

# North Somerset's ECONOMIC PLAN 2017-2036



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## Welcome to North Somerset

*Our ambition is for North Somerset to be a vibrant and successful place to live, work and study, with a distinct identity and quality of life that attracts and retains enterprise, investment, young people and visitors.*

North Somerset is strategically located at the access point to the South West and is part of the Bristol and Bath City region. Covering over 150 square miles, North Somerset is home to the four main towns of Portishead, Clevedon, Nailsea and Weston-super-Mare, as well as a number of rural settlements. It has a population of 211,700. It is located within a highly successful city region, where economic growth has exceeded the national average and ambitions for growth through innovation, knowledge and quality of life are strong. There are 25 miles of beautiful coastline and stunning countryside. Rich in cultural and scientific heritage, the area has connections to Brunel, Coleridge, Tennyson, Thackeray, Eddington and Marconi.

North Somerset has a diverse range of sectors making up its economic base, contributing to the vigour and dynamism of the economy. A number of national and international companies are based here including GE Oil and Gas, Oxford Instruments Plasma Technology, UTC Aerospace Systems, Brabantia, Yeo Valley, Thatchers, Bristol Airport, The Bristol Port Company, Smurfit Kappa, and QuEST Global Engineering Ltd.

Located in some of North Somerset's towns and villages are world leading high-technology manufacturers making everything from aircraft parts to plasma screens and subsea control systems. Alongside them are makers of more traditional products originating from the natural produce of rich farmland. These are turned into world leading brands of cheese, cider and yogurt among many others. Similarly business services provide quality employment, supporting the wider regional economy which includes Bristol and Bath. North Somerset also complements the region's strengths in creative media with growing numbers of businesses working in all aspects of this dynamic sector.

North Somerset is well connected, with the M5 motorway and mainline rail services running through the area to London, Birmingham, the South West and beyond. It is also home to Bristol Airport, the fifth largest UK airport outside London and the fastest growing over the last decade. Direct flights to over 100 destinations coupled with multiple daily services to major international hubs makes North Somerset accessible to companies from across the world. Similarly, Bristol Port/Royal Portbury Docks is the UK's most centrally located deep water port and can handle vessels up to 130,000 dwt. Its central location and direct access to motorway and railway makes it a very economical port distribution location. Despite these enviable strategic transport connections, there is a continuing need to reduce congestion and improve East/West connectivity and accessibility to employment, particularly in rural areas.

North Somerset benefits from the designation of J21 as an Enterprise Area, offering 72 hectares of employment land with planning permission and access, excellent transport links and a highly skilled workforce. Already home to several global and national companies as well as a range of growing SMEs, J21 provides significant scope for further growth. The highly skilled workforce is supported by the growth of Weston College, which is now able to offer degree courses in partnership with the universities of Bath Spa and the University of West of England (UWE). Weston College has invested heavily in state-of-the-art facilities and has developed its Higher Education offer with a new Professional Services Academy which will be a significant asset for the area.

A full review of the strategic context together with a socio-economic profile of the area is included as an appendix to this document.

## Introduction

This document sets out a refreshed Economic Plan for North Somerset covering the period from 2017 to 2036. It updates the original plan produced by North Somerset Council in 2013. Much has happened in the last four years nationally, regionally and locally and the updated plan provides an opportunity to capitalise on transformational opportunities that have arisen over this period.

Although not statutorily defined, responsibility for developing, guiding and promoting the economy of North Somerset rests primarily with the Council. The West of England Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), through its Strategic Economic Plan (SEP), sets the strategic context for delivery, influencing how government funding is spent on economic development activity regionally. The purpose of the North Somerset Economic Plan will be to provide a framework to guide and influence activity, resources and investment. It will help focus on the things that will generate the greatest returns to the North Somerset economy in the long run, and in simple terms, provide a statement of why North Somerset Council and partners are investing in some projects and not others.

North Somerset's economic development activity cannot be delivered in isolation – the North Somerset Economic Plan will enable the Council to build and develop relationships with a range of economic actors (public and private; local, regional and national), to maximise impact and secure additional investment for the area's businesses and residents.

This refresh has been informed by:

- A thorough review of the evidence base, ensuring there is a 'golden thread' running from the needs and opportunities of the area to the proposed activities;
- A clear understanding of the strategic context, nationally, sub-regionally and locally – ensuring that the Plan aligns with the West of England's Strategic Economic Plan as well as North Somerset Council's Corporate Plan;
- An inclusive process of consultation with key businesses and stakeholders in all stages of development; and,
- A steering group consisting of North Somerset Council, North Somerset Enterprise Agency, Weston College and the West of England LEP.

## The Strategic and Economic Landscape

This Economic Plan is being produced during a time of considerable change, nationally and regionally. At a national level the Government is developing its *negotiating position on Europe*, the outcome of which could arguably have the most far-reaching consequences for the economy and society that the country has seen in decades. At the same time it is developing a '*Modern Industrial Strategy*' to '*deliver a high skilled, competitive economy that benefits people throughout the UK*'. With messages coming through about the role of *science, innovation and technology* there is also a focus on addressing *productivity challenges*.

Regionally, a West of England *Regional Strategy* is in development, alongside the *Joint Spatial Strategy and Transport Study*. A West of England Combined Authority (WECA) covering the three unitary authority areas of Bath & North East Somerset, Bristol and South Gloucestershire, has been established.

With good relationships already in place with its West of England neighbours, North Somerset will continue to play a pro-active role in the broader regional agenda whilst also building on its increasingly strong links with national government. It will also need to maximise the benefits stemming from wider initiatives in the South West and Wales such as *Hinkley Point C*, whilst also minimising any associated risks. More locally, it will be important to capitalise on broader West of England growth projects, such as the Growth Hub and Metrobus.

North Somerset has a *diverse and growing economy* with the number of active enterprises having expanded by 10.2% since 2009 which is higher than the rate of growth for England. Structurally, North Somerset's business sectors follow a similar profile to the national average, although a granular analysis does reveal

some niche areas (including logistics and food and drink). As well as a healthy private sector, North Somerset benefits from 556 registered charities, with volunteers providing 60,832 hours per week of time, valued at £32m. **The visitor economy is also important to the area**, with 540,000 staying visitor trips and 7.4m day visitor trips. Tourists are estimated to spend £364,544,000 in North Somerset, supporting 6,811 jobs, which is approximately 7% of all employment<sup>1</sup>. Whilst this is significant, it is a lower proportion than seen in all other counties in the South West and expenditure per visitor is also below that of the wider area. Stakeholders highlighted the visitor economy as a potential area for growth highlighting a number of existing cultural assets including the Mendip Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, stunning coastline enjoyed by a thriving windsport community, Tyntesfield National Trust Property and Clevedon Pier.

**SPOTLIGHT ON A LOCAL BUSINESS: BRISTOL PORT** as one of the UK's major ports, offers the full range of

marine, cargo handling, warehousing, logistics and distribution services. Based in the South West of the UK, Bristol Port is the UK's only deep water port to have direct motorway and rail connections to all points of the compass. Able to handle vessels of up to 130,000dwt; its extensive handling equipment, transit storage and location, close to the heart of the UK, make the Port a superb facility for export and import of goods to and from the UK.



It is major employer in the South West region with 550 directly employed members of staff and a total of 7,500 people working within the Dock Estate. The company and the businesses on the site contribute 1 billion GDP per year and is crucial to the local, regional and national economy. The Port continuously engages with local schools and colleges and has an active and successful apprenticeship scheme. Bristol Port has a heritage in North Somerset spanning over 40 years and looks forward to representing this successful region for years to come.

For John Chaplin, Director of External Affairs & Special Projects *“Royal Portbury Dock is situated in North Somerset and provides cargo handling and storage for the deep-sea vessels that connect the Port to the Far East, Mediterranean, USA and elsewhere. The landside connectivity by road and rail with the very high quality of life on offer in North Somerset are a winning combination for our business.”*

More generally, **labour productivity has improved at an impressive rate** of more than 4% per year since 2004 which has significantly improved North Somerset's position relative to the other authorities in the LEP area. However, productivity per full time worker is still at only 97.4% of the GB average, suggesting that there is **more work to be done**. There is evidence to suggest that the area may not perform as well as its counterparts **on innovation indicators** and there is also **room for improvement on exporting**, both of which could help to close this gap.

Further, some local businesses report **skills shortages and difficulties in attracting the right candidates** which can constrain their growth. There are **reasonably high qualification levels** in North Somerset with the area having seen a considerable reduction in the number of people with no qualifications since 2012. However, at higher qualification levels, neighbouring unitary authorities perform better and it will be important to continue work with the area's excellent education providers to **ensure that skills levels match current and future demand**. Data shows, for example that North Somerset pupils are taking STEM A-levels at similar proportions to those seen nationally, however, we can see that girls in North Somerset are less likely to take STEM A-levels than their counterparts in England which is important given the strong and robust correlation between the employment of **STEM graduates and Highly Innovative Firms**.

<sup>1</sup> South West Research Company, 2016

**SPOTLIGHT ON A LOCAL BUSINESS: VIPER INNOVATIONS** is based in Portishead, provides consultancy services and pioneering products to the subsea oil and gas sector. Its customers range from the international and independent oil companies to the first tier suppliers of those companies. It recently won a Queens Award for Enterprise for its ground-breaking V-LIFE Electrical Insulation Resistance Improvement System. The company has seen year-on-year growth having invested heavily in research and development which has resulted in a number of patents.



For Viper's MD, Neil Douglas, *"North Somerset is a great area for staff to live and work, which, coupled with excellent road, rail and flight communications as well as local hubs of academic excellence in Universities and colleges make it a superb location for companies to be based"*.

Importantly, North Somerset also experiences a **lower than average jobs density**. Only 74% of working age people are able to be employed in the area, compared to the GB average of 82%, with a **net out-commuting population of 14,000 workers** (i.e. 14,000 more people commute out of the area to work than commute in). Although not unexpected given the proximity to Bristol, this does suggest an opportunity to create more local jobs. Looking to the future, forecasts produced by Oxford Economics indicate that by 2030, North Somerset could have a jobs growth of between 19% and 27%. Whilst the occupational profile currently shows a higher than average proportion of managers, directors and senior officials, as well as associate professional and technical occupations in North Somerset, it is predicted that this profile could become 'hollowed out' with fewer middle ranking occupations.

Overall there are **high employment levels in North Somerset** but the profile also shows a higher than average number of part-time workers and **high levels of self-employment**, particularly in rural areas which potentially points to issues of **under-employment and the need for progression pathways**. Significantly, the median gross weekly pay for full time workers resident in North Somerset is £565 which is higher than England and the city region averages but the median full time workplace earnings are only £518 which is lower. This is largely accounted for by the high levels of out-commuting to more specialised jobs elsewhere and highlights a need not only for more jobs to be created within the area, but the **need specifically for more high value jobs**.



**SPOTLIGHT ON A LOCAL BUSINESS: PURECOMMS** is an award winning Telecoms and IT provider with offices in Tickenham (North Somerset) and St Austell (Cornwall). It provides Telecoms and IT solutions and services for businesses across the South West and the UK, offering unified communications (VoIP/hosted,

lines/calls, Wi-Fi, mobiles, cabling, network services, licences etc.) and state-of-the-art technology. Established in 2009, the company's turnover has grown from zero to £2m, and has seen the business win several awards including 'Reseller of the Year' (national award) in December 2016. Co-op, Bristol Airport, Bonhams, Redrock, Mark Templar, Inns of Devon and Cornwall and North Somerset Enterprise Agency/The Hive are amongst clients, which range from SMEs through to large corporates.

CEO, Rob Vivian says that *"North Somerset is a perfect place to do business. It has ideal links to other parts of the UK and we have found an exciting pool of talented people based here. We are looking forward to continuing our growth over the next few years from our base in North Somerset."*

It should also be borne in mind that North Somerset has a somewhat **skewed population profile** with a clear gap in the 18-25 age band caused by high levels of outward migration. This loss of young adults is most likely



accounted for by students leaving the area for Higher Education but, given that the 25-40 age band does not regain the population lost at 18-25, it suggests that young people are leaving and not returning. There is coupled with a large proportion of over 65s in the area, with high levels **of inward migration as this age group look to retire**. Overall, this results in a smaller than average working age population.

Positively, the **unemployment rate** for North Somerset is 3.6% which compares very favourably with the national average of 5.1% and there are comparatively **low levels of young people 'Not in Education, Employment or Training'** (NEET). However, some wards, particularly in Weston-super-Mare, do experience entrenched levels of worklessness and deprivation and initiatives have been put in place to address them. Rural deprivation was also noted by stakeholders, but is rarely picked up in statistics. Additionally, 10.3% of the working age population in North Somerset are in receipt of benefits, the most significant being Employment Support Allowance (ESA) or Incapacity Benefits (IB), where the claimant rate is slightly higher than the national average. Many of these claimants have mental health and behaviour disorders. The four main towns of Weston-super-Mare, Portishead, Clevedon and Nailsea provide a varied cultural offer and there is an identified **need to ensure that North Somerset's towns and villages are vibrant places where people want to live and work; and where businesses want to locate**. Exciting plans are already in place for some significant redevelopments, including Coastal Communities Funding in Clevedon.

These plans will need to take into account a number of **infrastructural advantages and challenges**. Whilst on the one hand the area has **excellent proximity to transport links including the motorway, Bristol Airport and the Port, there are nevertheless congestion and accessibility issues**, as well as digital connectivity and mobile 'not spots', although mobile coverage is broadly good. There are also some environmental constraints on development which affects both housing and employment sites. Whilst there are a number of sites and premises already in existence across North Somerset including the **flagship Junction 21 Enterprise Area** which, amongst other things supports the Food and Drink Innovation Centre, a need has been identified for a **more varied range of sites to support growing businesses, alongside more targeted business support**.



**SPOTLIGHT ON: Bristol Airport** is the fifth largest UK airport outside London. In 2016 Bristol Airport handled over 7.5 million passengers, with planning approval in place to expand to handle ten million passengers per annum with over £150m investment in facilities since 2010. Scheduled and charter airlines contributed to the growth taking the total

number of destinations served to 116, including 16 capital cities across 30 countries and with multiple daily services to major international hubs such as Amsterdam, Brussels, Dublin providing access to hundreds of onward connections. In 2016 for the second year running Bristol was named the UK's most punctual airport in a league table measuring on-time performance compiled by leading global aviation provider OAG based on more than 50 million flight records. Over 3,000 employees work for over 50 businesses on-site and create £388 million in GVA. The Airport plays a crucial role in the area's Visitor Economy and has created a Local Community Fund to support local projects.

## Approach to Growth

Statistically North Somerset has a relatively strong economy, its businesses exhibit productivity levels similar to the national average, which is rare outside of London and the South East. Similarly, its employment levels and activity levels are above average and its workforce is well qualified. It benefits from a strong strategic location in the UK, with local businesses able to connect to markets in the UK and beyond, through the strategic transport network and international ports and airports. This provides a good foundation from which to build. However, whilst North Somerset has strong economic foundations, it also experiences a number of challenges which must be addressed if it is to achieve long term, sustainable growth. These include:

- **Productivity challenges** – whilst North Somerset’s businesses demonstrate relatively good productivity, nationally the UK ranks poorly in global comparisons, which means that UK businesses struggle to compete in the global marketplace. There will be an on-going need to ensure that North Somerset’s businesses remain competitive by addressing the main productivity drivers: Innovation, Exports, Enterprise, Skills and Investment.
- **Lower than average wages** – whilst resident wages are compare favourably with national averages, the average wages of people employed within North Somerset are below average. Again this points to a need to attract better paid and higher value jobs to the area.
- **A shortage of young people in the population** – which reflects the fact that many young people leave the area to study at 18, but do not necessarily return later in life. This skews the population profile and denies North Somerset’s businesses the opportunity to benefit from the energy, enthusiasm and creativity that young people bring.
- **A low employment density** – which reflects high levels of out-commuting to higher value job opportunities in neighbouring areas. Whilst this suits individual’s needs and is unsurprising given its position in the city region, high levels of out-commuting can be detrimental to local centres and have a high environmental costs. In order to improve the job density in North Somerset, it will be necessary to attract better paid and higher value jobs to the area.
- **Economic distinctiveness** – North Somerset has a diverse range of businesses and sectors and is very similar economically to the national profile, which means that whilst it is not overly reliant on one industry sector, it struggles to have a distinct identity. On the one hand this makes it harder to ‘sell’ the area to potential inward investors but on the other hand there is space for new ideas to grow. The evidence base points to a number of opportunities to cultivate emerging niches/opportunities such as food and drink, professional services, nuclear, creative/digital and hi-tech industries.
- **Attractiveness** – businesses highlighted the need to build on the general attractiveness of the area as a place to live and visit, emphasising the link between the area’s attractiveness and their ability to recruit a talented workforce. Much work is currently underway to improve the attractiveness of towns in North Somerset, in particular Weston-super-Mare, which has high levels of deprivation in key wards in the town centre. These efforts and those of partners, such as Weston College provide a platform to re-position North Somerset as an attractive place to live, work and visit.

North Somerset also benefits from a number of opportunities to address these challenges, which include:

- **Being part of the West of England** - known for its high value-added industries, universities and cultural offer. This proximity means that North Somerset is able to benefit from ‘agglomeration effects’, ‘piggy-backing’ growth on the wider development of clusters, knowledge based assets and opportunities that a successful city region can provide to businesses. North Somerset must capitalise on this economic relationship by aligning activity with growth clusters and opportunities in the region; presenting its offer as part of the city region offer; and, using the asset base (i.e. universities, cultural attractions etc.) to attract investment.
- **Scope for high value employment growth** - through strategic employment locations and connectivity including the Enterprise Area, Airport, Port and key towns. These provide an



opportunity to support the retention and expansion of the area's most cutting edge and innovative companies as a driver of productivity growth, as well as attract inward investment. A key challenge is therefore to ensure that these sites are developed to provide the necessary grow on space for growing businesses.

- **Proximity to Hinkley Point C** - the largest engineering project in Europe, anticipated to create 25,000 jobs and supply chain opportunities across the South West. North Somerset is well positioned to benefit from: significant supply chain opportunities; utilising J21 EA as a 'landing' space for Hinkley related inward investment; and new job opportunities created through the development and operational phases, helping to raise the skills and earnings levels of the local workforce. However, it will also be important to recognise that a project like Hinkley may result in skills shortages for existing businesses and this situation needs to be planned for.
- **An Ambitious College of Further and Higher Education and close proximity to four other universities** - the growth of Weston College including University Centre Weston provides a unique opportunity to retain and attract young people in to the area to study. Combined with its proximity to other universities, wider improvements to the attractiveness of the area and efforts to attract higher value employment opportunities, the growth of the college could provide a tangible mechanism for addressing the demographic challenge.
- **Enterprise trends** - reflecting the fact that since 2000, the growth of the business population in the UK has been driven by a rise in self-employment and the very smallest businesses – highlighting the importance of micro-businesses, sole proprietorships and self-employment to economic growth. This trend reflects a wider social trend and opportunities for people to work at home, taking advantage of improvements to broadband to set up and run businesses in ways not seen 20 years ago. North Somerset has an opportunity to capitalise on this trend by supporting entrepreneurship and micro business starts.

## Productivity or Employment Led Growth?

There is considerable debate in North Somerset about how growth should be achieved. On the one hand, it is argued that in order to establish North Somerset as a significant business location in its own right, it is necessary to create more jobs in North Somerset. However, others are concerned that creating more jobs alone will lower the area's productivity – especially if additional employment is in lower value sectors or not matched with a growth in the areas output.

Evidence shows that high levels of productivity underpin regional competitiveness, material well-being and sustainable economic growth. However, targeting productivity /efficiency alone, in the absence of growth in output, would result in job losses and rising unemployment. However, if productivity improvements are set within the context of increasing growth, they improve the competitiveness of local businesses, enabling them to invest and grow.

Therefore it is argued that productivity should not be targeted relentlessly or exclusively, but it is possible to achieve improvements in productivity at the economy level, by focusing on wider drivers of productivity and growth, i.e. sectoral composition, skills, inward investment, innovation, enterprise and competition.

Given the national emphasis on addressing the productivity challenge, this plan focuses on the drivers of productivity in order to achieve long term sustainable growth, whilst ensuring that employment opportunities are maintained.

# Strategic Ambition

## Ambition

At the heart of our economic plan is our ambition for North Somerset:

*To be a vibrant and successful place to live, work and study, with a distinct identity and quality of life that attracts and retains enterprise, investment, young people and visitors.*

This ambition will be achieved in full by 2036, with significant and tangible progress made by 2025.

## Mission

The Plan outlines the continuing mission for North Somerset Council and its partners:

*To champion North Somerset and provide the strategic leadership necessary for transformational economic change.*

## Strategic Objectives

To further support our ambition, the Council and its partners will continue to pursue five Strategic Objectives

- **Strategic Objective 1: To create the conditions for higher value local employment** - to raise average wages and raise standards of living, recognising the need for a range of job opportunities for all;
- **Strategic Objective 2: To grow and enhance the competitiveness of our businesses base** – to address the productivity challenge;
- **Strategic Objective 3: To foster a culture of enterprise, innovation and aspiration** – to become an outstanding place to start and grow a business;
- **Strategic Objective 4: To enhance the area's skills profile** – to meet the needs of the current and future economy; and,
- **Strategic Objective 5: To nurture and build on the area's distinctive identity** – to attract and retain young people, families, visitors and investment.

These objectives will be delivered through four investment themes, with activity cutting across all five strategic objectives:

- Facilities and Infrastructure;
- People and Skills;
- Competitive Businesses and Enterprise; and,
- Quality Places.

Each of these investment themes are described in more detail overleaf.

## Investment Themes

The diagram below illustrates how the investment themes contribute to each of the strategic objectives, with thicker arrows indicating a stronger contribution.





## Theme 1: Facilities and Infrastructure

### What are we trying to achieve?

Theme 1: Facilities and Infrastructure			
Improving transport/accessibility /connectivity	Creating the right employment space in the right locations	Ensuring sustainable housing growth	Expanding HE/FE provision and facilities

### What is already happening?



#### West of England Joint Spatial Plan and Transport Study

- Shared vision for growth and development across 4 UAs
- Identifies where growth will be located
- Identifies the transport infrastructure required to unlock this



#### Weston College

- Continued expansion of Weston College facilities and South West Skills Campus
- Law & Professional Services Academy
- University Centre Weston



#### Junction 21 Enterprise Area

- 72 ha of employment land on J21
- Designated as an Enterprise Area
- Should create 9-10,000 jobs by 2030
- Including 'The Hive' Enterprise Hub and incubation space



#### Food Enterprise Zone

- 10 acre zone at Junction 21
- Simplified planning
- Focus on food and drink manufacturing and supply chain opportunities
- Food Innovation Centre (Foodworks<sup>SW</sup>)



#### SME Start-up & Growth Hubs

- Easy access workspace
- The Hive Phase 1
- Kesterel Court, Portishead
- Planned creative hubs for Weston and Clevedon



#### Connecting Devon and Somerset

- Phase 2 contract about to start
- Aiming to take 'superfast' coverage from 90% to 95% by December 2017



#### South Bristol Link/MetroWest

- £47m link between A370 Long Ashton and Hengrove Park
- Improving accessibility to South Bristol and reduce congestion in North Somerset
- Improving access to Bristol Airport

## What do we need to do next?

### Short-term (0-2 years)

- Conduct an employment land review to identify availability of sites, scope for expansion and opportunities to develop a network of incubator facilities
- Develop a masterplan for key locations linked to a cluster development strategy and business support
- Build Foodworks SW, a new flagship regional Food Innovation Centre at J21 EA
- Ensure next generation digital connectivity and telecommunications technology is supplied into new premises and workplaces
- Work with public sector agencies, planning and developers to ensure sustainability and resilience of developments

### Medium-term (1-5 years)

- Develop a Council-led Infrastructure Plan to prioritise major investment for economic return, linked to the Joint Spatial Plan and Joint Transport Study
- Re-open Portishead Rail
- Attract investment at J21 EA
- Working with the Connecting Devon and Somerset Partnership and others, secure investment in digital connectivity including innovative technologies
- Develop a food & drink manufacturing cluster through the Food Enterprise Zone at J21 EA
- Develop a network of small incubator and grow on facilities across the area including expansion of the Hive and creative hubs in Weston and Clevedon
- Work with public and private sector partners to reduce the number of mobile 'not spots'
- Through Weston College Group and the University Centre Weston, develop further HE/FE infrastructure in North Somerset

### Long-term (4-20 years)







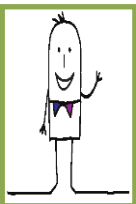
- Work with partners to bring forward viable 'big ticket' transport projects including: J21a improvements, A38 corridor improvements, airport accessibility, Portishead Rail, Metrobus and improved East/West linkages
- Work with partners to maximise the role of the airport and port as strategic employment locations
- Develop projects, facilities and infrastructure at key strategic employment locations
- Enhance rail connectivity to Bristol and London

## Theme 2: People and Skills

What are we trying to achieve?

Theme 2: People and Skills			
Retaining and nurturing talent	Developing local employability and workforce skills	Creating a range of job opportunities	Addressing under-employment and providing pathways to progression

What is already happening?

 <p><b>Team North Somerset</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multi-agency, coordinated support to individuals furthest from the labour market</li> <li>• Local delivery arm of WoE Building Better Opportunities programme</li> </ul>	 <p><b>Weston College</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Award winning outstanding college</li> <li>• Creation of University Centre with UWE and Bath Spa University</li> <li>• Law &amp; Professional Services Academy</li> <li>• Supporting HPC supply chain businesses</li> <li>• Growth of apprenticeship provision</li> </ul>
 <p><b>North Somerset Enterprise and Technology College</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 14-19 provider in Weston</li> <li>• Focus on Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths to meet employer needs</li> </ul>	 <p><b>Enterprise Advisor Network</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding for West of England LEP's Enterprise Advisor Network</li> <li>• Enhancing linked between business and education to develop fully inclusive careers and enterprise strategies</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Sector Based Work Academies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helping meet employers' immediate and future recruitment needs</li> <li>• Recruiting a workforce with the right skills to sustain and grow businesses</li> </ul>	 <p><b>Hinkley Point Training Agency</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acting as a facilitator for skills interventions for HPC</li> <li>• Vehicle through which employers, providers and key local stakeholders can collaborate to develop / access solutions</li> </ul>
 <p><b>westonworks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One stop skills and jobs shop</li> <li>• Community Resource – independent &amp; impartial advice since 2009</li> <li>• Skills matching service</li> </ul>	



### Short-term (0-2 years)

- Working in partnership, deliver the outcomes for West of England Works in North Somerset to support those furthest from employment
- Promote work experience, apprenticeships and traineeship options with employers
- Roll out Sector Based Work Academies to help address worklessness
- Commission a survey of skills supply and demand for North Somerset's businesses
- Capitalise on HPTA to maximise benefits to North Somerset residents
- Deliver the Skills4Work programme at Dolphin Square
- Develop a programme of volunteering to help people progress into and through work
- Work with the Careers Education Information Advice & Guidance (CEIAG) Network and others to deliver progression options for children, young people and adults

### Medium-term (1-5 years)

- Continue working with Weston College and local universities to ensure there is growth in their offer, matched to local business needs
- Implement a coherent careers and progression strategy for young people and adults, building on identified good practice to address under-employment
- Work with local providers to establish effective graduate placement and internship programmes to help nurture and retain talent
- Implement models such as placement schemes with HPTA that businesses can access
- Use best practice to develop models of delivery which enable equal opportunities for both the employed and unemployed
- Enhance life-long learning and community based training and skills projects through additional business engagement
- Develop a project that supports businesses to recognise talent (as well as skills) in recruitment practices

### Long-term (4-20 years)

- Continue working with Weston College and other providers to ensure that all young people have the opportunity to choose a higher education route (academic or vocational) locally should they wish to
- With WoE partners, develop a skills planning and progression framework to ensure stronger links between business providers and residents

## Theme 3: Competitive Business and Enterprise

### What are we trying to achieve?

Theme 3: Competitive Business and Enterprise			
Developing niche cluster and supply chains	Supporting start-ups and growth	Enabling self-employment and home working	Attracting high value, high profile businesses to the area

### What is already happening?




**Invest in Bristol & Bath**

- Shared inward investment service for West of England
- Develops investment propositions to position area's assets on a national and international stage



**Food Works<sup>SW</sup>**

- Supports start-ups, growth and innovation
- Within the Food Enterprise Zone Foodworks<sup>SW</sup> will provide a comprehensive business support offer for food and drink businesses



**North Somerset Enterprise Agency**

- Based at 'The Hive' incubation space
- Start-up/grow on business advice for tenants



**Business Networks**

- Business Ambassador Programme
- North Somerset Manufacturing Group
- North Somerset Tourism Group
- North Somerset Council Business Engagement Programme



**Hinkley Supply Chain**

- 365 businesses supported by wider Somerset Chamber project
- Dedicated support package for North Somerset businesses



**Enterprising West of England**

- EU funded programme led by Business West
- Package of support for business start-up and early growth SMEs



**West of England Growth Hub**

- On-line diagnostic and brokerage tool
- Offer includes: finance assistance, support for high growth businesses, access to skills packages, manufacturing, innovation and research advice and export support



**Weston Creative Hub**

- Provides space for small creative businesses to grow and develop
- Combination of flexible work space and support for entrepreneurs to launch and develop their businesses

## What do we need to do next?

### Short-term (0-2 years)

- Map key clusters and develop business forums to encourage collaboration and supply chain development (linking with the wider city region) including smart energy
- Develop a business mentors programme, capitalising on the skills of the Business Ambassadors and other volunteers
- Work with FE providers to develop a programme of enterprise and business skills
- Review planning processes to identify opportunities to support home-working and home start-up
- Identify gaps in business support and advice for productivity growth - including exporting and innovation
- Maximise the impact of EU funded projects locally such as Enterprising WoE
- Develop a tailored business support package for high growth indigenous companies via the council's Business Engagement Programme
- Create a package of targeted support for businesses with an opportunity to supply to Hinkley

### Medium-term (1-5 years)

- Develop a coherent narrative and offer to promote opportunities in key clusters
- Work with education providers to ensure that their offer aligns with cluster needs
- Explore opportunities to develop commercial twinning programmes with towns & cities elsewhere
- Working with partners, develop a programme of business support and advice to address identified gaps
- Develop a portfolio of 'grow on' and hybrid facilities to retain start-ups and SMEs locally
- Work with the port, airport and DIT to develop a campaign to encourage exporters/importers to use their local ports/airports, as part of wider support to exporting

### Long-term (4-20 years)

- Attract high value inward investment capitalising on identified niche clusters, supply chains and strategic transport connectivity (port and airport)
- Create a network of business incubation and support hubs across North Somerset



## Theme 4: Quality Places

### What are we trying to achieve?

Quality Places			
Developing vibrant and thriving town centres and villages	Enhancing the visitor economy	Building on the area's cultural identity	Reducing inequality and building community cohesion

### What is already happening?

 <p><b>North Somerset Tourism Group</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Networking group to share ideas, best practice and collaborative approaches</li> <li>• Network of visitor centres</li> </ul>	 <p><b>Weston Town Centre Regeneration</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Masterplan for Weston</li> <li>• University campus and new homes</li> <li>• £20m investment by Homes and Communities Agency</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Economic Plan for Clevedon</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aims to enhance Clevedon's seafront for residents and visitors including the Pier</li> <li>• Developing a Cultural Quarter and Creative Economy Hub</li> </ul>	 <p><b>Tropicana</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development as an iconic cultural destination and events space</li> <li>• Development manager employed</li> <li>• Working in partnership with local organisations</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Weston Museum</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transferred to Town Council and secured £1m through Heritage Lottery Fund and DCLG's Coastal Revival Fund for major redevelopment and modernisation</li> </ul>	 <p><b>Made in North Somerset</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Celebration of local food, drink and creativity, including meet the maker</li> <li>• Significant regional cultural event</li> <li>• 5 years old</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Bristol and Bath Cultural Destinations Project</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funded by Arts Council and Visit England</li> <li>• Promoting cultural offer to new visitor markets and overseas visitors</li> </ul>	 <p><b>JSP &amp; Place Making</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shared approach to developing quality places across the West of England which provides the homes and jobs that people need and the supporting infrastructure</li> </ul>

## What do we need to do next?

### Short-term (0-2 years)

- Map the area's cultural offer and develop a cultural strategy for the whole area
- Develop vision and brand concept(s) linked to wider City region (e.g. Plymouth's Ocean City)
- Work with local businesses to develop a pro-active retail strategy for all towns
- Explore the use of Business Improvement Districts to fund improvements in all town centres
- Develop clear spatial plans that integrate retail/cultural offer and facilities within all towns
- Continue the delivery of Weston Regeneration Programme, sharing best practice across other North Somerset towns

### Medium-term (1-5 years)

- Support the development of cultural facilities and assets such as the Tropicana, Curzon Cinema, Piers and seafront heritage
- Work with key partners to develop a cultural quarter and creative economy hub in Clevedon town centre based on the Curzon Cinema and adjoining areas
- Work with tourism businesses to improve their offer and upgrade facilities to attract staying visitors
- Develop a strategic and integrated approach to the visitor economy and destination management across the West of England
- Build on the role of Bristol Airport and port as gateways to the North Somerset region, developing targeted support packages for international investors
- Develop an approach to improving the quality of the built environment

### Long-term (4-20 years)

- Develop large exhibition space and conference centre to attract business visitors year round
- Work with key partners to position North Somerset/West of England assets on international stage to increase volume and value of visitor spend
- Develop a high-end hotel investment campaign to attract new brands to North Somerset

## Outcomes and Targets

We will measure our success against eight core outcome indicators:

Core Outcome	Baseline Position	By 2020	By 2036
<b>Increase labour productivity</b>	97.4% of GB average	Match GB average	Exceed GB average
<b>Increase wages for people working in North Somerset</b>	Median full time workplace earnings are £518 in North Somerset compared to £544 in England (95%)	Reduce the gap in workplace earnings between North Somerset and England average	Match workplace earnings
<b>Increase jobs density</b>	74% of the working age population are able to be employed in the area compared to 83% for GB	Reduce the gap in employment density between North Somerset and GB average	Halve the gap in employment density between North Somerset and the GB average
<b>Maintain healthy enterprise rates</b>	The number of active enterprises grew by 10.2% between 2009 and 2015, higher than the rate of growth for England of 9.5%	Maintain a growth rate above the England average	Maintain a growth rate above the England average
<b>Increase the number of businesses employing between 10 and 49 people</b>	In 2016, there were 750 businesses employing 10-49 people, up from 620 in 2011.	Increase the number of businesses employing between 10 and 49 people by 10%.	Increase the number of businesses employing between 10 and 49 people by 25%
<b>Increase higher level skills in the population</b>	In 2015, 36.7% of North Somerset's working age population held at least an NVQ Level 4+ qualification, compared to 43.6% in the West of England LEP area	Reduce the gap in higher level skills between North Somerset and the LEP area	Match the higher level skills profile of the West of England
<b>Reduce levels of deprivation</b>	In 2015, North Somerset 5 LSOAs in the most deprived 5% in the UK	Reduce the number of LSOAs in most deprived 5%	No LSOAs in the most deprived 5%
<b>Increase visitor spending</b>	Expenditure per day visitor and staying visitor is lower in North Somerset than the WoE	Reduce the gap in visitor expenditure between North Somerset and WoE	Match visitor expenditure between North Somerset and WoE

## Managing Delivery

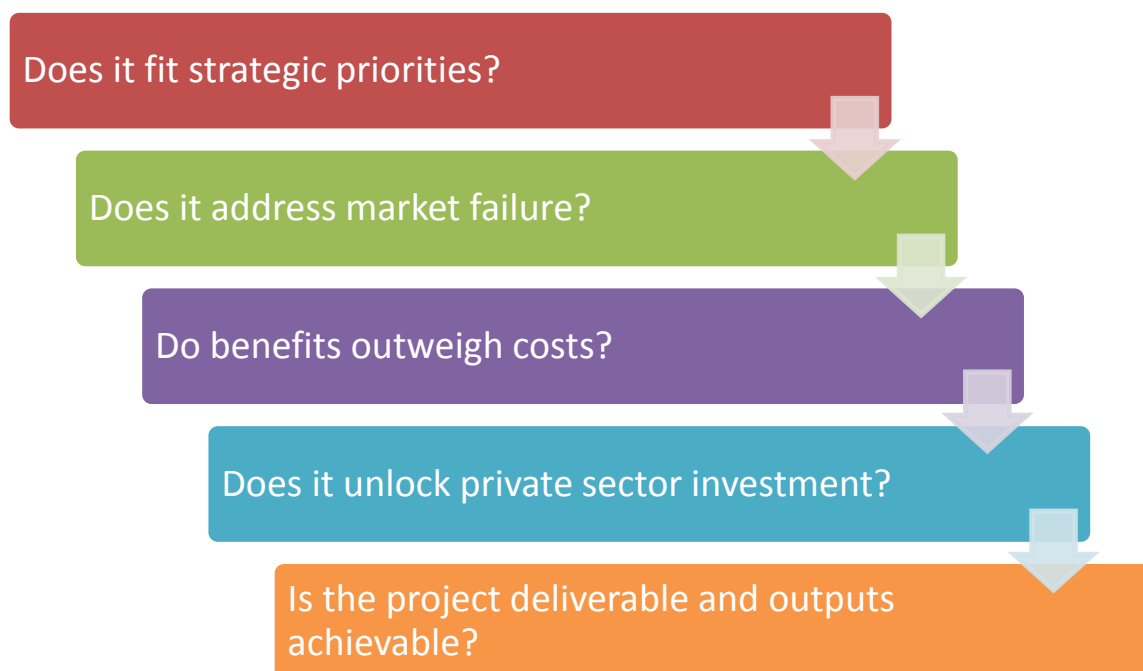
North Somerset Council is committed to working with its partners and stakeholders across the LEP area and nationally to deliver the overall ambition and four strategic objectives outlined above. The main mechanisms for achieving these objectives have been set out in our four investment themes.

However, it is important to recognise that whilst some existing activities are already funded, the Plan itself does not have a dedicated resource to deliver these investment themes. Therefore the process for delivery through to 2030 is likely to involve:

- Direct delivery of activities (e.g. commercial property assets);
- Bidding for future national/international funding programmes – Growth Deal/Coastal Communities Funding etc.;
- Working in partnership with West of England partners/LEP/National Government and influencing policies such as the Industrial Strategy;
- Working in partnership with other sub-regional agencies such as Destination Bristol and Invest Bristol and Bath; and,
- Working with local partner agencies, learning institutions, social enterprise and trusts, and the business community;
- Influencing central government partners and agencies, such as the Department of International Trade to ensure national programmes are relevant to the needs of businesses in North Somerset.

## Prioritising Investment

The North Somerset Economic Plan provides the strategic backdrop for development and prioritisation of our economic interventions. In line with standard HM Treasury Green Book methodology, the decision making process should ask the following questions:





## Performance Management and Governance

It is recommended that a private sector led 'Growth Board' be established to take forward the Plan and ensure shared ownership going forwards. Membership will be created around the core investment themes, with ad-hoc theme groups convened to feed into the Growth Board as necessary. This board will provide a strong business voice to influence local, sub-regional and national policy. The existing Business Ambassadors Group will act as the promotional arm of the strategic group.

The key functions of the Growth Board will include:

- On-going development of the Growth Strategy;
- Identification of strategic opportunities;
- Sharing intelligence and pooling resources;
- Prioritising and developing new projects;
- A formal partnership to support funding bids;
- Advisor to North Somerset Partnership on economic growth issues;
- Lobbying locally and nationally;
- Linking to the Business Ambassadors Network; and,
- Scrutinising delivery of West of England initiatives.

## Values

Our actions will be guided by the following values:

- Being proud of and ambitious for North Somerset;
- Being open-minded to exploring ideas and new ways of working;
- Acting with integrity and behaving responsibly;
- Demonstrating strong leadership;
- Providing equality of opportunity for all our people and businesses, including those in the most remote areas; and,
- Being focused on actions and outcomes.





