

# **Chesterfield Growth Strategy 2019-2023**

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## **Foreword**

Chesterfield's economy has faced many challenges over the years: from the major job losses linked to the decline of our traditional industrial base; to the growth of on-line retailing and the impact this is having on the high street; and most recently, the uncertainty surrounding the Brexit negotiations and the effect this is having on business investment decisions.

The most appropriate response to these on-going challenges and uncertainties is to bring an even greater focus to our efforts to build a more resilient economy for the future...an economy that can provide the high quality well-paid jobs that local people deserve.

To achieve this we need to make Chesterfield the best possible place in which to establish and grow a business. We need to build on our advantages such as a central location, strategic transport links, available workforce and competitive costs to attract new investment to the area. We need to make the most of our major development opportunities, such as the Northern Gateway scheme, Peak Resort and HS2, to deliver a step-change in the economic prospects of the area.

This Growth Strategy provides a framework for an ambitious range of activities and initiatives which the Council will be aiming to deliver over the next four years. This includes the construction of an Enterprise Centre which will support the growth of new businesses. We will also seek to attract a higher level of foot-fall into the town centre and encourage more visitors to use Chesterfield as a base for visiting surrounding attractions such as Chatsworth House and the Peak District.

A key objective of the Strategy is to support the creation of more and better jobs that are available to local people. We will work closely with partners to help improve work readiness and skill levels to ensure that all local people can benefit from the new jobs which are created.

Councillor Terry Gilby  
Cabinet Member for Economic Growth

## **Executive Summary**

### **Introduction**

The overall purpose of this Growth Strategy is to set out the role of the Council in supporting the growth and regeneration of Chesterfield borough. Specifically it seeks to build on a range of current development prospects to accelerate the rate of economic growth and maximise opportunities for the benefit of local people and businesses.

### **Economic Assessment**

The Strategy is underpinned by an economic assessment which highlights a number of issues including: local employment growth that has consistently lagged behind the growth seen at the national scale; an economic structure with an under-representation of key national growth sectors such as business and professional services; and higher levels of youth unemployment and working age benefit dependency. Equally, the number of businesses in the borough has increased by 20% over the last five years (2012-17); there is an improving rate of business start-ups; and the proportion of young people gaining 5 GCSEs at A\*-C is ahead of the national average.

### **Strategic Context**

Activities in this Growth Strategy will ultimately contribute towards the achievement of the aims of a range of strategies operating at the national, sub-regional and local scales, including the Government's Industrial Strategy with its focus on creating prosperous communities across the country. Chesterfield forms part of a North Midlands 'overlap geography' that sits within both the SCR LEP/CA and the D2N2 LEP areas. Funding via both LEPs is supporting the delivery of regeneration schemes in the borough including Chesterfield Waterside, Peak Resort, Northern Gateway, Markham Vale and transport improvements in the A61 Corridor.

### **Defining Chesterfield's Competitive Advantage**

Chesterfield competes with other locations to attract investment, businesses and skilled workers. Chesterfield's competitive advantage is based on a range of factors (including its central location, strategic accessibility, historic town centre and being a great place to live) that come together to define it as an investment location.

### **Challenges and Opportunities**

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

The challenges include:

- Slowdown in the national economy as a result of Brexit uncertainty and a squeeze on consumer spending;
- Increasing the rate of housing delivery and maintaining the five year housing land supply; and
- Challenges faced by town centres such as Chesterfield, notably the continued expansion of on-line retailing and an investment focus on the largest retail centres.

The opportunities include:

- Development of HS2, including a stopping service at Chesterfield station and an Infrastructure Maintenance Depot and rail related activities at Staveley;
- Redevelopment of the former Co-op building to strengthen the town centre leisure offer, facilitated by the Northern Gateway scheme; and
- Seeking to attract entrepreneurs and skilled workers to the area on the basis of Chesterfield’s affordable high quality of life offer.

**The Role of the Council in Supporting Growth**

The key challenge that Chesterfield faces is building a resilient economy that can create and sustain a range of quality job opportunities. Linked to this, a second challenge is to ensure that local people have the right mix of skills to access the jobs which are created. Given on-going austerity measures, the public sector can no longer be relied upon to be a driver of jobs growth as it has been in the past: essentially what Chesterfield needs is a stronger private sector business base to drive employment growth in the future.

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 the lead role of the Council in dealing with a wide range of place-related factors that can help shape business success and make the borough a great place to live. The Council will be clear to prioritise its resources on activities where it can add value and will work pro-actively in partnership with others to secure the best outcomes for Chesterfield.

There are currently a number of significant regeneration opportunities across the borough, the successful development of which will deliver a step change in the growth prospects of the wider North Derbyshire economy. In order to realise these opportunities, there is a need to ensure that delivery arrangements are fully fit for purpose, particularly in relation to partnership working.

**Strategic Framework**

The overall aim of the Growth Strategy is: **‘To secure the long term growth of the borough, supporting new job creation and ensuring local people have the right skills to access future employment opportunities.’**

The Strategy provides a framework for the delivery of a range of programmes and initiatives that can be grouped under three thematic headings and seven key objectives:

1. Supporting business growth and investment	1. Work to increase business start-ups and support the expansion of the existing business base. 2. Undertake a range of marketing activities to raise the profile of the borough as a business location and attract new business investment.
2. A great place to live, visit and do business	3. Secure investment in infrastructure that enables employment and housing growth and delivers a high quality of place. 4. Strengthen the distinctive role of Chesterfield town centre to ensure its longer term vitality and viability. 5. Support the growth of Chesterfield as both a visitor

	destination and hub.
3. An inclusive approach to growth	6. Work to raise the level of workforce skills to support future business growth. 7. Ensure that all local people are in a position to benefit from the growth which takes place in the borough.

**Economic Growth Programme**

This section sets out the main activities and projects that the Council will deliver, either directly or in partnership with other organisations and the private sector, under each of the key objectives. Progress on delivering key projects will be reported on an annual basis.

**Measuring Success**

Progress will be measured in relation to the successful delivery of activities and projects set out in the programme and through improvements in the headline performance indicators as set out in the Council Plan.

## Introduction

The overall purpose of this Growth Strategy is to set out the role of the Council in supporting the growth and regeneration of Chesterfield borough. It provides a framework for actions over the period 2019-2023 that will deliver the Council's priority of making Chesterfield a thriving borough and contribute towards the priorities of improving the quality of life for local people through the provision of value for money services.

Working closely with partner organisations and the private sector, the Council plays a leading role in creating a positive environment for the growth of new business activity, in response to the longer term restructuring that has taken place in the area's economic base. The local economy continues to face challenges at a number of levels, ranging from weaker growth in the national economy, through the on-going impact of austerity measures on public sector services and employment, to the future of retailing on the high street.

Equally, these challenges are balanced by a number of opportunities which can be built on to drive sustainable economic growth. These include: key regeneration schemes such as Chesterfield Waterside and Peak Resort starting on site; the strengthening of the town centre offer through the delivery of the Northern Gateway scheme and the redevelopment of the former Co-op building as a leisure destination; and longer term, the development of HS2 which has the potential to be a catalyst for significant residential and commercial development as well as attracting more visitors to the area. Collectively these developments present a real opportunity to put Chesterfield on a higher growth trajectory, starting to address the local 'jobs deficit' that has increased over a number of years as local employment creation has consistently lagged behind growth seen at the national scale.

The Growth Strategy is 'evidence-based' and aims to demonstrate a clear link between the assessment of issues on the ground and actions taken by the Council. The scope of activities in the Economic Growth Programme is defined in response to the range of challenges and opportunities that the area faces (as highlighted above) whilst recognising the key roles played by other organisations and the private sector. The Council will continue to pursue a pro-active approach to growth, working closely with partners to ensure a joined-up approach to scheme delivery and prioritising its resources on activities where it can genuinely add value.

The primary focus of this Strategy is about accelerating growth to maximise economic opportunities for the benefit of local people and businesses. It seeks to identify those characteristics that make Chesterfield a great place to live, visit and do business, and then build on these to attract further investment, visitors and skilled workers to the area. There is a clear focus throughout the strategy on inclusive growth to ensure that local people have the right skills to take advantage of the new jobs which are created.

## **Economic Assessment**

An assessment of Chesterfield's economy has been completed in order to inform the development of the Growth Strategy. Key messages from the assessment are summarised below:

### **National Context**

Local economic prospects are shaped to a large degree by the performance of the national economy. The decision to leave the EU is impacting on future national growth, with uncertainty over the outcome of Brexit negotiations leading to delayed investment decisions and consumer spending (a key driver of growth) being squeezed by higher inflation. Following growth of 1.8% in 2017, the Office for Budget Responsibility is now forecasting an average growth rate of only 1.4% over the next five years (compared to trend rate growth of 2.0%).

### **Population**

Chesterfield's population, which currently stands at 104,400 people, has been growing more slowly than the regional and national averages. This lower rate of population growth reflects the economic difficulties the area has faced with fewer jobs being created, meaning that fewer people have been attracted to the area to work, or have left the area to find employment elsewhere. A key issue will be to increase the number and quality of job opportunities that will meet the needs of a growing population and attract more younger workers, including those who have previously left the area to go to university.

### **Economic Geography**

Chesterfield functions as the sub-regional service centre of north eastern Derbyshire providing a focus for a range of employment, retail, leisure and cultural activities. It attracts over 21,000 daily commuters from surrounding areas, mainly North East Derbyshire, Bolsover, Sheffield and Derbyshire Dales. Chesterfield is the most important source of employment for Chesterfield residents with almost 31,000 (or 64%) working in the borough and a further 17,000 travelling outside the area for work, mainly to the previously named authorities. Over the last ten years there has been a notable increase in out-commuting by residents for work, and this is likely to be linked to the low level of employment growth that has been seen in the area.

### **Employment Base**

Approximately 50,000 people work in the borough (2017), with high levels of employment in the public sector (36%), retail & wholesale (19%), and above average levels of employment in manufacturing (10%). Local employment growth has consistently lagged behind the growth seen at the national scale, for example over the last 10 years the number of jobs has increased by 4%, compared to 12% nationally. If growth had been in line with the national average there would now be 54,000 jobs in the borough, 4,000 more than the current position. This underlines the scale of the challenge the area has faced as it seeks to adjust to the decline of its traditional industrial base and secure the growth of new business activities.



## Future Employment Prospects

Looking forward, it is anticipated that Chesterfield will see employment growth in future years, but this will continue to be at a slower rate than growth seen nationally. The main reason for this is that the borough has a greater exposure to sectors that are expected to show weaker or no net growth (for example parts of the public sector and manufacturing) and less exposure to the fastest growing private sector services such as ‘professional and business services’. The likely prospects for employment growth in Chesterfield’s main business sectors, taking account of past performance, national forecasts and local factors, are set out in the table below:

Sector	Employment Prospects (near term)	Employment Prospects (longer term)
Manufacturing	↔↔	↓
Construction	↔↔/↑	↑
Retail & Wholesale	↔↔/↑	↔↔/↑
Transport & Storage	↑	↑
Accommodation & Food Services	↑/↑↑	↑
Information & Communications	↑	↑
Financial, Professional & Business Services	↑	↑/↑↑
Public Admin, Education & Health	↓/↔↔	↔↔/↑
Arts, Recreation & Other Services	↔↔/↑	↑

Local employment growth opportunities include: the strengthening of the town centre leisure offer, facilitated by the Northern Gateway scheme; the development of Peak Resort as a major visitor attraction; and, in the longer term, the growth of higher-value services around the railway station (including Chesterfield Waterside) and rail related activities at Staveley linked to HS2. The successful delivery of these schemes will potentially create a significant development momentum, increasing the prospects of a faster rate of employment growth in future.

### Chesterfield Town Centre

Chesterfield town centre is ranked (by CACI) as the 125<sup>th</sup> largest centre in the country for comparison retail shopping (placing it in the top 3% largest centres nationally) with a regular shopper population of 105,000 and expenditure potential of £186m. Chesterfield is the dominant centre in its core retail catchment, achieving a market share of 52%, however in its wider catchment it faces significant competition from surrounding centres and is ranked third behind Meadowhall (16%) and Sheffield (15%) with a market share of 9%. Although Chesterfield’s current retail offer has a bias towards the value end of the market, the town consistently achieves retail occupancy rates that are above the national average. A study by CACI has also

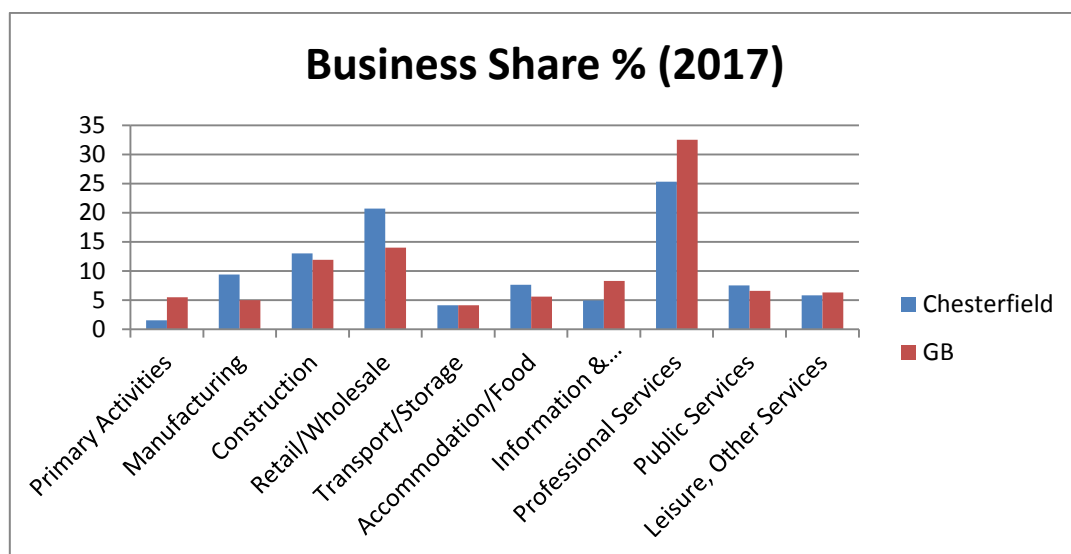
identified the town as being in the top 100 locations nationally (ranked 26<sup>th</sup>) that offer the most potential for new retail and leisure investors.

### Visitor Economy

In 2017, Chesterfield attracted over 3.7m visitors (a 5% increase on the previous year), the majority of which (91%) were visiting for the day, with the balance comprising those staying overnight either with friends and relatives, or in paid accommodation. Annual visitor spend of £132m currently supports over 2,100 jobs across a range of service based sectors including retail, accommodation, food & drink and recreation. With tourism forecast to be one of the fastest growing sectors in the national economy, it is considered that the visitor economy could make an even greater contribution to local growth in future.

### Business Base

In 2017 there were 3,340 businesses based in Chesterfield. Over the five year period (2012-17), the stock of businesses increased by 21% (or 575 businesses), behind the increase seen nationally of 26%, but a relatively strong performance when compared to Chesterfield’s lower rate of employment growth. A comparison of Chesterfield’s business base to the national average is shown below.



The number of new start businesses has increased significantly over the last five years, from 275 a year in 2011 to 450 in 2016. Despite this improvement Chesterfield has a lower level of entrepreneurial activity (7 new starts per 1,000 working age population) than the regional (8 starts) and national (10 starts) averages, but compares reasonably well with neighbouring authorities.

### Economic Activity

The number of economically active residents in Chesterfield is increasing, reflecting both the growth in the population and a rise in the activity rate (although this still remains below the national rate at 68% compared to 70%). The number of people actually in employment has increased by more than 5,000 (2001 to 2011), although

the growth in part-time employment has been significantly higher than the growth in full-time employment.

Unemployment in Chesterfield currently stands at 2.6% (above the national rate of 2.2%) and has fallen significantly since peaking at over 9% in the mid-1990s. The local rate achieved a low point of 1.6% at the end of 2015, but has increased gradually since that time, mirroring the rise seen in the national rate. Chesterfield continues to have a relatively high level of youth unemployment at 4.9% (nationally 3.0%), although this has also shown a substantial improvement, declining from almost 11% over the last five years. Chesterfield has a high rate of working age people claiming key out of work benefits (11.2% compared to 8.4% nationally). The borough contains some significant pockets of worklessness, such as the wards of Loundsley Green, Rother, Middlecroft & Poolsbrook and St Helens, where the rate of claimants is over twice the national average.

### Occupations and Skills

Chesterfield has fewer 'knowledge workers' (those in the highest skill occupations) than the national average (34% compared to 41%) and a greater proportion of local people in lower skilled occupations (43% compared to 35%). This shortfall is also reflected in the skills profile, with fewer well qualified people (NVQ 4 and above, 21% compared to 27%) and more people with no qualifications than the national average (28% compared to 22%). The proportion of young people achieving five GCSEs at A\*-C grade is 66.1%, ahead of the national average (59.3%), highlighting the potential of Chesterfield's young people to contribute to an improved economic performance in future.

### Indices of Deprivation

The Indices of Deprivation (2015) ranks Chesterfield as the 85<sup>th</sup> most deprived district in the country (out of 327 districts) measured on a range of deprivation indicators. The borough has particular issues with the Health & Disability and Employment aspects of deprivation where it is ranked 25<sup>th</sup> and 43<sup>rd</sup> respectively on a national basis. Across the borough, 20 SOAs (Super Output Areas – small scale geographies typically with a population of around 1,500) out of a total of 69 SOAs are ranked in the most deprived 20% of SOAs nationally, with 6 of these in the most deprived 10%.

### Housing Market

Chesterfield's housing offer is focused towards lower and middle market housing, with a smaller proportion of larger detached properties (14%) than the regional average (19%). This is reflected in the average house price which is around 15% below the regional average, although this makes housing affordability less of an issue for the borough at just over 5 times earnings (compared to 6.5 times earnings for the East Midlands). Chesterfield's supply of new housing has been on a gradual upward trajectory following the collapse in new build activity at the time of the global financial crisis in 2008. From over 400 houses constructed in 2007, to a low point of only 24 new houses in 2009/10, it is now estimated there will be over 260 completions in 2017/18.

## Strategic Context

The activities set out in this Growth Strategy are influenced by, and will contribute towards, the aims and objectives of a range of strategies and plans operating at the national, sub-regional and local scale. These include:

### National Context

The '**Industrial Strategy: building a Britain fit for the future**' (2017) sets out the Government's approach to help businesses create high quality well paid jobs right across the country. The Industrial Strategy is structured around the 'five foundations of productivity' that will accelerate the transformation of the national economy: Ideas – the world's most innovative economy; People – good jobs and greater earning power for all; Infrastructure – a major upgrade to the UK's infrastructure; Business Environment – the best place to start and grow a business; and Places – prosperous communities across the UK. These foundations are reflected in the Council's Growth Strategy with its focus on promoting the growth of higher value, higher skilled employment by making Chesterfield a great place to do business.

The White Paper '**Fixing our broken housing market**' (2017) sets out the Government's plans to reform the housing market and boost the supply of new homes. The paper identifies that the average build rate since the 1970s has been 160,000 homes a year, whereas the consensus is that between 225,000-275,000 houses are required to keep up with population growth and to tackle years of under-supply. It includes measures that aim to: plan for the right homes in the right places; build homes faster; diversify the housing market; and help people to buy their own homes. The issue of housing under-supply is reflected at the local level, and the Council is working to facilitate the delivery of a number of key regeneration schemes that will significantly boost the delivery of new homes.

As part of the Government's aim of rebalancing growth across the country, new sub-national partnerships have been established to drive growth in the North (the **Northern Powerhouse**) and the Midlands (the **Midlands Engine**) respectively. Through its positioning in both the Sheffield City Region (SCR) Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and the D2N2 LEP, the actions of both partnerships will have a role in shaping future growth in Chesterfield. For example the Midlands Connect Strategy (the transport component of the Midlands Engine) identifies an 'intensive growth corridor' connecting the Nottingham-Derby hub to the north as a priority for investment and highlights 'the exciting opportunity' of Chesterfield being served by high speed rail. Connectivity issues in the North are being addressed by Transport for the North, which has identified a Southern Pennines multi-modal transport corridor as a strategic priority, with a particular focus on delivering transformational road and rail links between Sheffield and Manchester, and improving access to Doncaster Sheffield Airport.

### Sub-Regional Context

Chesterfield forms part of a North Midlands 'overlap geography' (comprising the districts of Bassetlaw, Bolsover, Chesterfield, Derbyshire Dales and North East Derbyshire) that sits in both the SCR LEP / CA and D2N2 LEP areas. Through the

allocation of resources via Local Growth Deals, LEPs/CAs have become the key partnership structures for driving economic growth at the sub-regional scale.

The **SCR's Strategic Economic Plan (SEP)** sets out an ambition to structurally transform the city region's economy by securing 'a bigger stronger private sector' that can support the creation of 70,000 jobs by 2025. The SEP identifies Chesterfield as the sub-regional economic centre for northern Derbyshire, with a high quality urban core and opportunities for further growth in the Staveley and A61 Corridors. The A61 Corridor (including Chesterfield town centre), alongside Markham Vale, is highlighted as one of the seven spatial priority areas in the city region where a significant proportion of growth is expected to occur.

The Council's pro-active engagement with SCR is providing significant regeneration benefits for the borough, with pump-priming infrastructure funding (via the SCR Investment Fund) supporting the delivery of Chesterfield Waterside (£2.7m), Peak Resort (£2.85m), Northern Gateway (£5.83m) and the Markham Vale Seymour Link Road (£3.1m via Derbyshire CC). Chesterfield companies benefit from access to business support via the SCR Growth Hub, including potential grant funding and bespoke workforce training programmes from the SCR's Skills Bank.

The **D2N2 LEP** is currently consulting on its revised SEP which sets out an ambition (by 2030) for a world class innovation-led, highly productive economy with a global reputation for manufacturing excellence. The SEP aims to close the persistent productivity gap (with the area producing too little output for the hours worked) as the basis for driving up living standards, with more people in higher-wage occupations. The SEP highlights the role of D2N2's major towns as important economic centres in their own right, with 'Chesterfield being home to over 30,000 jobs, having an economy generating over £2bn of GVA per annum and a planned station on the High Speed 2 line'. D2N2 will work with local partners to deliver the North Derbyshire Growth Zone, centred around the station in Chesterfield and the Infrastructure Maintenance Depot at Staveley, to enhance Chesterfield's role as a Peak District Gateway and accelerate the regeneration of the Staveley Corridor and surrounding key sites.

D2N2 has provided funding of £2.5m for the Seymour Link Road and £3.5m to the University of Derby to support the redevelopment of the former St Helena's school as a new university campus (opened October 2016). Funding has also been allocated to upgrade the A61 Whittington Moor roundabout (£3.2m) and £12.8m has been made available over a four year period to 2021 for transport investment in the wider A61 Corridor (covering both Chesterfield and North East Derbyshire).

## Local Context

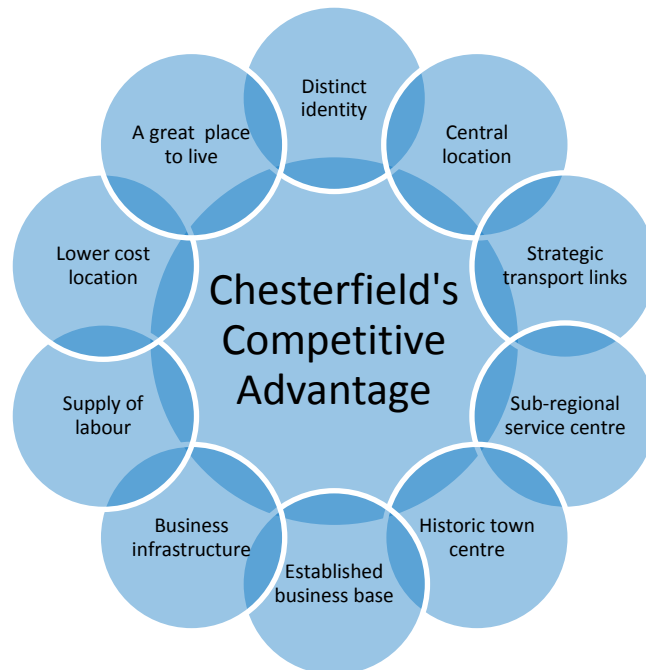
**The Council Plan (2015-19)** prioritises making Chesterfield a thriving borough, improving the quality of life for local people and providing value for money services. The Growth Strategy will provide the strategic framework for activities that will make Chesterfield a thriving borough including the delivery of key regeneration schemes, supporting the growth of the town centre and making sure local people benefit from growth opportunities. Actions in the Growth Strategy will also contribute to improving

the quality of life for local people by increasing the supply of housing, improving the quality of public places and helping to reduce inequality.

The delivery of the Growth Strategy will be supported by the **Chesterfield Local Plan: Core Strategy** (2013) which provides the planning framework to enable the provision of new housing and commercial development across the Borough. The Council is presently consulting on a new **Local Plan** (2017) which updates the overall strategy and identifies new site allocations looking ahead to 2033. The draft Local Plan makes provision for an additional 4,629 homes, at an average build out rate of 272 homes a year, and the provision of 83 ha of land for new employment uses. The Plan will support proposals which strengthen Chesterfield town centre's role as a sub-regional service centre and measures to promote sustainable tourism development.

## Defining Chesterfield's Competitive Advantage

Attracting (and retaining) new investment, businesses and skilled workers is a competitive process and Chesterfield 'competes' with a range of other locations to secure these outcomes in order to support the growth of its economy. Chesterfield's ability to compete is based on a particular mix of local characteristics that come together to define it as a business location and provide the basis of its USP. Building on these characteristics (whilst addressing any weaknesses) will help reinforce Chesterfield's distinctive identity and enable it to compete more effectively for new investment. The basis of Chesterfield's competitive advantage is summarised below:



**Distinct identity:** Chesterfield has a unique identity, it is a name people recognise usually in connection with the Crooked Spire, Chesterfield Football Club, or as a historic market town (that people often drive through on their way to Chatsworth or the Peak District).

**Central location:** Chesterfield's central location provides easy access to customers and suppliers and is consistently identified as a key attribute by local businesses. Chesterfield benefits from being close to both Sheffield (access to jobs, workforce, services and leisure offer) and the Peak District, with easy access to the outstanding landscapes of the national park. It is this ability to mix different aspects of both the urban and the rural environments that forms a key part of Chesterfield's locational appeal.

**Strategic transport links:** well connected to the strategic motorway and rail network, with direct rail access to key cities and London in less than 2 hours. Future delivery of HS2 will see journey times to London cut to just over 70 minutes and improved connectivity to other regional cities. Only a limited number of locations will benefit from direct services on HS2, enabling Chesterfield to punch above its weight as an investment location.

**Sub-regional service centre:** Chesterfield functions as a sub-regional service centre providing a range of retail, employment, cultural and leisure activities. It is of sufficient scale to offer most of the services and amenities that people require on a regular basis, but not so large as to become too congested or difficult to navigate. Chesterfield's service role is continually evolving with the University of Derby establishing a new university campus in the town.

**Historic town centre:** Chesterfield has an attractive, pedestrian friendly, historic town centre with its large outdoor market and Crooked Spire and this also provides a key part of the destination offer for both day visitors and overnight stays.

**Established business base:** Chesterfield is a significant economic centre with over 3,300 businesses and is home to many world class companies. New entrants benefit from co-location with other businesses, including established business networks and support services. Although its traditional industrial base has declined, Chesterfield retains a key sector strength in metals and engineering related activities.

**Business infrastructure:** Chesterfield has a large (and growing) range of industrial and commercial premises, enabling new starts to establish themselves and existing businesses to grow within the locality. The scale of provision, linked to ease of access, means that Chesterfield is an attractive business location for surrounding areas (for example with entrepreneurs living in the south west of Sheffield setting up businesses in the Council's two innovation centres).

**Supply of labour:** approximately 500,000 people live within a 20 minute drive time of Chesterfield providing a sizeable labour supply for businesses. Chesterfield is well connected to Sheffield, enabling businesses to draw additional staff from this larger labour market pool. For example, local ICT companies have highlighted the proximity to the two Sheffield Universities as a strength when it comes to graduate level recruitment.

**Lower cost location:** Chesterfield is a lower cost location with average wages, commercial rents and housing costs all below the national average. A central location also helps to reduce transport and travel costs.

**A great place to live:** as a contemporary market town sitting on the edge of the Peak District, Chesterfield can offer people a great place to live. This quality of life offer reflects a number of attributes including: a range of affordable housing; schools' GCSE performance that is ahead of the national average; an attractive town centre; a variety of leisure and cultural facilities; attractive rural surroundings, with the Peak District on the doorstep offering a mix of outstanding landscapes and outdoor recreation opportunities; and its central location offering ease of access to all parts of the country (to be boosted in future with the arrival of HS2 services). These quality of life factors are becoming increasingly important in determining where investment takes place, particularly where this relates to the location choices of individual entrepreneurs or knowledge based companies looking to attract and retain highly skilled staff.



## Challenges and Opportunities

This section provides a summary evaluation 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

Slowdown in the national economy as a result of Brexit uncertainty and a squeeze on consumer spending. Impact of on-going national austerity measures on the local public sector employment base.

Chesterfield has an older age population profile with fewer younger workers, linked (in part) to a lack of graduate level employment opportunities.

Increase in automation and digitalisation impacting on employment across a range of sectors: 20% of jobs could be displaced over the next 20 years, but new job roles will also be created.

The local economy has a bias towards lower-value and lower-growth employment sectors, and an under-representation of the fastest growing 'professional and business services' sector, impacting on future employment growth prospects.

A lower level of entrepreneurship, with fewer new start businesses per head of working age population than regional and national averages.

The town centre faces a number of challenges including: maintaining a viable outdoor market; raising the quality of the retail and leisure offer; the growth of on-line retailing; and strong competition for consumer spend from surrounding centres such as Meadowhall and Sheffield.

Limited supply of employment land available for immediate development.  
Cost and difficulty of bringing forward brownfield sites for development.  
Competition for resources for infrastructure investment.

Increasing the rate of housing delivery and maintaining a five year supply of available housing sites.

The Borough has a weaker occupational and skills profile, with fewer knowledge workers and more people with no qualifications than the national average.

Despite recent improvements, Chesterfield continues to have a relatively high level of youth (18-24) unemployment.

Legacy of restructuring: a high level of working age benefit claimants (particularly health related) and concentrated deprivation in some local communities.

## Opportunities

Development of HS2, including a stopping service at Chesterfield station and an Infrastructure Maintenance Depot at Staveley, has potential to be a catalyst for significant residential and commercial development around the station and in the Staveley-Rother Corridor.

Delivery of Chesterfield Waterside to provide a high quality mixed-use urban neighbourhood, including residential, office space and leisure uses.

Implementation of the town centre masterplan to support the longer term vitality and viability of the town centre. Priorities include the delivery of high quality public spaces, improved pedestrian connectivity and more homes in and around the centre.

Redevelopment of the former Co-op building (private sector) to strengthen the town centre leisure offer, facilitated by the delivery of the Northern Gateway scheme.

Provision of a new enterprise centre to promote the growth of service based employment in the town centre.

Strengthening Chesterfield's role as both a visitor destination in its own right and as a hub for visits to major attractions such as Chatsworth and the Peak District. This role will be greatly enhanced by the construction of Peak Resort, a nationally significant leisure destination.

Supporting the further development of Chesterfield as a university town.

GCSE attainment levels ahead of regional and national averages, highlighting potential of Chesterfield's young people to support a longer term shift to a higher-skill, higher-value economy.

On-going actions to reinforce Chesterfield's distinctive identity, including via the Destination Chesterfield place marketing initiative and the Council's Percent for Art scheme.

Further strengthen relationships with the existing business base to support growth and jointly promote the borough as a business location.

Seek to attract skilled workers and entrepreneurs to the area on the basis of Chesterfield's affordable quality of life offer, including provision of an appropriate housing mix to attract and retain younger workers.

Maximise the local benefits of major developments through the use of local labour clauses and supply chain initiatives.

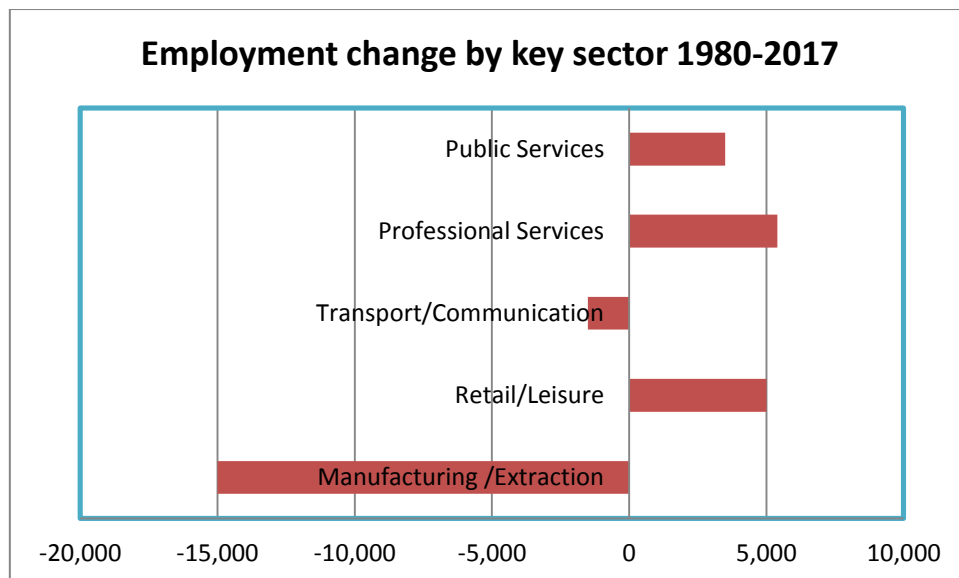
Developing the Chesterfield Apprentice Town Initiative to raise the profile and increase local participation in apprenticeships.

Positive engagement with both SCR and D2N2 LEPs to support local growth including access to regeneration funding.

## The Role of the Council in Supporting Growth

The key challenge that Chesterfield faces is building a resilient economy that can create and sustain a range of quality job opportunities. Fundamentally Chesterfield needs more jobs and better jobs to drive growth and meet the future employment needs of local people.

Local employment growth has consistently (and significantly) lagged behind the growth seen at national level, such that over a longer timeframe (1980-2017) there has been no net employment growth in the borough. Over that period a large number of jobs were created in public and private sector services, but unfortunately even more jobs were lost in traditional industries, as the economy went through a difficult period of restructuring (see below). If the economy had grown in line with the national average there would now be a third more jobs in the borough than there are today.



Given on-going austerity measures, the public sector can no longer be relied on to be a driver of jobs growth as it has been in the past: essentially what Chesterfield needs is a stronger, more diversified, private sector business base to grow jobs in the future. This can be achieved by actions to: increase the number of new start-ups; support the growth of existing businesses; and attract more entrepreneurs and businesses to the area. In order to secure sustainable employment growth, the quality of jobs will be as important as the quantity of jobs. Actions should therefore seek to diversify the economic base towards higher value business sectors that can deliver higher skill, higher wage employment.

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 the Council's lead role in dealing with a whole range of place-making factors that can help shape business success. These include: the direct provision of a significant portfolio of business premises; securing resources and enabling the delivery of major regeneration schemes by the private sector; providing managed business centres and business advice; strengthening the town centre offer to increase footfall;

promoting the area to attract new investment and more visitors; and working with partners to make sure businesses have access to workforce skills development.

As well as the direct delivery of economic development services, the Council undertakes a range of place related activities that enable business growth by making the borough a great place to live. These include: planning for, and facilitating the delivery of, a sufficient range and quality of housing that meets the needs of local people and helps attract skilled workers to the area; maintaining the quality of homes across all tenures and making significant investments in the council housing stock; the provision of cultural venues such as the Pomegranate Theatre and leisure facilities including the new Queens Park Sports Centre; and maintaining and improving the quality of public space across the borough.

Alongside the creation of more and better jobs, Chesterfield faces a further challenge of ensuring that local people have the right mix of skills to access the jobs which have been created. The restructuring in the economic base has left a legacy of a persistently high number of residents who are claiming key out of work benefits as well as concentrated levels of deprivation in particular communities in the borough. The Council will seek to deliver an inclusive approach that engages with the harder to reach to ensure that all local people are in a position to benefit from the growth which takes place in the borough. This will involve: addressing work-readiness issues; ensuring the workforce have the right mix of skills to meet future job requirements; and the shaping of regeneration opportunities to meet local needs.

The Council's role in future service provision will be defined in response to addressing clearly identified needs or seeking to make the most of economic opportunities for the benefit of local people. The Council will be both pragmatic and flexible in its approach to service delivery, whilst being clear to prioritise its resources on activities where it can genuinely add value.

There is currently a number of significant regeneration opportunities in the borough, the successful development of which has the potential to deliver a step change in local economic performance, placing Chesterfield on a higher growth trajectory that will support increased levels of job creation. In order to achieve this accelerated rate of growth, there is a need to ensure that delivery arrangements are fully fit for purpose. This requires a joined-up approach between key partners that works to remove any potential blockages and speeds up the process of scheme delivery.

The Council recognises the important role played by other organisations in supporting the growth of the borough and enabling local people to fully participate and benefit from that growth. The Council will work proactively in a range of partnerships at the local, sub-regional and regional scales in order to secure the best possible outcomes for Chesterfield. An example of this is the current working around HS2 involving neighbouring authorities, Derbyshire County Council, the SCR and D2N2 LEPs and regional and national partners.

Whilst the Council and partner organisations can shape the business environment, it is clearly acknowledged that it is the private sector that will ultimately have the biggest impact on growth through its decision making process on locations for investment and job creation. The Council will continue to work closely with the

private sector in bringing forward major regeneration schemes and seek to engage widely with the local business base to jointly champion Chesterfield as a great place to do business.

## **Strategic Framework**

The overall aim of the Growth Strategy is:

**‘To secure the long term growth of the borough, supporting new job creation and ensuring local people have the right skills to access future employment opportunities.’**

The Strategy provides a framework for the delivery of a range of programmes and initiatives by the Council that will contribute towards the achievement of this aim. These activities can be grouped under three thematic headings and seven key objectives:

### **Supporting business growth and investment**

1. Work to increase business start-ups and support the expansion of the existing business base.
2. Undertake a range of marketing activities to raise the profile of the borough as a business location and attract new business investment.

### **A great place to live, visit and do business**

3. Secure investment in infrastructure that enables employment and housing growth and delivers a high quality of place.
4. Strengthen the distinctive role of Chesterfield town centre to ensure its longer term vitality and viability.
5. Support the growth of Chesterfield as both a visitor destination and hub.

### **An inclusive approach to growth**

6. Work to raise the level of workforce skills to support future business growth.
7. Ensure that all local people are in a position to benefit from the growth which takes place in the borough.

The three themes (businesses, places and people) are interlinked, with actions under one theme positively re-enforcing the delivery of activities under the other two themes. For example, raising the level of workforce skills supports business growth and investment, whilst skilled workers are attracted by a stronger business base and by Chesterfield being a great place to live.

## Supporting business growth and investment

### 1. Work to increase business start-ups and support the expansion of the existing business base.

Whilst the number of businesses in Chesterfield has been increasing, the rate of growth has not kept pace with that seen nationally, and the existing business base continues to have a bias towards lower-value added and lower-skill activities. Essentially, there is a need to increase the number of start-ups and boost levels of business productivity, for example, by encouraging more companies to: engage in the development of innovative products and services; make new capital investments; export to new markets; and invest in the skills of their workforce.



The Council undertakes a range of activities to directly support business growth and these will continue to provide the focus of activity going forward. These include:

- Provision of a Land and Property Information Service (LPIS). This service provides a one-stop-shop to enable new starts and businesses to meet their commercial property requirements in Chesterfield. The Economic Development Team (EDT) typically deals with 800 to 900 enquiries a year, with the majority of these from the local market, but also including inward investment enquiries received via the SCR's Inward Investment Team, the Invest in Derbyshire project and Destination Chesterfield.
- Management of Innovation Centres. The Council operates two innovation centres (Tapton Park and Dunston) which provide a managed environment to support the growth of knowledge based businesses at all stages of their development and is currently developing a further enterprise centre as part of the Northern Gateway scheme.
- Business Support Programme. The Council has a business advisor who provides free one-to-one support to local businesses, including undertaking independent business reviews, identifying and brokering specialist support, and delivering a programme of workshops, seminars and networking events.
- Statutory Services advice. The Council provides advice on a range of business related topics including business rates, licensing, commercial waste and planning services. For example, the Planning Team offer businesses pre-planning application advice to help improve the quality of submitted applications.

Chesterfield's location means that businesses can benefit from services provided by both the SCR and D2N2 Growth Hubs (in 2016/17 over 400 Chesterfield businesses engaged with the two Growth Hubs). Each of the Growth Hubs offer a range of support including: a 'Launchpad' service (SCR) for people starting up in business; an 'Access to Finance' Centre of Expertise (SCR) that enables companies to access private and public funding sources, including potential grants; and, an 'Enabling Innovation' programme (D2N2) providing business access to Nottingham and Derby universities expertise. With two Growth Hubs operating in the area, the Council's business advisor has a key role to play in helping businesses to navigate to the right support and making sure that the maximum number of businesses benefit from the support that is available.



## **2. Undertake a range of marketing activities to raise the profile of the borough as a business location and attract new business investment.**

The EDT uses a mix of media to promote the availability of commercial property in Chesterfield. This includes a searchable property database on the Council's website, promotion via on-line platforms, and local radio and newspaper advertising.



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 is currently running a number of marketing campaigns and events including: 'Made in Chesterfield' to raise the profile of the manufacturing and engineering sectors, and highlight these sectors as a career option with local schools; a Retail Awards and Food & Drink Awards to showcase the quality and depth of businesses in these sectors; and 'Inspired Investment' which is supporting national and overseas promotion as part of a wider 'Invest in Derbyshire' campaign.

Destination Chesterfield has successfully engaged with the local business community and there are currently over 170 businesses signed up as 'Chesterfield Champions'. Working in partnership, the business community is equally keen to talk-up the town and promote it as a great place to live, work, visit and do business.

The EDT will continue to respond proactively to investment enquiries received either directly from its own marketing activities or via Destination Chesterfield, the SCR's Inward Investment Team and the Invest in Derbyshire project. Where appropriate the Team will take the lead role in co-ordinating the partner response to investor enquiries.

The Council directly engages with businesses at a number of levels, reflecting the range of services it provides, and the public-private partnerships it is involved in. This includes meetings with local and foreign owned companies via a process of Key Account Management. This approach recognises that by strengthening local relationships, not only is the business supported, but there is a greater chance that future investment decisions will be taken in favour of Chesterfield.

The above marketing activities are complemented by the Council's provision of a Visitor Information Service and the wider promotion of the Borough as a visitor destination.

## **A great place to live, visit and do business**

### **3. Secure investment in infrastructure that enables employment and housing growth and delivers a high quality of place**

The Council has a key role to play in creating a quality of place that delivers a competitive advantage as a business location and provides an attractive environment where people want to live. This objective is primarily about securing the public and private investment in infrastructure that supports the delivery of new commercial and residential development, whilst recognising the broader range of factors that need to be shaped to enhance the overall quality of place. Key drivers such as the development of the



digital and low carbon economies have the potential to increasingly shape the area's infrastructure needs and the Council will work with partners to ensure the area is in a position to respond positively to these changing requirements.

Over many years the Council has been a major investor in business infrastructure including the provision of employment sites and the construction of offices and industrial units. This is an on-going process with a new enterprise centre in the town centre scheduled for opening in 2019. There is now a portfolio of over 600 units and the on-going management of this portfolio will continue to support start-ups and SME business growth.

The Council seeks to enable new employment and residential development through the planning framework and works proactively with public and private sector partners to bring forward key regeneration schemes. For example the Council is partnering the private sector in a joint venture company 'Chesterfield Waterside Ltd' to secure the development of a 25ha brownfield site that will deliver 30,000 sqm of office space and 1,500 residential units, alongside a mix of hotel, retail and leisure uses. The EDT secured infrastructure funding for the scheme and the first phase development 'Basin Square' is now underway.

The arrival of HS2 services at Chesterfield station has the potential to deliver a step change in the growth prospects for the area, with shorter journey times to major cities boosting the attractiveness of Chesterfield as a residential and business location and strengthening its role as a hub for visits to the Peak District. Working in close partnership with Derbyshire County Council (DCC), a Chesterfield HS2 Vision and Masterplan has been prepared to establish the station and its environs as a vibrant gateway with improved connectivity to the town centre.

The development of HS2 will also see the construction of an Infrastructure Maintenance Depot (IMD) at Staveley which will employ 200-250 people when fully operational. This will need to be fully integrated into the regeneration plans for the Staveley and Rother Valley Corridor, which could deliver up to 2,000 dwellings and 50 ha of employment land, with the potential to attract additional rail related uses to sit alongside the IMD. 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 coordinated manner.

Ensuring the borough has the right housing offer is not only vital for the quality of life and well-being of local communities, it also supports economic growth by providing for the needs of the local workforce and helping attract skilled workers to the area. For example the development of higher density 'Build To Rent' housing at Chesterfield Waterside will broaden the local residential offer and potentially appeal to younger workers with its easy rail access to surrounding cities.

The draft Local Plan (2017) makes provision for an additional 4,629 homes between 2016 and 2033 at an average build out rate of 272 homes a year, with the Council required to demonstrate it has a five year supply of deliverable housing sites. The rate of new housebuilding in Chesterfield has been slowly recovering following the recession, with the most recent figures pointing towards the delivery of over 260 homes in 2017/18, although this remains below the target completion rate.

A range of factors can influence the rate of housing delivery at the local level including: the availability of mortgage finance; the level of market demand (with a low level of local employment growth acting as a potential constraint on housing demand); the physical characteristics and associated costs of bringing housing sites forward for development; the delivery strategies of regional housing developers; and landowner expectations about the value of potential housing sites in their ownership. As at April 2017, there were over 100 sites in the borough (capable of accommodating over 3,000 houses), which either had planning permission for residential development or where housing construction had already started, highlighting the Council's positive approach to supporting housing development via the planning process.

The Council will continue to take actions to help ensure a sustained level of housing delivery that can keep pace with the housing completion requirements. These actions will include: securing resources to help unlock the development potential of priority sites; liaising with landowners and developers to find workable solutions to bring forward appropriate housing sites; and looking to make best use of its own land assets to deliver new housing.

Future employment and housing growth will be supported by the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), which came into effect April 2016. The purpose of CIL is to help provide the key infrastructure needed to support new development in the borough and this will be determined in line with Core Strategy (2013) and draft Local Plan (2017) priorities.

The Council will seek to deliver wider quality of place improvements both directly and through the development process, making use of the CIL, Section 106 agreements, the Council's Percent for Art scheme and other funding sources.

#### **4. Strengthen the distinctive role of Chesterfield town centre to ensure its longer term vitality and viability**

Chesterfield town centre faces a number of challenges going forward including: the growth of on-line retailing which is having an increasing impact on the high street; changing retailer strategies with an increasing focus on the top 100 destinations (which serve the majority of the national population) for new store development; and on-going investment in surrounding centres (such as Sheffield and Meadowhall) which increases the competition for consumer spend in Chesterfield's retail catchment.



Chesterfield needs to respond positively to these challenges, not just to maintain its current position, but to make the most of the town centre which is the key economic asset for the wider area. To realise its full potential there is a need to build on the town's core functions, strengthening its role as a retail, leisure, cultural, learning and employment centre. In addition, the provision of new homes in and around the centre (for example the redevelopment of the former Saltergate Health Centre site) will help generate more activity (and demand for services) throughout the daytime, evening and weekends, creating a more vibrant town centre. New development should seek to capitalise on, and reinforce, Chesterfield's distinctive historic character, helping to strengthen the unique identity of the town.

In recent years, the Council has made a number of investments in the town centre including the redevelopment of the Market Hall and the restoration of the town's historic fabric via the delivery of the Townscape Heritage Initiative. However, maintaining a strong town centre offer is both a dynamic and competitive process and without on-going improvements there is an increasing risk that trade will be diverted either to other centres or to on-line retailers.

One way of addressing this issue is to broaden the appeal of the town centre, making it an attractive place to visit, not just a place to shop. This could be achieved by strengthening the town's wider leisure offer to encourage 'destination trips' that combine a range of retail, catering and leisure activities (including events), extending the amount of time people spend in the centre and increasing associated expenditure. The key will be to provide people with an experience that is uniquely 'Chesterfield' which cannot be replicated by surrounding centres or by shopping on-line.

The redevelopment of the former Co-op building (delivered by the private sector) will support this approach by providing a mix of restaurants, hotel and a gym in the northern part of the town centre. This development will be facilitated by the Council's

wider 'Northern Gateway' scheme, which will see the construction of a new enterprise centre, the rebuild of the Saltergate MSCP and the provision of enhanced public realm along Elder Way and Knifesmithgate. These investments will breathe new life into the area and help generate increased footfall and expenditure across the wider town centre.

Future development will be guided by the Chesterfield Town Centre Masterplan (2015) which highlights a number of priorities including: securing a sustainable future for the outdoor market as a key town centre asset; better pedestrian connectivity of both the train station and the Ravenside Retail Park to the historic retail core; and investing in a high quality urban environment (buildings and public realm) to encourage greater patronage and extend dwell times. The more people who are attracted by the great public spaces (including digitally enabled), the more attractive the centre becomes for retail and leisure operators, creating a positive cycle for further development and growth.

The Council will continue to play an important role in the management of key elements of the wider town centre offer including the operation of the markets, the provision of car-parking, CCTV and street cleaning services. The Council works effectively with retailers in the town centre, engaging with businesses through the Town Centre Forum and in the delivery of the Healthy High Street Initiative.

## 5. Support the growth of Chesterfield as both a visitor destination and hub

The visitor economy makes an important contribution to the local economy, largely based on Chesterfield's role as the sub-regional service centre for north eastern Derbyshire, attracting a mix of business, leisure, retail and family related visits to the area. Chesterfield also plays a role as a tourist destination, with the historic town centre, focusing on the indoor and outdoor markets and Crooked Spire, comprising the core tourism product,



alongside the developing role of Barrow Hill Roundhouse as a popular visitor attraction (particularly on event days). The restoration of Chesterfield Canal to full navigation also has the potential to attract a significant number of visitors to the area.

Events form an important part of the local tourism offer (for example the Cricket Festival and various events linked to the outdoor market, including the recent attraction of the Big Wheel), helping to raise the borough's profile and increasing the number of visitors from a wider catchment. The Council provides a Visitor Information Centre in the town centre and works with partner organisations to promote Chesterfield as a visitor destination.

There is scope to increase both the number and value of visits to Chesterfield, reflecting an enhanced future role both as a destination in its own right and as a base for visits to the iconic landscapes and attractions of the Peak District and surrounding area. To achieve this, further investment will be required in both the visitor product and supporting infrastructure, with the overall quality of the town centre offer being key to attracting more visitors to the area. A wide range of factors can shape the town centre offer, including: the number of vacancies on the high street; the quality of the public realm; the choice of places to stay, eat and drink; the variety of programming at the Pomegranate and Winding Wheel; the provision and cost of car-parking; the standard of street cleaning; perceptions of safety; and the maintenance of a viable outdoor market as a key town centre asset. There is a need to ensure that all of these factors (and more) are acting to reinforce, rather than undermine, the quality of the destination offer.

Despite its popularity, the Peak District continues to provide opportunities for growth, particularly around increasing the number of higher value staying visits. Given its proximity to the national park and the major attraction of Chatsworth House, Chesterfield is well placed to capitalise on this growth potential, although presently the town plays a more limited role as a hub for visits to the Peak District. Further work is required to positively shape visitor perceptions about the relationship between the town and the Peak District. This relationship will be strengthened through the development of Peak Resort, an all-weather, year round, leisure, health and education destination, located in the north west corner of Chesterfield Borough.

Peak Resort will function both as an attraction in its own right and as a hub for visits to the national park, providing a variety of packaged Peak District experiences.

Longer term, the arrival of HS2 services will improve rail access to the Peak District for higher value national (and international) markets, particularly from London and the South East, with Chesterfield ideally placed to be the key rail gateway to the national park. The challenge will be to ensure that Chesterfield functions not only as a gateway but also 'captures' a share of this market to base itself in the borough whilst exploring the area.

Reflecting these emerging developments, a Visitor Economy Action Plan will be prepared to enable Chesterfield to position itself to make the most of future visitor growth opportunities.



## **An inclusive approach to growth**

### **6. Work to raise the level of workforce skills to support future business growth**

A skilled workforce is vital to the future economic success of the area, supporting business growth and attracting new investment to the borough. The local economy presently has a bias towards lower-value activities, so developing a skilled workforce will be key to supporting the shift towards a more sustainable higher-value, higher-wage economy. However, this is something of a chicken and egg situation, with actions to improve the supply of workforce skills needing to go hand in hand with actions to increase business demand for those skills (ie the creation of new jobs), if the economy and local people are to fully benefit.



The Council is proactively addressing the demand side by creating an environment that supports the growth of higher value businesses, for example through its investment in innovation and enterprise centres. On the skills side, GCSE attainment levels are above the national average, highlighting the potential of young people to support the shift to a higher value economy, and Chesterfield is establishing itself as a university town. Taking these factors together, there is now a greater prospect that more higher skill jobs will be created and more skilled workers, particularly younger people and graduates, will be attracted to, or remain in the area.

There is a need to ensure that the mix of workforce skills is responsive to both the current needs of business (ie addressing existing skills gaps) and the way in which the demand for labour is evolving. A stronger link needs to be made between education / skills provision and the development of future business sectors and identified growth opportunities, such as the construction, operation and maintenance of HS2. The link between local businesses and schools should also be strengthened so that young people are more aware of, and better prepared for, the local career pathways that are available to them.

In relation to skills delivery, the Council primarily plays a facilitation role, seeking to ensure that programmes are delivered effectively at the local level and acting as a conduit between businesses and the skills providers. The Council is currently supporting (through events, marketing and key account management) the delivery of the SCR's 'Skills Bank' and D2N2's 'Skills Local' and 'Employ Local' programmes, which collectively have engaged with over 100 employers (760 learners) so far, with a further 55 employers (860 learners) in the pipe-line.

Alongside programmes delivered by partners, the Council has taken a lead role in establishing the 'Apprentice Town' initiative, designed to raise awareness and increase the take-up of apprenticeships in Chesterfield. A Skills Action Plan has

been prepared to guide future activity by the Council including the delivery of an annual skills conference as a way of sharing local and regional skills' priorities with schools and the business community.

## **7. Ensure that all local people are in a position to benefit from the growth which takes place in the borough**

Despite some improvement, Chesterfield continues to be adversely affected by the legacy of restructuring with high levels of working age benefit claimants, youth unemployment and some local areas that are amongst the most deprived 10% on a national basis. Alongside economic inactivity, the borough has a particular issue with health related deprivation. These two issues are often linked such that measures to improve employability will need to address health related issues and vice versa.



The aim of this Strategy is to accelerate economic growth, creating more and better jobs that are accessible to local people. Improving work readiness and skills will be key to this approach, ensuring all local people can participate and benefit from the jobs which are created. An inclusive approach to growth will engage with the hardest to reach and target provision at the communities where it is most needed. For example, the Council is currently supporting the delivery of a number of employment programmes including 'Talent Match' and 'Ambition SCR' which have so far worked with more than 340 young people, of which one third have gone on to secure employment.

As highlighted in previous sections, there are a number of significant development schemes, either underway or in the pipe-line, that will not only provide new employment upon completion, but also have the potential to offer wider employment, training and supply chain opportunities during the delivery phase.

To maximise the benefits of this new investment, the Council takes a pro-active approach in securing local labour clauses and supply chain contracts both in terms of its own procurement processes and through the negotiation of section 106 agreements on planning applications. For example, the main contractor for the construction of the new Queens Park Leisure Centre provided apprenticeships and employed two-thirds of construction workers from within a local radius. The Council will work closely with the developers of major schemes to bring forward skills and employment plans that prioritise local access to jobs and training.

## **Economic Growth Programme**

This section sets out the key activities and projects that the Council will deliver over the next four years, either directly or in partnership with other organisations and the private sector, in order to help secure the long term growth of Chesterfield's economy. The programme focuses on those activities which directly impact on regeneration and growth, whilst recognising the broader range of activities undertaken by the Council that enable growth by making Chesterfield a great place to live. Progress in delivering the programme will be reported on an annual basis.

### **1. Work with partners to increase business start-ups and support the expansion of the existing business base**

Activity:

- Provide a Land and Property Information Service to support the growth of the business base
- Deliver a Business Support Programme to help new start-ups and improve the competitiveness of local businesses
- Work closely with the SCR and D2N2 Growth Hubs to ensure a co-ordinated approach, and local access, to business support delivery
- Maximise the role of Dunston and Tapton Park Innovation Centres as a focus for the growth of knowledge based businesses
- Provide advice on a range of business related services delivered by the Council including pre-planning application advice to support new development.
- Encourage local supply chain opportunities as part of Council contracts and in relation to new developments.

### **2. Undertake a range of marketing activities to raise the profile of the borough as a business location and attract new business investment**

Activity:

- Promote the availability of commercial property in Chesterfield
- Support the delivery of the Destination Chesterfield place marketing initiative and provide input to relevant marketing initiatives undertaken by the LEPs
- Respond proactively to investor enquiries including those received via SCR's Inward Investment Team, the Invest in Derbyshire project and Destination Chesterfield.
- Strengthen relationships with local and foreign owned companies via a process of Key Account Management.

### **3. Secure investment in infrastructure that enables employment and housing growth and delivers a high quality of place**

Activity:

- On-going investment and management of the Council's commercial property portfolio to support business start-ups and growth
- Ensure the provision of a sufficient range of employment and housing sites in the borough and seek to positively enable growth through the local planning framework / process
- Proactively engage with relevant organisations (including SCR, D2N2 and DCC) to secure investment in local transport and business infrastructure
- As a partner in Chesterfield Waterside Ltd, support the delivery of the first phases of residential and commercial development on the Waterside site
- Work with DCC to secure the implementation of the Chesterfield HS2 Masterplan to develop the station area as a vibrant HS2 gateway and unlock significant commercial and residential development
- Enable the regeneration of the Staveley and Rother Valley Corridor (including the Staveley HS2 IMD), working closely with the landowners to ensure that development phases are brought forward in a co-ordinated and comprehensive manner
- Work with landowners, developers and the HCA (including through the establishment of a Developer Forum) to accelerate the delivery of housing development sites across the borough
- Make the best use of public sector land assets to deliver new housing
- Support wider improvements to community infrastructure and quality of place, making use of the Community Infrastructure Levy, Section 106 agreements, the Council's Percent for Art scheme and other funding sources.

### **4. Strengthen the distinctive role of Chesterfield town centre to ensure its longer term vitality and viability**

Activity:

- Secure on-going investment and development of the town centre, building on the town's core functions and historic character, and guided by proposals set out in the Chesterfield Town Centre Masterplan

- Implement the Northern Gateway scheme to include the construction of a new enterprise centre, the rebuild of the Saltergate MSCP and the provision of enhanced public realm to Elder Way and Knifesmithgate
- Encourage improvements to the range and quality of the town centre leisure offer, including supporting the private sector in the redevelopment of the former Co-op building
- Seek to sustain and enhance the important role played by the outdoor market as the key asset in the town centre, including the introduction of additional evening and event markets
- Provide a positive town centre experience for residents and visitors through the effective co-ordination and delivery of town centre services.

## **5. Support the growth of Chesterfield as both a visitor destination and hub**

Activity:

- Provide a high quality Visitor Information Service
- Raise the profile of Chesterfield as both a visitor destination and hub, through a range of marketing activities, working in partnership with the Visit Peak District and Derbyshire DMO and neighbouring authorities
- Support the further development of the borough's visitor product and infrastructure, with a particular focus on the quality of the town centre offer
- Deliver an enhanced programme of festivals and events to attract more visitors to the town
- Work with the private sector to help enable the successful delivery of the Peak Resort development
- Prepare a Visitor Economy Action Plan to help realise opportunities to grow both the number and value of visits to Chesterfield.

## **6. Work to raise the level of workforce skills to support future business growth**

Activity:

- Deliver Apprentice Town activity with Chesterfield College and other partners to raise awareness of, and increase participation in, apprenticeships
- Encourage the further development of higher education provision in Chesterfield
- Work with SCR and D2N2 LEPs to facilitate local business access to training that will up-skill the workforce via programmes including Skills Bank and Skills Local

- Engage with businesses through key account management to enable a bespoke response to the specific skills needs of the business
- Work with businesses, education and training providers, and other key stakeholders to ensure that skills provision evolves in line with future business sector growth opportunities, including the delivery of HS2
- Foster links between the local business community and schools / education providers to raise awareness of future career pathways
- Deliver an annual skills conference and maintain up to date information to signpost people and businesses to appropriate training programmes.

**7. Ensure that all local people are in a position to benefit from the growth which takes place in the borough**

Activity:

- Work with partners to ensure that work readiness, skills and employment support programmes are fully accessible to local people, and seek to direct provision to the communities where it is most needed
- Support the delivery of local programmes that provide targeted support to 16-24 year olds including Talent Match, Pathways to Progression and Youth Engagement programmes
- Agree local labour clauses on 100% of new eligible major developments, and in relation to the most appropriate opportunities, work with applicants to bring forward skills and employment plans.

## **Measuring Success**

Progress will be measured in relation to the successful delivery of the activities and projects set out in the programme and through improvements in the headline performance indicators as set out in the Council Plan:

- Increase year on year the number of businesses in Chesterfield borough (position 2018 – 3,270 businesses)
- Sustain town centre occupancy at 90% or higher (position Sept 2018 – 91% occupancy)
- Increase the value of the visitor economy by at least 5%, bringing in an additional £7m per annum (position 2017 - £132m visitor expenditure)
- Reduce the number of young people not in education, employment or training (position Oct 2018 – 5.1% 18-24 claimant unemployed)
- Secure local labour clauses on major developments (target – 100% clauses secured)
- Net new dwellings completed (target – 262 net new dwellings).