

North West Leicestershire

Economic Growth Plan

2019 - 2021



Photo credit: Luke Jerram's Museum of the Moon Andrew_Allcock_Wild_Rumpus

FORWARD

This Economic Growth Plan sets out our ambitions for North West Leicestershire, a thriving and ambitious district in the heart of the National Forest. Working cooperatively with our partners we will continue to develop a successful, sustainable economy, playing an increasingly prominent role in the regional and national economy.

This plan sets out our ambition to showcase our excellent location, transport infrastructure, attractive natural, cultural and heritage assets, and to demonstrate to those who want to invest or develop companies in North West Leicestershire that we are open for business.

The first North West Leicestershire Growth Plan was published in 2014 and focused on how North West Leicestershire District Council, working with partners, would stimulate growth within the local economy after the 2008 UK recession.

Since that Growth Plan was published there have been significant changes in the U.K. economy, including business and investment challenges following the EU referendum. We are proud to report, however, that the last

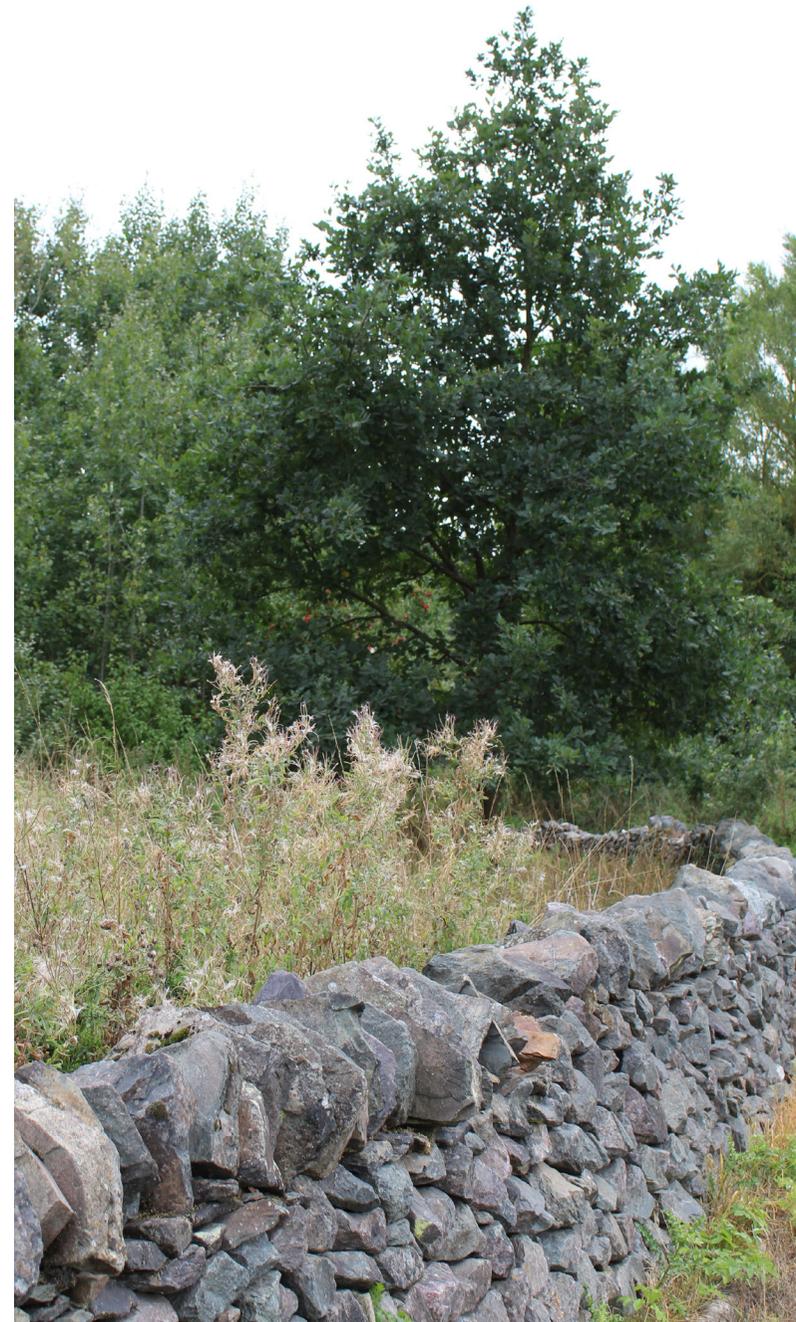
four years have seen significant investment in the district and in our market towns. The 2018 Grant Thornton 'Vibrant Economy Index' recognised North West Leicestershire as an outstanding performing area. The district's creation of wealth and jobs puts us in the top 20% nationally for prosperity and the highest in the East Midlands - a ranking reflecting positive change for local people.

The district continues to provide a positive environment to do business, for new enterprises, growing SMEs, new investors or for the many multi-national companies who have already chosen to be based here.

We trust this next stage of the Growth Plan will encourage the district's businesses and residents to rally round a shared aspiration for North West Leicestershire, encouraging further investment and public benefits in the process.

Over 100,000 residents and over 4,000 businesses call North West Leicestershire home. Each is an integral part of our shared ambition to secure our sustained economic prosperity and wellbeing now and in the years to come.

www.nwleics.gov.uk/business



Hicks Lodge Trail



8.9m trees planted in the National Forest

BACKGROUND



East Midlands Airport – UK's largest pure freight airport

The 2014 North West Leicestershire Growth Plan identified growth priorities for the district up until 2018 and was prepared in consultation with partners to coincide with the production of the Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Economic Plan (SEP). Both the original growth plan and the SEP used the same structure, based on making the most of the areas strongest assets in terms of 'people', 'place' and 'business' and ensuring that these three gears of the economy function effectively together.

Using these gears, this growth plan sets out a long-term strategy for the growth of the local economy. The plan will be influenced by the Government's Industrial Strategy and the emerging Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) which is currently being prepared by the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership.

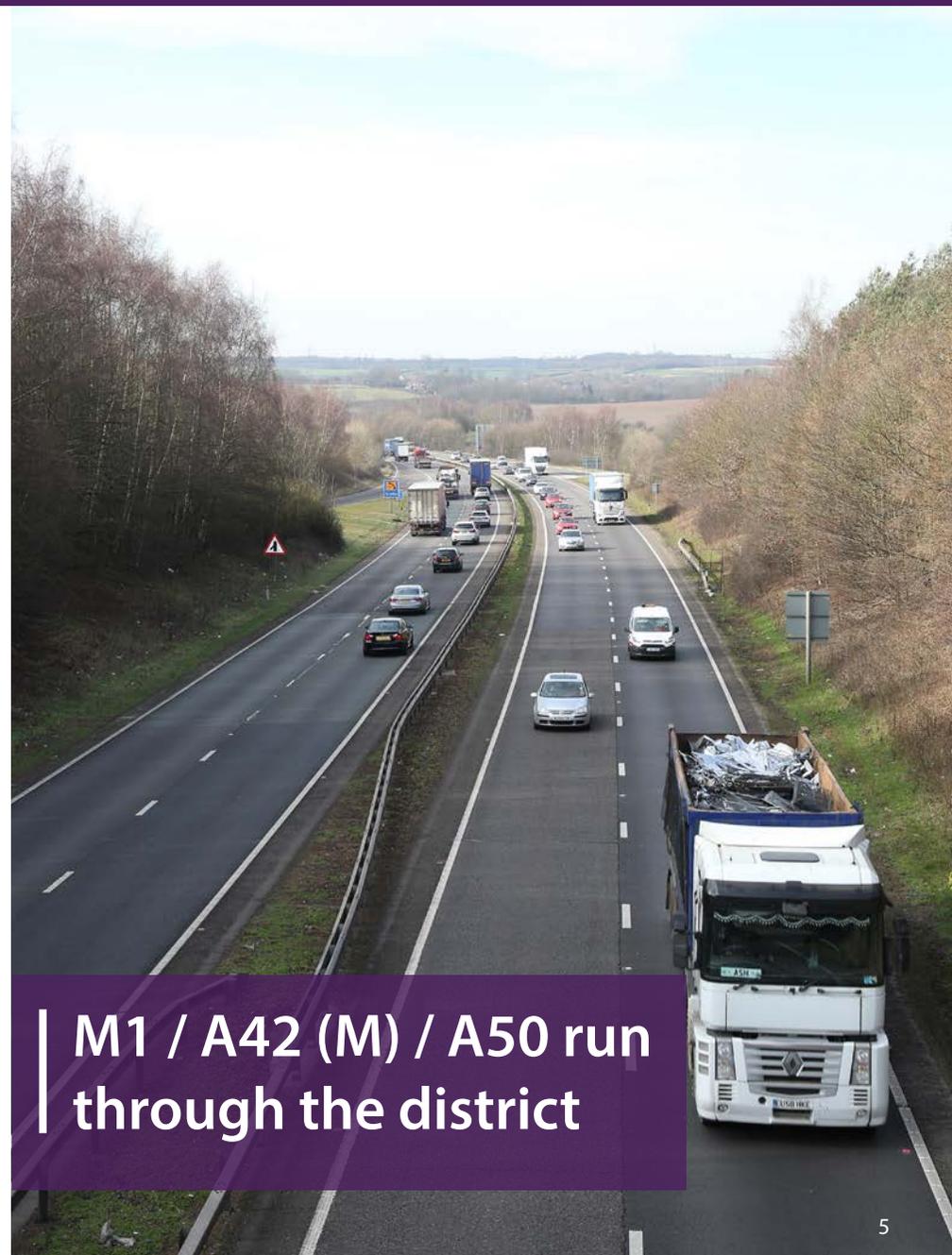
The emerging LIS identifies a series of priority sectors. Although the key growth areas identified in the LIS are not all relevant priorities for the North West Leicestershire area, the district has a significant role to play in delivering Leicestershire's planned growth. Therefore it is essential that the policy context for the growth plan in addressing local priorities is consistent and supportive of the wider clean growth agenda.

North West Leicestershire has a diverse and prosperous economy, based in the heart of the National Forest with strong road, rail, air and digital infrastructure. Central to the three cities of Leicester, Derby and Nottingham and the M1, M6, M42 golden triangle, the district

is home to East Midlands Airport and the Strategic Rail Freight Interchange at East Midlands International Gateway providing global links to encourage growth across all sectors. The eastern leg of HS2 phase 2 will result in the construction of a new high speed railway through North West Leicestershire, connecting to the East Midlands Hub Station at Toton.

The importance of a sustainable low carbon economy is vitally important today and for future generations. At the heart of the National Forest, NWLDC is committed to ensuring that growth is sustainable and in balance with the local environment.

This plan will underpin the Council Delivery plan and will also feed into other local strategies such as the North West Leicestershire District Council's Environment Strategy and North West Leicestershire District Council's Tourism Strategy. The plan will create a clear pathway to support local growth and create a framework for delivery of key priorities, objectives and to steer resources.



**M1 / A42 (M) / A50 run
through the district**

INVESTMENT

Since the 2014 growth plan was published there has been significant investment in the district and in our market towns.

Council investment:

- Announced plans for a £23million development to build a new state of the art leisure centre in Coalville
- A £1million investment to create much needed new car parking provision on North Street in Ashby
- Plans for a strategic public realm-led regeneration scheme to transform Marlborough Square in Coalville, creating a new public square and event space in the town centre
- The creation of a new high quality market hall in a long term vacant retail property on Marlborough Square, Coalville
- A £700,000 grant scheme to assist property owners to undertake improvements to shops in Coalville town centre.



The DHL cargo terminal at East Midlands Airport

INVESTMENT

- A £500,000 series of grant programmes to support the creation and growth of SME businesses and retailers in North West Leicestershire to support the creation of new local jobs
- A £90,000 investment to provide free Wi-Fi access in Coalville and Ashby town centres
- A £45,000 grant towards the renovation and reopening of the iconic Emporium night club in Coalville
- A £50,000 grant towards the renovation, restoration and reopening of the former Ashby Road bus depot in Coalville back into employment use
- A joint venture to acquire and demolish the abandoned Pick and Shovel public house and replace it with Royal Oak Court, a new social housing provision in Coalville town centre
- A joint venture to acquire and demolish the vacant Coalville Police station and replace it with new social housing in the town centre
- An investment to enhance visitor attractions within the National Forest including new high / low ropes at Conkers and Timber – The International Forest Festival.



INVESTMENT

Home to the Strategic Rail Freight Interchange



Infrastructure investment:

- A £7 million initiative to increase capacity at the M1 junction 22 roundabout and the A42 junction 13 roundabout to support growth on the A511 corridor
- Extensive infrastructure improvements to junctions 24 and 24a of the M1 including the introduction of a smart motorway system, improved access to the A50 and a new bypass for Kegworth
- A multi-million pound investment through Leicestershire County Council, supported by the North West Leicestershire District Council to roll out superfast fibre connectivity to homes and businesses across North West Leicestershire
- A £5.5million Leicestershire County Council and LLEP project to provide new start-up and move-on business units in Coalville providing much needed new workspace
- The ongoing development of SEGRO Logistics Park at East Midlands Gateway, a 700 acre development for up to 6,000,000 sq ft of logistics accommodation and a Strategic Rail Freight Interchange

INVESTMENT

- The continued growth of East Midlands Airport and the new investment made by both DHL and UPS to expand and create new employment at the airport
- A partnership with East Midlands Airport and Trent Barton has created an enhanced bus service providing public transport connection from Coalville to East Midlands Airport, the East Midlands Gateway and through to Nottingham
- Significant private sector investment in the district from the likes of Ibstock Brick, Trunet Group, Amazon, Norton, Donington Park, Formula E, Birlea Furniture, Stobarts, Pharmacy2U, Aldi, Moran Logistics and many others
- This investment across the board shows the attractiveness of North West Leicestershire as an excellent area to invest and do business.



WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

To support the growth of North West Leicestershire, North West Leicestershire District Council will continue to work in partnership with local businesses, the National Forest, Leicestershire County Council, the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership, Stephenson College, Job Centre Plus, Leicester-Shire and Rutland Sport, neighbouring authorities and other regional bodies.

This work will particularly focus on three core challenges:

- People – skills, access to employment, entrepreneurial spirit, health and wellbeing
- Place – infrastructure, connectivity, quality of life, environment
- Business – Business growth, investment, private sector jobs.



A SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY

Through promoting sustainable economic growth it is essential that this plan recognises the urgency of climate change.

This growth plan provides the opportunity for the District Council and our partners, such as the National Forest and Leicestershire County Council, to demonstrate leadership in this area. To show how the connection between growth in jobs and homes and the natural environment are connected and how these can be enhanced to support clean growth.

It is important that we all recognise the role of natural capital as a driving force for a healthy population and a sustainable economy and natural environment. This is woven through all three of the plans core challenges: people, place and business.

Working with partners we must strive to protect, and make positive contributions to, the district's natural capital and enable a transition away from practices that damage the natural environment and increase greenhouse gases.

Through this plan, and the Council's emerging Environment Strategy, we will continue to work with partner organisations to help the Council achieve carbon neutrality and support our businesses and communities to adapt and mitigate climate change.



GROWTH SECTORS



Priority sectors for growth, based on official data from the Office of National Statistics and emerging opportunities within the district are:

- Manufacturing
- Logistics and distribution
- Construction
- Professional, scientific and technical
- Creative, cultural and tourism

There are also strong local sectors which are not considered to be priority growth sectors for the future, but will continue to play a significant role in the local economy. These include:

- Transport and storage
- Business administration and defence
- Finance and insurance
- Mining and quarrying.

Growth within our key sectors will need to recognise the impact on the natural environment in context of climate change and the clean growth agenda.

Businesses within growth sectors will need support to enhance their productivity and competitiveness whilst improving energy efficiency, reducing carbon and making the most of the district's natural capital.

CHALLENGE 1: PEOPLE

Principles - skills, access to employment, entrepreneurial spirit, health and wellbeing.

North West Leicestershire has a growing population of over 100,000. 91.5% of our resident population aged 16-64 have at least an NVQ1 and 43.5% have obtained at least NVQ4. Both attainments are higher than the regional and national averages.

The availability of a diverse workforce with the appropriate skills for business is vital if the local economy is to be successful and resilient. Our residents will have greater employment and entrepreneurial opportunities available to them if they have higher levels of skills, educational attainment and healthy lives.

Growth in future productivity will rely on ensuring that local people can meet the challenges of changing employment needs in, emerging growth sectors, changing environmental practices and the efficiencies brought by artificial intelligence and increased automation. The continued development of our people is necessary to ensure that our residents can take up local job opportunities and that those who are not economically active are encouraged to participate effectively.



CHALLENGE 1: PEOPLE

Objectives

- Help new and existing businesses to recruit local people. For example, by continuing to support the Airport Academy at East Midlands Airport and continue working with the SEGRO Logistics Park employment group
- Work with partners to ensure that the workforce needs of businesses are met and help to raise skill levels and productivity
- Encourage local businesses to become Disability Confident Employers and to adopt a more open recruitment policy so that those furthest from the labour market can access employment opportunities
- Work with partners to ensure young residents can access careers advice and relevant information on future employment opportunities with local companies in key growth sectors
- Assist the LLEP and other partners to facilitate relationships between local businesses and schools and colleges. This will ensure that future employment needs are met and opportunities are highlighted, particularly in growth sectors
- With the National Forest, promote the need for training, apprenticeships and investment to support an increasing workforce in forestry, the land based economy, the outdoor leisure economy and a sustainable tourism economy
- With partners explore the emerging changes in skills requirements to adapt to the shift towards a low carbon economy and the evolution of new technologies and A.I. within the workplace.

Photo credit: Cooper Parry in Castle Donington

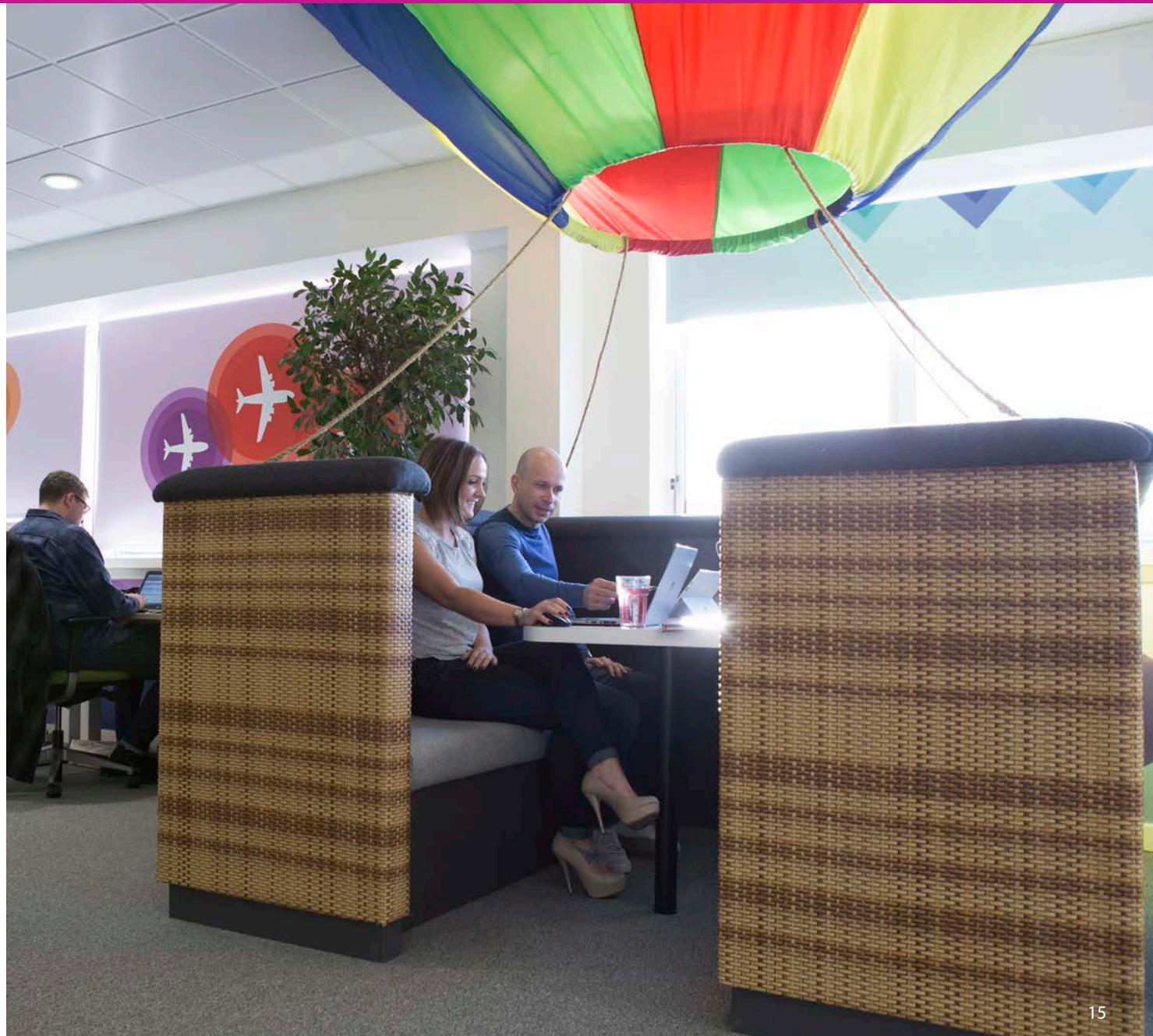


83% of residents are economically active

Source: Office for National Statistics

CHALLENGE 1: PEOPLE

- Develop and enhance NWLDC's apprenticeship programme and provide volunteering and work experience opportunities within the organisation
- Promote the employment and training opportunities provided by partner organisations, such as the Leicester Employment Hub, to support those furthest from the labour market into employment
- Promote workplace health interventions and countywide sport and leisure initiatives to ensure that employees and employers are aware of the benefits of health and wellbeing in the workplace and the impact this has on increased productivity
- Work with the Supporting Leicestershire Families team to continue to provide support to vulnerable families in North West Leicestershire with a particular focus of assisting people into employment
- Ensure that current and future employment opportunities from both the construction and implementation phases of HS2 are promoted locally.



CHALLENGE 2: PLACE

Principles - infrastructure, connectivity, quality of life, environment.

Our location and environment has been a considerable driver for the economy of North West Leicestershire in terms of natural resources, natural assets and the location of strategic, national and international transport links.

The district lies at the heart of the National Forest and much of the district remains rural in character with attractive countryside. Our historic market towns and business parks sit at centre of the national transport network,

hosting East Midlands Airport and are served by the A42/M42, A50 and M1 corridors.

Providing the necessary environment for businesses is essential to support continued sustainable economic growth and competitiveness. The local business environment needs to continue to offer access to suitable premises and land with good transport links, effective digital connectivity, appropriate housing provision for the workforce and access to excellent quality of life facilities

including town centres, leisure and open space.

Our market towns and local centres are hubs of social and commercial activity. Sustained investment and renewal of our towns will ensure they prosper and meet the needs of current and future businesses, residents and visitors.



CHALLENGE 2: PLACE

Objectives

- Develop the work of the Coalville and Ashby projects to maximise private and public investment into our market towns
- Continue to support and develop our smaller local centres to be vibrant hubs for their communities, businesses and visitors
- Support proposals for increased investment within the National Forest to develop the tourism offer and support the rural economy
- Encourage activity and investment that supports and enhances the tourism offer of North West Leicestershire
- Facilitate the development of East Midlands Airport and the wider East Midlands International Gateway including investment in infrastructure such as transport links and utilities
- Support the development of the SEGRO Logistics Park and the Strategic Rail Freight Interchange
- Ensure there are sufficient employment sites and premises in the district and help to identify gaps in provision by working with developers and partners,

particularly for incubation, and follow-on space

- Work with developers, agents and partners such as the LLEP and the Invest in Leicester team to attract new businesses into the district and assist with indigenous expansions
- Lobby to protect the district's interests and maximise the economic benefits in relation to HS2.

One of the highest performing areas in terms of prosperity in the UK

Source: Office for National Statistics



CHALLENGE 2: PLACE

- Through the planning process, continue to encourage quality sustainable design and public realm within the setting of the National Forest and across the district.
- With the National Forest, review how to benchmark and monitor the carbon footprint of the economy and establish what monitoring is required for water quality, air quality, soil quality and woodland habitat.
- To support the continued role out of Superfast Leicestershire to improve digital connectivity

of homes and businesses across the district

- Deliver the south east Coalville and Money Hill developments and ensure that the people living in these new homes have relationships with their town centres and local services
- Explore opportunities to provide better public transport connections to major employment areas, including rail links and the East Midlands International Gateway
- Support Leicestershire County Council and Midlands Connect to deliver their investment

strategies for continued improvements to the highway and transport infrastructure that serves the district

- Work with a range of partners to maximise the provision of affordable housing within North West Leicestershire to ensure that residents have access to good quality affordable homes.



**35% growth in GVA 2011-16
highest in the East Midlands**

Source: Office for National Statistics

CHALLENGE 3: BUSINESS

Principles - business growth, investment, private sector jobs.

Businesses are the engine of growth and local opportunity, and a varied resilient economy ensures that opportunities are maximised. Growth is generated by new business start-ups, indigenous business expansion and new businesses locating to the area.

Strong business productivity is reliant on many factors including a good supply of skilled workers, but it also relies on availability of suitable premises, efficient supply chain links, transportation links and access to finance.

People who are committed to developing a business will also need additional advice and support, particularly in the early stages of their business when it's at highest risk. North West Leicestershire will continue to offer a competitive business environment and access to effective support.



Home to 52 of the Top 200
Leicester and Leicestershire's
businesses

CHALLENGE 3: BUSINESS



Objectives

- Encourage entrepreneurial activity by delivering programmes of support including business start-up workshops
- Help to deliver specific support to assist more women to start a business or to consider self-employment
- Design a programme of support specifically relevant to the growth and development of local businesses in the creative, cultural and tourism sector.
- Continue to deliver the council's Enterprising Grants schemes to assist business growth to increase productivity and boost local employment
- Work with partners to provide local businesses with advice and support. Particular focus should also be placed on those businesses priority growth sectors
- Provide information to businesses in North West Leicestershire about the Leicester and Leicestershire Business Gateway and achieve a higher enquiry take-up
- Ensure there is sufficient workspace and support for new enterprise and for business start-ups

CHALLENGE 3: BUSINESS

PWC and HSBC regional offices at Castle Donington



- Promote tourism and sustainable tourism businesses that support forestry, agriculture, land based rural diversification and outdoor leisure.
- With the National Forest and partners, provide advice and support to existing business to cut energy costs, reduce and off set carbon, reduce waste, increase efficiency and promote a circular economy.
- Promote North West Leicestershire as a destination for inward investment to attract business that will create new high-skilled employment opportunities.
- Facilitate programmes that assist businesses in staff recruitment and upskilling. For example, hosting jobs and skills fairs with particular emphasis on those furthest from the labour market and promoting a more open recruitment policy
- Ensure there is a “soft landing” package for potential investors to make informed decisions about locating to North West Leicestershire
- Assist North West Leicestershire businesses affected by the proposed route of HS2 to relocate
- Look to ensure that local businesses are aware of HS2 supply chain opportunities
- Encourage local businesses to get the most from their apprenticeship levy to create new apprenticeship opportunities and upskill their existing workforce
- Provide specialist advice such as environmental health, planning, building control and licensing to local businesses to ensure that they are compliant with regulations.

DELIVERY

The North West Leicestershire Economic Growth Plan has been developed against the backdrop of emerging Local Industrial Strategy (LIS). While the exact detail of LIS are still being shaped the LIS can be expected to play a significant role in shaping the strategic direction of the Leicester and Leicestershire area and also the distribution of future government funding.

The success of the growth plan will be monitored by the extent to which the objectives set out in the document are achieved, but also by considering the outcomes they bring.

Strong local governance is required. The North West Leicestershire Economic Growth Plan 19-21 will be underpinned by action plans that will be implemented by the North West Leicestershire District Council's Business Focus Team and our Business Corporate Action Team (CAT). The CAT brings together expertise from various disciplines across the council to deliver the council's key business facing services.

Furthermore, a baseline of the most recent economic data has been collected in the Economic Growth Plan – Evidence Base. This evidence will be reviewed, updated

and reported annually to be a measure of the delivery of the Growth Plan and to what further actions or adjustments are needed to support continued economic growth.

Progress on the delivery of the strategy will be overseen by Business Focus Team, the CAT and reported to the Portfolio Holder for Business and through the North West Leicestershire District Council's reporting framework.

The successful implementation of this plan will be enabled through strong partnerships with the council and require input from local businesses, the National Forest, Leicestershire County Council, the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership, Stephenson College, Job Centre Plus, the Federation of Small Businesses, the Chamber of Commerce, neighbouring authorities and other regional bodies.

www.nwleics.gov.uk/business





Informational sign with text and images, likely providing details about the Moon model or the event.