



**South
Derbyshire**
District Council



Economic Development Strategy 2016 - 2020

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District Council

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Acknowledgements

The Economic Development team at South Derbyshire District Council would like to thank all those who have participated in the development of this Strategy.

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Foreword

South Derbyshire District Council's Corporate Plan 2016-2021 sets out a Vision to make the District a better place to live, work and visit. 'Progress' is one of its four key themes and central to this is the continued support and development of the local economy.

The South Derbyshire Economic Development Strategy will directly contribute to the achievement of the Progress objectives. These focus on economic development, inward investment, The National Forest, tourism and town centre growth.

In order to further build on our significant achievements, the Council will continue to help grow and diversify our strong local economy to keep South Derbyshire well and truly open for business. This includes harnessing the potential of The National Forest.

We will maximise opportunities for the future by encouraging the formation of new enterprises as well as the continued growth of existing businesses, helping to increase visitor spend, and attracting inward investment.

Cllr Bob Wheeler

Leader, South Derbyshire District Council



Executive Summary

The Economic Development Strategy aims to set out an understanding of the economic challenges and opportunities currently facing South Derbyshire and to put forward a vision for the further development of the District.

Whilst production of the Strategy has been led by the District Council, it sets out a common understanding and vision that has emerged from research and consultation with all interested parties.

South Derbyshire has experienced a period of strong growth, with increasing numbers of jobs and low levels of unemployment. In the coming years, the area's economy will face a number of unique challenges:

- Maintaining the success of the **manufacturing sector** - South Derbyshire has one of the highest concentrations of employment in manufacturing in the UK, with products exported around the world; In contrast to most other areas of the country, the District has retained a major manufacturing sector. The challenge will be to provide the conditions for growth, address constraints, enhance productivity, and maintain the sector's success in an increasingly challenging global marketplace. This will avoid a dependence on public and service sector employment, predominantly located in larger centres in neighbouring areas.
- Accommodating high levels of **population growth** - South Derbyshire has had one of the fastest growing populations in the country over the last decade; This will continue, with extensive areas of new housing planned. The challenge will be to facilitate the provision of many more jobs, and a range of employment opportunities that are accessible locally to a rapidly growing workforce. This will avoid worklessness or higher levels of commuting and associated congestion.
- Maximising the potential of **The National Forest** - South Derbyshire is at the heart of The National Forest, a unique national initiative to create a new forest in one of the least wooded areas of the country. Millions of trees are being planted, creating an attractive environment and quality of life. The challenge will be to use the Forest as a basis to grow business sectors such as tourism, forestry and low carbon, particularly where they will support businesses in the countryside. This will avoid a decline in jobs and services in rural areas.
- South Derbyshire will also share some **economic development challenges** common to many areas, including: Changing shopping habits will continue to impact upon town centre vitality; Persistent pockets of deprivation and small numbers not currently engaged in the labour market; Shortcomings in connectivity in both urban and rural areas; and, Raising aspirations and work-readiness amongst some young people.

The Economic Development Strategy will aim to address these challenges and opportunities through the following Vision, Objectives and Ambitions.

A more prosperous, better connected, increasingly resilient and competitive economy will make South Derbyshire a better place to live, work and visit at the heart of The National Forest.

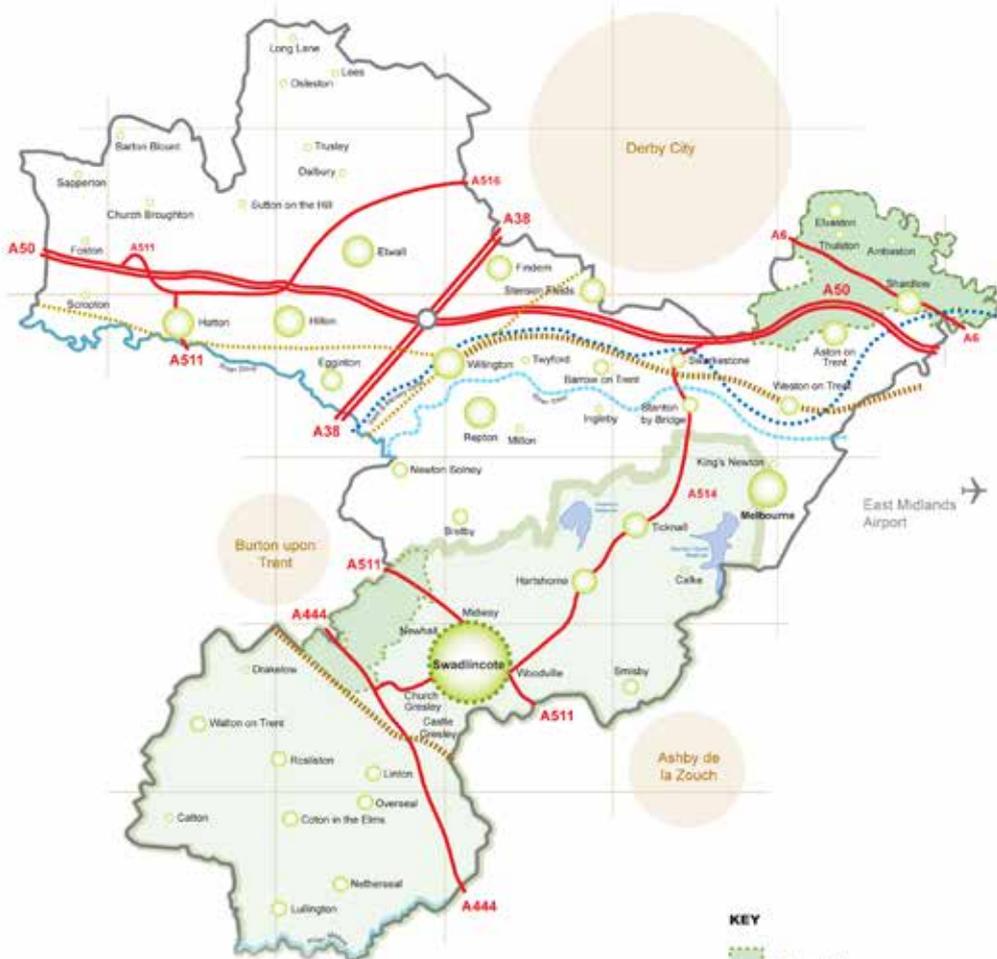
The actions of the Economic Development Strategy are expressed as Ambitions. This reflects the fact that the majority are dependent upon the joint commitment of the public, private and voluntary/community sector organisations operating in South Derbyshire. In some instances, they will also be dependent on securing external funding.

Whilst some of the actions envisaged are core activities of the District Council, the majority will be undertaken in partnership with other organisations. As such, the key delivery vehicle for the Economic Development Strategy will be through the South Derbyshire Partnership and in particular the Sustainable Development Group.

BUSINESS		Business support, access to finance & innovation
1.	To attract new inward investment , plus reinvestment by existing businesses	
2.	To provide business support , advice and signposting including to financial, exporting, innovation and other assistance	
3.	To promote the development of the area's key sectors , such as manufacturing and tourism	
SKILLS		Recruitment, employment & skills
4.	To work with businesses to meet their workforce needs , raising skills levels and productivity	
5.	To address employability barriers, such as work-readiness, and the accessibility of work and training	
6.	To equip young people with the skills and resources to realise their potential, promoting entrepreneurship and matching their aspirations with knowledge of the local economy	
INFRASTRUCTURE		Infrastructure for economic growth
7.	To provide a range of employment sites and premises, and pursue associated infrastructure improvements	
8.	To seek improvements to access and connectivity – both transport links, sustainable travel modes and services, and superfast broadband and mobile telephone coverage	
9.	To support vibrant town centres as commercial, community and service centres	

Introduction

South Derbyshire, located in the centre of England, includes the rolling countryside to be found in the valleys of the Rivers Trent and Dove - with historic settlements, including Melbourne, Ticknall and Repton – and the market town of Swadlincote. In the north of the District, Shardlow on the Trent & Mersey Canal is one of only two inland canal ports to survive largely intact. The map below shows the position of the District in the sub-region.



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KEY

- Green belts
- Extent of The National Forest within the South Derbyshire boundary
- Rail links**
 - passenger
 - freight
- Road links**
 - Road links
- Settlements**
 - Settlements
- Trent and Mersey Canal
- Rivers
- Reservoirs

The District is also at the heart of The National Forest where, in twenty-five years, almost 8.5 million trees have already been planted. As Britain’s boldest environmental project, this is a ‘forest in the making’ where part of the nation’s future heritage is being created - providing an extensive green link between the ancient forests of Charnwood and Needwood. The dramatically changing landscape is bringing economic, environmental and social benefits through the creation of woodland sites and attractions for local people and visitors alike. Around one third of The National Forest is within South Derbyshire District.

As such, South Derbyshire is a largely rural district, covering an area of approximately 34,000 hectares (340 sq km) with a population of 99,300 (ONS Mid 2015 Estimate). To the north, the District adjoins the city of Derby and to the north west stretches towards Ashbourne and the Peak District. The town of Burton upon Trent in East Staffordshire lies immediately to the west where the Rivers Trent and Dove create the county boundary. On its eastern side South Derbyshire extends from the River Derwent to the east of Derby, south along the Trent and then adjoins Leicestershire, bordering Donington Racetrack and East Midlands Airport. The southern boundary is shared with the counties of Leicestershire and Staffordshire.

South Derbyshire is steeped in history with stately homes scattered across its hills and valleys. The jewel in the crown is Calke Abbey, the second largest country house in Derbyshire after Chatsworth; Calke is hidden from public view as befitted the home of a reclusive family and offers a fascinating mixture of finery and faded splendour.

The main population and employment centre of the District is Swadlincote (approx. 40,000), with other sizeable settlements being the attractive Georgian town of Melbourne and the villages of Hilton, Hatton, Repton and Willington. For many years Swadlincote was important for mining and pottery manufacture due to its location on the South Derbyshire Coalfield. However, in the latter part of the 20th Century these industries declined dramatically. Today, South Derbyshire boasts a range of new industries and has the fastest growing population in the county and one of the fastest growing populations nationally.

In recent years significant new housing development has taken place in both Swadlincote and Hilton. These settlements are continuing to expand, together with new home construction at Drakelow and on the edge of Derby City. The main concentration of businesses may be found in Swadlincote which has a number of established business parks including Tetron Point. Other focuses include Melbourne, Hilton, Hatton and Shardlow. Additional employment land has recently been allocated adjacent to the business parks at Dove Valley Park (Foston) and Infinity Park (Sinfin), close to the A50.

The Trent Valley provides a natural transport corridor across the District giving good access to the regional and national road and rail network. There is a passenger rail station at Willington on the Birmingham-Derby line and a network of freight lines that once served coal-fired power stations in the area. The A50 passes through the District providing an east-west link between the M6 and the M1/M42.

The economy of the north of the District is very much inter-linked with that of the city of Derby, whilst Swadlincote and the southern parishes relate much more closely to the adjacent settlements of Burton, Moira and Ashby.



Recent Events

South Derbyshire emerged from the economic downturn relatively quickly and has gone on to experience positive growth over the last few years. Reinvestment by the District's major employers, continued inward investment and a dynamic small business sector have been key features of the recovery. This has been aided by a range of economic development activities led by organisations in the public and voluntary/community sectors, including the growth of The National Forest.

Economic development events in South Derbyshire over the last few years have included the following:

Business

- Continued development of South Derbyshire's major international companies including the introduction of the Toyota Auris hybrid model at Burnaston, expansion of the range manufactured at JCB Power Systems at Foston to include a 6 cylinder engine, and construction of a new coffee production facility at the Nestlé plant in Hatton.
- Expansion of tree coverage within The National Forest to 20% (originally 6%); accompanied by a growth in visitor accommodation and facilities.
- The growth of Swadlincote's larger businesses including Dellner (rail components), Keystone (construction products), and Brunel Healthcare (vitamins and minerals).
- Expansion of the accredited Swadlincote Tourist Information Centre's activities, including the popular "What's On" guide.
- Growth of The National Forest & Beyond destination marketing campaign – The National Forest attracted a record 7.8 million visitors in 2014, generating £373.8m of visitor spend and supporting some 4,842 jobs.
- £500,000 investment in Sharpe's Pottery Museum, including a new café extension, outdoor play area, 'Story of The National Forest' gallery and repairs to the historic kiln.
- A number of significant investments into the Melbourne area, including The One Off design agency and DG Light Haulage.
- Introduction of the South Derbyshire Business Advice Service providing free impartial one-to-one advice and 'Thinking of Starting a Business?' workshops for prospective entrepreneurs.
- Development of a town centre markets and events programme in Swadlincote including the introduction of a farmers' market and a Christmas market, plus individual events such as the 2020VISION photography exhibition, pancake races and Diamond Jubilee lunch, together with support for others' events such as the Festival of Transport, International Food & Drink Festival and Scarecrow Hunt.
- Development of the Tractivity inward investment system to provide an online property database, and gather information for the Vacant Commercial Property Bulletin and Investment Gazette.
- Introduction of business breakfasts and events to raise awareness of advice and support, and workshops to develop the skills of owners/managers.
- Introduction of the annual Business Awards including a gala awards evening.
- Award of Assisted Area status for three wards in South Derbyshire for the period 2014-2020 (Etwall, Stenson and Willington & Findern).

- Inward investment successes including Nampak Plastics at Dove Valley Park, Advance Lighting at Hilton Business Park and Clipper Logistics at Tetron Point Business Park.
- Delivery of a programme of support for independent retailers including advice and training, together with promotion of the town centre businesses and markets, including introduction of reusable Swadlincote 'shop local' bags.
- Creation of the 75 mile National Forest Way long distance footpath from the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire to Beacon Hill Country Park in Leicestershire, plus numerous other footpaths and cycleways.
- Public and private investment in new and improved visitor attractions and activities, including at Rosliston Forestry Centre, Mercia Marina, Swadlincote Golf Centre, Swadlincote Ski & Snowboard Centre, Calke Abbey, Trent Adventure and the Apex indoor climbing centre.
- Award of 'Portas' Our Town First funding to Swadlincote town centre, enabling a range of retailer support activities to be undertaken.

Skills

- Renaming of Burton College and the establishment of Burton & South Derbyshire College's Swadlincote campus and Construction Academy.
- The loss of several long-standing employers during the economic downturn, though with the availability of their former premises facilitating the attraction of new businesses.
- Introduction of Jobs & Careers Fairs enabling jobseekers to meet prospective employers and have-a-go at new skills with training providers, whilst school children can learn about careers and businesses in the area.
- Delivery of employability activities to assist unemployed residents into work, in partnership with local community organisations, through the Work Club and ALICE projects.
- Creation of the South Derbyshire Young Enterprise challenge, aiming to raise aspirations and aid student's future transition from education into independent living and employment - developing life skills through working as a team to set up and run a small enterprise from a market stall.
- Delivery of the Raising Aspirations project working intensively with secondary school pupils at risk of failing to reach their potential through, for example, mentoring, positive role models, work placements, aspirational employer visits and raising awareness of employment and training opportunities.



Infrastructure

- Implementation of £2.3 million of town centre public realm improvement works in Swadlincote, including the redesign of The Delph public square and historic West Street together with a number of the adjoining pedestrian links.
- Delivery of a £250,000 environmental improvement programme to key arterial routes and town centre gateways in Swadlincote, including tree planting and business frontage improvement grants.
- Large scale private investment in Swadlincote town centre including 'The Pipeworks', a 110,000 sqft retail and leisure scheme, the rebuilding of an expanded Sainsbury's superstore and a number of residential projects.
- Consistently high levels of house building focused upon the southern periphery of Derby, at Hilton and in Swadlincote, including a new neighbourhood centre at Castleton Park.
- Construction of William's Yard in Melbourne, a small mixed use scheme of shops and offices successfully integrated into the Georgian town centre.
- Completion of the Business Navigator scheme which provided business security and resource efficiency advice to companies to help them reduce their overheads and environmental impact.
- Continued investment in the fabric of Swadlincote town centre's historic buildings, including the reinstatement of traditional shop fronts.
- Creation of The National Forest Walking Festival attracting visitors to enjoy a package of walks led by local community groups and promoting the history, ecology and attractions of the area.



Overview

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

The Appendices contain an in-depth review of current issues in South Derbyshire based upon research, survey work, consultation and analysis of data sources. A very brief overview of the findings may be found below.

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manufacturing sector, including skills base and supply chain Central location in country/in road network/to markets/to workforce catchment Available employment land Presence of multi-national businesses Tourism assets eg Calke Abbey High levels of economic growth/activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Swadlincote town centre; Proximity of larger centres Connectivity – transport/broadband Out-commuting and congestion Work-readiness Accessibility of jobs and training Persistent pockets of deprivation; Groups outside the labour market Range of employment within the District
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The National Forest, canals Proximity to Airports, Donington Racetrack, Infinity Park Enterprise Zone Growing sectors including logistics and tourism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Population growth/jobs needed Infrastructure limitations; Limited investment Dependence on one employer Workforce skills/skill shortages in some specific roles Climate change issues and impacts

South Derbyshire has experienced a period of strong growth in recent years, with increasing numbers of jobs and low levels of unemployment. Following the global economic downturn of 2008-13 and the UK's decision in 2016 to leave the European Union, future economic predictions are difficult to make with any certainty.

If national trends are followed, employment growth will be primarily led by the wholesale & retail trade, professional scientific & technical, and administration & support services sectors, with numbers of manufacturing jobs falling. However the District has not always followed general trends in the past.

Due to its location, the District will be heavily influenced by the fortunes of neighbouring settlements, in particular Ashby, Burton and Derby. It will also be impacted by the plans of major employers in the wider area such as East Midlands Airport and Rolls Royce.

Whilst the future is uncertain, it will undoubtedly be a period of continuing growth, transition and change in South Derbyshire with the creation of extensive new areas of housing, employment and forest. As a result, South Derbyshire's economy will face a number of unique challenges in the coming years.

Manufacturing

Maintaining the success of the manufacturing sector – South Derbyshire has one of the highest concentrations of employment in manufacturing in the UK, with products exported around the world; In contrast to most other areas of the country, the District has retained a major manufacturing sector. The challenge will be to provide the conditions for growth, address constraints, enhance productivity and maintain the sector's success in an increasingly challenging global marketplace. This will avoid a dependence on public and service sector employment, predominantly located in larger centres in neighbouring areas.

There are some 250 businesses in the District engaged in manufacturing. These range from micro businesses to some of the largest companies in the world. They include particular concentrations in transport equipment manufacturing, associated with the planes, trains and automobiles industries of the Midlands, food & drink with links to the brewing industry in Burton upon Trent and construction products with origins in minerals extraction. Labour productivity in South & West Derbyshire is the second highest in the East Midlands, though slightly below the national average.

In the context of a changing economy, there will be a need to assist the transition process. New businesses in growing industries will need to be established and existing businesses assisted in diversifying into new products and technologies. This will require re-skilling amongst some existing employees and a more general raising of skills levels amongst the local workforce to reflect the growing demands of employers and the need to raise productivity.

Population Growth

Accommodating high levels of population growth – South Derbyshire has had one of the fastest growing populations in the country over the last decade; This will continue, with extensive areas of new housing planned. The challenge will be to facilitate the provision of many more jobs, and a range of employment opportunities that are accessible locally to a rapidly growing workforce. This will avoid worklessness or higher levels of commuting and associated congestion.

The population of the District grew by some 13,000 between 2001-2011 (+15.9%, England +7.9%) making South Derbyshire the fifth fastest growing area outside the South East. Following the Census in 2011 the population is estimated to have grown by a further 1,000 per annum between 2011-15 to reach 99,300 (Nomis, 2016).

In the coming years South Derbyshire will accommodate not only its own growth but much of that of the City of Derby. Over the period 2011-2028 the adopted South Derbyshire Local Plan (Part One) will see at least 12,618 dwellings constructed in the District, focused on Swadlincote/ Drakelow and the fringes of Derby City.

The outlook suggests that by 2030 the District's population will reach over 110,000 - driven primarily by migration. Some new residents will already have employment whilst other will be seeking opportunities in a fast growing area. Clearly this raises concerns about changing commuting patterns and increased usage of private vehicles in an area that already has a high number of car users and limited public transport services or sustainable travel options.

In order to meet job demands locally there will be a need for employment growth within existing businesses, together with the attraction of new inward investment and reinvestment by existing foreign direct investors. This will require the availability of attractive premises and employment sites that can compete with other localities.

There will also be a need to pursue a greater range of employment opportunities, such as a growth in the 'knowledge economy' (managerial and professional roles), which would also help to create a stronger, more diversified local economy. Some communities may need assistance in terms of, for example improving skills and travel options, to ensure that the benefits of job creation are felt locally - with good road links businesses in the District can access a large workforce catchment extending into neighbouring areas.

The National Forest

Maximising the potential of The National Forest – South Derbyshire is at the heart of The National Forest, a unique national initiative to create a new forest in one of the least wooded areas of the country. Millions of trees are being planted, creating an attractive environment and quality of life. The challenge will be to use the Forest as a basis to grow new enterprises (or diversify existing businesses) in sectors such as tourism, forestry and low carbon, particularly where they will support businesses in the countryside. This will avoid a decline in jobs and services in rural areas.

The National Forest is the key economic development initiative impacting upon South Derbyshire and one of the country's most ambitious environmental projects. It is transforming 500 square kilometres of the Midlands including parts of Derbyshire, Leicestershire and Staffordshire. The area encompasses a variety of landscapes including the ancient forests of Needwood and Charnwood and parts of the industrialised Midlands Coalfield and Trent Valley. The aim of the National Forest Company is to create a mosaic of land uses and activities, framed by 33% woodland cover, that will enhance the environment and economy of the area and improve the quality of life for residents.

The Forest area encompasses about half of South Derbyshire District but the impact is felt throughout. The Forest is also a driver for physical change in the southern part of the District and the former South Derbyshire Coalfield. The Forest has helped to address the physical legacy of past industries - reclaiming land, creating an attractive environment and changing perceptions of the area. To date woodland cover has increased from 6% to 20% of the area, and visitor facilities, both new and improved, and public access to the countryside has grown rapidly.

The Forest is creating opportunities for the growth and development of small and medium-sized businesses, facilitating farm diversification and supporting new sources of income and employment in rural areas. As the Forest develops, the potential for new business and employment creation will be felt most directly in the visitor and woodland economies. Opportunities in the woodland economy range from nurseries, timber production and forestry contracting through to the processing of wood products and the use of wood fuel for heat and power generation. Meanwhile

tourism and leisure opportunities are developing far quicker than anticipated, including attractions, overnight accommodation (of all types), heritage and wildlife sites, events and festivals, and food and drink outlets, together with the benefits for the sustainability of rural services and vitality of town centres arising from visitor usage.

There are opportunities to exploit the economic development potential of the Forest further, for instance, as a catalyst for the development of new businesses in environmental technologies or to use the increasing attractiveness and awareness of the Forest as an attractor for inward investment.

Economic Development Challenges

South Derbyshire will also share some economic development challenges common to many areas, including: Changing shopping habits will continue to impact upon town centre vitality; Persistent pockets of deprivation and small numbers not currently engaged in the labour market; Shortcomings in connectivity in both urban and rural areas; and, Raising aspirations and work-readiness amongst some young people.

Deprivation levels in the District have fallen in recent years according to the Indices of Deprivation. However District-level indicators mask some persistent issues that have been hidden by a more wealthy and skilled incoming population, often commuting to work outside of South Derbyshire. Some long-standing areas and groups remain disadvantaged but are now less visible, with pockets of deprivation persisting in both urban and rural areas of the District. Unemployment is low but there are significant numbers of residents with a disability or illness (or acting as a carer) preventing them from seeking paid employment, though levels are notably below the national average.

The Indices of Deprivation reveals that within the Swadlincote urban area, there are several neighbourhoods experiencing significant levels of deprivation relating to employment, education & skills, and low incomes affecting children. In some cases, deprivation levels in these areas have relatively worsened in recent years. A number of rural parts of the District have significant levels of deprivation in terms of barriers to housing & services. This reflects typically higher house prices and greater distances to services such as shops, schools and GP surgeries.



Way Forward

The way forward will be to build on South Derbyshire's assets and strengths whilst addressing its weaknesses and future challenges. These may be grouped in terms of business, skills and infrastructure.

Business

In order to cater for a growing population, redress high levels of out-commuting and replace employment that is being lost in declining sectors, the District will need to attract inward investment (and reinvestment by existing investors). South Derbyshire has a successful track record as a destination for relocating businesses to build upon. This will also help to diversify the local economy and add to its robustness.

South Derbyshire has a range of advantages including its central location, road and rail links, land availability and proximity to airports. There is scope to develop this further through the promotion of The National Forest brand and 'lifestyle' as a unique selling point and means of attracting more businesses that can offer higher skilled employment in the knowledge economy. There is also scope to actively target growth sectors, to attract supply chain companies connected with existing major businesses and to pursue tourism development, associated with East Midlands Airport and The National Forest.

A number of key business sectors have been identified in South Derbyshire based upon their current importance and/or future potential – Transport equipment manufacturing, Construction, Food & drink, the Visitor economy and Transport & logistics. In each instance the area boasts a particular competitive advantage.

Transport equipment manufacturers are able to build on the presence of an extensive base of workforce skills and supply chain businesses. Construction companies benefit from immediate access to raw materials, building product manufacturers and a Construction Academy training future employees. Food & drink operators profit from the District's numerous agricultural businesses and proximity to the brewing industry in Burton upon Trent with its associated processing expertise. Visitor economy enterprises are supported by the rapid development of The National Forest as a major tourist destination with a joint marketing campaign. Transport & logistics operators are drawn by the District's central location in the country, with lower operating costs and business parks adjacent to the national road network and close to East Midlands Airport.

The South Derbyshire key sectors relate closely to the Local Enterprise Partnership's priority sectors and may be promoted as drivers of the local economy and the basis for the creation of support structures and development of supply chains. Sectors operate at different scales ranging from a grouping of tourism operators across The National Forest through to transport equipment manufacturers collaborating across the Midlands.

South Derbyshire's local economy is undergoing transition, with general trading conditions becoming increasingly uncertain, dynamic and competitive. This gives rise to a need to support modernisation, diversification and growth amongst indigenous businesses and explore means of supporting the formation of new businesses. Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) will continue to fulfil a vital role in the local economy and in future job creation. Meanwhile, supporting

their efforts to increase productivity will enhance the competitiveness of companies' products and services in domestic and international markets.

Small business survival and growth is based upon sustaining competitive advantage. This can be assisted through the sharing of ideas and good practice and pursuit of innovation. An innovation may just be new to the business concerned or be a totally new product, process or service. Innovation and the sharing of good practice can be encouraged through, for example, the provision of business advice, exploitation of ICT, development of businesses/management skills, access to specialist advice and the establishment of links with Higher Education institutions and centres of excellence.

Small businesses may lack the time or the in-house expertise to take advantage of opportunities or address challenges. Business support services can provide expert advice and signpost specialist assistance on subjects ranging from innovation and exporting to financial assistance and resource efficiency. Businesses also benefit from a fair and consistent approach to business regulation, for example, in health & safety.

Business continuity is of increasing importance for enterprises of all sizes, with climate change issues and impacts a growing concern. The UK's climate change risk assessment highlights a number of issues specific to the East Midlands including: Increases in the frequency of flooding, affecting the operation of businesses and critical infrastructure; Summer overheating potentially contributing to heat-related health problems; and, Reductions in water availability, particularly during the Summer, leading to more frequent water use restrictions. Businesses will also need to adapt to national policy making aiming to reduce carbon dioxide emissions and promote low carbon and renewable energy options.

Promotion of healthy and sustainable workplaces will become increasingly important with an ageing workforce. A healthy workplace can reduce accidents, sickness absence, staff turnover and costs whilst enhancing productivity and reputation, aiding recruitment. Improving workforce health and wellbeing can deliver significant benefits to the economy as a whole and particularly to small businesses where productivity is critical to survival.

The District has a key role to play in contributing to the realisation of the vision for The National Forest, as described in The National Forest Strategy 2014-2024, thereby maximising the benefits for the whole of South Derbyshire. The Forest provides a unique opportunity to support the development of new and diversification of existing rural enterprises, in a range of businesses from visitor accommodation to food & drink outlets, and from forestry contracting to wood fuel.

The National Forest can be a catalyst for a new nationally-recognised visitor destination if the growth in visitor spend can be maintained. The key will be to increase overnight stays and support the growth of the smaller visitor businesses that predominate in the sector. Meanwhile, East Midlands Airport offers great potential for in-bound and business tourism.

Skills

With a changing economy both locally and nationally, higher levels of workforce skills are expected to be fundamental to future economic prosperity, productivity and growth. Action is required to promote a culture of lifelong learning amongst individuals and a commitment to workforce development amongst employers. Central to this will be the development of vocational skills

amongst both young people, for example through apprenticeships, and amongst adults in terms of up-skilling and retraining where skills have become out-dated. Training provision should be aligned with current skills shortages and the future needs of industries that are growing locally.

South Derbyshire's resident population has slightly above average levels of higher occupations but slightly below average higher qualifications. There are several neighbourhoods in the Swadlincote urban area that are amongst the 10% most deprived nationally in terms of education, skills and training.

Whilst levels of economic activity are high in South Derbyshire, exclusion from the workforce may arise from a combination of barriers, such as low levels of literacy or numeracy, poor health, or limited access to transport or childcare. Some three quarters of working-age benefit claimants in the District have an illness or disability, or are caring for someone with those conditions - though levels are below national averages.

The aim is to establish pathways back into employment. For those closer to the labour market this may be assistance with CV/interview preparation, confidence building or work experience. For others more intensive assistance is required that can provide a stepping stone into unsupported employment, through for example, the provision of training in community venues, the promotion of volunteering, and supported work within social enterprises. Increasingly basic literacy, numeracy and IT skills will be an essential requirement for even low paid employment.

Accessibility to both training and employment opportunities is a key issue in a semi-rural District. Resident's dependence on access to a private vehicle for travel to work is much higher than the national average. Public transport routes and services are limited, whilst businesses often prefer sites close to the main road network which are typically away from centres of population. Further, many companies operate shift patterns and weekend working that require travel outside of peak hours.

Accessibility issues encompass the needs of residents, workers, businesses and visitors and demand a range of improvements. Enhancing links between centres of population and employment growth would ensure that local residents benefited from inward investment attracted to the District. However, in many cases new public transport services are unlikely to be commercially viable, at least in the short term, and will require public or private subsidy.

The prospects of the District's young people have been a major concern in recent years, with a number of the area's secondary schools experiencing challenging times. From an economic development perspective, the key issues concern careers advice and work readiness.

At times, there is an apparent mismatch between the career choices and course selections of young people and the qualified employees sought by local businesses. This can result in disillusionment amongst young people and the frustration of persistent skills shortages for employers. The aim is to equip young people with the skills and resources to realise their potential, matching their aspirations with knowledge of the local economy and growing sectors. Traditional attitudes to training and employment amongst pupils or parents may no longer reflect local economic circumstances. Encouraging a cultural change that raises expectations where necessary and links these to the area's future employment opportunities will enhance the long term prospects of young people.

Employers frequently cite a lack of work readiness or employability skills amongst school leavers, leading to a reluctance to take on and train young people. This can encompass reliability and motivation, literacy and numeracy, as well as initiative and team working. These can be addressed by informing expectations and enhancing understanding of the workplace through for example company visits, industry projects with employers and work experience placements. Promoting entrepreneurship can be a valuable approach, encouraging an awareness of business skills and multi-disciplinary teams and roles, together with associated career options, that will be valuable regardless of whether pupils subsequently decide to become self-employed.

Infrastructure

New employment land will be required to provide for a growing workforce and changing business demands. The District will need to ensure that it can offer a range of sites and premises to businesses, from high quality office parks through to small industrial starter units, in both urban and rural areas, together with the associated infrastructure.

Larger inward investors are attracted to the business parks along the A38 and A50 corridors, whilst the industrial estates in the urban areas often appeal to a more local relocation demand with employers keen to retain their skilled workforce. It will be crucial that both of these needs continue to be met through an adequate supply of available employment land. The local economy is changing and new business sectors will have different land use demands to those of the past. Further there will be a need to provide for both heavy industries and high quality office-based uses that may not be compatible.

New and existing business locations require good infrastructure provision, from road and rail, to utilities and broadband. Pursuing the co-ordinated provision of infrastructure will be a key factor in the attraction of inward investment. Whilst South Derbyshire is well connected to the national road network, links to Swadlincote itself are congested and infrastructure investment is required to open up brownfield land for new employment uses in a number of locations. In the north of the District growth is associated with the future expansion of Derby, including extensive new residential and employment land. In the south the development of The National Forest is radically changing the appearance and perceptions of the area, and attracting new housing and businesses.

Public intervention may be required if market failure is to be overcome with respect to some specific sites (eg for land reclamation or access improvements) and types of premises (eg smaller units) and to improve the appearance of the area. The development of some forms of provision such as managed workspace or enterprise centres are rarely viable as purely commercial projects. Meanwhile, appropriate smaller scale commercial development in rural areas can facilitate local employment creation.

A number of major infrastructure schemes are proposed including: a new River Trent crossing and bypass of the village of Walton-on-Trent opening up the former power station site at Drakelow for mixed uses; the Swadlincote-Woodville Regeneration Route, mitigating congestion at the 'Clock Island', creating a new arterial route and opening up adjacent development land in the Woodville Regeneration Area; and, the South Derby Integrated Transport Link opening up the Infinity Park Extension employment land and a number of housing sites to the south of the city. In addition, there are numerous smaller and pinchpoint schemes that would improve the local highway network.

Transport will undoubtedly be a key issue with increasing traffic volumes on the District's roads. There will be a need to improve public and sustainable transport systems/services and promote

their usage, and to encourage movement of freight by rail or waterway wherever possible. Movement of goods is predominantly by road despite the fact that the District is well-served by rail infrastructure that could be adapted or upgraded to enable improved freight services.

Infrastructure improvements would help to reduce congestion and business constraints. They could also promote greater cycling, walking and car sharing for both commuting and leisure trips. Similarly, visitors to The National Forest would benefit from recreational walking and cycling opportunities, enhanced bus services to attractions, or the greater usage of rail links such as The National Forest Line (formerly 'Ivanhoe Line').

Connectivity is vital to modern business activity and with local improvements the District could maximise the potential of existing strengths such as its national road links and proximity to airports. Equally important are communication links and in particular mobile telephone and superfast broadband coverage. High broadband speeds are vital to businesses of all types and whilst improvements are being made through initiatives such as Digital Derbyshire, there is a need to pursue further enhancements.

South Derbyshire boasts a range of physical assets which can contribute to its future economic development, not least the attractive countryside based upon the valleys of the Rivers Trent and Dove. This is being complemented by The National Forest and its potential as a catalyst for a range of wood-related and tourism businesses. These new industries have the potential to redress the decline of employment in predominantly rural sectors such as agriculture, mining and power generation. Usage by visitors can also enhance the viability of rural services, such as Post Offices. As the Forest develops there will be increasing scope for new initiatives, for example in alternative sources of power generation, creative industries and sustainable construction.

The District also has numerous heritage assets such as Catton Hall, many relating to the area's past industries and offering scope for further tourism development, such as the Trent & Mersey Canal, Shardlow Inland Port and potentially the reinstatement of the Derby & Sandiacre Canal. Particular emphasis is placed on maximising the heritage potential of South Derbyshire's towns and rural centres.

Melbourne has a thriving Georgian centre with a range of independent retail and food & drink outlets that offer great potential for the attraction of additional visitors. The surrounding countryside is particularly attractive with the reservoirs at Foremark and Staunton Harold and a cluster of visitor accommodation and attractions including Calke Abbey and Melbourne Hall.

The appearance and vitality of town centres is fundamental to perceptions of the District and to the creation of a focus for community life. Swadlincote town centre is overshadowed by larger centres in close proximity. However, a number of significant investments in retail and leisure provision in recent years, ongoing improvements to heritage buildings, together with a rapidly growing and more prosperous local population and visitors drawn to The National Forest, offer potential for further improvement that will meet the needs and desires of the local community.

The Swadlincote Town Centre Vision was updated in 2012 and together with the public realm masterplan provides the basis for the collaboration of public and private sectors in the pursuit of an enhanced town centre. There is scope for significant retail, leisure, office and residential provision with substantial sites available within and adjacent to the town centre. Similarly, there is potential to recapture spending – in retail, leisure and food & drink – that is currently 'leaking' to neighbouring centres, through support for the town centre and its businesses.

Vision, Objectives and Ambitions

The Strategy's vision for economic development in South Derbyshire is as follows:

A more prosperous, better connected, increasingly resilient and competitive economy will make South Derbyshire a better place to live, work and visit at the heart of The National Forest.

The Economic Development Strategy will aim to address the identified challenges and opportunities through the following Objectives and Ambitions.

BUSINESS		Business support, access to finance & innovation
1.		To attract new inward investment , plus reinvestment by existing businesses
2.		To provide business support , advice and signposting including to financial, exporting, innovation and other assistance
3.		To promote the development of the area's key sectors , such as manufacturing and tourism
SKILLS		Recruitment, employment & skills
4.		To work with businesses to meet their workforce needs , raising skills levels and productivity
5.		To address employability barriers, such as work-readiness, and the accessibility of work and training
6.		To equip young people with the skills and resources to realise their potential, promoting entrepreneurship and matching their aspirations with knowledge of the local economy
INFRASTRUCTURE		Infrastructure for economic growth
7.		To provide a range of employment sites and premises, and pursue associated infrastructure improvements
8.		To seek improvements to access and connectivity – both transport links, sustainable transport modes and services, and superfast broadband and mobile telephone coverage
9.		To support vibrant town centres as commercial, community and service centres

The actions of the Economic Development Strategy are expressed as Ambitions. This reflects the fact that the majority are dependent upon the joint commitment of the public, private and voluntary/community organisations operating in South Derbyshire. In some instances, they will also be dependent on securing external funding.

BUSINESS Ambitions:	Indicative Actions	Key Partners Include
To attract new inward investment , plus reinvestment by existing businesses	Undertake investor marketing to raise the profile of South Derbyshire as a location for business, promoting available commercial land and buildings (eg vacant property bulletins, investor prospectus, attendance at trade shows, site guides)	DEP, Property Owners, Developers
	Operate an investor support service to assist potential investors, including maintaining an online commercial property database to promote vacant properties to expanding indigenous businesses and new businesses looking to relocate	DEP, Property Owners, Developers
	Work with partner agencies to attract foreign direct investors to the area and provide aftercare to investors once they have arrived	DEP, UKTI, Property Owners, Developers
To provide business support , advice and signposting to financial, exporting, innovation and other assistance	Provide an impartial business advice service that is free for businesses to access, assisting those thinking of starting a business through to established companies (eg one-to-one advice, workshops, peer-to-peer learning)	SDBAS Contractor, Business Assocs, D2N2 LEP
	Pursue better business regulation , ensuring a fair and consistent approach that is easier to access and understand (eg planning, health & safety, licencing, business rates) and promote good practice (eg resource efficiency, business continuity, flood prevention, climate change preparation, sustainable travel, workforce health)	D2N2, DCC, Business Assocs
	Proactively support financial measures that will assist smaller businesses (eg prompt payment of invoices, offering business rate relief, promoting local procurement, providing empty property relief)	Business Assocs
To promote the development of key sectors , such as manufacturing and tourism	Stage business events to raise awareness of assistance, and encourage networking and sector development	SDBAS Contractor, DEP, Business Assocs, D2N2 LEP
	Jointly undertake visitor destination marketing for The National Forest and beyond with partners to increase awareness of what South Derbyshire has to offer	Sharpe's Pottery Museum, NF&B, MPDD, Businesses
	Operate an accredited Tourist Information Centre in Swadlincote, supporting visitor businesses and providing information about events, attractions, accommodation and travel to tourists, businesses and residents (eg What's On Guide, venue guide, corporate guide)	Sharpe's Pottery Museum
	Encourage the staging of public events and markets that will attract visitors and raise the profile of the area, in particular town centres (eg Swadlincote Markets, The National Forest Walking Festival)	Market Contractor, NFC, Business Assocs

KEY: D2N2 LEP – Derby, Derbyshire, Nottingham & Nottinghamshire Local Enterprise Partnership; DCC – Derbyshire County Council; DEP – Derbyshire Economic Partnership; MPDD – Marketing Peak District & Derbyshire; NF&B – National Forest & Beyond Partnership; NFC – National Forest Company; SDBAS – South Derbyshire Business Advice Service; UKTI – United Kingdom Trade & Investment

SKILLS Ambitions:	Indicative Actions	Key Partners Include
To work with businesses to meet their workforce needs , raising skills levels and productivity	Encourage employers to invest in workforce training and development and take-up available assistance (eg apprenticeships, ESIF-funded programmes)	Businesses, Training Providers, SFA
	Encourage developers of major housing sites to contribute to the development of the construction sector and skills locally	Developers, Training Providers, DWP, CITB
To address employability barriers, such as work-readiness, and the accessibility of work and training	Support community-based employability projects providing assistance to those seeking to enter or return to the labour market (eg volunteering, confidence building, CV writing, interview skills)	Voluntary & Community Organisations, DWP
	Promote connections between growing sectors and new inward investments, and unemployed individuals and deprived communities (eg Sector Based Work Academies)	DWP, Training Providers
	Pursue travel to work initiatives that improve access to training and employment, particularly for those without a car (eg car share and cycle hire schemes, out of hours public transport services, cycle and walking routes)	Businesses, EMEG, DCC, Developers, Public Transport Operators
To equip young people with the skills and resources to realise their potential, promoting entrepreneurship and matching their aspirations with knowledge of the local economy	Improve jobseeker's, parent's and young people's knowledge of the local economy and local employers, together with awareness of training and job opportunities in the area (eg jobs & careers fairs, guide to careers in the local economy)	Businesses, Schools, Training Providers
	Promote entrepreneurship through enterprise activities with local schools, improving team working and business skills, and raising awareness of self-employment as a career option (eg competitions)	SDBAS Contractor, D2N2 LEP, Schools, Market Contractor, Businesses
	Work with schools and businesses to raise aspirations, enhance employability skills and improve independent careers advice (eg improving access to work experience and developing interview skills)	D2N2 LEP, SFA, Schools, DCC, Businesses, D2 ESB

KEY: CITB – Construction Industry Training Board; D2 ESB – Derby & Derbyshire Employment & Skills Board; DWP – Department of Work & Pensions; EMEG – East Midlands Enterprise Gateway; ESIF – European Structural & Investment Funds; SFA – Skills Funding Agency

INFRASTRUCTURE Ambitions	Indicative Actions	Key Partners Include
To provide a range of employment sites and premises, and pursue associated infrastructure improvements	Ensure a supply of available employment land for all sizes and types of businesses, including appropriate sites in rural areas, and resist the loss of existing sites to other uses	Landowners, Derby HMA
	Pursue key infrastructure schemes with developers, funding and highways bodies to unlock sites, improve networks and reduce congestion (eg River Trent crossing/Walton by-pass, Swadlincote-Woodville Regeneration Route, South Derby Integrated Transport Link)	D2N2 LEP, DCC, Derby City, Highways Agency, Developers
	Maximise the economic development potential of publicly-owned property and explore opportunities to address unmet needs (eg small business units, enterprise centre, meeting space)	Public Bodies, Developers, Universities
	Maximise National Forest tree planting contributions as part of planning permissions for new developments	Developers, NFC
	Protect the area's natural and historical assets and continue to develop the tourism product (eg Rosliston Forestry Centre, Elvaston Castle, Sharpe's Pottery Museum, visitor trails)	NFC, HLF, FC, Sharpe's Pottery Museum, C&RT
To seek improvements to access and connectivity – both transport links, sustainable transport modes and services, and superfast broadband and mobile telephone coverage	Ensure new developments have good utility provision including superfast broadband and mobile telephone coverage, and seek improvements to existing poorly-served areas	Digital Derbyshire, Utility Providers, Developers
	Pursue the development of transport links and services between settlements and employment sites, service centres and visitor attractions for residents, commuters and visitors (eg cycleways, footpaths, cycle racks, changing facilities)	DCC, Developers, Businesses
To support vibrant town centres as commercial, community and service centres	Work with businesses to improve the vitality , profile and perceptions of the town centres (eg Shopping Guide, Wedding Fair)	Bus Assocs, Businesses, Swadlincote TIC
	Communicate to, and work with, the Community Safety Partnership to address any developing crime and disorder issues in the town centres (eg business security)	Bus Assocs, SSDP, Police
	Maintain high standards of street cleansing, landscape maintenance and accessibility, and offer free parking in town centres	Property Owners, Businesses
	Pursue building maintenance, signage, landscaping and public realm improvements in town centres, including frontage grant schemes (eg Swadlincote Townscape)	HLF, DCC, NFC, Property Owners

KEY: C&RT – Canal & River Trust; FC – Forestry Commission; HLF – Heritage Lottery Fund; HMA – Housing Market Area; SSDP – Safer South Derbyshire Partnership; TIC – Tourist Information Centre

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