



Report to: Cabinet Meeting - 11 November 2025

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Claire Penny, Sustainable Economic Development

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Report Summary	
Type of Report	Open Report, Key Decision
Report Title	Newark & Sherwood District Council Sustainable Economic Growth Strategy 2026 - 2031
Purpose of Report	To present to Cabinet the Newark & Sherwood District Council Sustainable Economic Growth Strategy 2026 – 2031
Recommendations	To endorse the Newark & Sherwood District Council Sustainable Economic Growth Strategy for 2026 – 2031
Alternative Options Considered	There is an option to not update the Sustainable Economic Growth Strategy. This option has been discounted as Newark & Sherwood District Council have identified economic growth as a priority.
Reason for Recommendations	To enable a strategic, meaningful direction of travel for local economic growth the proposed recommendation to update the Sustainable Economic Growth Strategy based on data and evidence is recommended.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 In November 2020, officers established the NSDC Economic Growth Strategy for 2021 – 2026. Over the previous four years officers have worked on implementing programmes & projects detailed in this document, including over £31 million of grant support to businesses during the Covid-19 pandemic, the facilitation of Towns Funds Projects such as the ASI, Levelling Up Funds and Shared Prosperity Funds, and the organisation of events such as the annual Future First Careers Expo to promote local employment and skills opportunities. This strategy to respond to the changing socio-economic picture, and to tackle emerging opportunities and challenges, a new strategy to cover the period 2026 – 2031 has been developed.
- 1.2 In 2024 officers commissioned The Knowledge Ladder to compile two reports that would become the evidence base informing the direction of travel for the vision, priorities and actions of this strategy. These were:

- A reappraisal of the 2017 Social Mobility Report
- An Economic Assessment that investigated metrics including employment, skills, business growth and productivity

- 1.3 The reports identified that Newark & Sherwood was a developing district with improving social mobility compared to other local authority districts between 2017 and 2023, although there is a need to enhance skills, aspirations and health. There are opportunities to develop the district as a destination, and to grow key sectors. However, there are challenges that require attention, such as infrastructure, sustainability and job creation.

The Sustainable Economic Growth Strategy 2026-2031 is attached as **Appendix 1** to the report.

- 1.4 The vision within the Strategy is *“To make Newark & Sherwood a prosperous place, where productivity is high, inclusivity is at the heart of our communities, our residents have barriers removed and opportunities created and maintained for skills, qualifications and employment that enriches their lives. The area where, starting and building a business is nurtured, increased investment is achieved, infrastructure is secured for sustainable growth, people visit and experience our offer, and our communities have a bright future”*

- 1.5 After reviewing the Knowledge Ladder research, the NSDC Community Plan (objective 3) the East Midlands Combined Authority (EMCCA) Inclusive Growth Commission and Growth Plan and other local data sources, officers have proposed the following emerging priorities:

- Diversifying Town Centres to have a sustainable mix of diverse offers including increased residential provision, higher footfall and increased diversity of offer including culture, leisure and health.
- Accelerating the upskilling and reskilling into education or employment with a focus on young people and those with no qualifications
- Supporting people to become economically active, especially after sickness and ill health
- Improving connectivity and infrastructure to areas with poor access or potential beneficial impacts for economic growth
- Focussing support around key sectors of the local economy, including Health, Transport, Storage, Accommodation, Food, Clean Energy, Construction, Real Estate, ICT, and Manufacturing
- Make Newark & Sherwood an aspirational destination to visit, work and live

These priorities align with several identified in the UK Industrial Strategy and the EMCCA Growth Plan & Inclusive Growth Commission. Local needs mentioned during a UK Industrial Strategy consultation with local industry also further influenced the evidence base of the strategy.

- 1.6 Differences from the previous strategy include a greater focus on health, particularly after recent data revealed a higher-than-average portion of the local population is unable to access employment due to long-term illness. Raising qualifications and aspirations of young people has also been identified as a key area

to prioritise, providing incentives for more young people to stay within the district rather than seek opportunities elsewhere. Continuities from the 21-26 Strategy include the focus on diversifying the district's town centres, and the development of growing sectors such as manufacturing, construction and logistics.

Developing Newark & Sherwood as a destination will also be a key priority in the 26-31 Strategy. A Destination Management Plan (DMP) focusing on enhancing the local visitor economy has been incorporated into the strategy.

Further the Strategy will reflect sustainable growth, which considers economic growth that meets current needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own. Where practicable in the delivery of projects this will be through environmentally friendly, socially responsible and economically viable routes.

1.7 Consultation & Engagement

Three consultation sessions were held with District Council Members during February 2025, engaging 26 Members in total. Following this, the Knowledge Ladder report's and the draft Sustainable Economic Growth Strategy were shared for Members to comment on. A number of members responded and assisted in shaping the draft into the proposed version for recommendation. Following this a further internal consultation was undertaken with Business Managers meeting to identify cross departmental priorities that may need to be considered in developing the updated strategy. Business Managers have also responded and assisted in the development of the Strategy. Finally, consultation with external partners and stakeholders was conducted during June to August 2025, and this included organisations such as East Midlands Combined Authority, Nottinghamshire County Council, Business Clubs and the Federation of Small Businesses, as well as training providers such as Newark College. The response from key stakeholder was positive and there was recognition of the alignment and shared objectives of the EMCCA Growth Plan, as well as support from partners to the direction of travel.

- 1.8 The associated action plan will be annually reviewed and consider changes to national, regional and local economic conditions, national and regional policy changes, and the utilisation of any opportunities that arise during the year. The action plan will be presented to the Portfolio Holder and Cabinet annually with a synopsis evaluation of the previous year.

1.9 Local Government Reform

As Members are aware, Newark & Sherwood District Council is identified as a local authority affected by the proposed Local Government Reform programme and will likely be amalgamated into a Unitary Council in 2028. The Sustainable Economic Growth Strategy has been developed with this consideration, and whilst evidence based, will allow for the new Unitary Council to have an agreed approach to economic growth in a period of transition. The creation of a new Unitary Council will seek to establish key services such as governance, leadership, finance, and ICT in the first instance, and there will be an expectation from Government to continually provide other statutory and non-statutory services during this period. The Sustainable Economic Growth Strategy will allow the new Council to have an

Economic Growth & Visitor Economy function that identifies key priorities and interventions for this locality, creating a sustainable legacy for the locality.

2.0 Proposal/Options Considered

- 2.1 The Sustainable Economic Growth Strategy 2026-2031 is proposed based on providing a strategic direction for Newark & Sherwood District Council that provides a data and evidenced based approach. The Strategy is aligned with the Community Plan 2023-2027 seven ambitions and is aligned to the East Midlands Combined County Authority Growth Plan published in October 2025.
- 2.2 The Strategy encompasses both what is deliverable within the capacity and resources of the Council, including commitments undertaken in the delivery of economic growth such as the Pride in Place Programme.
- 2.3 There is an option to not update the Sustainable Economic Growth Strategy, however this has been discounted as Newark & Sherwood District Council have identified economic growth as a priority and has undertaken meaningful programmes and projects over the last 8 years which can be built upon.

3.0 Implications

In writing this report and in putting forward recommendations, officers have considered the following implications: Data Protection; Digital & Cyber Security; Equality & Diversity; Financial; Human Resources; Human Rights; Legal; Safeguarding & Sustainability and where appropriate they have made reference to these implications and added suitable expert comment where appropriate.

Financial Implications (FIN24-25/6295)

- 3.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

Legal Implications 2526/6484

- 3.2 All legal implications have been addressed within the report. A consultation exercise has been carried out and recommendations are made based on the evidential conclusions.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

None

Newark & Sherwood Sustainable Economic Growth Strategy 2026-2031

Foreword by Portfolio Holder

TBC

Newark and Sherwood's Economy

Newark and Sherwood has a population of 122,900 and covers over 65,134 hectares of land. The District has seen a 7% population growth since the 2011 census and has seen a growth in productivity of 10.4% in 2022.

The District is the home to over 5,000 businesses that operate on the national and global stage; and beautiful countryside with a variety of unique habitats. Robin Hood, a legend at the heart of national folklore, is a key figure in our region's identity and continues to draw visitors from across the world. Sitting at the crossroads of multiple road and rail transport networks and the River Trent, Newark & Sherwood is also well located for businesses and visitors.

We want to do all that we can to enable residents and businesses to flourish and fulfil their potential, as well as encouraging more visitors to enjoy all that Newark and Sherwood has to offer, from the historic market town of Newark, the picturesque Minister town of Southwell to Edwinstowe, the Gateway to Sherwood Forest.

Newark is the largest town in the district, with a population of approximately 30,000. A historic market town with a variety of heritage assets and independent retailers, it attracts an average footfall of 7,000 visitors per day. Despite this, Newark has struggled with challenges such as the rising cost-of-living impacting spend in the town, skills shortages, and significant retail vacancies, sitting at 12.6%. The area was also highlighted as one of the most challenged in the UK within the 2017 Social Mobility Report for young people to have positive outcomes for employment, training and qualifications.

Nonetheless, there are also multiple opportunities to boost growth, including the development of new homes and employment land at Middlebeck & Fernwood, Newark, to the dualling of the A46, and catalyst transformational projects including the Construction College, Air & Space Institute, Community & Activity Village and Castle Gatehouse.

There are also opportunities to redevelop and revitalise former mining towns such as Ollerton, Clipstone Rainworth and Bilsthorpe, through government investment. These areas have often been characterised as 'left behind' and face challenges and barriers evidenced by multiple indicators of the Indices of Multiple Deprivation, particularly in health, and the impact of poor health on residents affect the local economy. Investment into these Towns & Villages present an opportunity to uplift the local community and transform the towns into more vibrant places to live, work and visit. The Council will seize on opportunities to progress the development of the Ollerton Town Centre Regeneration Project and Clipstone Regeneration Project as part of the Sherwood Revival Programme.

The District Council is one of several public sector stakeholders, with Town and County Councils and East Midlands Combined County Authority all having powers and responsibilities to support economic growth, it is therefore important to ensure that the Sustainable Economic Growth Strategy connects to the EMCCA Growth Plan and the UK Industrial Strategy. The Council cannot deliver economic growth in isolation, collaboration, engagement and inclusion with stakeholders and communities is paramount to developing and improving place.

The opportunity provided through Local Government Reform over the next 5 years requires placing the District at the heart of transformation, through supporting economic growth. The development of pipeline programmes and projects that offer interventions, evidenced by need, focuses this strategy to progress into the 2030s.

Vision

“To make Newark & Sherwood a prosperous place, where productivity is high, inclusivity is at the heart of our communities, our residents have barriers removed and opportunities created and maintained for skills, qualifications and employment that enriches their lives. The area where, starting and building a business is nurtured, increased investment is achieved, infrastructure is secured for sustainable growth, people visit and experience our offer, and our communities have a bright future”

Our Priorities

1. Diversifying Town Centres to have a sustainable mix of diverse offers including increased residential provision, higher footfall and increased diversity of offer including culture, leisure and health.
2. Accelerating the upskilling and reskilling into education or employment with a focus on young people and those with no qualifications.
3. Supporting people to become economically active, especially after sickness and ill health
4. Improving connectivity and infrastructure to areas with poor access or potential beneficial impacts for economic growth.
5. Focusing support around key sectors of the local economy, including Health, Transport, Storage, Accommodation, Food, Clean Energy, Construction and Real Estate, ICT, and Manufacturing
6. Make Newark and Sherwood an aspirational destination to visit, work and live

Within the priorities for local economic growth there are key threads of Health & Wellbeing, Sustainability, and Inclusive & Sustainable Growth that are interwoven into the delivery of the Strategy. Sustainable growth, will consider economic growth that meets current needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own. Where practicable in the delivery of projects this will be through environmentally friendly, socially responsible and economically viable routes.

NSDC are in a position to influence the development of key sectors that employ a significant proportion of residents and are among the biggest contributors to local GVA (such as manufacturing, logistics and health) via targeted interventions. The council is also in the

position to prompt the growth of newer industries that are becoming increasingly vital (such as digital technologies, energy production and green technology) through the varied support offered within the different business units such as commercial tenancies, funding, business rate incentivisation, procurement and access to training & mentoring. Interventions are the preferred option over allowing market forces to dictate business growth; if NSDC were to do nothing this could lead to escalating inequalities in income, infrastructure and employment as a result of market failures.

Policy Context

There are a number of policies that work in synergy with the delivery of the Newark & Sherwood Sustainable Economic Growth Strategy, these include, at the national level, the government intent for economic growth as outlined in the proposed UK Industrial Strategy, regionally the Mayor of the East Midlands has developed, with the aid of the Inclusive Growth Commission a Local Growth Plan for the East Midlands , and locally both the County Council and District Council have outlined an intent to drive forward economic development within their own plans.

The priorities of these strategies align with several of the priorities identified in the EMCCA Local Growth Strategy which has been developed for the East Midlands .

The EMCCA Vision for Growth for the East Midlands aims to become a global model for regional development powered by the Green Economy. The vision is rooted in:

- Clean energy innovation
- Decarbonised industry
- Energy security
- Inclusive and spatial growth

It builds on the region's industrial heritage and strengths in sectors like energy, aerospace, automotive, and rail, while leveraging strategic assets such as Freeports, Investment Zones, and world-class universities and businesses (e.g., Rolls Royce, Toyota). The plan is built around three strategic pillars:

- Investing in six enablers of growth, including skills, clean energy infrastructure and climate resilience, innovation, housing and place, business partnerships, and transport and digital connectivity.
- Supporting the development of a sub-set of high-impact sectors, including advanced manufacturing, MedTech and Life Sciences, Visitor Economy, Digital Creative and Cultural, and Clean Energy.
- Applying a place-based approach across the region, emphasising the priority of investment across seven Growth Strategy Areas

The vision sets out to:

- Create 100,000 new jobs
- Deliver 52,000 new homes
- Add £4.6 billion in annual GVA to the UK economy
- Develop 4.2 million sqm of commercial floorspace

The growth strategy is structured around seven key areas:

1. Trent Arc – A nature-led urban network linking Derby and Nottingham, including a New Town proposal and major transport upgrades.
2. Canal Corridor – Revitalising historic market towns and industrial zones along the Chesterfield Canal.
3. Supercluster – Anchored by the STEP fusion project at West Burton, aiming to become a global hub for clean energy and innovation.
4. Derwent Valley Mills – Heritage-led regeneration of a UNESCO World Heritage Site.
5. Peaks and Dales – Enhancing the visitor economy and rural infrastructure in the Peak District.
6. The Heartlands – Tailored growth strategies for diverse communities like Mansfield and Newark.
7. The Loop – A long-distance walking trail connecting cultural and natural assets across the region.

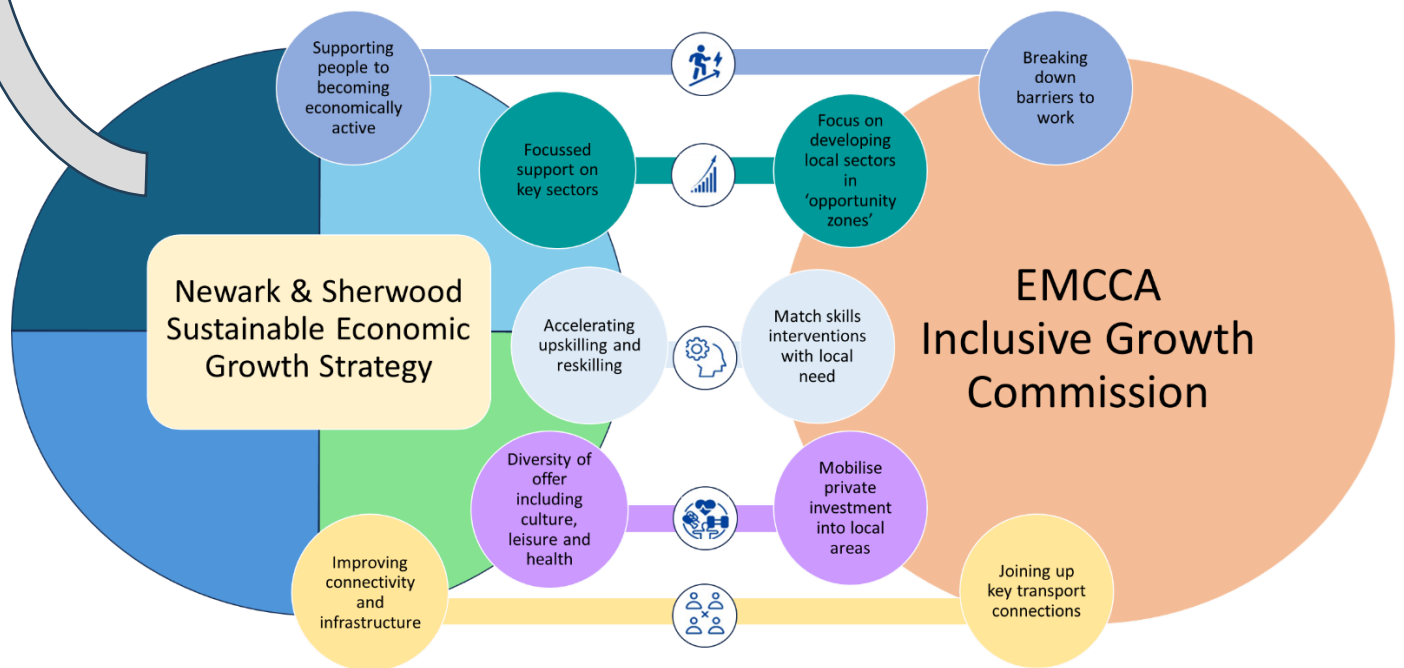
The vision is underpinned by several emerging principles:

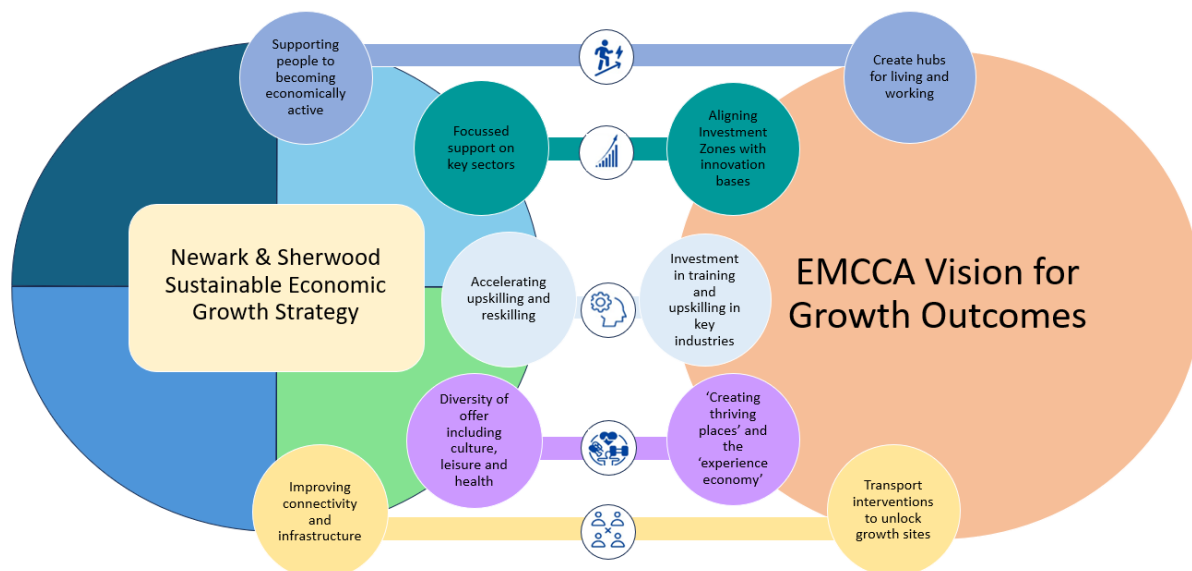
- Master our own destiny – proactive planning and delivery
- Reimagine identity – a unified regional narrative
- Net zero & nature – central to health, wellbeing, and economic growth
- Multiplier effects – closed-loop thinking for supercharged growth
- Radical simplification – streamlined processes and accelerated outcomes
- Global ambition – evolving from local strength to international reputation

The roadmap is divided into three phases:

- Now (2025–2030): Early wins, stakeholder engagement, infrastructure planning
- Near (2030–2040): High-impact projects, regional capacity building, flagship developments
- Next (2040+): Global recognition, fusion energy, advanced industrial powerhouses

These include interventions to prompt investment in local business and infrastructure, as well as skills development to match economic needs. Graphics comparing the two plans can be found on the page below.





Several local areas of focus align with the policy areas of the new UK Industrial Strategy. Both prioritise upskilling and reskilling to help support people in becoming economically active while enhancing productivity of high growth sectors.

The Why? Data & Evidence)

In 2024 the Council commissioned an evaluation of the 2017 report on Social Mobility. When first published this report identified a series of challenges to the social mobility for the local communities. The new study was undertaken with two goals in mind:

- 1) To assess and compare the data provided in the 2017 Social Mobility Report
- 2) To collect new data for the intervening years and determine whether the work undertaken by the Council and partners had increased beneficial impacts for the local community

In synergy with this study, an Economic Assessment was created that evaluated socio-economic data relating to people, skills, employment, business growth and carbon emissions. This study followed the delivery of the 2021-2025 Economic Growth Strategy which intended to deliver growth during and after the Covid-19 pandemic.

The two reports identified the key evidential data to assist in shaping and defining the work that the Council and partners will seek to address in the period 2025-2030. To review these documents in full please refer to Appendix 1 & 2. (To access these please go to [Data Appendix](#))

The data and evidence identifies that the District has seen some notable improvements within the economy over the last few years including:

- Population Growth: Newark and Sherwood's population growth since the last census in 2011 is 7%, which is higher than the national average of 6.3%.

- Education and Skills: The area has a higher rate of adults aged 19+ achieving a Further Education qualification in 2022/23 at 5,570 per 100,000 population, compared to 3,529 nationally. Additionally, Newark and Sherwood has a higher rate of residents starting apprenticeships than the national average.
- Local Business Growth: Newark and Sherwood experienced a growth in GDP of 10.4% between 2020 and 2021, compared to a growth of 8.7% for the UK overall

However there also remains some significant challenges, which include:

- Productivity is low, and there are many people who have poor health who are economically inactive, which stands at 20.8% of the population.
- Employment and Skills: The percentage of working-age residents with higher-level skills (NVQ levels 3+ and 4+) is below the national average, with 33.7% qualified to at least a level 4 in 2021 (44.5% nationally) 6. Additionally, the percentage of working-age residents with no qualifications is higher than nationally at 12.8% (6.5% nationally).
- Business Sustainability: Newark and Sherwood has experienced more business deaths than births in every quarter since Q2 2022 8. The number of enterprises declined between 2023 and 2024 by 3.3%, in line with the national trend.

Despite improvements, Newark & Sherwood continues to face low educational outcomes and limited aspirations among young people. The area also has significant pockets of deprivation, with 3,100 children living in low-income families and many residents living with disabilities. Further, health inequalities are pronounced, particularly in the most deprived wards.

This data and evidence identifies the ‘why’ we have chosen the vision and priorities to address within the local area. It also assists with where the Council can support key sectors, geographic areas, and cohorts of the community to allow for meaningful, inclusive, sustainable economic growth.

Business Consultation

In conjunction with work being done to support the national Industrial Strategy, NSDC engaged with businesses, investors, developers and other partners to understand the current barriers to growth and future challenges that may be on the horizon.

People and Skills were again a key issue, with local businesses experiencing difficulties in recruitment and retention of skilled staff. Some partners reported that there has been a ‘hollowing out’ of the population in some localities, particularly in the 18-30 demographic, many of whom have moved out of district to pursue opportunities in cities. It was suggested that steps should be taken raise local aspirations; attract people to stay in, or return to, Newark; and showcase the local opportunities there are available to combat the belief that younger people must move away to succeed.

This challenge is partly linked the current perception of place in Newark & Sherwood, as well as the wider East Midlands region. Possible solutions included the development of a

marketing tool to promote the area, curate a more positive image and introduce potential investors to what the district has to offer.

Engagements revealed a decline in business confidence for the future. A recent FSB survey revealed that only 29% of SMEs in the region were confident that they could grow. This is partly due to changes to NI contributions and employment legislation, as well as uncertainty regarding upcoming regulatory, skills and technological change, such as Government's AI Action Plan. SMEs need support in understanding what these changes mean for them, as well as clear pathways to achieve Government's ambitions.

Partners also identified the need for business incubation space so start-ups can work in a supportive environment. In the UK approximately 90% of start-ups fail within their first 5 years of operating, however by creating a dedicated space in which entrepreneurs can collaborate with likeminded business owners and share experiences it could help reduce the number of business deaths during their first years of trading.

Infrastructure requirements were highlighted by developers as key barriers to overcome for future investment to take place, such as greater certainty around upgrades to critical transport infrastructure such as the A614 and A46. One of the most prominent of these was existing power limitations in the East Midlands region which limits where manufacturers can grow and locate. A recommendation that emerged from this was to align power needs with development sites.

Sectoral Focus:

Town Centre Agenda

In 2022 the Council undertook a resident survey that identified a need to address the decline within town centres. This consultation informed the Council that the Town Centre agenda was a priority, and that actions and interventions to shape, design and support prosperous town centres across the District were needed.

In doing this the Council is aware that the District is polycentric and has four town centres serving the different needs of the local communities and catchments. Newark, as the largest Town Centre has an oversupply of retail floorspace. Meanwhile, Southwell as a small town as higher demand for commercial and retail units. Edwinstowe has a vibrant high street that is in part disconnected via public realm, pathways and access to the USP that is Sherwood Forest. Finally, Ollerton is a town serving a community not well connected to Newark or Mansfield.

The Council have sought to intervene through leadership, policy development, advice, guidance, support, information including high street health metrics, partnership work with stakeholders and businesses and through use of government funds. To enable this a series of specific Town Centre Action Plans will be created.

Renewable Energy, Biodiversity and Carbon Emissions

The NSDC Community Plan 2024-27 and the UK Industrial Strategy Green Paper have recently highlighted Net Zero as a key objective. The proposed Industrial Strategy makes a commitment to sustainable growth, recognising the Clean Energy Mission and the Net Zero

transition as opportunities for enhancing the economy and creating jobs. Data from SUEZ UK predicts that the energy transition will establish more than 500,000 new 'green skills' roles across various industry sectors by 2040, highlighting it as an area with a high potential for growth.

Previous local interventions to encourage sustainable thinking include the joint commissioning of decarbonisation support through UKSPF. Support involved 1-to-1 sessions and 'credits' to spend on energy efficiency measures. Similarly, recent grants allowed rural businesses to help develop more sustainable processes. Sustainability has also been a focus of business support events including workshops, conferences and support programmes.

The role of the Council in achieving this sustainability objective is as in community leaders, influencers and collaborators. Officers can work with experts to guide businesses through challenges involved with decarbonisation, biodiversity and ESG. By gathering intel and developing relationships we can build a convincing case for change, taking advantage of planned solar farms and step fusion to encourage the growth of green energy businesses.

Officers will work with partners to influence the rollout of decarbonisation support through local knowledge.

Manufacturing, Transport, ICT, Real Estates and Construction

The identified sectors are key to the local economy, providing employment, skills and training at significant levels; and generating GVA for the local area, coupled with the potential for higher economic growth in the future. The placement of these sectors within the locality provide an ideal environment an thriving agglomeration economy, with supply chains and local labour markets linking in. Together these factors create an offer that can be capitalised upon to drive economic growth.

The local Manufacturing sector contributes £181 million to local GVA and provides jobs to approximately 6,000 people, with large employers in a variety of subsectors, including Specialist Technologies (Barcode Warehouse), Food (Bakkavor) and Automotive components (NSK). The breadth of subsectors that are present in the district provide a variety of roles for residents to develop skills in.

The Transportation & Storage sector is an expanding industry in the district, with opportune connections across the UK via road and rail. Large employers such as GXO reside at Newark and Boughton, providing roles in areas such as automation, and significant opportunities for growth and inward investment are on the horizon, including development of logistics floor space at a strategic location just north of the A46-A1 junction.

The Information and Communication sector is not among the district's largest employers, however the Knowledge Ladder's Economic Assessment reveals that it is a highly productive sector with the fourth largest GVA in Newark & Sherwood. Businesses in this sector range from small and micro enterprises that are recent startups, to established companies such as Digital Space - one of the district's largest employers. The profitability and the rapid rate of change in the ICT sector presents a significant opportunity for growth in the district.

It is also important to note that the UK is the third largest AI market in the world, with the research ecosystem providing opportune conditions for innovation. The technology has

already diffused across multiple sectors and has established a multiple AI-related jobs, prompting the UK Government to create a blueprint to take advantage of these changes in the AI Opportunities Action Plan. It is likely that future growth in the ICT sector will be linked to generative and agentic AI, making it important that local knowledge and skills are able to maintain pace with the rapid rate of change in the sector.

There are approximately 1,400 local Construction SMEs, making it the second largest local sector in terms of number of enterprises. Collectively the sector employs approximately 3,000 people as of 2023, each contributing to a GVA of approximately £188 million. Local skills provision such as the Construction College in Newark has helped to strengthen the pipeline of prospective employees transitioning into this industry, meaning that the skillsets of many residents are aligned with the needs of the sector, presenting significant opportunities for future growth if local infrastructure challenges are met.

The role of the Council, as place maker and curator, is to support and nurture higher economic growth in these sectors through a number of interventions. This can be through policy making, support through compliance, funding opportunities, and brokerage of the third party service provision, such as skills development, business development, land management, commercial site provision, or resourcing.

Health & Social Work Activities

As a foundational sector within the District, the Health and Social work activities is a key sector for the local economy. However, there are challenges within this sector that include skills shortages and skills gaps. Data has evidenced that there is a recruitment challenge within this sector, where employment is offered by the local labour market is not prepared. This presents an opportunity for the employers and local training institutions and providers to support one another to develop both short and long terms solutions to a sector that is needed within the community.

The role of the Council in supporting this sector is similar to that of the identified sectors above but may be extended to include further work and development on the skills programmes and offers connected to community.

The Visitor Economy: Newark & Sherwood Destination Management Plan (DMP)

This strategy also incorporates a DMP for Newark & Sherwood. The aim of this DMP is to elevate the visitor experience, foster sustainable visitor economy practices and drive facilitate growth in the local visitor economy sector. Our mission is:

To cultivate an immersive destination where the tapestry of history intertwines with the allure of nature, inviting visitors to embark on a journey of district-wide discovery whilst reconnecting to the joys of the outdoors. Through arts, culture and a deep reflection on our heritage and folklore we endeavour to inspire, educate, and enrich the lives of all who venture into the timeless embrace of Newark and Sherwood District.

Research performed by officers included interviews and workshops with local stakeholders in the public, private and voluntary sectors. Evidence was also compiled using visitor

intelligence from partners such as Visit Britain, Great Britain Day Visits, Nottinghamshire County Council, ONS, Global Tourism Solutions, and The Knowledge Ladder.

According to latest available figures, the visitor economy sector had an economic impact of £348.8 million on the economy of Newark and Sherwood during 2023, this represents an increase on recent years however spend has still not reached pre-Covid levels.

The sectors that comprise this sector make up approximately 21% of local GVA, however there has recently been a contraction in the number of visitor economy enterprises in the district by 3.7%

The research identified residents of Lincolnshire, Derbyshire, and Nottinghamshire as core audiences due to their proximity and accessible transportation connections, often being within a one-hour drive of Newark and Sherwood-based destinations.

The mix of single-family (66.2%) and one-person households (29.5%) in this local area suggests a diverse visitor demography, which opens opportunities for multi-generational and family-oriented tourism marketing, as well as experiences that cater to solo travellers and small groups.

Household deprivation has also be considered; it is estimated to impact 50.9% of households in Newark and Sherwood. This indicates that affordable, value-driven tourism experiences would resonate well with local visitors.

Due to the higher percentage of disabled individuals (19.9% compared to 17.7% nationally), there is also a vital importance that local attractions and services are accessible to all.

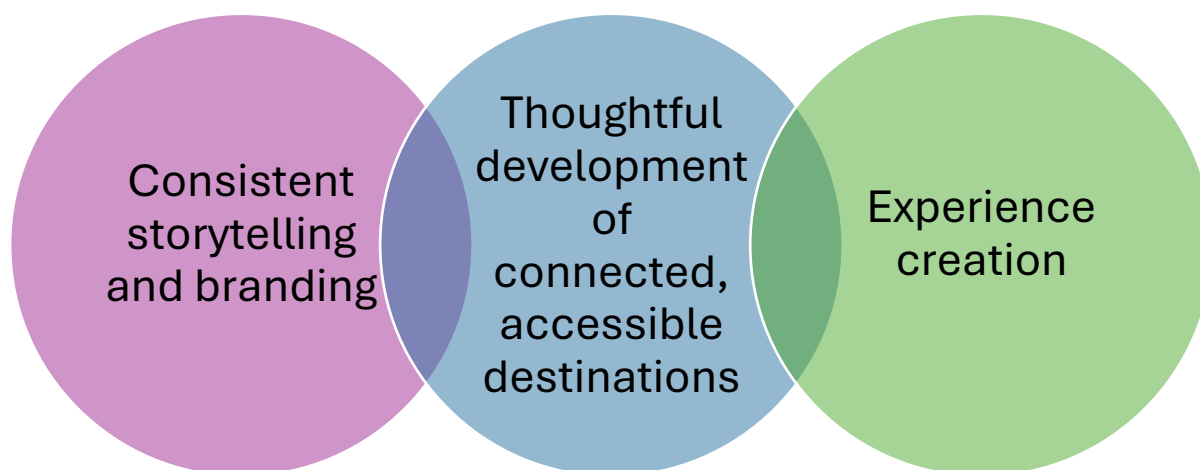
On a national level, day trips to cities and regional attractions (E.g. Wollaton Hall / Lincoln Castle) experienced a big increase in 2023 and current evidence suggests this trend continued in 2024. Overnight trips to cities and quaint towns also remained popular despite an overall drip in visitor numbers by 7%.

According to recent studies 33% of respondents preferred UK trips instead of overseas excursions due to ease of planning, indicating the presence of a wide audience-base from across the UK. As Newark & Sherwood is 1.15 hours from London by train there is an opportunity for the district to attract both day-trippers and overnight visitors by offering cozy accommodations, cultural experiences, and the renowned Robin Hood heritage.

National visitors can be split into 3 categories – families; experience-seekers in their late 20s and early 30s, and older visitors who enjoy traditional visits to country retreats. These are the audiences that are recommended for focus when developing campaigns, coupled with a need to increase accessibility for local visitors.

On an international level, visitors displayed an inclination towards spending, with expenditures reaching a record £31.1 billion across the country, indicating a resilient demand for experiences within the UK. International tourists are increasingly drawn to destinations that offer a harmonious blend of historical heritage and immersive modern attractions. Newark and Sherwood's attractions, notably Newark Castle, Sherwood Forest and Southwell Minster, align with these preferences, making them potential major draws. Despite this, global consumer spending slowed in 2023, particularly in Europe, likely as a result of global cost of living pressures.

From the audience analysis and evidence collection the following three priorities have been identified:



Actions related to one or more of these priorities have been incorporated into the Action Plan of this Strategy.

Our Approach - The Intent, Implementation and Impact

IOOI (Inputs/Outputs/Outcomes/Impacts)

To drive forward this Strategy the Council will approach the economic growth of the area through a simple model of setting out our strategy, evidence and the why (being the intent), setting out what we will do directly, through partnership work, or through influence (being the implementation) and monitoring and evaluating the change (being the impact) to ensure usefulness and future policy change need.

To fully understand the 'how we achieve success' it is important to review the way we achieve our strategy and vision. The inputs, outputs, outcomes and impacts logic model helps us define success on our plans based on our role and resources. The definitions within the model are (IOOI):

Inputs are those things that we use in the strategy to implement it. For example, in any project, inputs would include things like human resource, finances in the form of money, machinery such as vehicles, and equipment. Inputs ensure that it is possible to deliver the intended results of a project.

The **Outputs** are the direct immediate term results associated with a project. In other words, they are usually what the project has achieved in the short term. As an example, for a qualification this may be that the learner has achieved a pass, and/or the class had 90% pass rate.

Outcomes are the second level of results associated with a strategy and refers to the medium-term consequences of the interventions. Outcomes usually relate to the goal or aim. Using the example of a learner, this may be that because of the qualification the

learner was able to secure better paid employment, or is more productive for the business they are employed in.

Impacts are the third level of project results and are the long term consequences of a project. Utilising the business example, this could be that the business is more prosperous and recruits more staff due to growing orders or service improvement, thereby reducing unemployment.

In delivering the Newark and Sherwood Sustainable Economic Growth Strategy we need to understand what our inputs, outputs, outcomes and impacts are intended to be. We therefore formulate our approach on the basis of our intent 'our desired goals', our implementation 'how we will do it' and our impact 'what we achieved.'

Ways of Working – The NSDC Role

There are a number of ways the Council can deliver the sustainable economic growth agenda, these are detailed below.

Commissioning - Researching and setting policies and actions and then deciding on the best way to achieve those policies.

Lead and Invest – Actions the Council can take to build the change it wants to see in the economy.

Collaborate – Working in partnership with other public or private stakeholders, this could be through different models including a joint venture.

Influence – Where NSDC does not have the resources or powers to drive change locally, officers can use local evidence to lobby on actions that can enhance the vitality and resilience of the districts economy, people and places.

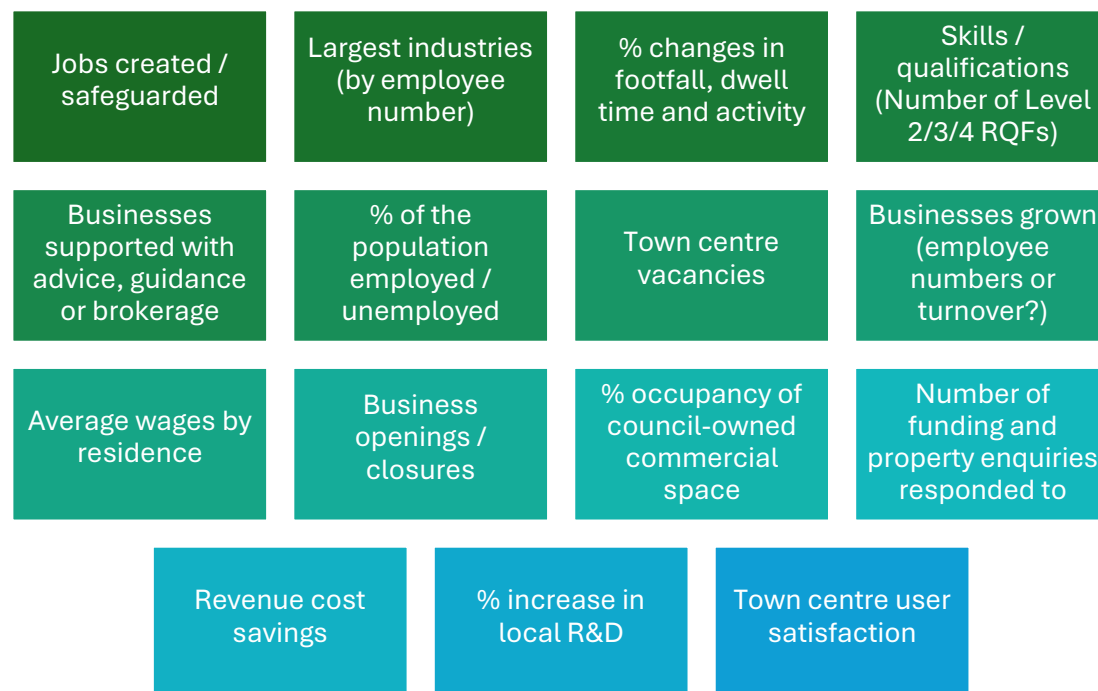
What does success look like?

The Council has a lead role in driving the growth of the local economy, and success is measured through a number of outcomes stated below. The overall intended impact for this Strategy is that by 2031; there will have been:

- An increase in GVA productivity from £2.676 million to £3.000 million by 2031
- An improvement in social mobility i.e. the area improves further from 161 out of 294 to 140 or better out of 294 by 2031
- An increase in earnings of 14% by 2031
- An improvement in qualification levels
- A reduction of people with health issues economically inactive from 20.8% to 18% in 2031

Measuring success:

Outcomes that can be achieved include



The Action Plan 2025-2030

Activities ("the implementation")	Link To Priorities	Activity Start	Activity Expected End
To undertake and complete a Newark Town Centre Masterplan & Design Code. Further to develop bespoke Town Centre Action Plans for each Town.	Priorities 1,4,5,6	2024	2027
To facilitate and enable inclusivity within locality Boards, including; Newark Town Board, and Sherwood Partnership	Priorities 1,2,3,4,5,6	2025	2031
Deliver the Shared Prosperity Fund Programme in Year 2025/26. To deliver key local economic priorities in relation to skills, business support and community development.	Priorities 1,2,3,4,5,6	2025	2026
To identify and monitor barriers to employment (ill health and wellbeing, transport, connectivity, infrastructure) and seek to develop projects to address these.	Priorities 2,3,4	2025	2031
Progress and support the development of 14 Market Place to provide commercial space to the ground floor and residential dwelling above.	Priorities 1,4,5,6	2025	2027

To redevelop 32 Stodman Street, Newark into a mixed use housing and commercial offer.	Priorities 1,4,5,6	2023	2027
To deliver the Newark Pride in Place Programme	Priorities 1,2,3,4,5,6	2025	2034
Investigate and explore the potential redevelopment of St Marks, Newark.	Priorities 1,4,5,6	2025	2029
To progress and implement the Newark Market Place Regeneration Capital Project	Priorities 1,4,5,6	2025	2029
To work with agents and property owners to promote and fill empty units within the Town Centres in the District. Create a Town Centre Dashboard to measure the health and vitality of the Town Centres and provide evidence for intervention.	Priorities 1,4,5,6	2025	2031
To lead on the delivery of the Ollerton Town Centre Regeneration Project, creating a new mixed use development.	Priorities 1,4,5,6	2025	2031
Deliver the Southern Link Road Project creating improved infrastructure and better connectivity and accessibility for Newark.	Priorities 1,2,4,5,6	2023	2032
To improve transport links with employment areas including the hospitals, and education provision	Priorities 1,2,4,5,6	2025	2032

To work with EMCCA to improve public transport across the area with better bus provision and rail connections	Priorities 1,2,4,5,6	2025	2032
Create new Industrial Units of the Clipstone Holdings site.	Priorities 2,4,5,6	2025	2028
Develop the Forest Corner Masterplan Programme	Priorities 1,4,5,6	2029	2031
Deliver the Clipstone LUF Regeneration Programme; providing new access to sports and community facilities	Priorities 2,3,4,5,6	2022	2029
Deliver the Castle Gatehouse Town Fund Project.	Priorities 1,4,5,6	2022	2027
To facilitate and lead on the Tourism Action Group.	Priorities 5,6	2023	2031
Develop and create seasonal destination marketing campaigns.	Priorities 1,5,6	2025	2028
Further to create a Visitor Website and Events Calander.			
To undertake a hotel needs study for the District	Priorities 1,5,6	2028	2031
Work with EMCCA, Visit Nottinghamshire, Visit Britain and other destination management organisations to promote the area to increase visitors.	Priorities 1,5,6	2025	2031

Provide, organise, facilitate and deliver the Future First Careers Expo	Priorities 2,3,5,6	2025	2031
Work with education providers and industry to provide life-long learning and community learning opportunities.	Priorities 2,3,5,6	2025	2031
To facilitate and lead on a Local Employment & Skills Board & the Land Management Skills Group To promote skills bootcamps in growing sectors within the District.	Priorities 2,3,5	2025	2031
Maximise local employment opportunities during, and arising from, major infrastructure and housing schemes	Priorities 1,2,3,4,5,6	2024	2028
To work with higher education and further education partners to promote and provide localised accessibility.	Priorities 2,3,5,6	2025	2031
To provide Business Events per annum supporting businesses to adapt or grow.	Priorities 5,6	2025	2031
To facilitate and host an annual growth conference	Priorities 5,6	2025	2031
Assess and develop the Invest Newark & Sherwood Campaign	Priorities 5,6	2025	2031
To work with the Department for International Trade and Investment facilitate inward investment enquiries.	Priorities 5,6	2025	2031

To maintain a Key Account Management for business support Further to develop a maintain a commercial property register and create an e-newsletter	Priorities 5,6	2025	2031
Identify sites/premises for investors and business to grow and host site visits, .	Priorities 1,4,5,6	2025	2031