

County Durham Inclusive Economic Strategy Delivery Plan 2023 - 2025



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 our Inclusive Economic Strategy for County Durham.

Our 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. Our focus on inclusive economic growth means that we want to **enable as many people as possible to contribute to and benefit from growth**. We also want to achieve this by enhancing our environments and substantially reducing carbon emissions.

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:

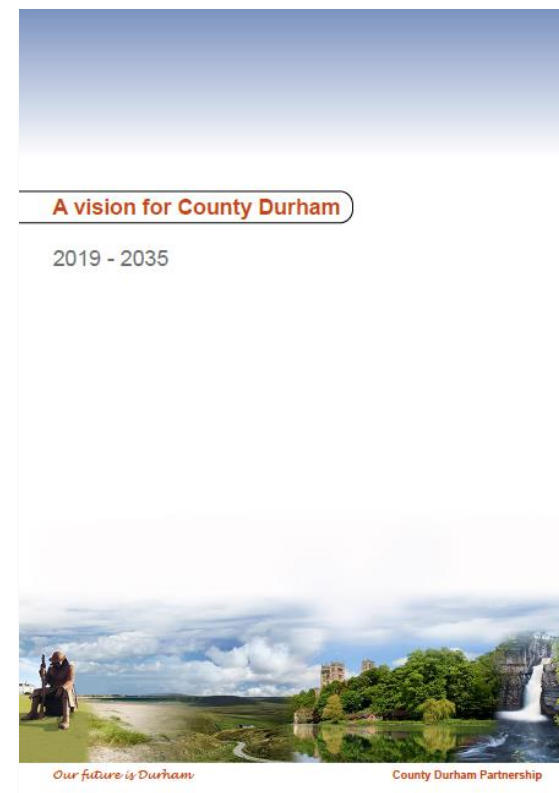
- More and better jobs
- People live long and independent lives
- Connected communities

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 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: 13,500 more people in employment or self-employment** (6% increase)
- **Better jobs: 30,000 more people in managerial, professional and associate professional occupations** (32% increase)
 - **Close the £14,264 gap with national performance on Gross Value Added Per Filled Job** (up to 23% 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 (more jobs)							Unemployment						Skills (better jobs)					
	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+ (%)	Ec. Inactive: Long-term sickness*	Highest skilled jobs (%)	Lowest skilled jobs (%)	NVQ4+ qualifications (%)	NVQ3+ qualifications (%)	No qualifications (%)	Weekly pay (£)
England	29m	32m	0.9	79	76	68	10	4	4	5	4	3	26	52	15	43	61	6	646
Co. Durham Compared to Eng.	182k	252k	0.7	75	72	65	8	4	3	5	4	2	36	39	20	33	53	8	575
NEMCA	820k	937k	0.9	74	71	66	7	5	4	5	5	3	32	43	18	35	54	9	580

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

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	£61,310	2,370,125	18%	13%	97,800 (UK)	1.7m (UK)
Co. Durham Compared to Eng.	£8.8 billion	£47,046	14,580	27%	21%	11,478**	600**
NEMCA	£46.2 billion	£48,576	55,120	21%	20%	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+ (%)	Ec. Inactive: Long term sickness*	Highest skilled jobs (%)	Lowest skilled jobs (%)	NVQ4+ qualifications (%)	NVQ3+ qualifications (%)	No qualifications (%)	Weekly pay (£)	
Co. Durham Compared to Eng.	182k	252k	0.7	75	72	65	8	4	3	5	4	2	36	39	20	33	53	8	575	
Compared to Co. Durham (inclusive growth)	Bishop Auckland	30k	39k	0.8	72	68	67	15	6	4	6	4	2	48	26	20	32	56	7	563
	City of Durham	58k	51k	1.1	82	81	64	6	4	2	1	3	2	24	50	17	44	65	9	574
	Easington	25k	36k	0.7	68	64	68	7	5	5	8	5	2	42	38	21	28	49	11	561
	North Durham	21k	41k	0.5	77	74	67	9	n/a	3	6	4	2	39	38	16	27	47	9	593
	North West Durham	23k	50k	0.5	78	75	65	10	4	3	6	3	2	36	46	23	35	55	5	593
	Sedgefield	35k	44k	0.8	72	68	74	6	5	3	6	4	2	40	37	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 of working age.

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"> • Delivery of new training support programme which will prepare residents for new job opportunities • Development of a Digital Inclusion Skills programme to ensure residents have the digital skills to sustain employment and access services • Increase confidence in numeracy and literacy and basic digital skills • Skills interventions to support the growth of the low carbon sector • Skills programmes for modern methods of construction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased numbers of residents with basic skills –numeracy, literacy, digital. • Residents with improved confidence and work-related skills.
<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"> • A comprehensive, client-centred employment support infrastructure enabling residents to access and progress in work • An all-age careers guidance framework and programme, enabling young people and adults to make informed decisions on careers paths. • Develop an apprenticeship brokerage resource enabling employers to maximise the use of apprenticeships and available levy funds • Develop ongoing collaboration between Adult and Health and Regeneration Economy and Growth services to identify and address interdependencies between health, work and wealth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased numbers of residents into employment who have disabilities, learning disabilities, autism and poor mental health. • Increased numbers of economically inactive residents in employment and training
<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 and roll-out of the 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"> • Increased number of residents achieving technical qualifications at higher levels
<p>Health and wellbeing: Ensure good health and wellbeing leads to economic inclusion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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"> • Reduced number of residents in vulnerable employment • Increased number of residents accessing

		<p>careers advice / support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increased number of apprenticeship starts across all levels• Increased number of residents in employment with associated health support programmes• Increased numbers of people employed in the green economy
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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 to 19+ year olds to support numeracy and basic digital skills	Durham County Council £2.8m of UKSPF secured until the end of March 2025	Productivity: These actions will be beneficial to local businesses

	1.1.4	Deliver the Communicate programme to 19+ year olds to support literacy and basic digital skills	Durham County Council, funded through UKSPF. UKSPF secured until the end of March 2025	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 programme 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 service</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	Maximise the delivery of DurhamWorks and DurhamAdvance, supporting unemployed and economically inactive young people and adults into employment and training	Durham County Council UKSPF secured until the end of March 2025	<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>
	1.2.2	Deliver the Reaching Out Across Durham (ROADII) scheme supporting unemployed and economically inactive adults to overcome barriers to employment	Groundwork £500,000 of UKSPF secured until the end of March 2024	
	1.2.3	Maximise the delivery of DurhamEnable supported employment service, helping residents with disabilities, learning disabilities, autism and poor mental health into employment	Durham County Council UKSPF secured until the end of March 2025	
Engage residents with low / no qualifications in learning and provide opportunities to develop their skills to enhance their life chances	1.2.4	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	<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>
Improve 'soft skills' to enable residents to progress towards paid work	1.2.5	Develop a joint approach, similar to 'passport', with accredited learning	Durham Community Action	
	1.2.6	Work with North East Youth Alliance to ensure a routeway for young people		

Support businesses to increase the number of apprenticeship opportunities	1.2.7	Develop an apprenticeship brokerage resource which will assist SMEs to take on new apprentices	Durham County Council	
	1.2.8	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	1.2.9	Commission a new Careers Framework for County Durham	Durham County Council Commission funded through UKSPF	
	1.2.10	Develop an effective all age careers resource to allow residents to make informed employment and training choices	Durham County Council.	
	1.2.11	Deliver The Workplaces project to Year 10-12 pupils	Durham County Council in partnership with local schools and employers. Funded through the Poverty Action Group until July 2025	
Provide specialist support to overcome barriers to residents' labour market participation	1.2.12	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	Durham County Council and Public Health Funded through a partnership between DurhamEnable and Public Health until August 2024	
	1.2.13	Deliver the Local Supported Employment project supporting residents with significant barriers to employment and who have disabilities, learning disabilities, autism and poor mental health into employment	Durham County Council Funded by DWP until March 2025	

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.
	1.3.2	Shape and support the roll-out of 'skills for jobs' programmes	Colleges / Independent Learning Providers	
	1.3.3	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	1.3.4	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
	1.3.5	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
	1.4.2	Deliver training programmes about financial literacy to frontline practitioners working with Children Young People and Families	Durham County Council	

	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 (aligns with 1.2.12)	Durham County Council and Public Health	Productivity: These actions will drive good business practices, including improving the health and wellbeing of the workforce
Promote good health and well-being for employees and workplaces	1.4.5	Increase the promotion of the Better Health at Work scheme to enhance the participation of micro and small businesses	Durham County Council	
Improve the wealth of communities	1.4.6	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 • Housing Associations 	

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. We will also support businesses in the county to bring new innovations and products to the market which address climate change, reduce carbon emissions, and reduce energy usage and waste.

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> <p>Promotion: These actions will support inward investment opportunities</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 2.3)	To be commissioned using UKSPF resources.	
	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 <u>National Semiconductor Strategy</u>	<p>Business Durham & North East Advanced Material Electronics,</p> <p>Resource implications need consideration. March 2024.</p>	



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Ambitions	Action No.	Actions	Lead Partner	Links to other Priorities
Grow the space sector	2.1.5	Deliver the North East space cluster programme	Business Durham	Planet: These actions will support green businesses and businesses that are becoming greener
	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. £3.,17m secured from UKSPF until the end of March 2025.	People: These actions will support employability programmes by promoting enterprise as a route out of unemployment 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
	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.	Promotion: The business conference will fit with the county's place branding approach

Ambitions	Action No.	Actions	Lead Partner	Links to other Priorities
	2.2.5	Establish an expert group to investigate and improve access to finance for small and growing businesses	County Durham Economic Partnership Chair & Barclays Bank. March 2024.	<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 innovations that have environmental benefits</p>
	2.2.6	Establish an annual County Durham business conference programme linked to the key themes in the IES	County Durham Economic Partnership. March 2024 / annual.	
	2.2.7	Deliver the <u>InTUNE</u> programme to support the capacity of SMEs to innovate and develop new products and processes (aligns with 2.3.5)	Durham University in collaboration with 4 other North East universities and CPI. £2m of UKSPF secured until March 2025.	
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	<p>Productivity / Places / Planet: Actions will support projects and</p>

Ambitions	Action No.	Actions	Lead Partner	Links to other Priorities
	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	County Durham Pound	further low carbon innovations. People / Planet: Actions will support the demand for 'green skills'.
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 as part of InTUNE (see 2.2.7) to increase innovative collaborations between North East universities and CPI	Durham University and CPI £2m of UKSPF secured until the end of March 2025	Planet: Actions will support low carbon and energy efficiency innovations and the growth of the green economy.
	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 2.1.2)	Durham County Council	Places: Actions will support demand for employment land and better digital infrastructure.
	2.3.7	Pilot approach to target inward investment linked to specific growth sectors (aligns with 2.1.7).	CPI / Business Durham / North East Mayoral Combined Authority Resources to be confirmed.	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
	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 linked to	To be commissioned using UKSPF	

Ambitions	Action No.	Actions	Lead Partner	Links to other Priorities
		the identified research and development opportunity of an anchor institution		and talent retention within the county.
	2.3.10	Investigate opportunities to expand VentureFest to develop peer-to-peer networks	Business Durham Resources to be confirmed	Promotion aligns and supports inward investment activities, specifically linked to our priority sectors
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	Planet: The action will support the repair, recovery, and repurposing of goods
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)	North East Procurement Organisation	Productivity: This action will support businesses to win more contracts People: This ambition will support social sustainability Planet: This ambition supports environmental sustainability
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	2.4.4	Encourage organisations to engage with County Durham Workplace Health	Public Health / Business Durham	People: This action will directly support the

Ambitions	Action No.	Actions	Lead Partner	Links to other Priorities
support productivity, addressing issues are key determinants of health such as mental health, smoking, drugs and alcohol use		Programme and become signatories to Better Health At Work Awards		health and wellbeing of workers
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 aligns business support with support for businesses to save energy, reduce their carbon emissions, and other environmental impacts.	Business Durham	Planet / Productivity: These actions will support the growth of the green economy

3. Places

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

A strong economy is built on confident, successful places. Vibrant cities, towns and village centres which attract people and footfall allow businesses to adapt, survive, and thrive. The Delivery Plan period will see major investment in our places across the region through the ongoing delivery of the £25m Towns and Villages programme; £54m of government investment in Bishop Auckland; and £20m in Spennymoor. Levelling Up Fund Round 3 and North East Devolution will also provide future funding opportunities to secure investment in our places and communities. A new Housing Strategy for the County will also set out how high-quality housing for all incomes can underpin the success of our economy. Role/s of housing providers and other partners - university, infrastructure providers, development partners, private sector?

Central to our new approach to building successful places will be empowering local communities to be at the heart of shaping the future of their towns and villages. We will work with local people, businesses and stakeholders to establish visions for each place, with a rolling programme to review existing masterplans to guide future and existing investment, through Strategic Place Plans. A range of new tools will be developed using innovative engagement methods, such as the role out of Place Labs to drive culture-led regeneration.

More and better jobs will be underpinned through the delivery of the 300 hectares of allocated employment land in the County Durham Plan. The council's £62m phase 3 expansion of NETPark will create up to 1,250 new jobs on site and is due to complete in early 2025; the procurement of a joint venture partner for the Aykley Heads site within the Durham Innovation District is underway; the private sector development of phase 2 of Jade Business Park is expected to commence during the plan period; and the council will continue to work with the private sector and seek public sector funding to develop sites at Forrest Park and future phases of Integra 61. Employment land reviews will also consider the need for any future employment sites.

Improving both the physical and digital connectivity between places in the county is central to the 2035 vision. Alongside the development of a new Connectivity Strategy will be the delivery of a park and pedal schemes, piloting on demand bus services to connect people to jobs, and implementing the Local Elective Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) Programme. The delivery of the Digital Durham Programme and Project Gigabit will continue to improve access to superfast broadband across the County to open up more opportunities for home working and business start-ups, particularly in our rural communities. Deployment of REPF?

Summary of Priorities, Actions, and Impacts

Priorities	Actions	Impacts
3.1 Build vibrant and diverse towns and villages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Towns and Villages Programme • Strategic Place Plan 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 • Increase levels of GVA • Increased levels of GVA per filled job • Increased County Durham Pound spend • Reduced vacant shops in town centres • Reduced problem and empty buildings in council ownership • Redeveloped brownfield land • Household Disposable Income
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 	
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 Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) Programme 	
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 to develop a programme • Develop Microgrid pilot and digital community hubs programme • Drive 5G innovation regions 	

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 programme across the county	Durham County Council - Economic Development Team 2023 - 2026	Productivity / People: This programme will lead to a range of new economic opportunities for businesses and local people
	3.1.2	Pilot home working initiatives	Housing Associations 2024	
Create and implement visions for towns and villages across the county	3.1.3	Strategic Place Plans development programme and delivery frameworks	Durham County Council and Housing Associations	Productivity: These actions will help to identify new opportunities to support business growth in town centres Planet: These actions will explore opportunities to support sustainable growth, reduce carbon emissions, and ensure new developments support biodiversity
	3.1.4	Explore opportunities for health on the high street / One Public Estate interventions with local communities and delivery partners	Durham County Council / NHS 2023 - 2024	
	3.1.5	Develop a new Durham City Vision and Delivery Strategy / Framework	Durham County Council To commence Dec 2023	
	3.1.6	Develop a programme to strengthen local foundational economies (e.g. food, housing, health services, transport) as part of place shaping / regeneration schemes	Housing Providers	
Deliver Levelling Up priorities and maximise the access to funding to support regeneration in some of our most disadvantaged communities	3.1.7	Deliver Levelling Up Fund Round 1 Rural Connectivity and Cultural Programme in Bishop Auckland Constituency - Whorlton Bridge, A68 bypass, Stockton and Darlington Railway walking and cycling route and Locomotion in Shildon improvements	Durham County Council 2025	Promotion: These actions will improve cultural assets and support the visitor economy Productivity: These actions will support local businesses and create
	3.1.8	Deliver the Stronger Towns and Future High Streets programmes in Bishop Auckland	Durham County Council/Brighter Bishop	

Ambitions	Action No.	Actions	Lead Partner	Links to other Priorities
			Auckland Partnership £53m.	new job and self-employment opportunities
	3.1.9	Deliver the Long-Term Plan for Towns programme in Spennymoor	Durham County Council £20m	
	3.1.10	Consider outcome of Levelling Up Fund Round 2 bids and develop proposals to access Round 3 funding	Durham County Council 2023-2024	
Regenerate Horden to create greater diversity of housing and higher quality of built and natural environment	3.1.11	Horden Masterplan Delivery	Durham County Council 2023 - 2033	Planet: These actions will include the retrofitting of homes with energy saving measures, the delivery of new efficient homes, support opportunities for renewable energy infrastructure, and deliver environmental improvements
	3.1.12	Support Horden Together to champion community-led public sector collaboration	Horden Together Partnership 2023+	
Regenerate Stanley town centre to tackle problem buildings such as the former Board School and support diversification within the town centre	3.1.13	Undertake stakeholder engagement and asset mapping. Deliver the Board School scheme and roll-out a Place Lab	Karbon Homes / Durham County Council 2023	People / Productivity: These actions should lead to more opportunities for local businesses and residents Planet: The actions will have a positive impact on the local environment
Support community resilience and	3.1.14	Pilot Place Labs Programme in Peterlee, Teesdale and Durham City	Durham County Council 2023 - 2025	People: These actions will improve community

Ambitions	Action No.	Actions	Lead Partner	Links to other Priorities
engagement, development and ownership of places through culture-led regeneration	3.1.15	Identify and roll-out the Place Labs programme more widely across the county	Durham County Council 2025+	engagement and opportunity for skills development Planet: These actions will seek to tackle climate change and carbon reduction at a local level
Establish a collaborative approach between social housing providers to support local place making	3.1.16	Engage County Durham Housing Associations in the Northern Housing Consortium Foundational Economy Place Network and consider opportunities for integration with the North East Mayoral Combined Authority	Housing Associations	People: These actions will improve community engagement Planet: The actions will accelerate progress towards the take-up of lower carbon technologies and the achievement of net zero
Sufficient and suitable housing land to support economic growth and provide quality housing for the residents of the county	3.1.17	Approve and implement the updated County Durham Housing Strategy	Durham County Council 2023+	Planet: These actions will help us to explore opportunities to support sustainable growth, reduce carbon emissions, improve biodiversity
	3.1.18	Support the delivery of strategic housing sites within the County Durham Plan	Durham County Council, Housing Associations, private sector 2023+	
	3.1.19	Identification and management of brownfield sites programme. Including bids into NEMCA Brownfield Housing Fund	Durham County Council / Housing Associations 2023-2025	
3.2 Employment land: Unlock employment land for high quality premises				
Nationally and regionally recognised	3.2.1	Complete NETPARK Phase 3, Sedgfield	Business Durham 2023 - 2025	Planet: These actions will identify

Ambitions	Action No.	Actions	Lead Partner	Links to other Priorities
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	3.2.2	Develop Durham City Innovation District Masterplan and secure a development partner	Durham County Council / Durham University 2024 - 2026	opportunities for new EV charging infrastructure and renewable energy generation
	3.2.3	Deliver Devolution Regeneration Funding programme at Aykley Heads, Durham - creation of a connectivity corridor through the site	March 2025	Productivity: These actions will support local innovation ecosystems and deliver 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: The actions will help us to identify future business skills needs and opportunities Promotion: The actions will form a core part of the county's offer to attract inward investment and new jobs
	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+		
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: These actions will directly deliver Climate Emergency Response Plan (CERP) 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	

Ambitions	Action No.	Actions	Lead Partner	Links to other Priorities
Ensure there is sufficient and suitable employment land to capture new investments and business growth	3.2.10	Employment Land Review to assess the demand, need, and opportunities for new employment land allocations and business space	Durham County Council 2024-2025	<p>Productivity: These actions will facilitate business growth, clusters, and inward investment</p> <p>Planet: These actions will support green growth and low carbon research and technologies</p>
	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	Pursue the opportunity to include NETPark as part of the North East Investment Zone including promoting supply chain benefits and inward investment opportunities for the county	Durham County Council 2023	<p>Productivity: These actions will support investment and recognition for businesses within the clean energy and green manufacturing sectors and support innovation ecosystem development</p> <p>Promotion: These actions will position County Durham within the North East Investment Zone and provide additional place promotion opportunities</p> <p>People: These actions will support the</p>
	3.2.13	Seek capital investment through NEMCA Investment Fund to grow the county's business space and infrastructure	Business Durham 2024+	

Ambitions	Action No.	Actions	Lead Partner	Links to other Priorities
				development of future business skills needs and opportunities linked to these sectors
Understand the electricity demand and capacity of key employment sites to ensure there is the capability to support new developments	3.2.14	Undertake an assessment of power connections and capacity requirements for major employment sites including opportunities to provide renewable energy and secure further investment	Durham County Council, Northern Powergrid 2023 - 2024	<p>Productivity: These actions will support sectoral growth</p> <p>Planet: The actions will explore renewable energy generation options to understand and deliver capacity demands, mitigating the impacts of developments</p>
	3.2.15	Influence and inform the development of a regional approach to understanding energy supply needs that are impeding or constraining development	NEMCA, Northern Powergrid 2024-2026	
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	<p>People and Productivity: These actions will help us to understand 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</p>

Ambitions	Action No.	Actions	Lead Partner	Links to other Priorities
				tackle scope 3 carbon emissions
	3.3.2	Undertake an assessment of sustainable travel routes and public transport connectivity between the county's main settlements and employment sites	Durham County Council 2023 - 2024	<p>People / Productivity Planet: These actions will support connectivity and more sustainable travel options for residents, business and visitors as well as enhancing the health and wellbeing of residents and visitors</p> <p>Planet: the actions will help to meet and test Climate Emergency Response Plan objectives</p>
	3.3.3	Undertake a feasibility study for a park and pedal scheme in the county	Durham County Council 2023 - 2024	
	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	<p>People and Productivity: The actions will support more sustainable travel options</p> <p>Planet: The actions will help us to meet and test Climate Emergency Response Plan objectives</p>
To improve connectivity and accessibility across	3.3.5	Develop a connectivity statement / strategy for county to shape the refresh of the Transport	Durham County Council 2023 - 2024	People and Productivity: Actions

Ambitions	Action No.	Actions	Lead Partner	Links to other Priorities
the county and integration across the North East		Plan for the North East and development of the region's broadband networks		will improve access to employment and business growth opportunities
	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: Actions will support more sustainable travel options
	3.3.7	Secure investment to develop business cases for transport capital investment pipeline	Durham County Council, NEMCA	People and Productivity: The action 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: The action will support better connectivity and investment in national infrastructure
	3.3.9	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: The actions will support more sustainable travel options
	3.3.10	Pilot an 'on-demand' bus service to Newton Aycliffe Business Park	Durham County Council 2023	
	3.3.11	Promote real time services and integrated ticketing for bus travel across the county and region	Durham County Council, Transport North East 2023-24	Promotion and People: The action will raise awareness across the county and support new

Ambitions	Action No.	Actions	Lead Partner	Links to other Priorities
				employment opportunities
Enhance the county's electric vehicle charging infrastructure	3.3.12	Implement the Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) Programme	Durham County Council 2023 - 2025 £1.25m secured	Planet: The action will help to meet and test Climate Emergency Response Plan objectives
Enhance active travel and road infrastructure to improve connectivity and support employment growth	3.3.13	Secure Active Travel funds and deliver new programmes to provide new connectivity	Durham County Council 2023-2026 Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIP) and Transforming Cities Fund (£4.5m)	People / Productivity Planet / Promotion: The action will support connectivity and more sustainable travel options for residents, business and visitors
	3.3.14	Secure funds and deliver schemes to expand the Durham City Park and Ride network	Durham County Council £1.6m	
	3.3.15	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: The action will support 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	3.3.16	Develop Full Business Cases and secure funding for new railway stations at Sedgfield and Ferryhill on the Stillington Line to connect more towns together	Durham County Council 2024 - 2026	
	3.3.17	Develop a business case for the re-opening of the Leamside Line	Durham County Council / North East Mayoral Combined Authority/Transport North East	

Ambitions	Action No.	Actions	Lead Partner	Links to other Priorities
			2024+	
Improve the resilience and capacity of local energy networks	3.3.18	Develop local area energy masterplans to support investment in local energy networks	Durham County Council	<p>Places: This action will support the supply, resilience and capacity of local energy networks</p> <p>Productivity: This action will support the energy needs of businesses</p> <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>
	3.3.19	Identify opportunities for community owned and developed energy networks		
	3.3.20	Develop renewable energy infrastructure across the county for energy generation and vehicle charging		

3.4 Digital infrastructure: Enhance digital infrastructure and connectivity				
Supporting hard to reach communities gain access to gigabit capable broadband. Government UK targets are: <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	Deliver 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	Digital Durham, Project Gigabit BDUK Team, Providers 2023 - 2030	<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>
Reduce digital exclusion of those living in social housing and in rural communities	3.4.2	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	Digital Durham and social housing providers 2023	Productivity: supporting development of infrastructure to support service provision
	3.4.3	Establish Digital Inclusion Steering Group to develop a digital inclusion action plan	County Durham Together 2023	People and Productivity: supporting employment and business growth
	3.4.4	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
	3.4.5	Identify relevant assets, sites, and hubs, and consider the potential to integrate a microgrid pilot	Durham County Council / Northern Powergrid 2024	

Improve digital connectivity for communities and businesses across the county	3.4.6	Deliver the Digital Strategy and investment pipeline	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
	3.4.7	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	3.4.8	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	3.4.9	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
	3.4.10	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
	3.4.11	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

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 a 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, Actions, 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 an activation programme • Develop and deliver an ambassador programme to support activation of the brand • Inform North East place branding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased visitor numbers • Increased visitor spend • Increased overnight stays • Increased number of jobs • Increased number of businesses • Increase levels of GVA • Increased County Durham Pound 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 	
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 	
4.4 Enhance cultural and creative infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead the NEMCA 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 • 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, businesses, and visitors and increase civic pride amongst residents	4.1.1	Use findings from regional and countywide perceptions research to develop a place brand for County Durham.	Durham County Council, Visit County Durham and sector partners 2023+	Productivity and Place: These actions will support inward investment and growth sectors in various parts of the county
	4.1.2	Develop a stakeholder engagement plan to engage, young people, residents, public, private and third sectors to inform and feedback on brand development proposals and act as brand ambassadors		
	4.1.3	Develop and deliver an activation strategy targeted at external audiences		
	4.1.4	Develop and deliver an ambassador programme to support activation of the brand and amplify messaging with audiences internal and external to the county at a local, regional, national and international level		
	4.1.5	Align brand messaging and activity with North East place branding messaging and activity		
4.2 Inward investment: Attract more inward investment in the sectors and places it makes sense				
Increase foreign direct investment through the	4.2.1	Develop an FDI International Strategy to maximise engagement with national and	Business Durham	Productivity: This action will lead to



Better for everyone

Ambitions	Action no.	Actions	Lead Partner	Links to other Priorities
creation of an International Strategy		internal networks and trade propositions including MPIM, UKREIFF and Host City		additional investment, businesses, and jobs
	4.2.2	Develop place marketing campaigns targeted at agreed sectors for inward investment (live, work, invest, do business)		
Attract more events and conferences to County Durham	4.2.3	In partnership with the with North East Destination Management Organisations develop a 10-year regional Business Events Strategy incorporating an approach to rural conferencing	NEMCA, Durham County Council 2024-2026	
	4.2.4	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	NEMCA and Durham County Council 2025-2026	
	4.2.5	Use County Durham’s annual events programme as a hook to attract more inward investment		
	4.2.6	Develop a conferencing offer in Durham City.	Visit County Durham Durham University?	Place: This action will support the vision for Durham City
	4.2.7	Raise the national profile of Durham’s existing events and festivals programme - National significance/reach of Lumiere	Durham County Council	Productivity: This action will support the growth of the visitor economy Place: This action will support improvements in pride of place
Develop, expand and secure investment in the creative industries sector	4.2.8	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	Support the delivery of strategic plans for the North East Destination Development Partnership three-year pilot programme	Durham County Council and NEMCA 2025-26	People / Productivity: These actions will support growth of the tourism sector and new job opportunities Place: These actions will encourage visitors to major place-based attractions in the county
	4.3.2	Undertake a feasibility study for a new family visitor attraction in Durham City	Durham County Council 2023-24	
	4.3.3	Develop products and experiences that drive visits in the shoulder months (Oct - Mar) to level out the season, creating a year-round offer		
	4.3.4	Establish a biannual Sci-Art Festival which links our space science, history and innovation ambitions and take advantage of a gap in the national market	Partnership between University of Durham and DCC	
	4.3.5	Enhance tourism offer, visitor attractions, and visitor economy infrastructure	Rural England Prosperity Fund, £600k 2024 - 2025	
Reduce carbon emissions associated with the visitor economy	4.3.6	Commission a report for transport services within the county, highlighting infrastructure and connectivity (final mile) challenges for visitors to the county and considering improvements and solutions	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	Deliver carbon exchange pilot project for Lumiere	DCC, Artichoke 2023-2024	
	4.3.8	Develop a plan for regenerative tourism to bring transformational experiences to visitors, whilst making sure that communities, the environment and local cultural heritage and traditions are conserved from one generation to the next	Durham County Council	

	4.3.9	Participate in the Global Destinations Sustainability Index, establishing a benchmark in 2023	Visit County Durham, Durham County Council 2023-2025	
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 see MG changes	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	<p>People: These actions will support skills development and creative / tourism careers, creating higher value jobs and more attractive visitor economy</p> <p>Place: These actions will support culture-led regeneration and more attractive places to live and visit</p>
Support and develop cultural and creative industries sector	4.4.3	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	Durham County, NE Screen Industries Partnership	People / Productivity: These actions will support more job and business opportunities
	4.4.4	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	4.4.5	Complete major visitor infrastructure, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Light (DLIMAG) 	DCC. Raby Estates, Durham County Cricket	Place: These actions will support culture-led

and offer in County Durham		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Story • Stockton to Darlington 2025 • Faith Museum and Bishop Auckland tourist attractions • Locomotion New Hall • Raby Castle • Remaking Beamish • Durham County Cricket Club • World Heritage Site 	Club, Beamish Museum, The Auckland Project	regeneration and place shaping to improve vibrancy and pride of place Productivity: These actions will support heritage sector growth and innovation
	4.4.6	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 creative business start-ups	4.4.7	Create a network of Place Labs and establish a programme that supports creative business start-ups for residents from all backgrounds (aligns with 3.1.11/12)	Durham County Council	People: These actions will support skills development, the promotion of the sector as a career, address skills gaps, and support new enterprise opportunities Productivity: These actions overlap with the Enterprising Durham Framework and will support growth and innovation in the creative sector Place: These actions will support the economic diversification of towns across the county
	4.4.8	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	
	4.4.9	Deliver sector growth and skills bootcamps and establish work based learning opportunities (e.g. screen industries, CCI, Tourism and sport)	Lead to be identified	
	4.4.10	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	

