

KNOWSLEY

Our plan for accelerating economic growth 2025–2030



Foreword

Over the last ten years, Knowsley has seen exceptional business growth. Our unapologetically ambitious vision for Knowsley has brought together businesses, community organisations and residents with the common aim of driving growth. We did so, exceeding many of the targets we set for ourselves, delivering more affordable homes and good jobs for residents.

In the most challenging of circumstances, we can be proud of all we have done through our last Economic Growth Plan. We know though, that there is more that we can achieve.

This plan sets out how we will build on that growth, making sure that everyone benefits.

To meet the opportunities of the future, we need to make the most of our best asset- our people. Through our learning and skills offer, we are raising aspirations and work readiness, so that businesses can find the skills they need to grow. To sustain our success, we are prioritising education and training, including supporting people in Knowsley to access high-quality, high-paid jobs and to progress in work.

Together, I am confident we can make Knowsley an even more thriving, inclusive economy with opportunities for people and businesses.



Cllr Tony Brennan,
Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Economic Development

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1. OUR VISION

BY 2030, KNOWSLEY WILL BE AN EVEN MORE THRIVING, INCLUSIVE ECONOMY, WITH OPPORTUNITIES FOR PEOPLE AND BUSINESSES.

Knowsley has achieved much in the ten years since our last growth plan. Our exceptional growth has been achieved in particularly challenging economic and political conditions, not least with funding from central government reduced by over £100m since 2010. In response, the Council, Knowsley Chamber of Commerce and businesses have worked together to create an offer that has attracted more than £1bn in private investment and delivered positive results for residents. This way of working has been successful, creating the right conditions for growth. We will continue on this path, giving us the best way to take advantage of the opportunities ahead, including the transition to Net Zero.

This plan builds on the ambitious growth agenda set out in Knowsley's previous economic growth plan, which exceeded many of the targets we set for ourselves, in very difficult circumstances.

Having just celebrated the 50th anniversary of Knowsley as a borough and place, we are setting out a collective vision and ambition for Knowsley's economy over the next five years, closely aligned with the ambitions set out in Knowsley's 2030 strategy. We have worked with partners to ensure that our vision of a local economy – one that allows businesses and social organisations to thrive and create social value in our communities – is shared.

The Plan also sets out how we will build on our offer to young people, with their success key to Knowsley's future prosperity. This means the private, public, community and voluntary sectors working together to achieve common aims, as well as working collaboratively with wider stakeholders outside of Knowsley, including neighbouring local authorities, the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority and national Government. Together, we can continue our work to make Knowsley a great place to live, work, invest and visit. This plan sets out Knowsley's offer, delivered alongside our partners and epitomises the principles of Knowsley Better Together.



2. THE JOURNEY SO FAR

Our journey over the last 10 years shows the benefits of the collective approach we have taken, far exceeding the goals we set for ourselves. This has resulted in year-on-year growth.

A northern English town lauds the ‘Shakespeare effect’

A new theatre opening in July is already attracting businesses to Prescot on Merseyside



11,000

jobs created

B B C

Dame Judi Dench hails Merseyside’s new Shakespeare theatre

7%

growth in jobs in innovation Sectors

4.6 million sq ft

of floor space developed

6,000

homes built

25% are affordable housing



Amazon confirms move into massive new Knowsley warehouse

Amazon’s move into Knowsley has been described as “another outstanding success story” by the local council

£36.6 million

grant funding

provided to local businesses during Covid-19

St Helens Star

Knowsley among UK’s top rising areas for first-time buyers

21ST SEPTEMBER 2024 PROPERTY



Over £1bn

in Private sector investment



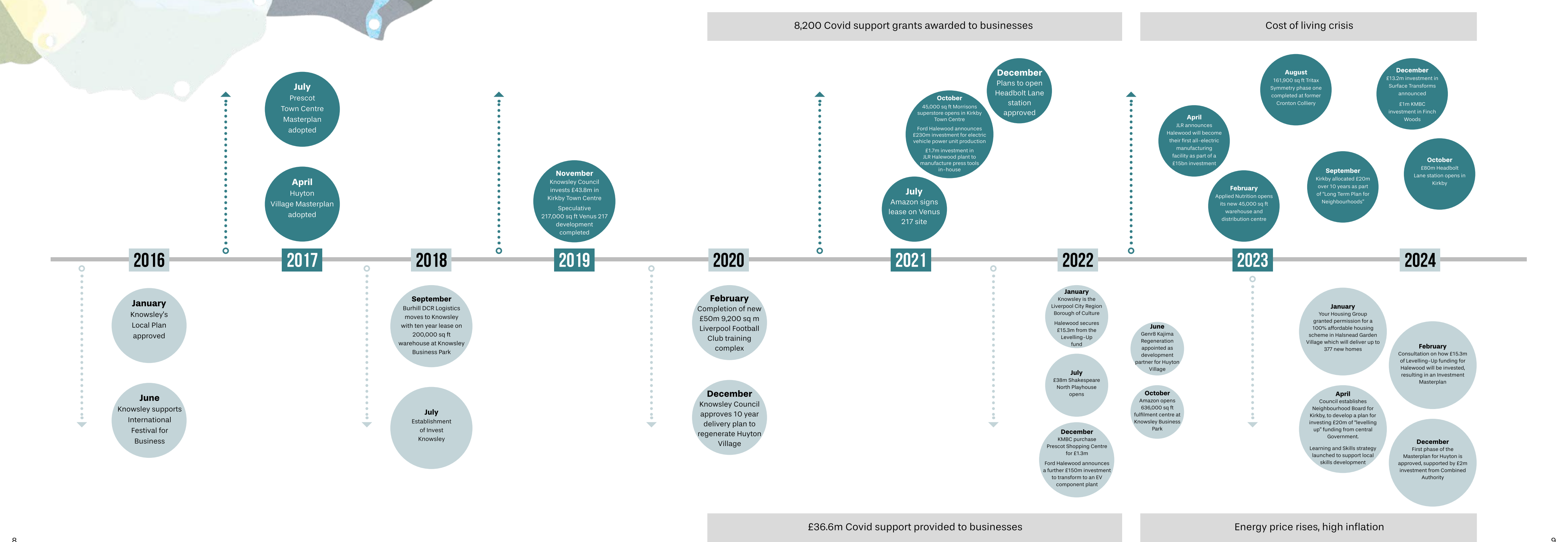
How a UK council is driving a retail revival in a deprived northern town



7%

increase in town centre GVA



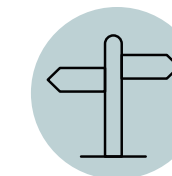


3. WHAT MAKES KNOWSLEY A GOOD PLACE TO DO BUSINESS



Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per head up by **20%** between 2015 and 2022

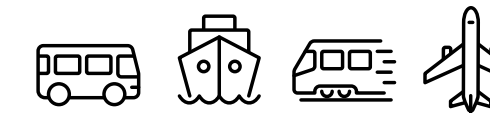
Gross Value Added (GVA) grew by **25%** between 2015 and 2025, adding **£64m** to the local economy



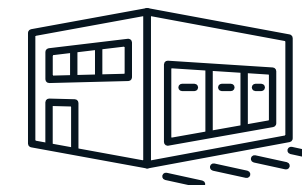
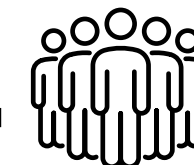
IDEALLY LOCATED
15 minutes from Liverpool

30 minutes from Manchester

Situated between **2** international airports

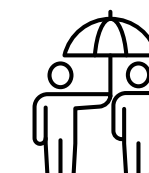


Population has grown by **8%** since 2016 and is still growing

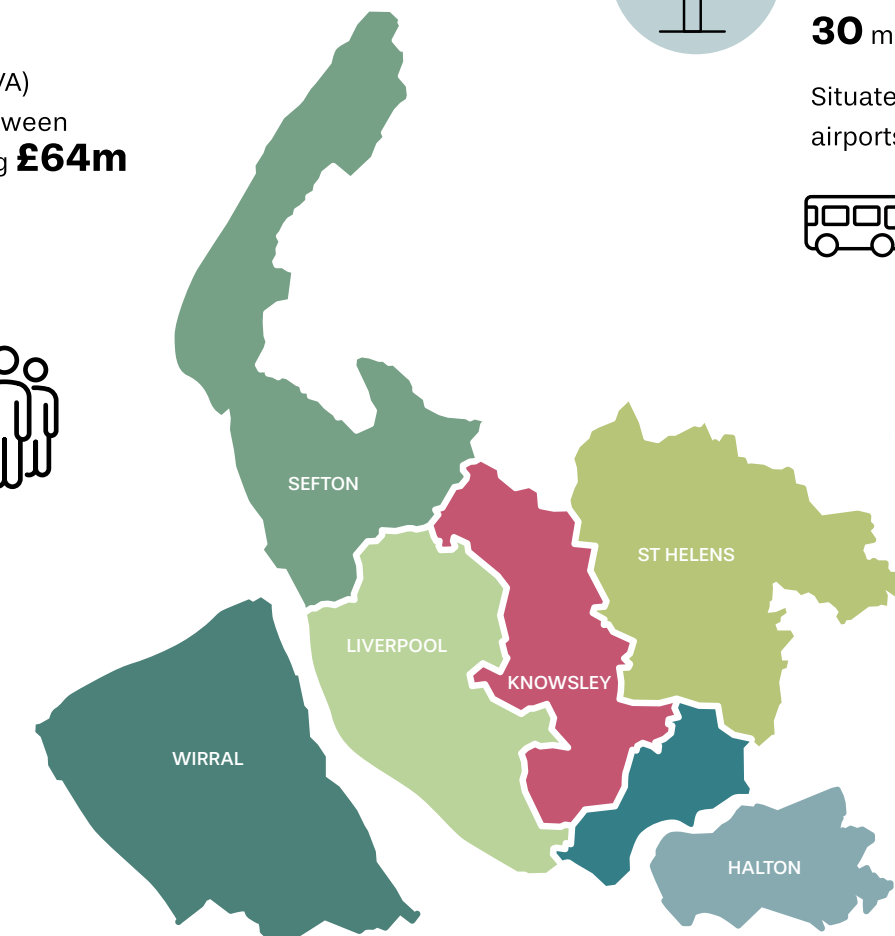


BUSINESS PARKS

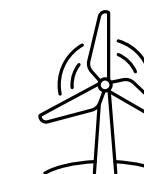
6 business parks employing 30,000 people, including Knowsley Business Park, the second largest in the North West



WORKING WITH THE VCFSE SECTOR
£52.1m contribution to Knowsley's GVA per year



12 universities – and thousands of graduates – within 60 minutes



WORKING WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR

Private investment of more than **£1bn** over the last ten years, with significant investment from the Council

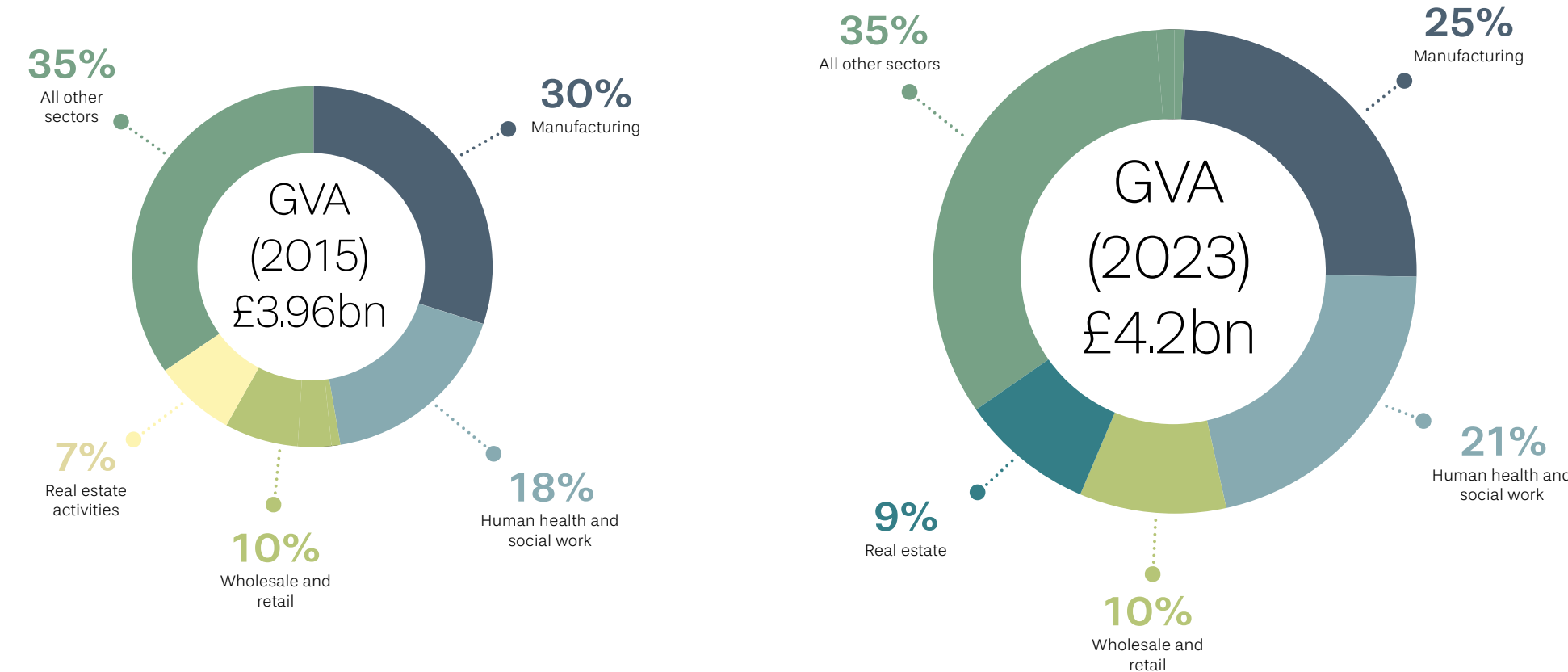
£214m

Annual GVA from Knowsley Business Park



KEY SECTORS

Historically, Knowsley's strengths have been in manufacturing, freight and logistics. This continues to be the case, with the local economy adding 250 new construction businesses and 140 new transportation and storage businesses since 2015. Alongside this there has been increasing diversification, with our Gross Value Added (GVA) growing in new sectors.



MANUFACTURING

Our businesses are a vital part of the £4.3bn advanced manufacturing sector of the Liverpool City Region, with 6,900 people employed locally. This is a 28% increase since 2009. It is anticipated that advanced manufacturing will continue to go from strength to strength over the next 10 years, as businesses invest in low-carbon, sustainable manufacturing. This has already been the case with businesses large and small. One example is Ford's £355m investment to convert their Halewood plant to electric vehicle power unit production has been accompanied by £1m of community investment in the borough through their charitable arm, Ford Philanthropy.

Delivering social value: Supporting the vital work that local community organisations do, Ford Philanthropy has been working with multiple organisations across Knowsley, adding social value that meets local need.

Since 2023, Ford Philanthropy have invested more than £1m in organisations such as Torrington Drive Community Association (TDCA) and other Knowsley organisations, with a further £160,000 invested in 2025.

Working with volunteers and organisations who know their communities best, this funding has already resulted in improvements to community assets, such as renovating the New Hutte Neighbourhood Centre, from where TDCA provides a wide range of support to residents. Site now provides an on-site café, a social supermarket and a mobile food service.

Investment has also been used to build stronger links between young people, their local community organisations and businesses. Initiatives such as the Steps to Work programme, that support young adults with barriers to employment will also benefit from the community investment. Liverpool Life Sciences UTC and the Studio School will use this funding to further develop a set of tools aimed at helping young people become 'work ready'. This will help them develop skills that are not traditionally taught as part of the national curriculum but that nevertheless are valued by employers. Pilot projects will cover lean manufacturing, data science, mobility, and transportation.

This will support vital community organisations such as Centre 63, Evolving Mindset CIC and Vee's Place amongst others, helping them provide community-based services.

FREIGHT AND LOGISTICS

Knowsley's strategic location continues to make us attractive to freight and logistics businesses, with a number of businesses moving into, or expanding in, the borough. Logistics businesses based in Knowsley can also access the benefits of the Liverpool City Region Freeport, meaning Freeport goods can be imported, manufactured and re-exported without being subject to customs checks, paperwork or tariffs. Some Knowsley businesses have already been approved as Freeport customs sites, and through our "one front door" business support model, we can help more business to access this competitive advantage.

We continue to work with our partners to prioritise investment in Knowsley's vital transport links, via both road and public transport routes. This has included working with the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority to deliver the new £80m Headbolt Lane Station in Kirkby, improving access to the wider City Region for 20,000 residents as well as transport links to Knowsley Business Park. These investments in our future will support Knowsley residents and businesses as we move towards Net Zero.

Recent growth for logistics companies in Knowsley has seen the Cronton Colliery site re-developed as a key logistics site as part of Halsnead Garden Village. In 2024, Yodel moved into a 161,900 sq. ft facility on Symmetry Park Merseyside, with a further 495,720 sq. ft under development by Tritax Big Box across two warehouses in 2025.

Supporting aspiration: Through its Community Benefit Fund, developer Tritax Big Box is supporting Shakespeare North Playhouse to deliver its School Partnership Programme, helping children from disadvantaged families to access the theatre and its events. Tritax established the fund to support community projects in areas where they are developing warehouses. With planning permission for up to 1 million sq ft, the Community Benefit Fund provides a donation equivalent to 10p per sq ft of developed floorspace for local communities.

With the support of Tritax, Shakespeare North Playhouse aim to engage with 35,000 children and their families in Knowsley and the wider area. Tritax, alongside Huyton Asphalt, have also supported Knowsley Council to celebrate the work of prominent Hillsborough campaigner Margaret Aspinall. Knowsley resident Margaret was awarded Knowsley's highest honour, Freedom of the Borough, in recognition of her work to change legislation in memory of her son, James.



HOUSING

Over the last ten years, we have worked with partners to deliver over and above the housing targets set by national government as the Council has focussed on delivering growth and meeting acute local housing needs. There have already been more than 6,000 new high-quality homes built across the borough, with another 3,000 either in development or due to be built before 2028. This achievement has resulted in Knowsley becoming a first-time buyer hotspot, with more than 71% of mortgages going to new homeowners. Over the next ten years, we will help more people access the kind of housing they want, in the places that they want, by diversifying the types of housing that is available, with for example more 1 and 2 bed properties. People's needs change throughout their lives, and Knowsley needs housing that will be suitable for them throughout their lives.

We also want more people to be able to afford to buy their own homes. Over the last 5 years, 1,311 affordable homes have been delivered in Knowsley, with nearly 500 affordable homes set to be delivered between 2025 and 2027. The Council will work with our Registered Provider partners to maximise opportunities to deliver more affordable housing utilising the Government's Affordable Housing Programme as well as delivering through Knowsley's Affordable Housing Access Fund. This is funded through contributions from developers, known as section 106 contributions. These are organised contributions from developers to mitigate impacts and to support improvements to local infrastructure.



The Affordable Housing Access Fund is one way that we pool together those individual contributions to deliver greater and more targeted improvements for residents in the most appropriate locations and often catalysing wider regeneration ambitions.

It is vital that new developments have a positive impact on communities, and we require developers to have a social value strategy- setting out how the local community will benefit from their development. Our social value delivery partner works with developers to identify opportunities that meet local need. As well as supporting infrastructure around new developments- such as additional capacity in schools and doctors' surgeries- this can also be providing work opportunities for young people or giving financial contributions to community groups. In the last few years, these contributions have amounted to £28m being invested by developers into Knowsley's communities. As well as delivering on the new housing targets set by national government, we will work with residents and partners to make sure that the right infrastructure is in place to accommodate this growth, now and in the future. Alongside this, we are also working to make sure that Knowsley's existing homes are fit for the future, saving residents money on energy bills, supporting people to stay in their own homes for longer and reducing our impact on the planet.

Since 2021, nearly 1,500 homes- privately owned, rented and social housing- in Knowsley have been retrofitted by our partners, to improve energy efficiency and keep costs down for residents. The Council will continue to work with the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority, national government and other partners to deliver future retrofit programmes, continuing to increase the standards within our existing housing across the borough.



GROWTH SECTORS

Green technology/Net Zero: The green technology sector is becoming increasingly important for Knowsley businesses, with many employers investing in new processes and technologies to meet net-zero emissions targets and remain competitive. Already, Knowsley businesses are growing by seizing opportunities in the renewable, heating and insulation sectors, creating the jobs of the future. This knowledge is being re-invested in the local community, with many employers working with schools and local organisations to support training or re-training in these fields, including the courses in Low Carbon Heating and Solar Technologies provided by St. Helens and Knowsley College and The City of Liverpool College. New Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) are also being adopted to deliver homes fit for the future. These steps put Knowsley in the right place to work with national government to direct investment into green projects through GB Energy and the National Wealth Fund.



Fit for the Future: Founded in Knowsley, renewable energy experts Next Energy have delivered improvements to more than 18,000 properties nationally. Through contracts with Liverpool City Region Combined Authority and Knowsley Council, they have made thousands of homes more energy efficient in the region, bringing down costs and future-proofing homes. In 2023, they were awarded Contractor of the Year, presented at Knowsley Business Awards.

Since its founding in 2016, the company has committed to employing a minimum of 25% of their workforce from Knowsley residents, a target they have far exceeded in the years since. This is part of their broader support for the region's communities, including supporting Alder Hey Children's Hospital, Swanside Community Centre and schools within Knowsley.

Culture and tourism: Knowsley's cultural offer has hugely expanded in the last five years, including hosting Borough of Culture in 2022, culminating in the opening of the new £38m Shakespeare North Playhouse in Prescot town centre. More than 500,000 people visited the borough in 2022, and legacy events such as the 'touring' Owl and Pussycats, Knowsley Music Festival and the Serious Nonsense Festival have continued to draw in visitors. We have also published a Cultural Strategy to maximise our impact.

Town centre regeneration: Our town centres are some of our biggest assets, and we have invested in them significantly in the last few years to support business growth. We have consulted with Residents, Businesses and the Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise sector to develop long-term plans for each town centre, with plans to deliver improvements throughout the borough. This will include transformational regeneration in Huyton Village, further investment in Kirkby Town Centre to strengthen the retail offer and deliver an evening and leisure economy, the re-development of Prescot Shopping Centre and infrastructure improvements to support new housing in Halewood.



4. OUR OFFER



OUR OFFER

Invest Knowsley is our 'one front door' for all business and investment enquiries, bringing together the expert knowledge of Knowsley Chamber of Commerce, Knowsley Council's Business Growth Team and Knowsley Council's Major Development team. One phone number, one email address.

These teams are co-located, with the single focus of providing the insight, expertise and connections to enable investment and accelerate economic growth. The success of this approach can be seen in the businesses that have chosen Knowsley in the last 10 years.



BUSINESSES

- Tailored support to meet business needs
- Access to local business networks and supply chains
- Support with processes such as land and property searches
- Help with recruitment through Knowsley Works
- Established relationship with schools and local higher education providers

INVESTORS

- Access to support from Knowsley Business Growth Team
- Assistance to identify investment opportunities
- Practical guidance around planning and statutory requirements
- Support to build local connections with other businesses and suppliers
- Recruitment support through our networks

DEVELOPERS

- Step by step support to design and develop schemes
- Guidance on local and regional requirements and the assessment process
- Signposting to funding opportunities such as loans and grants
- Expert advice on scheme content and local demand

The Knowsley Place Board and Ambassadors

Businesses in Knowsley can also become part of the Knowsley Ambassadors network, a wide range of influential individuals and organisations working in, or connected to, Knowsley that share a passion for the place and for its future prosperity. Originally launched in 2014, the events provide individuals and organisations with an opportunity to keep up to date with the latest developments and news from across the borough whilst also making connections and positively promoting Knowsley as a great place to live, work, visit, invest and do business.

This comprehensive offer has been the foundation of the exceptional growth that Knowsley has experienced in the last 10 years, and we are committed to continuing to deliver the services that businesses tell us are vital to their success. Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, the Council's Business Growth Team and Knowsley Chamber of Commerce were instrumental in supporting businesses as rules and guidance changed rapidly. As well as responding to an unprecedented volume of enquiries, the team designed and delivered direct support through Covid grants and support programmes. Because of this, £36.6m of funding delivered vital support to thousands of Knowsley businesses.

The future economic prosperity of Knowsley is shaped, influenced and championed by the Knowsley Place Board. Originally established in 2012 to develop the Knowsley Story, the Board, made up of leading business figureheads from across the North West has recently been re-established under the Chairship of Max Steinberg CBE. The board continues to support the Council in its ambition and commitment to growth, and is instrumental in the delivery of the Knowsley Ambassador Programme and key business events.

Knowsley Business Awards are now in their 21st year, with an event every November celebrating Knowsley businesses and developing talent, while raising money for the Mayor's charities. This is fully funded by Knowsley's fantastic business community.



Based in Knowsley Business Park North, structural steel specialists Webber (NW) Ltd began their growth journey six years ago. After a promising start, the Covid-19 pandemic risked wiping out of all the business' progress. With major clients reducing planned maintenance and putting development projects on hold, Webber's turnover fell by 41%.

Thanks to support from Invest Knowsley, Webber managed to weather the storm. Practical guidance, as well as facilitating access to a £20k "Trading On" grant, helped the business get back on track.

Webber also received support from The University of Liverpool through the Horizons project, funded by the Liverpool City Region's UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) allocation. Signposted to this support by Invest Knowsley, the business used the support to boost turnover by more than 50% and add more than 20 new members of staff.

Further growth plans are expected to boost turnover by a further £2m and support 15 new members of staff. With a locally- based supply chain, Webber also expects to invest a further £700k in the local economy.

"Invest Knowsley has given us lots of help and advice, particularly around process improvement, signposting us to further support on our digital journey. Webber now has more staff, more apprentices and improved skills. We have also re-branded, bought new vehicles, developed a new digital training facility, re-furbished our offices and bought new welding kit".

Nicky Silvano, Director, Webber (NW) Ltd.

PARTNERSHIP WORKING

The wider City Region economy is vital to Knowsley's businesses, and we have a strong voice within the Liverpool City Region (LCR), supporting the delivery of the Plan for Prosperity, which sets out the LCR's approach to achieving a Fairer, Stronger, Cleaner City Region.



We actively work in collaboration with the LCR on jobs and skills, business and development, housing and transport issues. We share the vision of the Metro Mayor that greater devolution will allow us to meet local challenges with local solutions. Developments within the LCR such as the Freeport, which is expected to add £850m to the region's Gross Value Added (GVA), and the Liverpool City Region Investment Zone, which has the potential to unlock £320m in private investment, represent great opportunities for Knowsley's residents and businesses. A key part of the LCR's Innovation Zone will be the development of Earlsfield Park in North Huyton, which will add £18.7m in Gross Value Added (GVA) to the local economy.

The increase in devolved responsibilities will soon see the LCR take on further skills and employment responsibilities, including a new Connect to Work programme. The region will also trial an 18-21 "Youth Guarantee" supporting young people to access education, training or help to find a job or apprenticeship. As well as partnership between Knowsley Council and the Combined Authority, Knowsley Chamber of Commerce is also working closely with Chambers across the region to deliver growth that works for Knowsley's residents and businesses.

We will continue to work with the City Region to deliver improvements for Knowsley residents. Already, the City Region's Strategic Investment Fund has supported the delivery of significant infrastructure projects such as Shakespeare North, Halsnead Garden Village and the re-development of Knowsley Business Park. The Fund has also contributed to the Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) sector, including through the establishment of Kindred, an organisation that supports socially trading organisations, such as Knowsley based dementia centre Me2u.

Through the Liverpool City Region's Transport for City Regions settlement, we are developing and maintaining vital transport infrastructure, as well as investing in projects such as the Huyton Active Travel corridor programme to upgrade foot and cycle paths and link new developments to necessary infrastructure.

As well as delivering social value through procurement, we will **amplify and support Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) organisations in partnership with One Knowsley**, which represents the sector. As well as being a lifeline for many residents, community organisations contribute £52.1m to



Knowsley's Gross Value Added (GVA) every year. Their passion and local knowledge are vital to our continued economic growth.

One Knowsley has been crucial in recent years in supporting community organisations through challenging economic conditions, as well as amplifying best practice. Through their Volunteer Hub, residents and businesses alike can identify opportunities to contribute to Knowsley's communities. Volunteering is a key driver of both economic growth and social value in Knowsley, supporting the development of a skilled, employable workforce, promoting social mobility and strengthening the local labour market. This supports our goal of **making sure that the social value added by developers and investors meets local need**.



Since 1987, Knowsley Chamber has been the "voice of business" in Knowsley, championing the interests of Knowsley's business community locally, nationally and internationally. They are co-located with Knowsley Council's Business Growth Team and Major Development Team. Through this Invest Knowsley Offer, they provide a single front door streamlined approach for all investment, business growth and development enquiries. Their membership includes some of the largest businesses in the Liverpool City Region, as well as a raft of small and medium sized businesses, community interest companies and charities. Knowsley Chamber's Members benefit from a wide range of events, workshops and networks to support professional development, as well as exclusive vacancies through Knowsley Works, and services such as a free 24/7 legal helpline for all business issues.

The strong relationships that Knowsley Chamber has with business, community interest groups and charities, and schools and further education institutions in the borough supports and encourages shared goals and objectives, including delivering social value that works for Knowsley residents.

Support to volunteer: In 2024, employees at Amazon's Knowsley fulfilment centre donated over 1,200 hours of volunteering to charities, many in the local area. More than a third of workers participated, making it the top Amazon facility for volunteering in the UK. Knowsley Foodbank and The Eco Therapy Garden, a community therapy garden located in Kirkby have both benefitted from the time and skills volunteered by Amazon's employees.

This was supported by an Amazon pilot designed to reduce barriers to volunteering, including undertaking virtual volunteering, allowing employees to lend their expertise and time in a flexible way.

5. DELIVERING OUR VISION



DELIVERING OUR VISION

We can all be proud of what Knowsley has achieved to date. Bringing together businesses, community organisations, training and learning providers as well as the Council and Knowsley Chamber of Commerce, we have delivered beyond expectations. By being unapologetically ambitious, maximising our assets, sharing best practice and retaining our unique offer to businesses, we can do so again, making sure that growth benefits everyone. Through Knowsley Business Awards, we have been celebrating Knowsley businesses and community organisations for 20 years. This plan will take us through to our 25th Business Awards, and we are determined that the businesses celebrated, and their achievements will be the most impressive yet.

Building an inclusive economy

We are committed to making sure that growth benefits everyone, and local communities see the value of investment and development. In 2024, Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council signed up to the Cheshire and Merseyside Anchor Institute Charter, committing to principles such as employing and purchasing locally to support the local economy and supporting the Real Living Wage. Anchor institutions are large organisations "anchored" in local areas that hold a significant stake in their communities. They can be used to support health and wealth building within communities.

In recognition of this role, we are committed to ensuring that Knowsley's communities gain something from a new project or development. All major developments in Knowsley are required to add "social value". This contribution can be social, financial or environmental. Many organisations that have invested recently in Knowsley have provided significant social value, and we work with residents and partners such as One Knowsley to ensure that contributions are being used to meet local need.

Another way we are supporting the values of inclusive growth is through Community Asset Transfers. This scheme supports community groups and organisations to take control of local facilities and run them for the benefit of the community. Recent examples include Incredible Edible at Court Hey Park, supporting people to grow their own food and connect with nature and Me2U, dementia care specialists who opened a second Huyton location through an asset transfer from Knowsley Council.

MAXIMISING OUR ASSETS

Our People

As a small borough, maximising our physical and social assets is vital in securing sustained economic growth. Our people are a key part of achieving this, and we want to make the most of the potential we have. Businesses in Knowsley are ready and willing to invest in their workforce.

We will bring together schools, colleges and further education providers, businesses, VCFSE organisations and residents to raise aspirations and results.

This has already started, with Knowsley's Learning and Skills Strategy being launched in 2024 and a Learning and Skills Board meeting termly to provide governance and monitor strategy delivery. Following this, we have identified how we can support people to access skills and training opportunities that enhance employability. This has involved key partner agencies such as Career Connect and the Liverpool City Region Careers Hub who have renewed their offers to local schools to support with raising aspirations and overcoming barriers to work, with a number of schools in the area becoming actively engaged with this work. The Council has been working closely with Knowsley Chamber to support the connecting of businesses and schools, and we will continue to focus our efforts on this area.

Awareness raising initiatives across Knowsley have included the opening of a local learning centre in Kirkby to support young people and raise awareness of post-16 options, marked by an "IntoUniversity" event, followed by seven successful school partnerships in Knowsley with local primary and secondary schools, providing a wide range of services, from raising awareness about potential career paths to 1-2-1 support for personal statements for further education.

Our further education providers are also taking steps to support residents to enhance their skills and employability. This includes Knowsley Community College, which is taking steps to improve work readiness through free courses in maths, English and digital skills, as well as courses in emerging green industries. To support this, the College has embedded sustainability into the curriculum, as well as developing a Green Energy Skill Centre to support renewable heating



86.5%

of Knowsley students studying at Cronton and Riverside College achieved A*-C grades in their A Levels in 2022



83.5%

of Knowsley students studying at Carmel Sixth Form College achieved A*-C grades in their A Levels in 2022

technologies. They have also developed enhanced facilities at their Stockbridge Lane campus which will be used to train construction workers in retrofitting homes for energy efficiency.

To ensure that young people have a strong voice in shaping skills and training provision, Knowsley Chamber of Commerce have established a Youth Chamber initiative. As well as supporting young people to reach their full potential, the group also aims to make the transition between education and training or employment easier.

Regionally, the direction of skills provision is set by the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority, and we will continue to work with them to shape the skills and training opportunities available to Knowsley residents. We will also continue our support for the City Region's Fair Employment Charter, celebrating fair employment practices and driving up standards across the region.

Supporting the future workforce: Over the last 14 years, the Knowsley Apprenticeship programme has supported more than 1,800 young people into apprenticeships with Knowsley businesses. The Council, schools and businesses working together to provide high-quality work experience and raise awareness of different career paths. Employers such as The Forshaw Group, Structec, Citrus Group and Livv Housing are amongst those investing in Knowsley's future workforce, with roles from construction to administration. These apprenticeships help young people to earn while studying, achieving NVQ level 5 by the end of their journey.

Support is also available for people of all ages who are unemployed through Knowsley Works, with support ranging from exclusive vacancies with the Employment Team to overcoming personal and social barriers with confidence building.

Specialised advice: Knowsley Works also offers specialised advice and guidance on topics such as disability, learning difficulty and autism and mental health and wellbeing.

For young people not yet ready to embark on apprenticeships, community group Northwood Together have been working with Livv Housing to offer a pre-apprenticeship programme, supporting young people to gain skills and experience they need to take the next step.

Supported Internships are also available locally for young people 16-24 with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) through Knowsley Community College.

Workplace wellbeing

Since 2011, the hugely successful Working Well initiative has been delivered by Knowsley Chamber of Commerce. Supported and funded by Knowsley Public Health, this scheme aims to promote health and wellbeing in the workplace. There is clear evidence that a healthy, productive workforce is beneficial for both employees and employers. More than 240 Knowsley businesses have benefitted from this support to date. Working Well works in partnership with businesses, the Voluntary, the Community, Faith and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) sector and Knowsley Borough Council to support health and wellbeing at work. This support includes:

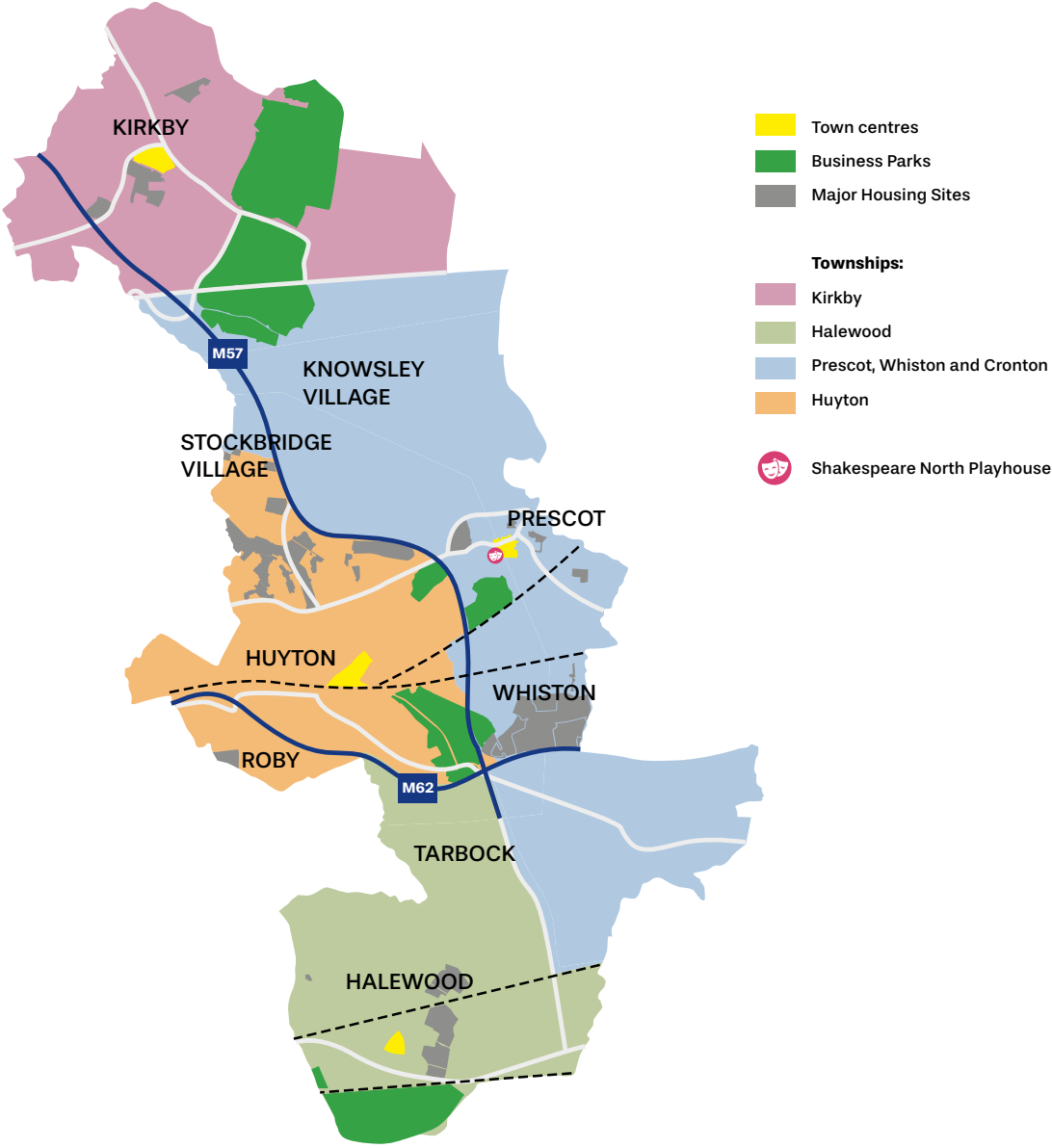
- Bespoke support from dedicated Business Engagement Managers who focus on the delivery of the Working Well programme, advising and assisting businesses looking to improve workplace health and wellbeing.
- Grants of up to £1,000 to help small and medium sized businesses to deliver health and wellbeing interventions for their employees. This support is available for Knowsley based businesses, and any goods or services procured should prioritise Knowsley businesses.
- Events aimed at improving awareness of health and wellbeing issues in the workplace, such as mental health, physical activity or smoke cessation.
- Certificates of accreditation (Gold, Silver or Bronze) based on the standard of support offered.

Embedding the principles of "Working Well" within the Borough, the initiative also provides "Signposting to Support", making links between businesses looking to provide social value with community-based organisations who need volunteer time and specific expertise, for example with building repairs.

Meeting local need: Centre 63, a community centre based in Kirkby supporting young people, received help with painting and decorating, installing new windows and refurbishing the outside spaces from Saputo Dairies, GL Telecoms, J&L Supplies and Platinum Windows. This allowed Centre 63 to make the best use of the contributions, and for businesses to make the most of their expertise. The businesses also contributed to the foodbank as well as toys and gifts for Christmas and Easter hampers.



6. UNASHAMEDLY AMBITIOUS – SUPPORTING GROWTH ACROSS KNOWSLEY



A New Local Plan – Delivering New Homes, Spaces for Business and Protecting our Environment

As national government makes critical changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), we are committed to delivering a new Local Plan that works for Knowsley and its residents. This will ensure there is land to support businesses to grow and invest, for much needed new homes, continuing the regeneration of our town centres and providing vital infrastructure for new developments. It will also protect and enhance our most valued biodiversity, investing in the green spaces that residents value and helping Knowsley on its journey to Net Zero.

Work on a new Local Plan will start later this year, starting with engagement with residents and businesses throughout Knowsley. To meet the scale of ambitions we have for Knowsley, as well as the requirements set by government, the process will take around 30 months to complete. This will involve extensive consultation to agree next steps for Knowsley's growth. It is expected that the new Local Plan will be adopted in 2028.

Inclusive and Ambitious Place Based Economic Growth throughout the Borough

As a borough, we are committed to delivering ambitious and inclusive economic growth, with benefits felt widely and equitably across Knowsley. Done properly, inclusive growth can mitigate social, economic and regional inequalities. This is a vital step in building a borough where no-one is left behind and residents and businesses thrive.

Another vital step is the regeneration of our town centres, which are at the centre of our communities. The places that people use every day are key to driving further economic growth. That is why we have invested in securing the future of our high streets, working with residents and businesses to develop long-term plans that draw on the unique strengths of each town centre. Alongside this, we will be delivering major residential and commercial development programmes, ensuring that there is suitable infrastructure in place to support growth, including working with local schools to increase the number of school places where necessary.

Knowsley's business parks have been key drivers of our success over the last ten years, with Knowsley Business Park alone adding £214m to Gross Value Added (GVA). Business at Knowsley Business Park North and South, King's Business Park, Preston Business Park, Huyton Business Park and Earlsfield Park account for about half of all employment in the borough. These locations are of key importance for businesses looking to invest in Knowsley, with natural sectoral clusters in strategic locations. These include Jaguar Land Rover and Ford in Halewood.

Whilst creating the conditions for economic growth, we remain fully committed to fulfilling our environmental responsibilities. In 2020, Knowsley Council declared a Climate Emergency and made a commitment to develop an action plan with the aim of achieving net zero carbon emissions from the Council's estate and services by 2040. This recognises that the impacts of climate change are being seen now, and there is no doubt that urgent action is needed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and limit global warming. Many local businesses and community organisations have made that same commitment.



Kirkby

Knowsley Council acquired Kirkby Town Centre in 2019. Since then, there has been significant investment from both the local authority and the private sector. This has resulted in an improved retail and leisure offer, with large companies such as Morrisons and Pure Gym investing in the area and bringing increases in footfall to the town centre. This investment in Kirkby town centre has already created over 450 new jobs.



There has also been an investment of £2.2m by the Council and Liverpool City Region Combined Authority to transform the multi-storey car park to support further ambitious investment opportunities in Kirkby Town Centre. The site of the former municipal buildings in the town centre is to be actively marketed as the Kirkby Gateway site and providing scope for new homes, offices and a hotel. In January 2025, Knowsley Council approved the next phase of Kirkby Gateway, to enhance the town's leisure offer.

Kirkby has also seen significant transport improvements, including over £80m invested in the opening of Headbolt Lane Station, which increases the connectivity of Kirkby with the rest of the borough, including to Knowsley Business Park, and beyond to Manchester. Further extensive investments in walking, cycling networks and the highway networks are taking place via planned investment from the City Region Sustainable Transports Strategy (CRSTS).

Through the Government's "Plan for Neighbourhoods", Kirkby has been allocated up to £20m, to be spent over 10 years. This funding is intended to build thriving places, strengthen communities and empower people to take back control. This long-term investment will be guided by a 10-year Neighbourhood Plan which will be developed through public consultation and overseen by a Neighbourhood Board made up of key local stakeholders.

Knowsley Business Park is the largest business park in the Liverpool City Region and one of the largest employment parks in Europe. It is home to approximately 800 businesses and 18,000 employees. Key sectors of activity include manufacturing, distribution and retail, transport and communication, and banking, finance and insurance, reflective of the breadth of offer at the park encompassing industrial, warehouse and office uses. The Business Park has seen significant investment over the last ten years, with new modern developments providing space for expansion as well as attracting major new employers. Most recently, Amazon have occupied the 835,000 sqft distribution warehouse developed by PLP. This has brought a long-standing large brownfield site back into economic use and created up to 1,000 new jobs.



Huyton

Work is already underway to deliver our ambitious 10-year development plan for Huyton Village. With a population of more than 55,000 people and around 1,000 town centre employees, Huyton serves as the borough's administrative headquarters. New residential development has



driven demand for a greater mix of retailers, including food and drink outlets. This has been led by a strong independent business sector. Knowsley Council have supported this growth with significant investment, with a further £2m to be invested by the Combined Authority. This has been used to improve the appearance of shop fronts and a public arts strategy to attract visitors from elsewhere in the borough.

Building on the success of the Borough of Culture in 2022, Huyton has benefited from art murals in prominent locations in the town. It is estimated that improvements will deliver 1,700 jobs for the local area and provide a £50m boost for the local economy.

Huyton is also home to King's Business Park and Huyton Business Park and has most recently seen investment in new commercial employment units at Earlsfield Park. These business parks provide opportunities for local business growth alongside scope to attract new businesses into the borough.

Work continues to provide much needed high quality new homes through the North Huyton Revive programme and this will continue throughout the next few years.

Prescot and Whiston

Prescot has grown in the last few years as a key visitor attraction in the City Region, with a key draw being the opening of the £38m Prescot North Playhouse in 2022, which sold 65,000 tickets in its first year. It is anticipated that the Playhouse will bring additional economic benefits of £5.3m a year. Related cultural attractions such as the Elizabethan Fayre, the Serious Nonsense Festival and the Knowsley Music Festival have also encouraged visitors from around the region and beyond. The restoration of the Picture Palace is expected to further grow Prescot's visitor economy.

Knowsley Council has recently acquired Prescot Shopping Centre, investing in repairs to improve accessibility and partial demolition to support the financial sustainability of the Shopping Centre. New tenants, including a Banking Hub, bar and restaurant have also been welcomed.



Ambitious plans for Prescot town centre will harness the potential of its cultural heritage and boost the town's vibrant evening economy.

This will be set out in further detail later this year.

Significant progress also continues to be made at Halsnead Garden Village. The prestigious Halsnead Garden Village development is the largest combined housing and employment site in the Liverpool City Region. Halsnead Garden Village will be made up of around 1,600 new, high-quality homes, 33 hectares of new greenspaces and a new 28-hectare country park. At Halsnead South, the site of the former Cronton Colliery, two large new employment warehouses have already been completed. A further three units are expected within the next five years, after which the site is expected to have created 1,000 new jobs.

Halewood

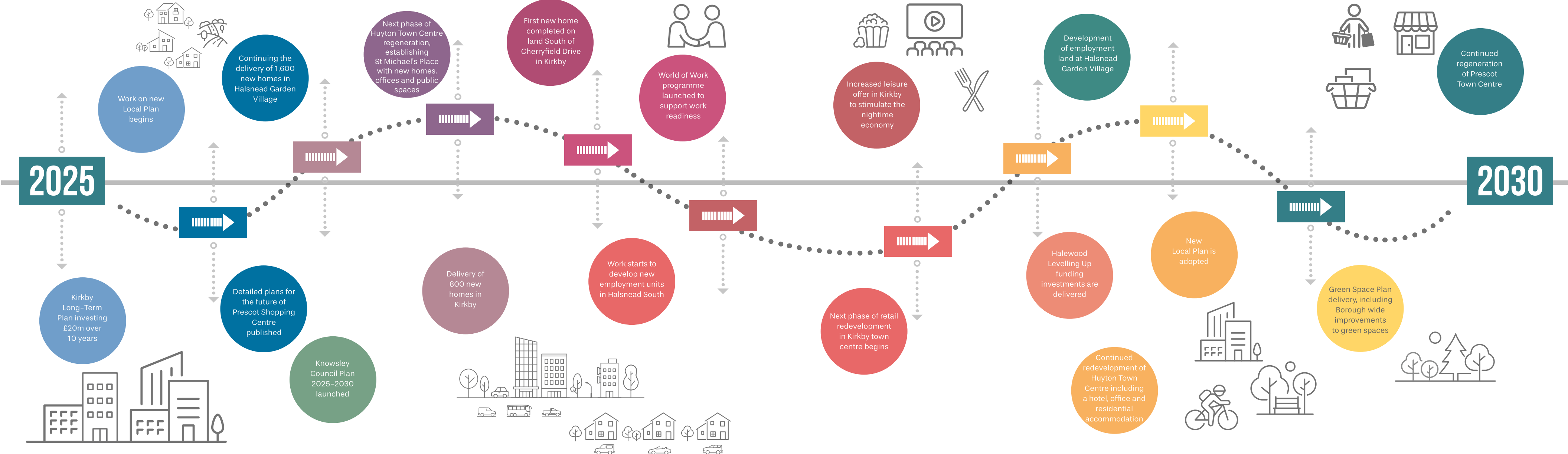
Halewood, the home of Jaguar Land Rover and Ford in Knowsley, is currently undergoing major growth alongside a wider automotive sectoral cluster that helps drive both the local and national economy.

Significant housing development is already underway, with more than 1,300 new homes being built as part of the East of Halewood development. This is being facilitated by more than £31m, invested by Knowsley Council over the next few years, and supported by Levelling Up Funding (LUF) from national government and s106 contributions from developers. Consultation has already taken place to help decide how this funding could translate to improvements in the local area. This work, already underway, will result in enhancements to the local green space, leisure facilities and active transport infrastructure.



Contributions from developers in Halewood already have included £4.6m to expand early years and primary school provision and £1m to re-develop Halewood Finch Woods to support community use, increasing the green space by around 50%.

7. ROADMAP TO FUTURE GROWTH





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KNOWSLEY

