticeship opportunities	1.2.5	Develop an apprenticeship brokerage resource which will assist SMEs to take on new apprentices	Durham County Council	
	1.2.6	Work with anchor institutions to maximise the utilisation of the Apprenticeship Levy		
Inform residents of all ages, of the employment opportunities, progression routeways and skills requirements for a modern labour market	1.2.7	Commission a new Careers Framework for County Durham.	Durham County Council Commission funded through UKSPF	
	1.2.8	Develop an effective all age careers resource to allow residents to make informed employment and training choices	Durham County Council.	

	1.2.9	Deliver The Workplaces project to Year 10-12 pupils	Durham Learn in partnership with local education establishments and local employers. Funded through the Poverty Action group until March 2025	
Provide specialist support to overcome barriers to residents' labour market participation	1.2.10	Deliver the Durham Help employment support programme, provide advice, guidance and support to job seekers who living with or experiencing mental health or emotional wellbeing issues	DCC – Public Health / Durham Enable	
Promote good workplace health and wellbeing.	1.2.11	Deliver targeted promotion / interventions to enhance small business participation in the Better Health at Work Programme	DCC – Public Health / Durham Enable	Productivity: These actions will support higher levels of productivity through improved workforce health and employee engagement and will Drive good business practices, including improving health in the workplace

1.3 Progression and upskilling: Increase in-work progression and upskilling linked to new opportunities				
Address skills gaps for key and emerging sectors and improve the skills of the workforce	1.3.1	Commission and deliver a new workplace skills development programme	Durham County Council £4m of UKSPF secured until the end of March 2025	Productivity: These actions will support businesses in growth sectors and businesses that are growing supporting new job opportunities.
	1.3.3	Shape and support the roll-out of 'skills for jobs' programmes	Colleges / Independent Learning Providers	
	1.3.4	Embed the findings of the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) to support key growth sectors identified in the IES	County Durham Economic Partnership	
Provide local people with the technical training needed to secure employment within high demand/growth sectors	1.3.5	Deliver Skills Bootcamps for Green Skills, providing bespoke training solutions to bridge existing skills gaps within high demand sectors	New College Durham	Productivity: These actions will harness the potential of growth our opportunity sectors
	1.3.6	Create industry-standard manufacturing cleanroom lab facilities at East Durham College.	East Durham College	
1.4 Health and wellbeing: Ensure good health and wellbeing leads to economic inclusion				
Improve personal incomes, well-being, and life chances	1.4.1	Develop and deliver a new County Durham Employment Support offer which provides key worker support to vulnerable groups, those excluded from the labour market and those in insecure and low paid employment.	Durham County Council, VCS partners, Housing Providers, JCP, NCS	Place: These actions support community resilience and engagement, development and ownership of places Productivity: These actions will drive good

	1.4.2	Deliver training programmes about financial literacy to frontline practitioners working with Children Young People and Families.	Durham County Council	business practices, including improving health in the workplace
	1.4.3	Deliver the Durham Help employment support programme, provide advice, guidance and support to job seekers who living with or experiencing mental health or emotional wellbeing issues (as per 1.2.10)	DCC – Public Health / Durham Enable	
	1.4.4	Promote the take up of support through Multiply and Communicate programmes. Include signposting of public health interventions into services supporting residents in poverty	Durham County Council / Delivery Partners	
	1.4.5	Work With Communities to co-produce an approach to wellbeing	Durham County Council / VCS partners / Local cultural organisations	
Improve employee's health and well-being through the expansion of the Better Health at Work approach	1.4.7	Increase the promotion of the BHAW scheme. Explore opportunities to support sole traders / employees of micro businesses (as per 1.2.11)	Durham County Council County Durham Businesses	
Improve the wealth of communities	1.4.8	Through a Community Wealth Building approach, work with County Durham Anchor Organisations to develop and deliver pre-employment programmes for those who are unemployed, economically inactive, or otherwise excluded from the labour market	County Durham Anchor Institutions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Durham County Council • Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust • Durham University • FE Colleges 	

2. Productivity

Support business innovation, growth, & higher levels of productivity

The actions for Productivity relate to the need to support niche sectors that can drive and diversify our economic in new areas, support more higher value jobs in the county, inspire people about the opportunities in the county, and generate broader demand for a range of goods, services, and research in the county. The actions also build on the recognition in the IES and its evidence base that the vast proportion of businesses in the county are small and that we need to support them to grow, employ more people, and integrate with other local businesses. We also intend to support enterprising and innovative people who want to, or have the potential to, start-up businesses and turn their ideas into products and services. We will also do more to understand what specific local barriers prevent people and businesses developing innovations and develop a more supportive ecosystem that encourages wide-scale innovation. In relation to the inclusive nature of the IES, we will also encourage more businesses of all sizes in the county to consider their social and environmental impacts and recognise the commercial and ethical benefits of operating responsibly.

The approaches set-out in this part of the Delivery Plan cross-cut with the people theme which intends to promote enterprise as a route out of unemployment, link to the creative approaches set-out under the Promotion theme, and the approaches to infrastructure development under the Place theme. We need to do more to understand the green economy and the economic opportunities associated with the low carbon and net zero agendas and target support towards businesses that are developing solutions. We also need to develop and support holistic solutions to cutting carbon emissions from energy, transport, and buildings which cross-cut the other IES themes.

Summary of Priorities, Activities, and Impacts

Priorities	Activities	Impacts
<p>1: Harness the power of our major employment sectors and accelerate our opportunity sectors</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harness the potential of opportunity sectors through the development of targeted sector growth plans • Implement the semi-conductor sector action plan • Deliver the North East Space cluster programme and develop proposal for NE Space Hub • Pilot approach targeting Inward Investment in growth sectors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased number of jobs • Increased portion of higher-level jobs • Increased number of green jobs
<p>2: Provide excellent support at all stages for our businesses to start up, sustain, thrive and grow</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create an integrated partnership to deliver support to enterprises and start-ups. Deliver the UKSPF funded Enterprising Durham Framework Programme • Deliver the integrated Productivity and Growth programme • Improve access to finance for small and growing businesses and venture capital opportunities to support innovation • Establish an annual County Durham business conference 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved job density • Increased number of businesses • Increase levels of GVA • Increased levels of GVA per filled job • Increased County Durham Pound spend
<p>3: Expand the thriving innovation ecosystem</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver the IN-Tune project increasing innovative collaborations between NE universities, CPI and local businesses • Develop a COM-B model identifying barriers constraining innovation • Develop delivery strategy to drive innovation in the opportunity sectors identified in the IES • Promote the circular economy approach to businesses in the county 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase level of R&D expenditure • Increase volume of patent applications • Increase the growth of the green economy
<p>4: Drive good business practices, including improving health in the workplace</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop the County Durham Pound programme and OEM model, and embed social, economic, and environmental value within businesses • Promote good business practices and consider creating BCorp model • Ensure that residents can access secure work that pays a living wage • Support businesses to reduce their carbon emissions and other environmental impacts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce carbon emissions

Ambitions	Action No.	Actions	Lead Partner	Links to other Priorities
2.1 Major employment and opportunity sectors: Harness the power of our major employment sectors and accelerate our opportunity sectors (advanced manufacturing, digital, electrification, life sciences, space).				
Harness the potential of opportunity sectors	2.1.1	Establish an expert group to develop a granular understanding of national and global sector opportunities.	Durham University and RTC North .	<p>People: These actions will lead to new employment opportunities for those looking to enter the workplace or advance their careers.</p> <p>Places: These actions will drive demand for employment land, better connectivity, and digital infrastructure.</p>
	2.1.2	Develop targeted Growth Plans for each of the opportunity sectors identified for growth in the IES, the plans will provide a definition of the sector and methodology for tracking growth (aligns with priority 2.3).	Resources, lead, and timescales to be identified.	
	2.1.3	Identify and fill gaps for business support in opportunity sectors, mapping networks linked to opportunity sectors and creating new networks to fill gaps.	Resources, lead, and timescales to be identified.	
Grow the semi-conductor sector	2.1.4	Develop and implement a semi-conductor action plan that will develop the cluster, establish the North East as a powerhouse in this sector, and benefit from government support in line with the National Semiconductor Strategy .	Business Durham & North East Advanced Material Electronics . Resource implications need consideration. March 2024.	<p>Promotion: These actions will support inward investment opportunities.</p> <p>Planet: These actions will support green businesses and businesses that are becoming greener.</p>
Grow the space sector	2.1.5	Deliver the North East space cluster programme.	Business Durham	
	2.1.6	Develop a proposal for a North East Space Hub.		
Attract Inward Investment in growth sectors	2.1.7	Pilot an approach to better targeting and joined-up support for inward investors.	CPI & Business Durham . Deployment in 2024.	

2.2 Start-ups and business growth: Provide excellent support at all stages for businesses to start-up, sustain, thrive and grow in County Durham				
Create an integrated partnership to support and increase enterprises and start-ups within the county	2.2.1	Establish and grow the Enterprising Durham Partnership model.	Business Durham & NEEAL . £2.6m secured from UKSPF until the end of March 2025.	<p>People: These actions will support employability programmes by promoting enterprise as a route out of unemployment.</p> <p>Places: Enterprise hubs will be located in town / village centres or business parks and will lead to demand for new premises and potentially demand for employment land.</p>
	2.2.2	In line with the Enterprising Durham Framework deliver the first phase of enterprise and start-up support.		
	2.2.3	Pilot a hub and spoke model to increase the visibility of enterprising opportunities across the county.		
Enable businesses to be more productive and grow	2.2.4	Deliver the integrated Productivity and Growth Programme, which will deliver business engagement, create workable action plans, productivity support, and business grants investing in growth projects and implement productivity improvements.	Business Durham & UMI & RTC North . £8.2m of UKSPF and REPF secured until the end of March 2025.	<p>Promotion: The business conference will fit with the county's place branding approach.</p> <p>Planet: These actions will ensure that businesses interested in improving their energy efficiency will be supported.</p> <p>Planet / Productivity: UKSPF may be used to provide loans and grants for energy efficiency projects.</p> <p>Planet: The InTUNE programme may support</p>
	2.2.5	Establish an expert group to investigate and improve access to finance for small and growing businesses.		
	2.2.6	Establish an annual County Durham business conference programme linked to the key themes in the IES.		
	2.2.7	Deliver the InTUNE programme to support the capacity of SMEs to innovate and develop new products and processes (overlaps with action 2.3.5).		
			<p>County Durham Economic Partnership Chair & Barclays Bank. March 2024.</p> <p>County Durham Economic Partnership. March 2024 / annual.</p> <p>Durham University in collaboration with 4 other North East universities.</p> <p>£4.7m of UKSPF secured until March 2025.</p>	

				innovations that have environmental benefits.
2.3 Innovation ecosystem: Expand the thriving innovation ecosystem				
Change the 'mindset' and behaviours of residents and businesses within the county towards innovation, addressing barriers and capturing opportunities to bring more innovation support to the county	2.3.1	Commission research into the mindset of innovators and local barriers constraining innovation in line with the COM-B model . Aligned with effective communication and delivery strategy to maximise reach and inclusion.	Durham University	<p>Planet: Actions encourage businesses to minimise their environmental impacts.</p> <p>People: Actions encourage businesses to maximise their social value impacts.</p>
	2.3.2	Establish expert group to investigate and identify barriers to innovation and develop delivery strategy.	Business Durham / Durham University	
Improve 'readiness' to innovation	2.3.3	Investigate opportunities to expand venture capital opportunities in County Durham	Business Durham / North East Mayoral Combined Authority March 2025	<p>Productivity / Places / Planet: Actions will support projects and further low carbon innovations.</p> <p>People / Planet: Actions will support the demand for 'green skills'.</p>
	2.3.4	Further develop the County Durham Pound programme, maximising supplier opportunities and the OEM supply chain access to major contractors and priority sectors	Durham County Council. County Durham Pound / County Durham Economic Partnership	
Increasing the 'capability' of our local businesses to innovate and expand the county and region's innovation ecosystem	2.3.5	Deliver the Northern Accelerator Programme and Arrow initiatives to increase innovative collaborations between North East universities.	Durham University £2.0m secured from UKSPF until the end of March 2025	<p>Planet: Actions will support low carbon and energy efficiency innovations and the growth of the green economy.</p> <p>Places: Actions will support demand for employment land and</p>
	2.3.6	Develop targeted Growth Plans for each of the opportunity sectors identified for growth in the IES, the plans will provide a definition of the sector and methodology for tracking growth and changes in sector performance (aligns with priority 2.1.2).	Durham County Council	

	2.3.7	Pilot approach to target inward investment linked to specific growth sectors (aligns with priority 2.1.7).	CPI / Business Durham / North East Mayoral Combined Authority Resource implications and lead need consideration. Summer 2024.	<p>better digital infrastructure.</p> <p>People: Specialist technical skills development programmes linked to the county's opportunity sectors will support the innovation ecosystem, generating more job opportunities. Activities will support graduate and talent retention within the county.</p> <p>Promotion aligns and supports inward investment activities, specifically linked to our priority sectors</p> <p>Planet: The action will support the repair, recovery, and repurposing of goods.</p>
	2.3.8	Develop an internship programme for graduates within local businesses supporting enterprise, graduate retention and business innovation	Durham University	
	2.3.9	Explore opportunities for a Sector-led Innovation Challenge programme	tbc	
	2.3.10	Investigate opportunities to expand VentureFest to develop peer-to-peer networks	Business Durham / Innovation Supernetworks Resource implications need consideration. March 2023.	
Promote the circular economy approach to businesses in the county	2.3.11	Deliver the Accelerating the Circular Economy (ACE) Programme	University of Durham & CPI	

2.4: GOOD BUSINESS PRACTICE: Drive good business practices, including improving health in the workplace				
Use the collective strength of partners to maximise social, economic, and environmental value of day-to-day activities	2.4.1	Capitalise on the new opportunities of the Procurement Bill (e.g. training on new procurement rules) and develop the County Durham Pound programme to embed social value within businesses (aligned to 2.3.4)	North East Purchasing Organisation & Durham County Council	<p>Productivity: This action will support businesses to win more contracts.</p> <p>People: This ambition will support social sustainability.</p> <p>Planet: This ambition supports environmental sustainability.</p>
Promote good business practices	2.4.3	Establish an expert group to consider the value of creating a BCorp model	County Durham Economic Partnership	People, Places, Planet: Actions will encourage businesses to achieve high social and environmental standards.
Improve good workplace health and wellbeing to support productivity, addressing issues are key determinants of health such as mental health, smoking, drugs and alcohol use	2.4.4	Encourage organisations to engage with County Durham Workplace Health Programme and become signatories to Better Health At Work Awards	Public Health / Business Durham	People – directly support people’s health and wellbeing
Ensure that residents can access secure work that pays a living wage	2.4.5	Explore opportunities to promote the Durham Living Wage or alternative scheme to businesses and partner organisations across the county.	County Durham Economic Partnership	People: Actions will help to increase the proportion of residents in secure work that pays a living wage.
Support businesses to reduce their carbon emissions and other environmental impacts	2.4.6	Aligned with the Productivity and Growth programme deliver an integrated service which supports businesses to save energy	Business Durham / Low Carbon Team Durham County Council	Planet: These actions will support the growth of the green economy.

		and reduce their carbon emissions and other environmental impacts.		
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3. Places

Improve places and plan infrastructure so people and businesses can access opportunities

Intro – text to be added

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Summary of Priorities, Activities and Impacts

Priorities	Actions	Impacts
3.1 Build vibrant and diverse towns and villages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Towns and Villages Programme • Masterplan development programme • Levelling Up interventions and regeneration schemes • Deliver programme of Place Labs • Creation of a new vision and delivery framework for Durham City • Refresh of the County Durham Housing Strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased number of jobs • Improved and developed employed land • Increased businesses supported
3.2 Unlock employment land for high quality premises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of nationally and regionally significant sites – NETPark and Durham City Innovation District including Aykley Heads • Infrastructure and development of Jade Business Park, Forrest Park and Integra 61 • North East Mayoral Combined Authority Investment Zone – Clean Energy and Green Manufacturing • Undertake employment land review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase levels of GVA • Increased levels of GVA per filled job • Increased County Durham Pound spend • Reduced vacant shops in town centres
3.3 Improve physical connectivity between places in the county	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop connectivity Strategy for County Durham County Council • Deliver park and pedal scheme • Pilot on demand business services • Promote bus REALtime and ticketing scheme • Implement Local Elective Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) Programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced problem and empty buildings in council ownership • Redeveloped brownfield land
3.4 Enhance digital infrastructure and connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery Digital Durham Programme and Project Gigabit • Develop digital data collaboration model with social housing providers • Establish Digital Inclusion Steering group and develop programme • Develop Microgrid pilot and digital community hubs programme • Drive 5G innovation regions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •

Ambitions	Action No.	Actions	Lead Partner	Links to other Priorities
3.1 Towns and villages: Build vibrant and diverse towns and villages				
Support business, retail, community resilience, and enhance the environment in our most disadvantaged settlements	3.1.1	Deliver established Towns and Villages Delivery Programme	Durham County Council – Economic Development Team 2023 – 2026	Productivity / People: The programme will lead to more opportunities for businesses and local people Planet: Projects to be developed in line with Sustainability Appraisals as required/scale
Diversification and the creation of vibrant places/town centres	3.1.2	Masterplan development programme and delivery frameworks . Agree prioritisation and scheduling (2023)	Durham County Council	Productivity: identification of new opportunities to support business growth in town centres Planet: Explore opportunities to enable sustainable growth, reduce carbon emissions and broader approach to bio diversity through new developments
	3.1.3	Explore opportunities for health on the high street/one public estate interventions	Durham County Council / NHS 2023 – 2024	
Deliver Levelling Up priorities and maximise the access to funding to support regeneration in some of our most disadvantaged communities	3.1.4	Deliver Levelling Up Fund Round 1 Rural Connectivity and Cultural Programme in Bishop Auckland Constituency – Whorlton Bridge, A68 by pass, Stockton and Darlington Railway walking and cycling route and Locomotion in Shildon improvements	Durham County Council 2025	Promotion: improved cultural assets and supporting visitor economy Productivity: businesses supported

Ambitions	Action No.	Actions	Lead Partner	Links to other Priorities
	3.1.5	Deliver Stronger Towns and Future High Streets in Bishop Auckland £53m Programme	Durham County Council/Brighter Bishop Auckland Partnership 2024	
	3.1.6	Consider outcome of Levelling Up Fund Round 2 bids and develop proposals to access Round 3 funding	2023-2024	
Regenerate Horden to create greater diversity of housing and higher quality of built and natural environment	3.1.7	Horden Masterplan Delivery	Durham County Council 2023 - 2033	Planet: Retro fitting of homes, delivery of new efficient homes and consider opportunities for renewable energy infrastructure
	3.1.8	Support Horden Together to champion community-led public sector collaboration	Horden Together Partnership 2023+	Planet: Local environmental improvements
	3.1.9	Review and embed the economic impacts of Horden station	Durham County Council 2024-2026	Productivity: consider connectivity and employment growth
Regenerate Stanley town centre to tackle problem buildings such as the former Board School and support diversification within the town centre	3.1.10	Stakeholder engagement and asset mapping Deliver Board School Scheme. Roll out of Place Lab in 2024/25	Karbon Homes / Durham County Council 2023	People / Productivity: The activities should lead to more opportunities for local businesses and residents Planet: The activities will have a positive impact on the local environment
Support community resilience and engagement, development and ownership of places	3.1.11	Pilot Place Labs Programme in Peterlee, Teesdale and Durham City	Durham County Council 2023 – 2025	People: Community engagement and opportunity for skills development
	3.1.12	Identify and roll out programme	Durham County Council 2025+	

Ambitions	Action No.	Actions	Lead Partner	Links to other Priorities
through culture-led regeneration				Planet: opportunities to tackle climate change and carbon reduction at a local level
Establish a collaborative approach between social housing providers to support local place making	3.1.13	Establish a new place-making group which will join-up delivery	Livin 2023	People: community engagement.
	3.1.14	Pilot home working initiatives	2024	Planet: The action will accelerate progress towards the take-up of lower carbon technologies and the achievement of net zero
Durham City to punch its weight and drive economic growth	3.1.15	Develop a new Durham City Vision and Delivery Strategy / Framework	Durham County Council 2024	Planet: Clean Air and Green Infrastructure Strategy – Air Quality management plan – options for green infrastructure
Sufficient and suitable housing land to support economic growth and provide quality housing for the residents of the county	3.1.16	Complete the review and update of County Durham Housing Strategy	Durham County Council 2023+	Planet: Explore opportunities to enable sustainable growth, reduce carbon emissions and broader approach to bio diversity through new developments
	3.1.17	Support the delivery of strategic housing sites within the County Durham Plan	Durham County Council and partners 2023+	
	3.1.18	Identification and management of brownfield sites programme . Including bids into NEMCA Brownfield Housing Fund	Durham County Council, Registered Housing Providers and Homes England 2023-2025	
3.2 Employment land: Unlock employment land for high quality premises				
	3.2.1	Complete NETPARK Phase 3 , Sedgefield	Business Durham	

Ambitions	Action No.	Actions	Lead Partner	Links to other Priorities
Nationally and regionally recognised strategic sites that have high quality infrastructure and premises to support science and technology innovation, opportunity sectors, advanced manufacturing and capitalise inward investment – developing allocated land within the County Durham Plan			2023 - 2025	Planet: Potential for EV charging infrastructure and renewable energy generation will be considered through individual schemes
	3.2.2	Develop Durham City Innovation District Masterplan and secure a development partner	Durham County Council / Durham University 2024 - 2026	
	3.2.3	Deliver Devolution Regeneration Funding programme at Aykley Heads, Durham - creation of a connectivity corridor through the site	March 2025	Productivity: Provision of innovation ecosystems and enabling infrastructure that supports business growth
	3.2.4	Develop Jade Business Park Phase 2 , Murton	Business Durham 2023 – 2026	
	3.2.5	Promote, secure investment and develop phases at Forrest Park , Newton Aycliffe	Business Durham County Council 2023+	People: Future business skills needs and opportunities – working with University and FE Colleges
	3.2.6	Explore infrastructure and funding options to unlock phase 2 of Integra 61	Durham County Council	
	3.2.7	Work with the private sector to redevelop or bring back into use under utilised premises and land at Peterlee Business Parks (including North West, South West, Whitehouse and Brackhill) and Newton Aycliffe Business Park?	Business Durham Newton Aycliffe/Peterlee Business Forums? 2024+	Promotion: Core part of the county’s offer to attract inward investment and job creation
Supporting sustainable growth and development of natural assets that enables infrastructure development across the county	3.2.8	Develop a Local Nature Delivery Strategy that supports appropriate mitigation measures and offsetting to enable inclusive growth	DEFRA and Durham County Council	Planet: Directly helping to deliver Climate Response Plan objectives
	3.2.9	Assess the potential to use council land assets for renewable energy generation, biodiversity net gain, and nutrient neutrality.	Durham County Council	Planet: Directly helping to deliver Climate Response Plan objectives
Ensure there is sufficient and suitable employment	3.2.10	Employment Land Review to assess the demand, need, and opportunities for new	Durham County Council	Productivity: Facilitating business growth, clusters

Ambitions	Action No.	Actions	Lead Partner	Links to other Priorities
land to capture new investments and business growth		employment land allocations and business space	2024-2025	and inward investment – understanding market needs and gaps Planet: These actions will support green growth and low carbon research and technologies
	3.2.11	Investigate the potential for a new low carbon business park		
Development of the North East Mayoral Combined Authority Investment Zone – Clean Energy and Green Manufacturing that harnesses investment and business growth opportunities	3.2.12	Evaluate tax sites and business rate retention potential benefits and impacts for NETPark and Durham City Innovation District	Durham County Council 2023	Productivity: opportunity for investment and recognition for businesses within the clean energy and green manufacturing sectors - innovation ecosystem development Promotion: County Durham within the North East Investment Zone provides additional place promotion opportunities People: future business skills needs and opportunities linked to these sectors
	3.2.13	Seek capital investment through NEMCA Investment Fund to grow the county’s business space and infrastructure	Business Durham County Council 2024+	
	3.2.14	Promote supply chain benefits and seek inward investment opportunities for County Durham as part of the North East Investment Zone	Business Durham County Council 2024+	
Understand the electricity demand and capacity of key employment sites to ensure there is the	3.2.15	Undertake an assessment of power connections and capacity requirements for major employment sites including opportunities to provide renewable energy and secure further investment	Business Durham, NPG 2023 - 2024	Productivity: supporting sectoral growth Planet: Explore renewable energy

Ambitions	Action No.	Actions	Lead Partner	Links to other Priorities
capability to support new developments	3.2.16	Influence and inform the development of a regional approach to understanding energy supply needs that are impeding or constraining development	NEMCA, NPG, Renewable providers 2024-2026	generation options to understand and deliver capacity demands. Mitigating the impacts of developments – options in consideration
3.3 Physical connectivity: Improve physical connectivity between places in the county				
Champion and understand County Durham connectivity needs – to enhance connectivity for residents, business and visitors	3.3.1	Develop a baseline of evidence of travel patterns to employment sites	Durham County Council 2023	<p>People and Productivity: Understanding business travel and education travel plans</p> <p>Planet: This action will help us to understand travel patterns, inform public transport decisions, address air quality challenges and tackle scope 3 carbon emissions</p>
	3.3.2	Undertake an assessment of sustainable travel routes and public transport connectivity between the county’s main settlements and employment sites – Durham City Innovation District and NETPark	Durham County Council 2023 – 2024	<p>People / Productivity Planet: Supporting connectivity and more sustainable travel options for residents, business and visitors and enhancing health and wellbeing for residents and visitors.</p> <p>Planet: helping to meet and test Climate</p>
	3.3.3	Undertake a feasibility study for a park and pedal scheme in the county	Durham County Council 2023 – 2024	

Ambitions	Action No.	Actions	Lead Partner	Links to other Priorities
				Emergency Response Plan objectives
Support the development of the North East Mayoral Combined Authority's transport and connectivity plans	3.3.4	Consider opportunities and secure investment for a new and enhanced transport hubs in Newton Aycliffe and Stanley to support levelling up/connectivity	Durham County Council and major town centre land and property owners 2025-2026	People and Productivity: supporting sustainable options for travel Planet: helping to meet and test Climate Emergency Response Plan objectives
	3.3.5	Develop a connectivity statement/strategy for county to shape the refresh of the Transport Plan for the North East	Durham County Council 2023 - 2024	People and Productivity: supporting access to employment and business growth
	3.3.6	Assess the suitability of current bus fares for younger people accessing work	Transport North East / North East Mayoral Combined Authority	People and Productivity: supporting sustainable options for travel
	3.3.7	Secure investment to develop business cases for transport capital investment pipeline	Durham County Council, NEMCA	People and Productivity: scheme development that will support employment and business growth
	3.3.8	Establish a new North East and National Highways Collaboration Board to influence National Highways investment in major road infrastructure including A1(M), A66, and A19	Durham County Council, Transport North East 2023	People and Productivity: supporting connectivity and investment in national infrastructure
3.3.8	Inform development of the regional Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) to support access to employment and improving connectivity across the county	Durham County Council, Transport North East 2023	People and Productivity: supporting sustainable options for travel	

Ambitions	Action No.	Actions	Lead Partner	Links to other Priorities
	3.3.9	Pilot an 'on-demand' bus service to Newton Aycliffe Business Park	Durham County Council 2023	People and Productivity: supporting sustainable options for travel
	3.3.10	Promote REALtime and ticketing for bus travel across the county and region	Durham County Council, Transport North East 2023-24	Promotion and People: raising awareness across the county and to establish campaigns to support employment opportunities
Enhance the county's electric vehicle charging infrastructure	3.3.11	Implement the Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) Programme	Durham County Council 2023 – 2025 £1.25m secured	Planet: helping to meet and test Climate Emergency Response Plan objectives
Enhance active travel and road infrastructure to improve connectivity and support employment growth	3.3.12	Secure Active Travel funds and deliver new programmes to provide new connectivity –	Durham County Council 2023-2026 LCWIPs and Transforming Cities Fund	People / Productivity Planet: Supporting connectivity and more sustainable travel options for residents, business and visitors Promotion: sustainable travel options promoted across the county
	3.3.13	Secure funds and deliver schemes to expand the Durham City Park and Ride network	Durham County Council	People / Productivity Planet: Supporting connectivity and more sustainable travel options for residents, business and visitors

Ambitions	Action No.	Actions	Lead Partner	Links to other Priorities
				Promotion: sustainable travel options promoted across the city and with visitors to support cultural attractions/visitor offer
	3.3.14	Secure funding and deliver improved road infrastructure to enable phase 3 of Integra 61 as a strategic employment site	Durham County Council 2024 - 2026	People and Productivity: supporting access to employment and business growth
Deliver on our carbon emission targets by reducing the volume of freight on the road by expanding the rail infrastructure within the county and access to new stations	3.3.15	Develop Full Business Cases and secure funding for new railway stations at Sedgefield and Ferryhill on the Stillington Line to connect more towns together	Durham County Council 2024 – 2026 Timescales tbc	People and Productivity: supporting access to employment and business growth
	3.3.16	Develop a business case for the re-opening of the Leamside Line	Durham County Council / North East Mayoral Combined Authority/Transport North East 2024+	People and Productivity: supporting employment and business growth
Improve the resilience and capacity of local energy networks	3.3.17	Develop local area energy masterplans to support investment in local energy networks	Durham County Council	Places: This action will support the supply, resilience and capacity of local energy networks. Productivity: This action will support the energy needs of businesses.
	3.3.18	Identify opportunities for community owned and developed energy networks		
	3.3.19	Develop renewable energy infrastructure across the county for energy generation and vehicle charging		

Ambitions	Action No.	Actions	Lead Partner	Links to other Priorities
				<p>People: This action will drive the demand for skilled workers.</p> <p>Planet: This action will support green growth.</p> <p>Promotion: County Durham could become a leader in local energy networks.</p>
3.4 Digital infrastructure: Enhance digital infrastructure and connectivity				
<p>Supporting hard to reach communities gain access to gigabit capable broadband. Government UK targets are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Min 85% coverage by 2025 (currently 57% coverage in the county) • As close to 100% of properties to have gigabit capable coverage by end of 2030 	3.4.1	<p>Implement the Digital Durham Programme including Project Gigabit and identify opportunities to secure commercial investment in fast and resilient networks -Includes £6.6m in Teesdale Programme</p>	<p>Digital Durham, Project Gigabit BDUK Team, Providers 2023 - 2030</p>	<p>People and Productivity: supporting employment and business growth</p> <p>Planet: This action will reduce the need for people to travel and reduce transport-based carbon emissions</p>
<p>Reduce digital exclusion of those living in social housing and in rural communities</p>	3.4.2	<p>Develop a digital and data collaboration model with social housing providers – connect suppliers, share understanding of needs, improve delivery, and deliver social tariffs, social value</p>	<p>Digital Durham and social housing providers 2023</p>	<p>Productivity: supporting development of infrastructure to support service provision</p>

Ambitions	Action No.	Actions	Lead Partner	Links to other Priorities
	3.4.3	Establish Digital Inclusion Steering Group through the County Durham Together Partnership	County Durham Together 2023	People and Productivity: supporting employment and business growth
	3.4.5	Identify infrastructure improvements and negotiating rates/agreements with provides to enable more residents to work from home	Housing providers, Suppliers 2023-24	Productivity: supporting development of infrastructure to support service provision
	3.4.6	Identify relevant assets, sites, and hubs, and consider the potential to integrate a microgrid pilot	Durham County Council / Northern Powergrid 2024	
Deliver Durham County Council Digital Strategy	3.4.7	Prioritise investment and develop investment pipeline – specific actions to be developed	Durham County Council 2024 – 2027	Promotion: Opportunity to showcase and develop smart places campaign/benefits for the county People and Productivity: supporting employment and business growth
	3.4.8	Develop a concept of smart places for County Durham and communications/marketing campaign		
Maximise the impact of Service Direct NEWCO Ltd Telco to improve digital infrastructure	3.4.9	Provision of telecommunication services to public sector organisations including employment sites – consider options for Durham City Innovation District	Service Direct NEWCO Ltd Telco 2023+	Productivity: supporting development of infrastructure to support service provision
Improved 5G coverage across the county – 5G Innovation Regions	3.4.10	Collaboration with Department for Science Innovation and Technology to drive forward innovation and unlock opportunities for digital infrastructure with the county	DSIT Durham County Council	People and Productivity: supporting employment and business growth
	3.4.11	Inform and influence the development of 5G ambitions for the North East as part of the emerging NE Devolution Deal and 5G Innovation Regions	NEMCA 5G Innovation Regions - £40m Fund Durham County Council	People and Productivity: supporting employment and business growth

Ambitions	Action No.	Actions	Lead Partner	Links to other Priorities
	3.4.12	Develop project proposals for the county and 5G innovation proposition for NETPark (2023) and deliver future project (2024-25)	Durham County Council 2023	Promotion and Productivity: part of the offer for supporting further investment and business growth

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4. Promotion

Promote our county, assets and opportunities to businesses, investors, visitors, developers, and residents

The actions for Promotion will focus on supporting and growing our year-round visitor economy and responding to the opportunity to develop and strengthen the role of cultural enterprise and creative industries. We will work to develop a clear brand and place marketing which will engage and attract investors, business and visitors, recognising this will play an important role in ensuring that actions and investment are coordinated. We will take action to understand perceptions, deliver brand activation and support the cultural amplification of County Durham, regionally, nationally and internationally working with NEMCA to develop a regional brand narrative our approach will also support North East development of the Local Economy Visitor Partnership Status.

We will support and deliver a number of major visitor infrastructure projects, including Beamish, Raby Castle, The Story, and Stockton to Darlington Heritage Railway during the delivery plan. Our actions will focus on enhancing our Cultural and Creative Infrastructure powered by deeper collaboration to create an framework of opportunity. We will take the lead for NEMCA Devolution Portfolio for Culture, develop an ambitious cultural development framework, carry out feasibility for a new Culture and Creative Zone, develop plans for a UK first through the Heritage X project, support the delivery and cultivation of sector specific skills and creative tech innovation, and inform the development of a Regional Cultural Observatory closing the gap between national and local creative economy performance.

We will also actively seek to attract inward investment in the sectors and places it makes sense, developing key strategies for FDI, regional business and the NE Creative Industries Plan.

Summary of Priorities, Activities and Impacts

Priorities	Actions	Impacts
4.1 Develop a clear brand and place marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop County Durham place branding and deliver amplification programme • Inform North East place branding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased visitor numbers • Increased visitor spend
4.2 Attract more inward investment in the sectors and places it makes sense	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop FDI International Strategy • Develop Regional Business Events Programme • Support the feasibility of a North East Events and Festival Unit and proposition for the North East designation as the first UK Region of Sport • Raise the profile of County Durham events programme • Shape and influence the NE Creative Industries Plan and promotion of the UK Create Growth Programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased overnight stays • Increased number of jobs • Increased number of businesses • Increase levels of GVA
4.3 Grow a year-round visitor economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support North East development of the Local Economy Visitor Partnership Status • Undertake feasibility for a new family attraction in the county • Establish a biannual Sci-Art Festival • Deliver REPF Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund • Undertake feasibility into tourist transport services within the county • Deliver carbon exchange pilot project for Lumiere • Develop a plan for reaching carbon neutrality in the visitor economy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased County Durham Pound spend • Decrease average carbon emissions per visitor
4.4 Enhance cultural and creative infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead the NEMCA Devolution Portfolio for Culture, Creative, Tourism and Sport • Work with NEMCA to develop an ambitious cultural development framework • Identify and undertake feasibility for a new Culture and Creative Zone • Complete major visitor infrastructure projects • Develop and deliver the Heritage X project • Development of a network of Place Labs • Delivery of sector specific skills bootcamps and creative tech innovation • Inform the development of a regional Cultural Observatory 	

Ambitions	Action no.	Actions	Lead Partner	Links to other Priorities
4.1 Brand and place marketing: Develop a clear brand and place marketing				
Develop a place brand to promote a compelling and authentic narrative about County Durham to engage and attract investors, business and visitors	4.1.1	Commission a perceptions survey and develop place brand options	Durham County Council 2023	Productivity and Place: These actions will support inward investment and growth sectors in various parts of the county
	4.1.2	Deliver brand activation programme, sectoral and cultural amplification programme and campaigns	Durham County Council, Visit County Durham and sector partners 2023+	
	4.1.3	Evaluate the impact of brand through take up, recognition and economic returns	tbc	
Maximise regional place branding for the benefit of County Durham	4.1.4	Work with NEMCA to develop a regional brand narrative , identifying coherence and distinctiveness in strategic application	Durham County Council, NEMCA 2023-2024	Productivity, Place and People: This action will support improved pride of place and champion opportunities across the county
4.2 Inward investment: Attract more inward investment in the sectors and places it makes sense				
Increase foreign direct investment through the creation of an International Strategy	4.2.1	Develop an FDI International Strategy to maximise engagement with national and internal networks and trade propositions including MPIM, UKREIFF and Host City	Business Durham	Productivity: This action will lead to additional investment, businesses, and jobs
Attract more events and conferences to County Durham	4.2.2	Develop a Regional Business Events programme . Work with DDP to identify key markets to increasing the number of events and conferences in the county	NEMCA, Durham County Council 2024-2026	
	4.2.3	Work with NEMCA to test the feasibility and scope for a North East Events and Festival Unit	NEMCA and Durham County Council 2025-2026	
	4.2.4	Develop a conferencing offer in Durham City.	Visit County Durham Durham University?	Place: This action will support the vision for Durham City

Ambitions	Action no.	Actions	Lead Partner	Links to other Priorities
	4.2.5	Develop the proposition for the North East designation of the UK Region of Sport – supporting and attracting more high-profile sporting events	NEMCA	<p>People: This action will support skills development and the health and wellbeing of local people</p> <p>Place: This action will support improved pride of place and sports clusters / assets in towns</p>
	4.2.6	Raise the national profile of Durham’s existing events and festivals programme – National significance/reach of Lumiere	Durham County Council	<p>Productivity: This action will support the growth of the visitor economy</p> <p>Place: This action will support improvements in pride of place</p>
Develop, expand and secure investment in the creative industries sector	4.2.7	Shape and influence the NE Creative Industries Plan and promotion of the UK Create Growth Programme to maximise investment opportunities for Durham businesses	North of Tyne CA, NEMCA, Create UK 2023 - 2025	Productivity: This action will support growth in the creative sector.
4.3 Year-round visitor economy: Grow a year-round visitor economy				
Increase the tourism offer of County Durham	4.3.1	Work with NEMCA to achieve Local Economy Visitor Partnership Status as part of the Trailblazer development the North East Devolution Deal	Durham County Council and NEMCA 2025-26	<p>People / Productivity: These actions will support growth of the tourism sector and new job opportunities</p> <p>Place: These actions will encourage visitors to major place-based attractions in the county</p>
	4.3.2	Undertake feasibility and options analysis to identify potential partner to deliver large scale family attraction	Durham County Council 2023-24	
	4.3.3	Establish a biannual Sci-Art Festival which links our space science, history and innovation	Partnership between University of Durham and DCC	

Ambitions	Action no.	Actions	Lead Partner	Links to other Priorities
		ambitions and take advantage of a gap in the national market		
Create a carbon neutral visitor economy	4.3.4	Deliver REPF Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund £600k programme – to enhance the tourism offer and visitor attractions	Partners 2024 - 2025	
	4.3.6	Undertake feasibility into dedicated ‘red bus’ or ‘on demand’ tourist transport services within the county	Durham County Council 2024-2025	Planet and Place: These actions will improve public transport to the county’s heritage and tourism infrastructure, reducing vehicle based emissions and improving air quality
	4.3.7	Consider investment options and develop active travel transport connectivity improvements between key sites and attractions	Durham County Council 2025-2026+	
	4.3.8	Deliver carbon exchange pilot project for Lumiere	DCC, Artichoke 2023-2024	
	4.3.9	Develop a plan for reaching carbon neutrality in the visitor economy including events programme with County Durham	NEMCA and Durham County Council 2025+	
4.4 Cultural and creative infrastructure: Enhance cultural and creative infrastructure				
Harness the potential of the cultural and creative sector with improved direction and infrastructure development	4.4.1	Lead the NEMCA Devolution Portfolio for Culture, Creative, Tourism and Sport	Durham County Council 2023-2025	
	4.4.2	Work with NEMCA to develop an ambitious cultural development framework and partnership to enhance infrastructure and access to investment for the whole region	Durham County Council, NEMCA 2023-2025	People: These actions will support skills development and creative / tourism careers, creating higher value jobs and more attractive visitor economy Place: These actions will support culture-led regeneration and more
	4.4.3	Secure NEMCA devolution funding to develop a programme of cultural infrastructure investments and deliver new cultural assets for County Durham	Durham County Council and partners 2025+	

Ambitions	Action no.	Actions	Lead Partner	Links to other Priorities
				attractive places to live and visit
Support and develop cultural and creative industries sector	4.4.4	Support the development of the NE Screen Industries Partnership - working with emerging creative industries focusing on screen industry development on locations, location services and screen writing – Specific actions to be added?	Durham County, NE Screen Industries Partnership	People / Productivity: These actions will support more job and business opportunities
	4.4.5	Identify and undertake feasibility for a new Culture and Creative Zone within County Durham – to form part of a network of Zones across NEMCA	Durham County Council 2024	
Increase and enhance the cultural infrastructure and offer in County Durham	4.4.6	Complete major visitor infrastructure projects including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Light (DLIMAG), • The Story • Stockton to Darlington 2025 • The Faith Museum and Bishop Auckland tourist attractions • Locomotion New Hall • Raby Castle • Remaking Beamish • Durham County Cricket Club • World Heritage Site 	DCC. Raby Estates, Durham County Cricket Club, Beamish Museum, The Auckland Project	Place: These actions will support culture-led regeneration and place shaping to improve vibrancy and pride of place Productivity: These actions will support heritage sector growth and innovation
	4.4.7	Develop and deliver the Heritage X project – feasibility and explore investment/location requirements	Durham University and NE Universities 2024 - 2028	
Increase access to creative careers and	4.4.8	Create a network of Place Labs and establish a programme that supports creative business start-ups for residents from all backgrounds	Durham County Council	People: These actions will support skills development, the

Ambitions	Action no.	Actions	Lead Partner	Links to other Priorities
creative business start-ups	4.4.9	Inform and influence the development of the North East as an International Hub for creative tech innovation – specialism in e-sports, light art and immersive technologies	NEMCA	<p>promotion of the sector as a career, address skills gaps, and support new enterprise opportunities</p> <p>Productivity: These actions overlap with the Enterprising Durham Framework and will support growth and innovation in the creative sector</p> <p>Place: These actions will support the economic diversification of towns across the county</p>
	4.4.10	Deliver sector growth and skills bootcamps and establish work based learning opportunities – screen industries, CCI, Tourism and sport	tbc	
	4.4.11	Inform the development of a regional Cultural Observatory -Evaluate, measure and understand culture and creative values through an inclusive economy lens	Durham University and NEMCA	