

The North East Strategic Economic Plan

Creating more and better jobs

Executive summary

January 2022





Our long-term plan at a time of change

The North East Strategic Economic Plan sets out the region's long-term framework for improving our economy, delivering 100,000 more and better jobs and creating a more productive, sustainable and inclusive region.

The North East Strategic Economic Plan was published in 2014 and sets out an evidence-led, ten-year plan focusing on:

- Developing areas of our economy (tech, energy, health and life sciences and advanced manufacturing) and programmes of work (business growth, innovation, skills, investment and infrastructure, and transport connectivity) where there is an opportunity for growth and productivity
- Improving the economic, social, cultural and physical foundations of our region across our towns, cities, and rural areas
- Strengthening our contribution to levelling up the national economy.

Our Plan was developed collaboratively, with input from business, public, education and third sector partners. Our delivery model is flexible yet robust, focused on securing investment and taking action.

Over the past seven years, we have made a difference. Our interim independent evaluation stated that:

"The North East Strategic Economic Plan has played a key role in the economic development of the North East LEP area, particularly in the development of a cohesive and unifying voice and set of objectives [and] interim value for money assessment of the Local Growth Funding and Enterprise Zone programmes have indicated good to very good value for money in line with national benchmarks".

COVID-19 and the longer-term transition to a future outside of the European Union have together disrupted the way we do business at home and overseas, and the way we live and spend our time.

Whilst there has been opportunity for many – individual businesses, creative entrepreneurs and whole sectors have found new markets and enjoyed stimulus – others have faced challenges – unemployment, ill health and insecurity, disrupted markets and business processes, and disconnection for individuals and communities.

We've also seen sharpened global focus and regional urgency around climate, demographic and technological change.

I am encouraged that the core principles in our long-term regional plan are strongly aligned to government's priorities. Enhanced investment and joint working between government and regional partners can provide us with an opportunity to deliver the aims identified in our Plan and to support government in its mission to level up the UK economy. We can do this by delivering on our ambition to:

- Improve the quality of employment for our people and the infrastructure of our places
- Close the performance gap of the North East with England excluding London in productivity, private sector growth, employment and economic activity rates, in line with the government's vision to level up the UK
- Enhance our five programmes to drive competitiveness and deliver more and better jobs, giving a regional focus to the Plan for Growth
- Drive growth and exports through green energy, electrification, life sciences, manufacturing, and digital and knowledge intensive services supporting the ambitions of the national net zero and trade and export strategies
- Support younger and older people to find good work, and to support people in work to make progress in good careers, providing government with a strong partnership to support delivery of the Skills for Jobs White paper.

The region has shown strong and united commitment to the vision and the strategy set out within the North East Strategic Economic Plan – and now is no different. Our direction of travel remains clear and as government policy continues to emerge we are encouraged by the alignment.

However, our Plan is not static. We hold it under constant review, refreshing and refocusing as economic and policy circumstances develop. We will continue to be proactive in building the evidence and intelligence we need to make the right choices to evolve our Plan, and our region should have confidence in its shared approach and ambition.

Together with our partners we look forward to working with government to grow our economy, deliver more and better jobs for our region and to make our contribution to level up the UK economy.

Lucy Winskell OBE
Chair, North East Local Enterprise Partnership

The North East Strategic Economic Plan

What is the North East Strategic Economic Plan?

It is the North East's plan for growing and developing a more productive, inclusive and sustainable regional economy.



What does the Plan want to achieve?

The Plan's ambition is to increase the number of jobs in the North East by 100,000 between 2014 and 2024, with 70% of these being better jobs, defined as managerial, professional and technical roles.

In addition it aims to level up the region by closing gaps in our performance on productivity, employment, economic inclusion and the strength of our private sector.

What is the North East Local Enterprise Partnership and its role in delivering the Plan?

The North East Local Enterprise Partnership is a private, public and education sector partnership, supported by a small executive team that provides strong, collaborative leadership to support the growth and development of the North East economy.

The executive team works with partners to lead, facilitate and evaluate delivery of the Strategic Economic Plan.

It drives the ongoing development of the region's economic evidence base to ensure that the decisions are informed. It takes the lead on strategy and policy projects that can accelerate the ambitions of the Plan.

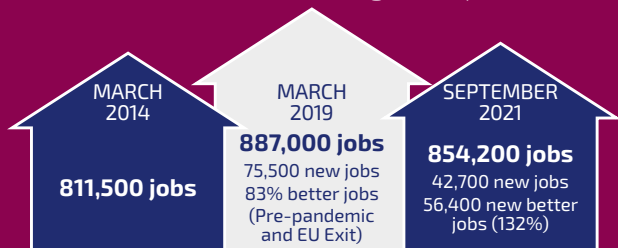
Why are we updating the Plan?

Our Plan is not static - we have always held it under constant review. Our strategy is and continues to be based on solid and thorough analysis of evidence and intelligence to understand opportunities and challenges and to adapt our delivery priorities to achieve our long term ambitions.

As we work through the immediate and longer term impact of COVID-19 and the transition from membership of the European Union, we need to respond to these changes for our businesses and residents. We have a range of assets which can make a significant impact on the global challenges of decarbonisation, technological and demographic change, and we want to sharpen our focus on these social and market opportunities in this update.

Levelling up the North East economy – progress to date

Our ambition is to create 100,000 more jobs between 2014 and 2024, with 70% of those being better jobs



By March 2020, employment in all jobs had increased by 42,700, with better jobs having reached 56,400.

The last two years has seen a subsequent reduction in overall jobs, with net growth falling to 42,700 by September 2021. The stock of better jobs has been more resilient with additional better jobs exceeding the fall in other jobs, meaning net growth of 132%, ahead of our target. A better job are classified as managerial, professional and technical roles.

Levelling up targets

We share government's ambition to level up the country and our region. We have identified four key economic performance gaps for our region to be addressed to achieve this ambition in relative levels of employment, economic inclusion, productivity and the proportion of jobs in businesses. We have set clear targets to close these gaps.

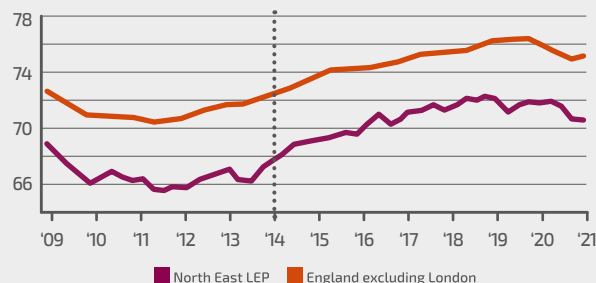
We have great potential in the region and closed these gaps towards these targets between 2014 and 2021, but the last two years has impacted on this progress.

A strong partnership with government, and investment and support for our programmes to support recovery of our economy will enable us to accelerate this progress and level up our region.



Employment rate

To close the gap between the North East LEP area and England excluding London by 100%.

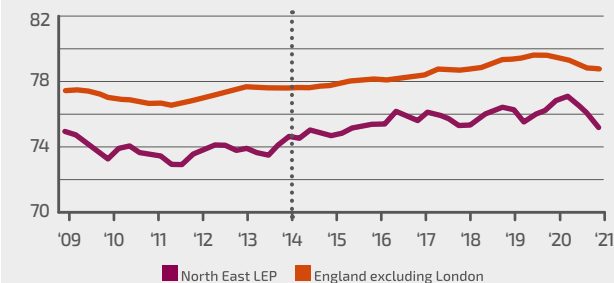


By September 2021, the gap had reduced by 15%. Some of the earlier reductions in the gap were reversed in the most recent year as the North East employment rate decreased faster than nationally.



Economic activity rate

To close the gap between the North East LEP area and England excluding London by 50%.

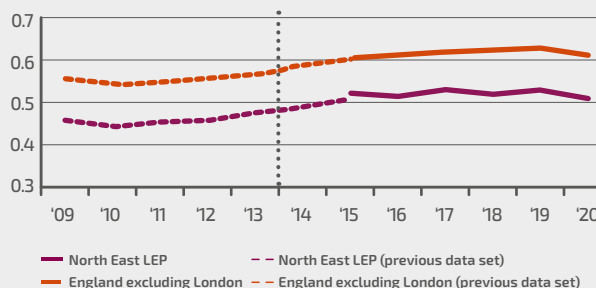


By September 2021, the gap had slightly widened rather than narrowing. Earlier progress towards the target had been completely reversed by the North East's much larger rate decrease in the most recent year.



Private sector employee jobs per working age person

To close the gap between the North East LEP area and England excluding London by 50%.

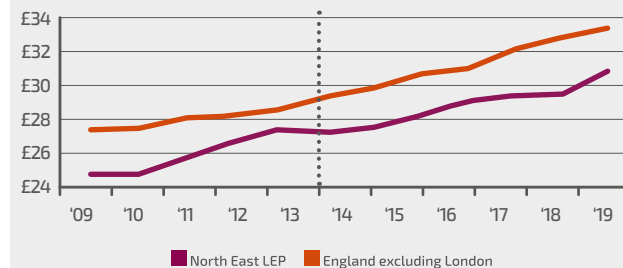


Between 2015 and 2020 the gap had widened by 23%. This was the result of a decrease of 2.0% in North East private sector employment combined with a 2.5% increase in England excluding London. The earliest consistent data is from 2015.



Gross Value Added per hour worked (£)

To close the gap between the North East LEP areas and England excluding London by 50%.



Between 2014 and 2019, productivity in both areas increased by about 12%. In the year to 2019, the latest available data, North East productivity increased by 4.6%, compared to a 1.7% rise in England excluding London, suggesting that the gap was beginning to close.

Note: Vertical line on charts indicates the start of the North East Strategic Economic Plan

Our plan for growth at a time of change

Our Plan is aligned to emerging policy and economic priorities, which we have summarised below:

Public policy

These policy areas provide an opportunity for us to work with government to develop the regional economy:

Build Back Better: The Plan for Growth

This [report](#) sets out government's overarching approach to UK economic growth as we move forward from COVID-19 and European Union exit. It details government's approach to industrial support, planning, and trade and investment.

Levelling Up White Paper

This paper is due to be published in early 2022 - it is expected to frame government's ambitions to enhance local leadership, improve living standards and public services, and strengthen communities and places. It is expected to focus on proposals for the evolution of regional institutions and local government and provide the framework for investment programmes including the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Community Renewal Fund.

Net zero and decarbonisation

The decarbonisation of the global economy and our social, economic and physical infrastructure is a priority that cuts across all aspects of government policy and delivery. The next steps include policies, as outlined in [Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener](#), to decarbonise all sectors of the UK economy and achieve net zero climate emissions by 2050.

Global Britain

The government's internationalisation agenda is focused on enhancing trade, exports, research collaboration and foreign direct investment to strengthen the UK's economic and political influence.

[Made in the UK, Sold to the World](#) details how government will support businesses to grow through a focus on global export opportunities prioritising new and future trade deals.

Skills and good work

The [Skills for Jobs](#) White Paper aims to strengthen skills across the UK and looks at routes to employment and progression within careers. It promotes a life-time skill guarantee, aims to revolutionise post-16 education, and reshape the training and further education landscape.

Change in the regional economy: short to medium term priorities

The impact of COVID-19 and the UK's departure from the European Union have delivered short term disruption in our key industries, communities, and labour markets. [Our Economy 2021](#), the annual state of the region report and a report that looks at [insights into the impact of COVID-19 and EU transition](#) on the North East Economy, highlight the following themes we will prioritise for action:

- Continuing to address the number of jobs available, ongoing improvement of the proportion of better jobs, and responding to changes in work requiring different skills, particularly digital skills
- The reduction in employment and economic activity rates – the North East has lower levels than elsewhere in England excluding London and we have challenges in disadvantaged communities
- The mismatches of labour supply and demand, skills shortages, and younger and older people needing support to take the jobs available.
- Continuing gaps in productivity metrics and private sector employment rates are long term priority issues for the region
- Increasing the number of scale up businesses, the amount of private sector R&D investment, and the value of exports
- Growth in our areas of opportunity as they drive growth and employment through their focus on global challenges including decarbonisation of energy, heat and transport, health and demographic change
- Challenges for the foundational economy, including retail, tourism, and public transport
- Digitalisation of processes, goods and services across business public bodies and social organisations
- Increased barriers to trade, especially for small businesses.



Our plan for growth at a time of change

Change in the regional economy: long term opportunities and priorities

In addition to looking at the region's short term response and immediate recovery we continue to look for opportunity in the long term changes to the global economy.

Trade, export and investment

['Global North East: Driving growth in North East trade and exports'](#), published by the North East LEP, Department for International Trade (DIT) and North East England Chamber of Commerce, outlines how the region can build its competitiveness, drive higher productivity, and create more and better jobs by increasing international trade.

The report sets out where the North East has opportunities to grow exports in global markets, building on new Free Trade Agreements and ongoing support for trade into Europe.

Future markets

The North East LEP is leading a piece of strategic work to identify the major market, technology and other divers in the global economy, with the aim of identifying where our regional capabilities and innovation and other assets can deliver opportunities for growth and economic transformation over the longer term. Exciting opportunities in established markets where we have existing assets like electric vehicles, energy generation, energy storage and software development, and emergent markets like autonomous vehicles, robotics, and space and satellites, are some of the 17 opportunity areas in focus. Over the next year we will examine these areas in more detail, positioning our region to play a strong role nationally and internationally.

Net zero

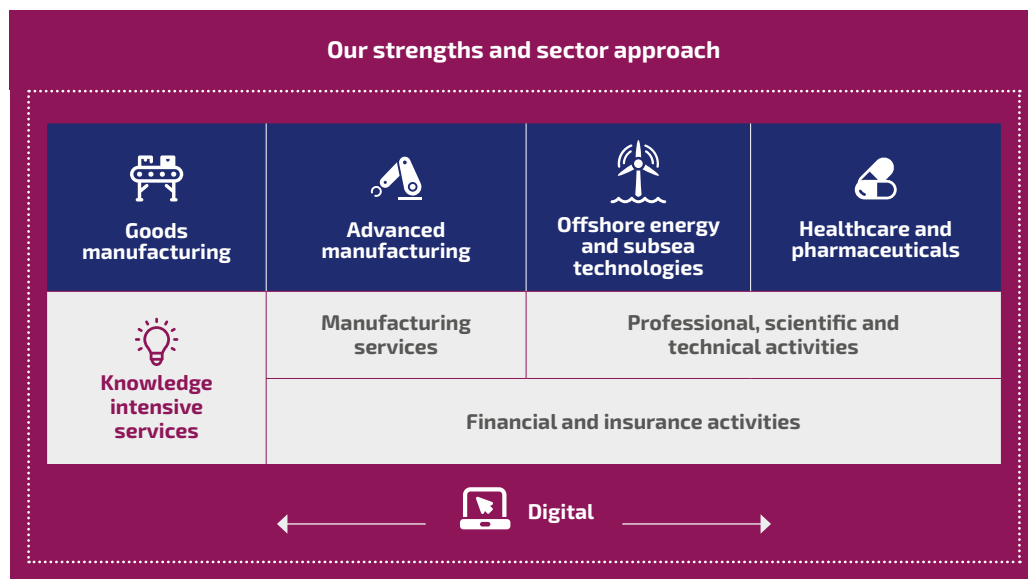
The North East has ambitious targets to accelerate our progress to reach net zero emissions in the 2030s. To do so needs strengthened regional action.

Partners across the region are focusing collaboratively on our strengths in energy generation and manufacturing, and the management of natural assets in areas like water and land sectors, to drive new jobs, investment and growth and are a focus for research and innovation.

Strategies to reduce our transport and heat emissions in particular need to be accelerated as together these represent 70% of our current emissions. Our strengths and assets in science, industries, public transport systems, and a focus on our retro-fitting of homes will help us achieve this.

We have opportunities to capture and store carbon through deployment of technology and increased investment in our landscapes, protecting our peat and wetlands, and planting more trees.

If we meet our net zero targets, it is estimated that we could see an uplift of our economy by £1.9 billion (3.4% of 2020 GVA) and 27,000 new jobs by 2050. This includes 13,500 jobs in the energy and electricity sector which represents the largest net opportunity for the North East.



The North East Strategic Economic Plan

A framework to create 100,000 more and better jobs for the North East economy between 2014 and 2024

Areas of strategic importance



Advanced manufacturing



Health and life sciences



Energy



Tech



Business services

Enabling services



Education



Transport and logistics



Construction

Programmes of delivery



Business growth



Innovation



Skills, employment, inclusion and progression



Transport connectivity



Investment and infrastructure

Cross cutting themes

Decarbonisation and the drive to net zero

Digital transformation

What's new to the Strategic Economic Plan

Reflecting the cross-cutting nature of their impact, we have identified two cross-cutting themes which will be addressed by each of our strategic programmes and programmes of delivery.

Digitalisation

The response to COVID-19 has accelerated deployment of digital technologies, creating new opportunities and challenges for residents, businesses, communities and institutions.

The shift to home working during the pandemic is, for many, resulting in new hybrid working models, that are having an impact on working patterns and transport usage. Traders and retailers have delivered a rapid shift to e-commerce, that has impacted transport and logistics, and a longer term change for our towns and cities.

These patterns build on wider changes which pre-dated the pandemic including digital applications in manufacturing, design, health care and public services. But the speed of change has led to inclusion challenges for people without digital skills across the economy.

Across all of our programmes, we will aim to respond pro-actively to these opportunities and challenges. Key initiatives will include:

- Extended roll-out of the Made Smarter programme to promote digitalisation in our manufacturing industries

- Accelerated investment in the physical infrastructure and connectivity to support digital adoption is important. Connecting more of our communities to superfast broadband in rural and urban settings, taking advantage of our international connectivity to promote trade, and taking a lead on the roll out of 5G, including the national demonstrator project in Sunderland are priorities for the region
- Leveraging the impact of our digital innovation centres in smart data, immersive technologies and software in our key industries, ports and transport infrastructure and communities
- Ensure our universities, school and colleges deliver more digitally skilled people into the workforce and addressing the high level of digital exclusion across the region

Through this work, we will aim to support growth and secure investment into our growing clusters of digital businesses, working with partners in sector bodies and industries.

Decarbonisation

As the world moves forward from COP 26, partners in the North East of England are committed to the transition to a greener and more sustainable future. To achieve climate targets, we will deliver net zero carbon emissions at pace, whilst driving quality employment, improved standards of living and enhancement of our unique regional environment.

Leaders in our businesses, institutions and communities have made strong commitments to this objective:

- Our seven local authorities and two combined authorities have declared a climate emergency and committed to decarbonising their areas.
- Leading industries – in energy, transport, and health - are transitioning to new products and delivery models which strip out emissions of carbon and other gases.
- Research and innovation leaders are pioneering new ways of decarbonising the way we heat our homes and communities and clean up our water and waste

- Voluntary and environmental organisations have come together to mobilise communities and residents to play their full part in the region's transition

We have made progress in reducing emissions, in particular from industrial and commercial sources. We have delivered growth in renewable power generation. But we need to move faster to achieve the 'fair allocation' carbon budget of 81.4Mt CO2 set down in the Paris agreement, and focus on the other gases which contribute to warming.

We will continue to utilise our leadership position in renewable energy generation, eliminating water and environmental pollution, and carbon capture through natural assets such as peat and forestry and focus on reducing transport and domestic emissions, which together now represent 70% of our current emissions.

Through each of our programmes, we will work with partners to collectively drive to Net Zero and advocate for a firmer national response and strengthened local powers to enable us to deliver this.

Our challenges and opportunities

To deliver effectively, we need to understand our region's opportunities and challenges. Many are ongoing, reflecting the longstanding economic profile of the region, however recent policy and economic change is identifying new areas that also require focus, investment and action.

Challenges

- Areas of our foundational economy, such as tourism and retail, have been severely impacted by COVID-19 and the UK's departure from the European Union. We must focus on this area of economic recovery and aim for more productive and resilient business models.
- We are seeing signs of skills shortages and mismatches across our labour force. According to the evidence we have, solutions should include supporting businesses to invest in automation and innovation, the identification of new sources of labour, and better promotion of employment opportunities to residents.
- Many of our young people and people in work have seen disruption to their education, training and apprenticeships. There is a need to minimise the resulting impact and accelerate support.
- Our employment rate remains lower than the national equivalent at 70.6% and in the last year over 18,000 working age people have become economically inactive.
- In addition to longstanding basic skills challenges, there is an urgent priority to enhance digital skills in response to changes in the economy and society
- Our towns, cities and rural communities must reimagine and adapt as people and businesses change the way they work, travel and spend their time.
- As we move to a more digitalised economy, demands on our digital infrastructure will increase and we need to ensure this remains robust and continues to develop.
- We must unlock the transport investment funding allocated to the North East to stabilise our transport system and deliver a sustainable model as we move forward.
- Transport and domestic heating represents 70% of our region's emissions. We need to accelerate our strategy to get these industries to net zero by 2050, while continuing to support the rest of the economy on their net zero journey.
- There is currently a lack of clarity about future government funding streams, the levels of funding that will be made available, and the scope of what the funding can be used for. Clarification in this area is critical to supporting our regional priorities.
- Leaving the European Union has introduced a number of challenges for our region, including regulation, trade barriers and costs, which we need to address as they have significant impact on our overseas trade, investment, research and science, tourism, workers and students. Promotion of the North East is a critical part of this.

Opportunities

- Continuing to maintain our strategic focus on delivering more and better jobs, and on improving productivity, employment, inclusion and strengthening our private sector.
- Our areas of strategic importance continue to grow and offer significant growth potential for our region. We should continue to build on our assets, invest in and nurture the following areas:
 - **Energy** – Energy and subsea industries, with particular focus on renewable energy generation, and emerging opportunities including heat networks, electrification and geothermal, and mine energy.
 - **Advanced manufacturing** – Electric vehicles and other transport and logistics sectors, battery manufacturing and the wider automotive supply chain.
 - **Health and life sciences** – The proposed pharmaceutical development zone that could deliver new treatments, medicines and care services, and contribute to health resilience.
 - **Tech** – Technology, digital and knowledge-based services which are growing rapidly, as well as looking at new industries of the future including software, financial technologies, immersive technologies and professional services.
- Supporting those key enabling sectors which underpin our economy and deliver jobs; logistics, education and construction.
- Building on the policy opportunity to promote levelling up, to respond to significant change in place-based and foundational sectors including tourism, retail, culture and environmental services to recover employment and promote more productive and resilient business models.
- We have a regional investment plan that details a pipeline of projects and interventions which can drive forward our regional growth. These include:
 - Innovation - focused projects which can deliver innovation and commercialisation into the markets of the future, with opportunities in space, surface technologies, digital and knowledge-based services including financial and immersive technologies, transport and mobility, and decarbonisation.
 - A strengthened and more integrated business support framework, providing advice, guidance and finance for start up, scale up, exporting, digitalisation and productivity improvement.
 - Skills, employment and careers activities seeking to deliver the skills needed in good quality jobs.
 - Support for towns and cities, driving forward our pipeline of infrastructure and connectivity proposals to secure new investment.

Delivering the North East Strategic Economic Plan

Areas of strategic importance

The clusters and industries which have the most potential to drive our ambitions and targets – in particular to deliver growth in our economy, higher quality jobs and productivity, in turn strengthening our competitiveness and long term sustainability.

In addition to developing the North Easts assets and capabilities in each area there is a focus on building strong collaborations and leveraging collective strengths of our partners from across the North, such as through the Northern Powerhouse 11 and the North East, Yorkshire and Humber Energy Hub and Growth Hub Clusters.



Energy

Expertise in offshore Energy and subsea technologies, regional energy and demonstration and innovation

Our aim is to deliver on national energy policy, while driving growth in the North East.

- We will invest in our offshore renewables and sub sea industries.
- We will deliver on national and regional decarbonisation goals through unique North East energy projects
- And make the North East the go-to place to develop and showcase new energy solutions that change the world.

You can find out more about our Energy for Growth Strategy and its delivery progress [here](#).



Health and life sciences

Excelling in clinical research, innovation in pharmaceuticals, responding to an aging population

We want to position the North East as a UK leader in developing, testing and adopting patient centred treatments, and the manufacture of medicines and therapeutics at a time of demographic change.

You can read our health and life science strategy and find out more about our delivery activity [here](#).



Advanced manufacturing

Specialising in automotive, electrification and medicine manufacturing

Our ambition is to nurture a globally focused, competitive and integrated cluster, driving productivity by innovating in high level engineering; from design to manufacturing and from the application of knowledge and innovation assets.

You can find out more about the North East advanced manufacturing sector and our plan for growth [here](#).



Tech

Specialising in software, cloud computing, communications, buildings information modelling, gaming. Emerging specialisms include data analytics, immersive technologies and cybersecurity.

The North East is a global hotbed of tech product innovation where:

- There is a vibrant startup scene
- Tech businesses are a magnet for venture capitalist investment and talent
- Businesses have grown to global significance
- The North East is a critical engine for tech talent creation nationally
- Businesses from across the globe are choosing to locate in the North East.

You can find out more about the North East tech sector and our plan for growth [here](#).



Business services

Knowledge intensive and higher value sub sectors of business services now account for 90,000 (52%) of jobs within the sector.

These sub sectors attract considerable investment and deliver high levels of exports - making a significant contribution to the increase in services exports. Areas like financial technology, telecommunications, engineering and management consulting and professional services represent a considerable opportunity for the region, that we have been nurturing through investment in property, connectivity, data centres and skills systems.

By positioning business services as a fifth area of strategic importance, we will develop an approach with partners to continue to grow the sector with a particular focus on the most productive and higher value employment opportunities.

Key enabling services

We also identify a group of key enabling services which underpin the economy and provide the potential for significant growth of higher value jobs.



Education

Education is important to our economy. Those working in the sector educate young people and adult learners, giving them the skills and knowledge they need to secure employment and build careers. The jobs they do contribute to all areas of our economy.



78,000 people are employed in education in the North East



Education system includes
870 schools
9 colleges
4 universities



Estimated to contribute about **7% of regional GVA**



Transport and logistics

The North East's transport and logistics infrastructure provides the foundations for our economic activity, trade and tourism.



1,500 enterprises employ **16,000** people in transport and logistics organisations, supporting the movement of goods and people across the region

Freight in 2020

47 million tonnes lifted by vehicles
5.6 million tonnes handled by North East ports
1039 tonnes handled by Newcastle Airport



Construction

Construction is a key part of the economy, a driver of jobs and growth. The quality of our buildings, whether that be schools, offices, hospitals or housing, has a lasting impact on the wellbeing of businesses and communities across the region.



8,100 enterprises employ **40,000** people in a construction related industry



The GVA contribution of this sector to the North East is equal to **£3.5 billion** in 2019

Delivering our plan: five programmes of delivery

Initiatives and projects that will deliver the ambitions of this Plan.



Business growth

Our ambition for the North East is to be an entrepreneurial, growth orientated, dynamic and productive environment where businesses start up, grow, invest, and thrive.

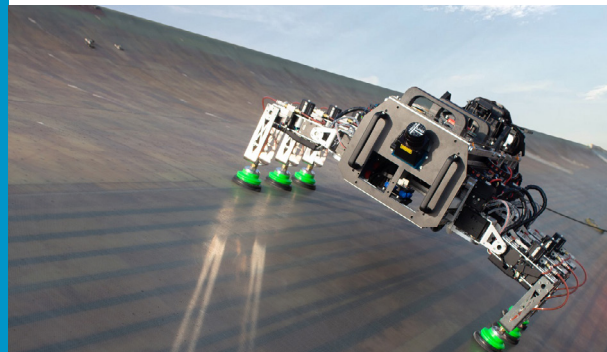


You can find out more about our business growth programme [here](#).



Innovation

Innovation is central to our long-term aim to build a more productive region, fostering a competitive and embedded business base and solving social and economic challenges.



You can find out more about our innovation programme [here](#).



Transport connectivity

In March 2021 the North East Transport Plan was published setting out our vision of 'moving to a green, healthy, dynamic and thriving North East.'

You can read more about the North East Transport Plan [here](#).



Skills, employment, inclusion and progression

Our ambition is that all individuals in the North East have a good understanding of the employment opportunities available and how to access these and that employers have strong links with education and training providers, helping to ensure that provision meets local needs. We will work to ensure that all partners understand the importance of skills in improving productivity, social mobility and living standards.

You can find out more about our skills, employment, inclusion and progression programme [here](#).



Investment and infrastructure

Through focussed and coordinated investment we will address market failures and competitive weaknesses. We will work with partners to quicken the pace and scale of investment across the North East, focusing on our business and infrastructure investment opportunities and needs. Opportunities for job and productivity growth on strategic employment sites, in town and city centres, along strategic transport corridors, in our culture and tourist hubs, and in the rural economy will be prioritised



You can find out more about our investment and infrastructure programme [here](#).

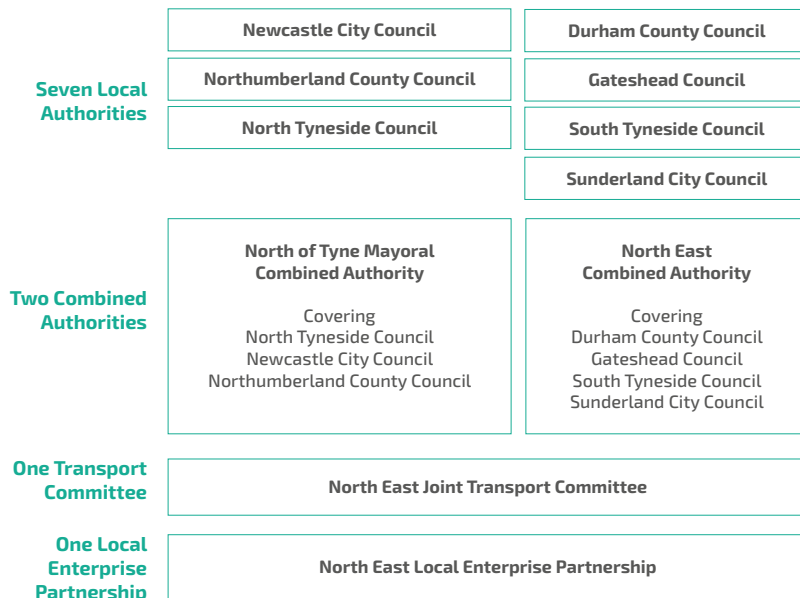
Governance

Regional governance

Regional governance changed on 2 November 2018 after government agreed to devolve powers and funding and form a new Mayoral North of the Tyne Combined Authority. This sees Newcastle, North Tyneside and Northumberland local authorities come together with a shared ambition for a more dynamic and inclusive economy. The North East Combined Authority, made up of the four local authorities South of the Tyne; Durham, Gateshead, South Tyneside and Sunderland, remain focussed on economic growth together for their part of the region.

Transport matters for the North East region continue to be overseen by all seven local authorities, through the Joint Transport committee. The North East LEP also advocates for the region as a whole.

North East governance



North East LEP governance

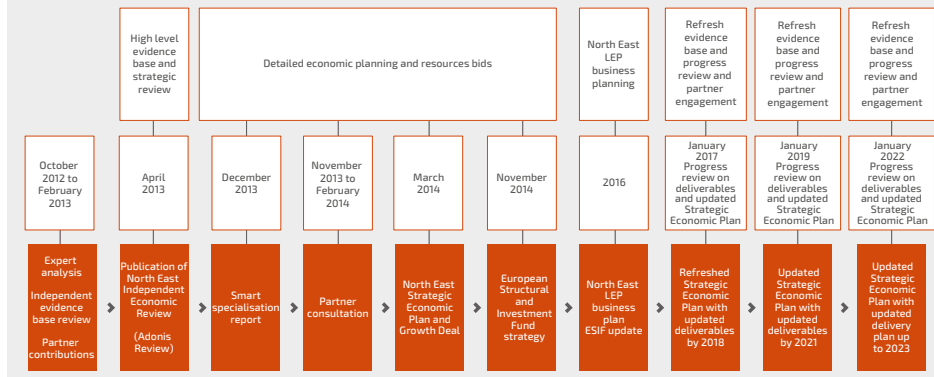
The North East LEP Board is a business-led, private, public and education partnership. It is supported by four advisory boards, which provide strategic guidance and oversight of the Strategic Economic Plan programmes' delivery to the main Board.

Areas of Strategic Importance co-ordination Groups are being introduced to support the areas of strategic importance activities.






The Strategic Economic Plan is recognised by government and other partners as the key strategic economic document for the North East. The Strategic Economic Plan sets out a forward direction for regional economic development and provides a key point of reference for investment and decision making. From the beginning, evidence has underpinned the development and delivery of the Strategic Economic Plan.

The North East Independent Economic Review in 2013 provided a strong foundation for the original Strategic Economic Plan and we have continued to build the evidence base to support our programmes and wider economic policy making in the region.





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