

Annual Review

April 2022 – March 2023

Creating 100,000 more and better jobs for the North East economy between 2014 and 2024.

2022
2023

North East
Local Enterprise Partnership





Introduction from Helen Golightly OBE

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Helen Golightly OBE, Chief Executive Officer

I have to start my reflections on the past twelve months in sharing my delight at the announcement of the North East Devolution Deal. The LEP has always championed devolution. This deal heralds new funding and decision-making powers that will unlock the creation of more and better jobs, allow us to seize new opportunities, accelerate strategic schemes, address economic and social issues that are holding us back and critically, to be more competitive where we have strengths on a national, sectoral and global stage.

Most importantly of all, we will do this with a strengthened region-wide partnership. I look forward to the year of transition that lies ahead, where the functions of the LEP will be absorbed into the new Mayoral Combined Authority, together with the North of Tyne Combined Authority; Transport North East; Invest North East England; and the North East Combined Authority.

As always, I want to thank the formidable team at the LEP – thank you for continuing to live our values by doing the right thing for our region so we truly make a difference to the communities we serve. For always thinking bigger and never accepting anything but the best for our region. For working together to find collaborative solutions and to strengthen delivery. I am constantly astounded by and proud of the commitment and passion our team has to serve the region. I'll always be the biggest champion of their work and ethos.

Our board has been through a number of changes this year. We said goodbye to Gillian Hall, who has been a long-standing member, who chaired our Innovation Board and was an active member of our Investment Board. We said goodbye to Kate Whickham and Erika Leadbeater. I'd like to say a huge thank you to them all for their service and commitment to the North East. Our new Board members are Emily Cox MBE, Group Head of Colleague Relations and Policy at Lloyds Banking Group; Phil Redman, Area Director with Mott MacDonald; Colin Hewitt, Senior Partner at Ward Hadaway; Alan Johnson, Senior Vice President, Manufacturing and Supply Chain for Nissan AMIEO region; and Sam Whitehouse, Executive Chairman of High Force Research Ltd.

The role of the North East LEP Board will also go through a process of transition over the next year as it evolves into the Business Board of the new Mayoral Combined Authority, providing the business voice to inform the strategic direction and decision making.

We continue to be led by Lucy Winskell OBE, who is well respected across the region and by government, and has a truly inclusive approach to regional leadership.

We remain fully committed to deliver the North East Strategic Economic Plan. Our plan has always been to create 100,000 more jobs in the economy, of which 70% are better jobs, between 2014 and 2024 as we strive to create a stronger, greener and more inclusive economy for the region.

This Annual Review is full of activity that is driving forward this mission and the progress we are making, but I wanted to note some particular highlights for me. Having a robust evidence base to inform decision making has always been important to us. Bringing the evidence we produce and the evidence of partners into one place led to the launch of the North East Evidence Hub last year. Since then I have listened to feedback about how helpful and exciting it is. A very welcomed and easy to use regional asset for everyone. Please check it out.

We have always championed the North East Growth Hub's offer and used ongoing feedback and insights to inform future policy towards a simpler, more coordinated business support system in the region. This year it was evaluated independently. The evaluation demonstrated that businesses supported by the Growth Hub have achieved a £8.8k turnover per employee improvement and that overall, £292million additional Gross Value Added and 4,435 additional jobs have been added to the economy since 2017 – something we are incredibly proud of.

Our Skills team has continued to make an impact locally and nationally in delivering the government's technical education agenda for young people and adults. We have conducted rigorous research to understand the apprenticeship landscape for 16-18 year olds and brought together key regional stakeholders to develop and deliver a regional Apprentice Ready vision and I look forward to taking this forward over the next 12 months.

The team have worked incredibly hard this year to launch The North East Commercial Property Investment Fund, managed by FW Capital. The fund provides loans of between £2 to £7 million to support new or refurbished grade A commercial office and industrial space. We predict that it will create up to £119 million investment over the next 15 years, creating 5,600 jobs and developing 140,000 sq m of commercial space.

More generally, I reflect on the investment we have been accountable for over the last decade. From Enterprise Zones, to Local Growth Funding, Getting Building Fund and more recently the current Skills Bootcamp programme. We have used evidence to inform strategic investments right across our region with our budget of £450m leveraging more than £1.5bn from other public and private sources to deliver a truly positive impact on the economy and the lives of the people we serve. I feel extremely proud of the legacy our investment portfolios will leave.

I end this year feeling proud of what we have achieved as a LEP and as a region. Being better together is one of our values and one that we champion every day. Devolution is the epitome of this, and I look forward to working with colleagues across the region to play our part in realising this ambitious, historic deal for the region.

Helen Golightly OBE
North East LEP, Chief Executive Officer



Our targets

Progress towards the six headline targets in the North East Strategic Economic Plan is currently mixed. The trend of employment growth has resumed after an interruption due to the impact of COVID-19, increasing progress towards our more and better jobs targets. There has been limited progress towards closing the gap with England excluding London in the four rates that we have targeted.

In the latest 'more jobs' data, for 2022, total North East employment was 59,600 higher than at the start of 2014. This is almost three-fifths of the way towards meeting our 2024 target. The impact of COVID meant that the latest employment total was about 10,000 lower than in 2020 despite an increase during the latest year.

North East employment growth since 2014 has been driven by increases within 'better job' occupations, with total employment having decreased elsewhere. Hence, these occupations have been responsible for more than 100% of the total net employment increase in that period. Employment in "better jobs" in the North East has bounced back more effectively from COVID than employment in other occupations.

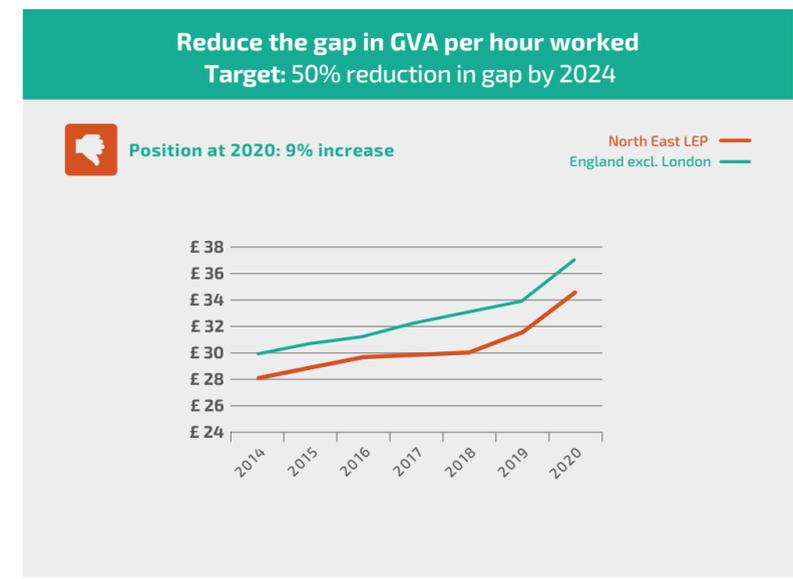
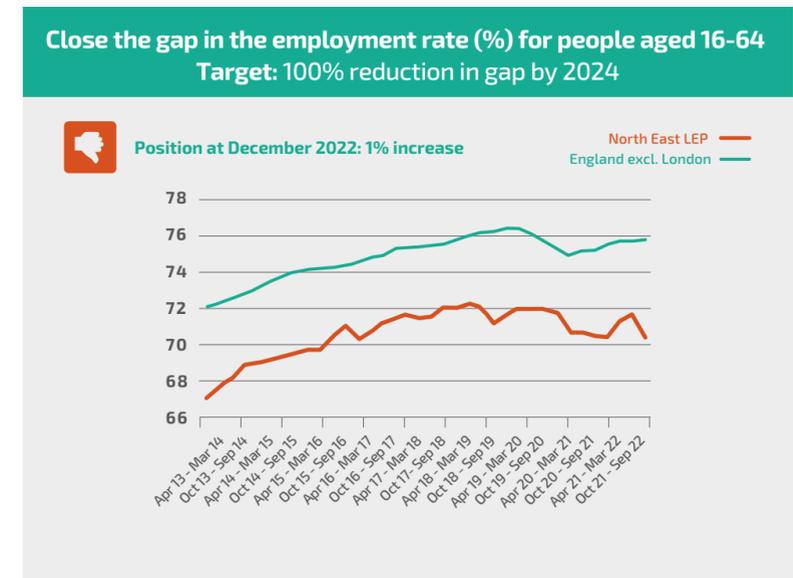
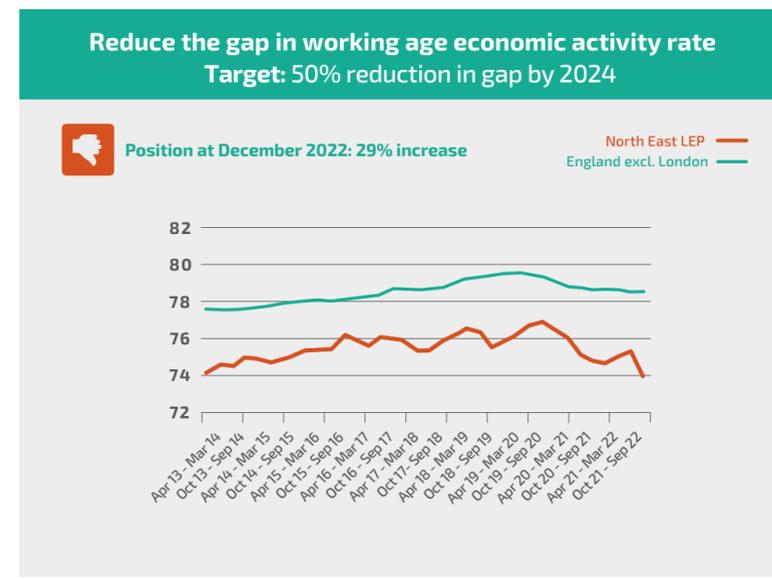
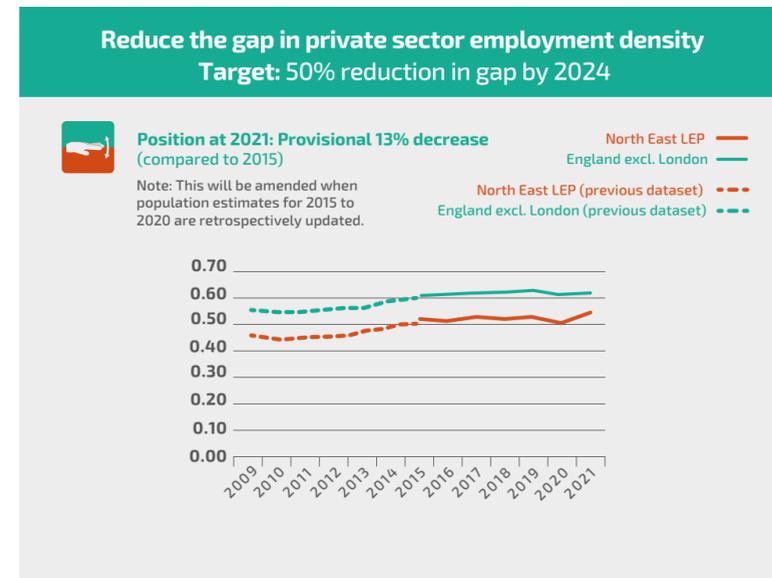
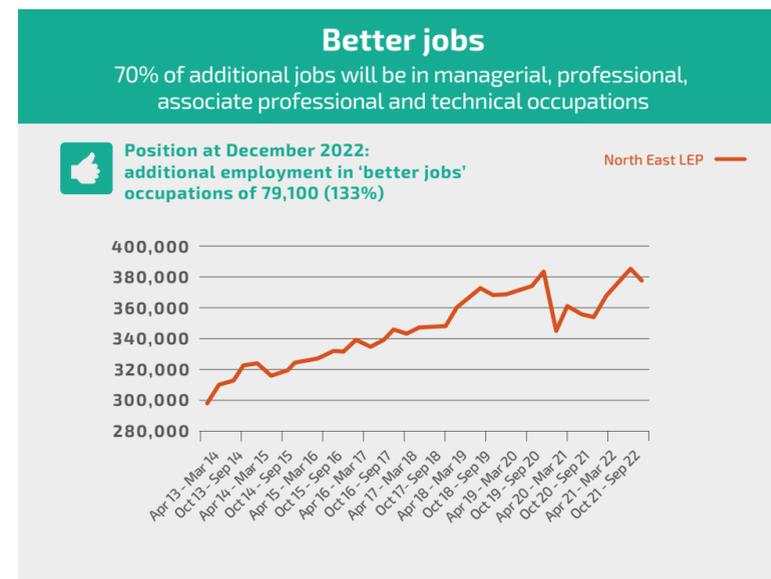
The most recent North East **employment rate** was 3.4 percentage points (pp) higher than in 2014. This was a smaller increase than for England excluding London so the gap between the two rates had widened slightly over the period.

The latest North East **economic activity rate** was slightly lower than in 2014 while the England excluding London rate was higher. As with the employment rate, the latest data shows limited progress towards the target of narrowing the gap.

Both North East rates had unusually large decreases in the latest period, reversing recent progress towards closing the gaps. The statistics are survey-based, and it is unclear whether this represents an emerging trend or is a "one off" reflecting the source's volatility.

The gap in the **private sector employment density** between the North East and England excluding London was smaller in 2021 than in 2015 (the oldest available year). This is a provisional finding as revised populations up to and including 2020 are currently being drafted to correct inconsistencies with census data. These will change the densities and may well produce different trends.

The latest **productivity** estimates are for 2020. In both the North East and England excluding London, productivity on that date was more than 20% higher than in 2014, although this was partly due to a COVID-related decrease of hours worked in sectors producing lower economic output. The North East's rate of increase was lower, resulting in an increase in the gap, rather than the targeted decrease.



Business, innovation and sector growth



"I'm incredibly proud of the proven impact that the team and partners have made. Independent evaluation demonstrates that businesses supported have achieved a £8.8k turnover improvement per employee, generating £292million additional gross value added overall, and adding 4,435 additional jobs to the economy since 2017."

Colin Bell, Business and Sector Growth Director

Businesses we've supported have achieved a £8.8k turnover per employee improvement

Responding to Change

In many ways 2022/23 was a challenging year – the Business Growth, Innovation and Sector development programme faced significant funding cuts and, as a consequence, needed to reduce and restructure its team and activities.

Changes included the integration of the innovation team into the wider programme and restructuring the Growth Hub and Growth Hub Connector roles to focus on the development of the North East's areas of opportunity in advanced manufacturing, tech, health and life sciences and energy.

Intensive support provided to **1,026 businesses**

95% of Growth Hub users reported that they were either satisfied or very satisfied with the support provided

What we delivered

During the year, the findings of an independent evaluation into the programme's impact was published which demonstrated that:

- Businesses we supported achieved an average £8.8k turnover per employee improvement, providing a significant productivity boost to businesses.
- Overall £292million gross value added and 4,435 jobs were added to the economy demonstrating exceptional value for money and return on investment.
- Customer satisfaction levels stood at 95%.
- The programme provided a critical role in coordinating the regional business support response to Covid19 and Brexit.

It is heartening that the hard work of the team and partners, particularly during the pandemic, was reflected in its impact. It also demonstrates that the programme works, has proven impact, and that scaling up and building on activities could deliver a significant impact on the regional economy.

North East Growth Hub

Growth Hub Connectors have provided medium intensity support to over 438 businesses; high intensity interventions to over 158 businesses, and light intensity brokerage to 430 businesses.

We developed an operational model to reduce the impact of an increasingly fragmented landscape to reduce business frustrations.

We developed a new pioneering online software benchmarking tool to help understand entrepreneur growth aspiration and ambition, together with a diagnostic tool to identify business strengths and weaknesses.

The Growth Hub continued to perform its role in coordinating the business support ecosystem through the Business Support Provider Network, facilitating knowledge exchange, encouraging collaboration and cross referrals between 75 member organisations.

Generated **4,435 jobs** (909 of which are better jobs) and **£292million GVA**



North East Growth Hub team: from left to right. Ken Arnold, Craig Harrison, Karen Berry, Morgan Dunbar, Helen Lee, Ian Wood, Suzi Scarlett.



Deal Direct Blinds in Gateshead worked with Made Smarter Adoption North East to invest in a new, state of the art roller blind table, making its manufacturing processes more precise and more efficient.

Innovation

Two challenges (supporting older people at home, work and play; and delivering energy efficient, net zero homes) were defined and launched by the Challenge North Tyne programme. The programme received 104 expressions of interest proposing solutions to the challenges. 48 businesses with 50 solutions were offered a place on the Challenge North Tyne programme alongside a £5,000 grant.

The Future Markets Acceleration Programme concluded in November and supported 39 businesses and 10 organisations in Sunderland via one-to-one support, events, workshops and grants which led to one business introducing a new product to market and 18 businesses/ organisations engaging in knowledge transfers.

The programme supported 50 business and 11 organisations in Gateshead via one-to ones, support, events workshops and grants, which led to four businesses introducing new products to market, 11 organisations engaging in knowledge transfer and one innovation plan being developed.

Advanced Manufacturing

The North East LEP secured £800k from government to deliver the North East Made Smarter programme in partnership with Tees Valley Combined Authority. Throughout the year, Made Smarter has supported 75 manufacturers across the North East and Tees Valley to adopt industrial digitisation technologies through the development of leadership capability, digital roadmaps and funding.

In addition, and to support the development of regional Advanced Manufacturing Strategy, the team have published a comprehensive Advanced Manufacturing Sector Evidence Base, which is available on the North East Evidence Hub.

Energy

The strength of the North East LEP's Energy Programme was incorporated into the creation of Net Zero North East - a region-wide initiative that will champion the region's journey towards Net Zero and build on the pioneering work in heat networks, mine energy, offshore wind and electrification. NetZero North East will build on the work of the Energy Catalyst in bringing forward innovation and deepening and further integrating the work of the government-funded North East and Yorkshire Net Zero Hub.

Tech

A Tech Strategy Board was formed, comprising leading figures from across the tech business community who defined priorities to be incorporated into a North East Tech Sector Strategy.

Health and Life Sciences

In health and life sciences, under the guidance of the Health and Life Science Strategy Board, the delivery of the sector strategy continued, with the Growth Hub coordinating activities, gathering intelligence to inform policy and strategy and signposting companies to relevant support options.

The year also saw the conclusion an exciting proof-of-concept study to create a North East Life Science Innovation Zone, demonstrating significant potential in harnessing the sector's growing momentum and contributing towards achieving the North East Life Science Strategy's goal of doubling the size of the sector by 2030.

Skills, employment, inclusion and progression



"This year has been a year of great progress and I'm delighted with the achievements that reflect the hard work and dedication of the team and our partners and stakeholders. We are leading on the delivery of a strategy for employability and skills which will strengthen our position as a globally competitive region through ensuring the supply of skilled people meets demand from a growing and prosperous business base."

Michelle Rainbow, Skills Director

We secured £7.4m to deliver Skills Bootcamps to 1,800 learners in 2023/24.

Improving skills in the North East workforce is fundamental to our economic future, underpinning our aim of creating 100,000 jobs by 2024, and ensuring that the majority are 'better jobs.'

North East Ambition

The North East Careers Hub was expanded to 162 schools and colleges and continues to make progress against the Good Career Guidance Benchmarks, with the average benchmark score across the region increasing. It is also delivering a number of additional projects, with a variety of stakeholders, putting employers at the heart of education and better preparing the region's future workforce.

The North East Ambition Primary Programme is supporting more young children in the region. The programme has continued to strengthen its core work, as well as expand and evolve in response to the recommendations identified at the end of the initial and successful two year pilot. It is broadening horizons and helping children to better understand the future career options open to them in the region, as well as the pathways into them.

We also continue to work with SEND schools across the North East to provide the best

possible career guidance for children and young people in our region, including through an Effective Transition Fund.

"The rare joy of helping to improve the potential outcomes for young people is hugely beneficial for all involved."

Ian Buckingham from specialist coaching and mentoring consultancy, Mosaic Partners who worked with the skills team to develop The Mentoring Project, an innovative new pilot scheme designed to help young people in the Youth Justice Service system in South Tyneside raise their aspirations and build better futures.

The North East LEP was recognised nationally as a pioneer in supporting the design and delivery of T-levels

ONE Vision

We remain focussed on NEET prevention through bespoke support and careers guidance.

We were delighted to successfully complete the DfE-funded Opportunity North East - Challenge 4 project, which aimed to improve destinations for over 400 young people from 15 North East secondary schools.

In November 2022, over 97% of pupils who participated in the project were reported to be in education, employment or training following completion of their Key Stage 4 studies. Every percentage point reduction in NEET pupils across the 15 ONE Vision secondary schools has the potential to save public finances £1.85million and over £3.46million in wider lifetime costs to the economy and community.

162 schools and colleges

The North East Careers Hub expanded to support 162 schools and colleges.



Charlie Ellison and Jude Humphrey, degree apprentices at High Force Research, a chemical development and manufacturer working in the health and life sciences sector.



Partners from The Mentoring Project with South Tyneside Youth Justice Service.

Skills Bootcamps

We were delighted to support learners through the DfE-funded Wave 3 Skills Bootcamps. These bootcamps helped 779 learners, exceeding the target of 629, and 173 businesses. This has resulted in an allocation of £7.4m to deliver Skills Bootcamps in 2023/2024, with a target of 1,800 learners supported.

Apprenticeships

As part of National Apprenticeship Week, we hosted our 'Future Proof your Workforce' event in February 2023 to explore how we can promote and deliver high quality technical skills and industry experience through apprenticeships in our region. We welcomed over 80 SMEs to the event, which was delivered in collaboration with the Federation of Small Business and the North East Apprenticeship Ambassador Network. The event secured ministerial support and has now led to a multi-agency collaboration to translate findings into a regional apprentice ready model.

T-levels

The North East LEP has been recognised nationally as a pioneer in supporting the design and delivery of T-levels, resulting in the region's first graduate cohorts experiencing some of the highest T-level attainment nationally. We are the only region in which industry placements for all learners were achieved. This culminated in DfE choosing the North East LEP to host its first T-level Conference aimed at SME Businesses. The event attracted over 70 SMEs and showcased the value of T-levels to learners and employers. The model adopted for this conference is now being rolled out across all regions by DfE.

"It is important that we invest in our talent to build the skilled workforce our life sciences cluster needs to grow and thrive in the North East region."

Dr Marie Labus, AMLo Biosciences CEO, explains how an innovative approach to recruitment, with an emphasis on growing talent and upskilling the workforce, has been the key to success for the Newcastle-based life sciences company as part of Careers Pathways, a new resource to boost skills in the region's health and life sciences sector produced by the Skills team.

Skills 4.0

We were invited to join a collaboration with the City of London and a European delegation in Lyon to showcase our concept of Skills 4:0, the skills required for responding to the fourth industrial revolution demands.

Investment and infrastructure



"I was pleased to join our partners FW Capital in January for the launch of our new North East Commercial Property Investment Fund. With an injection of £35m from the North East LEP, the fund will be supporting regional developers for many years to come."

Helen Golightly, Chief Executive Officer OBE

Our investment programmes have attracted over £123m in follow on capital investment in 2022/23

Commercial Property Investment Fund

Following a tendering exercise FW Capital were appointed to manage the new North East Commercial Property Fund. The £35m fund was launched to address a gap in the market and facilitate the delivery of new commercial property developments. It builds on a pilot scheme funded through the Getting Building Fund that has supported five projects in the past year including new industrial units at Bessemer Court, Consett, and offices at Air View Park, on the Newcastle Airport Enterprise Zone.

Enterprise Zones – Infrastructure Investment

In the past year, we have invested £11m, with significant progress made on key sites, including on Jade Business Park, Durham; Ashwood Business Park, Northumberland; and Tyne Dock, where Equinor began recruitment for 200 new jobs for their Dogger Bank Operations and Maintenance Base.

"Over the last few years, we've seen inward investment into the port reach record levels and the £8.2m Enterprise Zone investment by the LEP to make swathes of the port shovel ready for development"

Matthew Hunt, Director at Port of Sunderland



Digital, Robotics and Autonomous Engineering (DARE) Centre, OREC Catapult, Blyth

Getting Building Fund

£10m has been invested to help deliver town and city centre regeneration projects, including in North Shields and in new research and development facilities to support the decarbonisation of the regional economy including the Digital, Robotics and Autonomous Engineering (DARE) Centre in Blyth.

122,470sqm

Some 122,470sqm of new and refurbished commercial floorspace has been developed



East Pilgrim Street, Newcastle phase 1 public realm improvements and Bank House office development

Local Growth Fund

The programme continues to taper to a close with £6.57m invested in the past year. With 2,200 jobs reported, 2022/23 was our most successful year to date, including over 600 at Just Eat's UK Hub at Rainton Bridge and 500 on the International Advance Manufacturing Park, Sunderland. In Wooler, north Northumberland, the Ad Gefrin Distillery and Visitor Centre opened creating up to 50 local job opportunities. In Newcastle, the first phase of works on the redevelopment of East Pilgrim Street saw the completion of public realm works adjacent to the new Bank House office development.



Howard Street, North Shields town centre - public realm and highway improvements



Envision AESC gigafactory in construction, IAMP, Sunderland



CPIF launch: North East LEP, Chief Executive and FW Capital - Fund Managers

Supporting Regional initiatives - Project Development Accelerator Fund

Eighteen regionally strategic projects have been supported with development funds to help accelerate their delivery. Business case development support helped Tyne Coast College to secure £20m from the Department for Education to develop a new campus in South Shields town centre, whilst in Newcastle, support to development company Blocwork has helped secure funding from Network Rail to progress plans for the regeneration of Forth Goods Yard.

"The LEP's initial investment has been instrumental in securing an allocation of £20m for the Forth Goods Yard"

David Chubb, Network Rail

Transport connectivity



"This year we've made great strides delivering the key priorities detailed in the North East Transport Plan and will continue to do so in the coming year.

The North East Devolution Deal provides a suite of new powers and funding that will be available to a new Mayor to enhance the transport network and we are gearing up to prepare for this change."

Philip Meikle, Transport Strategy Director, Transport North East

We secured £163.5m in government funding to improve our bus network – the highest amount in England.

Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP)

Following the highest allocation in England of £163.5m in government funding to improve bus services in the North East, stakeholders across the bus industry are working together through our newly formed Enhanced Partnership to implement the interventions outlined in the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP). One of the early measures is the introduction of a capped fares scheme which allows Under 22's to travel on a single fare anywhere in the region for £1. To ensure the benefit of cheaper travel on bus is wide reaching, further fare initiatives are set to be introduced later this year, including capped adult tickets and free travel for young people leaving local authority care.

Work also continues on a variety of other improvements to the bus network, including bus priority implementation, new bus services and enhancements to existing services through increasing frequencies. The combination of these measures will lead to bus travel becoming cheaper, faster and more reliable.

£46.5m

of active travel funding allocated to the North East since March 2020.

Active Travel Fund

Delivery of our programme, funded through Tranche 2 of the Active Travel Fund, is well underway, with approximately half of the programme complete. The funding will see £9.049 million of active travel schemes delivered across our region. The North East Joint Transport Committee (JTC) was successful in securing an additional £17.9m for delivery of our Tranche 3 programme, with delivery of schemes expected to commence imminently. At the end of March 2023, the region was also successful in securing an additional £17.4m through our Tranche 4 bid, taking the total to £46.5m of active travel funding since March 2020. We are working collaboratively with Active Travel England and partners to drive up the pace and quality of investment.

Capability Fund (Active Travel)

£2.16million of capability funding activities has been delivered providing resources and training for those using the active travel network, this includes maps, itineraries and family friendly roadshows. The region has successfully secured an additional £1.4m through the 2022-2023 bid, which is actively being used to support the development of schemes and wider behaviour change activities. Funding has also been used to relaunch the Go Smarter, Go Active branding and website across the region.

Transforming Cities Fund

The Transforming Cities Fund Tranche 2 programme is well underway, with 20 of our major schemes now in delivery. By the end of March 2023, approximately £102.6 million of investment in sustainable transport projects was approved by the Joint Transport Committee.

Nexus completed delivery of the £104 million Metro Flow project, funded through the Transforming Cities programme to enhance capacity and improve reliability across the network, in December 2022.

Levelling up Fund

In January 2023, the region received an indicative award of £19.5m from the Levelling Up Fund. This funding is being used to deliver up to 52 new high-quality zero emission buses and supporting infrastructure. The buses will operate on eight of the highest frequency bus routes across the North East. These routes currently experience some of the highest levels of air pollution.

The funding will also provide up to 92 new Electric Vehicle (EV) chargers across 36 regional sites. These include Park & Ride locations and other key destinations to encourage multi-modal journeys which use public transport for at least part of the journey.



Cross-party political support and business backing for the full reopening of the Leamside Line

The Leamside Line

Transport North East has continued its campaign for the full reopening of the Leamside Line, with cross-party political support and business backing. This is the most important piece of infrastructure for the economic future of the North East. The line would operate as a diversionary route for the East Coast Main Line, freeing up much-needed capacity to meet our future rail needs, and allow us to extend rail and Metro services to more communities in the region.

In January 2023 we submitted the Strategic Outline Business Case for the "Washington Metro Loop" to the Department for Transport. This new Metro connection between Pelaw and South Hylton via Washington would be worth over £90m per year in economic benefits to the region, creating nearly 8million additional passenger journeys a year and reducing carbon emissions by nearly 87,000 tonnes a year through modal shift. The Washington Metro Loop forms the first part of our wider project to re-open the entire Leamside Line. Work on the more detailed 'Outline Business Case' for the Loop has now begun with Nexus taking a lead role.

East Coast Main Line – connecting our region to elsewhere

We have co-funded work to develop the Integrated Rail Plan (IRP) interventions for the East Coast Main Line north of York to Newcastle to increase trains paths to seven or eight per hour, up from six. We hope this can be an early outcome from the IRP that brings much-needed additional capacity to this longstanding bottleneck.



North Shields Transport Hub – Concept design

Northumberland Line

Following a successful bid to the Restoring Your Railway Fund bid, we have worked with partners in central and local government and the rail industry to prepare for the return of passenger services to the Northumberland Line. This rail link connection between Ashington and Newcastle via several intermediate stations will cut journey times from 70 to 35 minutes while improving access to employment hubs and open new opportunities for education and travel.

The Secretary of State for Transport visited the line on 6 March, confirming that services will commence in Summer 2024. Transport North East continues to work with partners to shape station planning, timetabling and ticketing.

New Metro Train Fleet

The Tyne and Wear Metro's first new train arrived in Newcastle in February, in a landmark moment for the £362m asset renewal programme. In total 46 New Class 555 Stadler trains will now be phased into service across the network in a transition programme running until 2025; the trains are being built in Switzerland with a number of North East manufacturing firms providing key components

The new fleet, which replaces the entire original 43-year-old rolling stock, will offer a comfortable, new, air conditioned, open plan layout, sleekly modelled interior, transforming the customer experience and setting new standards for accessibility and energy efficiency. It will encourage even more people to make use of our Metro network for all types of journeys, including travel to work and education or for leisure purposes.



Sunderland Railway Station

Zero Emission Vehicles (ZEVs)

Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Fund (LEVI) aims to deliver public electric vehicle chargepoints, primarily aimed at benefitting residents who do not have off street parking. The fund, delivered by the Office for Zero Emission Vehicles (OZEV), is available in two parts: capability funding to be spent on resource to help deploy charging infrastructure, and capital funding to be spent on charging infrastructure. The region has already received £250k of capability funding and this is being used to support a bid for a further initial allocation of up to £15.8m of capital and a further £1.1m capability funding to help unlock a significant number of chargers in areas where they are most needed across the North East.

Investment in new EV Chargers

Work has continued on delivery of the £500,000 LGF-funded programme to install new EV chargers at strategic sites around the region, with new chargers already operating at St Mary's car park, Sunderland, and others set to go live in future months.



Continued investment in new EV Chargers

Strategy, policy and analysis



"We have been proud to lead and convene partners to develop the North East evidence base over the past 12 months. But launching the North East Evidence Hub has been a particular highlight as it provides a platform to make this information available in an accessible and collaborative way - we now have a solid platform and regional asset to host and grow the region's evidence base as we move forward."

Richard Baker, Strategy and Policy Director

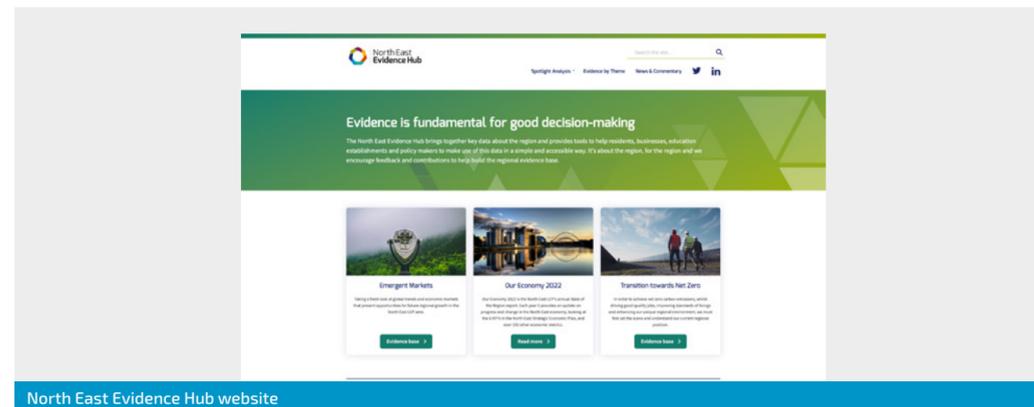
The Evidence Hub is now a comprehensive overview of the region's economy, with over **one thousand datasets and 8 in-depth spotlight analyses**

Our Economy

Our Economy was held in November 2022 and was attended by over 200 delegates. Alongside our annual review of the region's economic performance, the focus of the event was on the cost of doing business and cost of living, with speakers from CBI, the Institute of Directors and Resolution Foundation. More information on the event is available [here](#).

Over 300 datasets were analysed and presented on the North East Evidence Hub as part of the event and are available [here](#). We also published the outputs from our economic markets foresight study which identifies future growth for the North East LEP area, available [here](#).

Our Economy 2022 was a flagship event, bringing together over 200 delegates to explore and discuss issues and challenges around cost of living and cost of doing business



North East Evidence Hub website

North East Evidence Hub

We relaunched the [North East Evidence Hub](#) to bring together key data and evidence about the region to support decision making and to make evidence more accessible for stakeholders and partners across the region.

We have continued to invest in and develop the Hub in terms of its functionality and content, and have tripled the amount of content available.

We have published spotlight analysis on sectoral evidence such as [Digital Tech](#) and [Advanced Manufacturing](#) in support of our Areas of Strategic Importance.

Throughout the year, we have analysed census releases from ONS and published a [spotlight analysis page](#) which includes population by age group, economic activity, industry sectors, occupations and travel to work analysis.

Over the year, we have seen engagement and usage of the Hub increase steadily. On average, we have approximately 900 users accessing the Hub each month, with 5,800 pages being viewed demonstrating strong engagement and demand for the content.



Our Economy event 2022

UK Shared Prosperity Fund

To support the regional bids for UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) we developed a comprehensive evidence base on the North East Evidence Hub, following consultations with the Local and Combined Authorities. The evidence base includes data for each investment theme and a summary of previous evaluation reports to give an overview of 'what works' in terms of support interventions, available [here](#).

The North East LEP was recognised as a regional evidence leader and developed the evidence base that sits behind the North East's UKSPF bids



One example of a project driving forward the Net Zero North East agenda - since it started operating in 2017, Ray Wind Farm in Northumberland has prevented 317,000 tonnes of CO2 from entering the atmosphere - that's the equivalent weight of 45 Tyne Bridges.

Net Zero North East England

On 14 November 2022, Net Zero North East England (NZNEE) was launched with the inaugural summit being attended by over 300 people. We played a critical role in mobilising the [programme](#), providing strategic oversight and direction, leading the development of the evidence and launch communications.

The evidence base covers data on decarbonisation as well as a range of other economic, social and environmental indicators for monitoring the impact of the transition on the North East. These are gathered into pages on clean growth, just transition and environmental protection.

Trade and Internationalisation

Since the publication of the '[Global North East: Driving growth in North East trade and exports](#)' in 2021, we have continued to support the ongoing work programme of the steering group by providing up to date data and evidence to support ongoing negotiations which will initially focus on four priority countries (Turkey, USA, India and Germany).

Partnerships and Collaborations

We have continued to coordinate a number of regional groups including the North East Evidence Forum, Economic Prospects Group and EU Exit Implementation group. The aim of these groups is to bring together experts in research and policy to share best practice and knowledge. We have also maintained and developed our relationships with the local universities and have recently committed to allocate funding towards the Local Area Energy Planning project with Durham University.

We have also led the development of the Northern Evidence Network, bringing together LEPs and Combined Authorities from across the Northern Powerhouse to collaborate and share intelligence and expertise around evidence and data. As part of this programme of work, we continue to build relationships with national data and research institutions such as ONS.

North East Local Enterprise Partnership

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