

South Ribble Economic Strategy



Business in
South Ribble

A strategic approach to providing the conditions for businesses to thrive and residents to progress good careers

Aim: A thriving borough with a vibrant, inclusive local economy

Long term vision, short term priorities to direct our activities for the next 3 years to 2025, with flexibility to adapt and react to economic changes and opportunities.

Unprecedented global and national challenges have had a fundamental impact on our economy, creating significant uncertainty for businesses and communities. Despite these challenges, South Ribble is a thriving borough. With an excellent location, strong heritage and world class resources, South Ribble is a great place to do business. Over the coming years, Leyland town centre will be transformed and major developments will create thousands of jobs. As a council we have already set up new schemes and business support services including energy reduction assistance and skills and careers support pathways.

But we're also doing things differently. Our commitment to social value is paramount, and we want to work collaboratively across sectors to create a truly resilient economy that turns business energy into better outcomes for our people and places. An economy where wealth and opportunity are more evenly distributed across all our communities. An economy that more effectively tackles the climate emergency by delivering the green infrastructure, jobs and industries of the future. An economy that changes lives.

This strategy sets out our future vision, objectives, actions and measures to drive forward economic aspirations in South Ribble. Four key priorities guide our plans:

- **Space and place** – creating the right conditions for business
- **Workforce and skills** – fit for the future, diverse and driven
- **Employability** – so that everyone can access career opportunities
- **Business support** – for every enterprise, right across the borough

Our world is constantly changing and therefore this strategy will be dynamic. Work has already started to deliver key actions and the plan will be regularly reviewed to make sure that it is still in line with our aspirations and priorities.

South Ribble is in a great place and together, I am confident we can achieve even more for our businesses, places and people.

Councillor James Flannery
Cabinet Member



OUTSTANDING CONNECTIVITY

Excellent links to the M6, M61 and M65 motorways, as well as easy access to the region's international airports and the Port of Liverpool

Within an hour of the attractions of Manchester, Liverpool, the Lake District and Yorkshire Dales

Established and new business locations accessed directly from major routes



SPACE TO GROW

Unrivalled choice of commercial development and growth opportunities including Lancashire Central strategic site and Samlesbury Enterprise Zone

Affordable housing, accessible green spaces and employment opportunities make South Ribble an excellent place to live and work

The right expert advice and support to grow your business



POWERFUL ECONOMY

World-renowned location for engineering, manufacturing and construction with the Advanced Manufacturing Research Centre on the doorstep

Diverse business base including Leyland Trucks, BAE Systems, Conlon Construction, Baxi, Eric Wright and Dr Oetker call South Ribble their home

A resilient economy with high commercial occupation rates and significant growth opportunities



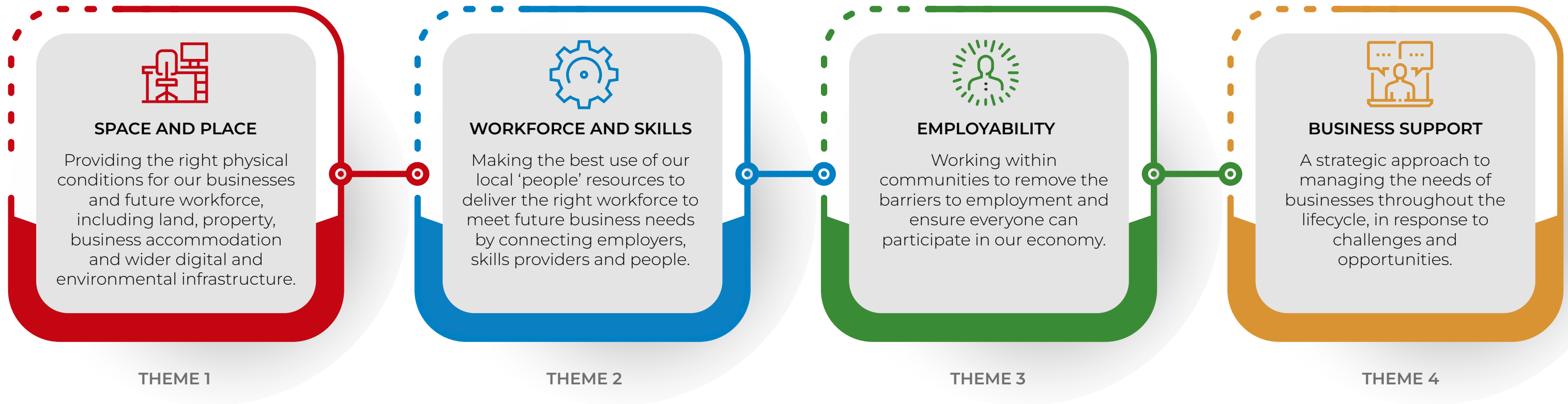
PRODUCTIVE WORKFORCE

Excellent links with award-winning further and higher education and with specialist training institutions

Direct access to a large, highly skilled, motivated and mobile workforce within central Lancashire

Support in place for businesses to recruit and develop the workforce

Four priority themes have been identified to support economic growth in South Ribble



Detailed objectives and actions have been developed for each of the four themes



SPACE AND PLACE

The evidence says

There is a lack of sufficient suitable, available, commercial space for business growth and inward investment, 26 hectares needed

We need suitable living and working places to retain and attract the skilled workforce to meet current and projected business needs including STEM and cyber skills

Gigabit connectivity is good within the central area of South Ribble (Leyland, Lostock Hall and Bamber Bridge) but there is a need for improved connectivity in the more rural areas to the East and West (the A59 corridor near Longton and parts of Samlesbury)

The effect of climate change within the borough poses an immediate danger to the health and wellbeing of residents therefore there is a need to support businesses to reduce their carbon footprint to help make the borough carbon neutral by 2030



WORKFORCE AND SKILLS

The evidence says

Businesses face significant recruitment challenges because there is insufficient workforce with the skills, qualifications and behaviours needed by businesses.

Skills levels (NVQ3 +) are lower than National average in South Ribble and that many highly skilled employees who study in Lancashire leave the area following study, leaving a lower skilled workforce available locally

South Ribble has an ageing population, which results in a reduction in the working age population and in the loss of skills as people retire

Out-commuting by workers with higher skill levels poses a risk to the local economy because there will be insufficient workforce skills to match the needs of local growth sectors



EMPLOYABILITY

The evidence says

Residents in some areas of the borough face greater challenges in accessing work and career opportunities

South Ribble has seen a large increase in people who are not in education, employment or training. The percentage is higher in South Ribble than the national average.

Residents in the 18-24 year age group were most significantly impacted in terms of unemployment during the pandemic. However, the trend during 2022 has been for the youth unemployment rate to reduce and for people claiming jobseekers allowances in the 25 year plus age groups to increase

Economic inactivity rates are increasing, which results in a reduction in the available skilled workforce to meet business needs



BUSINESS SUPPORT

The evidence says

Nationally, there is an economic downturn and businesses are at increased risk of insolvency

Businesses are facing rising energy, fuel and other costs, which impact viability

Growth in the number of active enterprises up to 2020 in South Ribble was slower than growth across the North West and England. South Ribble has seen positive growth in enterprises from 2019 to 2022 but the future trend is uncertain.

Productivity has improved significantly in South Ribble since 2009. However, it is still lower than regional and national levels

OBJECTIVES – SPACE AND PLACE



Maintaining the supply of high-quality commercial land and space to meet the sectoral and life cycle needs of businesses

ACTIONS

Work with the partners delivering the Samlesbury Enterprise Zone, Cuerden Strategic Site (Lancashire Central) and other key sites to support commercial space development.

Deliver Leyland Town Deal including BASE2, commercial buildings and Leyland Market regeneration providing co-working space, business training space

Support the development and delivery of the Samlesbury Enterprise Zone including the AMRC and National Cyber Force campus within NW Cyber Corridor

OBJECTIVES – SPACE AND PLACE



Developing the local, regional & national transport infrastructure links required for business growth

ACTIONS

Allocate & protect new employment land in the Local Plan – work through the Local Plan process to allocate new employment sites in the correct locations to meet business needs and protect appropriate existing employment uses

Maintain and develop transport infrastructure through lobbying, regional and national transport programmes and unlocking land and assets

OBJECTIVES – SPACE AND PLACE



Providing excellent places for people to live, work and relax to retain and grow our skilled workforce

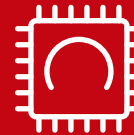
ACTIONS

Through local planning delivery, maintain the good quality of life offer including the supply of affordable, attractive housing, transport, leisure and support facilities

Maintain quality, accessible parks and green spaces in South Ribble

Investment campaign to attract and retain investment and skilled workforce

OBJECTIVES – SPACE AND PLACE



Securing digital connectivity at the highest industry standards to all employment areas and business premises

ACTIONS

Ensure businesses have access to and can use high quality digital infrastructure through national programmes, commissioning through UKSPF to address gaps and promoting innovation support through the Advanced Manufacturing Research Centre and 5G Factory of the Future

OBJECTIVES – SPACE AND PLACE



Supporting our town and village centres to thrive, ensuring that they are both adaptable and versatile in response to changing trends in retail, hospitality and other uses

ACTIONS

Provide support programmes through UKSPF to facilitate changes of use & refurbishment of commercial space in town and village centres to increase visitor numbers, linked to Leyland Town Deal delivery

OBJECTIVES – SPACE AND PLACE



Reducing the carbon footprint (and energy costs) of the local economy and reducing the environmental impact of development

ACTIONS

Through implementation of Local Plan policies, commissioning support programmes through UKSPF & promotion of the Social Value Toolkit, ensure new commercial developments are sustainable and existing commercial space increases energy efficiency and moves towards low carbon and Net Zero

OBJECTIVES – WORKFORCE AND SKILLS



Taking a strategic, information-led approach to understanding sectoral skills needs and ensuring delivery is in place

ACTIONS

Work with Lancashire Enterprise Partnership Skills Hub and the Chamber of Commerce to identify sectoral skill needs and to accelerate skills delivery through the Local Skills Improvement Plan with a focus on South Ribble sector opportunities e.g. cyber / digital

OBJECTIVES – WORKFORCE AND SKILLS



Ensuring that the jobs & skills social value outcomes of local developments are delivered

ACTIONS

Strengthen policies in the new Local Plan to support employment and skills and monitor delivery by developers of Employment and Skills Plans where required by the Employment & Skills Supplementary Planning Document

Skills Factory skills & jobs matching service – virtual platform for residents and tradespeople to sign up to submit their skills to match to job opportunities and apprenticeships

OBJECTIVES – WORKFORCE AND SKILLS



Improving links between businesses and education to retain local talent, raise awareness of local job opportunities and reduce out-commuting

ACTIONS

Deliver a Skills Factory careers programme informing, inspiring and raising the aspirations of young people about local opportunities, engaging under-represented groups in growth sectors e.g. digital and construction and promoting apprenticeships

Support Runshaw College to deliver careers, training and apprenticeship events

OBJECTIVES – WORKFORCE AND SKILLS



Using a strategic approach to influence the relevance of the provision of skills delivery programmes that respond to projected future industry demands e.g. digital and green energy

ACTIONS

Work with Lancashire Enterprise Partnership Skills Hub, training providers and regional / national programme delivery bodies to improve and increase the interactions between businesses & education providers to ensure students are equipped to meet industry needs

Support partner organisations with the delivery of the skills talent pipeline, which will be required by the National Cyberforce

OBJECTIVES – WORKFORCE AND SKILLS



Supporting business to recruit, train and upskill their workforce, leading to higher level skills and higher paid jobs

ACTIONS

The 'Skills Factory', a business-focused skills solutions service: strategic intelligence; advice and support; tailored solutions to support recruitment, upskilling, reskilling & retention

Raise the profile of South Ribble to help businesses attract skilled staff & encourage people to grow careers in the area

OBJECTIVES – WORKFORCE AND SKILLS



Retaining workforce skills by supporting people to remain in employment longer and offering retraining opportunities to counteract projected skills shortages

ACTIONS

Promote positive employment opportunities, flexible work & retirement policies and health care to retain workforce skills, supporting older workers to remain in employment longer

Develop training and skills support delivery through BASE2 under Town Deal – providing a local delivery point for adult education, higher education and sector skills

Support the delivery of Skills Bootcamps

OBJECTIVES – EMPLOYABILITY



Ensuring equality of opportunities for residents to gain higher level skills that will lead to higher paid jobs

ACTIONS

Commission additional local support through UKSPF to enhance Lancashire level skills delivery activity by providing local provision (level 2-7) to meet gaps in funded training

OBJECTIVES – EMPLOYABILITY



Delivering targeted interventions in key geographical areas to support access to work opportunities

ACTIONS

Support developers and businesses to deliver the activities set out within Employment and Skills Plans (required by the Employment and Skills Supplementary Planning Document) including careers support in schools and local recruitment and work placements

Promote programmes such as The Prince's Trust, Young Enterprise and bespoke delivery through the Youth Council to support young people interested in starting businesses

OBJECTIVES – EMPLOYABILITY



Facilitate and support local anchor institutions and businesses to work together so that they can support residents to overcome barriers to employment

ACTIONS

Promote the Lancashire Skills Pledge and work with delivery partners to help local anchor institutions and businesses support residents into employment

Deliver events with anchor institutions and employment and training organisations to support residents to overcome barriers to employment

OBJECTIVES – EMPLOYABILITY



Coordinating and supporting the local delivery of funded employability programmes

ACTIONS

Facilitate the Employment Taskforce to coordinate local delivery by funded organisations of employability programmes by providing networking opportunities and referral opportunities

OBJECTIVES – EMPLOYABILITY



Delivering the relevant employability support needs to people to help them to overcome barriers (e.g. people with disabilities, young people, people aged 50+ and people in shrinking employment sectors)

ACTIONS

Design and commission targeted activity (through UKSPF) to address gaps in provision for the needs of specific sectors and cohorts including digital outreach and sector-based skills support to complement Jobcentre Plus delivery.

Promote workforce health and wellbeing initiatives

OBJECTIVES – EMPLOYABILITY



Coordinating support to increase economic activity rates so that we can minimise skilled workforce leaving employment prematurely and the resulting loss of skills, which businesses need to remain competitive

ACTIONS

Help employers to access potential recruits by linking them to schemes supporting ex-offenders, armed forces and programmes supporting those furthest away from employment

Collaborate with other organisations to deliver a programme of support events such as Raising Aspirations and recruitment events

OBJECTIVES – BUSINESS SUPPORT



Taking a strategic approach to managing business needs throughout the business lifecycle based on information and intelligence to provide the conditions for businesses to thrive

ACTIONS

Commission economic research to maintain intelligence on economic issues & opportunities

Maintain business interaction, engagement & intelligence gathering through business networks, business surveys & business support activity e.g. business seminars and breakfast briefings

OBJECTIVES – BUSINESS SUPPORT



Maintain business interaction, engagement & intelligence gathering through business networks, business surveys & business support activity e.g. business seminars and breakfast briefings

ACTIONS

Commission and deliver business support and advice (including small grant programmes) through UKSPF to help businesses start-up, grow and be resilient including social enterprises and cooperatives

Work with organisations including Boost Lancashire, Federation of Small Businesses and the Chamber to develop and deliver support programmes and events for businesses

OBJECTIVES – BUSINESS SUPPORT



Attract continued investment by businesses in growth sectors by ensuring a bespoke business support offer is in place

ACTIONS

Identify sector specific support needs and gaps and commission business support and advice through UKSPF to meet those needs

Support the delivery of funded peer to peer networks and business networks facilitating collaboration and learning

OBJECTIVES – BUSINESS SUPPORT



Support businesses to develop and adopt low carbon technologies and reduce energy use towards Net Zero

ACTIONS

Deliver the South Ribble Business Energy Efficiency (BEE) scheme

Promote low carbon knowledge sharing networks and support including innovation forums and the Advanced Manufacturing Research Centre (AMRC) low carbon demonstrator

OBJECTIVES – BUSINESS SUPPORT



Support businesses to be competitive, access new markets (international and domestic) and to increase innovation & productivity

ACTIONS

Deliver a programme of international trade business support and advice events jointly with the Department for International Trade (DIT) and the Chamber of Commerce

Support the Advanced Manufacturing Research Centre (AMRC) to develop and deliver the 'SCAN Digital (Supply ChAiN Digital Demonstrator) and to engage businesses to improve productivity and innovation

OBJECTIVES – BUSINESS SUPPORT

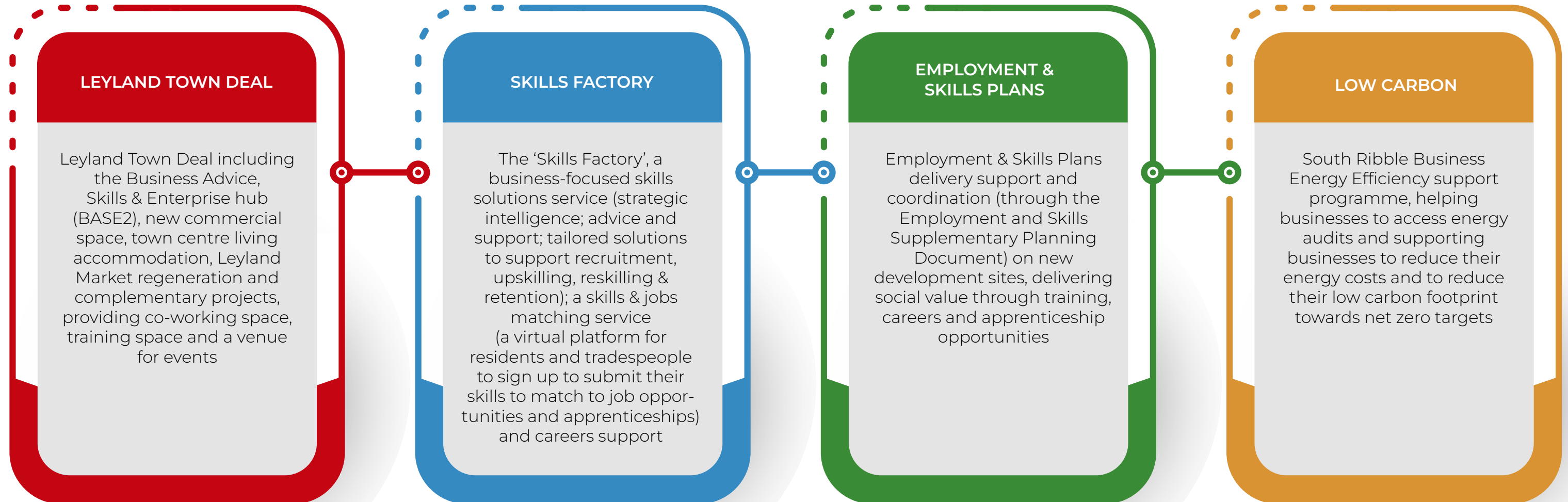


Support businesses to deliver social value and to access local public and private sector procurement opportunities

ACTIONS

Review our social value toolkit and develop materials and resources to increase social gain, including effective dashboard monitoring through the Social Value Portal to track outputs and outcomes.

In response to the economic challenges, priority programmes have been identified:



DELIVERY AND MEASUREMENT

The economy of South Ribble will be monitored using established datasets to enable comparison with regional and national performance trends. Individual projects will be assigned key performance indicators (KPIs). For UKSPF funded actions, KPIs will be determined by the required UKSPF outputs for interventions in the Local Investment Plan.

MONITORING DATASETS

- Employment rate for the borough
- Economic inactivity for the borough
- Number of young people (16-17) who are not in education, employment or training
- NVQ3 and above attainment in the borough
- NVQ4 and above attainment in the borough
- Earnings by place of residence
- Earnings by place of work
- Number of active enterprises (Inter Departmental Business Register)

KEY OUTCOMES

- Businesses are able to access the skilled workforce they need to grow
- Residents can participate in appropriate training to progress their careers
- Residents are able to access higher level jobs in growth sectors
- Businesses have access to the appropriate commercial premises and infrastructure to enable growth
- Business information, advice and guidance supports business formation, investment and growth