



LLEP Business Gateway Growth Hub Board
Wednesday 1st December 2021 13.00 – 15.00
TEAMS meeting

AGENDA

TIME		ITEM	REPORT	DECISION / INFORMATION	LEAD
13.00	1.	Welcome, Introductions and Apologies	Verbal	Information	Chair
13.05	2.	Declarations of Interest	Verbal	Information	All
13.10	3.	Minutes and Actions of previous meeting	Paper A	Decision	All
13.15	4.	Growth Hub Manager	Verbal	Discussion	Rachel York
13.30	5.	Growth Hub Update	Presentation	Information	Rachel York
13.45	6.	Innovation Update	Verbal	Information	Sue Tilley
13.55	7.	Economic Growth Strategy	Presentation	Information	Irshad Mulla
14.10	8.	Partner updates	Verbal	Information	All
14.25	9.	Any other business	Verbal	Information	All

Future meeting dates:

2nd March 2022

1st June 2022

31 August 2022

30 November 2022

Paper A



LLEP Business Gateway Board
15.00 - 17.00, 28th September 2021
MS Teams Call

Member	Organisation	Representing
Sonia Baigent (SB, Chair)	Assist Business Consulting	
James Arnold (JA)	North West Leicestershire District Council	District Council
Diane Beresford (DB)	East Midlands Chamber	Private Sector
Matt Bowers (MB)	Hinckley and Bosworth District Council	District Council
Julian Bowrey (JB)	UKRI	Private Sector
Peter Chandler (PC)	Leicester City Council	Local Authority Sector
Jo Dexter (JD)	LLEP Area Lead	
Helen Donnellan (HD)	De Montfort University	HE Sector
Helen Harris (HH)	Leicestershire County Council	Local Authority Sector
Rupert Harrison (RH)	Andrew Granger - Estate Agents and Chartered Surveyors	Private Sector
Matthew Lowe (ML)	CBI	Private Sector
Ben Ravilious (BR)	Start Up Leicester and Ultimate Web	Private Sector
Lewis Stringer (LS)	British Business Bank	Finance
Jennifer Thomas (JT)	Federation of Small Business	Private Sector
William Wells (WW)	University of Leicester	HE Sector
In Attendance		
Sharif Chowdhury (SC)	LLEP Governance Officer	
Mary-Louise Harrison (MLH)	LLEP Senior Projects Manager	
Kerry Mainwaring (KM)	LLEP	
Deepa Shah (DS)	LLEP- Economic Intelligence Officer – Business Gateway	
Simon Weaver (SW)	LLEP Senior Projects Manager	
Sue Tilley (ST)	LLEP Head of Business and Innovation	

<u>Minute</u>		<u>Action</u>
1.	<u>Welcome and Apologies</u>	
1.1	SB welcomed those present at the meeting.	
2.	<u>Declarations of Interest</u>	
2.1	There were no Declarations of Interest.	
3.	<u>Actions from last meeting</u>	
3.1	The Minutes from the Meeting held on 27th May 2021 were agreed as a true and accurate correct record.	
4.	<u>Growth Hub Update</u>	
4.1	ST updated on the new recruitment of the Growth Hub Manager in October 2021, Rachel York who is moving from De Montfort University and is expected to attend the next Growth Hub meeting.	
4.2	ST presented the Growth Hub activities which break down into four key areas 1) Business and Specialist Sector Support programmes 2.) Events 3.) Marketing 4.) Business Advisers. Business support programmes include the Start-Up programme which was presented by Simon Weaver and is highlighted in agenda item 7.	
4.3	It was updated that Growth Hub activity had been high in January due to increased funding received for Covid-19, support with over a thousand enquiries. Since this period numbers had decreased significantly, in July and . This has been attributed to a combination of businesses starting to accelerate their business activities and the holiday period. This trend has been seen in other Growth Hubs	
4.4	The highest number of enquiries were received from the manufacturing sector followed by wholesale and retail.	
4.5	ST updated on funding which includes the popular ERDF business growth grant and Green Bell which help businesses to install green technologies into their business and also PROSPER and SPRING delivered by Loughborough University which has been designed to support innovative businesses.	
4.6	ST updated that the specialist business support services, in particular peer networks programme has received significant traction since its launch with 172 business onboarded this year which equates to 15 cohorts up and running with a further two in progress with recruitment. A proposed seven additional cohorts have been requested from BEIS and if these are awarded will result in engaging a further 77 businesses. The LLEP Business Gateway Peer Networks	

Minute		Action
4.7	<p>has been seen as an exemplar of best practice and have been asked to share best practice with other LEP Growth Hubs.</p> <p>It was noted that the ongoing series of innovation webinars by Stuart Hartley, along with access to finance webinars from Lori Chandler which has received popular interest. From January 2022 further seminars on zero carbon will be commissioned.</p>	
<p>5.</p> <p>5.1</p> <p>5.2</p> <p>5.3</p> <p>5.4</p> <p>5.5</p>	<p><u>Net Zero Update</u></p> <p>MLH provided background on the Net Zero Update where the agenda was taken over in June 2021 to move the local economy towards becoming zero carbon.</p> <p>Successes include the LLEP employees have received carbon literacy training, becoming the first LEP to gain a bronze award.</p> <p>The LLEP has signed up to several initiatives including developing sustainable foods, community engagement and take up of low carbon. The LLEP has been successful in participating in a joint event with D2N2 for the governments race to zero tour bus and holding a regional Green Zone event televised at COP26 event on the 11th of November.</p> <p>The Zellar project has recently been commissioned to create a zero-carbon digital platform, enabling 100 local businesses become trail blazers in decarbonising the economy by collaborating with businesses to become more proactive, inclusive, innovative and sustainable.</p> <p>The LLEP have strategically collaborated with key partners including the Midlands Energy Hub, Midlands Engine and Midlands Connect to move the agenda forward at a pace.</p> <p>MLH invited partners to join the focus group by getting directly in touch. Lewis Stringer of British Business Bank indicated that he would wish to join the focus group.</p>	<p>Business Board Members /LS</p>

<u>Minute</u>		<u>Action</u>
<p>6.</p> <p>6.1</p> <p>6.2</p> <p>6.3</p> <p>6.4</p> <p>6.5</p> <p>6.6</p> <p>6.7</p>	<p><u>Innovation Board Update</u></p> <p>Gary Dimmock (GD) Innovation Manager provided background on the Innovation Board which holds sixteen members and was inaugurated in March 2021 and meets quarterly, the latest meeting commenced on the 22nd of September 2021. The Innovation Board is chaired by Dr Nik Kotecha, supported by Gary Dimmock and Sharif Chowdhury.</p> <p>GD provided an update on the Innovation Board, where the governments Innovation Strategy was discussed and the local impacts, the UK Hydrogen strategy by Anthony Baxendale the head of Horiba MIRA, Innovation Week 2021 and looking ahead to planning for Innovation Week 2022.</p> <p>Innovation Week 2021 ran 20 events registering 372 attendees including the three universities and approximately 110 companies that the Growth Hub had not had contact with before and 75 attendees outside of Leicestershire.</p> <p>GD informed the group that the foundations for the Innovation paters on the Business Gateway website is ready, and now in the process of collecting content for pages including case studies from all relevant parties including the Business Growth Hub Board and for content pieces to be sent to Gary Dimmock and Peter Allen.</p> <p>GD has circulated a guidance document to create a thirty second video on recording short videos for the Innovation talking heads project to discuss Innovation successes.</p> <p>GD outlined the purpose of the Innovation Steering group, the transition from the MITREAP group into the steering group as an action group of the Innovation Board. A key focus of the group is to mitigate the blockers of Innovation which include senior management time, finance, risk and skills through the use of support and training.</p> <p>Programmes include a three-month long business matching where Innovation Advisors or mentors work with businesses to improve Innovation within workspaces.</p>	<p>Business Board Members</p>
<p>7.</p> <p>7.1</p> <p>7.2</p>	<p><u>Start-up Programme</u></p> <p>SW provided background on the start-up programme which has been developed in partnership with the districts to support businesses adversely impacted by the pandemic that started trading shortly before the pandemic and have been forced to shut down.</p> <p>The programme was commissioned and completed via a tendering process and the funding will be combined from the Growth Hub BEIS funding,</p>	

Minute		Action
7.3	<p>contributions from the district councils and Leicester City Council. Four different support providers, Leicester Start Ups, Incrementa, NBV and So Very Creativeh have now been appointed to deliver six separate programmes within the LLEP region.</p> <p>The programme will launch on the 11th of October, and consists of business accelerator programmes, workshops and one to one mentoring support. The programme is on track and no issues are anticipated.</p>	
7.4	<p>The programmes have five key themes including business resilience, strategy, planning, product development and pricing. Overall helping businesses to reach new markets and to be investment ready.</p>	
7.5	<p>Efforts are being made to introduce a quality assurance step and providing a crucial role for the business advisors to support. Evolutive, the LLEP's Customer Relationship Management tool is being used to record and monitor all activities, outputs and benefits received by businesses to ensure a consistent level of service across the region.</p>	
8	<p><u>Partner Updates</u></p> <p>8.1 LS updated that the British Bank published the annual report which includes £80bn liabilities. Many impacts have resulted from redundancies, restructuring and refinancing and debts have been delayed. It was updated that many businesses are likely to struggle with cashflow management towards the end of the year.</p> <p>8.2 JT updated that the FSB's point of view is that the challenges cannot be solved locally as there are huge macro-economic or problems requiring government intervention. Concerns include the level of indebtedness and international trade. JT added there are more start-ups in Leicestershire than ever before, and this may be down to individuals having to go into business due to redundancy and do not have a background or skills to run a business and require support.</p> <p>8.3 PC updated that Crystal Carter from Market Harborough is now leading as the Workspace Manager.</p> <p>8.4 HD updated that the Leicester Business Festival is going ahead, and the applications are now closed for events. A forward list will be circulated, and the approach taken this year is to pay special attention and scrutiny to each event. A hybrid model of some face to face and virtual is being employed to factor in restrictions going forward.</p>	

Minute		Action
9.	AOB	
9.1	N/A	



Leicester & Leicestershire

Economic Growth Strategy 2021-2030

Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership Limited
November 2021

Foreword



Using our local capabilities, innovations and skills – we will build a productive, innovative, inclusive and sustainable economy at the cutting edge of science and technology that supports the health of people and the planet

Leicester and Leicestershire has undergone a transformation over the past decade – into an innovative, technology-led and knowledge economy. These new and evolving strengths, alongside existing strengths and advantages, will help us overcome the impacts of Covid-19 and challenges of the EU transition. It is important to also acknowledge the need to deliver economic participation and prosperity for all residents, to improve people's health and ensure a carbon-neutral future.

From post-Covid recovery, to the future impact of new technologies and international trading arrangements, the future is uncertain. Important national policy decisions that will impact local economies are also being formulated, and we will know their priorities, objectives and potential resources later in 2021 and 2022.

This strategy sets out the broad ambitions for Leicester and Leicestershire that will inform future funding bids and resource prioritisation.

Despite the current economic and policy uncertainties, we are best served identifying and being informed about our main challenges and opportunities. This strategy sets out ambitions, objectives and priorities for the next 10 years and is intended to be used as a commissioning document for seeking funding, allocating funding and making decisions of what to prioritise over the coming years.

The Leicester & Leicestershire Economic Growth Strategy is based on an analysis of the current state of the economy, previous and current research,

strategies and action plans, and stakeholder aspirations and concerns. Prior to the formulation and writing of this strategy, a separate document entitled the Leicester & Leicestershire Economic Growth Strategy Evidence Review 2021 was published. It set out the insights and evidence from existing strategies and studies, stakeholder workshops and research commissioned by the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership to offer an up-to-date analysis and outlook for the economy. It also incorporates the recommendations and priorities of The Strategic Growth Plan for Leicester & Leicestershire 2050: Our vision for growth (2018) – this is the strategic growth plan for the region which has been endorsed by the nine local authority partners and the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership. Furthermore, this Strategy considers the Climate Emergency Declarations made by both Leicester City Council and Leicestershire County Council, and highlights a vision for achieving sustainable economic growth.

The next steps are to develop delivery plans and secure resources.

The strategy presented here is not an action plan or delivery document - these will come later in 2021 and 2022. Leicester and Leicestershire has a fantastic track record in delivery, in transforming the region into a knowledge and technology-led economy. We have successfully delivered a range of transformative local and national policy initiatives, such as our Enterprise Zone sites. We are poised to further capitalise on initiatives such as the East Midlands Freeport. Working together, we can deliver the 2021-2030 Economic Growth Strategy.

Contents

Foreword	2
Executive Summary	4
Our Mission	10
Our Strategy: 4 pillars	13
PRODUCTIVE	18
INNOVATIVE	36
INCLUSIVE	48
SUSTAINABLE	60



Executive Summary

Leicester and Leicestershire's Economic Growth Strategy 2021-2030

The Leicester and Leicestershire Economic Growth Strategy 2021-2030 seeks to deliver recovery and growth. Leicester and Leicestershire face the challenges of recovering from the Covid-19 pandemic, and the post-EU transition – from a position of strength as the region has transformed into a leading technology and knowledge-based economy over the past 10 years.

This strategy is built on robust research, stakeholder views and existing policies. This new economic strategy incorporates previous and current research, strategies and action plans, and stakeholder aspirations and concerns. It also builds on the recommendations and priorities of The Strategic Growth Plan for Leicester & Leicestershire 2050: Our vision for growth (2018), which is the strategic growth plan for the region endorsed by the nine local authority partners and Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership.

Diversity is our strength. Leicester and Leicestershire benefits from a thriving, multicultural city at its heart surrounded by distinctive and independent towns and beautiful and productive rural areas. Our aspiration is to ensure that the diversity of Leicester and Leicestershire is more strongly reflected in the types of jobs and industries which our residents participate in, as well as

broadening the diversity of entrepreneurship, and business leadership in terms of gender, ethnicity and age.

Building sustainability principles into everything we do. Leicester and Leicestershire's local authorities have recently declared a climate emergency and are leading the way in moving towards net carbon zero. New strengths are emerging such as the low carbon sector, space and life sciences and other activities that are creating new knowledge-based jobs and business opportunities.

Collaborating to succeed. The region's strategic central location provides many exciting opportunities. These include areas in both the Midlands and the wider UK on issues of common economic interest that will help to implement the objectives of Building Back Better. Key collaborations include the Midlands Engine, East Midlands Freeport, and joint working with Coventry and Warwickshire, and Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire.





Continuing the economic transformation

Building on the global R&D and entrepreneurial expertise of Leicester and Leicestershire's three universities, and excellence in science and engineering, the region is now home to several UK and world-leading centres of new technology and innovation in space and Earth observation, sports science, life sciences, IT and cyber technologies, and automotive engineering.

Leicester and Leicestershire is also the UK's central logistics hub, having gained significant jobs and investment due to the area's strategic location. Agriculture and Food & Drink production remain key sectors in the region, producing £1.8 billion in GVA and accounting for 43,900 jobs. There is an opportunity to further build a sustainable visitor economy, that currently supports 58,000 jobs in Leicester and Leicestershire. New developments such as the East Midlands Freeport, HS2, and the continued development and build-up of world-class technology and business parks, position the region for further growth.

A successful, accessible location for business with world-class science and enterprise parks, and vibrant urban and rural areas. Alongside a reputation for a high quality of life and mixture of a dynamic city and vibrant rural towns and areas, Leicester and Leicestershire provides some of the best sites in the UK for science, technology, professional services and logistics businesses in the most central, accessible location in the UK.

Although the diversity of the local economy has presented some resilience against the impacts of Covid-19, the challenges facing communities and localities experiencing economic disadvantages have deepened. Industries such as manufacturing, tourism and hospitality have been hit hard by the pandemic. Prior to Covid-19, the region experienced long-standing economic deprivation and disadvantage challenges, with Leicester and Leicestershire ranked 23 out of 38 LEPs for deprivation. Covid-19 has led to further inequalities and concentrations of disadvantage, and has increased the future risk of unemployment and job insecurity facing lower-skilled residents and workers.



The strategy and its four pillars

Using our local capabilities, innovations and skills, we will build a productive, innovative, inclusive and sustainable economy at the cutting edge of science and technology that supports the health of the people and the planet. We aim to do this through our four strategic pillars (Productive, Innovative, Inclusive and Sustainable), outlined as follows:

Productive

Aim: Increase GVA and productivity, continue to develop a leading science and technology-led economy.

Leicester and Leicestershire is a prime location for international business, with 18% of businesses actively exporting their products and services. The region has seen significant growth in science and technology and the knowledge economy, accommodated in our growing world-class business and technology sites. Current challenges include the high demand for office and industrial land and premises, with insufficient supply and the reliance on public sector intervention. Up to 42% of jobs in Leicester and Leicestershire will require graduate skills by 2030, but the region has low graduate retention rates.

The four main priorities for meeting this aim and addressing the challenges include:

1. Entrepreneurial, resilient and high growth businesses: Continuing to build an entrepreneurial region, further improving rates of enterprise start-ups and scale-ups, and helping businesses recover after the pandemic. We will continue to support the following sectors:

- Beacon sectors: Space and Earth Observation, Life Sciences, Automotive, Sport Science and Cyber), aligned with our MIT REAP strategy.
- Growth sectors: ICT, Food and Drink, Logistics, and Professional and Financial Services).

- Key sectors of interest: Agriculture, Textiles, Creative and cultural, Construction, Tourism and the Visitor Economy and the Voluntary and non-profit sectors.

2. Attract and grow international businesses, investment and visitors: Support the contribution that international trade and investment make to economic growth, productivity and the creation of high-skill and high value jobs; whilst renewing our efforts to develop the visitor economy. Build on past successes, including the IBM Leicester Client Innovation Centre, The Access Group Global HQ, the MIRA Technology Institute and the work of Visit Leicester and Leicestershire.

3. Employment and skills for growth: Knowledge intensive services are forming an increasing share of the local workforce – comprising 238,600 jobs in 2018, and increasing by 2% per year since 2000. We need to continue to build relationships and joint initiatives to meet the employment and skills needs of employers and the future economy.

4. World-class business locations: Continue to develop and provide the business sites and locations needed to become a world-class location for science, technology and professional services. Build on the success of Loughborough University Science and Enterprise Park, MIRA Technology Park, Charnwood Campus Life Sciences Opportunity Zone, SEGRO Logistics Park, Magna Park, Leicester International Gateway and SpacePark Leicester.



Innovative

Aim: Global innovation leadership, increase innovation activities across the whole business base.

Over the past decade, Leicester and Leicestershire has significantly increased its university and technology-based R&D and entrepreneurship. The region is also home to corporate R&D centres for 3M, IBM and PepsiCo. The region's economy is dominated by small businesses and the MIT REAP Programme has developed an ambitious, tailored programme to increase the rate of entrepreneurship and business growth in Leicester and Leicestershire.

Low levels of R&D expenditure compared to the national average and international standards continue to be a challenge. Workforce skills are also deficient in key areas, such as STEM-related industries and corporate management. A major boost to innovation is required to meet the climate change and sustainability agenda facing local industries and society.

The four main priorities for meeting this aim and addressing the challenges include:

1. Global innovation leadership: Supporting our outstanding R&D strengths and innovation achievements. This involves working closely with the region's three universities – De Montfort, Leicester and Loughborough. SpacePark Leicester is a major new R&D and technology business campus which demonstrates that the region can attain and invest in innovation leadership of national and international significance.

2. Increase and broaden innovation activity amongst businesses: Capitalising on the interest amongst the Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) base in innovation and knowledge exchange, improving rates of innovation adoption, collaboration and skills acquisition. We need to increase regional business involvement in university research, building on progress such as that achieved by De Montfort University's Cyber Security Academic Centre of Excellence.

3. Successfully pioneer and apply emerging and new technologies: Helping businesses become more competitive and resilient. The most resilient businesses that emerged from the Covid-19 pandemic, had good digital systems and online platforms, or implemented them rapidly. Business performance and success depends on technology and innovation adoption and transformation. Leicester and Leicestershire has a great track record upon which to build, exemplified by initiatives such as the 842-acre MIRA Technology Park.

4. Innovation for sustainability: Business performance and success depends on technology, adopting innovation and transformation. Sectors such as food & drink, textiles and logistics will need support in the transition to sustainability. The region has several distinct leaders in sustainable technologies, such as Cenex, based in Loughborough, which is the UK's first Centre of Excellence for Low Carbon and Fuel Cell technologies, established in 2005.

Inclusive

Aim: Create a resilient, adaptive workforce where all residents have access to skills and career progression and are paid the living wage.

The diversity and international links of the region's population and communities presents opportunities for international trade and investment. The concentrations of deprivation, pockets of low education and skills attainment, and social, economic and health inequalities in Leicester and Leicestershire will need addressing. To increase access to opportunities and decrease economic disadvantage, there needs to be progress in delivering youth, employment and careers services.

The four main priorities for meeting this aim and addressing these challenges include:

1. Informed choices and routes to job and skills progression: Deliver services to prevent increases in youth unemployment, provide employer-led skills development, progression pathways and increase apprenticeships. Partners in Leicester and Leicestershire need to build on the significant progress made in the provision of youth, employment and careers services with the Enterprise Adviser Network, Careers Hub and the Youth Employment Hub.

2. Improve skills and qualifications attainment and employability of the workforce: Reduce the flow of low skilled, poorly qualified individuals into adulthood, and address low qualifications and skills attainment in adults. Initiatives such as Loughborough College Careers and Enterprise Hub are making good progress and continued support for similar initiatives is needed.

3. Improve access to work, labour market inclusion and wellbeing at work: This priority aims to address the foundations of labour market exclusion, working conditions, and health. It seeks to help individuals participate in education, training and the labour market, and to access and maintain employment. Wellbeing at work is also of increasing importance for those most at risk of health inequalities, economic exclusion and poverty. Initiatives such as Barratt Developments and SMB Group's Construction Partnership and Social Mobility Pledge, and the University of Leicester and Leicester College support for leaders and managers in the voluntary sector, have shown that progress can be made.

4. Improve jobs quality, in-work progression and pay: We need to ensure good access to education and skills attainment, quality jobs, pay and prosperity, particularly amongst deprived or excluded individuals, households and communities. We also need to examine how communities and residents can access new areas of jobs growth such as in the green economy.



Aim: Become a leader in zero carbon solutions, with sustainability principles built into everything we do.

OPPORTUNITIES:

In Leicester and Leicestershire, all local authorities, the Local Enterprise Partnership, universities, East Midlands Airport and many other businesses and organisations have made a commitment to zero carbon, addressing biodiversity loss and resource scarcity. There are opportunities for businesses in developing and adopting sustainable innovations and technologies – such as zero carbon vehicles, pollution monitoring, and Earth observation. Climate change and sustainable development will bring radical, urgent and far-reaching consequences for the economy, business operations and industrial structure. We will need new and adapted economic models and frameworks.

The four main priorities for meeting these aims include:

1. Sustainable places, city and town centres:

City and town centres have been impacted significantly by the pandemic, with local retail (excluding food) and leisure footfall up to 80% lower during the past year, whilst the shift to online shopping has accelerated. The demand for new homes continues to increase. Development and redevelopment must be delivered sustainably, going forward – as prioritised in The Strategic Growth Plan for Leicester & Leicestershire 2050: Our vision for growth. Homes must be affordable and green, and sites for new employment space and premises must be zero carbon developments. Progress on the Natural Capital Strategy and the National Forest has been made but will need continued support.

2. Sustainable transport and connectivity: For Leicester and Leicestershire to deliver the 187,096 new dwellings that it is estimated

will be needed by 2050 will require rail improvements and increased modal shift from private to public and sustainable transport. Road improvements to the A46 and A5 are vital to housing and employment growth, with road transport decarbonisation and improved internet connectivity, particularly for rural areas, also required to meet sustainable development goals. Some progress has been made on internet connectivity with the rollout of Superfast Leicestershire, but continued investment in broadband and 5G will be required to ensure that digital infrastructure can meet the requirements of employers, workers, businesses and learners in the future.

3. Sustainable energy: The Energy Infrastructure Strategy for Leicester and Leicestershire demonstrated that renewable energy could generate 6,700 gigawatt hours per year – enough to meet total electricity demand in the region today, and in 2050. To achieve this, 125 megawatts of renewable energy generation needs to be installed every year up to 2050. Another barrier to energy efficiency is that power networks are stressed, and more efficient energy infrastructure and networks need to be installed, including ‘smart streets’ networks.

4. Sustainable business: To achieve carbon saving targets and increase the environmental sustainability of the local economy, businesses will need to decarbonise, reduce resource use and waste, and adapt to new business models and conditions. Grant programmes such as the Green BELLE project have been welcome, but business transformation will need to continue.

Next steps

This strategy sets out the broad ambitions for Leicester and Leicestershire that will inform future funding bids and resource prioritisation. The ambitions, objectives and priorities for the next 10 years are intended to be used as a commissioning document for seeking funding, allocating funding and making decisions on what to prioritise over the coming years. Working with partners, we will develop delivery plans and secure resources for the individual pillars and priorities within the Strategy.

Our Mission



Welcome to Leicester and Leicestershire – a leading and fast-growing centre of science, technology and knowledge-industries in the UK

This new Economic Growth Strategy for 2021-2030 seeks to deliver recovery and development, building on the successful transformation of the local economy over the past 10 years

Leicester and Leicestershire's Economic Growth Strategy for 2021-2030 seeks to deliver a successful recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic and further capitalise on the phenomenal transformation of the local economy over the past 10 years. Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, Leicester and Leicestershire generated £24.5 billion in GVA, with 42,000 businesses and 538,000 jobs. As a testament to its resilience and growth potential, we expect this to increase to £30.2 billion and 568,000 jobs by 2030.

Building on the global R&D and entrepreneurial expertise of Leicester and Leicestershire's three universities, and excellence in science and engineering, the region is now home to several UK and world-leading centres of new technology and innovation in space and Earth observation, sports science, life sciences, IT and cyber technologies, and automotive engineering. Leicester and Leicestershire is also the UK's central logistics hub, having gained significant jobs and investment due to the area's strategic location. Agriculture and Food & drink production remain key sectors in the region, producing £1.8 billion in GVA and accounting for 43,900 jobs. There is an opportunity to further build a sustainable visitor economy, which currently supports 58,000 jobs in Leicester and Leicestershire.

With the opportunity to create up to 9,900 new skilled jobs in Leicester and Leicestershire from the East Midlands Freeport

Another significant new opportunity is the East Midlands Freeport, which benefits from the existing maritime-operated rail facility at East Midlands Gateway, and existing and proposed railheads at Ratcliffe and East Midlands Intermodal Park. The Freeport, at full build out across three sites, is expected to generate 61,700 jobs – 32,800 on-site jobs, and another 28,900 through supply chains. The site is based around the East Midlands Airport and Gateway Industrial Cluster (EMAGIC) in North West Leicestershire and is expected to contribute £600 million in GVA annually, and 9,900 jobs within Leicester and Leicestershire (with £390 million and 5,300 jobs on-site).

The Freeport will bring significant investment to develop and drive innovation, alternative energy sources and green technology supporting SMEs and large regional employers, including Rolls-Royce, Toyota, and Alstom (formerly Bombardier). The East Midlands Freeport bid was submitted in February 2021 by a consortium led by the Local Enterprise Partnerships representing Leicester, Leicestershire, Derby, Derbyshire, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire. It included private sector businesses and local authorities, with support from universities, business groups, local MPs and the proposed East Midlands Development Corporation.

A successful, accessible location for business with world-class science and enterprise parks, and vibrant urban and rural areas

Alongside a reputation for a high quality of life and mixture of a dynamic city and vibrant rural towns and areas, Leicester and Leicestershire provides some of the best sites in the UK for science, technology, professional services and logistics businesses in the most central, accessible location in the UK.

Leicester and Leicestershire has transformed into a leading technology and knowledge-based economy over the past 10 years

The region's three universities (De Montfort University, the University of Leicester and Loughborough University) and businesses have demonstrated that they are world-class at Sports science, Space, Advanced engineering, and Automotive sectors, The Life sciences, Health, ICT, Professional services and Logistics. The universities are well integrated into the local economy and business base, where they impart their international research expertise and their own entrepreneurship and innovation initiatives. Leicester and Leicestershire's further education colleges have adopted a business-focus and are helping to improve SME participation in apprenticeships.

With the potential to reach critical mass in terms of the techno-entrepreneurial economy – particularly on its world-class business and technology sites

This progress has culminated in the delivery of a range of modern science, technology and business sites – with higher education, R&D and enterprise support built-in. These include the Loughborough University Science and Enterprise Park, MIRA Technology Park, Charnwood Campus Life Sciences Opportunity Zone, Magna Park, SEGRO Logistics Park, Leicester International Gateway and SpacePark Leicester. Alongside this, the region also hosts leading commercial R&D activity and expertise in firms such as 3M Group, the AI Institute, PepsiCo and IBM. These leading business

and technology sites are supported by East Midlands Airport's global connectivity. The recently announced East Midlands Freeport will also provide a significant boost to Leicester and Leicestershire.

Covid-19 has accelerated and exacerbated existing trends

Leicester and Leicestershire suffered from higher caseloads of Covid-19, and the impacts on tourism and hospitality sectors has been significant. However, the diversity of the local economy has provided some resilience against the pandemic, and there have been fewer job losses compared to the national average. In addition, certain sectors in the region such as logistics, life sciences and online retail, have seen buoyant demand and growth over the past year.

As elsewhere, the Covid-19 pandemic has impacted workers on low pay and facing job insecurity the most. Due to the pandemic, up to 117,000 jobs are classified as 'vulnerable', of which 58,000 are in Hospitality, Tourism and retail, while 30,000 are in Manufacturing. The tourism sector experienced a 64% fall in economic output in 2020 compared to 2019. There has been a contraction in job vacancies and hiring, with young people particularly affected by a reduction in entry level positions and places on apprenticeships.

Prior to Covid-19, there were long-standing challenges with deprivation and economic disadvantage. Leicester and Leicestershire ranked 23 out of 38 LEPs for deprivation. Leicester City has significant concentrations of deprivation and NEET rates (5% vs. England which has 3%). Although many Leicester and Leicestershire residents enjoy a good quality of life and unemployment is relatively low, the area still suffers from isolated pockets of deprivation and there are significant differences across different local authority areas. Covid-19 has led to further inequalities and concentrations of economic disadvantage and has increased the future risk of unemployment and job insecurity facing lower-skilled residents and workers.



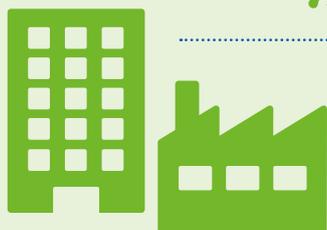
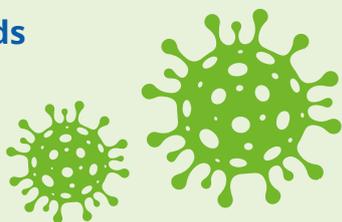
Covid-19 has also impacted business continuity, resilience, supply chains and market demand. The capacities and capabilities of many SMEs have been significantly stretched in terms of their resilience and financial health. The pace of acceleration brought about by the digital transformation of businesses, public services and skills has meant that changes have occurred in a few months instead of taking place gradually over a few years.

Rural areas have also been significantly impacted, with disruptions to harvesting and meeting the demand for agricultural produce, as well as interruptions to supply chain operations in the Food & drink sector. Access to the countryside has also played a significant role during the Covid-19 lockdowns and curtailment of international travel and tourism.

Impacts of Covid-19 on the Leicester & Leicestershire Economy

Covid-19 caseloads

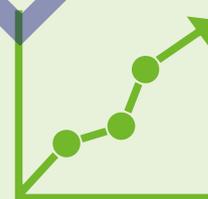
70% higher than national average in February 2021



Employers have been **less likely** to have made **redundancies**

Covid-19 has amplified existing inequalities

in our communities, and the impacts have been uneven both spatially and according to income group, age, ethnicity and gender.



117,000 or 24.3% of jobs classed as **'vulnerable'** due to Covid-19



By 2030, as a legacy of the pandemic the Leicester and Leicestershire economy could expect to have in the region of 1,600 fewer jobs, output £800 million lower, and a workforce of £1,300 per annum less productive.

Leicester and Leicestershire – a thriving location for business and talent

Using our local capabilities, innovations and skills – we will build a productive, innovative, inclusive and sustainable economy at the cutting edge of science and technology that supports the health of people and the planet

The Leicester & Leicestershire Economic Growth Strategy is based on an analysis of the current state of the economy, previous and current research, strategies and action plans, and stakeholder aspirations and concerns. Prior to the formulation

and writing of this strategy, a separate document, entitled the Leicester & Leicestershire Economic Growth Strategy Evidence Review 2021, was published. This document sets out the insights and evidence from existing strategies and studies, stakeholder workshops and research commissioned by the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership to offer an up-to-date analysis and outlook for the economy. It also incorporates the recommendations and priorities of The Strategic Growth Plan for Leicester & Leicestershire 2050: Our vision for growth (2018) – the strategic growth plan for the region endorsed by the nine local authority partners and the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership.

Our Strategy: 4 pillars

PILLAR	OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES IN THE REGION	PRIORITIES
<p>PRODUCTIVE</p> <p>Grow GVA and productivity, continue to develop a leading science and technology-led economy</p>	<p>OPPORTUNITIES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Prime location for international business, 18% of businesses export ● Significant growth in science and technology and knowledge economy ● World-class business and technology sites <p>CHALLENGES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ High demand for office and industrial land and premises, with insufficient supply and reliance on public sector intervention ◆ 42% of jobs will require graduate skills by 2030, but low graduate retention 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Entrepreneurial, resilient and high growth businesses 2. Attract and grow international businesses, investment and visitors 3. Employment and skills for growth 4. World-class business locations
<p>INNOVATIVE</p> <p>Global innovation leadership, increase innovation activities across the whole business base</p>	<p>OPPORTUNITIES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● University and technology-based R&D and entrepreneurship ● Corporate R&D: 3M, IBM, PepsiCo ● MIT REAP Programme <p>CHALLENGES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ R&D expenditure remains below national average and low by international standards ◆ Workforce skills ◆ Innovation required to meet the climate change and sustainability agenda facing local industries and society 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Global innovation leadership 2. Increase and broaden innovation activity amongst businesses 3. Successfully pioneer and apply emerging and new technologies 4. Innovation for sustainability
<p>INCLUSIVE</p> <p>Create a resilient, adaptive workforce where all residents have access to skills and career progression and are paid the living wage</p>	<p>OPPORTUNITIES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Diversity and international links of population and communities ● Progress in youth, employment and careers services <p>CHALLENGES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Concentrations of deprivation ◆ Low education and skills attainment ◆ Social, economic and health inequalities ◆ Low pay and job quality ◆ Skills required to meet the climate change and sustainability agenda facing local industries and society 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Informed choices and routes to job and skills progression 2. Improve skills and qualifications attainment and employability of the workforce 3. Improve access to work, labour market inclusion and wellbeing at work 4. Improve jobs quality, in-work progression and pay
<p>SUSTAINABLE</p> <p>A leader in zero carbon solutions, with sustainability principles built into everything we do</p>	<p>OPPORTUNITIES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Multi-stakeholder commitment to zero carbon, addressing biodiversity loss and resource scarcity ● Business and technology actions and innovations (e.g., zero carbon vehicles, pollution monitoring, Earth observation) <p>CHALLENGES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Radical, urgent and far-reaching consequences for economy, operations and structure ◆ Adapting to new economic models and frameworks 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sustainable places, city and town centres 2. Sustainable transport and connectivity 3. Sustainable energy 4. Sustainable business

Diversity is our strength

Leicester and Leicestershire benefits from a thriving, multicultural city at its heart which is surrounded by distinctive and independent towns and beautiful and productive rural areas.

Leicester and Leicestershire is strategically located in the centre of the country, with good road, rail and air links with the rest of the UK and the world. The region's strengths lie in its diverse nature and global connections which offer a wide range of opportunities for businesses, residents and potential investors.

Leicester is renowned for its young and dynamic multicultural population, with thriving South Asian, Somali and Eastern European communities that are fluent in over 100 different languages. Leicestershire is renowned for its distinctive and independent towns including Loughborough, Melton Mowbray, Market Harborough, Hinckley, Ashby-de-la-Zouch and Coalville. Each town is an important economic centre in its own right and a focal point for their local communities. In between Leicester and its surrounding towns and villages lie varied and beautiful rural areas that are rich in natural capital. Leicestershire is predominantly a rural county where much of the Melton and Harborough districts are classified as rural, along with large parts of Hinckley and Bosworth borough and North West Leicestershire district. Our aspiration would be to ensure that the diversity of Leicester and Leicestershire is more strongly reflected in the types of jobs and industries which our residents work in, as well as broadening the diversity of entrepreneurship and business leadership to encompass gender, ethnicity and age.

Building a healthy, sustainable economy

Transforming the economy by maximising the opportunities from environmental sustainability and health

The world is facing three interconnected global emergencies: climate change, resource exploitation and biodiversity loss. It is only by transitioning to a zero-carbon economy, creating a circular economy and recovering lost biodiversity that irreversible damage can be avoided, and our natural environment and resources be protected for future generations. The adoption of zero carbon technologies and the efficient use of resources is one of the greatest industrial opportunities of our time, which present the ability to transform existing industries and create new ones as the UK moves to a more resource-efficient economy.

Businesses in Leicester and Leicestershire have been showing the way – as demonstrated by East Midlands Airport which was the first among UK airports to make a commitment to achieve carbon neutral ground operations by 2012. However, SMEs and microbusinesses need further support.

People's health

The Covid-19 pandemic has illustrated the significant role that health plays in our economy and society, and the need to incorporate health into strategic thinking. While the city of Leicester has a younger population than average, like the rest of the UK the elderly population continues to grow.

In the period up to 2030, the number of people over 65 is expected to increase by 55,000, representing 70 per cent of the forecast growth in population. This will create new demands for technology, products and services and will alter patterns of working and participation in the economy. De Montfort University has collaborated with two local healthcare providers and Age UK to establish the Leicester Academy for the Study of Ageing, to research the challenges that come with ageing while using multidisciplinary approaches to develop solutions.



Building sustainability principles into everything we do

Leicester and Leicestershire is ready to meet these challenges. The local authorities recently declared a climate emergency and are leading the way in moving towards net carbon zero. Leicestershire County Council is committed to achieving net zero carbon by 2030 for its own operational emissions and will work with its partners and the government to achieve net zero carbon for Leicestershire by 2045 or before. Leicester City Council has also made zero carbon commitments for the city of Leicester, which encompass the council's activities, organisation and estate becoming carbon neutral by 2030 or sooner. The City Council published a Climate Emergency Strategy and an accompanying Action Plan in 2020.

Leicester and Leicestershire is also developing new strengths in sectors such as low carbon, space, and life sciences, which have led to the creation of new knowledge-based jobs and business opportunities. This is emphasised in the strategy's fourth pillar - Sustainable - which refers to the ambition of becoming a leader in low carbon solutions with sustainability principles built into everything we do.

Delivering healthy and sustainable growth

To deliver healthy, sustainable growth and support the AI and Data and Low Carbon Grand Challenges, Leicester and Leicestershire will create more high value jobs in sectors such as low carbon, space and life sciences. The introduction of SpacePark Leicester provides a new centre of excellence for Earth observation and satellite technology, and a low carbon and circular economy business cluster exists at the Loughborough University Science and Enterprise Park (LUSEP). Other measures include the construction of new sustainable and affordable housing, while developing and encouraging more sustainable forms of transport to mitigate the impacts of climate change. Leicester and Leicestershire will also aim to increase targeted foreign direct investment in the low carbon sector and will support the development of renewable energy from local sources. Businesses will also be supported in their bid to become more energy efficient and carbon neutral.

Leicester and Leicestershire – your partner in growth

A successful track record of working in partnership to win government funding to deliver transformative projects.

Partnership is a key strength of Leicester and Leicestershire, with local authorities, businesses, universities and the Local Enterprise Partnership working together to deliver a more successful, inclusive and sustainable economy.

Leicester and Leicestershire has delivered a number of nationally important projects over the past decade, using the 2014 City Deal and Growth Deal funding. The region achieved Enterprise Zone status for two Enterprise Zones covering four separate sites, including the UK's only automotive focused Enterprise Zone, the UK's first designated Life Sciences Opportunities Zone, and two new Manufacturing Zones in Leicester and Melton Mowbray.

Funding was also secured from the Satellite Applications Catapult to support the Manufacturing, Engineering, Technology and Earth Observation Centre (METEOR) at Space Park Leicester. Related to this, the Department for International Trade relaunched the Leicester Space Park HPO (High Potential Opportunity) project as part of the UK Space Sector COVID Support Plan (SSCSP), while a successful HPO in Rehabilitation was awarded to Leicester and Leicestershire thus capitalising on the region's strengths in life sciences and health research. More recently, the East Midlands Airport and Gateway Industrial Cluster (EMAGIC) sites in North West Leicestershire were granted Freeport Status. The East Midlands Freeport consortium will now work with the government to develop the proposals into an outline business case which will provide further information on how the Freeport will be delivered. If successful, this will provide a significant boost to manufacturing and logistics industries in the region.



The economic strategy aligns with *The Strategic Growth Plan for Leicester & Leicestershire 2050: Our vision for growth* which sets out housing and development aspirations

Leicester and Leicestershire has clear and well-developed plans in place to support sustainable future growth as articulated and agreed upon in The Strategic Growth Plan for Leicester & Leicestershire 2050: Our vision for growth. In 2018, the nine local authorities (Leicester City Council, and Leicestershire County Council and the seven district authorities of Blaby, Charnwood, Harborough, Hinckley and Bosworth, Melton, North West Leicestershire, and Oadby and Wigston) and Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership agreed to The Strategic Growth Plan, setting out their aspirations for the development of new housing and infrastructure in the period up to 2050. The strategic plan highlighted that around 187,000 new dwellings will be needed between 2011 and 2050 to house the area's growing population, with 96,580 homes required by 2031 and a further 90,516 by 2050. In addition, it was also estimated that between 367 and 423 hectares of employment land will be required by 2031 to meet future demand. This Economic Growth Strategy (2021-2030) adopts and aligns with the principles and priorities outlined in The Strategic Growth Plan (2018). It includes priorities to create suitable conditions for investment and growth while balancing the need for new housing and jobs with protection of our environment and built heritage. It also encourages more development on strategic locations – which will give rise to better planned communities in terms of housing, employment, transport and services. There is a recognition that The Strategic Growth Plan

(2018) was developed prior to the recent Climate Emergency Declarations and so the priorities found within this Economic Growth Strategy will be applied to the delivery of The Strategic Growth Plan (2018). Another significant aspect of The Strategic Growth Plan (2018) is the timing and coordination of improvements to transport to enable the development and success of our world-class business locations.

Ensuring everyone can benefit from economic success

Significant progress has been made in the provision of youth, employment and careers services, with the Enterprise Adviser Network, Careers Hub and Youth Employment Hub. In addition, projects like the Leicester Employment Hub, Construction Skills Hub and area European Social Fund (ESF) programmes support both young people and adults, along with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and National Careers Service offerings. Loughborough College, in partnership with Loughborough University and Charnwood Borough Council, has led a project to open a new Careers and Enterprise Hub in Loughborough town centre, which supports all ages. Although Leicester and Leicestershire is home to three leading universities and has many well-qualified residents, its overall educational attainment lags behind the rest of the UK, and this is reflected in lower pay. With the demand for higher-skilled workers predicted to increase over the next decade, improving educational attainment and upskilling the workforce will be key challenges moving forward. Increasing graduate retention is part of the solution.



Collaborating to succeed

Part of the Midlands Engine, working with neighbouring cities and localities

Leicester and Leicestershire's central location provides the region with many exciting opportunities to work with areas within the Midlands and the wider UK on issues of common economic interest that will help to implement the objectives of Building Back Better. This will include utilising cross-border physical assets to create new employment opportunities as well as developing collaborative approaches with neighbouring areas such as Coventry and Warwickshire, and Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire to improve growth and productivity in key sectors.

To the north, Leicester and Leicestershire has collaborated with Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire over the development of the East Midlands Airport Freeport Proposals, and continues to collaborate over East Midlands Airport and High Speed 2 to ensure that the delivery of these key infrastructure assets benefit the local area. This will be supported by the creation of a new East Midlands Development Corporation, which will focus on developing an area straddling the north Leicestershire and south Nottinghamshire borders. The establishment of the new National Defence Rehabilitation Centre, as well as existing assets such as Charnwood Campus and BioCity Nottingham, also offer the opportunity for Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire to work jointly to develop an East Midlands life sciences cluster.

Such cross-border collaboration already exists through initiatives such as the Midlands Engine, as well as the new Loughborough Area of Innovation (LAI) - a multi-partner initiative, linking Loughborough, Leicester, Nottingham and Derby - led by Loughborough University. This new Economic Growth Strategy aligns with Midlands Engine priorities including support for developments by the East Midlands Development Corporation at The East Midlands Hub HS2 Station, East Midlands Airport and Ratcliffe-on-Soar power station which will help to advance the Ten Point Plan for Green Growth in the Midlands Engine.

Furthermore, Leicester and Leicestershire is integral to several Midlands Connect (the Subnational Transport Body for the East and West Midlands) priorities over the next 10 years. These include support for an orbital transport solution to the south and east of the City, A5 Improvement Corridor, and A511 Growth Corridor - with the potential to accommodate thousands of new homes and jobs. The Midlands Connect £3.5 billion plan to revolutionise the Midlands rail network would also bring significant benefits to Leicester and Leicestershire, providing electrification and HS2 compatible services. The HS2 railway line will pass through Leicestershire to the north of the County with access from nearby Toton in Nottinghamshire. This will create extra capacity for high-speed railway journeys and free up space for 2.5 million tonnes of freight each day.

Next steps

Developing delivery plans and securing resources

This strategy sets out the broad ambitions for Leicester and Leicestershire that will inform future funding bids and resource prioritisation. The ambitions, objectives and priorities for the next 10 years are intended to be used as a commissioning document for seeking funding, allocating funding and making decisions on what to prioritise over the coming years. Working with partners, we will develop delivery plans and secure resources for the individual pillars and priorities within the Strategy.

PRODUCTIVE

Increase GVA and productivity, continue to develop a leading science and technology-led economy



Priorities

1. Entrepreneurial, resilient and high growth businesses

Continuing to build an entrepreneurial region, further improving rates of enterprise start-up and scale-up, and helping businesses recover after the pandemic. Reflecting the strong

role of SMEs in the Leicester and Leicestershire economy, we will continue to promote high rates of entrepreneurship and start-ups and help businesses realise their ambitions with high growth business support and advice. We will also seek to improve the performance of existing businesses via productivity improvements, digital transformation, HR and skills and diversification. We will continue to support the key growth sectors of Life sciences, Space and Earth observation, Sports and sport science, Advanced engineering, ICT, Food and drink, Logistics and professional and financial services – as well as the locally important sectors of Agriculture, Textiles, Creative and cultural, Construction, Tourism and the visitor economy, and the voluntary and non-profit sectors. We will provide ongoing support to businesses that are recovering from Covid-19 and adapting to the new trading relationships with the European Union (EU), including support to strengthen local supply chains. We will ensure that the diversity of Leicester and Leicestershire is more strongly reflected in entrepreneurship and business leadership in terms of gender, ethnicity and age.

2. Attract and grow international businesses, investment and visitors

Support the contribution that international trade and investment make to economic growth, productivity and the creation of high-skill and high value jobs; and renew our efforts to develop the visitor economy.

The region is a prime location for international businesses. In 2020, 18 per cent of all businesses exported their products and services overseas, while multinational firms such as 3M, IBM and PepsiCo continue to operate here. We will continue to secure inward investment, while retaining and growing our existing international businesses. We will develop and implement the Freeport strategy and provide support for SMEs to export their products and services. Tourism and the visitor economy is a significant and growing sector, that needs support to recover from the Covid-19 pandemic. To this end, we will continue to support the ambitions of the Leicester and Leicestershire Tourism Growth Plan to attract international businesses which increasingly desire locations that are at the forefront of providing climate and biodiversity action, health and wellbeing and sustainable communities.



3. Employment and skills for growth

Build relationships and joint initiatives to meet the employment and skills needs of employers and the future economy. Knowledge intensive jobs will grow over the next decade. By 2030, it is forecast that 42 per cent of jobs within Leicester and Leicestershire will require Level 4+ qualifications. Demand for Level 2 and Level 3 jobs are also expected to grow by around 5%, while other roles or jobs which do not require any qualifications are forecast to contract as a share of the LLEP total. Previously, skills shortages could be met by attracting overseas workers. In the future, employers will be much more reliant on local workers and their skills. We will meet this challenge by matching the skills supply to the needs of employers and increasing graduate employment and retention. Further education colleges, universities and employers will work together to increase the take-up of apprenticeships and vocational learning. We will encourage lifelong learning and improve skills attainment across the broad range of diverse sectors in the Leicester and Leicestershire economy. Another key aim is to help employers improve their HR and skills development capabilities and practices.

4. World-class business locations

Continue to develop and provide the business sites and locations needed to become a world-class location for science, technology and professional services. Leicester and Leicestershire has transformed its business locations and premises since 2010, with world-class sites such as Loughborough University Science and Enterprise Park, MIRA Technology Park, Charnwood Campus Life Sciences Opportunity Zone, Magna Park, SEGRO Logistics Park and Leicester International Gateway, as along with city centre developments such as SpacePark Leicester, the former Stibbe site, DOCK I and DOCK II developments. Over the past 10 years, brand new Grade A offices, technology and manufacturing premises have been built to accommodate 5,000 high-technology jobs. Within the principles of the Strategy for Growth, which sets out the region's strategic land use and planning policies, we aim to provide enough Grade A space for 10,000 more jobs. While much progress has already been made in providing world-class business locations, follow-on investment and development are now required to accommodate further jobs and strengthen the region's international reputation.





PRODUCTIVE - Priority 1: Entrepreneurial, resilient and high growth businesses

Continue to build an entrepreneurial region, further improving rates of enterprise start-ups and scale-ups and helping businesses recover after the pandemic.

The Leicester and Leicestershire economy is dominated by small businesses - with 89.8% of businesses micro-sized (employing less than 0-9 people). Building on the Business Gateway Growth Hub support and expanding on successful initiatives such as the MIT Regional Entrepreneurship Acceleration Program (REAP), we can continue the substantial progress made in the last 10 years, as evidenced by the growth in the number of businesses (+ 20% between 2014 and 2019), and improvements in start-up and survival rates that are higher than the national average. Businesses will continue to be supported through the uncertain recovery period and the EU transition. The Leicester and Leicestershire MIT REAP Ideas Taskforce has provided a detailed analysis of the opportunities and challenges facing the region, resulting in the “Bootstraps and Beacons” strategy which combines an approach that seeks to upscale productivity and enhance existing innovation infrastructure.

We will continue to support the following sectors:

- Beacon sectors: Space and Earth Observation, Life Sciences, Automotive, Sport Science and Cyber) aligned with our MIT REAP strategy.
- Growth sectors: ICT, Food and Drink, Logistics and Professional and Financial Services) and
- Key sectors of interest: Agriculture, Textiles, Creative and cultural, Construction, Tourism and the Visitor Economy and the Voluntary and non-profit sectors.

We will provide ongoing support to businesses recovering from Covid-19 while adapting to the new trading relationships with the EU, and addressing the specific needs and issues affecting rural businesses and the agricultural economy. We will ensure that the diversity of Leicester and Leicestershire is more strongly reflected in entrepreneurship and business leadership in terms of gender, ethnicity and age. We will also seek to improve the performance of existing businesses via productivity improvements, digital transformation, HR and skills and diversification. Businesses will also need support to address climate change, resource exploitation and biodiversity loss. The relevant support and advice will enable them to adapt accordingly.





PRODUCTIVE – Priority 1:

Entrepreneurial, resilient and high growth businesses

Objective	Short-term (2021-23)	Long-term (2021-30)
1. High rates of entrepreneurship and start up	By drawing together and enhancing existing provision, develop and coordinate a cohesive framework for local start-up support, to meet increased demand for support via the Business Gateway Growth Hub.	Within the existing Business Gateway Growth Hub, create a local framework for start-up support to assist self-employment, entrepreneurship and non-profit organisations. This includes support for key groups such as those newly unemployed, graduates, young people, women and rural residents.
2. Helping businesses realise their growth ambitions	The Business Gateway Growth Hub will broker support to businesses with high growth ambitions. Develop formal partnerships and resources to deliver the MIT REAP framework.	High growth business support and peer networks, with MIT REAP.
3. Support growth in key sectors and knowledge-based businesses	Continue to support life sciences, space and Earth observation, sports and sport science, advanced engineering, ICT, food and drink, logistics and professional and financial services.	Provide for the next stages of grow-on and networking space and premises; integrate growth sector needs into skills pathways and careers guidance. Provide scale-up support to businesses.
4. Resilient and adaptable businesses	Provision of ongoing advice and support to businesses through the Business Gateway Growth Hub. Sector recovery and supply chain plans and effective targeting of support for industries affected by Brexit and Covid-19. Encouraging companies to engage across sectors to strengthen local supply chains. Support productivity improvements, digital transformation, HR and skills, and diversification. Develop support for transition to a sustainable economy.	Diagnostic and peer support networks and services for ongoing business resilience and engagement across the diverse range of sectors within the Leicester and Leicestershire economy. Suite of business support and advisory products and resources for business transformation and resilience, and the transition to a sustainable economy.





MIT REAP
Regional Entrepreneurship
Acceleration Program

CASE STUDY:

INCREASING AND BROADENING BUSINESS INNOVATION ACTIVITY

MIT REAP Programme

The MIT Regional Entrepreneurship Acceleration Program (REAP) is a powerful global initiative that engages with communities to supercharge innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystems and transform economies. Members of the Ideas Taskforce, who led the implementation of the MIT REAP initiative in Leicester and Leicestershire, include representatives from Natwest, the British Business Bank, PPL PRS Ltd, RSM, Loughborough, Leicester and De Montfort Universities, Innovate UK and local SMEs, DPI Ltd and Aristec Ltd.

The MIT REAP exercise acknowledged the excellence of Leicestershire's three universities and the affiliated Space Park in Leicester, SportPark at Loughborough University, and De Montfort University's excellence in AI and cybersecurity as significant opportunities. The Life Sciences Opportunities Zone at Charnwood Campus, Loughborough, and Horiba Mira at Hinckley institute were also highlighted. However, this exercise also exposed the additional challenges presented by Leicestershire's low-skilled workforce and low wage economy, together with a high concentration of micro businesses and mature manufacturing SMEs, which limits the capacity for knowledge-intensive growth.

The final strategy, "Bootstraps and Beacons" combines an approach that seeks to upscale productivity and enhance the existing infrastructure 'pulling the manufacturing base by its bootstraps' through the introduction of Industry 4.0 capabilities, while driving a culture of innovation, supported by Leicester and Leicestershire's distinctive beacons in space, life sciences, sport, health, AI and cybersecurity. It proposed a mixed mode strategy to tackle skills and mentoring, investment, value creation, market capture, networking, knowledge exchange, commercialisation, and with advanced services and spaces to drive innovation. Bootstrap support would extend the reach and depth of existing business provision to focus support around better use of assets, skills and spaces, which allow the market to work more effectively.

PRODUCTIVE - Priority 2:

Attract and grow international businesses, investment and visitors

Support the contribution that international trade and investment makes to economic growth, productivity and the creation of high-skill and high value jobs; and renew our efforts to develop the visitor economy

Leicester and Leicestershire is a prime location for international businesses. In 2020, 18% of all businesses exported their products and services overseas while 83% of exporters sold to markets in the EU. Advanced manufacturing specialisms in food and beverage, machinery, transport, computer, electronic and optical products, are key exporters. Professional, scientific and technical industries are also major exporters. Over the next 10 years, businesses must adapt to the new challenges and opportunities posed by Covid-19 and Brexit. This is illustrated by the 16% decline in value of goods exported from the UK throughout 2020 – the largest drop since comparable records began.

Cultural, leisure and tourism industries generated £1.88 billion for the local economy in 2019 but have been highly disrupted by the pandemic and social distancing measures. Tourism, hospitality and retail accounted for 58,000 (50% of all) Covid-vulnerable jobs in Leicester and Leicestershire. The tourism sector saw a 64% fall in economic output in 2020 compared to 2019. We will continue to support the Leicester and Leicestershire Tourism Growth Plan and Tourism Advisory Board which sets out actions for the sector's recovery while strengthening and differentiating it in the long-term. This includes developing the potential of the region's tourism assets to welcome more visitors, increase tourist spending, enable profitable businesses, create jobs and deliver positive economic impact. As part of

our efforts to improve productivity, our ambition is to realise the full economic potential of the business tourism sector to help fill our hotels and meeting venues, address seasonality and better utilise our attractions for the corporate market. Our area, located in the centre of the country with great road, rail and air connectivity, is ideally suited for meetings, incentives, conferences and events (MICE). With over 140 unique, quality-assured and award-winning event venues available, we have considerable local potential. Our aim is to champion business tourism and ensure the sector remains a vitally important part of our local visitor economy. We need to work towards a step change in promoting the offer to increase the number of companies planning and booking meetings and conferences in the area.

There is also a recognised strategic need to improve the beneficial local tourism impact from East Midlands Airport, as visitors travelling by air spend an average of £728 per person in the UK, and if they use a regional airport, they are more likely to stay in that region. East Midlands Airport has ambitious growth targets to double passenger numbers to 10 million over the next 25 years, which has huge potential to maximise economic value from inbound tourism.

International businesses increasingly desire locations that are at the forefront of providing climate and biodiversity action, health and wellbeing and sustainable communities. This presents opportunities to further develop and market Leicester and Leicestershire as key locations for investment, businesses and talent.



PRODUCTIVE – Priority 2:

Attract and grow international businesses, investment and visitors

Objective	Short-term (2021-23)	Long-term (2021-30)
1. Secure inward investment	Refresh the approach to international branding, marketing and attracting inward investment – identifying key sectors and investment opportunities.	Implement new inward investment and place marketing approach. Incorporate changing location factors such as climate action, biodiversity, health and wellbeing.
2. Grow existing international businesses	Encourage and support international business expansion, including in the Freeport site.	Account management and support plans for major international businesses.
3. Increase trade and exporting	Develop and implement the Freeport strategy and SME support for exporting, identifying key sectors and opportunities.	Support businesses to export and take advantage of the Freeport.
4. Develop visitor economy offer	Support the delivery of the Tourism Growth Plan, Business Tourism Service and the activities of the Tourism Advisory Board.	Continue to build the visitor offer outlined in the Tourism Growth Plan by supporting the Business Tourism Service, ambitious capital projects for the visitor economy, improving productivity of SMEs and building a cohesive destination brand.

CASE STUDY:

ATTRACT AND GROW INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS

The IBM Leicester Client Innovation Centre

IBM is a globally integrated enterprise operating in over 170 countries. Today, the company has around 20,000 employees in the UK, bringing innovative solutions to a diverse client base to help solve some of their toughest business challenges

In 2015, IBM announced it was setting up a new base in Leicester. The Leicester Client Innovation Centre is IBM's first in the UK and enables the hi-tech giant to extend its technology services to UK-based clients. The Centre provides a range of IT services, including software development and support services to clients across all industry sectors. It employs graduates and experienced professionals who have technical backgrounds or who show an aptitude for IT and want to pursue a career in the industry.



CASE STUDY:

ATTRACT AND GROW INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS

The Access Group Global HQ

In November 2020, a new Global HQ for The Access Group was completed on the Loughborough University Science and Enterprise Park (LUSEP) – the largest single-occupier office deal in Leicestershire since the millennium began. The Access Group, a leading provider of business management software to mid-sized organisations, has more than 35,000 customers across commercial and not-for-profit sectors. Founded in 1991, Access employs more than 3,000 staff with a significant number based in the Midlands. Links to Loughborough University go back several years following the opening of the firm’s technical development and support centre at LUSEP in 2016.





CASE STUDY: ATTRACT AND GROW INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS

Visit Leicester and Leicestershire

Centrally located in the heart of England with easy access by road, rail and air, Leicester and Leicestershire combine great value for money with a range of multi-award-winning venues able to accommodate from five to 2,500 delegates. The area prides itself on offering conference facilities fit for a king in the city where the remains of King Richard III were discovered as well as an out of this world delegate experience at the National Space Centre (voted NVA Best Unique Venue of 2018). The area also boasts three world-class universities with multi-award-winning academic conference centres in Leicester and Loughborough (in the 2019 M&IT awards Imago Venues won Best Academic Venue). Leicester offers delegates a vibrant urban centre with over 2,000 years of history. Direct trains from London provide easy access to 23 business orientated hotels in just over an hour. With over 140 meeting and event spaces, accommodation providers and incentive tourism options, the region's asset mix offers rich pickings for event planners all within 45 minutes of two international airports.





PRODUCTIVE - Priority 3: Employment and skills for growth

Continue to build relationships and joint initiatives to meet the employment and skills needs of employers and the future economy

Knowledge intensive services are forming an increasing share of the local workforce – comprising 238,600 jobs in 2018 and increasing by 2% per year since 2000. Scientific and technical occupations support 34,100 jobs - around 7% of the total workforce and represent one-in-eight additional jobs generated across the area since the year 2000.

Local skills needs will also be driven by the shortfall in overseas workers, caused by Covid-19 and the fall in EU workers coming to, and remaining in the locality and the wider UK. Sectors that are particularly vulnerable include distribution, hotels and restaurants, textiles, food and drink, banking, finance and insurance, public administration, education, and health and social care, and

agriculture. There will be a need to encourage lifelong learning, and to improve skills attainment across the broad range of diverse sectors in the Leicester and Leicestershire economy. We also aspire to ensure that the diversity of Leicester and Leicestershire is more strongly reflected in the types of jobs and industries which our residents participate in, as well as broadening the diversity of entrepreneurship, and business leadership in terms of gender, ethnicity and age.

The transition to a sustainable economy that addresses climate change, resource exploitation and biodiversity loss is also inevitable. Leicester and Leicestershire's workforce will need the skills to enable this, such as trained installers and maintenance staff for zero carbon and energy efficient technologies.



PRODUCTIVE – Priority 3:

Employment and skills for growth

Objective	Short-term (2021-23)	Long-term (2021-30)
1. Match skills supply to the demands of employers and the economy	Secure a Wave 2 Institute of Technology (IoT) to provide higher technical qualifications and digital skills linked to the needs of the economy. Set out skills pathways for sustainable economy.	Continue to produce current and accurate labour market intelligence to inform the development of curricula in FE, HE and other provision. Develop skills training and development capacity for sustainable economy.
2. Increase graduate employment and retention	Continue to support graduate careers and retention initiatives of the three universities. Match individuals to opportunities via the Employment Hub.	Incorporate graduate skills into enterprise support, innovation, and growth initiatives.
3. Increase take-up of apprenticeships	Develop an Apprenticeship Action Plan to address the decline in apprenticeships due to Covid-19. Match individuals to opportunities via the Employment Hub.	Advice, support and peer networks to promote apprenticeship take-up.
4. Help employers improve their HR and skills development capabilities and practices	Progress the MIT REAP recommendations for advanced manufacturing technology skills development for SME staff.	FE and HE collaboration to provide training for the manufacturing workforce to enable adoption of new technologies.



CASE STUDY:
SKILLS FOR GROWTH

MIRA Technology Institute

MIRA Technology Institute (MTI) is a 24,500 sq. ft. bespoke global centre for skills on the grounds of the MIRA Technology Park. It is a unique partnership led by North Warwickshire and South Leicestershire College, HORIBA MIRA, Coventry University, Loughborough University and the University of Leicester – providing businesses and individuals with a bespoke curriculum aimed at satisfying an ever-increasing need for specialist skills in the UK automotive sector, focusing particularly on disruptive technologies, such as electrification and driverless cars.

MTI delivers specialist skills and qualifications to industry leaders, engineers, technicians and other professionals working, or aspiring to work, in the automotive sector, helping them to develop essential skills that are key to fuelling their career ambitions and their employer’s business success. With an ambition to constantly create learning opportunities in the cutting-edge technologies required to develop innovative and inspiring products, MTI’s aim is to improve transport in all of its forms for future generations.



CASE STUDY: SKILLS FOR GROWTH

De Montfort University

De Montfort University has developed a wide range of skills-based partnerships working with stakeholders in Leicester and Leicestershire, placing high importance on the value of research, knowledge exchange and graduate careers to support regional growth.

In 2020, students helped drive forward recruitment in the logistics industry by devising marketing campaigns in partnership with Leicestershire-based Pall-Ex. The freight network challenged students to help tackle the industry's nationwide skills shortage, with a live brief to develop a fully integrated marketing communications recruitment campaign to appeal to Generation Z. The partnership will continue into 2021 as Pall-Ex challenges students to develop ongoing marketing campaigns.

As the Covid-19 pandemic gathered pace in March 2020 and Leicester went into lockdown, DMU launched a completely new digital support scheme for SMEs, connecting students' tech skills with local businesses needing immediate help to go online. In total, 23 small businesses were matched virtually with students, who helped them create digital marketing plans, develop their websites and set up digital booking systems. Sarah Ludden-Roughley, Director of Inicio Private Tuition, commented: "Our volunteer student was professional, talented and understanding of how tough things must be for a business affected by the Covid-19 restrictions. We used her skills to promote our online offering, as this was a brand-new version of our business model and, as a result, we had no advertising ready for it."

Flexible forms of business support build on DMU's fully funded graduate internship programme, running since 2013. To date, DMU has committed a total of £1.6M to fully fund 200 graduate internships a year in the LLEP region. This has supplied local businesses with a flow of graduate skills to carry out work ranging from database development to new brand design. Many successful outcomes have resulted from this standing internship offer - for example, local companies including Eazi-Business and Insight Consultancy both went on to recruit their interns due to the value they brought to the company, and both now occupy senior roles.



CASE STUDY: SKILLS FOR GROWTH

Topps Tiles partners with Leicester College

Leicester College has been supporting Topps Tiles with skills training including apprenticeships and professional development of existing employees within the Topps Tiles HQ in Leicester. This has included the delivery of a range of business/management apprenticeships for employees in distinct business functions, including business support, customer service, information technology, and senior management.

Topps Tiles approached Leicester College to discuss the potential for the college to support them in overcoming the current skills gap concerns, through the development and delivery of a contextualised Wall and Floor Tiling Apprenticeship programme with the college delivering the training with industry input from Topps Tiles and BAL. As part of this, Topps Tiles will support with the apprenticeship training for local Leicestershire SME traders that recruit a wall and floor tiling apprentice to the individual business. Leicester College will lead on the dedicated recruitment and attraction support for the traders and apprenticeship training delivery.

From this close working partnership between the college and Topps Tiles, the college has been identified by Topps Tiles as its preferred provider for work-based skills training. This includes identifying potential new opportunities and skills gaps where the college is able to support Topps Tiles, its suppliers and members (SME traders).



PRODUCTIVE - Priority 4: World-class business locations

Provide the business sites and locations needed to become a world-class location for science, technology and professional services

Leicester and Leicestershire has transformed its provision of world-class business locations and premises since 2010, with sites such as Loughborough University Science and Enterprise Park, MIRA Technology Park, Charnwood Campus Life Sciences Opportunity Zone, SEGRO Logistics Park, Magna Park, Leicester International Gateway and SpacePark Leicester. Over the past 10 years, brand new Grade A offices and technology and manufacturing premises have been built to accommodate 5,000 high-technology jobs. Although major progress has been made, mostly with public assistance, there remains a significant appetite for employment land and premises across all sizes, use classes and tenures.

There is a need to continue to extend existing sites, provide new sites and renew existing ones, and to ensure that infrastructural capacity and capability supports sustainable growth and development, in line with The Strategic Growth Plan for Leicester & Leicestershire 2050: Our vision for growth. This includes office provision in Leicester city centre – which has excellent rail and road connectivity, a sizeable graduate population and significant improvements to the urban realm, culture and leisure. As mentioned, Leicester and Leicestershire has significantly relied on public intervention to deliver office and industrial property provision and this market failure is likely to persist, warranting a continued strong public sector role.



PRODUCTIVE – Priority 4:

World-class business locations

Objective	Short-term (2021-23)	Long-term (2021-30)
1. Provide more employment sites and premises for growth	Maintaining confidence and momentum of development of strategic sites, the Freeport, Leicester city centre and town centres.	Preparing for the next phases of extensions to existing sites, including move-on space for start-ups and SMEs, and larger-scale office, technology, manufacturing and logistics sites and premises.
2. Renew existing employment sites and premises where there is demand	Ensuring that strategic assets and buildings are retained for employment use where this is viable.	Reinventing and renewing town centres, the city centre and place-shaping, and understanding and delivering how employment sites and premises play a role in this.
3. Ensure infrastructure capacity and capability supports growth	Supporting the improvement of efficient and affordable public transport services and maintaining momentum in delivering strategically important road and rail projects that enable site development and access to jobs.	Supporting strategic infrastructure projects as identified in the Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Growth Plan.

CASE STUDY:

WORLD-CLASS BUSINESS LOCATIONS

Loughborough University Science and Enterprise Park

Situated just one mile from junction 23 of the M1, Loughborough University Science and Enterprise Park (LUSEP) is one of the most accessible science parks in the UK, and at 106 hectares is also one of the largest.

Surrounded by high-quality parkland, the first phase of LUSEP is already home to a thriving science and research community leading the way in energy and low carbon technologies, advanced engineering, and sports technology. It brings together over 75 high-tech companies from dynamic start-ups to R&D facilities of global brands, together with national sports governing bodies, a world-class research-intensive university and a vast pool of graduate talent.

The scale of potential development across this site means that there are considerable possibilities for the creation of new clusters for knowledge-based businesses and associated high value manufacturing. The site's proximity to Loughborough University provides unique opportunities for organisations to benefit from a campus partner package of R&D, specialist research facilities, graduate recruitment, and business, conference and leisure services.



CASE STUDY: WORLD-CLASS BUSINESS LOCATIONS

Charnwood Campus

Set in 70 acres of landscaped grounds, Charnwood Campus combines nature with modern facilities to create the ideal conditions for start-ups, SMEs and established enterprises within the bioscience, biotechnology and pharmaceutical sector. This site is part of the Loughborough and Leicester Science and Innovation Enterprise Zone.

The first and only Life Sciences Opportunity Zone (LSOZ) in the UK, the site builds on the East Midlands legacy of pharmaceutical research and development activities. The Campus comprises high quality, modern laboratories, production plants and office space. The buildings can be adapted, repurposed or diversified to suit business requirements to provide the opportunity to develop, design and build bespoke working environments. It can provide young and smaller businesses flexibility in terms of accommodation and leases; excellent grow-on space prospects using significant onsite brownfield development spaces; and opportunities for further development for companies looking to expand.

Companies locating themselves at the Campus also have access to a state-of-the-art events facility for meetings, showcases and conferencing activities, alongside contemporary casual workspaces and a café area. The investor benefits of locating in a Leicestershire Enterprise Zone include business rates discounts, unrivalled locality and access to a large workforce.

The Strategic Growth Plan for Leicester & Leicestershire 2050: Our vision for growth

The Strategic Growth Plan (2018) has been prepared by the ten partner organisations in Leicester and Leicestershire (Leicester City Council; Leicestershire County Council; the seven district authorities of Blaby, Charnwood, Harborough, Hinckley and Bosworth, Melton, North West Leicestershire, and Oadby and Wigston; and Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership) to provide a long-term vision that will address the challenges and opportunities facing the region. It is a non-statutory plan, but it sets out the agreed strategy for the period to 2050. The strategy will be delivered through Local Plans. This Economic Growth Strategy (2021-2030) adopts and aligns with the principles and priorities outlined in the Strategic Growth Plan (2018), as highlighted below.

Five building blocks

1. Working with Leicester and Leicestershire's existing and distinctive settlement pattern.
2. Understanding national policies, bringing benefits to the area but controlling excessive development pressures.
3. Understand the local economy and how it is supported by the Government's Midlands Engine Strategy (2017).
4. Understand the road and rail improvements highlighted in the Midlands Engine Strategy (2017).
5. Protect environmental, historic and other assets.

Four priorities:

1. Creating conditions for investment and growth – balancing the need for new housing and jobs with protection of our environment and built heritage.
2. Achieving a step change in the way that growth is delivered – focusing more development on strategic locations – which will allow better planned communities in terms of housing, employment, transport and services.
3. Securing essential infrastructure that is needed to make this happen – taking advantage of proposals to improve national and regional networks. This includes the provision of local public services as well as transport.
4. Maintaining the essential qualities of Leicester and Leicestershire and delivering high quality modern developments such as garden towns, villages and suburbs

A Spatial strategy that:

- Acknowledges the scale of growth already in the pipeline as the result of local plans and planning permissions.
- Builds upon known road and rail infrastructure opportunities or commitments.
- Acknowledges that Leicester plays a role as the 'central city' supporting market towns and rural areas, providing more jobs, leisure, arts, culture and entertainment facilities with the strategic regeneration of the Waterside.
- Provides sites for housing and new jobs that make full use of existing services and infrastructure within Leicester City, increase capacity on the radial roads and improve public transport, cycling and walking.

- Prioritises the 'Priority Growth Corridor' which would form an orbital transport solution to the south and east of Leicester that is critical to many elements of this strategy. This has the potential to accommodate 38,000 new homes and additional new jobs.
- Supports Leicestershire International Gateway. Prioritises the A5 Improvement Corridor to reduce congestion and deliver planned housing growth and industrial sites.
- Designates Melton Mowbray as a key centre for regeneration and growth.
- Designates the Managed Growth Areas of: Coalville, Hinckley, Loughborough, Lutterworth, and Market Harborough – applying the principles of sustainable growth and town centre regeneration.
- Limits growth in villages and rural areas to provide for local needs.

More details at: <https://www.llestrategicgrowthplan.org.uk/>

INNOVATIVE

Global innovation leadership and increasing innovation activities across the whole business base



Priorities

1. Global innovation leadership

Supporting our outstanding R&D strengths and innovation achievements.

All three universities in Leicester and Leicestershire are successful in commercialising their cutting-edge research and developing spin-out businesses. The corporate R&D facilities of 3M, IBM and PepsiCo are located here. We will further build on this by growing and expanding existing innovation and R&D strengths and developing new ones. We will increase investment and activity in R&D and innovation, and draw on existing innovation and R&D capabilities from our leading corporations.

2. Increase and broaden innovation activity amongst businesses

Increase innovation activity amongst the wider SME and business base.

Although the rate of innovation is low amongst the business base, there is significant interest in innovation and knowledge exchange amongst SMEs. The MIT Regional Entrepreneurship Accelerator Programme has set out a tailored strategy to supercharge innovation and entrepreneurship in the region. Its main recommendations are to boost collaborative networks, improve innovation adoption and the skills needed for this, and to enhance the rate of innovation amongst 'bootstrap' businesses, which form the majority of SMEs in Leicester and Leicestershire.

3. Successfully pioneer and apply emerging and new technologies

Helping businesses to successfully pioneer and apply emerging and new technologies to become more competitive and resilient.

Many businesses that had or applied digital systems and online platforms to their businesses during the Covid-19 pandemic, survived and were successful. Furthermore, all three universities in the region have specialisms in ICT, artificial intelligence, high performance computing, cyber security and digital technology – and are actively helping local businesses. Industry 4.0 will provide our advanced manufacturers with a competitive edge in future years. Business performance and success depends on technology and innovation adoption and transformation.

4. Innovation for sustainability

Innovation will need to be harnessed to help businesses survive and thrive as the economy transitions to sustainability while market regulations and customer expectations change.

Certain sectors, such as Food & drink have already been affected – such as by the transition to more plant-based diets. The supply chain and sustainability of textiles has already been questioned, and the switch away from fossil fuels will be a major challenge for the logistics sector.



INNOVATIVE - Priority 1: Global innovation leadership

Support our outstanding R&D strengths and innovation achievements

All three universities in Leicester and Leicestershire are leaders in life sciences and health research and development. Loughborough University is a world leader in sports science and technologies. Leicester is a world-leading hub for space and space-enabled industry driven by the University of Leicester. Research excellence in Leicestershire's higher education institutions includes 43 industry centres of excellence: 16 at Loughborough University; 16 at the University of Leicester; and 11 at De Montfort University. Leicester and Leicestershire's universities are

already successful in commercialising their cutting-edge research and developing spin-out businesses. Examples include the University of Leicester's MIP Diagnostics Ltd, Loughborough University's Sports Dynamics Ltd and De Montfort University's Game Changer Biotech. Leicestershire's university spinouts generated £12.75m of turnover in 2017/18. Leicestershire is home to the largest automotive testing facility in the UK at MIRA Technology Park, which leads on the development of autonomous vehicles and commands a vast advanced manufacturing supply chain to the UK and the world. Corporate R&D facilities include the 3M Group, AI Institute, PepsiCo and IBM.



INNOVATIVE – Priority 1:

Global innovation leadership

Objective	Short-term (2021-23)	Long-term (2021-30)
1. Grow and expand existing innovation and R&D strengths	Establish and resource the LLEP Innovation Board to drive forward accelerated innovation priorities.	Support expansion and growth of existing R&D strengths.
2. Develop new innovation and R&D strengths	Ensure the R&D sector has sufficient skills, capabilities and support to successfully retain and attract new R&D programmes.	Facilitate commercialisation and knowledge exchange with new R&D strengths.
3. Increase investment and activity in R&D and innovation	Support current R&D funding bids, innovation and knowledge transfer initiatives. Increase public and private investment in R&D and innovation.	Increase business R&D expenditure and number of businesses that are innovation active. Increase public and private investment in R&D and innovation.
4. Draw on existing innovation and R&D capabilities including corporates	Retain and expand existing corporate and business R&D functions and attract new ones.	Draw on existing corporate R&D capabilities into new sources of open innovation and local value creation.



CASE STUDY: GLOBAL INNOVATION LEADERSHIP

SpacePark Leicester

By 2030, the global space market is expected to increase by 80% to £400 billion. Since 2000, the UK space market has also trebled in size, with an ambition to grow from 6.5% of the global space economy to 10% by 2030. This is equivalent to £40 billion and will provide an additional 100,000 jobs. Based near the National Space Centre, SpacePark Leicester is home to the Leicester Institute for Space and Earth Observation, one of the University of Leicester's flagship research institutes, along with first-class teaching and laboratory facilities. SpacePark Leicester serves as a significant global hub for businesses, researchers, academia and innovation. It enables collaboration between the University of Leicester and the private sector, creating high-quality, knowledge-based jobs, building the skills base and contributing to economic growth and the resilience of the economy. The first phase of the project has delivered a 4,800m² facility for Earth observation, business hosting and teaching. Additional phases will include an industry-academic collaborative environment on next-generation space engineering and AI data labs, and a Low-Cost Access to Space Manufacturing Facility for satellite constellations.



INNOVATIVE - Priority 2:

Increase and broaden innovation activity amongst businesses

Increase innovation activity amongst the wider SME and business base

25.6% of Leicester and Leicestershire firms that innovate are involved in active collaborations, ranking 36th out of 38 LEPs, which suggests there is progress to be made in this area. The latest economic data suggests that R&D expenditure is equivalent to 1.5% of GVA for Leicestershire, Rutland and Northamptonshire, which continues to fall behind the UK average of 1.7% and the government target of 3% in the longer-term.

43% of establishments that have invested in digital technologies expect they will need new skills as a result. Up to 11% expect to need to recruit new staff (this has risen to 20% during Covid restrictions), while 37% expect to need to develop

the skills of their existing workforce (31% during Covid restrictions). There is considerable interest in knowledge exchange - there were 28,000 attendees at higher education events in 2017/18, while there have been 10,000 attendees at the annual Leicester Business Festival and Innovation Week.

The MIT Regional Entrepreneurship Acceleration Program (REAP) is a powerful global initiative that engages with communities to supercharge innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystems and transform economies. The Leicester and Leicestershire Ideas Taskforce has taken this forward, with a detailed analysis of the opportunities and challenges facing the region. Its "Bootstraps and Beacons" strategy combines an approach that seeks to upscale productivity and enhance existing innovation infrastructure.





INNOVATIVE – Priority 2:

Increase and broaden business innovation activity

Objective	Short-term (2021-23)	Long-term (2021-30)
1. Collaborative networks	Drive up opportunities for collaboration, knowledge exchange, pooling of resources, and applied problem solving. Provide mentoring and peer network support.	Develop new venues for knowledge exchange to encourage cross-fertilisation of skills from high R&D to low R&D businesses and sectors.
2. Innovation adoption	Improve the culture of innovation, and awareness of the business performance benefits.	Sector-focused accelerator programmes to improve connections and technology transfer between technology leaders and SMEs.
3. Innovation for bootstrap businesses	Develop support to accelerate incremental innovation undertaken in the majority of SMEs.	Develop skills and capabilities for innovation; provide risk/investment finance for innovation.

EMBARK





CASE STUDY:

INCREASING AND BROADENING BUSINESS INNOVATION ACTIVITY

Cyber Security at De Montfort University

De Montfort University (DMU) has been recognised for conducting world-leading cyber security research, having been named the East Midlands' first 'Academic Centre of Excellence in Cyber Security Research' (ACE-CSR). The ACE-CSR scheme is one of a number of initiatives in the Government's National Cyber Security Strategy: 'Protecting and Promoting the UK in a Digital World', which outlines how it is working with academia and industry to make the UK more resilient to cyber-attacks.

The National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) and the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) have recognised DMU as an ACE-CSR, thanks to its pioneering research in incident response and cyber threat intelligence, industrial control systems and sociotechnical security working closely with partners including Airbus, Rolls-Royce, Deloitte and BT.



INNOVATIVE - Priority 3:

Successfully pioneer and apply emerging and new technologies

Businesses can successfully pioneer and apply emerging and new technologies to become more competitive and resilient

Two types of businesses emerged during the pandemic – those with digital systems which meant their business and workforce were already online and could be rapidly digitally enabled – and those with a minimal digital presence and capabilities. There are considerable differences in the performance of these two types of businesses.

In 2020, 25% of Leicester and Leicestershire businesses provided the facility for customers to order and pay for goods or services on their websites. Up to 20% of businesses with an internet presence increased the facility for customers to do this in 2020. Over the past two years, 45% of Leicester and Leicestershire businesses have invested in digital technologies with an increase in 2020.

All three universities in Leicester and Leicestershire have successful research specialisms in ICT, AI, high performance computing and digital technology,

and lend their support to small businesses. The University of Leicester has a high-performance computing research lab and offers support from the Leicester Innovation Hub and Space Park Leicester to businesses and spin-outs. Its Schools of Mathematical and Computing Sciences conduct research, and offer courses in knowledge discovery, AI/machine learning, advanced software modelling and simulation such as digital twins, visualisation, face recognition, algorithms complexity and engineering, interaction design, evolution, validation and verification. De Montfort University's Innovation Centre lies at the heart of Leicester's digital tech scene. The Centre runs courses in computer science, artificial intelligence, software engineering, cyber security and digital forensics. Loughborough University's Department of Computer Science specialises in key research areas of Vision, AI, Autonomous and Human Centred Systems; Networks and Systems (NetSys); and Theoretical Computer Science (TCS). Academics work in collaboration with various organisations including BAE Systems, Toyota, Apical, Jennic, Arqiva, Sure, Sensinode and Rolls-Royce.





INNOVATIVE – Priority 3:

Successfully pioneer and apply emerging and new technologies

Objective	Short-term (2021-23)	Long-term (2021-30)
1. Help SMEs with digital transformation	Provide support to enable digital transformation in SMEs across a range of sectors.	Events, support materials and peer networks to demonstrate leading practice in digital business.
2. Help SMEs adopt and use emerging technologies	Development of business and university networks to support and advise on technology adoption.	Skills support for workforce to enable adoption of new technologies.
3. Lead the implementation of Industry 4.0	Audit current Industry 4.0 implementation and develop a peer network.	Provide support to manufacturing and engineering firms to implement Industry 4.0.

EMBARK





CASE STUDY:

SUCCESSFULLY POINEER AND APPLY EMERGING AND NEW TECHNOLOGIES

MIRA Technology Park

MIRA Technology Park is a global provider of pioneering engineering, research and test services to the automotive, defence, aerospace and rail sectors. It is a world-class centre of excellence in transport technology set in an outstanding 842-acre campus environment. Located at the geographical centre of the UK's automotive sector, the 2m sq. ft. Technology Park provides bespoke property solutions for customers by designing and delivering buildings to meet their R&D needs, alongside an existing range of flexible office, laboratory and workshop space.

HORIBA MIRA works in close collaboration with vehicle manufacturers and suppliers around the world, providing comprehensive support ranging from individual product tests to turnkey engineering design, development and build programmes. MIRA Technology Park offers global transport technology businesses a world-class location to establish their European R&D operations with immediate access to essential product development resources – test facilities, engineering knowhow and workshop/office space; over £300 million of test facilities; 100km of specialised proving ground and 480 technical staff; and clustering with over 30 Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs) and Tier 1 suppliers. The MIRA Technology Institute also delivers specialist skills for the global automotive industry.



INNOVATIVE - Priority 4: Innovate for sustainability

Innovation plays a major role in responding to the climate crisis and transitioning to a sustainable economy.

Businesses will need to innovate if they are to thrive in a future economy where customers prefer sustainable businesses and products. New regulations will make current standard technologies and business practices unviable, and climate change introduces new risks and resource scarcity. For example, the logistics and distribution industry is facing significant challenges from climate change, legislation and changing consumer preferences. Ending the sale of new petrol, diesel cars and vans from 2030, with HGVs following suit from 2040 as part of the UK Government's Climate Change commitments, presents significant challenges. In addition to the need for vehicles that use alternative, sustainable fuels, the energy and charging infrastructure will need to be ready to support the switch to electric vehicles. As electric vehicles comprised only one per cent of all vans sold in the UK in 2019, this is an ambitious timescale for transition.

Traditional sectors such as fashion and textiles, and construction also face distinct challenges related to climate change and sustainability. The fashion industry consumes large amounts of energy and has a well-documented record on pollution and waste. As consumers worldwide buy more clothes, the growing market for cheap items and new styles is taking a toll on the environment. Some industry players are taking steps, for example by developing new fabrics, cutting destruction of unsold goods, and ensuring products can be repaired or recycled. Some brands have committed to radical transparency in the supply chain, while several e-commerce platforms have enabled searches for sustainable brands. The coming years will be the toughest the engineering and construction industry has faced in a generation. In addition to its wider challenges of the shift to a net zero agenda, the sector often characterised as conservative and staid, now has an opportunity to adapt and thrive. It can do so by adopting new operational models, overhauling building practices, and reimagining the public and private places we all inhabit.



INNOVATIVE – Priority 3:

Innovate for sustainability

Objective	Short-term (2021-23)	Long-term (2021-30)
1. Sustainable innovation leadership	Develop an understanding of local innovation pioneers and adopters for sustainable economy and business.	Develop sustainable innovation leader's platform and advisory network.
2. Explore opportunities from zero carbon and sustainable new technologies	R&D on initiatives to create early adopters and leaders amongst organisations and businesses in the region.	A sustainable innovation fund that forges new collaborations, disruptive and complementary innovations between existing R&D and technology strengths, and the region's businesses.
3. Industry and community transitions	Explore and assess new funding mechanisms and incentives to stimulate R&D and innovation in helping the region's industries and communities to transition to a zero carbon, sustainable economy.	Deliver new funding mechanisms and incentives to stimulate R&D and innovation in helping the region's industries and communities to transition to a zero carbon, sustainable economy.

CASE STUDY:

INNOVATE FOR SUSTAINABILITY

Cenex: the UK's first Centre of Excellence for Low Carbon and Fuel Cell technologies

Based in Loughborough, Cenex was established as the UK's first Centre of Excellence for Low Carbon and Fuel Cell technologies in 2005.

Cenex focuses on low emission transport and associated energy infrastructure and operates as an independent, not-for-profit research technology organisation (RTO) and consultancy, specialising in project delivery, innovation support and market development.

Recently, Cenex launched the first of a series of documents explaining the latest low emission road transport technologies alongside a four-week online course. The three "Insight" documents cover battery electric and hydrogen fuel cell vehicles and their required infrastructure, including how each works, the suitable applications for each technology, and the benefits and limitations.

INCLUSIVE

Create a resilient, adaptive workforce where all residents have access to skills and career progression and are paid the living wage



Priorities

1. Informed choices and routes to job and skills progression

Deliver services to prevent increases in youth unemployment, provide employer-led skills development, progression pathways and increase apprenticeships. Significant progress has been made in the provision of youth, employment and careers services, with the Enterprise Adviser Network, Careers Hub and Youth Employment Hub. In addition, projects like the Leicester Employment Hub, Construction Skills Hub and area ESF programmes support both young people and adults, along with the DWP and National Careers Service offers. We can make further progress on ensuring successful youth transitions from school into work, providing routes and pathways to job and skills progression, building on the improvements made to careers guidance so far. An important aim is to improve the quality, number and take-up of apprenticeships – particularly after the decline in participation over recent years, as well as taking advantage of new government initiatives such as the Skills Accelerator.

2. Improve skills and qualifications attainment and employability of the workforce

Reduce the flow of low skilled, poorly qualified individuals into adulthood, and address low qualifications and skills attainment in adults. We will seek to help school pupils catch up with learning missed during the pandemic and continue to improve education attainment standards. We will continue to develop strategies and joint working between employers, FE, HE and training providers for in-work training and skills. Support for adult education and skills is also an objective, particularly for those made redundant or changing careers. Employability skills, including core and soft skills will also be emphasised, while help will be extended to overcome barriers to participation in education, training and work, since this can help to reduce long-term unemployment and youth disengagement.





3. Improve access to work, labour market inclusion and wellbeing at work

Improve access to work, labour market inclusion and wellbeing at work for all communities and residents. Covid-19 has compounded and deepened the pockets of deprivation in Leicester and Leicestershire. Prior to the pandemic, around 24% of neighbourhoods Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOA) in Leicester were among the 10% most deprived nationally. While many rural areas appear to lack the deprivation of urban areas, poorer access to public services due to greater distances and irregular public transport facilities can place barriers to services in more remote areas. More expensive house prices in sought after rural areas also puts housing out of reach for many. Low incomes continue to be a concern in Leicester and Leicestershire. This priority aims to address the foundations of labour market exclusion, working conditions, and health. It seeks to help individuals to participate in education, training and the labour market, and to access and maintain employment. Wellbeing at work is also of increasing importance for those most at risk of health inequalities, economic exclusion and poverty.

4. Improve job quality, in-work progression and pay

Improve the quality of jobs, in-work progression and pay, and access to opportunity. The quality and nature of jobs in the local economy, the scope for in-work progression and pay, and ensuring inclusive and fair access to labour market opportunities are also important aspects of the levelling-up agenda. We need to ensure good access to education and skills attainment, quality jobs, pay and prosperity, particularly amongst deprived or excluded individuals, households and communities. We also need to examine how communities and residents can access new areas of jobs growth – such as in the green economy.





INCLUSIVE - Priority 1:

Informed choices and routes to job and skills progression

Deliver services to prevent increases in youth unemployment, provide employer-led skills development, progression pathways and increase apprenticeships

While Leicester and Leicestershire has a younger workforce compared to the national average, significant progress has been made in the provision of youth and careers services. These include the Enterprise Advisor Network, Career Hub, Employment Hub, Construction Skills Hub and Youth Employment Hub, as well as the established capacity and expertise in the non-profit and

voluntary sectors. These needs will continue along with particular short-term pressures, and we aim to ensure that support is in place for the young people at higher risk of unemployment and income loss during the pandemic. In the longer-term, opportunities will come from government policy changes with the introduction of T-Levels, the Adult Skills White Paper and Local Skills Improvement Plans. Addressing the significant fall (reflected nationally) in apprenticeship starts and participation is also a key objective.





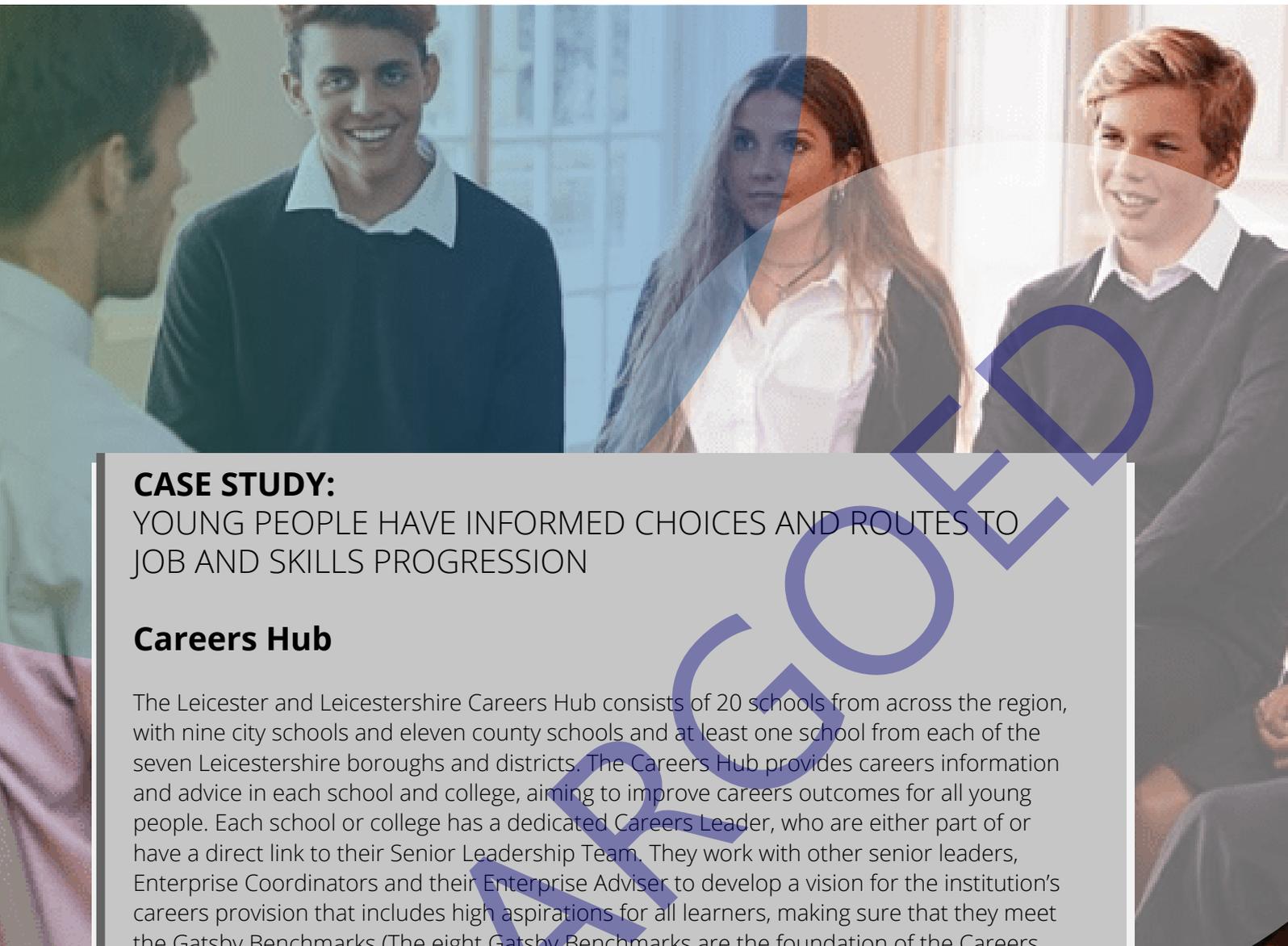
INCLUSIVE – Priority 1:

Informed choices and routes to job and skills progression

Objective	Short-term (2021-23)	Long-term (2021-30)
1. Successful youth transitions from school into work	Prevent young people becoming 'not in education, employment and training' (NEET), with support services and national programme delivery.	Sector representatives, FE and HE institutions work jointly to deliver an integrated FE and HE employer-led skills and guidance system.
2. Provide routes and pathways to job and skills progression	Identify pathways into employment and youth engagement in emerging, highly productive and buoyant sectors. Take advantage of government initiatives such as the Skills Accelerator.	Integrated FE, HE, training provider and employer-led skills infrastructure for the low carbon, health, life sciences and logistics sectors.
3. Maintain and improve careers guidance	Continuity in the provision of Careers Hub and Youth Employment Hub services.	Continue to enhance careers and guidance services, including the provision of labour market intelligence.
4. Improve quality, number and take-up of apprenticeships	Apprenticeship Strategy with businesses and delivery partners.	Increase apprenticeship numbers and take-up, supporting SMEs with this.

EMBARGOED





CASE STUDY:

YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE INFORMED CHOICES AND ROUTES TO JOB AND SKILLS PROGRESSION

Careers Hub

The Leicester and Leicestershire Careers Hub consists of 20 schools from across the region, with nine city schools and eleven county schools and at least one school from each of the seven Leicestershire boroughs and districts. The Careers Hub provides careers information and advice in each school and college, aiming to improve careers outcomes for all young people. Each school or college has a dedicated Careers Leader, who are either part of or have a direct link to their Senior Leadership Team. They work with other senior leaders, Enterprise Coordinators and their Enterprise Adviser to develop a vision for the institution's careers provision that includes high aspirations for all learners, making sure that they meet the Gatsby Benchmarks (The eight Gatsby Benchmarks are the foundation of the Careers Strategy, a statutory requirement for secondary schools and colleges).

CASE STUDY:

YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE INFORMED CHOICES AND ROUTES TO JOB AND SKILLS PROGRESSION

Leicester College Construction Skills Certification

Leicester College has launched a new four-week Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) Construction Card Course Level 1 that will enable students to qualify for a CSCS Green Card, required by contractors and major house builders to work onsite. By completing this course, students (both with or without previous experience in the construction sector) will also have the opportunity to qualify for a Traffic Marshal (Banksman) certificate of competence. Contractors and major house builders require their workers to hold a valid CSCS card and a Banksman license award would further increase employment opportunities. This course is delivered in partnership with Lendlease Construction, RMF (Construction Training Academy Ltd) and Jobcentre Plus. All students who successfully complete the course will receive a guaranteed interview with RMF.



INCLUSIVE - Priority 2:

Improve skills and qualifications attainment and employability of the workforce

Reduce the flow of low skilled, poorly qualified individuals into adulthood, and address low qualifications and skills attainment in adults

While Leicester and Leicestershire has many well-qualified residents, its overall educational attainment lags behind the rest of the UK, and this is reflected in lower pay. In 2018, workplace earnings per week were over £60 below the English average, while resident earnings were over £50 lower.

By 2030, it is forecast that 42% of jobs within Leicester and Leicestershire will require Level 4+ qualifications. Demand for Level 2 and Level 3 jobs are also both forecast to grow by around 5%, while

other roles or jobs which require no qualifications are expected to contract as a share of the LLEP total. A key challenge therefore, is to improve educational attainment and increase the number of higher-level qualifications and skills in order to meet the growing number of higher skilled jobs in the area.

Although the number of reported skills gaps in Leicester and Leicestershire has been falling in recent years, in 2017, 60 per cent of businesses still reported skill gaps within their existing workforce. The three most frequently identified skills needs by employers were communications, management and supervisory, and technical, practical or job specific skills. Core and soft skills were also emphasised.



INCLUSIVE – Priority 2:

Improve skills and qualifications attainment and employability of the workforce

Objective	Short-term (2021-23)	Long-term (2021-30)
Formal education and training	Help school pupils catch up with learning missed during the pandemic. Explore systemic causes of educational underperformance, including early years and aspirations.	Continue to improve educational attainment standards and reduce the share of school leavers with no qualifications. Formulate long term strategies and solutions from early years to the end of school education.
In-work and work-related training and skills	Continue to develop strategies and joint working between employers, FE, HE and training providers.	Raise the levels of technical and work-related skills across the workforce.
Adult education and skills	Support for adult education and skills, particularly those made redundant or changing careers.	Reduce the number of residents with no qualifications.
Employability, core and soft skills	Provide employability counselling and development, and core and soft skills training as part of adult and youth unemployment and NEET initiatives, and as part of the redundancy response.	Integrate employability, core and soft skills into apprenticeships and other training programmes.

CASE STUDY:

IMPROVE SKILLS AND QUALIFICATIONS ATTAINMENT

Loughborough College Careers and Enterprise Hub

Loughborough College, in partnership with Loughborough University and Charnwood Borough Council, led a project to open a new Careers and Enterprise Hub in Loughborough town centre in 2021 – as part of the Loughborough Town Deal. The project aims to provide local people with access to learning, training and support services in the post-Covid economy and help fill the skills gap identified in the LLEP Economic Growth Strategy, including communication skills, problem-solving and resilience which have been cited as the main issues for local people. At a local level, the hub will provide a physical portal for those most economically at risk into skills and enterprise. The Hub will also function as a delivery location for the government's Kickstart Scheme, which will enable employers to offer six-month job placements for 16-24-year-olds at risk of long-term unemployment. Residents with business ideas will also be able to access specialist expertise and facilities at Loughborough University by first accessing services at the Hub.



INCLUSIVE - Priority 3:

Improve access to work, labour market inclusion and wellbeing at work

Increase access to education, training and work opportunities for all communities and residents

Within Leicester and Leicestershire, the impact of Covid-19 on the labour market has largely been a 'Leicester story' where four in 10 of those out of work in the county reside in the city, which has accounted for half of all new unemployment claims in the region. These increases have largely been within deprived parts of the city already afflicted with high levels of joblessness and deprivation. Although the rate of redundancies is lower in Leicester and Leicestershire than nationally, the risks to workers remain.

Covid-19 has compounded and deepened the pockets of deprivation in Leicester and Leicestershire. Prior to the pandemic, around 24% of neighbourhoods in Leicester were among the 10% most deprived nationally. While many rural areas appear to lack the deprivation of urban areas, poorer access to public services due to greater distances and irregular public transport facilities can place barriers to services in more remote areas. More expensive house prices in sought after rural areas also puts housing out of reach for many. Low pay continues to be a concern in Leicester and Leicestershire.

The Covid-19 pandemic has laid bare the digital divide in society, with some residents and communities unable to afford devices, lacking the skills to use them, or in the case of some rural areas, cannot access high speed broadband or 4G or 5G mobile phone services. Employer surveys and consultations have identified that digital skills are expected to become more important, particularly social media, basic digital literacy and data manipulation, and presentation skills.

23% of the adult (16+) population of Leicester and Leicestershire are from Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic groups compared to 12.7% of the UK adult population. The region needs to better use the talents and diversity of its communities and workforce – and the make-up of entrepreneurs, business leaders and skilled workers needs to better reflect the ethnic and gender balance of the resident population.

Overall, Leicester and Leicestershire would benefit from a new, independent commission to examine inequalities and deprivation in the region and to develop a series of independent, objective insights and recommendations.



INCLUSIVE – Priority 3:

Improve access to work, labour market inclusion and wellbeing at work

Objective	Short-term (2021-23)	Long-term (2021-30)
1. Inequalities and deprivation commission	Plan and canvass the appetite for an independent commission on inequalities and deprivation for Leicester and Leicestershire.	Develop insights and recommendations from an independent commission on inequalities and deprivation, with partners responding with an action plan.
2. Redundancy response	Set up the Covid-19 Redundancy and Recruitment Service, involving LLEP, Futures, Leicester Employment Hub, the non-profit and voluntary sector and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).	Operate the Redundancy and Recruitment Service and deliver effective careers, employment and retraining advice to redundant workers through DWP, NCS and other partners.
3. Reduce digital poverty	Deliver Leicester and Leicestershire Digital Skills Partnership to address digital skills deficiencies in the workplace and wider society.	Identify and deliver further initiatives to reduce digital poverty.
4. Wellbeing at work	Embed wellbeing at work initiatives for those most at risk of health inequalities, economic exclusion and poverty.	Develop broader strategic partnership and initiative for wellbeing at work for all employers and employees.

CASE STUDY:

INCREASE ACCESS TO EDUCATION, TRAINING AND WORK OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL COMMUNITIES AND RESIDENTS

Barratt Developments and SMB Group's Construction Partnership and Social Mobility Pledge
The SMB Group, was created from a successful merger between Stephenson College and Brooksby Melton College. The organisation offers a wide range of vocational courses and has strong links with employers.

One of their thriving partnerships is their work with Barratt Developments, a huge Bardon-based construction company. SMB engaged with Barratt Developments to support them with challenges related to building a pipeline of joinery and bricklaying skills, starting with a pilot programme two years ago.

In addition, Barratt Developments has created a new action plan to address social mobility as a barrier to career opportunities in the housebuilding sector. Barratt Developments approached SMB for a venue to launch this new Social Mobility Pledge. The Social Mobility Pledge was launched by former Secretary of State for Education Rt Hon Justine Greening – co-founder of the initiative. The SMB Group offers a range of different apprenticeships and full-time study programmes, which provide different routes into the construction industry and therefore working towards meeting the needs of local skills gaps.



CASE STUDY:

INCREASE ACCESS TO EDUCATION, TRAINING AND WORK OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL COMMUNITIES AND RESIDENTS

Reaching People: The University of Leicester and Leicester College are supporting leaders and managers in the voluntary sector

The focus of the training support identified with Reaching People was specifically targeted at developing team leaders and managers within the voluntary sector and supporting their professional development. This was enabled by the University of Leicester which utilised a significant amount of its apprenticeship levy through the levy transfer facility. This in turn enabled local Leicestershire SME charities which were identified, to benefit, with 100% of the apprenticeship training cost provided by the University for their selected apprentices.

Leicester College worked with local voluntary sector employers promoting the potential support to Reaching People and its delivery partners.

To date three Leicestershire based, voluntary sector employers have taken up and benefitted from the apprenticeship training support. Going forward, the University has committed to using its levy to fund more opportunities for local Leicestershire SME voluntary and charitable organisations. We expect the numbers of key local support service organisations that can benefit from the apprenticeship training opportunities will continue to grow.



INCLUSIVE - Priority 4:

Improve job quality, in-work progression and pay

Improve the quality of jobs, in-work progression and pay, and access to opportunities

In 2019/20, 24.2% of jobs were low-paid in Leicester and Leicestershire compared to the UK average of 20.1%. Leicester has a particularly acute low-pay problem, with almost three in 10 jobs in the city paying below the Living Wage, whilst the Centre for Cities ranks Leicester as having the 9th lowest median pay out of 63 cities. Up to 81,800 households were in relative poverty in Leicester and Leicestershire pre-Covid; half of these were in Leicester, with the city's 33% relative poverty rate the 7th highest out of 181 urban authorities nationally.

Leicester and Leicestershire's poorest communities have been more acutely impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic and evidence shows that the lowest income neighbourhoods have experienced the biggest increase in unemployment. Conversely, more affluent areas, particularly within suburban and rural or market towns have generally experienced low levels of unemployment and furloughs, high rates of homeworking, higher levels of retail and leisure footfall and consumer spending, and lower levels of virus transmission and deaths. We need to ensure that all communities have good access to quality education and jobs across all sectors, particularly in areas of growth such as the green economy.



INCLUSIVE – Priority 4:

Improve job quality, in-work progression and pay

Objective	Short-term (2021-23)	Long-term (2021-30)
1. Real living wage	Develop a strategy and drive collaboration across partners to support the real Living Wage for employers and employees.	Provide advice and support to employers to implement the real Living Wage.
2. Access to green jobs	Examine role of green jobs as a means of providing quality jobs and in-work progression as part of work to analyse skills pathways for green jobs.	Reskilling programme for transition to green jobs, targeted at those most at risk of long-term unemployment.
3. Inclusive and fair labour market	Embed open and inclusive recruitment and HR practices within the region's employers, using enterprise support services and initiatives as necessary.	Ambition for jobs and skills structure to reflect the diversity of local residents and communities.

SUSTAINABLE

A leader in zero carbon solutions,
with sustainability principles built into
everything we do



Priorities

1. Sustainable places, city and town centres

Create adaptable and resilient town and city centres, rural areas and urban communities, delivering sustainable sites for housing and jobs in strategic locations that can be serviced by sustainable transport, and protect the environment and built heritage. City and town centres have been impacted significantly by the pandemic, with local retail (excluding food) and leisure footfall up to 80% lower during the past year, whilst the shift to online shopping has accelerated. The demand for new homes continues to increase. Going forward, development and redevelopment must be delivered sustainably, – as prioritised in The Strategic Growth Plan for Leicester & Leicestershire 2050: Our vision for growth. Homes must be affordable and green, and sites for new employment space and premises must be zero carbon developments.

2. Sustainable transport and connectivity

Build and promote sustainable modes of transport, decarbonise road transport and improve digital connectivity whilst also supporting healthier growth. Leicester and Leicestershire will support the Strategic Growth Plan and its aim to deliver the new dwellings required in a sustainable manner to house its expanding population. This will require rail improvements, and an increased modal shift from private to public and sustainable transport. Road improvements to the A46 and A5 are vital to housing and employment growth, but at the same time decarbonising road transport and improving internet connectivity, particularly for rural areas, are also required to meet sustainable development goals.





3. Sustainable energy

Increase renewable energy generation and implement smart energy networks. Renewable energy could generate 6,700 gigawatt hours per year – enough to meet total electricity demand in the region today, and in 2050. To achieve this, 125 megawatts of renewable energy generation facilities need to be installed every year up to 2050. Another barrier to energy efficiency is that power networks are stressed, and more efficient energy infrastructure and networks need to be installed, including ‘smart streets’ networks.

4. Sustainable business

Support business decarbonisation and sustainable business practices. To achieve carbon saving targets and increase the environmental sustainability of the local economy – businesses will need to decarbonise, reduce resource use and waste, and adapt to new business models and conditions. This will involve support for resource and energy efficiency measures amongst businesses, improved resource and waste management, and help for businesses to adapt to greener supply chains and the circular economy model. Businesses will require advice and support for the zero carbon transition, including zero carbon skills pathways and provision.





SUSTAINABLE - Priority 1:

Sustainable places, city and town centres

Create adaptable and resilient town and city centres, deliver sustainable sites for housing and jobs in strategic locations that can be serviced by sustainable transport, and protect the environment and built heritage

This strategy recognises the significant impact of the pandemic on leisure footfall in city and town centres and proposes an approach that is flexible and adaptable to the different dynamics and opportunities facing the city and each town centre. For example, the residential housing market in Leicester city centre is different from the market towns, as is the commercial property market.

Leicester and Leicestershire's population is growing and more homes will need to be built to provide affordable places for everyone to live. Yet at the same time, its natural environment and built heritage also need to be protected to ensure that they are preserved for future generations. An analysis from the 2018 Energy Infrastructure Strategy suggests that insulation improvements to the domestic housing stock alone would save close to 500kt of CO₂ annually, bringing fuel bill savings of £100 million for domestic consumers and £50 million for businesses each year.

By prioritising sustainable sites and developments, this will help to deliver and progress *The Strategic Growth Plan for Leicester & Leicestershire 2050: Our vision for growth* priorities:

1) Creating conditions for investment and growth – balancing the need for new housing and jobs with protection of our environment and built heritage; and

2) Achieving a step change in the way that growth is delivered. This involves focusing more development on strategic locations, which will allow for better planned communities in terms of housing, employment, transport and services. The local plans prepared by the seven districts and the Waste Local Plan prepared by Leicestershire County Council are also important policies within which this economic strategy will be realised.

The natural capital assets of Leicestershire have an annual value of £388.45 million, with agricultural habitats generating £180.91 million annually. There is a risk that future development does not consider natural capital and green infrastructure. Threats such as air pollution are continuing unabated. There is a need to restore and regenerate urban environments. However, Leicester and Leicestershire is well-positioned to counter these risks. There is a recognised need to enhance the environment to create a great place to live, work, study and visit. Combined with the commitment of Leicester City Council and Leicestershire County Council to reduce carbon emissions, there is an opportunity to fulfil the aims of the Strategic Growth Plan for Leicester & Leicestershire 2050 by building new infrastructure developments that also capitalise on local natural capital assets. New developments can provide opportunities to improve biodiversity corridors.





SUSTAINABLE – Priority 1:

Sustainable places, city and town centres

Objective	Short-term (2021-23)	Long-term (2021-30)
1. Sustainable development and renewal of city and town centres	Support the economic viability and vitality of town centres and the city centre during recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic. Continue the development of a range of Business Improvement District, City and Town Centre Recovery Plans, utilising funding opportunities such as the Towns Fund and Levelling Up Fund.	Support and enable the sustainable transition and adaptation of town and city centres into new uses including residential and business use. Continue to make the case for east-west rail improvements and rail electrification. Increased emphasis on sustainable travel options for new housing sites.
2. Sustainable and affordable housing supply	Demonstrate exemplar zero carbon developments, particularly on publicly owned land and continue with retrofit energy efficiency measures. Develop a zero carbon and sustainable housing strategy and action plan.	Introduce mechanisms and incentives which result in step changes to carbon savings and sustainability – including building systemic solutions such as low carbon heating networks and systems. Adapt housing standards to result in higher carbon savings and energy efficiency.
3. Enhance biodiversity and preserve natural capital	Develop a Natural Capital Investment Plan and deliver the roadmap the recent Natural Capital Review Report set out for Leicestershire.	Deliver the Natural Capital Investment Plan to achieve a net gain in biodiversity in development and minimise the loss of existing habitats.
4. Sustainable sites and buildings for economic growth	Demonstrate exemplar low and zero carbon developments, particularly on publicly owned land and continue with retrofit energy efficiency measures. Develop a zero carbon and sustainable employment land strategy and action plan.	Introduce mechanisms and incentives which result in step changes to carbon savings and sustainability – including building systemic solutions such as low carbon heating networks and systems. Adapt building standards to result in higher carbon savings and energy efficiency.



CASE STUDY:

SUSTAINABLE PLACES, CITY AND TOWN CENTRES

Transforming Cities Fund

Leicester is one of 12 areas to be chosen to bid for the Department for Transport's (DfT) £1.2 billion Transforming Cities Fund, aimed at improving local productivity through sustainable transport projects.

The City Council is working with partners, including the County Council, and bus and rail operators, to develop a major works programme to deliver the 'Connected Leicester Hub and Spoke Plan'. The vision is to transform central Leicestershire into Britain's most sustainable and prosperous place to live and work, by delivering an ambitious programme of public and sustainable transport schemes that will support city, regional and national economic growth.

The strategy would aim to address transport barriers to growth by delivering sustainable transport provision across the City Centre and also connecting to the north west and south west sectors of the city where major employment hubs are located, and large-scale housing along with employment urban extensions are underway or planned.

The programme will focus on providing high quality public transport, cycling and walking corridors on key radial routes into the city; fully integrated and connected city centre transport hubs; new and enhanced electric park-and-ride systems; and making journeys easier and quicker through the use of coordinated smart ticketing and quality travel information.

The council has secured £8.4 million initially to deliver cycling and walking corridor improvements which will link to the city centre and electrification of the Birstall Park and Ride service.

CASE STUDY:

SUSTAINABLE PLACES, CITY AND TOWN CENTRES

Enhance biodiversity and preserve natural capital: The National Forest

The National Forest was established 25 years ago to link the two ancient forests of Charnwood and Needwood and spans the counties of Leicestershire, Derbyshire and Staffordshire. Since its inception, over nine million trees have been planted across 200 square miles and forest cover has increased from 6% to 21%, creating a new mixed habitat forest.

This landscape once scarred by clay and coal extraction is being restored to patchworks of woodland which support: new low carbon and circular economies; an increase in social capital through community interaction; new habitats for wildlife; and green infrastructure to sequester carbon, reduce flooding and improve water and air quality.

The National Forest provides a more sustainable and positive future for the next generation and has also boosted the local economy by creating jobs in the woodland and tourism industries and has great potential as a healthy outdoor activity destination, with over 10 million people within 90 minutes travel distance.



SUSTAINABLE - Priority 2:

Sustainable transport and connectivity

Build and promote sustainable modes of transport, decarbonise road transport and improve digital connectivity whilst also supporting healthier growth

To provide planned and sustainable housing growth to support the needs of its expanding population, Leicester and Leicestershire will support the implementation of the Strategic Growth Plan to deliver the estimated 187,096 new dwellings that will be needed by 2050. This will include the Priority Growth Corridor which would form an orbital transport solution to the south and east of Leicester, Leicestershire International Gateway, A5 Improvement Corridor, regeneration and growth of Melton Mowbray, as well as areas of managed growth in Local Plans. It is critical to support local road and rail improvements, especially sustainable forms of transport, and ensure that rural transport provision effectively links people to jobs. HS2 and the East Midlands Hub Station will also provide opportunities to decarbonise transport. Rural broadband, Wi-Fi and 5G connectivity will need to be improved to address specific rural blackspots and overcome rural isolation and connectivity.

The Strategic Growth Plan for Leicester & Leicestershire 2050: Our vision for growth notes major infrastructure improvements will be needed to unlock land for development and accommodate new growth focussed on major transport corridors, which include:

- Investment in city transport infrastructure to support improved accessibility to and within the city – principally the hub and spoke plan for bus corridors and park-and-ride systems and cycling/walking corridor improvements.
- Improvements to the city centre to boost its role as a travel hub including rail and bus station enhancements together with connecting links.
- An orbital transport solution to the south and east of the City, connecting the M1 to the southwest and A46 to the northeast of Leicester, to create a new priority growth corridor to unlock substantial housing growth.

- Upgrades to the A5 and A42.
- Improvements to the M1.
- Improved railway lines and services from Leicester to Coventry and Birmingham, as well as enhancements to the Midlands Mainline and a link to HS2 at Toton.
- Potential new rail services, including the possible reopening of the Leicester to Burton railway line.
- Investment in a new outer distributor road for Melton Mowbray, as part of a wider Melton Mowbray Transport Strategy that will enable the delivery of substantial numbers of new homes and identify improvements to the Major Road Network. These include works to reduce congestion, improve safety and address environmental issues along the A511/A50 corridor, which supports the delivery of new homes.

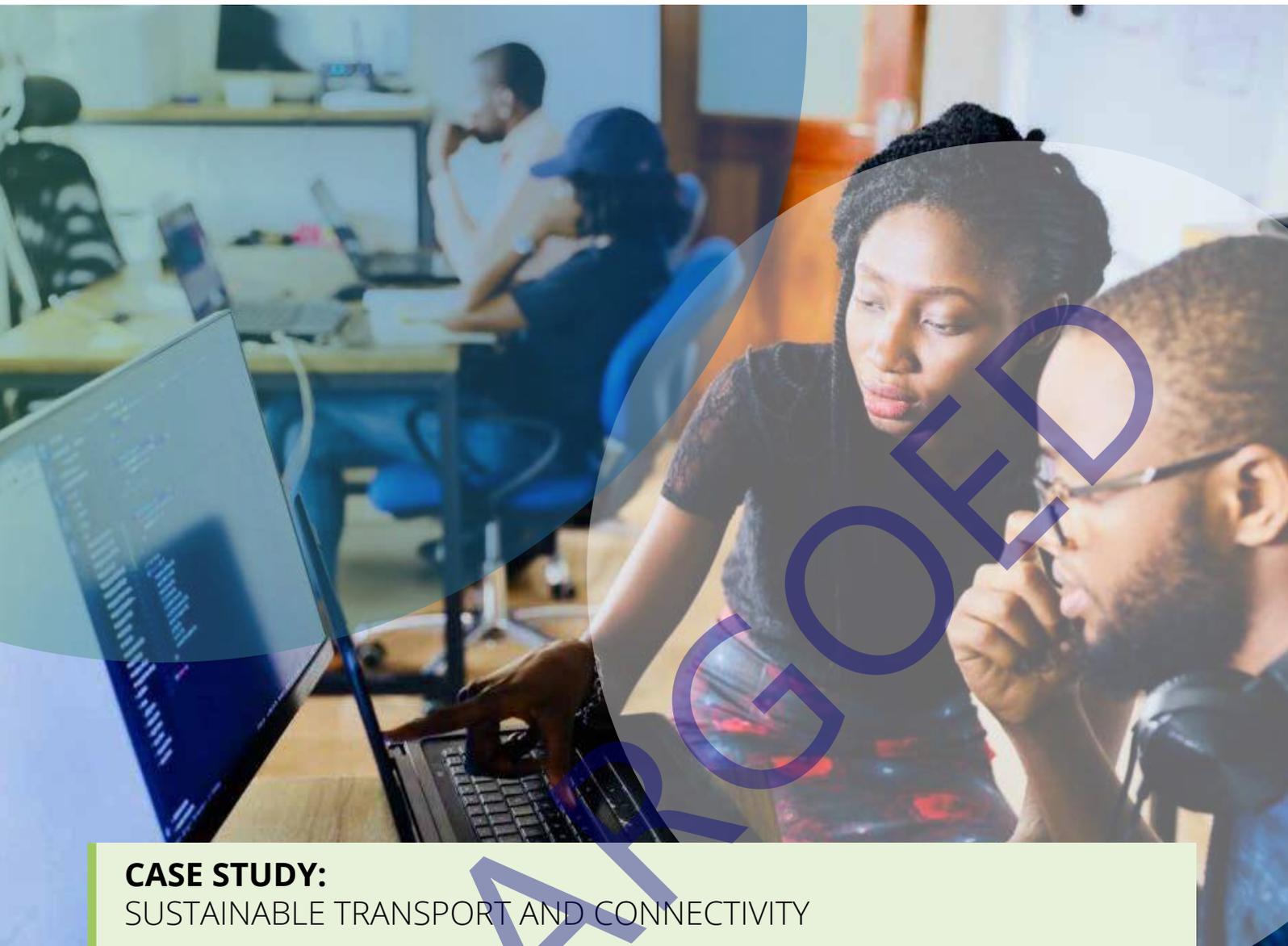
It is further noted in the Leicester and Leicestershire Strategy Transport Priorities 2020-2050 document that the delivery of the growth strategy will require the alignment of local, regional and national infrastructure plans and strategies along with substantial funding from government, LLEP, Midlands Connect and the private sector.

Transport sustainability will need to be built into all of our economic ambitions and plans. For example, we need to be mindful of the associated carbon impact of tourism sector growth from increased visitor numbers. The Tourism Growth Plan promotes support for the low-carbon agenda by encouraging local attractions to develop green travel plans. Improving the clarity of transport options and routes will help to support our growth ambitions (48% of overseas visitors surveyed by Visit Britain in 2013 were nervous about driving in the UK and saw this as a barrier to travel beyond London). The logistics sector, which is a local success story, will need to incorporate alternatives to fossil fuels and adopt the latest innovations and methods of working.

SUSTAINABLE – Priority 2:

Sustainable transport and connectivity

Objective	Short-term (2021-23)	Long-term (2021-30)
1. Improve rail infrastructure and services	Accelerate the pipeline of local rail infrastructure projects, in order to generate commitment and investment.	Improve east-west rail speeds, rail electrification and connectivity and the sustainable transformation that Leicester Railway Station improvements will bring. Support greater use of rail freight transport.
2. Improve public and bring about a modal shift to sustainable forms of transport	Continue to deliver and improve public transport services, and sustainable modes of transport.	Promote sustainable modes of transport including walking and cycling. Build on HS2 connectivity to make public transport improvements. Embed sustainable transport into relevant economic priorities such as the visitor economy.
3. Decarbonise road transport	Identify opportunities to add further green credentials to current transport plans.	Expand zero and ultra-low emissions vehicles and charging, including HGV refuelling. Support zero emissions connectivity and wider uptake of such vehicles by the public and private sector.
4. Connected places, households and businesses to reduce carbon emissions	Improve digital connectivity through broadband, Wi-Fi and 5G connectivity, particularly in rural blackspots.	Develop a plan for SME adoption of 5G technologies and 5G test beds. Improve network connectivity, particularly in rural blackspots.



CASE STUDY:

SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT AND CONNECTIVITY

Superfast Leicestershire

The Superfast Leicestershire programme is bringing superfast broadband to as many premises in Leicestershire as possible. As of 2019, more than 75,000 homes and business have received high speed broadband with a minimum speed of at least 24Mbps, while all premises now have access to at least 2Mbps.

The programme is being led by Leicestershire County Council in partnership with BT and with support from the other local authorities, government, the European Regional Development Fund and Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership from the Local Growth Fund.

Since 2013, superfast coverage in Leicestershire has increased from 81% to 96%, with plans in place to further extend coverage over the coming years.



SUSTAINABLE - Priority 3:

Sustainable energy

Increase renewable energy generation and implement smart energy networks

Progress has been made with the development of an Energy Infrastructure Strategy for Leicester and Leicestershire in 2018, which suggested that much of the technical potential for renewable electricity in the region remains unexploited. Renewable energy could generate 6,700 GWh/year – enough to meet total electricity demand in the region today, and in 2050. This potential is dominated by wind power with the remainder from solar PV, biomass, energy-from-waste and other sources. If deployed to its full potential, this would require 125 MW of renewable energy generation to be installed annually in the Leicester and Leicestershire region between now and 2050.

Another barrier to low and zero carbon energy is that power networks in the region are stressed, and there is little headroom in electricity generation, or for more efficient, flexible power grids. A central objective set out in the Clean Growth Strategy

is to enable a smarter, more flexible system by expanding interconnection, electricity storage and demand side response (DSR). Energy storage provides an opportunity, particularly when considering the need to rapidly scale up electric battery production in the UK.

There are also opportunities from developing heating systems and networks for homes and businesses. The use of ground and water source heat pumps, and industrial sources of waste heat represent an opportunity to reduce carbon emissions and improve environmental sustainability. Finally, we must consider how we implement sustainable energy systems and technologies on the strategic development sites, such as the remaining Enterprise Zone (EZ) sites and the new Freeport sites and those detailed in The Strategic Growth Plan for Leicester & Leicestershire 2050: Our vision for growth.





SUSTAINABLE – Priority 3:

Sustainable energy

Objective	Short-term (2021-23)	Long-term (2021-30)
1. Increase renewable energy generation, use and storage	Identify strategic sites and initiatives for renewable energy generation, storage and battery production.	Increase local renewable energy generation in wind, biomass, biogas, hydro and solar PV. Explore opportunities for energy storage facilities and battery manufacture.
2. More efficient energy infrastructure and networks	Develop initiatives to monitor energy generated by local renewable sources. Deliver 'smart streets' demonstration sites showcasing the latest approaches to energy efficiency, smart controls, batteries and other innovations.	Create a smarter, flexible electricity grid. Integrate smart streets into new housing and employment site developments.
3. Zero carbon energy and heating systems for homes and businesses	Feasibility studies for heating and energy networks for homes and businesses.	Delivery of heating and energy networks and systems for new housing and employment sites and premises.

EMBARK





CASE STUDY: SUSTAINABLE ENERGY

Energy Infrastructure Strategy for Leicester and Leicestershire (2018)

This strategy suggested that much of the technical potential for renewable electricity in the region remains unexploited. Renewable energy could generate 6,700 GWh/year – enough to meet total electricity demand in the region today, and our projections to 2050. This potential is dominated by wind (6,000 GWh/year remaining potential) with the remainder from solar PV, biomass, energy-from-waste and other sources. If deployed to its full potential, this would require 125 MW of renewable energy generation to be installed annually in the Leicester and Leicestershire region between now and 2050.

Natural gas is consumed mostly to meet heating and hot water demand in homes, businesses and industry, and oil is consumed mainly in the transport sector. In order to decarbonise these sectors, further energy efficiency and a transition to alternative, low carbon fuels for heating and transport are necessary. For heating, this could include electricity (in heat pumps or modern electric heating), bioenergy (solid biomass or renewable gas), waste heat and/or low carbon hydrogen; for transport, this could be achieved by deploying electric vehicles (EVs) and/or hydrogen-based fuel cell electric vehicles (FCEVs).

The strategy highlighted opportunities for addressing carbon reductions further including: home improvements and insulation; exemplar low carbon developments on publicly owned land; a one-stop shop for energy efficiency retrofits; accelerating the shift to low carbon transport; supporting electric cars and vans; a strategic plan for HGV refuelling and rapid charging hubs; delivering clean, smart, flexible power; providing a more efficient, flexible and smart electricity grid; and increasing renewable energy generation capacity.



SUSTAINABLE - Priority 4:

Sustainable business

Support business decarbonisation and sustainable business practices

Business activities will need to change in order to address climate change, resource exploitation and biodiversity loss. Only by transitioning to a zero carbon economy, creating a circular economy and recovering lost biodiversity can irreversible change be avoided, and our natural environment and resources be protected for future generations. The adoption of zero carbon technologies and the efficient use of resources is one of the greatest industrial opportunities of our time, transforming existing industries and creating new ones as the UK moves to a more resource efficient economy. Businesses in Leicester and Leicestershire have been leading the way – as demonstrated by East Midlands Airport which was the first of any UK airport to make a commitment to achieve carbon neutral ground operations by 2012, but they need further support, particularly SMEs and microbusinesses.

Businesses must become environmentally sustainable to survive and thrive in the future, and this will impact on all aspects of business activity – including products and services, location and premises, supply chains, material inputs, waste management, energy, transport and logistics, waste, and skills.

There are business opportunities from developments such as renewable energy. Current strengths in Leicester and Leicestershire Low Carbon Environmental Goods and Services (LCEGS) sub-sectors include Wind, Building Technologies, Alternative Fuels, and Photovoltaics. Yet, significant skills gaps exist in certain jobs including production engineers, power distribution engineers, and technicians.



SUSTAINABLE – Priority 4:

Sustainable business

Objective	Short-term (2021-23)	Long-term (2021-30)
1. Resource and energy efficiency	Engage with local and regional low and zero carbon programmes to ensure matches with local business and clusters.	Provide advice and support for business resource and energy efficiency.
2. Circular economy and supply chains	Map out zero carbon and circular economy business opportunities within the local economy. Create a new waste strategy to increase and improve recycling.	Enterprise support and advice to develop zero carbon and sustainable supply chains.
3. Zero carbon and sustainability transition planning and support	Business focus group and peer network to transfer best practice in reducing emissions and environmental impact. Develop support and advisory tools as part of Business Gateway Growth Hub.	Guidance and training to support business decarbonisation and sustainability. Implement a suite of support and advisory tools as part of the Business Gateway Growth Hub.
4. Zero carbon skills pathways and provision	Set out the investment requirements for our local zero carbon development needs and work with partners to match the associated training and skills routes and business opportunities.	Develop capacity among local providers for the delivery of training in zero carbon technologies.



CASE STUDY: SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS

The Green BELLE project: providing grants for low carbon, energy efficient improvements to business premises

The Green BELLE (Business Energy in Leicester and Leicestershire) project can provide grants of up to £10,000 to small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) to help cover the costs of low carbon, energy-efficient improvements to their premises. The project is run by Leicester City Council's sustainability service with support from Leicestershire County Council. So far, the scheme has provided up to nearly £785,000 worth of business grants to 142 local businesses. The aim of the project is to support up to a total of 293 businesses by June 2023. This will provide energy savings of up to 2,493 tonnes of CO₂e per year, equivalent to the amount of energy used in 399 "typical" homes.

Green BELLE grants can be used as support for a wide range of low-carbon and energy-efficient measures, such as installing efficient heating systems, low-energy lighting, insulation, or solar PV panels. Grants can be awarded to cover up to half of the total costs, with the remaining amount required from the business as match-funding.

Businesses have also benefited from significant reductions in their energy bills as a result of improvements made through the Green BELLE scheme.



Contact Details

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Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership Limited (LLEP)
City Hall, 115 Charles Street, Leicester, LE1 1FZ

Tel: [+44 \(0\)116 454 2917](tel:+441164542917)
Email: admin@llep.org.uk

 @LLEPNews  @LLEPnews

 Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership Limited

