



Business & Skills Plan

2024

ACHIEVE IN
B&NES

Bath & North East
Somerset Council
Improving People's Lives

INVEST IN
B&NES

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Executive Summary

Introduction

This document sets out B&NES Business and Skills teams 3 year Business and Skills plan for Bath and North East Somerset. This document will be reviewed and refreshed as the economic landscape changes and will be underpinned by a live implementation plan that will be maintained on a yearly basis.

The primary purpose of this plan is to draw on evidence at a local and regional level from key sources, plans and strategies, in order to understand strengths, opportunities and challenges within B&NES. For this reason, it has been kept intentionally light touch, with a greater focus on the implementation plan as a live document. From this review of data and evidence, we have set out a clear set of objectives and projects that will drive business and skills opportunities which will in turn promote economic growth and enable all residents to meet their full potential.

This document also sets out our plan for effective delivery, looking at our measurable success factors, and formally establishing a set of delivery principles for all projects moving forward.

Where We Are Now

The landscape in Bath and North East Somerset has seen massive change since 2020, with Covid-19, Brexit, Cost of Living Crisis, and Climate Emergency having profound effects on the Business and Skills landscape. These challenges have not only changed what support we deliver but also how we approach delivering it.

The graphic on the following page provides a brief snapshot of what has been delivered in 2023:

Business & Skills Statistics 2023

50apx - events and funding programmes delivered/supported including...

We Work for Everyone



55 - New Starters

32 - Supported into employability support, skills, training, employment or volunteering.

18 - Participants in employment, including self-employment 6 months after leaving.

Future Bright



218 - Residents received coaching.

89 - Started training.

63 - Increased their income.

424 - Received advice or signposting.

Employment & Skills Pod



194 - Referrals

38 - High intensity support referred to volunteering, employability services, training.

46 - Residents now in employment.

34 - Supported into employment earning at least the real living wage.



1891 - X Followers 3044 - Newsletter Subscribers

244 - LinkedIn Followers

Universal Business Support

430 - Businesses received direct/signposting to Business Support

324 - Businesses received at least 3 hours of Universal Business Support

62.25 - FTE Jobs Created



42 - Business start-ups supported.

Current Challenges

Drawing on data from the various plans and strategies in our region and area with Business and Skills focus, we have reviewed and identified a series of key challenges in our area that this plan highlights and adds narrative to. These key issues include:

- Employer identified skills gaps
- Aging work force
- Inequality
- NEETs
- Health and Wellbeing
- Low wages
- Poor GVA
- Business Infrastructure
- Climate and Ecological Emergency

While residents and businesses in B&NES face more challenges than those listed above, we have highlighted these in particular as prominent and recurring themes – with further information on additional challenges included in our SWOT analysis, and in the supporting documents.

Objectives & Priorities

The Business and Skills plan is a key implementation method for a number of the core priorities of the Economic Strategy. The Economic Strategy sets out six pillars which form the main ambitions for the strategy. The pillars which the Business and Skills plan will deliver against are:

- Pillar 2 - Good Work, and for relevant objectives in Pillar 3 – Resilient Business and Pillar 4 - Inclusive innovation.
- A number of additional objectives and priorities which have been determined based on other key documents (e.g., corporate strategy), local engagement and known challenges within the area, as well as regional strategic objectives that correlate with local data.

These align with the Business and Skills team's core function to deliver sustainable, inclusive growth, enabling residents and businesses to meet their full economic potential in our district.

Context

As identified in the B&NES Economic Strategy - from the surface, Bath and North East Somerset's economy appears to be a highly prosperous one, with the advantage of having significant academic, business, heritage, and natural assets. Overall, the area boasts highly skilled workforce, and we have low levels of unemployment.

However, we also face distinct challenges. Economic growth in the last ten years has been sluggish and our lower-than-average wages cannot keep up with escalating costs of local housing. Fuelled by inequalities in health, employment and education outcomes, a two-tier economy is emerging.

Since the covid19 pandemic we continue to feel the significant impact on the B&NES economy due to our concentration of employment in 5 core sectors including retail, accommodation and food services. The furlough scheme and universities operating on an online approach also had an impact on the B&NES economy.

Our current trajectory, if we continue business as usual, is one of deepening inequality where some people and places will thrive, while other residents, communities and places will be left further behind.

In order to address these challenges above, and also continue to build on our strengths in the area, the economic strategy has identified six pillars which will deliver B&NES ultimate goal of a fairer, more prosperous, and more sustainable place to live.

These are:

- We will create a **Greener Economy** that is net zero, nature positive,
- We will support our residents to access and thrive in **Good Work**,
- We will establish B&NES as a centre of **Inclusive Innovation and creativity**,
- We will create **Resilient Businesses** by building a diverse, creative, and sustainable business base,
- We will address **Housing Affordability** and ensure residents have access to high quality homes,
- We will support **Stronger Places**, building resilience and sharing prosperity more fairly.

This plan sets out our ambition for the delivery of Pillar 2 - Good Work, and for relevant objectives in Pillar 3 – Resilient Business and Pillar 4 - Inclusive innovation. While the challenges, objectives and projects set out in this plan will no doubt overlap and benefit the other pillars, our main focus will be on achieving the objective and priorities of this pillar. In doing this we will ensure we are supporting the residents by developing the skills that will enhance our capacity to grow our economy in ways that also protects our environment – aligning with the core purpose of the business and skills teams.

In order to address these pillars, we first need to understand the context of B&NES and the key challenges we face.

Young People & NEETs

Following the pandemic, young people's unemployment and economic inactivity rates increased. Locally, 1 in 11 (9%) children and young people in B&NES in 2020/21 were estimated to be living in relative poverty (before housing costs), amounting to some 3,000 children and young people aged 0 to 15 (20% after housing costs).

Negative health effects associated with being Not in Education Employment or Training (NEET) do not occur equally across the population, as the chance of being NEET is affected by area deprivation, socio-economic position, parental factors (such as employment, education, or attitudes), growing up in care, school experiences, etc. Being NEET therefore occurs disproportionately among those already experiencing other sources of disadvantage.

Case Study:

Working in partnership with DWP, we have set up employment clinics for our care leavers to attend to learn about certain industries. A senior member of the business will open their doors for a few hours and discuss with cohorts of care leavers what they do as a business, what they look for in their employees and an opportunity to see behind the scenes of a day at their company.

Low Wages

Despite the relative affluence of B&NES, wages are comparatively low. As of January 2021, resident average gross weekly pay in B&NES was £587, compared to £613 for England and £577 for the Southwest. As of January 2021, workplace average gross weekly pay in B&NES was £575, compared to £613 for England and £573 for the Southwest.

Overall, the past three years have seen a decline in resident and workplace pay from equal or above the national average to below it. The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic may have resulted in a reduction in lower paying jobs during 2020. In addition to relatively low resident wages, the cost of housing is very high in B&NES.

Case Study:

Future Bright offers free career coaching. When you join Future Bright, you will work with a dedicated career progression coach for 3 to 6 months, who will:

- Support you to create a career action plan
- Explore career progression opportunities with you.
- Help you with employability tools and skills such as CV, personal statement, application, and interview techniques.
- Help you to build your confidence and motivation.
- Provide information and advice on other services.
- Signpost you to specialist support.

Inequality

B&NES ranks in the top 10 local authority areas in England for low rates of unemployment and long-term unemployment. However, there are stark differences between wards. The table below shows wards with the highest rates of unemployment.

There is a need for targeted interventions to increase employment in the areas of B&NES described below. This will help reduce poverty, deprivation and financial insecurity in these areas as well as improve health – for which these areas have some of the poorest health outcomes in B&NES. With Twerton, Radstock, Keynsham South, Moorlands and Combe Down having the highest unemployment rates in our area.

Case Study:

The Employment and Skills Pod is a free service available to all residents of Bath and North East Somerset Council aged 18 years+, who wish to get back to work. The Pod is made up of a partnership of leading engagement services in the area and is partnered with the West of England Combined Authority's Skills Connect regional project, which will support residents that are short or long term unemployed, have been made redundant, or looking to change careers.

Mental Health & Wellbeing

In B&NES, people with mental health conditions are nearly 70% less likely to be in employment. Given that mental health is worsening in B&NES, the employment gap for people with mental health conditions is a major concern. Good mental health is a key influence on employability, finding a job, and remaining in that job. Unemployment causes stress, which ultimately has long term physiological health effects and can have a negative impact on mental health, including depression, anxiety, and low self-esteem.

Young professionals are the most vulnerable demographic in the workplace. They are 2x as likely to suffer from depression and are more susceptible to leave and have financial concerns than other age groups, exacerbated by the cost of living crisis.

Case Study:

The Thrive at Work programme supports business leaders with the mental health and wellbeing of their workforce. The eLearning 'Managing Mental Health at Work' is designed to equip businesses with the confidence and skills to have supportive conversations with their staff about mental health and wellbeing.

Developed in partnership with Mind, the leading mental health charity, the course is free to access for private sector and voluntary, community and social enterprises (VCSEs) in the West of England.

Ageing Workforce

In 2021, the population of B&NES was estimated to be 193,400, a 9.9% increase since the 2011 census (176,016). This increase is higher than the overall increase for England (6.6%) and the Southwest (7.8%).

When we compare Employment by age across Jan-Dec 2021 and Jan-Dec 2022, there is a decrease in the overall number in full or part time employment aged 16+ – from 97,600 to 92,300 – however employment numbers among the 50+ age group have increased – from 32,700 to 35,300 (an 8% increase). This figure has been growing and will continue to grow in the coming years.

Case Study:

In 2020 we ran Mid-Life MOT, which was an event that enabled individuals to assess their health, skills, and finances, to better enable them to prepare and plan for the future they want. B&NES Council and its partners hosted an event for anyone who is 45+, and was beneficial for employers, employees and the unemployed.

The day was educational, supportive, and offered tools on how to retain staff, as well as help with areas of better engagement, increased learning and development of staff and reducing staff absence and ill health.

Employer Needs

The National Employer Skills Survey shows that employers in the West of England have more vacancies and find it harder to recruit than the national average, particularly for higher skilled occupations. Whilst employers were more likely to be reporting skills shortages in higher and mid-skilled occupations, they were more likely to report skills gaps (lack of proficiency within existing workforce) in service and labour-intensive occupations.

The scenario in B&NES will likely be comparable to this and is backed up by reports from our business engagement team on the difficulties of recruitment due to lack of skills.

Case Study:

A Skills Bootcamp is a maximum 16 week training programme, comprising of at least 60 taught hours. Supported by B&NES Business and Skills, Bridges offered a free two-week Bootcamp training course in a variety of roles, with opportunities for staff to upskill, and residents to train in a new career with them.

By upskilling and progressing existing members of staff for more senior roles and new responsibilities, this offered opportunities at lower and entry level. This supports sustainable company growth, providing investment in existing staff, and training opportunities for hiring of skilled staff.

Poor GVA/Productivity Growth

In B&NES, business growth is below regional and national average, and this is likely due to the lack of diverse, sustainable, and creative business space. In terms of distribution across B&NES, the issue is particularly significant in Bath City sub area in terms of office uses, with Bath City accounting for a high share of losses in floorspace that support business activities in service sectors the sub area is a key driver of.

There is further need in B&NES for businesses to be supported to scale and stay in B&NES, for example through, Universal Business Support, sector-specific growth strategies, business engagement and signposting to grant funding schemes.

Case Study:

Our Universal Business Support programme offers businesses and pre-starts in Bath & North East Somerset free expert advice to help them grow and succeed, thanks to a West of England Combined Authority initiative, delivered in partnership with Bath & North East Somerset Council to support businesses in the region. Cool Ventures is the first point of contact for the service in B&NES, delivering advice to new entrepreneurs, start-up, and established SME businesses, and guiding them towards the most appropriate sources of specialist local advice.

Infrastructure

B&NES is behind on physical and digital infrastructure to support modern/future business requirements, with a lack of new office/industrial.

In order to overcome these issues B&NES will have to protect existing commercial stock through the planning framework, and advance digital infrastructure through Rollout of fibre and mobile digital infrastructure to ensure communities can access high-speed online services.

Case Study:

A consortium of partners led by Telet are testing out new 5G technologies in four south-west locations including Bath. The project will build a new 5G network in the city centre to test high demand usage. One Word 5G will last 18 months and includes funding for a B&NES Digital Coordinator.

Climate and ecological emergency

Business are currently being impacted by climate and ecological emergency, incurring higher costs, and experiencing uncertainty. There is currently limited access to funding, best practice, and support for the B&NES business community, and this is required for them to adapt to climate change. Moving forward there is a greater need for support to grow the environmental goods and services sector to include local supply chains for food drink.

Case Study:

The West of England Green Business Grants are designed to help SMEs purchase and install new products and equipment that reduce your greenhouse gas emissions, cut your utility costs and improve your energy efficiency.

A total of £2million has been made available up to March 2025. Businesses can apply for a grant of between £500 and £15,000 to cover between 30% and 60% of eligible capital costs of purchase and installation. The amount of grant they can apply for varies depending on the items you are looking to buy.

All applications must demonstrate how they will help the business to achieve a measurable reduction in greenhouse gas emissions when compared to their current baseline emissions.

Critically low levels of industrial availability

There are critically low levels of industrial availability in B&NES and particularly in Bath. Industrial space is needed to ensure the city can function as a whole, as well as delivering jobs for local people. Local employment floorspace has been lost due to the high competition from other uses, including student housing and housing.

The evidence base for the new Local Plan is projecting jobs growth of 15,000 new jobs by 2043, based on population projections, sector forecasts and historical figures. We need to ensure there is sufficient employment land to deliver this and we need to strengthen the protections for existing industrial floorspace in particular.

Case Study:

A new evidence base and Employment Land Review will be completed. This will assess the supply and demand picture and make recommendations for appropriate sites to deliver employment development to 2043. 10-15 new sites not previously covered will be assessed for their value in order to protect local neighbourhood and rural locations as well as making an overall assessment of the need for new land allocations. These will then be taken forward through the Local Plan process, which will progress in draft form in 2024 and for final adoption in 2025.

SWOT Analysis

<p>Strength</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High quality and diverse job opportunities from supportive business environment. • Employability provision including various routes into work and in work progression. • B&NES and Bristol region is home to the UK's 4th largest tech cluster, meaning there is a host of digital skills, innovation, and expertise. • High start-up and survival rate. • B&NES benefits from a number of global leading businesses. • Highly skilled & qualified workforce. • Quality of life and environment. • Strong provision of business support and finance. 	<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborative and regional approach to projects including FWD & Skills Connect • Encourage partners and local business to sign up to the West of England Combined Authority Good Employment Charter and as a council become a disability confident leader • Growing strength in environmental and social benefits • Remote working • New development sites and protection for existing workplaces • Funding and opportunities to test new ways of supporting residents • Bath has an international reputation • Universities & Colleges • Funding has been secured to develop a new 5G mobile network in the City of Bath
<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High inequalities and pockets of deprivation. • Low wages vs high house prices make it difficult to live and work in B&NES. • Lack of provision for young people not in employment education or training. • Usual suspects – input & engagement from same places/ organisations. • Local business information and data identifying skills needs and gaps. • Bath's World Heritage Status and challenging topography in our rural locations mean that investment in digital infrastructure is behind our regional comparators. • Low business growth & low productivity. • Relative lack of modern business workspace. • Disconnected business communities across B&NES. • Lack of Entry level (pre lv3) training provision. 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uncertain and short-term nature of funding opportunities. • Long term labour market trends, hollowing out middle of labour market. • Growing inequalities and poverty. • Exclusion acting as a drag on productivity. • Retention of skilled and trained workforce including post-education and remote workers. • National economic challenges including inflation, cost of living, international trade, and political uncertainty within government. • Speed of technological change. • Poor perception/reputation as a business location. • Geographical barriers and infrastructure challenges including travel and housing. • Cost, skills and coverage around digital remain key barriers for some of our residents in accessing services and employment.

Our Ambition

Business & Skills Team

“We want all our residents, regardless of age, gender, profession or personal circumstances to have access to good work.”

“If we want to deliver our ambitions on good work, inclusive innovation, and a greener economy, it is essential that businesses are resilient to economic uncertainty and empowered to seize the opportunities of changing market demands.”

The business and Skills Team has a core function is to deliver sustainable, inclusive growth. Enabling residents and businesses to meet their full economic potential in our district. This has a natural fit with **Pillar 2, 3 and 4** of the Economic Strategy.

In order to champion good work practices and increase inclusive pathways into work, we will identify, enhance, and add elements to an already accelerating employment and skills landscape within B&NES that will provide a resident with an opportunity to grow and progress, no matter where they are in their employment journey.

In order to create a resilient business community and promote inclusive innovation, we will continue to build from well established and key projects such as Invest in B&NES and Universal Business Support to support key business requirements so that businesses are able to start, scale, thrive and stay in B&NES area.

While these pillars set out a variety of key objectives and actions in line with the data provided in the previous sections, there are also a number of supplementary objectives we have identified that should be delivered alongside these in order to tackle additional prominent challenges within the area, as well as meeting specific corporate priorities, and Regional Business and Skills objectives.

Employment & Skills (Pillar 2)

Champion good work practices	Encourage partners and local businesses to sign up to WECA Good Employment Charter.	Short
	Promote the Real Living Wage to increase local adoption and look to become a living wage borough.	Short
	Work with the West of England Combined Authority to deliver the Thrive at Work programme.	Medium
	Promote the Disability Confident Employer scheme to encourage local employers to enhance the recruitment, retain and develop residents with disabilities.	Short
	Collaborate as B&NES anchor institutions (and major employers) to review and adopt good work practices.	Long
Increase inclusive pathways into work	Create and deliver an inclusive employment and skills plan for Bath and North East Somerset, ensuring UKSPF supports B&NES requirements.	Medium
	Promote Future Bright to increase uptake of careers coaching and support for residents already in work.	Short
	Use Midlife MOT to increase employment opportunities and retention of older adults.	Short
	Engage with the Southwest Social Mobility Commission to identify local social cold spots and ways to address them.	Long
	Prioritise projects to address barriers to employment for young people, including care leavers and those with SEND.	Medium
	Increase our Targeted Recruitment and Training requirements from developers to ensure that the benefits of new developments are shared.	Short

Additional Objectives

Champion good work practices	B&NES Council become a disability confident leader.	Medium
	Increase opportunities within B&NES Council for placements, apprenticeships, bootcamps etc.	Medium
	Support delivery of training and skills with pathways to real job opportunities.	Long
Increase inclusive pathways into work	Support unemployment, upskilling and career change for 45+ cohort.	Short
	Develop a NEET strategy to support our young people cohorts.	Medium
	Promote alternative routes to work (apprenticeships, bootcamps, SWAPs), and set an example as the local authority.	Short
	Support delivery of new/unique modular training.	Medium
	Develop supported internship opportunities to support those with EHCP's age 16-25 years access employment.	Medium
	Develop Information, guidance and support for parents, carers and professionals supporting young people with EHCP's moving towards employment.	Medium
Developing the Employment and Skills Landscape	Embedding of critical, digital, and green skills across employment and skills provision.	Medium
	Develop resource and knowledge base, through the Achieve in B&NES brand and Skills Connect.	Medium
	Address skills gaps in sectors struggling to recruit.	Medium
	Support raising the understanding and developing training opportunities in emerging sectors/industries such as Retrofit.	Long

Business & Digital (Pillar 3 & 4)

Resilient Businesses	Support local businesses to stay and scale in B&NES	Promote new and emerging developments for start-ups and scale-ups (Bath Quays and Somer Valley Enterprise Zone).	Medium
		Increase uptake of Invest in Bath and WECA funded management and leadership training for SMEs.	Short
		Increase local participation in regional business growth programmes.	Short
		Build local business networks and events to connect B&NES sectors and firms.	Medium
		Work with the Bath BID to share insight on emerging business needs and promotion of local business offer.	Short
		Work with the Regeneration team on the business focused elements of the Milsom Quarter, Fashion Museum, Creative Corridor and Locksbrook developments are strengthened.	Short
	Invest in the infrastructure businesses need	Understand and plan for future employment space demand (industrial, office and retail) through the local plan process.	Long
	Promote alternative business models and community-led action	Work with 3SG to showcase charities, social enterprises and voluntary groups working across B&NES.	Short
		Engage with local community groups to encourage volunteering targeted to local issues.	Medium
		Work with partners to provide targeted support for community-led and voluntary & community sector organisations.	Medium
		Promote business support aimed at alternative business models, for example from Co-operatives UK and B Lab UK.	Short
Create a local peer support network to connect existing alternative model businesses with those who are interested in changing their business model.	Medium		

Inclusive Innovation	Maximise local benefits of our leading innovation assets	Work with local major manufacturing and engineering base (e.g., around Midsomer Norton) to showcase career opportunities to young people.	Short
		Work with the Regeneration team on the business focused elements of the Milsom Quarter, Fashion Museum, Creative Corridor and Locksbrook developments are strengthened.	Short
	Promote B&NES as an innovation testbed	Promote B&NES innovation strengths and opportunities to investors and businesses online and through events.	Short
		Grow links to regional innovation partners to ensure that B&NES businesses and entrepreneurs are part of innovation district and ecosystem activity.	Medium
		Promote provider innovation assets such as SETsquared Bath and the University of Bath Innovation Centre to local businesses.	Short
		Promote regional accelerator programmes DETI and Creative Growth Programme.	Short
Ensure all sectors and businesses are supported to innovate	Prioritise the foundational economy in innovation support, working with partners to draw from good practice to create new programmes and support.	Medium	
Stronger Places	Promote economy in rural areas as a driver of economic growth	Increase representation of rural businesses in Council structures and local networks.	Short
		Continue the development of employment space in the Somer Valley.	Medium
		Use business support to support rural diversification and the adoption of green technologies as an economic growth opportunity.	Long
	Improve connectivity to and between all parts of B&NES	Accelerate digital infrastructure rollout, including gigabit, superfast broadband and 5G.	Medium
	Support local food supply chains and food security	Develop Local Food Strategy, including B&NES Menu to showcase local food production, sourcing and hospitality.	Short

Success Indicators

We will measure success by monitoring progress against a range of outcomes. Some of these outcomes are already defined and specific within the action from the Economic Strategy Pillars (e.g., Promote the Real Living Wage to increase local adoption and look to become a living wage borough.), however where objectives have wider or more open-ended goals (e.g., Use Midlife MOT to increase employment opportunities and retention of older adults), we have provided additional success indicators from these activities.

We have also included indicators that will help us identify the economic progress of the region as a whole and feed into the wider challenges that are being addressed as part of these specific actions (e.g., resident earnings).

We will monitor progress against these indicators and ensure all interventions developed as part of this plan are focused on delivering against these outcomes. These success indicators include:

- Increased gross household income
- Relative wage growth
- Lower NEET unknown rates
- Improved staff retention
- Increase proportion of people with level 2+ qualifications
- Increase the proportion of employees supported to receive training
- Increase take up of apprenticeships, bootcamps, SWAP etc
- Reduce unemployment rates
- Increased take up of local partner provision
- Overcoming known recruitment gaps
- Increased number of Business Starts

Delivery Principles

In order to deliver successful projects that meet the requirements of our residents, business and the economy overall, we have established three themes which will drive our delivery process -

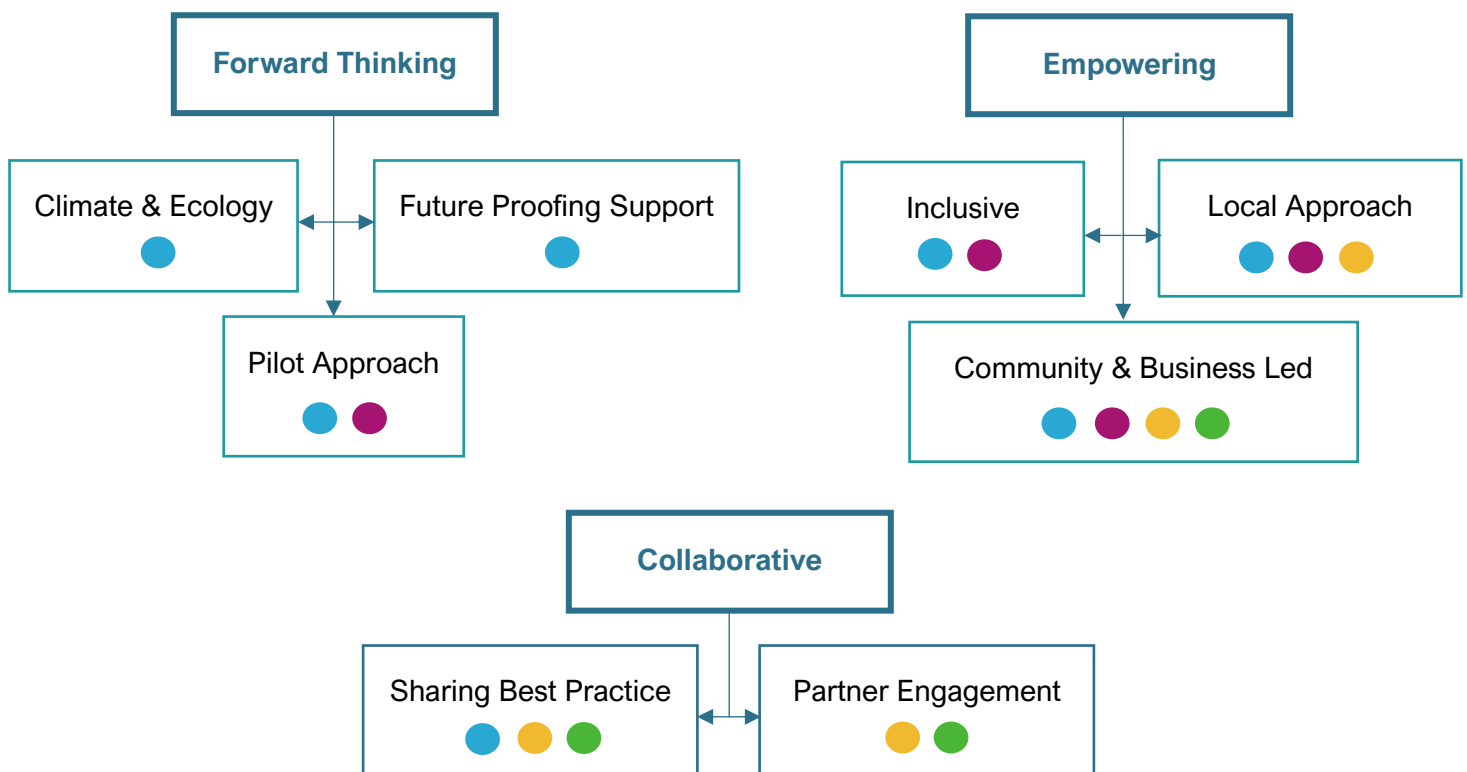
- Collaborative
- Empowering
- Forward thinking

We believe that these three themes encapsulate the critical values required to deliver Business and Skills projects, and we will adhere to these values by setting out a number of principles under each theme - as set out in the diagram on this page, and as broken down on the following pages.

These themes and principles are aligned with our overarching B&NES corporate values of being Bold, Empowered, Supportive and Transparent. These themes and principles are not designed to replace the corporate values, and rather act as specific methods of delivery to deliver the corporate values bespoke to the projects that the Business and Skills team run.

Delivery Principles and Corporate Values

● Bold ● Empowered ● Supportive ● Transparent



Collaborative

Partner Engagement

A central element of the Economic Strategy is a partnership approach. This will continue within the Business and Skills plan. By working with partners and utilising their expertise to deliver our projects we will ensure fit, and success of the services provided. Within skills it is vital to make the most of the limited resources at our disposal, and a keyway to achieve this is by pooling and collaborating where possible, to extend reach, enhance offer, and provide successful outcomes to our residents.

Sharing Best Practice

We will create an environment where we are able to share and receive best practice from partners and other organisations in order to boost efficiency and competence in project delivery, to form better decision making and planning and also start to build further collaboration in the region.

Empowering

Inclusive

Inclusion is vital to the health and wellbeing of our area for us to tackle deprivation and inequality, inclusion needs to be at the forefront of our project delivery. This includes understanding that not every location and type of venue is inclusive and their might both physical and mental barriers to access.

Community and Business Led

Our projects will be delivered with true need in mind. In order to be successful and deliver something that truly benefit s residents, we will need to consider the whole user journey, and thus ensure that 1) that the services are delivered in a way that is suited to our residents in order for them to access (including, location, accessibility, hours etc.), and 2) that real working opportunities are available and where possible directly linked with provision (preferably through employer led delivery). This should be achieved through consultation and co-design.

Local Approach

Using an outreach approach to deliver projects in the places they are needed, focusing on the development and utilisation of local hubs and drop-in locations to support community based/led projects, and reducing the impacts of travel requirements/costs on access to provision.

Forward Thinking

Pilot Approach

It is vital that we enhance the provision that we know works and supports our residents, but also that we begin to test new methods of delivery and engagement for supporting residents for whom opportunities in the current system do not fit. Through this principal we will be both bold and calculated in order to continue to develop an Employment and Skills system which is available and suitable for all residents within B&NES.

Future Proofing Support

Being data driven and understanding both local and strategic trends, to understand what type of provision is effective, and based on skills and sector what gaps we will be required to fill. To ensure that skills are future proofed. This also means understanding funding and creating sustainable and long-term funding models for delivery where possible.

Climate and Ecology

Ensuring that where possible our projects support or even directly address the council's net zero objectives, and objectives within the environmental and ecological action plans. For the most part this will be achieved through underpinning provision with green skills where possible in order to prepare for our future economy.

Delivery & Implementation

Delivery & Implementation Plan

The Delivery and Implementation plan is a supplementary and live document that sets out project delivery against the objectives in the Business and Skills Plan.

This is where we provide specific project information including:

- Key Milestones
- KPIs
- Objective Lead
- Key Stakeholders

Whereas the Business and Skills plan itself is a longer standing document, the Implementation plan will be maintained frequently, being reviewed, and updated.

The following page provides an example extract from the Implementation Plan:

Example of Implementation Plan

Good Work Priority	Objective	Rationale/ Challenge	Projects	Actions	Output	Economic Outcomes	Key Milestones	KPIs	Objective Lead	Key Partners
Increase inclusive pathways into work	Use Midlife MOT to increase employment opportunities and retention of older adults.	Decrease in the overall number in full or part time employment however, Employment numbers among the 50+ age group have increased Creating a fair and inclusive place to work. Overcoming barriers to employment for an aging workforce Addressing issues around health & wellbeing and finances	Midlife MOT	Utilise Skills Connect and the Employment and Skills Pod to deliver event Engagement with key partners and stakeholders including Public Health, DWP etc. Use Achieve in B&NES and other council platforms to provide comms and marketing to residents Use Invest in B&NES	Increased number of residents aged 45+ who: - feel more confident and have better prospects re moving into employment - are supported with Health & Wellbeing needs - feel more in control of their finances Increased number of businesses prepared for an aging workforce	Reduction in unemployment rates across the local area. Improved staff retention Increased take up of local partner provision Overcoming known recruitment gaps	Complete Event Plan Feb 2024 Finalise event details Mar 2024 Delivery of Event May 2024	TBC Feb 2024	Employment and Skills Pod (in Partnership with Skills Connect)	DWP, Public Health, Future Bright, NCS

Supporting Documents & Evidence Base

- **Corporate Plan 2020-2024**

The Corporate Strategy sets out our priorities for the next four years, as well as how we will deliver them. It also looks at how we have responded to the COVID-19 pandemic, and how we will deliver on our strategy in light of that.

- **Economic Strategy**

Employment and skills will be key component to support the Economic priorities: Sustainable, Fairer and Prosperous. Employment and skills are one of the main delivery mechanisms for these priorities.

- **Climate/Ecological Emergency**

The Employment and Skills plan will support the creation of green and sustainable businesses and jobs, as well as supporting people to gain the skills to enter good quality employment in the green economy.

- **The Local Plan**

The Local Plan has a strong focus on employment growth and job creation through development: this plan will support people to access these opportunities, and new businesses created through development to find skilled local employees.

- **Public Health Strategy**

The Public Health Strategy will support tackling health inequality by creating fairer life chances and employment and skills can support that improvement

- **West of England Employment and Skills Plan**

The West of England Employment & Skills Plan is critical for employment and business outcomes, and improved skills in the area will support development

- **Employment Land Review**

The Employment Land Review will provide of both economic forecasts and employment land demand forecasts. The review will also present a commercial market summary alongside a quantitative assessment of allocated and consented employment sites and premises supply.