

Chesterfield Growth Strategy 2023-2027

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1). Foreword

This Growth Strategy sets out an ambitious programme of activities and initiatives that the Council will be delivering in the next four years. It represents a continuation of our approach to build a stronger economy that can provide quality jobs for local people. This is in response to the loss of the heavy industries that previously provided the backbone of our economy and our communities. The loss of these industries has left us with a legacy of lower levels of growth and higher levels of deprivation that we are determined to tackle.

However, the scale of the change means that these issues won't be addressed overnight. It requires a long term commitment to rebuild our economic base and get it to a place where it can be a real driver of growth in the future. The Council has made that long term commitment and is delivering an on-going programme of investment in order to achieve it. Most recently this investment has included the first phase of the Chesterfield town centre Northern Gateway scheme and the construction of new offices at Chesterfield Waterside. These investments not only support the growth of new economic activity but act to build wider market confidence in Chesterfield as a successful business location.

Chesterfield already has a lot going for it as a great place to live and a great place to do business. However there still remains significant untapped economic potential that needs to be realised if we are to achieve our growth ambitions. In the east of the borough, for example, we have large scale brownfield sites that can support new employment and housing growth. Adjacent to the rail station, we can build a sustainable live/work community, making the most of our current rail connectivity and the future provision of high speed rail services. And, Chesterfield makes a great base for visitors to explore the Peak District and Derbyshire; we just need to shout about it a bit louder.

Despite the challenges we continue to face, one thing is absolutely clear, all of our communities must share in the benefits of growth and there will be no left behind places. For our young people, we will strive to make Chesterfield a borough of

opportunity, providing fulfilling well-paid jobs that allow them to live locally but still achieve their ambitions.

Council Leader / Cabinet Lead

2). Introduction

This Growth Strategy provides a framework for action by the Council to deliver on our ambition of making Chesterfield a thriving borough. Its focus is on where the Council can make a real difference in accelerating economic growth and ensuring local people benefit from the new economic opportunities which are created.

The context for local economic growth is currently challenging, with growth in the national economy currently slowing and forecast to enter recession in 2023. It is anticipated that the economic downturn will lead to job losses, with unemployment nationally forecast to rise by around 500,000 and peak in the second half of 2024. This will clearly have an impact at the local level, with Chesterfield already seeing an increase in youth unemployment.

Chesterfield's economy also faces other structural challenges, such as the long-term rebuilding of the economic base following the loss of heavy industries and more recently, addressing the future of our town centres in response to declining footfall and rising vacancy rates. Equally, the need to start delivering economic growth in a more environmentally sustainable way will require changes in behaviour of both businesses and individuals (as residents, employees and consumers).

These challenges are significant but not insurmountable. The Council has made (and is continuing to make) major investments in economic infrastructure to diversify the business base and support new job creation. This includes the new Northern Gateway Enterprise Centre (constructed to a high energy efficiency standard), which joins Tapton Park and Dunston Innovation Centres as part of the Enterprise Chesterfield Network. In Chesterfield town centre, we are delivering the Revitalising the Heart of Chesterfield project, which alongside the redevelopment of Stephenson Memorial Hall, will attract new visitors and drive footfall back into the centre.

In pursuing the growth objectives contained in this strategy, the Council will be guided by three over-arching principles: higher-value growth, inclusive growth and environmentally sustainable growth. Our ambition is to not only create more jobs, but more skilled, well-paid jobs. Equally, we are committed to pursuing an inclusive approach to growth, so that all of our residents are in a position to access meaningful employment and benefit from future job opportunities. We have set a target of becoming a carbon neutral borough by 2050 and will champion a sustainable approach to growth to help achieve that objective.

3). Chesterfield's Economy

A detailed assessment of Chesterfield's economy has been completed to inform the development of the Growth Strategy (link to Economic Assessment 2022). A key points summary is set out below:

National Context

Local economic prospects are shaped to a large degree by the performance of the national economy. At the end of 2022 the economic outlook is challenging with high inflation, rising interest rates and international trade disruption (caused by Covid, Brexit and the war in Ukraine) forecast to push the economy into a recession that will last until the second half of 2023, before returning to a low level of growth in 2024.

Population Profile

Chesterfield has an older demographic profile, with 21% of the population aged 65+ compared to 18% nationally. Population growth has consistently lagged the growth seen at regional and national scales (reflecting the economic difficulties that the area has faced). The population is projected to increase by 4% to 109,000 by 2040, compared to 9% growth nationally.

Local Economic Performance

In 2018 (latest figures available), Chesterfield's economy generated GVA of £2,336m, equating to £45,800 per worker, below the national average of £56,000 per worker. This reflects the particular mix of business sectors in the borough which show a greater bias towards lower value-added activities.

Employment Base

In 2021, there were 51,000 employee jobs in Chesterfield (plus approximately 4,000 self-employed). Chesterfield has high levels of employment in health & social services (20% compared to 14% nationally) and the wholesale & retail sector (20% compared to 14% nationally), but a lower share of jobs in professional and business services (20% compared to 28% nationally).

Employment Forecast

Chesterfield's employment base is forecast to grow by 4.0% between 2021 and 2030, equating to an additional 2,000 jobs. The largest number of jobs are expected to be created in the health and social care sector, followed by logistics, professional services and hospitality. The manufacturing, retail and finance sectors are forecast to see a fall in employment by 2030.

Chesterfield Town Centre

Chesterfield town centre is classified as a 'Lower Average Major Centre' by CACI meaning that it is in the second highest tier of retail destinations nationally, but has a greater proportion of value focused retailers. Chesterfield is the dominant centre in the local retail catchment, but sits third behind Meadowhall and Sheffield in the wider catchment area. In common with other centres, Chesterfield is facing some key challenges, such as the growth of on-line shopping, and this has resulted in a steady rise in the number of vacant units in the town centre.

Visitor Economy

In 2021, approximately 3 million people visited Chesterfield, a recovery from the 2 million who visited in 2020, but below the 4 million seen prior to the Covid pandemic in 2019. The economic impact of day and staying visitors was estimated to be £163m, supporting a total of 1,800 jobs in the local economy.

Business Base

In 2022, there were 3,350 enterprises operating in Chesterfield. Over ten years the business base has grown by 21%, however this is below the rate of growth seen at regional (30%) and national (29%) levels. The largest absolute growth has been seen in the construction, business administration and professional services sectors. Only the retail and wholesale sectors saw a decline in the number of enterprises over the ten year period.

Workforce

The Census 2021 highlights that Chesterfield has fewer 'knowledge workers' (managers, professionals, associate professionals) than the national average (38.5% compared to 46.5%), although the share of knowledge workers has increased by over 4% points since the previous census in 2011. Conversely, Chesterfield has a greater proportion of lower skilled occupations (caring, leisure, sales, elementary occupations) than the national average (32.5% compared to 27.3%) and this is only slightly down on the 2011 figure (32.7%).

Qualifications

Chesterfield has a lower skills profile (Census 2021) than the national average, with fewer people qualified at Level 4 or above (26.8% compared to 33.9%) and more people with no qualifications (20.2% compared to 18.1%). However, over the last 10 years there has been a notable improvement in the proportion of Chesterfield residents with a Level 3 or Level 4 qualification, with both increasing by almost 6% points.

Unemployment

Chesterfield's claimant count unemployment rate was 3.3% in November 2022, below the national average of 3.6%. Whilst Chesterfield's unemployment rate has shown good recovery from the Covid pandemic, it is forecast to start rising again in 2023 as the national economy enters a recessionary phase. Chesterfield continues to have a high rate of youth (18-24) unemployment which currently stands at 6.5% compared to 4.7% nationally.

Deprivation

The Indices of Deprivation (2019) ranks Chesterfield as the 86th most deprived district in the country (out of 317 districts). Chesterfield has particular issues with the health & disability, employment and income aspects of deprivation where it is ranked 13th, 40th and 64th respectively. The Census 2021 also includes a deprivation

indicator which shows that 55% of households in Chesterfield are impacted by at least one aspect of deprivation, compared to 52% nationally.

Housing Market

Chesterfield's housing offer is focused towards lower and middle market housing with 75% of properties in council tax bands A and B. The average house price in Chesterfield is around 30% below the national average, meaning that housing is more affordable (7 times median earnings) in the borough than nationally (9 times median earnings). Chesterfield's supply of new housing has been increasing, with the average build target of 240 homes a year exceeded in each of the last three years and an estimated 400 homes to be delivered in 2022/23.

4). Chesterfield's Competitive Advantage

Chesterfield is a great place to establish and grow a business:

- Central location and accessibility – Chesterfield's central location and excellent accessibility is consistently identified as a key source of competitive advantage by local businesses. Chesterfield is well connected to the strategic motorway and mainline train network, with direct rail access to London in less than two hours.
- Established business base - Chesterfield is a significant economic centre with over 3,300 businesses and 50,000 people working in the borough. New business entrants benefit from co-location within a critical mass of companies, both as customers, suppliers and with access to a range of business support services.
- Business infrastructure – Chesterfield provides a large range of industrial, commercial and office premises to support new starts and growing businesses. This includes a growing network of innovation and enterprise centres and new office development located next to the rail station.
- Workforce catchment – approximately 500,000 people live within a 30 minute drive time of Chesterfield providing a sizeable labour supply for businesses. Proximity to Sheffield universities also provides access to a large graduate talent pool.
- Competitive cost location – Chesterfield is a cost effective location with average wages, commercial rents and housing costs all below the national average. A central location also helps to reduce logistics and travel costs.
- Chesterfield town centre – Chesterfield is a large town providing a range of retail, service, cultural and leisure activities. It has an attractive, pedestrian friendly town centre, featuring a historic market place and the iconic Crooked Spire church.
- Business engagement – through the Destination Chesterfield partnership, the area benefits from a strong working partnership between the public sector and local businesses.

- A great place to live and work - as a contemporary market town located on the edge of the Peak District, with an affordable quality of life, Chesterfield can offer people a great place to live and work.

5). Challenges and Opportunities

This section provides a summary of the challenges which need to be addressed, and the opportunities that can be built on, in order to secure future growth in Chesterfield.

Challenges:

- The national economy is forecast to enter a recessionary phase in 2023, creating more challenging conditions for local economic growth.
- The local economy has experienced lower levels of employment and business growth than the national average, and has a bias towards lower-value, lower-skill and lower-wage employment.
- Changing patterns of consumer and retailer behaviour are having a negative impact on footfall in our town centres, threatening the longer-term viability of those centres.
- The aim of becoming a carbon neutral borough by 2050 will require significant adaptation in business, workforce, consumer and visitor behaviours.
- Low market values can impact viability and prevent new developments from moving forward. There is also a limited supply of employment land that is available for immediate development.
- Chesterfield is not strongly perceived as a visitor destination and lacks a critical mass of product that could encourage extended visitor dwell times.
- The borough has a weaker occupational and skills profile, with fewer knowledge workers and more people in lower skilled occupations than the national average.
- Chesterfield consistently has one of the highest rates of youth (18-24) unemployment in the East Midlands.
- Chesterfield has particular issues with the health & disability, employment and income aspects of deprivation and some local neighbourhoods are in the most deprived 10% nationally.
- The Chancellor's Autumn Statement announced significant cuts in public spending in the next few years and this will adversely impact the delivery of local government services.

Opportunities:

- Seek to re-orientate the local economy towards higher-value growth through measures including: the further development of Chesterfield as a university town; delivery of the DRIVe project at Barrow Hill; provision of an innovation support programme; and further skills investment in the workforce.
- Improve the vitality and viability of our town centres through new place making investment (Revitalising the Heart of Chesterfield and Staveley 21 town centre projects) and measures to support the further development of an experiential and leisure based offer.
- Develop the Chesterfield Station area as a vibrant transport gateway, supporting the future provision of high speed rail services.
- The reopening of the Barrow Hill line to passenger services (subject to funding) including new stations at Whittington and Barrow Hill, will boost local access to economic opportunities in Chesterfield and Sheffield.
- Support the regeneration of the east of the borough through the development of comprehensive proposals for the Staveley Growth Corridor and the delivery of the £25m Staveley Town Deal programme.
- Attract more day and staying visitors by strengthening Chesterfield's role as a visitor destination and as a base for exploring the Peak District and Derbyshire.
- Build relationships with partner organisations, businesses, developers and landowners (as appropriate) to facilitate new employment and residential development.
- Promote Chesterfield's affordable quality of life offer to attract entrepreneurs and skilled workers (linked to the growth of hybrid / remote working) to the area.
- Maximise the local benefits of major developments through the use of local labour clauses and seek to generate additional social value from council contracts.

6). Strategic Context

The objectives and actions set out in this Growth Strategy are aligned with, and will support the delivery of, strategic plans and initiatives operating at the national, sub-regional and local scales.

At the national scale, the Government's Levelling Up White Paper (2022) recognises that not all places share in the country's economic success, which has been overly concentrated in the south east of England. It seeks to address this by spreading opportunity more equally across the UK through measures to improve growth, productivity, innovation and skills. Related to this, Chesterfield has secured

resources from the Levelling Up Fund for investment in Chesterfield town centre and funding for the Staveley area via the Town Deals programme.

The white paper advocates local devolution deals, with a simplified funding settlement and control of some existing budgets passed down to areas that adopt mayoral governance structures. This will see the creation of the East Midlands Mayoral Combined County Authority (MCCA) based on the two counties of Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire, and the allocation of a growth deal worth £1.14 billion over the next 30 years (starting in 2024). The MCCA will be the key sub-regional regeneration partnership, with any remaining Local Enterprise Partnership functions being integrated into the MCCA structure.

At the local level, the Growth Strategy aligns closely with the Council Plan (2023-27) which prioritises making Chesterfield a thriving borough, improving the quality of life for local people and building a more resilient council. The Growth Strategy will provide the strategic framework for activities that will make Chesterfield a thriving borough and contribute to improving the quality of life for local people by facilitating housing delivery, improving the quality of public places and addressing economic inequality. Activities in the Growth Strategy will align with the Council's Climate Change Strategy (2023-30), reflecting a shared focus on promoting the growth of a carbon neutral economy.

Linked to the Growth Strategy, the Chesterfield Visitor Economy Strategy (2022-27) and the Skills Action Plan (currently under review) provide more detail of the issues and interventions under the respective 'visitor economy' and 'employment and skills' objectives included in this strategy.

The Chesterfield Borough Local Plan (adopted 2020) provides the planning framework to enable the provision of new housing and commercial development across the borough. The Local Plan makes provision for an additional 4,080 homes by 2035 and allocates 50 ha of land for new employment uses. The plan supports proposals which strengthen the roles of Chesterfield and Staveley town centres and measures to promote sustainable tourism development.

7). The Role of the Council in Delivering Growth

In response to the decline of our traditional industrial base, this strategy is focused on addressing two related challenges: to build a more resilient economy that can deliver a range of quality employment opportunities; and, to ensure that local people have the right mix of skills to benefit from the new jobs which are created. We do not under-estimate the scale of this challenge and have made the long-term commitment necessary to make Chesterfield a successful and thriving borough.

In order to grow the economy, Chesterfield must have a stronger, more diversified private sector business base. This can be achieved by increasing the number of business start-ups, supporting the growth of existing businesses and attracting more entrepreneurs and investment to the area. To make this happen Chesterfield needs a competitive place infrastructure and the Council has a key role to play in this process by creating the best possible environment in which to establish and grow a business. This reflects our lead role in local place making: addressing the wide range

of issues that can make Chesterfield both a great place to live and a great place for business (being a great place to live reinforces business success by providing a high quality of life for employees).

To illustrate our leadership role, the Council is: a major provider of commercial premises for business, with a portfolio of over 550 industrial, office and retail units; progressing the Revitalising the Heart of Chesterfield project to attract more footfall back into the town centre; redeveloping the Stephenson Memorial Hall to enhance our cultural offer; providing a range of indoor and outdoor leisure facilities across the borough; managing the Staveley Town Deal and delivering the Staveley 21 town centre project as part of that programme; making significant investment in the quality of the council housing stock; and working with housebuilders to bring forward new housing sites for development.

In relation to future service delivery, we will be clear to prioritise our resources on activities where we can genuinely add value and will work proactively in partnership with other organisations and the private sector to secure the best possible outcomes for Chesterfield.

In pursuing its growth objectives, the Council will be guided by the following principles:

Higher-value Growth

The evidence base highlights that Chesterfield's economy is growing at a slower rate than the national average and has a bias towards lower-value, lower-skill and lower-wage jobs. In response, our ambition is not only to create more jobs in the borough, but to promote the growth of higher-value businesses (in manufacturing and service based sectors) that can deliver higher-skill and higher-wage jobs for Chesterfield's residents.

The Council will seek to achieve this by:

- Strengthening the relationship with further / higher education providers, reinforcing Chesterfield's role as a university town.
- Supporting initiatives such as 'Made in Chesterfield' to raise awareness amongst young people of the varied STEM careers available in the local economy.
- Promoting opportunities for continuing skills development of the existing workforce and working to ensure skills provision evolves in line with future job requirements.
- Delivering DRIIVe, a rail innovation, research and training centre at Barrow Hill.
- Strengthening the role of the Enterprise Chesterfield Network as a catalyst for the growth of knowledge based businesses and delivering the Innovation Support Programme.
- Promotional campaigns to attract inward investors and entrepreneurs to the area.

Inclusive Growth

The evidence base underlines the difficult circumstances that local people are facing with the current cost of living crisis, the national economy moving into recession and a forecast rise in the unemployment rate. As a 'post-industrial' town, Chesterfield continues to experience the legacy impact of the loss of traditional industries with high levels of health & disability, employment and income related deprivation, and some local communities ranked in the most deprived 10% nationally.

Whilst Chesterfield's overall unemployment rate currently sits below the national average (although it is forecast to increase in future), the rate of youth (18-24) unemployment has been increasing since mid-2022 and is consistently one of the highest rates in the East Midlands. The cost of living crisis will see a particular impact on consumer facing sectors such as retail and hospitality, and these are sectors which typically employ a large proportion of younger people.

In response to these issues, the Council is absolutely focused on pursuing an inclusive approach to growth to ensure that all our communities have access to, and benefit from, future growth opportunities. There will be no left behind places in Chesterfield borough. We are committed to building a stronger economy that will deliver more quality well paid jobs for all our residents, both now and for the generations to come.

Environmentally Sustainable Growth

The Council has committed to becoming a carbon neutral council by 2030 and for the borough as a whole to be carbon neutral by 2050. In order to support the transition to net zero, this strategy seeks to promote a more environmentally sustainable approach to growth, balancing the need to make Chesterfield a thriving borough with the need to reduce carbon dependency in the local economy.

Measures which the Council will take to deliver sustainable economic growth will include:

- The provision of a decarbonise programme for local businesses, including green audits and small grant support to enable improvements.
- Encouraging local business development of green products and services, and promoting Chesterfield as a location for green business investment.
- Working with Destination Chesterfield and other business networks to deliver seminars and events to promote sustainability best practice.
- Provision of new business premises to high energy efficiency standards such as the BREEAM excellent rated Northern Gateway Enterprise Centre.
- Supporting patterns of built development that make best use of existing infrastructure and encourage sustainable travel, for example new employment

and residential development in and around the town centre and adjacent to the railway station.

- Supporting the reopening of the Barrow Hill line, improving public transport connectivity between Chesterfield and Sheffield.
- Developing Chesterfield as a sustainable visitor hub for visits to the Peak District, including support for PEAK Gateway and the 'Journey to zero' transport hub.
- Provision of a workforce training programme focusing on green skills. Exploring opportunities for future employment and skills development in relation to the decarbonisation of the housing stock (public and private sector).
- Supporting the growth of local independent businesses and increasing spend retention in the local economy through campaigns such as 'Shop Local'.
- Securing local labour clauses and encouraging local sourcing of goods and services as part of planning conditions and council contracts.

8). Progress, Aspirations and Targets

Over the last ten years, we have prioritised significant resources in pursuit of our aim of making Chesterfield a thriving borough. This long term commitment is starting to yield results, with real progress seen in a number of headline economic performance measures. Whilst we clearly recognise our interventions are only one part of a bigger picture, it is reasonable to state that the services we provide and the schemes we have delivered, have made a positive contribution to performance. For example, over the last 10 years:

- The number of jobs in the borough has increased from 49,000 to 51,000.
- There are 580 more businesses operating in the borough, a 21% increase.
- The number of higher value businesses has increased by 31%.
- The number of Chesterfield residents working in the higher value occupations has increased by over 10% (+1,800 residents).
- The claimant count unemployment rate has fallen below the national average (3.3% v 3.6%).

In addition:

- £60m of regeneration funding has been secured for projects in the borough.
- Over the last 5 years 265 businesses have received support from our Innovation Support Programme.

- Over the last 5 years our business accommodation and advice service has handled almost 3,000 enquiries for business premises.
- The Council's commercial property portfolio currently supports an estimated 2,500 jobs in over 550 units.

Looking forward to 2030, our aspiration is to see further business and employment growth in the borough and a continuing transition towards a higher value added economy that can generate more higher wage jobs for local people. Our interventions in Chesterfield and Staveley town centres will see increased footfall and reduced high street vacancy rates, whilst our visitor economy will see full recovery and growth following the Covid pandemic. Our inclusive approach to growth will see reduced levels of economic inactivity in the working age population and lower levels of unemployment relative to the national average. Our future growth will be delivered in an increasingly environmentally sustainable way as we seek to become a carbon neutral borough by 2050.

Headline Targets (by 2030):

- Increase the number of employee jobs in the borough by 4% (2,000 jobs).
- Increase the number of businesses by 12% (400 businesses).
- Increase the number of higher value businesses by 15% (100 businesses).
- Increase the share of Chesterfield residents in knowledge based occupations by 15% (baseline Census 21 - 18,000).
- Reduce the town centre vacancy rate to below 10% (baseline 13.2%).
- Increase the value of the visitor economy by 20% (baseline £163m).
- Reduce the economic inactivity rate relative to the national average (baseline Census 21 - 42% v 39%).
- Maintain the 16-64 claimant count below the national average (baseline 3.3% v 3.6%).
- Narrow the 18-24 claimant count to within 1% point of the national average (currently 1.8% points).
- Increase business participation in carbon reduction initiatives in support of becoming a carbon neutral borough by 2050.

9). Strategy Framework

Overall Aim

The aim of the Growth Strategy is:

‘To make Chesterfield a thriving borough, delivering environmentally sustainable growth that benefits local people.’

Strategic Objectives

The strategy sets out five inter-linked objectives that will provide the framework for the delivery of a range of programmes and projects by the Council:

1. Help businesses to grow and secure new business investment in the borough.
2. Build a competitive place infrastructure that accelerates employment and housing growth.
3. Strengthen the distinctive character and vibrancy of our town centres.
4. Develop Chesterfield’s role as a visitor destination and as a base for exploring the surrounding area.
5. Ensure local people have the right skills to support progression in the labour market and benefit from future employment opportunities.

The following section sets out the rationale for each objective and the key activities that will be delivered in the next four years (2023-27).

10). Strategic Objectives

1. Help businesses to grow and secure new business investment in the borough.

Chesterfield needs a stronger, more diversified and higher-value business base to drive quality employment growth in the future. The Council seeks to achieve this through a range of measures including: the development and management of the Enterprise Chesterfield network; the provision of business support services; and the attraction of new investment to the borough.

The Enterprise Chesterfield Network represents a flagship investment by the Council, comprising three high quality business centres which provide a managed environment to support the growth of knowledge based businesses. Building on the network’s strong track record, we will seek to further leverage the value of the centres as a catalyst for small firm growth.

The Council’s Innovation Support Programme provides one-to-one advisor support to local businesses, including undertaking business reviews, brokering specialist support and delivering a programme of events. The advisor works closely with other projects such as the Vision Derbyshire Start-Up Programme to ensure a joined-up approach to business support. Additional funding has been secured from the Shared Prosperity Fund and this will be used to extend the lifetime of existing programmes and commission new activities such as a business decarbonise project.

The Council provides a business accommodation and advice service to ensure the efficient functioning of the local commercial property market and enable new starts and existing businesses to successfully locate themselves in Chesterfield. Officers in the Economic Development Team regularly meet with local businesses, developers and landowners to strengthen local relationships and increase the prospects that new business investment will be secured in the borough.

Place marketing is delivered by 'Destination Chesterfield', an organisation tasked with developing a co-ordinated approach to promoting the town and raising its profile as a contemporary living and working destination. Destination Chesterfield deliver a range of local campaigns including 'Made in Chesterfield' and 'Celebrate Chesterfield' as well as engaging with the business community through the successful 'Chesterfield Champions' programme. The Economic Development Team works closely with Destination Chesterfield on developing and delivering 'Invest in Chesterfield' campaigns and takes the lead role in responding to investor enquiries.

There exists a clear overlap between the place marketing activities of Destination Chesterfield and the Council's marketing of Chesterfield as a visitor destination. A review will be undertaken to ensure the most effective arrangements are put in place to deliver a focused approach to future destination marketing activities.

Key Activities

- Deliver an Innovation Support Programme and commission activities to support business start-ups, business resilience and low carbon growth.
- Manage the Enterprise Chesterfield network as a focus for the growth of higher-value businesses.
- Enable local business growth and inward investment by providing a comprehensive business accommodation advice and support service.
- Work with Destination Chesterfield to develop and deliver place marketing and inward investment campaigns.
- Facilitate new business investment through a process of Key Account Management.

2. Build a competitive place infrastructure that accelerates employment and housing growth.

The Council has a key role to play in making Chesterfield both a competitive location to do business and a great place to live. The Council seeks to enable new employment and housing growth through the planning framework and works proactively with public and private sector partners to bring forward new infrastructure and site investment. We are also a major investor in business infrastructure in our own right and have most recently completed the Northern Gateway Enterprise Centre in the town centre and a new office development (One Waterside Place) adjacent to the rail station.

A masterplan has been completed to guide the development of the Chesterfield station area, which alongside a revised masterplan for the Chesterfield Waterside area, will establish the wider locality as a sustainable live/work community and vibrant gateway to Chesterfield and the Peak District. Whilst the station already

benefits from mainline connectivity, the future provision of high speed rail services will significantly enhance the appeal of Chesterfield as a residential, business and visitor destination.

The Staveley Growth Corridor, comprising 150 ha of former industrial land, represents the largest regeneration project in the borough. The corridor provides significant opportunities for new housing, employment, community services and the provision of enhanced green / blue infrastructure linked to the River Rother and Chesterfield Canal. The development potential of the corridor is directly linked to proposals for the Chesterfield Staveley Regeneration Route, which is currently the subject of a funding application being considered by the Department of Transport. The Council's Planning Team is working closely with relevant landowners to masterplan the area in order to ensure that the different scheme phases are delivered in a comprehensive and co-ordinated manner.

The Council has management responsibility for the Staveley Town Deal Programme and this will facilitate a number of infrastructure investments in the Staveley area in the period up to March 2026. These investments include: the restoration of part of the Chesterfield Canal and a first phase development at the Staveley Canal Basin; the provision of enabling works at Hartington Industrial Park to bring forward a 20 ha employment site; re-instatement of the railway station at Barrow Hill (subject to funding being made available to restore the Barrow Hill line); and provision of community facilities in Staveley and Barrow Hill.

Ensuring the borough has the right housing offer (in terms of both quality and quantity) is not only vital for the quality of life of local communities, it also supports economic growth by providing for the needs of the local workforce and helping to attract entrepreneurs and skilled workers to the area. The Local Plan (2020) demonstrates that there is sufficient land to meet the borough's identified housing need, based on a housing requirement of 4,080 new homes by 2035 or an average build rate of 240 homes a year. This target has been exceeded in each of the last three years (with 379 completions in 2021/22), reflecting the positive approach taken by the Council's Planning Team and Housing Delivery Manager.

We will continue to take actions to develop our housing offer including: achieving a comprehensive understanding of site development issues in the borough through positive engagement with developers and landowners; supporting housing investment on surplus land owned by the Council; purchasing new council houses to address local housing need and enable the development of stalled or marginally viable housing sites; and on-going investment to create quality places where people want to live.

Key Activities

- Ensure the provision of a sufficient range of employment and housing sites in the borough.
- Manage the Council's commercial property portfolio and identify new commercial investment opportunities that can facilitate economic growth.
- Deliver a first phase of development in the Chesterfield Station Masterplan area, seeking to create a vibrant gateway for the town centre and wider area.

- Adopt a revised masterplan to support the future development of the Chesterfield Waterside area.
- Work with partners to bring forward the comprehensive regeneration of the Staveley Growth Corridor.
- Manage the delivery of the Staveley Town Deal Programme.
- Develop the housing offer and work to accelerate the delivery of residential sites across the borough.

3. Strengthen the distinctive character and vibrancy of our town centres

Chesterfield town centre is a key economic asset for north Derbyshire, providing a wide range of employment in retail, hospitality, education and office based services. However, in common with other second-tier comparison retail destinations, it is facing particular challenges from changes in consumer behaviour (notably the growth in on-line retail) and the closure / relocation of national retail multiples out of the centre (for example the relocation of Marks & Spencer to Ravenside Retail Park). As a result, town centre footfall has declined significantly in recent years and this is impacting the high street vacancy rate, which has doubled in the last 5 years to over 13%. Without intervention, the risk of a negative cycle is clear, with business closures further reducing footfall and jeopardising the future of other town centre businesses.

Increasing footfall in Chesterfield is therefore considered critical to supporting the viability of all consumer facing businesses in the town centre. This will be achieved by making Chesterfield a focus for a whole range of activities that can generate additional footfall and spend in the centre. This will include: quality place making investment to make the town centre an attractive place to visit and spend time in; a redeveloped outdoor market and new public spaces delivering a range of speciality markets, festivals and events to encourage a high level of repeat footfall; more employment floorspace (for example the recently opened Northern Gateway Enterprise Centre) to drive weekday footfall; and an evolving town centre offer that attracts additional residential development within walking distance of the centre.

The town centre masterplan framework will be updated to guide future investment decision making and will include: proposals for the next phase of the town's Northern Gateway scheme; options for the future development of the Pavements shopping centre; and the preparation of a masterplan for the town's southern gateway, seeking to improve pedestrian connectivity between the centre and Ravenside Retail Park.

A new masterplan has been prepared for Staveley town centre and a first phase of investment (the Staveley 21 project), funded by the Staveley Town Deal, will see the redevelopment of the market place and upgraded public realm on the high street.

Key activities:

- Secure on-going investment and development of Chesterfield town centre, guided by a revised town centre masterplan, with specific proposals for the town's northern gateway, southern gateway and Pavements shopping centre.

- Deliver the Revitalising the Heart of Chesterfield Project, providing high quality public realm, new event spaces and a rejuvenated outdoor market in Chesterfield town centre.
- Ensure the effective co-ordination and delivery of town centre services including pro-active engagement with town centre businesses.
- Support the regeneration of Staveley town centre through the delivery of the Staveley 21 town centre project.
- Encourage further residential development in and around our town centres.

4. Develop Chesterfield's role as a visitor destination and as a base for exploring the surrounding area.

The Chesterfield Visitor Economy Strategy (2022-27) will guide the Council's approach to accelerating the growth of the visitor economy in Chesterfield town centre and across the borough. It seeks to attract more day and staying visitors, generating additional visitor spend that will support existing and new employment in the retail, hospitality and leisure based sectors.

The Council's approach is based on a realistic assessment of Chesterfield's current positioning as a visitor destination and the opportunities that are available to us to drive future growth. Consumer research has highlighted that Chesterfield is not strongly perceived as a visitor destination, with the current offer best described as 'low key' and lacking a critical mass of product to encourage longer dwell times. Equally, the same research has also highlighted some key strengths that can be built on, such as a very strong consumer association with the Crooked Spire and a perception that Chesterfield is close to the Peak District and that it is easy to get to.

Taking account of these factors, the main opportunities have been identified as: the potential to grow Chesterfield's existing markets, particularly day visitors from home and those staying in the Peak District; the continuing growth of the domestic short break market, with people using Chesterfield as a base; the revitalising investment in Chesterfield town centre, making it a more attractive place to visit; and future market opportunities linked to the development of PEAK Resort.

In terms of positioning, Chesterfield's core proposition will be as follows:

'A lively market town with the iconic Crooked Spire Church, Chesterfield inspires day and staying visitors with its unique mix of independents, markets, events, festivals and borough-wide attractions, providing a great base from which to explore Derbyshire and the Peak District.'

This will be achieved through wider quality of place investment, including the refurbishment of Stephenson Memorial Hall, to provide the setting for the further development of a distinctive experiential offer that attracts new visitors and encourages a high level of repeat visits. Raising awareness of this offer will be key to growing visitor demand and there will be a need to ensure the most effective arrangements are put in place to deliver future destination marketing activities.

Key Activities:

- Work in partnership to deliver a range of marketing activities to raise the profile of Chesterfield both as a visitor destination and as a base for exploring the Peak District and Derbyshire.
- Complete the refurbishment of Stephenson Memorial Hall to significantly enhance Chesterfield's cultural and heritage offer.
- Deliver a programme of speciality markets, events and festivals to attract more visitors to Chesterfield.
- Work with partners to support the further development of the borough's visitor offer including PEAK Resort, an enhanced Crooked Spire experience, the reopening of Chesterfield Canal and extension of the footpath/cycling network.

5. Ensure local people have the right skills to support progression in the labour market and benefit from future employment opportunities.

A skilled workforce is vital to the future economic success of the area, supporting the shift towards a higher-value and higher-wage economy. Equally, it is vital that local people have the right mix of skills to enable participation and progression in the current labour market as well as being in a position to benefit from new job opportunities that are created in the borough.

Following the resourcing of a Skills Delivery Officer, the Council is now playing a more pro-active role in relation to skills development and delivery in Chesterfield. The Council's Skills Action Plan is currently under review and this will guide our activities over the period 2023-27. It is recognised that closer working is required between stakeholders to ensure that local skills provision evolves in line with future business and job requirements. As such, it is proposed that a Skills and Employment Partnership be established and that this partnership oversees the delivery of the Skills Action Plan, ensuring alignment to key policy drivers and funding opportunities.

The Council will work to facilitate local business access to workforce training programmes, acting as a conduit between businesses and the training providers. Funding allocated via the Shared Prosperity Fund will also enable the direct commissioning of workforce training, with interventions around green and digital skills considered to be a priority.

Funding from the Staveley Town Deal Programme will enable the Council to make two significant skills-related capital investments: the construction of DRIVE, a rail innovation and training centre located at Barrow Hill; and the delivery of an on-site Construction Skills Hub that will provide construction related training for 340 people, establishing a pipeline of skilled workers for future developments.

Chesterfield has particular issues with youth unemployment, health related factors limiting people's participation in the labour market and high levels of deprivation in some local neighbourhoods. We will work with partners to ensure work readiness and employment support programmes are targeted where they are most needed, including the direct commissioning of activities around tackling economic inactivity and increasing levels of digital inclusion.

In Chesterfield, there are a number of significant development schemes, either underway or in the pipe-line, that have the potential to offer wider employment,

training and supply chain opportunities during the delivery phase. To maximise the benefits of this new investment, we will continue to take a pro-active approach in securing local labour clauses and supply chain contracts both in terms of our own procurement processes and through the negotiation of Section 106 agreements on planning applications. We will also work closely with end-users and inward investors to support local staff recruitment campaigns.

Key Activities

- Approve the Skills Action Plan to guide the development and delivery of skills activity over the period 2023-27.
- Establish a Skills and Employment Partnership to ensure skills provision evolves in line with future job requirements.
- Seek to secure the further development of higher education provision in Chesterfield.
- Facilitate local business access to workforce training programmes including the provision of green and digital skills courses.
- Foster links between businesses and schools so that young people are aware of future career pathways, including apprentice opportunities.
- Work with partners to ensure that work readiness, skills and employment support programmes are effectively targeted at priority groups and communities.
- Deliver DRIIVe, a nationally significant rail innovation and training centre, as part of a cluster of rail related activity at Barrow Hill.
- Establish the Construction Skills Hub in Staveley to deliver construction related training and employment for local people.
- Maximise the training and employment benefits of new development which takes place in Chesterfield, through the agreement of local labour clauses.