

# Wakefield District Economic Strategy

# Annual

# Review

## 2018 | 19

**wakefieldcouncil** *working for you*

# Foreword

It is one year since we launched the Wakefield Economic District Strategy with our vision to make Wakefield a place where all businesses and communities succeed.



Cllr Peter Box CBE,  
Leader of Wakefield Council

**In a challenging year for the wider UK economy, our strategy is taking us in the right direction. This is testament to the resilient partnerships we are building across the public and private sector.**

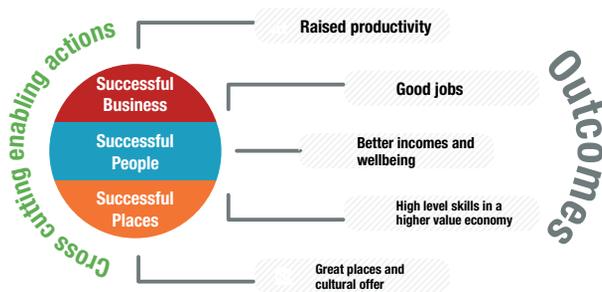
This strategy will continue to build a district we can all be proud of and is based on three themes – successful businesses, people and places. The infographic below outlines the outcomes expected from the plan and how they flow into the three themes.

The following report highlights our achievements in the last year and what we intend to achieve going forward.

It demonstrates what the Council will commit to and how we will work with businesses, communities, the voluntary sector and other partners. Our strategy enables the Council to ensure Wakefield is in as strong a position as possible to drive positive change for the benefit of residents and businesses within Wakefield.

Just as in Leeds City Region as a whole, challenges remain. We share the four 'great challenges' of productivity, innovation, living standards and persistent deprivation. Although employment is high, many jobs are in low skilled, low paid roles that are vulnerable to economic shock and automation. We need to future proof and diversify our economy and build new strengths and opportunities, such as in our growing cultural, digital and creative industries.

That will mean improving skills, innovation and productivity and ensuring the benefits reach ordinary people through well paid work. We have a vision for Wakefield and well-founded optimism for the future.

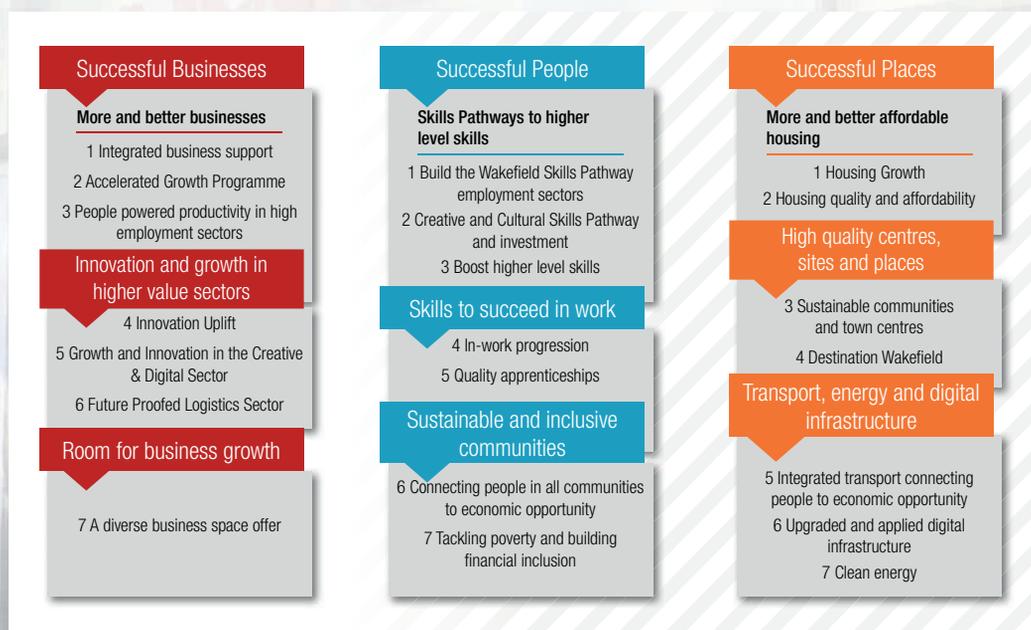


# Our ambitions

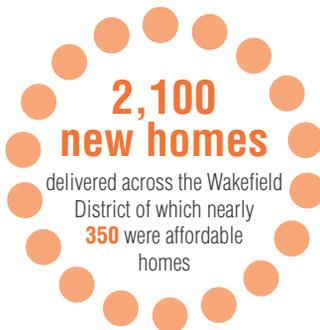
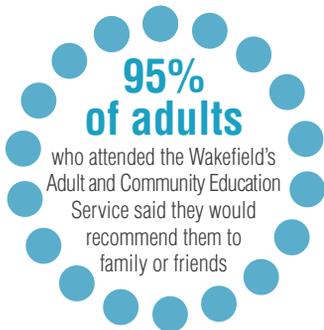
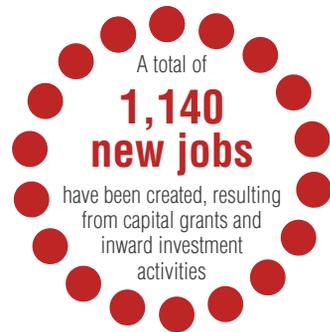
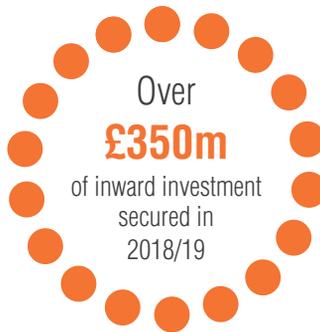
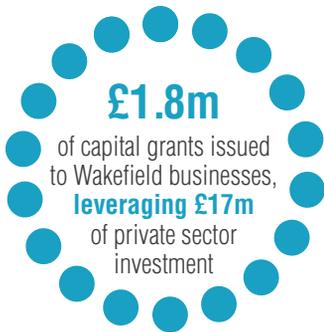
We are working in collaboration with multiple partners to support innovation, enterprise and entrepreneurship in every aspect of community life which will include assisting residents and businesses in fulfilling their potential.

**Our ambition is that by 2023 Wakefield will have developed into a more thriving, vibrant and prosperous economy that is underpinned by the key areas in the diagram below:**

Each theme area of the Economic Strategy has established a steering group which is made up of key public and private sector partners who are helping to shape, influence and support the delivery of the actions listed within the Programme Plan. The Wakefield Economic Strategy was officially adopted by Cabinet in June 2018.



# Wakefield Economic Snapshot



# Challenges Going Forward

## Successful Businesses

- Productivity and innovation is improving but below UK average, GVA per worker as a measure of productivity in Wakefield is £47,600, the UK average is £57,600. We will close this by increasing the quality of our business base and create high skilled, high value sectors.
- Digital Infrastructure in Wakefield is in a strong position with Superfast coverage (circa 96% of all premises). Future work required to look at ways of supporting businesses in the district to deliver digital projects via the European funded Digital Enterprise Programme.
- 19% of employment in Wakefield is in elementary occupations compared to 12% across the region. Wakefield's economy has lower proportions of professional jobs. Subsequently it is important to ensure residents have the skills they need to secure and progress into higher skilled employment.

## Successful People

- Wakefield has a low skills profile with 25.4% of the working-age population with a Level 4 qualification and 19.7% working-age population with a Level 3 qualification – there is a need to improve the numbers of people transitioning to a level 4 from a level 3. Developing the Wakefield Skills Pathway to higher-level skills and the development of a qualification pathway will help reduce this gap.
- People out of work due to poor health, Wakefield's Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) figures identifies around 17,000 Wakefield residents claiming ESA, 8.1% of working age adults. This is around 20% higher than UK and regional averages. There will be continued work supporting our communities with health improvements and lifelong employment to reduce that number.
- Wakefield is the 65th most deprived district in England with 47,000 residents living in the top 10% most deprived neighbourhoods. We will be delivering specific actions to prevent and enable people to move out of poverty, for instance working with Leeds City Credit Union to promote financial inclusion.

## Successful Places

- Need for affordable housing, in the future 30% of new homes will be affordable homes to rent or for shared ownership. We will be working to ensure that all of our places are fit for the future.
- City centre transformation is well underway but we need better office space, vacancy rates and retail. This will be aided with projects such as Waterfront, Kirkgate, Civic Quarter and Westgate that will develop quality commercial, leisure/ cultural and residential space to bring new vibrancy and footfall to the town centre.
- Ensure Clean Energy, in 2017, a total of 123,200 MWh of electricity generated in Wakefield District was from renewable sources and 17% of this was from solar. A key to future success will be working with businesses to secure energy supply and explore opportunities for the area.

# Successful Businesses

- During 2018/19 the Council piloted a new approach to engaging with Wakefield businesses. The introduction of a new '**Deal Based Business Programme**' which is an **integrated support offer** that helps businesses to grow whilst encouraging social value and connecting businesses to Wakefield's hardest to reach residents. Businesses receive a detailed business diagnostic and undergo a comprehensive yet tailored package of support, bringing in a range of partners.
- The AD:Venture business support programme has successfully hosted peer to peer sessions for SME's in the creative and digital and businesses and professional service sectors. To date over **92 businesses** have received support to develop **growth** and **innovation** in the sector.
- Since the launch of the Economic Strategy the Economic Growth Team have worked closely with landowners, developers and planning services to inform the new draft Local Plan.
- A number of significant private sector investments have been realised in 2018/19 with many more in the pipeline for the subsequent financial year.
- Investments include the growth of **existing businesses** such as the significant £30m investment at Coca Cola at Outwood, £30m at Ball Corporation at Outwood and the £60m investment for phase 2 of Newcold expansion at Stanley.
- In addition, the District has welcomed a number of **new investors** to the area, including a £4.7m investment of modular house-builder WeLink and a £3.9m investment from vehicle re-marketing company Aston Barclay to locate their head office at Normanton.

**230%**

increase on Council interventions

**1,500**

attended business support events

AD:Venture has provided over

**340 hours**

of face-to-face support

Over

**1,000 delegates**

attended Wakefield Business Week in 2018

# Successful Businesses

A total of  
**27**  
district wide  
business events

have been held since the Economic Strategy was launched in June 2018. Events topics include developing supply chains, encouraging digital innovation, workforce skills & succession planning and a range of masterclasses aimed at increasing productivity

**Wakefield Businesses  
have received grants**

to support their growth ambitions. The grants support businesses to be more resource efficient, purchase capital equipment, recruit apprentices and encourage innovation and improvements to their digital infrastructure

The Business Growth Programme has supported Wakefield businesses with capital grants during the last year

**51**  
businesses

have undergone initial assessment with 5 high quality businesses receiving intensive support

The Council will look to support local businesses and employment by increasing the money re-spend in the local economy from the Council's spend up to 40p in every pound

# Successful People

- The last financial year has seen significant progress towards the creation of the **Wakefield Skills Pathway**. An assessment of provision has been undertaken across multiple partners, including the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), Further Education establishments and Adult Education. Work has begun to enter the findings and skills provision onto a digital portal that will be used in all secondary education establishments and allow residents to access information online.
- The People Enabling Area Transformation Project (PEAT) has made significant progress in six areas of the Wakefield District. These are places that face significant economic, environmental and social issues. To deliver interventions relating to skills attainment and employability will increase the level of aspiration and boost higher level skills amongst residents.
- During the last year, the Works Better Employment Programme which is part funded by the European Social Fund has engaged with over 400 residents, ensuring each individual receives tailored and bespoke support to ultimately move them into sustainable employment. A positive response has been received from the business community with vacancies ring-fenced by employers

including Next, Galvanize UK and Minster Law. This has supported **people in all communities to access economic opportunities.**

- Funding was secured in 2018 for the delivery of the Employment Hub. The aim of the three year project is to actively support unemployed people to move into **quality apprenticeships** at all levels across Wakefield and increase employer participation in apprenticeships. The project was launched in January 2019 and has engaged with more than 25 local businesses and supported the creation of more than 20 new apprenticeship opportunities.
- Two thirds of Adult Education learners have progressed to higher levels of study, work-related activities or employment on completion of their programme of study.
- Learners following vocational courses benefit from high-quality work experience. They participate in community and business enterprise activities that help them to exhibit their work and demonstrate their practical skills locally. This prepares them well for the world of work and enables them to apply their learning effectively in a workplace setting.

The number of adults retained on their programme of learning was

**97.1%**  
in 2017-18

The Council launched 'Money Smart' an innovative new pilot scheme to help people save money, maximise their income and be more financially resilient

The Employment Hub will engage with

**800**  
**young people**  
up to age 25

Wakefield has secured £4.4million of the £20m Cultural Development Fund, to support the growth of cultural and creative industries



# Ofsted Success - A Good Result



**Wakefield's Adult and Community Education Service (ACES) was graded 'Good' in all areas of its Ofsted inspection last October. Ofsted recognised that leaders, managers and staff have improved the quality of provision since an, 'Inadequate Inspection' in November 2015.**

Ofsted stated that managers have tackled successfully most of the areas for improvement and have worked well with other council services and external partners to re-engage disadvantaged adults in learning. There was strong recognition by the Ofsted Inspectors that Governors, leaders and managers provide a curriculum that is well aligned to local economic regeneration needs and that helps vulnerable, socially isolated and disadvantaged local people to re-engage with learning.

Ofsted stated there is a successfully developed ambitious and open culture, characterised by an ethos of tolerance and respect

Learners and staff thrive in the supportive environment provided for the adults who attend the programmes

Ofsted spoke with local employers and other partners and their assessment was that they value the work done by ACES in developing learners' skills, confidence and ability to participate in community life

Governors, leaders and managers have raised expectations and aspirations for learners in Wakefield

**20**

## Apprenticeship

job opportunities secured by the Employment hub within the first quarter of the project

**Over  
£750,000**

of funding secured for apprenticeship opportunities for over 300 Wakefield Residents

The number of adults who passed their intended learning goal was

**97.6%**

Improved achievement rates of those attending basic Maths and English skills courses to

**82.2%**

in academic year 2017-18

Year 2017-18 Wakefield's Adult and Community Education Service had an achievement rate of

**94.7%**

# Successful Places

- In recent years there has been healthy housing growth in the Wakefield district. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment set a target of **1,600 new homes** per year in the District.
- **£18.9m Housing Infrastructure Fund** bid to accelerate delivery of housing in Castleford, along the Aire River Growth Corridor, to unlock strategic sites to deliver over **3,000 new homes**.
- **£1.5m of Marginal Viability funding** has been secured from Homes England to deliver key infrastructure, which will unlock housing sites and Council owned land to provide quality housing development.
- Both Pontefract and Knottingley have had a Vision and Action Plan approved to confirm the Council's commitment to reviving and repurposing its city and town centres. A retail enhancement fund has been introduced in Knottingley to assist tenants and landlords to upgrade their shop fronts, signage and upper floor windows. **80% of tenants** have engaged with the scheme.
- Horsefair in Pontefract has recently been selected as the preferred location for **£1m** investment in a Healthy Streets Pilot. The project will assist in transforming the public realm and improving pedestrian links between Pontefract Castle and the town centre.
- The Wakefield South East Gateway project in the city centre has progressed with the submission of a bid to **West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) for £6.5m Local Growth Funding**.
- The Council launched a new Energy Plan in May 2018 with a target to reduce the organisation's carbon emissions by **80% by 2050** (1990 baseline) in 2017/18 our reduction was at just over **55%**.

**£4.5 million Key to the North** project at Pontefract Castle a conservation and redevelopment scheme

**325 households supported with 352 improvement measures** under the Council's domestic energy efficiency measures

**ENGIE has achieved a 9.8% energy efficiency improvement** on the Council estate to date

**Corporate vehicle fleet efficiencies** e.g. increased use of electric vehicles



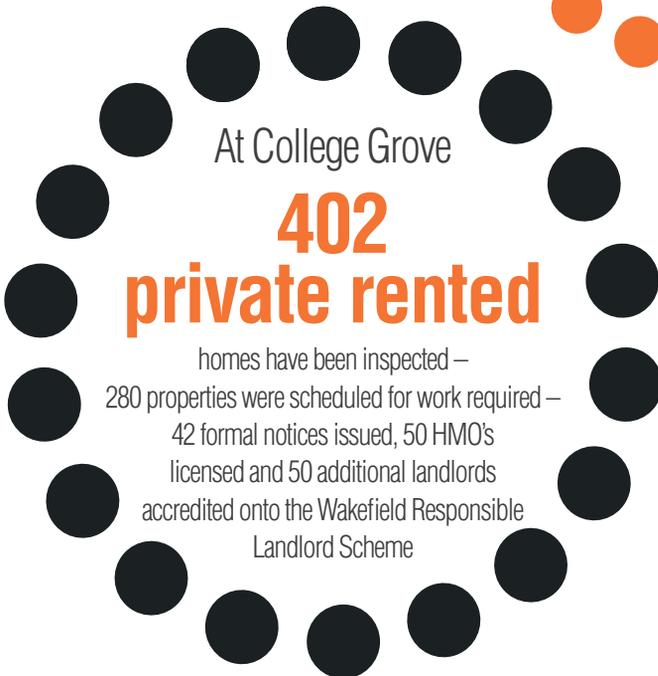
In 2018/19  
**70 HMO licenses**  
were issued across the district –  
the Strategic Housing team  
are currently processing  
another 54



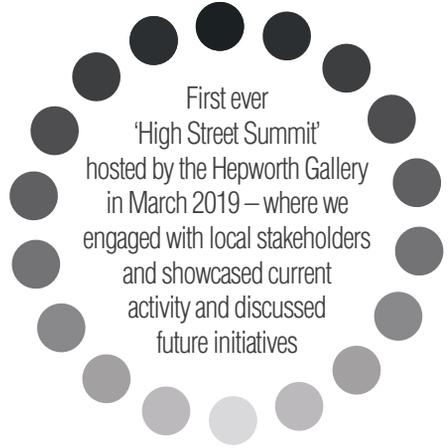
Successful  
Food, Drink and  
Rhubarb Festival with  
**135,000 visitors**  
over three days



Maximise direct  
Social Value by increasing  
the Council's spend with  
the 3rd sector (charities,  
voluntary and community  
groups, etc.) by at  
least 5%



At College Grove  
**402  
private rented**  
homes have been inspected –  
280 properties were scheduled for work required –  
42 formal notices issued, 50 HMO's  
licensed and 50 additional landlords  
accredited onto the Wakefield Responsible  
Landlord Scheme



First ever  
'High Street Summit'  
hosted by the Hepworth Gallery  
in March 2019 – where we  
engaged with local stakeholders  
and showcased current  
activity and discussed  
future initiatives

# The year ahead - Successful Businesses

**The first year of activity driven by our Economic Strategy has delivered very positive results. Wakefield Council will continue to drive this strategy forward by continued collaboration with local partners to facilitate change across the district:**

- Over the next year we will review and remodel business support to enable SMEs to access local support (and at Leeds City Region level) through a simple '**no wrong door**' gateway.
- We will explore with businesses the need to increase productivity. This will be achieved through supporting businesses investment in capital equipment and to increase skills levels of the workforce.
- More work will be undertaken with the logistics sector to support workers at risk of job losses due to automation and help businesses to upskill workers to facilitate changes associated with the upgrading of capital equipment.
- Our efforts in the city centre will continue with more work to increase office space and create smaller workshop space for our small and medium sized enterprises.
- Work will continue to secure funding for a **£7m Research and Development Centre**, working in partnership with a key private sector business to encourage innovation amongst new start and SME businesses.

# The year ahead - Successful People

**The first year's activity for the Successful People theme has established a strong foundation in which to build upon. Wakefield Council will work with key partners to develop activities and interventions to make a significant impact on the people agenda:**

- Further work will continue with businesses to encourage in-work progression. We will utilise Leeds City Region schemes including the Skills Service and Reach Higher West Yorkshire to target businesses and low paid workers most in need of skills and training.
- We will seek to widen access and promote high level apprenticeships to business and residents by promoting the benefits of the utilisation of the Apprenticeship Levy.
- Further development of the newly launched Employment Hub to support and engage 800 young people and secure employment for over 300 of them.
- Adult Education will continue to develop its on-line learning offer.

**STEP-UP**  
WAKEFIELD • Next Level You

**A new Service to local residents providing a One-Stop Shop linking local people to local job and training opportunities:**

- Starts in Knottingley in July 2019 – look out for further details coming soon.
- Individual support, tailored to a Client's goals and aspirations.
- Support offered through a dedicated Client Support Adviser.
- Business Engagement Officers will work with employers to support in-work opportunities for promotion and higher level training as well as supporting those out of work to find good quality jobs.

# The year ahead - Successful Places

**The first year's activity for the Successful Places theme has developed very positive inroads on a variety of key projects that will support the District and its economy. Going forward we will work on:**

- High Quality Housing Growth Innovation – The new Wakefield Housing Plan 2019-2022 has recently been approved.
- Safe and Healthy Homes – The Council will develop a 4 year Enforcement Plan.
- Sustainable Communities, Town Centres and Place Making – Following on from the approved action plans for Knottingley and Pontefract, master plans will now be developed for both town centres.
- Future High Streets Fund bid of which a decision is expected summer 2019 on our Expression of Interest.
- The development of Rutland Mills at Wakefield Waterfront will continue to be progressed with sale completion expected in December 2019.
- Clean Energy – The Council has declared a climate emergency and a pledge to make Wakefield Council a Carbon Neutral organisation before 2030.
- Prepare, publish and consult on the Wakefield District Local Plan 2036.
- **£6m investment** in Glasshoughton Southern Link Road.
- Castleford Rail Station major improvement and investment of **£3.3m**.
- A650 Newton Bar major corridor improvement scheme with an investment of **£6.75m**.
- **A £7m** Castleford Growth Corridor Scheme.

**For more information:**

 01924 306916

 [info@wakefieldfirst.co.uk](mailto:info@wakefieldfirst.co.uk)

 [www.wakefield.gov.uk/business/economic-strategy](http://www.wakefield.gov.uk/business/economic-strategy)

**wakefieldcouncil** *working for you*