



Leicester & Leicestershire

Economic Growth Strategy 2021-2030

Consultation Draft

Version 1.8

15 June 2021

Foreword

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

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

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

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

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

The strategy is ambitious – it sets out the short-term measures that we need to undertake to recover from the Covid-19 pandemic and transition to new trading arrangements after leaving the EU. The Leicester and Leicestershire Economic Growth Strategy describes how, using our local capabilities, innovations and skills – we seek to build a productive, innovative, inclusive and sustainable community at the cutting edge of science, technology and engineering by 2030.

The next steps are to develop delivery plans and secure resources

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

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Our Mission

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

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

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

Building on the global R&D and entrepreneurial expertise of Leicester and Leicestershire's three Universities, and excellence in science and engineering, the region is now home to several UK and world-leading centres of new technology and innovation in space and earth observation, sports science, life sciences, IT and cyber technologies, and automotive engineering. Leicester and Leicestershire is also the UK's central logistics hub, having gained significant jobs and investment due to the area's strategic location. Agriculture and Food & drink production remains a key sector in Leicester and Leicestershire, producing £1.8 billion in GVA and accounting for 43,900 jobs.

With the opportunity to create up to 60,000 new skilled jobs in the East Midlands Freeport

Another significant new opportunity is the East Midlands Freeport, which could create up to 60,000 new skilled jobs in the region. Based around the East Midlands Airport and Gateway Industrial Cluster (EMAGIC) in North West Leicestershire, Unipers Ratcliffe-on-Soar power station site in Rushcliffe in Nottinghamshire and the East Midlands Intermodal Park (EMIP) in South Derbyshire, the Freeport will bring significant investment to develop and drive innovation, alternative energy sources and green technology supporting SME's and large regional employers, including Rolls-Royce, Toyota, and Alstom (formerly Bombardier). The East Midlands Freeport bid was submitted in February 2021 by a consortium led by the Local Enterprise Partnerships representing Leicester, Leicestershire, Derby, Derbyshire, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire. It included private sector businesses and local authorities, with support from universities, business groups, local MPs and the proposed East Midlands Development Corporation.

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

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

Leicester & Leicestershire suffered from higher case-loads of Covid-19, and the impacts on tourism and hospitality sectors has been significant, and cannot be underestimated. However, the diversity of the local economy has provided some resilience, and there have been fewer job losses compared

to the national average. And for some sectors in Leicester and Leicestershire, such as logistics, life sciences, and online retail, demand and growth has been buoyant over the past year.

Covid-19 has accelerated and exacerbated existing trends

As elsewhere, the Covid-19 pandemic has impacted workers on low pay and facing job insecurity the most. 117,000 jobs are classified as 'vulnerable' due to Covid-19, of which 58,000 are in Hospitality, Tourism and retail and 30,000 are in Manufacturing. There has been a contraction in job vacancies and hiring, with young people particularly affected by a reduction in entry level positions and places on apprenticeships. This has led to further inequalities and concentrations of disadvantage, and has increased the future risk of unemployment and job insecurity facing lower-skilled residents and workers.

Covid-19 has also impacted business continuity, resilience, supply chains, and market demand. The capacity and capability of many SMEs has been significantly stretched in terms of their resilience and financial health. The pace of acceleration in the digital transformation of businesses and public services, and skills has meant that changes occurred in months that would otherwise have taken years. Rural areas have also been significantly impacted, with disruptions to both harvesting and the demand for agricultural produce, as well as supply chain disruptions in the Food & drink sector. Access to the countryside has also played a significant role during the Covid-19 lockdowns and curtailment of international travel and tourism.

Impacts of Covid-19 on the Leicester & Leicestershire Economy



Covid-19 caseloads

70% higher than national average in February 2021



Covid-19 has amplified existing inequalities

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

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



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



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

Leicester and Leicestershire – a thriving location for business and talent

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

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

With the potential to reach critical mass in terms of the techno-entrepreneurial economy

This progress has culminated in the delivery of a range of modern science, technology and business sites – with HE, R&D and enterprise support built-in – including the Loughborough University Science and Enterprise Park, MIRA Technology Park, Charnwood Campus Life Sciences Opportunity Zone, SEGRO Logistics Park, Leicester International Gateway and SpacePark Leicester. Alongside this, the region also hosts leading commercial R&D activity and expertise in firms such as 3M Group, the AI Institute, PepsiCo and IBM. The recently announced East Midlands Freeport will also provide a significant boost to Leicester and Leicestershire.

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

Our Strategy: 4 pillars

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

PRODUCTIVE

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

1. Entrepreneurial, resilient and high growth businesses
2. Attract and grow international business and economic activity
3. Skills for growth
4. World class business locations

INNOVATIVE

Global innovation leadership, increase innovation activities across the whole business base

1. Global innovation leadership
2. Increase and broaden innovation activity amongst businesses
3. Successfully pioneer and apply emerging and new technologies

INCLUSIVE

Create a resilient, adaptive workforce where all residents have access to skills and career progression

1. Informed choices and routes to job and skills progression
2. Improve skills and qualifications attainment for all
3. Improve incomes, reduced economic exclusion and poverty

SUSTAINABLE

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

1. Sustainable places, city and town centres
2. Sustainable transport and connectivity
3. Sustainable energy
4. Sustainable business

Diversity is our strength

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

Leicester and Leicestershire has one of the most central locations in the country, enjoying road, rail and air links with the rest of the UK and the world. The region's strengths lie in its diverse nature and global connections and this offers a wide range of opportunities for businesses, residents and potential investors.

Leicester is renowned for its young and dynamic multi-cultural population, with thriving south Asian, Somali and eastern European communities that are fluent in over 100 different languages. Leicestershire is renowned for its ring of distinctive and independent towns including Loughborough, Melton Mowbray, Market Harborough, Hinckley, Ashby-de-la-Zouch and Coalville. Each of these towns is an important economic centre in its own right and a focal point for their local communities. In between Leicester and its surrounding towns and villages are varied and beautiful rural areas that are rich in natural capital. Leicestershire is predominantly a rural county, with the majority of Melton and Harborough districts in the east being classified as rural, as well as large parts of Hinckley and Bosworth borough and North West Leicestershire district to the west.

Building a healthy, sustainable economy

Balancing the need to provide jobs and industries of the future along with the need to enhance environmental sustainability and health

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

Healthy people

The Covid-19 pandemic has illustrated the significant role that health plays in our economy and society, and the need to incorporate health into strategic thinking. Like the rest of the UK, Leicester and Leicestershire has an ageing population. In the period up to 2030, the number of people over 65 is expected to increase by 55,000, representing 70 per cent of the forecast growth in population. This will create new demands from technology, products and services and will alter patterns of working and participation in the economy. De Montfort University, in collaboration with two local healthcare providers and Age UK - has established the Leicester Academy for the Study of Ageing to research the challenges that come with ageing, using multi-disciplinary approaches to develop solutions.

Building sustainability principles into everything we do

Leicester and Leicestershire is ready to meet these challenges. The local authorities have recently declared a climate emergency and are leading the way in moving towards carbon neutrality. Leicestershire County Council has committed itself to achieving net zero carbon by 2030 for its own

operational emissions and to work with partners and the government to achieve net zero carbon for Leicestershire by 2050 or before. Leicester City Council has also committed to setting a target for achieving net zero carbon for the city as part of reviewing the Sustainability Action Plan in response to the need to act by 2030. Leicester and Leicestershire are also developing new strengths in sectors such as low carbon, space and life sciences that are creating new knowledge-based jobs and business opportunities. This is emphasised in the fourth pillar of this Strategy: Sustainable with the ambition of becoming a leader in low carbon solutions, with sustainability principles built into everything we do.

Delivering healthy and sustainable growth

To deliver healthy, sustainable growth and support the AI and Data and Low Carbon Grand Challenges, Leicester and Leicestershire will create more high value jobs in sectors such as low carbon, space and life sciences. It will deliver Space Park Leicester to create a new centre of excellence for Earth Observation and satellite technology and create a low carbon and circular economy business cluster at LUSEP. It will create new sustainable and affordable housing for its population and will develop and encourage more sustainable forms of transport to mitigate the impacts of climate change. It will increase targeted foreign direct investment in the low carbon sector and support the development of renewable energy from local sources. It will also support businesses to become more energy efficient and move towards carbon neutrality.

Leicester and Leicestershire – your partner in growth

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

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

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

Funding was also secured from the Satellite Applications Catapult support for the Manufacturing, Engineering, Technology and Earth Observation Centre (METEOR) at Space Park Leicester. Related to this, the Department for International Trade has relaunched the Leicester Space Park HPO (High Potential Opportunity) as part of the UK Space Sector COVID Support Plan (SSCSP)

More recently, the East Midlands Airport and Gateway Industrial Cluster (EMAGIC) sites in North West Leicestershire were selected for Freeport Status. The East Midlands Freeport consortium will now work with the government to develop the proposals into an Outline Business Case providing further information on how the Freeport will be delivered. If awarded, this will provide a significant boost to manufacturing and logistics industries in the region.

The economic strategy aligns with the Strategic Growth Plan which sets out housing and development aspirations

Leicester and Leicestershire has clear and well-developed plans in place to support sustainable future growth. In 2018, the nine local authorities (Leicester City Council, and Leicester County Council and the 7 district authorities of Blaby, Charnwood, Harborough, Hinckley and Bosworth, Melton, North West Leicestershire, and Oadby and Wigston) and Leicester and Leicestershire Local Enterprise Partnership agreed a Strategic Growth Plan setting out their aspirations for the development of new housing and infrastructure in the period up to 2050. This identified that around 187,000 new dwellings will be needed between 2011 and 2050 to house the area's growing population, with 96,580 required by 2031 and a further 90,516 by 2050. In addition, it was also estimated that between 367 and 423 hectares of employment land will be required by 2031 to meet future demand.

Ensuring everyone can benefit from economic success

Significant progress has been made in the provision of youth, employment and careers services, with the Enterprise Adviser Network, Careers Hub and Youth Employment Hub. In addition, projects like the Leicester Employment Hub, Construction Skills Hub and area ESF programmes support both young people and adults, along with the DWP and National Careers Service offers. Loughborough College, in partnership with Loughborough University and Charnwood Borough Council, has led a project to open a new Careers and Enterprise Hub in Loughborough town centre, which supports all ages. While Leicester and Leicestershire hosts world-leading universities and has many well-qualified residents, its overall educational attainment lags behind the rest of the UK, and this is reflected in lower pay. By 2030, it is forecast that 42 per cent of jobs within Leicester and Leicestershire will require Level 4+ qualifications. Demand for Level 2 and Level 3 jobs are also both forecast to grow by around 5 per cent. A key challenge will therefore be to improve educational attainment and increase the number of higher-level qualifications and skills in order to meet the increasing demand for higher-skilled workers within the area. Increasing graduate retention is part of the solution.

Collaborating to succeed

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

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

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

Nottingham, also offers the opportunity for Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire to work jointly to develop an East Midlands life sciences cluster.

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

Further, Leicester and Leicestershire is integral to several Midlands Connect (the transport improvement authority for the East and West Midlands) priorities over the next 10 years. These include support for the A46 Corridor, A5 Improvement Corridor, and A511 Growth Corridor - with the potential to accommodate thousands of new homes and jobs. The Midlands Connect £3.5 billion plan to revolutionise the Midlands rail network would also bring significant benefits to Leicester and Leicestershire, providing electrification and HS2 compatible services. The HS2 railway line will pass through Leicestershire to the north of the County, creating extra capacity for high-speed railway journeys and freeing up space 2.5 million tonnes of freight each day, with access to the network from the nearby station of Toton in Nottinghamshire.

Next steps

Board approval and public consultation

This is the first draft of the strategy. Once it has gained approval from the Leicester and Leicestershire Local Enterprise Partnership Board, it will be put out to public consultation. Then any further contributions will be taken on board and the strategy will be finalised and published.

Developing delivery plans and securing resources

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

PRODUCTIVE

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

Priorities

1. Entrepreneurial, resilient and high growth businesses

Continuing to build an entrepreneurial region, further improving rates of enterprise start-up and scale-up, and helping businesses recover after the pandemic. Reflecting the strong role of SMEs in the Leicester and Leicestershire economy, we will achieve high rates of entrepreneurship and start-up and help businesses realise their ambitions with high growth business support and advice. We will continue to support the key growth sectors of Life sciences, Space and earth observation, Sports and sport science, Advanced engineering, ICT, Food and drink, Logistics and professional and financial services – as well as the locally important sectors of Agriculture, Textiles, Creative and cultural, Construction, Tourism and the visitor economy, and the voluntary and non-profit sectors. We will provide ongoing support to business recovering from Covid-19 and adapting to the new trading relationships with the EU.

2. Attract and grow international business and economic activity

Support the contribution that international trade and investment makes to economic growth, productivity and the creation of high-skill and high value jobs; and renew our efforts to develop the visitor economy. Leicester and Leicestershire is a prime location for international businesses – with 18 per cent of all businesses exporting overseas in 2020, and multinational firms such as 3M, IBM and PepsiCo operating here. We will continue to secure inward investment, and retain and grow our existing international businesses. We will develop and implement the Freeport strategy and provide support for SMEs to export. The Tourism and visitor economy is also a significant and growing sector, that needs support to recover from the Covid-19 pandemic.

3. Skills for growth

Build relationships and joint initiatives to meet the skills needs of employers and the future economy. Knowledge intensive jobs will grow over the next decade. In previous years, skills shortages could be met by attracting overseas workers. In future employers will be much more reliant on in local workers and skills. We will meet this challenge by matching the skills supply to the needs of employers and increasing graduate employment and retention. FE Colleges, Universities and employers will work together to increase the take-up of apprenticeships and vocational learning. There will be a need to encourage life-long learning, and to improve skills attainment across the broad range of diverse sectors in the Leicester and Leicestershire economy. Another key aim is to help employers improve their HR and skills development capabilities and practices.

4. World class business locations

Providing the business sites and locations needed to become a world-class location for science, technology and professional services. Leicester and Leicestershire has transformed its business locations and premises since 2010, with sites such as Loughborough University Science and Enterprise Park, MIRA Technology Park, Charnwood Campus Life Sciences Opportunity Zone, SEGRO Logistics Park, Leicester International Gateway and SpacePark Leicester. Over the past 10 years, brand new Grade A office, technology and manufacturing premises have been built to accommodate 5,000 high-technology jobs. Within the principles of the Strategy for Growth, which sets out the region's strategic land use and planning policies, we aim to provide enough Grade A space for 10,000 more jobs.

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

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

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

We will continue to support the key growth sectors of Life sciences, Space and earth observation, Sports and sport science, Advanced engineering, ICT, Food and drink, Logistics and professional and financial services – as well as the locally important sectors of Agriculture, Textiles, Creative and cultural, Construction, Tourism and the visitor economy, and the voluntary and non-profit sectors. We will provide ongoing support to business recovering from Covid-19, adapting to the new trading relationships with the EU, and reflecting the specific needs and issues affecting rural businesses and the agricultural economy.

PRODUCTIVE – Priority 1: Entrepreneurial, resilient and high growth businesses		
Objective	Short-term (2021-23)	Long-term (2021-30)
1. High rates of entrepreneurship and start up	By drawing together and enhancing existing provision, develop and coordinate a cohesive framework for local start-up support, to meet increased demand for support.	Within the existing Growth Hub, Create a local framework for start-up support to support self-employment, entrepreneurship and non-profit organisations - including support for key groups such as those newly unemployed, graduates, young people, women and rural residents.
2. Helping businesses realise their growth ambitions	Develop formal partnerships and resources to deliver the MIT REAP framework.	High growth business support and peer networks, with MIT REAP as the primary vehicle.
3. Support growth in key sectors and knowledge-based businesses	Continue to support life sciences, space and earth observation, sports and sport science, advanced engineering, ICT, food and drink, logistics and professional and financial services.	Provide for the next stages of growth and networking space and premises; integrate growth sector needs into skills pathways and careers guidance. Provide scale-up support to businesses.
4. Resilient and adaptable businesses	Provision of ongoing advice and support to business through the Business Gateway Growth Hub. Sector recovery and supply chain plans and effective targeting of support of industries affected by Brexit and Covid-19.	Diagnostic and peer support networks and services for ongoing business resilience across the diverse range of sectors within the Leicester and Leicestershire economy.

CASE STUDY: INCREASING AND BROADENING BUSINESS INNOVATION ACTIVITY**MIT REAP Programme**

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

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

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

PRODUCTIVE - Priority 2: Attract and grow international business and the visitor economy

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

Leicester and Leicestershire is a prime location for international businesses – with 18 per cent of all businesses exporting overseas in 2020, and 83 per cent of exporters selling to markets in the EU. Advanced manufacturing specialisms in Food and beverages, Machinery, Transport, and Computer, electronic and optical products are key exporters. Professional, scientific and technical industries are also major exporters. Over the next 10 years, businesses must adapt to the new challenges and opportunities posed by Covid-19 and Brexit, as illustrated by the value of goods exported from the UK declining by 16 per cent throughout 2020 – the largest drop since comparable records began.

Cultural, leisure and tourism industries generated £1.88bn for the local economy in 2019, but have been highly disrupted by the pandemic and social distancing measures. Tourism, hospitality and retail accounted for 58,000 (50 per cent of all) Covid-vulnerable jobs in Leicester and Leicestershire. Prior to the pandemic, there were plans in place to develop the visitor economy further by developing awareness of Leicester and Leicestershire as a destination. Now, support is needed for the sector's recovery as well as strengthening and differentiating it in the long-term.

PRODUCTIVE – Priority 2: Grow and retain international business		
Objective	Short-term (2021-23)	Long-term (2021-30)
1. Secure inward investment	Refresh the approach to international branding, marketing and attracting inward investment – identifying key sectors and investment opportunities.	Implement new inward investment and place marketing approach.
2. Grow existing international businesses	Encourage and support international business expansion, including in the Freeport site.	Account management and support plans for major international businesses.
3. Increase trade and exporting	Develop and implement the Freeport strategy and SME support for exporting, identifying key sectors and opportunities.	Support businesses to export and take advantage of the Freeport.
4. Develop visitor economy offer	Continue to deliver the Tourism Recovery Framework that has been developed by the Tourism Advisory Board.	Build the visitor offer and branding around key USPs such as sports, culture, leisure and the natural environment.

CASE STUDY: ATTRACT AND GROW INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS**The IBM Leicester Client Innovation Centre**

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

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

CASE STUDY: ATTRACT AND GROW INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS**The Access Group Global HQ**

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

PRODUCTIVE - Priority 3: Skills for growth

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

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

Local skills needs will also be driven by the shortfall in overseas workers, caused by Covid-19 and the fall in EU workers coming to, and remaining in the locality and the wider UK. Sectors that are particularly vulnerable include Distribution, Hotels and restaurants, Textiles, Food and drink, Banking, Finance and insurance, Public administration, Education and Health and social care, and Agriculture. There will be a need to encourage life-long learning, and to improve skills attainment across the broad range of diverse sectors in the Leicester and Leicestershire economy

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

CASE STUDY: SKILLS FOR GROWTH

MIRA Technology Institute

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

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

CASE STUDY: SKILLS FOR GROWTH**De Montfort University**

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

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

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

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

CASE STUDY: SKILLS FOR GROWTH**Topps Tiles partners with Leicester College**

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

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

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

PRODUCTIVE - Priority 4: World class business locations

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

Leicester and Leicestershire has transformed its provision of world class business locations and premises since 2010, with sites such as Loughborough University Science and Enterprise Park, MIRA Technology Park, Charnwood Campus Life Sciences Opportunity Zone, SEGRO Logistics Park, Leicester International Gateway and SpacePark Leicester. Over the past 10 years, brand new Grade A office, technology and manufacturing premises have been built to accommodate 5,000 high-technology jobs.

PRODUCTIVE – Priority 4: World class business locations		
Objective	Short-term (2021-23)	Long-term (2021-30)
1. Provide more employment sites and premises for growth	Maintaining confidence and momentum of development of strategic sites and the Freeport.	Preparing for the next phases of extensions to existing sites, including move-on space for start-ups and SMEs, and larger-scale office, technology, manufacturing and logistics sites and premises.
2. Renew existing employment sites and premises where there is demand	Ensuring that strategic assets and buildings are retained for employment use where this is viable.	Reinventing and renewing town centres and place-shaping, and understanding and delivering how employment sites and premises play a role in this.
3. Ensure infrastructure capacity and capability supports growth	Supporting the reintroduction and improvement of efficient and affordable public transport services and maintaining momentum in delivering strategically important road and rail projects.	Supporting strategic infrastructure projects as identified in the Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Growth Plan.

CASE STUDY: WORLD CLASS BUSINESS LOCATIONS

Loughborough University Science and Enterprise Park

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

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

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

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

The Strategic Growth Plan (2018) has been prepared by the ten partner organisations in Leicester & Leicestershire to provide a long-term vision that will address the challenges and opportunities facing the region. It is a non-statutory plan but it sets out the agreed strategy for the period to 2050. The strategy will be delivered through Local Plans. This Economic Growth Strategy (2021-2030) adopts and aligns with the principles and priorities outlined in the Strategic Growth Plan (2018), as highlighted below.

Five building blocks

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

Four priorities:

1. Creating conditions for investment and growth – balancing the need for new housing and jobs with protection of our environment and built heritage
2. Achieving a step change in the way that growth is delivered – focusing more development on strategic locations – which will allow better planned communities in terms of housing, employment, transport and services
3. Securing essential infrastructure that is needed to make this happen – taking advantage of proposals to improve national and regional networks. This includes the provision of local public services as well as transport.
4. Maintaining the essential qualities of Leicester and Leicestershire and delivering high quality development – delivering 21st century garden towns, villages and suburbs

A Spatial strategy that...

- > Acknowledges scale of growth already in the pipeline as the result of local plans and planning permissions
- > Builds upon known road and rail infrastructure opportunities or commitments
- > Acknowledges that Leicester plays a role as the 'central city' supporting the market towns and rural areas, providing more jobs, leisure, arts, culture and entertainment facilities with strategy regeneration of the Waterside
- > Provides sites for housing and new jobs that make full use of existing services and infrastructure within Leicester City, increase capacity on the radial roads and improve public transport, cycling and walking
- > Prioritises the 'expressway' proposal for the A46 that is critical to many elements of this strategy, with the potential to accommodate 38,000 new homes and additional new jobs
- > Supports Leicestershire International Gateway
- > Prioritises the A5 Improvement Corridor to reduce congestion and deliver planned housing growth and industrial sites
- > Designates Melton Mowbray as a key centre for regeneration and growth
- > Designates the Managed Growth Areas of: Coalville, Hinckley, Loughborough, Lutterworth, and Market Harborough –applying the principles of sustainable growth and town centre regeneration
- > Limits growth in villages and rural areas to provide for local needs

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

INNOVATIVE

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

Priorities

1. Global innovation leadership

Supporting our outstanding R&D strengths and innovation achievements. All three universities in Leicester and Leicestershire are leaders in life sciences and health research and development. Loughborough University is world leading in sports science and technologies. Leicester is a world-leading hub for space and space-enabled industry driven by the University of Leicester. Research excellence in Leicestershire's higher education institutions includes 43 industry centres of excellence: 16 at Loughborough University; 16 at the University of Leicester; and 11 at De Montfort University. All universities are successful in commercialising their cutting-edge research and developing spin-out businesses. The corporate R&D facilities of 3M, IBM and PepsiCo are located here. We will further build on this by growing and expanding existing innovation and R&D strengths, and developing new ones. We will increase investment and activity in R&D and innovation and lever existing innovation and R&D capabilities from our leading corporations.

2. Increase and broaden innovation activity amongst businesses

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

3. Successfully pioneer and apply emerging and new technologies

Helping businesses to successfully pioneer and apply emerging and new technologies to become more competitive and resilient. Many of those businesses who had, or applied the digital systems and online platforms to their businesses during the Covid-19 pandemic survived and were successful. All three universities in the region have specialisms in ICT, artificial intelligence, high performance computing, cyber security and digital technology – and are actively helping local businesses. Industry 4.0 will provide our advanced manufacturers with a competitive edge in future years. Business performance and success depends on technology and innovation adoption and transformation.

INNOVATIVE - Priority 1: Global innovation leadership

Support our outstanding R&D strengths and innovation achievements

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

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

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

CASE STUDY: GLOBAL INNOVATION LEADERSHIP**SpacePark Leicester**

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

INNOVATIVE - Priority 2: Increase and broaden innovation activity amongst businesses

Increase innovation activity amongst the wider SME and business base

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

43 per cent of establishments that have invested in digital technologies expect to need new skills as a result; 11 per cent expect to need to recruit them (rising to 20 per cent during Covid restrictions) while 37 per cent expect to need to develop them within their existing workforce (31 per cent during Covid restrictions). There is significant interest in knowledge exchange - there were 28,000 attendees at HE events in 2017/18 and there has been 10,000 attendees each year at Leicester Business Festival and Innovation Week.

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

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

CASE STUDY: INCREASING AND BROADENING BUSINESS INNOVATION ACTIVITY**Cyber Security at De Montfort University**

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

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

INNOVATIVE - Priority 3: Successfully pioneer and apply emerging and new technologies

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

There were two types of business during the pandemic – those with the digital systems that meant their business and workforce were already online and could be rapidly digitally enabled – and those with very little digital presence and capability. There has been a big difference in the performance of these two types of business.

In 2020, 25 per cent of Leicester and Leicestershire businesses provided the facility for customers to order and pay for goods or services on their website. 20 per cent of businesses with an internet presence increased the facility for customers to do this during 2020. 45 per cent of Leicester and Leicestershire businesses have invested in digital technologies over the past 2 years, with an increase in 2020.

All three Universities in Leicester and Leicestershire have successful research specialisms in ICT, AI, high performance computing and digital technology, and support small businesses. The University of Leicester has an award-winning data centre, a high-performance computing research lab and offers support for spinout companies. It's School of Informatics conducts research in, and offers courses in knowledge discovery, machine learning, algorithms complexity and engineering, interaction design, software modelling evolution, validation and verification. De Montfort University's Innovation Centre is central to Leicester's digital tech scene and it has research expertise, and runs courses in computer science, artificial intelligence, software engineering, cyber security and digital forensics. Loughborough University's Department of Computer Science has research specialisms in Vision, AI, Autonomous and Human Centred Systems; Networks and Systems (NetSys); and Theoretical Computer Science (TCS) – and works in collaboration with organisations including BAE Systems, Toyota, Apical, Jennic, Arqiva, Sure, Sensinode and Rolls-Royce.

INNOVATIVE – Priority 3: Successfully pioneer and apply emerging and new technologies

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

CASE STUDY: SUCCESSFULLY POINEER AND APPLY EMERGING AND NEW TECHNOLOGIES**MIRA Technology Park**

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

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

INCLUSIVE

Create a resilient, adaptive workforce where all residents can have access to skills and career progression

Priorities

1. Informed choices and routes to job and skills progression

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

2. Improve skills and qualifications attainment for all

Reduce the flow of low skilled, poorly qualified individuals into adulthood, and address low qualifications and skills attainment in adults. While Leicester and Leicestershire has many well-qualified residents, its overall educational attainment lags behind the rest of the UK, and this is reflected in lower pay. We will seek to help school pupils catch up with learning missed during the pandemic and continue to improve education attainment standards. We will continue to develop strategies and joint working between employers, FE, HE and training providers for in-work training and skills. Support for adult education and skills is also an objective, particularly for those made redundant or changing careers. Core and soft skills will also be emphasised, particularly as they can help to reduce long-term unemployment and youth disengagement with work and training.

3. Improve incomes, reduce economic exclusion and poverty

Increase access to education, training and work opportunities for all communities and residents. Covid-19 has compounded and deepened the pockets of deprivation in Leicester and Leicestershire. Prior to the pandemic, around 24 per cent of neighbourhoods (LSOAs) in Leicester were among the 10 per cent most deprived nationally. While many rural areas appear to lack the deprivation of urban areas, poorer access to public services due to greater distances and irregular public transport can place barriers to services in more remote areas. More expensive house prices in sought after rural areas also puts housing out of reach for many. Low pay continues to be a concern in Leicester and Leicestershire. This priority aims to address the education and skills foundations of labour market exclusion and low pay. It seeks to improve educational attainment and help pupils catch up with learning lost during the pandemic; and continue to improve in-work and work-related training and skills. Improving adult education and skills are also an objective, as are core and soft skills, which helps to build employability and resilience.

INCLUSIVE - Priority 1: Informed choices and routes to job and skills progression

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

With a younger workforce than the national average in Leicester and Leicestershire, significant progress has been made in the provision of youth and careers services – including the Enterprise Advisor Network, Career Hub, Employment Hub, Construction Skills Hub and Youth Employment Hub, and established capacity and expertise in the non-profit and voluntary sectors. These needs will continue, with particular short-term pressures to ensure that support is in place for the young people at higher risk of unemployment and income loss during the pandemic. Longer-term, there are opportunities from government policy changes with the introduction of T-Levels and the Adult Skills White Paper. Addressing the significant fall (reflected nationally) in apprenticeship starts and participation is also a key objective.

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

CASE STUDY: YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE INFORMED CHOICES AND ROUTES TO JOB AND SKILLS PROGRESSION

Careers Hub

The Leicester and Leicestershire Careers Hub consists of 20 schools from across the area, with nine city schools and eleven county schools and at least one school from each of the seven Leicestershire boroughs and districts. The Careers Hub provides careers information and advice in each school and college, aiming to improve careers outcomes for all young people. Each school or college has a dedicated Careers Leader, who are either part of or have a direct link to their Senior Leadership Team. They work with other senior leaders, Enterprise Coordinators and their Enterprise Adviser to develop a vision for the institution's careers provision that includes high aspirations for all learners, making sure that they meet the Gatsby Benchmarks (The eight Gatsby Benchmarks are the foundation of the Careers Strategy, a statutory requirement for secondary schools and colleges) by the end of 2020.

CASE STUDY: YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE INFORMED CHOICES AND ROUTES TO JOB AND SKILLS PROGRESSION**Leicester College Construction Skills Certification**

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

INCLUSIVE - Priority 2: Improve skills and qualifications attainment

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

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

By 2030, it is forecast that 42 per cent of jobs within Leicester and Leicestershire will require Level 4+ qualifications. Demand for Level 2 and Level 3 jobs are also both forecast to grow by around 5 per cent, while other or no qualifications are forecast to contract as a share of the LLEP total. A key challenge will therefore be to improve educational attainment and increase the number of higher-level qualifications and skills in order to meet the growing number of higher skilled jobs within the area.

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

INCLUSIVE – Priority 2: Improve skills and qualifications attainment		
Objective	Short-term (2021-23)	Long-term (2021-30)
1. Formal education and training	Help school pupils catch up with learning missed during the pandemic.	Continue to improve educational attainment standards, and reduce the share of school leavers with no qualifications.
2. In-work and work-related training and skills	Continue to develop strategies and joint working between employers, FE, HE and training providers.	Raise the levels of technical and work-related skills across the workforce.
3. Adult education and skills	Support for adult education and skills, particularly those made redundant or changing careers.	Reduce the number of residents with no qualifications.
4. Core and soft skills	Provide core and soft skills training development as part of youth unemployment and NEET initiatives, and as part of redundancy response.	Integrate core and soft skills into apprenticeships and other training programmes.

CASE STUDY: IMPROVE SKILLS AND QUALIFICATIONS ATTAINMENT**Loughborough College Careers and Enterprise Hub**

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

INCLUSIVE - Priority 3: Improve incomes, reduce economic exclusion and poverty

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

Within Leicester and Leicestershire, the labour market impact of Covid-19 has largely been a 'Leicester story'; 4 in 10 of those out of work in the county reside in the city, which has accounted for half of all new unemployment claims in Leicester and Leicestershire. These increases have largely been within deprived parts of the city already afflicted with high levels of worklessness and deprivation. Although the rate of redundancies is lower in Leicester and Leicestershire than nationally, the risks to workers remain.

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

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

INCLUSIVE – Priority 4: Improve incomes, reduce economic exclusion and poverty

Objective	Short-term (2021-23)	Long-term (2021-30)
1. Real living wage	Develop a strategy to support the Real Living Wage for employers and employees	Provide advice and support to employers to implement the Real Living Wage
2. Redundancy response	Set up the Covid-19 Redundancy And Recruitment Service, involving LLEP, Futures, Leicester Employment Hub, the non-profit and voluntary sector and the Department of Work and Pensions	Operate the Redundancy and Recruitment Service and deliver effective careers, employment and retraining advice to redundant workers through DWP, NCS and other partners.
3. Reduce digital poverty	Deliver Leicester and Leicestershire Digital Skills partnership to address digital skills deficiencies in the workplace and wider society.	Identify and deliver further initiatives to reduce digital poverty.

CASE STUDY: INCREASE ACCESS TO EDUCATION, TRAINING AND WORK OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL COMMUNITIES AND RESIDENTS**Barratt Developments and SMB Group's Construction Partnership and Social Mobility Pledge**

The SMB Group, a successful merge of two Leicestershire colleges, Stephenson Colleges and Brooksby Melton Colleges, covers a wider range of vocational provision and has some very strong employer links.

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

In addition, Barrett's has created a new action plan to address social mobility as a barrier to career opportunities in the housebuilding sector. Barrett's approached SMB for a venue to launch this new Social Mobility Pledge. The Social Mobility Pledge was launched by former Secretary of State for Education Rt Hon Justine Greening – co-founder of the initiative.

The SMB Group offers a range of different apprenticeships and full-time study programmes, offering different routes into the Construction industry and therefore working towards meeting the needs of local skills gaps.

CASE STUDY: INCREASE ACCESS TO EDUCATION, TRAINING AND WORK OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL COMMUNITIES AND RESIDENTS**Reaching People: The University of Leicester and Leicester College supporting leaders and managers in the voluntary sector**

The focus of the training support identified with Reaching People was specifically targeted on developing team leaders and managers within the voluntary sector and supporting their professional development. This was enabled by the University of Leicester utilising a significant amount of their apprenticeship levy through the levy transfer facility, enabling identified local Leicestershire SME charities to benefit 100% training cost of apprenticeship training provided by the University for their identified apprentices. Leicester College worked with local voluntary sector employers promoting the potential support to Reaching People and its delivery partners.

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

SUSTAINABLE

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

Priorities

1. Sustainable places, city and town centres

Create adaptable and resilient town and city centres, deliver sustainable sites for housing and jobs in strategic locations that can be serviced by sustainable transport, and protect the environment and built heritage. City and town centres have been impacted significantly by the pandemic, with local retail (excluding food) and leisure footfall up to 80% lower during the past year, whilst the shift to online shopping has accelerated. The demand for new homes continues to increase. Development and redevelopment must be delivered sustainably, going forward. Homes must be affordable and green, and sites for new employment space and premises must be low carbon developments.

2. Sustainable transport and connectivity

Build and promote sustainable modes of transport, decarbonize road transport and improve broadband connectivity. To provide planned and sustainable housing growth to support the needs of its expanding population, Leicester and Leicestershire will support the implementation of the Strategic Growth Plan to deliver the 187,096 new dwellings that it is estimated will be needed by 2050. This will require rail improvements, and increased modal shift from private to public transport. Road improvements to the A46 and A5 are vital to housing and employment growth, but at the same time decarbonising road transport and improving internet connectivity, particularly for rural areas, are also required to meet sustainable development goals.

3. Sustainable energy

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

4. Sustainable business

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

SUSTAINABLE - Priority 1: Sustainable places, city and town centres

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

City and Town Centres have been impacted significantly by the pandemic, with retail (excluding food) and leisure footfall up to 80 per cent lower during the past year, whilst the shift to online shopping has accelerated.

Leicester and Leicestershire's population is growing and more homes will need to be built to provide affordable places for everyone to live. Yet at the same time its natural environment and built heritage also need to be protected to ensure that they are preserved for future generations. Analysis from the 2018 Energy Infrastructure Strategy suggests that insulation improvements to the domestic housing stock alone would save close to 500 ktCO₂ annually, bringing fuel bill savings of £100m for domestic consumers and £50m for businesses each year.

The natural capital assets of Leicestershire have an annual value of £388.45 million, with agricultural habitats generating £180.91 million annually. There is a risk that future development does not consider natural capital and green infrastructure. Threats such as air pollution are continuing unabated. There is a need to restore and regenerate urban environments.

SUSTAINABLE – Priority 1: Sustainable places, city and town centres		
Objective	Short-term (2021-23)	Long-term (2021-30)
1. Sustainable development and renewal of city and town centres	Support the economic viability and vitality of town centres and the city centre during recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic. Continue the development of a range of Business Improvement District, City and Town Centre Recovery Plans, utilising funding opportunities such as the Towns Fund and Levelling Up Fund.	Support and enable the sustainable transition and adaptation of town and city centres into new uses including residential and business use. Continue to make the case for east-west rail improvements.
2. Sustainable and affordable housing supply	Demonstrate exemplar low carbon developments, particularly on publicly owned land.	Building low-carbon housing with energy-saving heating and lighting, and solar panels. Installing energy efficiency measures on the existing housing stock.
3. Enhance biodiversity and preserve natural capital	Develop a Natural Capital Investment Plan, and deliver the roadmap the recent Natural Capital Review Report set out for Leicestershire.	Deliver the Natural Capital Investment Plan to minimising the loss of existing habitats and the impacts of development and encouraging innovative land use.
4. Sustainable sites and buildings for economic growth	Demonstrate exemplar low carbon developments, particularly on publicly owned land.	Create new, low-carbon business units and managed workspaces for start-ups and small companies. Retrofit energy efficiency to existing buildings.

CASE STUDY: SUSTAINABLE PLACES, CITY AND TOWN CENTRES**Transforming Cities Fund**

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

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

The strategy would address transport barriers to growth by delivering sustainable transport provision across the City Centre and also connecting to the North West /South West sectors of the city where major employment hubs are located, and large-scale housing/employment urban extensions are underway or planned.

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

The council has secured £8.4m initially to deliver cycling and walking corridor improvements linking to the city centre and electrification of the Birstall Park & Ride service.

CASE STUDY: SUSTAINABLE PLACES, CITY AND TOWN CENTRES**Enhance biodiversity and preserve natural capital: The National Forest**

The National Forest was established 25 years ago to link the two ancient forests of Charnwood and Needwood and spans the counties of Leicestershire, Derbyshire and Staffordshire. Since its inception, over 9 million trees have been planted across 200 square miles and forest cover has increased from 6 per cent to 21 per cent, creating a new mixed habitat forest.

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

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

SUSTAINABLE - Priority 2: Sustainable transport and connectivity

Build and promote sustainable modes of transport, decarbonize road transport and improve broadband connectivity

To provide planned and sustainable housing growth to support the needs of its expanding population, Leicester and Leicestershire will support the implementation of the Strategic Growth Plan to deliver the 187,096 new dwellings that it is estimated will be needed by 2050. This will include the A46 Priority Growth Corridor, Leicestershire International Gateway, A5 Improvement Corridor, regeneration and growth of Melton Mowbray, as well as areas of managed growth in Local Plans. It is critical to support local road and rail improvements, especially sustainable forms of transport, and ensure that rural transport provision effectively links people to jobs. To address rural isolation and connectivity, there is a need to improve rural broadband, Wi-Fi and 5G connectivity, focussing on specific rural blackspots.

SUSTAINABLE – Priority 2: Sustainable transport and connectivity		
Objective	Short-term (2021-23)	Long-term (2021-30)
1. Improve rail infrastructure and services	Accelerate the pipeline of local rail infrastructure projects, in order to generate commitment and investment.	Improve East-West Rail speeds and connectivity and Leicester Railway Station.
2. Improve public and modal shift to sustainable forms of transport	Ensure the effective restoration of public transport services after the pandemic.	Promote sustainable modes of transport including walking and cycling.
3. Decarbonise road transport	Identify opportunities to add further green credentials to current transport plans.	Expand zero and ultra-low emissions vehicles and charging, including HGV refuelling. Support zero emissions connectivity and wider uptake of such vehicles by the public sector, private sector.
4. Connected places, households and businesses to reduce carbon emissions	Improve digital connectivity through broadband, Wi-Fi and 5G connectivity, particularly in rural blackspots.	Develop a plan for SME adoption of 5G technologies. Improve network connectivity, particularly in rural blackspots.

CASE STUDY: SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT AND CONNECTIVITY

Superfast Leicestershire

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

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

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

SUSTAINABLE - Priority 3: Sustainable energy

Increase renewable energy generation and implement smart energy networks

Progress has been made in the development of an Energy Infrastructure Strategy for Leicester and Leicestershire in 2018 – which suggested that the majority of the technical potential for renewable electricity in the region remains unexploited. Renewable energy could generate 6,700 GWh/yr – enough to meet total electricity demand in the region today, and in 2050. This potential is dominated by wind (6,000 GWh/yr remaining potential) with the remainder from solar PV, biomass, energy-from-waste and other sources. If deployed to its full potential, this would require 125 MW of renewable energy generation to be installed annually in the Leicester and Leicestershire region between now and 2050.

Another barrier to low carbon energy is that power networks in the region are stressed, and there is little headroom in electricity generation, or for more efficient, flexible power grids. A central objective set out in the Clean Growth Strategy is to enable a smarter, more flexible system by expanding interconnection, electricity storage and demand side response (DSR). Energy storage is an opportunity, particularly the need to rapidly scale up electric battery production in the UK.

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

CASE STUDY: SUSTAINABLE ENERGY**Energy Infrastructure Strategy for Leicester and Leicestershire (2018)**

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

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

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

SUSTAINABLE - Priority 4: Sustainable business

Support business decarbonization and sustainable business practices

Existing business activities will need to be decarbonised, and there are business opportunities from developments such as renewable energy. Current strengths in Leicester and Leicestershire Low Carbon Environmental Goods and Services (LCEGS) sub-sector strengths include Wind, Building Technologies, Alternative Fuels, and Photovoltaics. Yet significant skills gaps are present in the region in Production Engineers, Power Distribution Engineers, and Technicians.

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

CASE STUDY: SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS

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

The Green BELLE (Business Energy in Leicester and Leicestershire) project can provide grants of up to £7,000 to small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) to help cover the costs of low carbon, energy-efficient improvements to their premises. The project is run by Leicester City Council's sustainability service with support from Leicestershire County Council. So far, the scheme has provided £550,000 of grant support to 101 local businesses. It is estimated that this has result in carbon savings of around 900tCO₂e per year – equivalent to the total carbon footprint of around 280 typical homes.

Green BELLE grants can be used as support for a wide range of low-carbon and energy-efficient measures, such as installing efficient heating systems, low-energy lighting, insulation, or solar PV panels. Grants can be awarded to cover up to half of the total costs, with the remaining amount required from the business as match-funding. Businesses have also benefited from significant reductions in their energy bills as a result of improvements made through the Green BELLE scheme.

CASE STUDY: SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS**Cenex: the UK's first Centre of Excellence for Low Carbon and Fuel Cell technologies**

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

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

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

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