

# Kirkby in Ashfield & Sutton in Ashfield Town Investment Plan 2021-2030



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# Foreword

Our Town Investment Plan has been developed over the past 12 months and is a sustainable approach for economic, environmental and social regeneration. It will deliver jobs and further education opportunities, long-term economic and productivity growth, new homes, improved transport infrastructure, reduced carbon and new cultural and visitor facilities. We are seeking to secure a Towns Deal of £61.8m to realise our ambitious plans for:

**Business and education:** the centrepiece of our plan is an Automated Distribution and Manufacturing Centre to create a national centre of excellence focussed on promoting and providing access to the latest technologies and best practice in automated distribution to enhance the competitiveness of the East Midlands and the UK. The ADMC will also be a regional leader for automated manufacturing helping businesses to become more competitive on the global stage.

The ADMC will build upon the area's traditional strength of manufacturing, embracing the potential threat of automation and leverage Ashfield's prime location on the M1.

We will also deliver construction and civil engineering education centres to transform our skills offer, drawing in students from across Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire.

At our libraries there will be new innovation centres which will support residents with digital skills, helping them access digital services more easily, learn new skills and adapt to new ways of working.

**Health and wellbeing:** a new Kirkby Health Hub and Sports Hubs at Kingsway Park and Sutton Lawn will give local residents greater access to healthier lifestyles and help tackle the poor local health outcomes.

**To boost the area's visitor economy:** a new Planetarium and Science Discovery Centre at Sherwood Observatory will help inspire a new generation of scientists and engineers across the region at one of the UK's top amateur run observatories (2nd only to Greenwich Observatory); a new leisure facility at Kings Mill Reservoir will offer a range of new water sports attractions for visitors from across the region, and a network of cycling and walking routes across the area will connect visitor attractions, homes and places of work; new digital tools will help visitors and residents learn about the rich heritage of the area.

**To make Ashfield Greener:** the gateway area around Kirkby train station will be developed to provide better access to the station and interchange to buses and the new cycle/walking network to promote use of more sustainable forms of transport; all new buildings funded through Towns Fund will be low carbon, utilising ground source heating and solar energy and existing buildings will be adapted to use solar energy.

We have created an investment plan that will respond to the challenges we face, including climate change and the impact of the pandemic. The plan will deliver transformational change not just within Ashfield but across the wider region too. We are looking forward to getting started on the next phase.

We would like to thank all the residents and businesses, the Discover Ashfield Board and Council members who have contributed to developing this plan. We hope that you will come with us on the next step of our journey to implement this plan and make the Kirkby and Sutton area a great place to live, work, study, visit and do business.



**Cllr Matthew Relf BSc (Hons) MIET FRSA**

Cabinet Member for Place, Planning and Regeneration, Ashfield District Council



**EUR ING Martin Rigley MBE BSc(Hons) C.Eng PGDip MIM3**

Chair of Discover Ashfield Board

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**Part One**

# **Context Analysis**

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# Executive Summary

This joint Town Investment Plan for Kirkby and Sutton provides a blueprint for sustainable economic, environmental and social regeneration, delivering jobs, long-term economic and productivity growth, new homes, improved transport infrastructure, reduced carbon and new educational and cultural facilities. Together these improvements will fulfil the vision of making the area a great place to live, visit, work, study and do business.

The Towns Fund programme has been created by Discover Ashfield, a partnership of organisations which is acting as the Town Deal Board. Over the past year the partnership has engaged with residents and businesses to gather ideas and generate a final list of Priority Projects.

The programme provides overall investment into the Kirkby and Ashfield area of over

# £98.89m

Total Towns Fund ask of  
**£61.7m**

Co-funding target of  
**£37.24m**

The funding ask for Kirkby is £31m and for Sutton £30.7m, with some of the regional influence project values split across the two towns to reflect the benefits for the whole area.

The government's ambition to level up towns, supported by funding from the Towns Funds, Future High Streets Fund (FHSF) and the Levelling-up Fund will provide a once in a generation opportunity to create sustainable change across the Kirkby and Sutton area.

The transformation of the area has already begun with the start of works to build the new £15.5m leisure centre in Kirkby and the Towns Fund Accelerated Programme investment to undertake the first phase of re-purposing in the two town centres.

The £6.2m provisional allocation from FHSF will fund a first phase of works in Sutton town centre to provide

- a Maker Space and business hub,
- a theatre with cinema and live music
- venue,
- an area for events and pop-up food offer and
- the purchase and re-purposing of vacant retail premises.

The investment will enable us to meet the ongoing challenges of attracting high value-added businesses and increasing the skills and earnings of the local population, as well as the challenges related to social mobility and health inequalities. Many of these issues have been exacerbated by the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, including rising unemployment, numbers accessing Universal Credit and increasing use of foodbanks.

To realise the vision for Kirkby and Sutton we have identified four Themes for Change: Be Healthy, Be Happy, More to Discover, Succeed in Ashfield and Greener Ashfield. The projects within these themes and included for Towns Fund Investment are closely aligned to the themes of the Towns Fund intervention framework of Local transport; Digital connectivity; Urban regeneration, planning and land use; Arts, culture and heritage; Skills infrastructure and Enterprise infrastructure. The project programme will deliver on the plan's goals as outlined on the following page.

### Be Healthy, Be Happy – to reduce health inequalities, provide great sports facilities and opportunities for activity and provide consolidated and accessible health services

We will deliver the Kirkby Health Hub, the Sports Hubs at Kingsway Park and Sutton Lawn and an off-road walking and cycling network across the area.



### More to Discover – to create great visitor attractions, a walking & cycling network and thriving town centres

We will develop the Discover Ashfield website to promote visitor attractions and develop regionally renowned attractions including a unique education and landmark visitor attraction with the new Planetarium and Science Discovery Centre at Sherwood Observatory; a new water sports centre at Kings Mill Reservoir; the redevelopment of the theatre and a pop-up food market in Sutton and a network of cycling and walking routes across the area.



### Succeed in Ashfield - Better opportunities for learning and employment and a strong and growing economy

We will deliver the flagship Automated Distribution and Manufacturing Centre to create a regional centre of excellence; construction and civil engineering education centres; library innovation centres; Maker Space, business hubs and Industrial start-up units and a focus for STEM subjects at the Planetarium and Science Discovery Centre station.



### Greener Ashfield - More learning and jobs in sustainable construction, Greener homes, businesses and travel options and the Council to be Carbon Neutral by 2027

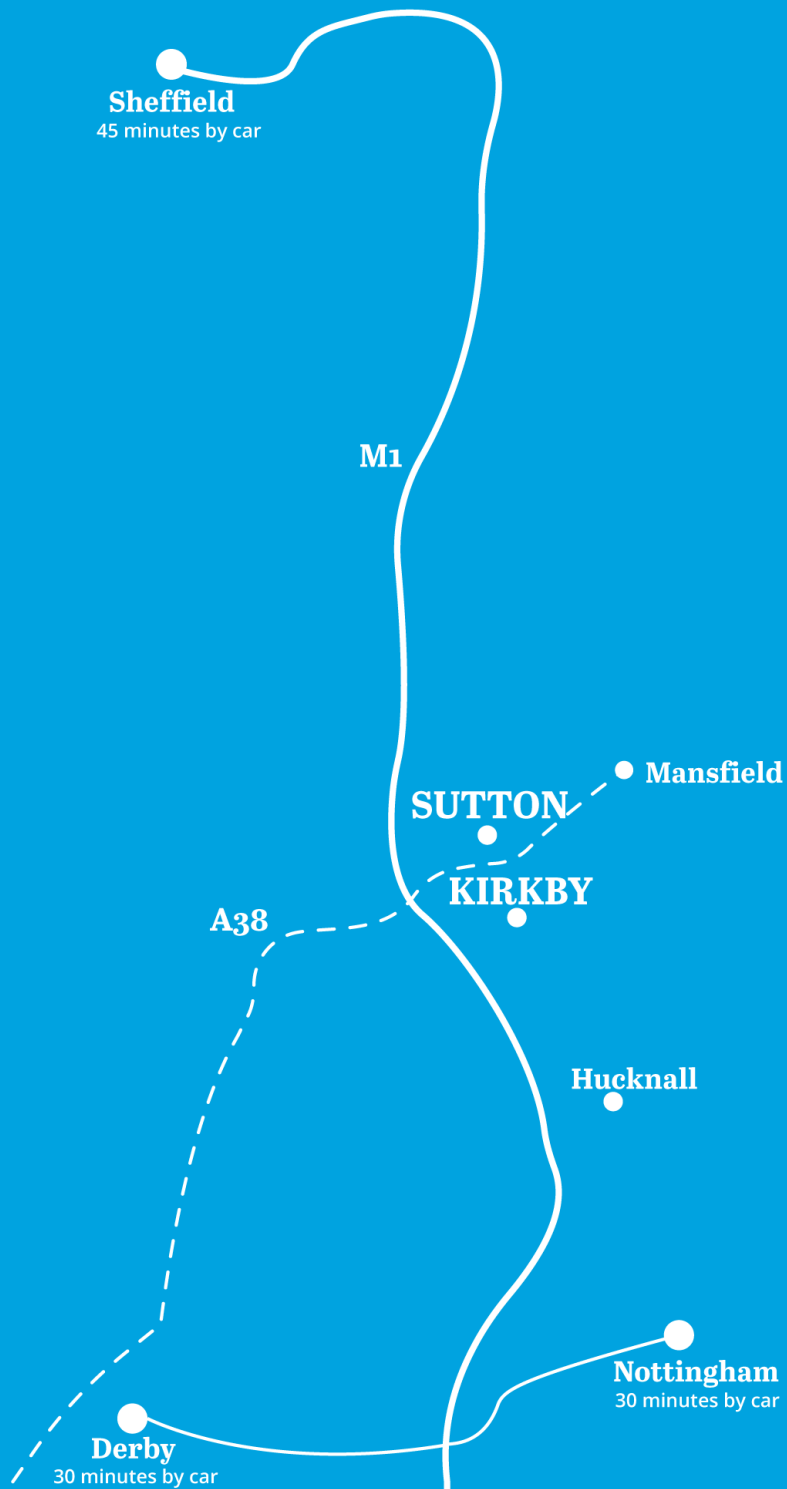
We will deliver all new build projects as low carbon, utilising ground source and solar energy, retrofit existing buildings with solar energy; develop the gateway area around Kirkby train station as a sustainable development model and develop the cycling and walking network. The new construction centre will have a focus on sustainable building methods.



Longer-term ambitions include the upgrading of the Maid Marian railway line for a passenger service, linking to HS2 via the East Midlands Hub; a potential new station at Kings Mill Reservoir and development of the gateway area around Sutton Parkway station.

Specific, deliverable, partnership interventions will spark a fire of ambition to create systematic transformation. Delivery of projects through the Towns Fund will deliver the following outputs:

- **£98m total investment**
- **223 new jobs**
- **10,094sq m of business space**
- **7,283sq m education space**
- **891 new learners**
- **120 new homes**



# Introduction

Kirkby in Ashfield and Sutton in Ashfield are historic market towns located 3.5 miles apart in the heart of England, and are home to proud communities and businesses.

The towns are situated between the cities of Nottingham and Derby to the south and Sheffield to the north. Lying in Mid-West Nottinghamshire on the edge of Sherwood Forest, Kirkby and Sutton are close to the Derbyshire Peak District and with excellent connectivity adjacent to the M1 and A38 network.

The two towns are steeped with a rich industrial and cultural heritage, former industrial strengths were based on mining and manufacturing, particularly hosiery.

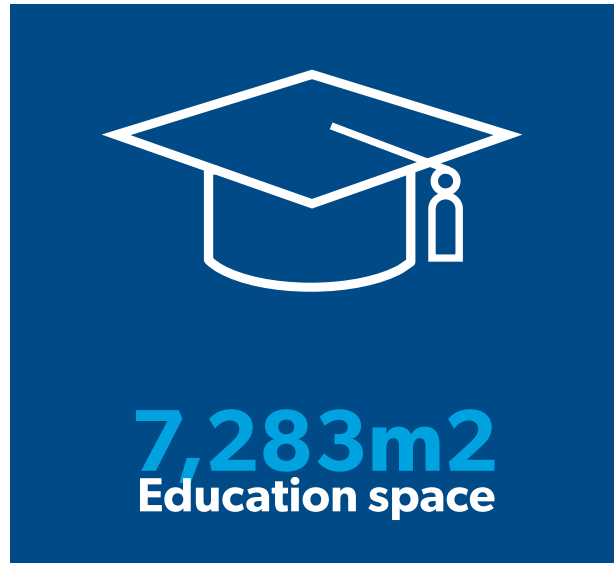
Both towns have significant challenges both visible and unseen, falling well below the average of most national indicators. Town centre decline continues, with years of under investment making it hard for business to succeed, health inequalities are prevalent, low skills result in low income levels, with poor social mobility and opportunity is therefore limited.

The Covid-19 pandemic has compounded these challenges impacting on key sectors such as manufacturing with reduced output due to social distancing requirements and the acceleration of automation.

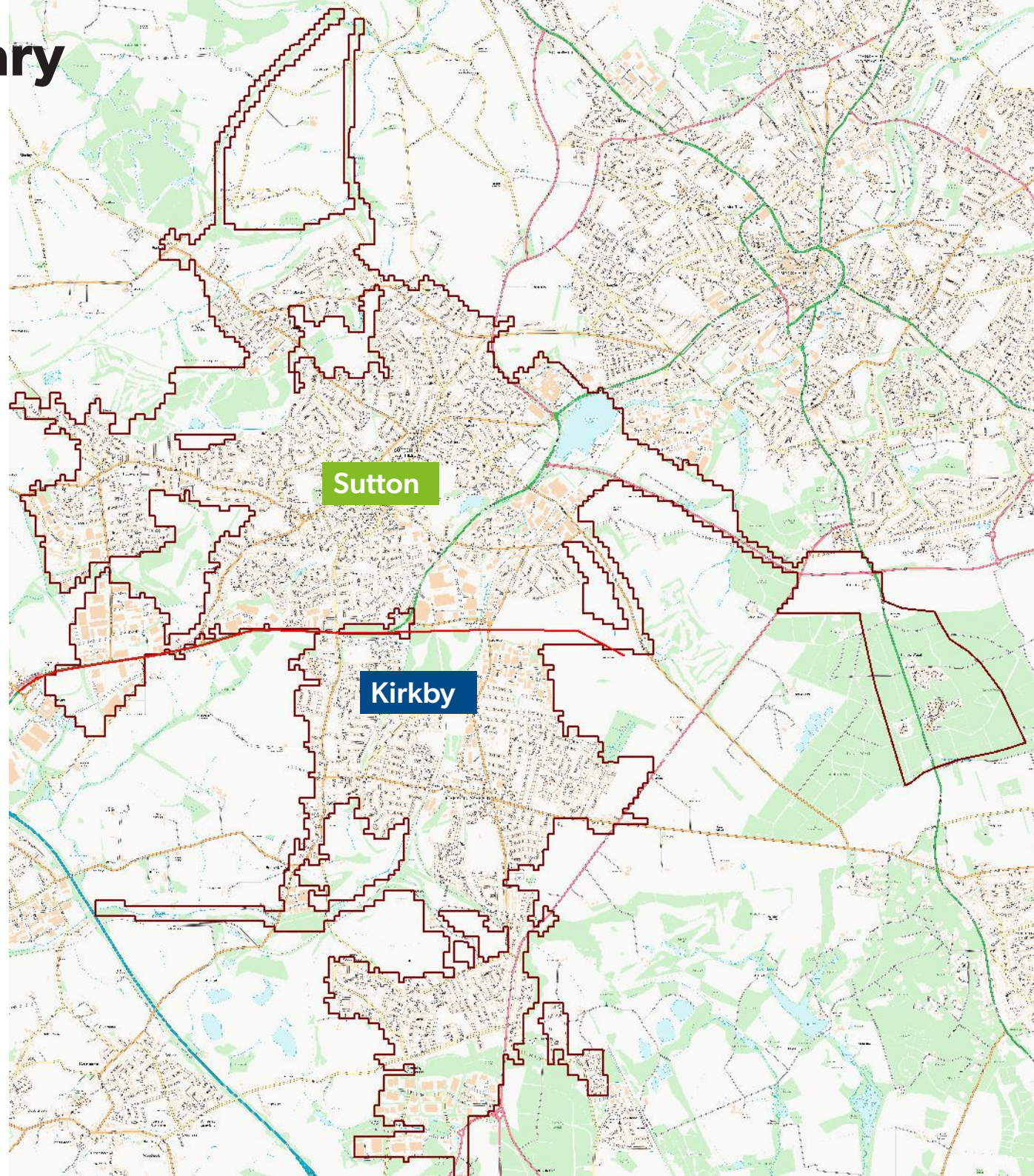
The Kirkby and Sutton area can be regionally recognised as a place which nurtures and provides opportunity for current, future and returning generations, places people and businesses choose to live, work, study and visit.



This Town Investment Plan is a clear, deliverable strategy to initially create, with Towns Fund assistance:



# Towns Fund Boundary



# Context

With a combined population of c.75,000 the Kirkby and Sutton area is located four miles west of Mansfield, twelve miles north of Nottingham City Centre and two miles from the Derbyshire border. The area is easily accessed from the A38 which connects to Derby which is 20 miles to the south east.

Its central location provides an excellent base for connectivity with direct links to the A1 and M1 meaning that most of the country is accessible within a three-hour drive. A wider transport network, which includes several airports, seaports and freight terminals are within two hours, provides opportunities for business and leisure.

Regular direct rail links into Nottingham and the anticipated phase II of the high-speed rail network (HS2) will increase the areas connectivity to Sheffield and the north.

Kirkby and Sutton has proven to be a diverse and resilient community in the face of industrial decline, willing to embrace new opportunities in the economy and with an entrepreneurial spirit. However growth in the years following the last recession has been abruptly reversed by COVID-19, and longer term recovery is predicted to proceed at a slower pace for Ashfield overall.

Kirkby and Sutton are now at a crossroads with regards to future growth and a transformational change is required to drive development and improve town centres, providing a strong foundation for the future with a strategic, targeted programme of economic and urban regeneration to kick-start renewal.

Investment is needed to support our programme of work, to reduce barriers to growth and development, and demonstrate market confidence to encourage the private sector to invest.

By nurturing business creation, development and growth, the area will transform over the next decade into a high-performing economy. This will make a significant difference to the region by providing a quality, sustainable and competitive environment for investment

# Kirkby in Ashfield

Kirkby took its name from the Danes meaning 'village with a church', and Ashfield from open land, or "feld", with ash trees and was mentioned as 'Chirchebi' in the Domesday Book. In 1261 the village of Kirkby was granted a market and the market cross was constructed.

By the start of the 18th Century, Framework knitting had been introduced to Kirkby and continued to grow alongside a diverse range of trades. During the 19th century, Kirkby evolved from a relatively small agricultural based community to an industrial township. The Butterley Company opened the Portland Colliery in 1821, followed in 1887 by the Summit Colliery. Bentinck Colliery was sunk in 1894. The town rapidly expanded during the Victorian era and in the early 20th century and by 1921 the population had increased to 17,236.

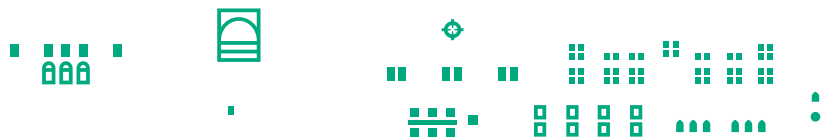
The 20th Century witnessed the continued growth and development of Kirkby but the closure of the coal mines in the 1980s and early 1990s led to a major slump in the local economy, and the area suffered a high level of socio-economic depression. Kirkby was an important centre for railways in west Nottinghamshire, with several junctions, however many closed in the early 1960s, leaving the town without a link to central Nottingham or Mansfield.

Passenger services recommenced in the 1990s as part of the Robin Hood Line project, providing links to other North Nottinghamshire towns and to Nottingham.

Kirkby is the smallest of Ashfield's three town centres and is identified as a 'District Centre' in the adopted Local Plan (2002). Kirkby can be described as a linear town centre with one pedestrianised street and is a retail and service destination for the local area. Kirkby (including the smaller urban area of Annesley, directly to the south) has a population of circa 29,500 (ONS Mid-year populations estimates 2018), a 6% increase on the 2011 census.

Kirkby College with 500 places is located to the south side of the town centre, an academy with a sports specialism. The college provides post 16 education with A Levels and vocational subjects including Hair and Beauty, Construction and Motor Vehicle. The larger Ashfield School, c.2,500 students from 11-19 years, is located at the north-west edge of the town, close to the Kirkby/Sutton boundary.

Kirkby is dominated by independent retailers, with few national operators and a market day on Fridays. The Morrison's store forms an anchor at the north eastern corner of the centre with a smaller Aldi store to the edge of centre in the west, close to Kirkby Railway Station.



Kirkby Town Centre

# Sutton in Ashfield

During the 17th century Sutton became identified with the textile and hosiery industry which transformed the area from an agricultural village to an industrial town. The industry continued to be a principal employer until recently. The Pretty Polly brand of hosiery originated in the town in around 1927, and was manufactured there until April 2005. Mining was the other principal industry until Sutton Colliery closed in 1989 and Silverhill closed in the 1990s.

The town saw growth during the 1920's and 30's with new commercial premises built, notably along Outram Street. The most recent development occurred during the 1960s and 70s with the building of 'Sutton Centre' (now Sutton Community Academy) which provided educational and recreational facilities; and the construction of the Idlewells Shopping Centre, library and bus station. Since the 1970s there has been very limited new development within the town.

Sutton is the largest centre within Ashfield District with a population of c.48,400, a growth of 5.5% since 2011 which is in line with the national average. The town is a Sub Regional/ Major District Centre and performs an important role as a retail and service destination for the local area, particularly for the convenience offer.

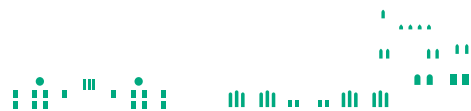
Sutton serves the town's population and residents of the wider District (population 126,164), including Kirkby and villages to the west. Sutton is a destination for residents of the Derbyshire settlements of Pinxton, Alfreton and Ripley, connected by regular bus services.

The town is a traditional market town with a mix of national and independent retailers and the Idlewells Shopping Centre which includes an indoor market. The ASDA Superstore located in the north of the town centre provides a pharmacy, post office and free parking. There is a small service sector of accountants and solicitors, located in and around the Old Market Place.

Sutton Community Academy is located on the southern town centre boundary, 100 metres from Low Street/ Idlewells Shopping Centre. The academy also provides Further Education. Another large secondary school, Quarrydale, lies just outside the town centre area.



Portland Square, Sutton




# Assets and Strengths


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In this section we discuss the key assets and strengths of the Kirkby and Sutton in Ashfield area to demonstrate the potential for investment and growth. The area's key assets include the landscape, shaped by its industrial past, a strong educational offer in construction, employment growth (prior to the pandemic) and modern, high quality leisure facilities. The two market towns are steeped in industrial and cultural history and are diverse and resilient in responding to economic decline.

## Education and Employment

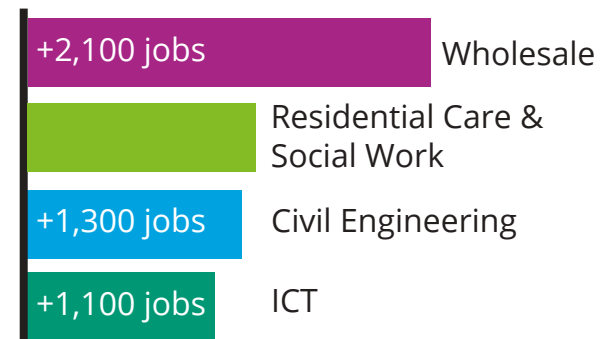
The Vision West Nottinghamshire College main campus in Mansfield is on the Ashfield boundary, with specialist centres for construction and engineering located in the Kirkby and Sutton area. The Vision University Centre at the main campus operated by Nottingham Trent University delivers Higher Education including Nursing and Allied Healthcare. Local Growth Fund investment is over £3m, with £600k recently committed to an Automation and Robotics training facility to address the risk of automation impacting on employment. 

The partnership between the college and the university has significantly enhanced skills provision and includes a wide range of foundation degrees to increase accessibility for local people to achieve key and higher level skills, including social care; paramedic training; business; computing and technology. The programme reflects the current and forecast employment growth in the key sectors for the area.

Nottingham Trent University (NTU) is an award-winning university (University of the Year 2019 -Times Higher Education Awards) - close proximity to a university is recognised as a driver of innovation, with an active NTU presence in the area this can lead to an increased number of partnerships with local businesses, to develop new products and processes, and increase efficiencies. Delivery of NTU economic programmes can help to stimulate the demand for higher value jobs in the local area and working with Vision West Notts. College helping to create a growing pool of highly skilled local people who can work in growth sectors helping to re-balance Ashfield's economy towards higher value and skilled jobs, making it more resilient and more able to capitalise on higher value opportunities to attract investment. 

Inspire provides courses for young people aged 16 to 24 in Health and Social Care and Construction from their specialist centre in Sutton. Inspire is a charitable community benefit society that delivers cultural, learning, library and heritage services across Nottinghamshire, for the county council. Sutton Community Academy (Academy Transformation Trust - ATTFE), provides vocational qualifications for young people and adults, including Construction trades with an emphasis on progression routes for learners with lower prior attainment. Portland College is the largest Further Education provider for High Needs Students in Nottinghamshire. Located south of Mansfield on the eastern edge of Sutton, the college provides a wide range of specialist support services to help learners access mainstream further education and employment.

Ashfield has experienced strong job growth since the last recession, between 2010 and 2019, resulting in a net increase of 9,500 jobs. This outstripped the regional and national rates of growth, and was driven by very strong growth in



Ashfield has a high reliance on the manufacturing sector which accounted for 18.5% of jobs within the District in 2018.


The top five sectors by employment in Ashfield were (EMSI Ashfield Economy Overview, bespoke data profile, D2N2):

- Health and social work;
- Wholesale and retail trade / repair of motor vehicles;
- Manufacturing;
- Construction;
- Education.

Prominent sectors with higher than the national average workforce include:

- Manufacturing;
- Construction;
- Health and social care;
- Wholesale and retail trade / repair of motor vehicles.

Although wholesale and distribution had been one of the major drivers of Ashfield's economy, the two key sectors likely to generate B8 employment: land transport, storage & post, and wholesaling, experienced sharp growth up to 2003, but the former gradually declined (-300 jobs) to 2019, whereas wholesaling continued to grow by 3,500 jobs (Ashfield Recovery Plan, Sept. 2020).

The D2N2 area is the advanced manufacturing capital of the UK, with more manufacturing jobs than any other LEP and the second highest manufacturing GVA (£8.1 bn). Kirkby has large clusters of manufacturing and distribution businesses located principally to the north of the town centre where there is good access to the A38 and Junction 28. 

Sherwood Business Park is located to the south of Kirkby-in-Ashfield, off junction 27 of the M1, with office and distribution space for over 70 businesses, including multi-nationals such as Dell, Eddie Stobart, Eon and L'Oréal.

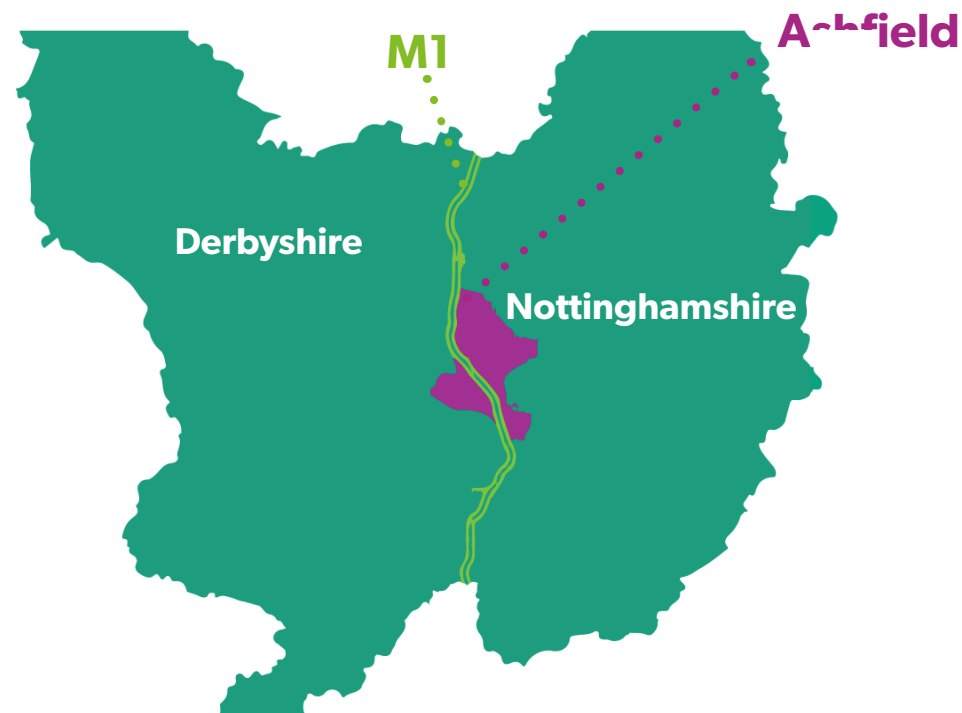
Sutton accommodates substantial industrial and distribution sites with large clusters of manufacturing close to Junction 28 of the M1 and alongside the A38.

With the exponential growth of online sales during the pandemic lockdown, distribution is predicted to be one of the fastest areas of economic growth, an Amazon distribution centre opened in autumn 2020, creating up to 1800 jobs.

Large companies are attracted by the proximity to strategic transport links, combined with a competitive labour market.

The health sector is a large-scale employer with King's Mill Hospital part of the local NHS Trust which employs 4,300 people. Other areas of employment include Romo Fabrics and furniture makers and pharmaceuticals companies Brightwake, Fresenius and Alloga.

## The D2N2 area is the advanced manufacturing capital of the UK, with more manufacturing jobs than any other LEP





## Health & Wellbeing and Communities

The local community are passionate about their towns and the local area, place surveys and informal feedback consistently show a deep affinity with Ashfield's outdoor spaces, from parks and local green spaces to walking and cycling routes.

Health and Wellbeing is one of the four themes of Discover Ashfield, under the Be Healthy, Be Happy banner. The Ashfield Health and Wellbeing partnership priorities are aligned with the Nottinghamshire Integrated Care Partnership and build on the Discover Ashfield theme.

The district Leisure Transformation Programme has a focus on rationalising indoor leisure facilities and creating high quality facilities. The programme is delivering:

- Investment of c.£19m over five years from 2019/20
- A new operator contract aligned to Sport England objectives
- Delivery of targeted programmes in priority areas to reduce health inequalities.



The centre will help to improve the vitality of the town centre and attract users locally and from outside the area, through the wide range of activities and facilities including swimming, sports hall with cinema, gym and fitness studios, wellbeing/sensory areas, adventure play, climbing wall and café.

A new leisure operating contract will commence in April 2021, which will provide a cost saving and facilitate capital investment including adventure play and fitness at the Lammas Leisure Centre, Sutton and investment to reduce carbon emissions. The contract focuses on increasing activity in local communities, particularly those with the greatest health inequalities and deprivation which include Coxmoor in Kirkby and Leamington in Sutton.

The area generally has good quality sports facilities, green space and access to the countryside within reach of most urban areas. Targeted work overseen by the Health and Wellbeing Partnership is being used in Coxmoor and Leamington to understand the barriers to participation and support physical activity, for example through the Feel Good Families project.

**The new £15.5m Kirkby leisure centre, due for completion in early 2022 will replace the existing facility which is no longer fit for purpose and has high management costs.**

The Council's programme of investment in green space improvements will see over £1.5m invested in the 2019/20 financial year. This includes completion of the physical works on a four-year £1.8m Heritage Lottery funded project focused on the heritage and visitor experience at Sutton Lawn and Kings Mill Reservoir.

The main parks in Kirkby and Sutton are located relatively close to the town centres and provide a wide range of activities, attracting large numbers of visitors and users. The parks are Green Flag Award winning sites: Kingsway Park in Kirkby is located 500m from the town centre and is well-used by local sports clubs, particularly for hockey, football and bowls. At Sutton Lawn there is high usage of the 3G (artificial) pitch which is managed by Sutton Academy, as well as grass football pitches, bowling greens and tennis courts.



Views across Sutton Lawn

## Environment and Housing

A major attractor for people living or considering living in the area is house prices, the median across the two towns in 2019 of £127.5k was 33.5% less than the regional average and just under 47% lower than the national average (<https://townsfund.org.uk/dashboard>).

In resident place surveys the value of green space is always rated highly, the availability of parks, open spaces and green areas was rated as the best thing about living in Ashfield in the last residents' survey in 2016. Improvements to parks and open spaces were well supported in the Towns Fund consultation with an average across the areas of 76% which was one of the highest scores for any proposal.



Image: Brierley Forest Park by Antony Stocks

## Transport and Accessibility

The Kirkby and Sutton area has excellent transport links, located in close proximity to major arterial roads, including J27 of the M1 for Kirkby. The A38 forms the boundary between Kirkby and Sutton and links to J28 of the M1 and to Derby. The towns' proximity to the road network provides excellent connectivity for goods distribution. Both towns have direct rail links to Nottingham.

Kirkby railway station is located on the edge of the town centre and is served by East Midlands Railways, connecting to Worksop and Nottingham, with a journey time to Nottingham of less than 25 minutes. Sutton Parkway is less than a five minute rail journey from Kirkby, although the station is located two miles from the town centre. At Sutton Parkway the Entry and Exit figures for 2018/19 were 197,540 and for 2019/20 - 199,070. At Kirkby the figures were: 2018/19 - 181,416 and 2019/20 - 176,680.

(<https://dataportal.orr.gov.uk/statistics/usage/estimates-of-station-usage>, 28.12.20)

Both centres are well served by bus services which connect to Nottingham and Derbyshire, although services to the outlying areas of Sutton such as Stanton Hill are more limited. The travel to work catchment area includes Ashfield and Mansfield Districts, with a population of c.240,000.

## Visitor Economy, Arts and Culture

Prior to the pandemic, tourism was one of the UK's fastest growing sectors, in 2019 the Nottinghamshire visitor economy was worth £1.75bn, supporting c.15,000 jobs. Nottinghamshire has a base of regular repeat visitors, with day visits dominating at 90%. Nottinghamshire's central location means it has a large audience within a two-hour drive time, with opportunities to collaborate with neighbouring areas such as Derbyshire.

Ashfield is located on the edge of the modern-day Sherwood Forest boundary, a heritage site of international significance, with annual visitor figures of c.350,000. Kings Mill Reservoir to the north-east of Sutton is just over 10 miles from Sherwood Forest Visitor Centre and Sherwood Pines, a Forestry England site with running and biking trails, zip wires, cabins and live music venue. The reservoir is also 13 miles from Sherwood Forest Center Parcs

Portland College is located on the edge of Sherwood Forest and is currently building a new centre of excellence for sports and theatre to complement the multi-games area and Woodland Adventure Zone with zip line, climbing wall and bike trails. All these facilities are free to access for local community groups and schools and are part of the development of Ashfield's visitor economy.

Ashfield is close to visitor destinations such as Hardwick Hall (8 miles north-west of Sutton, on the District boundary), Newstead Abbey (< 5 miles from Kirkby town centre) and the market towns and countryside of Derbyshire. Ashfield has associations with several historical figures including the romantic poet Lord Byron and his daughter Countess Ada Lovelace who is credited as the first computer programmer. Felley Priory, near Underwood is located in the west of the District.

The visitor offer for the Kirkby and Sutton area can be summarised as:

### Annesley Old Hall and Church



### Lindley's Mill, Sutton



### Sherwood Observatory, Sutton



### Mill Waters, Sutton & Mansfield



England's oldest viaduct

### Teversal Village, Sutton



### Skegby Village, Sutton



One of the area's greatest assets is the number of walking and cycling routes, many of which are a reminder of the area's industrial past along former railway lines. To the north/ north-west of Sutton the trails around Skegby and Teversal connect into Derbyshire and Hardwick Hall. Hidden Valleys is an undulating expanse of countryside south of Kirkby, much of which D. H. Lawrence referred to as 'The country of my heart'. Many of his novels are based around the places and families of the area. Villages within Ashfield, including Annesley are set within this landscape of way-marked rural paths with sites of natural, industrial and cultural heritage, amongst wooded areas and open countryside.

Analysis by Nottinghamshire County Council in 2020 showed that walking and cycling have increased in popularity during the pandemic, reflecting the national picture.

First Art, an Arts Council programme was delivered in Ashfield from 2015 -18 and then extended for three years, focusing on the co-design and production of activities and events with local communities. The Arts Council working with Inspire has established a Cultural Education Partnership (CEP) for Nottinghamshire, with a focus on Ashfield and Mansfield, recognising that nationally it is one of the areas with the greatest inequality of opportunity. Through CAPTIVATE cultural organisations, educational institutions and councils are driving delivery of cultural education, collaborating with the aim that every child and young person has access to high-quality arts and culture.

Arts Council England has also funded the creation of a Cultural Compact for Ashfield and Mansfield, led by Nottingham Trent University which is designed to support the cultural sector and enhance its contribution to development, with an emphasis on cross-sector engagement beyond the cultural sector. The Compacts model was a recommendation of the UK Cultural Cities independent enquiry into Britain's cultural resources.



Sailing at Kings Mill Reservoir

# Town Centres

## Kirkby

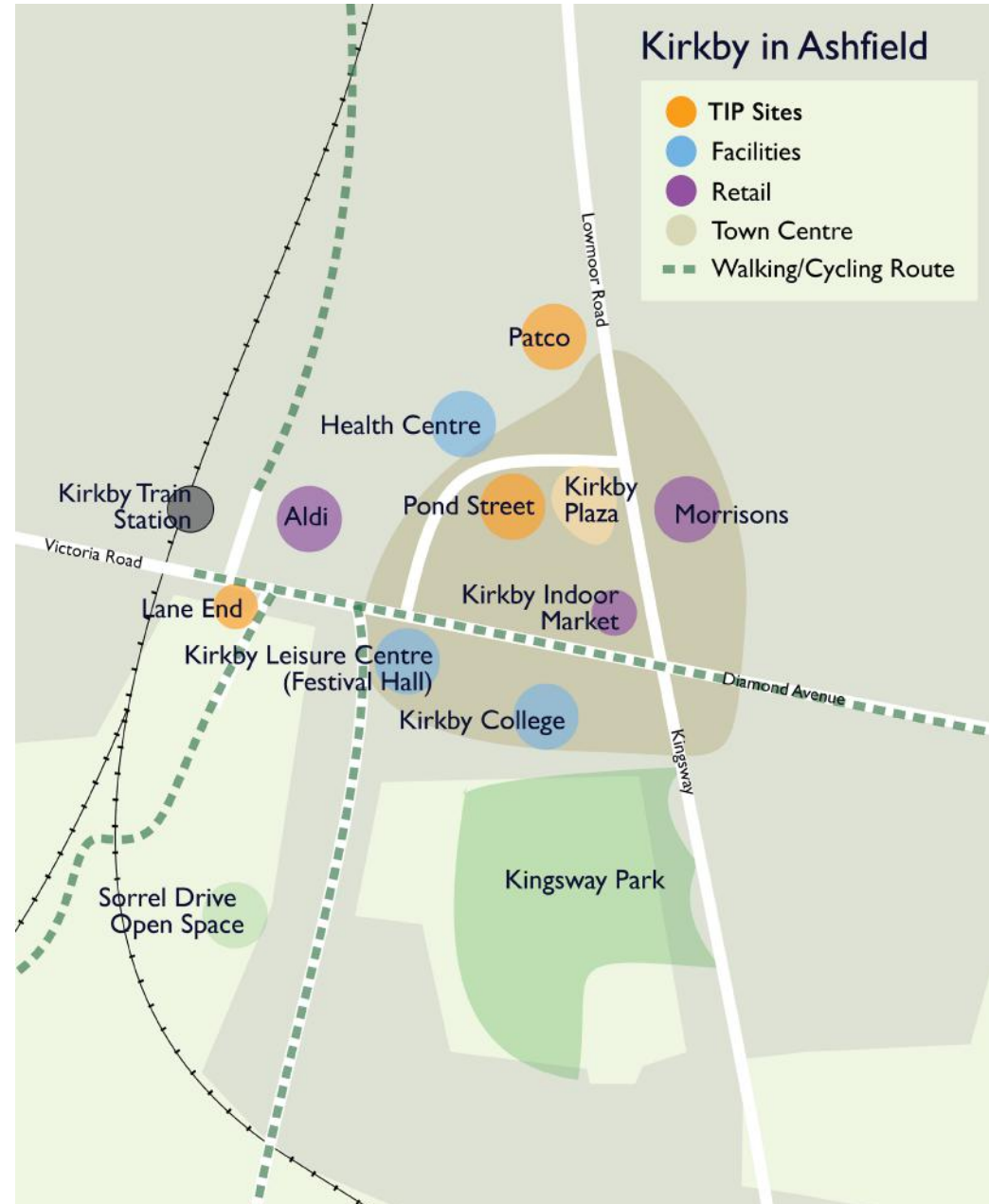
Investment in the new leisure centre will help to improve the vitality of the town centre and support local businesses and services. Visits to the centre are predicted to increase by 268% within five years.

There are two anchor stores in the town, Aldi (to the west) and Morrison's (to the east), on the edge of the shopping area. The redevelopment of the Regent Cinema building into Wetherspoon's pub has transformed a derelict 1930s cinema at the main crossroads in the town. A café culture has started to develop and a micro-pub has opened in the town centre.

The creation of a plaza and public realm improvements in 2015 have enhanced the quality of the shopping environment and Council shop front grants have supported an enhanced street scene.

Major employers are located in town centre, including Morrison's, Aldi, the District Council and the NHS. The Police and Department for Work and Pensions are co-located in the Council Offices. There is a varied mix of smaller employers including vehicle repairs, furniture fitters and undertakers.

As part of the Towns Fund Accelerated Programme three vacant units on the pedestrianised area of Lowmoor Road are being converted to create an indoor market which will diversify the offer and support businesses in the area.



## Sutton

The Idlewells indoor shopping centre is a major attractor for the town accommodating over 40 retail units, an indoor market and the library. There is a good representation of national anchor brands, including B&M, Superdrug, JD Sports, Greggs, Peacocks and Specsavers and a tenant mix which serves the local demographic. In 2017 the indoor market was redeveloped to create a modern space which currently has 98% occupancy. The £1.8m project benefitted from investment of £375k from the Local Growth Fund.

The town centre is relatively level, with good accessibility and space for events at Portland Square and the Old Market Place.

The Lammas Leisure Centre on the outskirts of the town attracts approx. 1 million visits per year and the award winning park Sutton Lawn is within 750m of the town centre.

The Towns Fund Accelerated Programme is funding the purchase of vacant property on Low Street. Potential new uses include a youth employment hub, working with DWP and potential use by Sutton Community Academy. The academy is located on the southern town centre boundary, 100 metres from Low Street and the shopping centre.

The £6.2m secured from the Future High Streets Fund for Sutton town centre will deliver overall investment of £8.2m and deliver:

### Sutton Theatre:

Refurbishment of a school theatre to open to the public, providing a wide range of entertainment, including theatre shows, cinema screenings and live music.

### Low Street, Sutton:

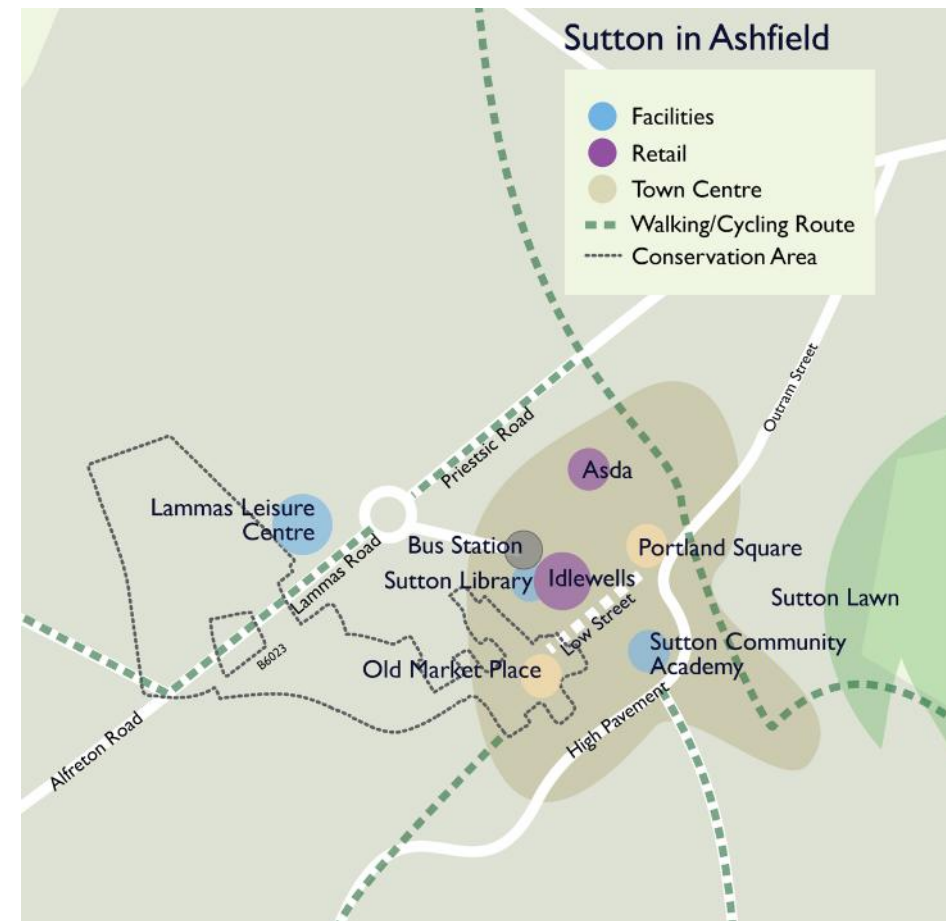
Purchase and repurposing of vacant retail space on Low Street, to revitalise the high street and create a vibrant connection between the north and west of the town centre.

### Fox Street, Sutton:

Redevelopment of a derelict gateway site that is impacting the wider town. Providing a pop-up food space and area for events with improved pedestrian linkages to the town centre and car parking.

### Maker Space and business hub:

Community workshop with equipment for members, including businesses to learn new skills, invent and build with access to prototyping equipment. Nottingham Trent University will use the venue to host events and deliver training for local businesses.



## Chapter Summary: Assets and Strengths

The assets and strengths of the area can be summarised as:



- High quality leisure facilities, new Kirkby Leisure Centre
- Parks and green routes
- Health and Wellbeing partnership and targeted work



- Natural, industrial and cultural heritage
- Captivate & Cultural Compact
- Proximity to Hardwick Hall and Sherwood Forest attractions



- Construction sector - education and employment
- Health sector employment
- Discover Ashfield Place Board
- Nottingham Trent University & Vision West Nottinghamshire College partnership
- D2N2 - advanced manufacturing capital of the UK
- Lower house prices, central UK location, road and rail links



- Cycling and walking routes



# Challenges

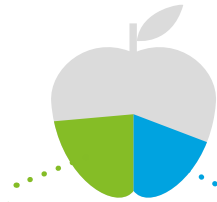
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In this section we discuss the longer-term challenges and issues which have affected the area for many years, including educational attainment, generational worklessness linked to low aspirations, poor health indicators and lower wages. We also discuss the immediate and longer-term impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic which are exacerbating many of the issues.

Both towns are ex-mining communities, the pit closures in the 1980s and 90s and the downturn in the hosiery manufacturing sector over the following two decades impacted the local economy severely. Both towns have struggled to recover and with little investment during this period they have been described as 'left behind towns'.

Ashfield is an area of high deprivation, with the Leamington Estate located in the southern part of Sutton and the Coxmoor Estate on the east of Kirkby the areas of highest deprivation.

Ashfield's Multiple Index of Deprivation (IMD) Ranking is **70th** out of 353 in the UK



5,465 or 24% children are living in poverty in Ashfield

20% of children are living in poverty in England on average

The 2018 figures for children for whom benefits are claimed stood at 86.3% for Kirkby and Sutton, compared with the national average of 77.7%



% Children for whom benefits are claimed in Kirkby & Sutton

% Children for whom benefits are claimed - national average

(Towns Fund website 26.8.20, <https://townsfund.org.uk/dashboard>).

Ashfield ranks in lowest 10% of local authorities on the Sustainable Growth Index . The index provides an overview of an area's strengths and opportunities. Prosperity is the only measure above the national average and is based on GVA; earnings; employment in knowledge-driven sectors; businesses turnover and foreign-owned businesses.

Overall Ashfield ranks 294 out of 324 local authority areas for sustainable growth.

Rank	324	1
Prosperity		91
Dynamism and Opportunity		312
Inclusion and Equality		251
Health, Wellbeing and Happiness		242
Resilience and Sustainability		256
Community, Trust and Belonging		311

Ashfield ranks in the top 20% for businesses turning-over over £1m and over £100m and is above average for Foreign Owned businesses. Although the District is in the top 20% for mean workplace weekly pay, the average annual salary is 9% below the national average. The Prosperity measures current economic strengths whereas Dynamism and Opportunity looks to future economic strength with its focus on skills, research and development and business start-ups. For this measure the District is ranked in the bottom 5% and it is this disparity which underlines the challenge.

# Education and Employment

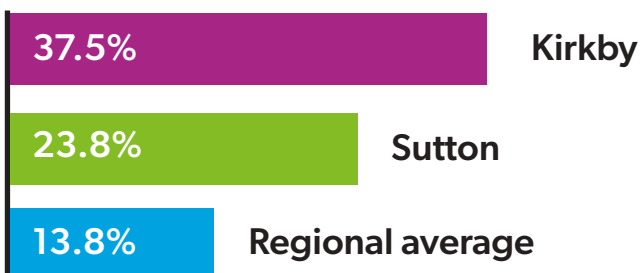
There are significant and persistent issues with low educational attainment in the Kirkby and Sutton area: more people have no qualifications and less people have higher level qualifications than the national average.

The relatively low qualification base means that a significant number of jobs are in elementary occupations where the threat from automation is the greatest. Research by the Wellcome Trust shows that poor educational opportunities to engage in science leads to long term educational as well as economic disadvantage for young people.

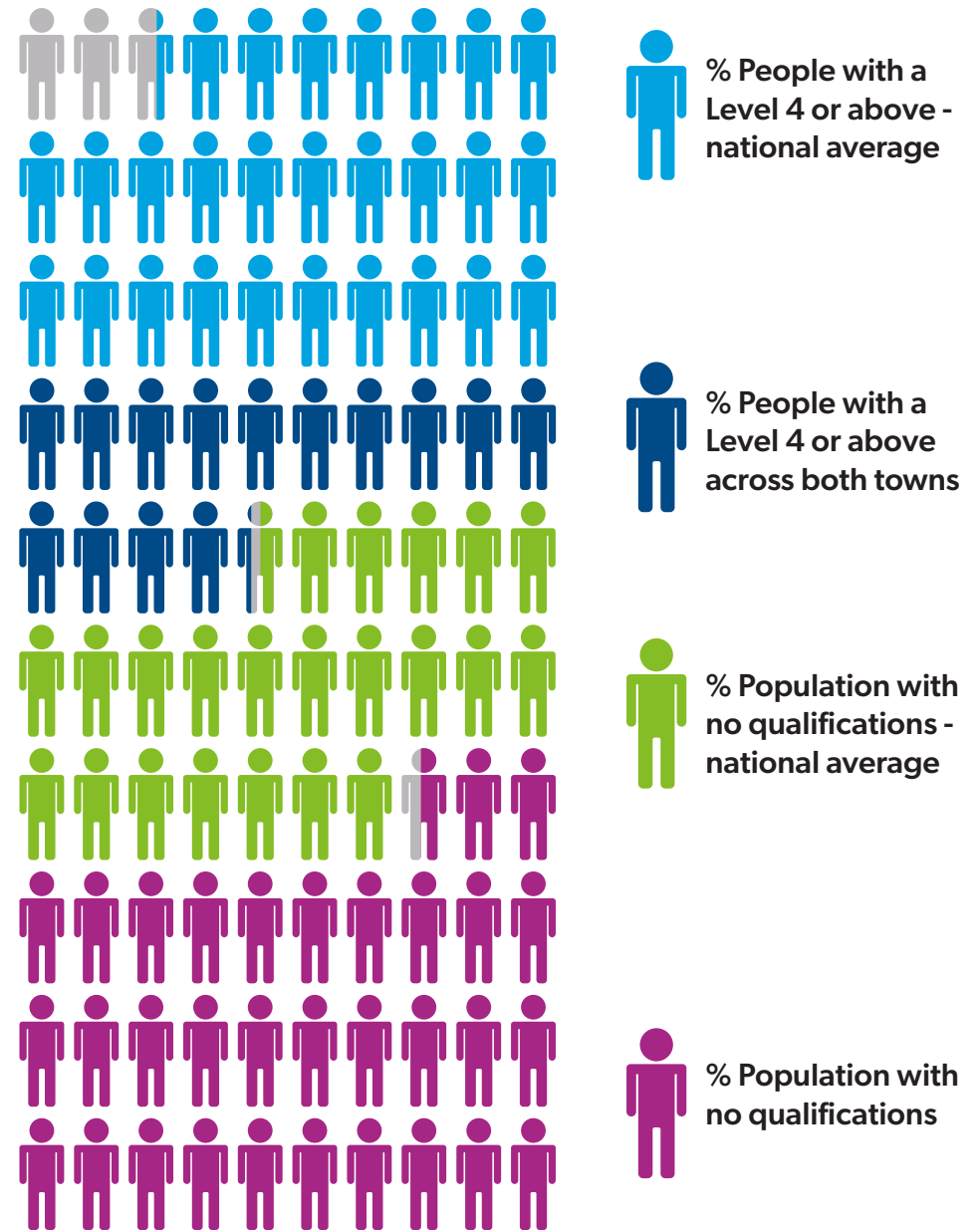
For Education the percentage of Lower Super Output Areas in the most deprived decile show Kirkby at 37.5% compared with the regional average of 13.8%, with Sutton at a lower percentage, but still significantly higher than the regional average at 23.8%. Nearly 12% of young people in the D2N2 area are classified as Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET).


The Vision West Nottinghamshire College construction campus in Kirkby has insufficient space to meet the increased demand for construction qualifications and the construction and trades facilities at Portland College are not fit for purpose and cannot accommodate current and future demand. Inspire is only able to operate from its current site for another two years.

The percentage of Lower Super Output Areas in the most deprived decile




Towns Fund website 26.8.20, <https://townsfund.org.uk/dashboard>



There are a range of issues with regards to employment and earnings in the area, linked to education and skills. There is a lack of start-up facilities and units in the area, evidenced by high occupancy rates. There are lower levels of self-employment than average and low rates of high-level skills limited number of higher paid jobs mean that social mobility is restricted. 

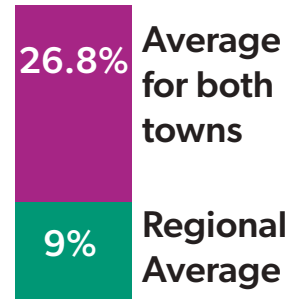
Unemployment rose sharply in 2020 and is likely to increase further following the ending of the furlough scheme. A total of 17,700 jobs (c.31%) associated with Ashfield residents were furloughed as at end of June 2020.

In Ashfield there is a larger number of small and medium-sized businesses which are therefore frequently unable to take a risk to invest in new technologies, techniques or processes. In addition there is no innovation and structured skills support available and businesses looking to invest are more likely to choose a city (AMILF report). 

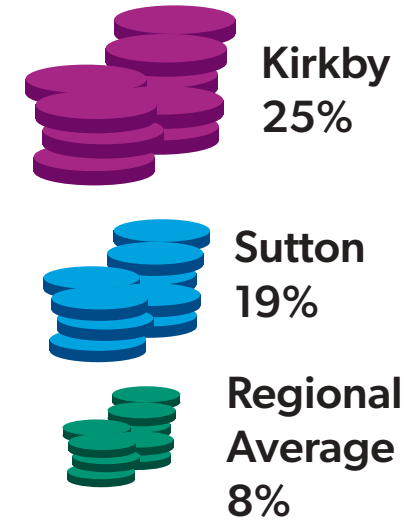
Recent analysis of support needs of SMEs engaging with the D2N2 Growth Hub identified ICT & Digital technologies at 31% and a further 18% needing support with identifying skills needs. The Make UK 2019 report: Digital Skills for a Manufacturing World, highlighted that a third of businesses didn't undertake any digital training in 2019. 

Jobs growth in the public sector due to the pandemic has been outstripped by declines in sectors that were previously driving Ashfield's economy, with a sharper fall in employment in the hospitalities, utilities, transport, professional services and manufacturing sectors compared with the national short term impacts.

**For employment the English indices of deprivation 2019 (percentage of Lower Super Output Areas in the most deprived decile)**

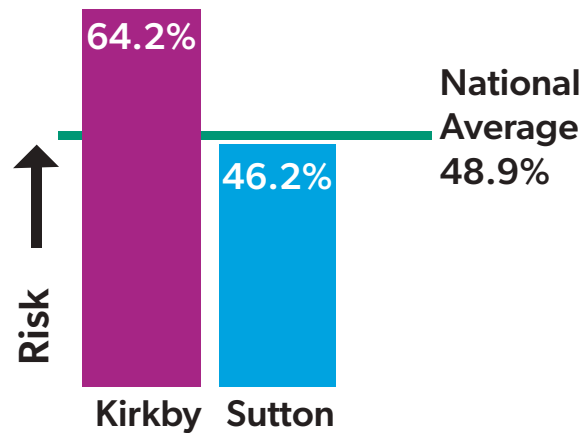


**Income**



Towns Fund website 26.8.20, <https://townsfund.org.uk/dashboard>

**Data for employment in 'at risk' categories**



Towns Fund website 26.8.20, <https://townsfund.org.uk/dashboard>

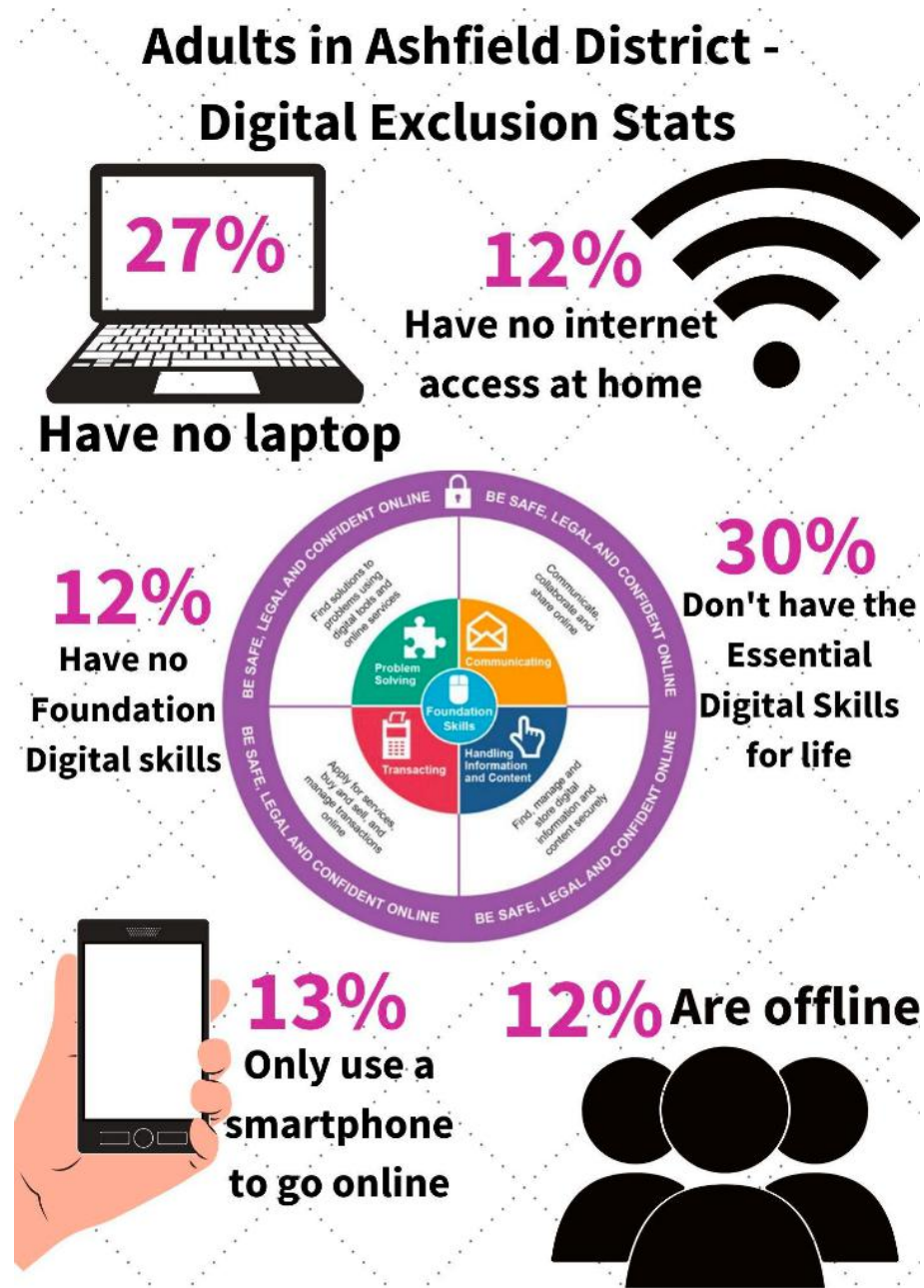
**National Average salary of £30,000**



## Digital Skills

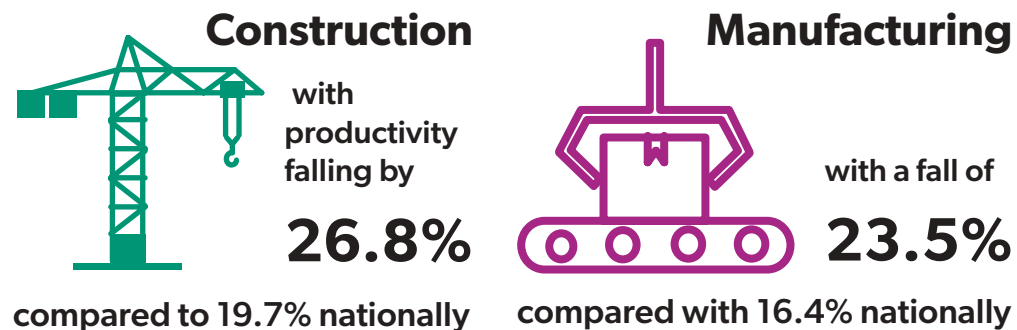
There is a relatively low level of digital literacy, affected by factors including access to equipment; skills and connectivity; age and for disabled people, cost and access to assistive technologies. Digital literacy and baseline digital skills contribute to a productivity shortfall across the D2N2 area, with productivity c.14% lower than nationally and c.32% lower for the Information & Communication sector.

D2N2 research shows that vacancies for ICT in the area result in the highest level of lost income after public sector nursing and education roles of £396m.



## Economic impact of Covid-19

During the pandemic some of the important sectors for the area's growth have declined more sharply than the England and Wales averages:



Data analysed for Ashfield Economic Recovery Plan (September 2020) identified that some of Ashfield's key strategic sectors have been hardest hit by the pandemic. This is reflected within the latest economic data with the sectors most significantly impacted including hospitality, tourism, retail, transport, manufacturing, education and construction.

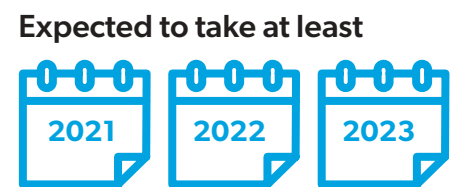
The findings from the report showed the following predicted impacts for the Ashfield area, based on Experian data and analysis:

Predicted short-term economic impact of c.£433 million during 2020, equivalent to a **17% drop in GVA** from pre Covid-19 levels



Reduction of **2,500** workforce jobs in 2020, and a return to pre Covid-19 employment levels after three years

At least **2-3 years** for the local economy to recover to pre Covid-19 levels of economic activity



Expected to take at least for GVA to return to 2019 levels

**4.1% fall is greater than the 3.6% adjustment forecast nationally.**

Approximately 20% of Ashfield's local employment, output and business base fall within sectors at highest risk from short term economic harm which is relatively low and reflects the low reliance on sectors such as hospitality and recreation. However, these are still important sectors and Ashfield faces continued structural vulnerability due to its reliance on manufacturing.


Ashfield has relatively few jobs in sectors that have been impacted significantly in the short term from the pandemic, notably Accommodation, Food Services and Recreation; however, of the five broad sectors where Ashfield has an 'over-representation', all are forecast to see significant declines in employment with the exception of the public sector.

- manufacturing, 7%;
- utilities 9%;
- Wholesale and retail 7%.

## Long Term Future Growth

A Centre for Cities report (Cities Outlook 2018) ([www.centreforcities.org/publication/cities-outlook-2018/](http://www.centreforcities.org/publication/cities-outlook-2018/)) estimated that by 2030 the Ashfield and Mansfield area could lose nearly 30% of all jobs to automation and artificial intelligence. Jobs in shops, administration and warehouses were identified as the most at risk.

The continued shift away from manufacturing, a traditional strength of Ashfield, towards lower paid health and social care sectors and the likely limited amount of transferable skills, is likely to mean that a significant number of older workers are at risk of being left behind. A decade-long rise in the number of over-50s in employment has stalled with this group most likely to struggle to find employment once out of work.

Following the sharp fall in jobs expected for 2020 and the 2-3 year recovery, growth is expected to be weaker than before. Forecasts indicate that it could take a number of years for employment within key sectors such as manufacturing, transport and hospitality to return to pre Covid-19 levels - if at all. 



**The new Amazon distribution warehouse, Sutton**

## Social mobility

The Ashfield and Mansfield area ranks poorly for social mobility (Social Mobility Commission report, 2017), with Ashfield 8th lowest and neighbouring Mansfield 10th lowest of Local Authority areas in England. The index shows that significant gaps open up in the early years for those from disadvantaged backgrounds, through educational attainment and entry to the labour market, on to the opportunities people have in their working lives from availability of higher paid jobs to being able to buy a house.

## Health and Wellbeing

Due to the high levels of deprivation and associated poor health outcomes, health and wellbeing is one of the biggest challenges for the area. Deprivation, obesity and inactivity levels contribute to poor health outcomes and lower life expectancy across the area compared with national averages. The regional average indices of deprivation at 9.6% contrast with the Kirkby average of 12.5% and Sutton of 28.6% (2019 - percentage of Lower Super Output Areas in the most deprived decile).

Towns Fund website 26.8.20, <https://townsfund.org.uk/dashboard>)

The latest health profile (2019, Public Health England) shows Ashfield performing worse than the England average across factors such as mortality from cancer at 147.4 (England average: 132.3) and Hospital admission rate for alcohol related conditions at 775.1 (England average: 663.7).

For behavioural risk factors District figures are worse than national averages and physical inactivity levels are the worst in Nottinghamshire. Barriers to participation prevent many adults from being active, particularly in areas of deprivation and include childcare, illness and long-term health conditions.



### Physically active adults



at 60.6%

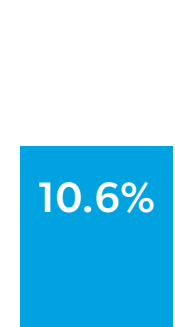


compared with  
the England  
average of  
66.3%

### Smoking during pregnancy



Ashfield



England  
average

### Adults classified as overweight or obese

**7.4%**

above the England  
average at 69.4%

### Breastfeeding initiation

**11.4%**

below the  
England  
average at

**63.1%**



### Year 6 prevalence of obesity



England average

Ashfield



## Housing

Relatively low sale and rental values for housing affect site viability, making it difficult to attract development and to negotiate developer contributions for requirements such as affordable housing, transport, public realm and health. As a consequence brownfield and underused sites in and around Kirkby town centre are unviable for development without intervention from the public sector.

## Crime and Safety

Sutton has a considerably higher rate of recorded crime than the national average, in 2019 the rate of 111 per 1,000 population compared with the national average of 82. Kirkby was below the average with 78.

(Towns Fund website 7.12.20, <https://townsfund.org.uk/dashboard>)

The Community Safety Partnership Public Consultation, 2019 found that the number one issue of concern was drug taking or dealing, followed by rowdy/inconsiderate behaviour and then dog fouling. Analysis of the consultation concluded that local communities feel that a lack of Police and other authorities is a significant concern, as well as the fear of crime and levels of crime.

## Transport and Accessibility

As a region, infrastructure in the East Midlands has been historically underfunded. The latest data shows that the region receives £245 per capita for transport expenditure, compared to £412 in the West Midlands, £528 in the North West and £1,019 in London. Spending on transport has also increased at a much slower rate over the last decade, at 3.35% for the East Midlands compared to 79% for London.

One of the main issues identified in public consultations is the congestion around Kirkby town centre at peak times on the main through-route, the B6020 connecting Kirkby to Rainworth and to strategic routes including the A611 (Nottingham to Mansfield, via Hucknall), A60 (Loughborough to Doncaster, via Nottingham) and A617 (Newark to Chesterfield, via Mansfield).

A study commissioned as part of the development work for the Towns Fund, reviewed junction capacity, signal controls and the potential for a Kirkby relief road to alleviate congestion. It found that a potential link road through the Patco development site would only provide minor improvement, would not alleviate congestion through the town centre and would not provide value for money. The report concluded that alternative signal control would have a greater impact on congestion.

A transport study commissioned in 2016 for the draft Local Plan predicted that required housing development will increase congestion on sections of many strategic routes if no mitigation is undertaken, in particular the A38. The draft Local Plan was withdrawn in 2019 and a revised transport study will be commissioned once potential development sites have been agreed.

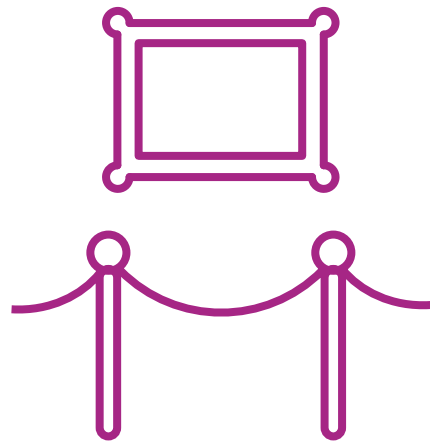
# Visitor Economy, Arts and Culture

The area has a weak visitor offer which is limited and fragmented, with much of the heritage hidden or lost during the last century, as well as deterioration of some sites, for example the Grade II listed Annesley Hall.

People living in Ashfield have less engagement with the arts than the national average, a consequence of social and economic deprivation and lack of offer, with no commercial theatres or art galleries. The Active Lives Survey 2015-17 showed:

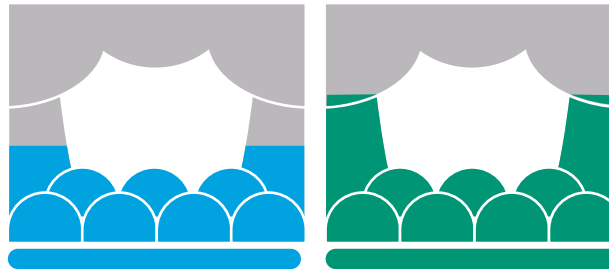


Engagement in arts and culture was 10% lower than the national average at



66% which includes visits to public libraries

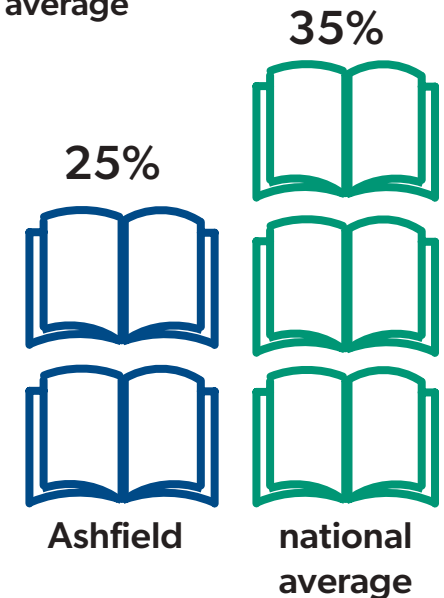
For arts participation and attendance, including arts, dance, literature, theatre and music the gap is even wider



48%  
Ashfield

60.6%  
national average

Use of public libraries is also well below the national average



Ashfield

national average

Due to lack of access museum and gallery visits are under 13% lower than the national average at



less than 34%.

All factors are classed as 'significantly lower'

## Town Centres

The District's town centres have faced the challenges of many high streets, linked to changes in shopping habits, increased operating costs for retail and decreased disposable income. In both towns there is a limited cultural offer and a weak night time economy, and for Sutton in particular, competition from out of town development.

Following the pandemic lockdowns consumer confidence is at an all-time low, and retail, and hospitality, have been particularly badly hit in Ashfield as across the UK. The District's town centres are particularly reliant on retail employment, with 4,300 jobs in the sector in 2019, almost a third higher than what might be expected for the size of the economy.

In October 2020, the town centre vacancy rates for Kirkby and Sutton were both above the national average of 11.3%, with Kirkby at 12.9% and Sutton 14.4%.



Image: Sutton Town Centre by Robin Macey

## Kirkby in Ashfield

Significant parts of the town centre are underdeveloped with poor use of space, as well as excess small-sized retail units. Underdeveloped areas include the NHS health and wellbeing centre site, the Pond Street and Patco sites, Festival Hall (site for the new leisure centre) and the Lane End site, as well as a large number of individual health centres and pharmacies close to the high street.

In a SWOT analysis undertaken for the town centre masterplan in 2019, the limited offer, number of vacant units and local competition from Sutton and Mansfield are identified as weaknesses with a need to have a 'complementary' offer. The pedestrianised high street on Lowmoor Road is particularly at risk with a high turnover of businesses and the loss of the Post Office in 2020 to an out of the town location. Through surveys residents tell us they would like different shops.

There are a limited number of uses in the town centre with a predominance of retail which spreads out beyond the core, diluting the offer. The night-time economy is very limited, with two pubs and a micro-pub.

The plaza has no active frontage and is infrequently used for events. Morrison's adjacent to the pedestrianised high street provides free parking but it is difficult to attract shoppers into the wider town centre.



**'can we have some decent shops please eg clothing shops, green grocers, perhaps another supermarket.. a decent market eg selling fresh fruit veg, meat, haberdashery, clothing, hardware..'**  
**#MyTowns**



## Sutton in Ashfield

Sutton is one of the most challenged town centres in Nottinghamshire and the D2N2 area and is struggling to adapt to changes in shopping habits. It is over-dependent on retail which takes up 71% of floorspace, and leaks into secondary retail, for example Outram Street to the north-east. There is a limited food and beverage offer of only 3% and leisure provision of 13.2% compared to the national average of 22.7%. A 2018 (Springboard Vacancy Rate Survey Report) identified a high dependence on discount retailers, with a lack of choice for consumers and leakage of consumer spend out of the area.

Much of the retail stock outside of the Idlewells Shopping Centre is in poor condition and no longer fit for purpose, in particular on Outram Street, around Portland Square and along Low Street towards the Old Market Place. The town has limited community and cultural facilities and lacks a food and beverage/night time offer. There is a lack of good quality residential provision in the town centre, many of the conversions of commercial to residential have been poor quality, particularly on Outram Street. The public realm is in poor condition, for example at Portland Square.

One of the main challenges is competition from neighbouring centres, in particular Mansfield and the East Midlands Designer Outlet, as well as Nottingham city centre (12 miles) and further afield Meadowhall shopping centre, near Sheffield at J34 of the M1. The East Midlands Designer Outlet is located three miles from Sutton town centre, close to J28 of the M1. It has over 70 stores, cafés and restaurants, free parking and a local bus service.

**'Better shops, bars and market'**

**'More useful shops no more banks building societies and estates agents'**

**'have a better outdoor market also more decoration like commissioned street art, flowers, just make the place look good and make it somewhere people want to shop'**

**'The town is dated. Please improve the walkways and benches in the town centre'.**

**'get rid of the eyesore outdoor market or move it and improve it, fill empty shops and bring back life to the town!''**

## Chapter Summary: Challenges

The challenges of the area can be summarised as:



- Deprivation and health inequalities
- Sutton crime rates



- Weak & fragmented visitor offer
- Low arts engagement
- **Town Centres**
- Weak night time economy
- Vacancy rates & competition
- Limited residential
- **Kirkby** – underdevelopment, fragmented health care, Plaza area.
- **Sutton** – limited leisure, and food & beverage offer, retail overprovision, poor condition of buildings and public realm.



- Pit closures and manufacturing decline, threat to jobs from automation
- Left behind towns
- Lower educational attainment and restricted construction education capacity
- Less high value jobs, lower wages and restricted social mobility
- Economic impact of Covid-19 and unemployment
- Lack of innovation and skills support
- Low digital literacy, skills and productivity & high vacancies




- Housing development viability
- Low spend on transport infrastructure
- Congestion in Kirkby

# Key Opportunities

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The funding provided through the government's agenda to 'level up' towns such as Kirkby and Sutton provides a once in a generation opportunity to create sustainable change across the area. It can provide the investment needed to develop the visitor economy and sustainable transport infrastructure; develop green technology and new housing; create opportunities for employment and education, by evolving the traditional strengths of manufacturing and construction ICON and support the town centres to adapt and repurpose, creating a greater community focus. The key opportunities are discussed in further detail in this section.

## Education and Employment

There is an opportunity to capitalise on the area's traditional strengths in manufacturing and construction and the growth in health and social care. We can evolve to create a diverse economy focused on innovation and sustainability. With a focus on the skills agenda, specifically digital and higher level skills, older people can be supported to adapt to alternative employment and young people entering the workforce can have the necessary skills. 

Although there is potential for demand to slow in the short-term due to the pandemic, signs from the construction sector are of a quick recovery and large scale developments within the local area and across the region will create a need for high value skills within the sector. Recent research by D2N2 and the Construction Industry Training Board (October 2020), found that public and private housing and infrastructure will grow construction employment by a combined 21.5% and England will see growth in construction of 5.5% over the next five years.

It is likely that there will be fewer manufacturing jobs, but the jobs will be higher value. By investing in skills and research and development we can help to ensure that these jobs are created and retained in Ashfield, and are accessible to local people. Post-Brexit there is also the opportunity for re-shoring of manufacturing, and the generation of more local (and shorter) supply chains.

Given the impact of the Covid-19 lockdowns, the need to develop digital skills for businesses and residents is more important than ever, with demand for digital skills increasing. The Council is commissioning a Skills Strategy with a specific digital focus to help ensure that everyone can access the resources and services they need.

Research undertaken by DCMS shows that SMEs which utilise relatively simple digital options such as a website, social media, cloud-based IT, e:commerce and analytics can increase annual turnover by over £280k.

There is a relatively high demand for digital occupations compared to other occupations in the D2N2 area, with 82% of advertised roles including a 'digital component' and roles requiring digital skills paying 29% more.

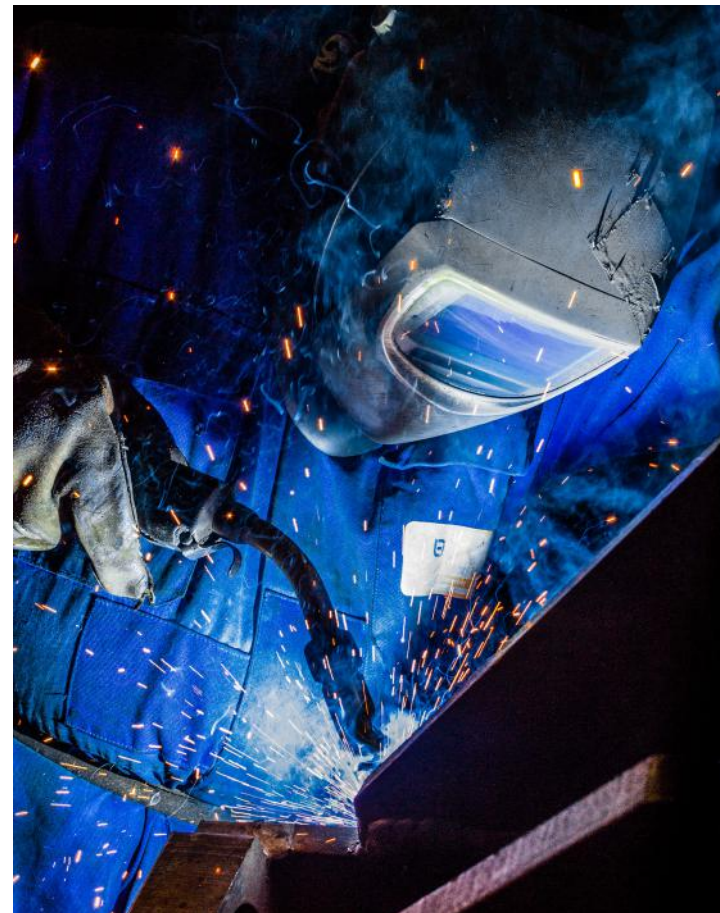


Image: James Eaton



## Health and Wellbeing

Analysis undertaken by Nottinghamshire County Council during 2020 shows that walking and cycling have increased in popularity during the pandemic, reflecting the national picture. As a former mining area there are miles of former railway corridors in the area, providing an opportunity to further develop the off-road cycling and walking network.



## Environment and Housing

There is an opportunity to prioritise sustainable infrastructure, creating and safeguarding jobs and helping to secure Ashfield's adaption to a net zero carbon economy.

The Council is working with Nottingham City Council who are recognised as one of the leading Councils in the country for their work on Climate Change and carbon reduction. A carbon management plan is being developed to pioneer innovation and application of green technology to drive longer term growth and productivity. The Council submitted a bid in January 2021 to the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme to retrofit solar to a number of Council-owned buildings and complements a bid to the Green Homes Grant Scheme for works to council houses.

With regard to Housing need there is demand for the majority of housing types, with family and older person's accommodation most in demand, and a need for more than 230 new rented affordable properties per year.

(Housing Needs Study, 2020)

## Transport and Accessibility

Plans for HS2 Phase 2b include a connection onto the East Coast Main Line via the East Midlands and South Yorkshire. Connectivity to the East Midlands Hub at Toton is a key priority for Ashfield with upgrades to the local transport networks to the Hub essential to ensure that benefits are maximised without causing delays to existing networks.

A recent review estimates that £85m of investment could provide local connections to the East Midlands Hub by upgrading the existing Maid Marian mineral line between Mansfield Woodhouse and Toton for a passenger service.

It is estimated that for every £1 spent, there would be over £4 in economic benefits for local communities, enabling an additional 500,000 people to access HS2 and associated employment opportunities.

HS2 would generate jobs in the District during construction with a main compound near J27 of the M1 and satellite compounds creating up to 256 full-time jobs (550 at peak times). A main compound at Castlewood Business Park, Sutton and satellite compounds would create up to 742 full-time jobs, with the compounds operational for over five years.

The Council has secured up to £50k through the Restoring Your Railways Fund to develop a business case for upgrading the Maid Marian line. Upgrading works would include culverting and improvements to the track and signalling to increase speeds, as well as station improvements. An outline business case (2020) demonstrated value for money to achieve wider rural and European connectivity.

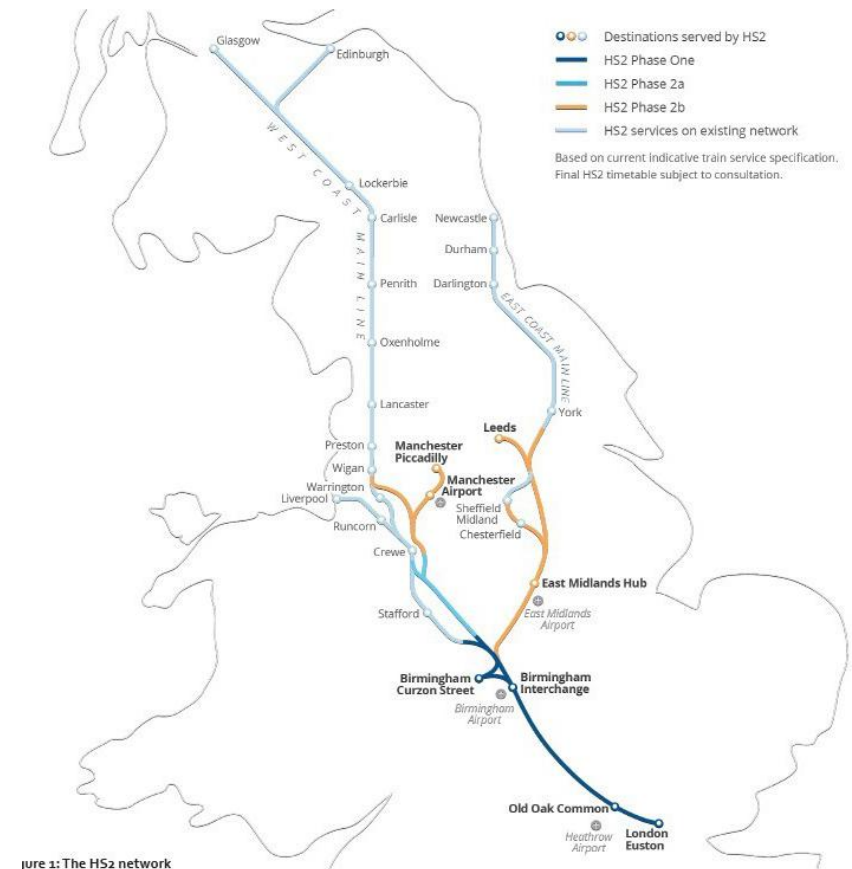


Figure 1: The HS2 network

The funding bid, sponsored by MP Lee Anderson is supported by Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire authorities. Ashfield Council is working with the Department for Transport and Derbyshire authorities to agree the scope, governance and timescales for the study.

An additional station at Kings Mill Reservoir is being added to the study, this proposal was included in the Towns Fund public consultation in 2020, but was not included as a Priority Project due to the delivery timeframe being outside of the five years for Towns Fund.

## Visitor Economy, Arts and Culture

There is huge potential to develop the area's visitor economy and cultural offer, by exploiting its heritage and environment, developing existing and new assets and raising the profile and identity of the towns. This includes opportunities to benefit from assets which are on the boundary which include Hardwick Hall and Newstead Abbey which in 2019 had combined number of visits exceeding 400,000.



Annesley Old Hall

## Town Centres

Investment provides the opportunity to create thriving and revitalised town centres with a greater focus on leisure, community, housing, healthcare and educational uses, as well as increasing the cultural opportunities of public places. Together with a more streamlined retail offer and a vibrant night-time economy.

Increasing residential provision in town centres has many benefits including higher density development with reduced carbon emissions; access to sustainable transport, shops and services and supporting the vitality of town centres, as recognised in the national Planning Practice Guidance Town Centre & Retail.

In Kirkby town centre the key opportunities are to increase residential provision and address underdevelopment; consolidate health service provision and diversify the high street.

In Sutton there is an opportunity for a comprehensive programme of repurposing and upgrading of property. Development of the two anchors at the north (Fox Street site and Portland Square) and the west (Sutton Theatre) of the town, through the Future High Streets Funding will support new uses for vacant properties along Low Street.

## Chapter Summary: Key Opportunities

The key opportunities of the area can be summarised as:



- Cycling and walking network



- Visitor economy and cultural offer

### Town Centres

- Thriving and revitalised centres with greater focus on leisure, community, housing, healthcare and educational uses
- Develop night time economy
- **Kirkby** - residential provision, address underdevelopment; consolidate health service provision, diversify high street, activity around Plaza
- **Sutton**- repurposing and upgrading property, development of anchors at Fox Street, Portland Square & Sutton Theatre (through FHSF)



- Innovation and sustainability
- Research and development
- Manufacturing, construction & green technology, health and social care - jobs and skills
- Increased productivity and growth
- More higher value jobs and higher skills, including digital for business and residents



- Sustainable infrastructure; low carbon housing
- Carbon reduction
- HS2 & Maid Marian passenger service

# Engagement



## Discover Ashfield Board

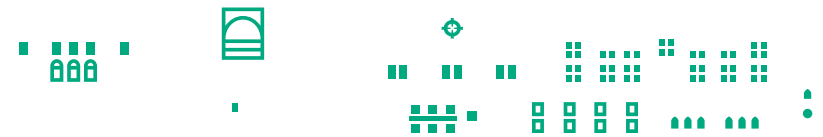
The board was formed in 2017 to work in partnership to improve the prosperity and success of Ashfield. Discover Ashfield is a private sector led partnership which celebrates all that is best about living, visiting, working and doing business in the District. The board is supported by officers from the Council, including a graduate project officer.

In 2018 the board commissioned consultants to create place branding which included working with local groups and businesses to develop the focus and name for the place board. As a result Discover Ashfield was created, centred on promoting Ashfield; developing pride and aspiration in communities, with a focus on business and the visitor economy.

Engagement, partnership working, and delivery are established key strengths of the Discover Ashfield Board. With a specific transformational focus the board has set a high level of ambition to deliver for the District. It provides a strong partnership approach to developing and delivering projects guided by a Delivery Plan. An Ambassadors scheme has recruited more than 70 people from across the business, community and visitor sectors to support the board.

The board agreed to act as the Towns Fund Board at a meeting in December 2019. It includes representatives from local and national businesses, education establishments and community organisations. The board was expanded to meet the requirements of the Towns Fund, with the addition of local MPs, Ashfield Voluntary Action (the main infrastructure organisation within the District), DWP, NHS and Annesley Parish Council (the only Parish within the Towns Fund area).

### Kirkby



### Sutton



### Ashfield



# Discover Ashfield Board Structure Chart

**Martin Rigley**  
Chair

**Louise Knott**  
Vice Chair

## Theme Leads



**Liz Barrett**



**Pete Edwards**



**Darron Ellis**



**Martin Rigley**

## Board Members

Ashfield Youth Council: Callum Parr

Notts CCG: David Ainsworth

Ashfield Voluntary Action: Teresa Jackson

Portland College: Edward Johnstone

Mansfield and Ashfield 2020: Gary Jordan

Rolls Royce: Robert Orgill

Ashfield District Council: CEO,  
Director of Place and Communities

Nottingham Trent University: Fiona Anderson

Citizens Advice Ashfield: Kathryn Stacey

D2N2: Rachel Quinn

DWP: Vicki Dyer

ATTFE: Simon Martin

Idlewells Centre: Chloe O'Donnell

ADC: Cllr Helen-Ann Smith, Deputy Leader  
Cllr Matthew Relf, Cabinet Member for  
Place, Planning and Regeneration

East Midland Designer Outlet: David Jackson

Lee Anderson, MP

Mark Spencer, MP

Annesley Parish Council: Cllr Jason Zadrozny

## Supporting Officers

### Ashfield District Council

Sarah Daniel, Lead Support  
Andrea Stone, Health and Wellbeing  
Trevor Middleton, Town Centres and Markets  
Lana Mills, Discover Ashfield Project Officer  
Katherine Green, Corporate Communications

### Nottinghamshire County Council

Matthew Neal

Comprehensive engagement has been undertaken to ensure that residents, businesses and partners are aware of the opportunity provided through the Towns Fund and can actively be involved in the process. We have encouraged project suggestions through all engagement activity and suggestions put forward have all been discussed with the Towns Fund board. More detailed information about the process undertaken to date and planned future engagement is included in the Engagement Plan in Annex 4.

Engagement began in December 2019, with a Council staff workshop and a Discover Ashfield stakeholder workshop in February 2020 which was attended by over 20 organisations.

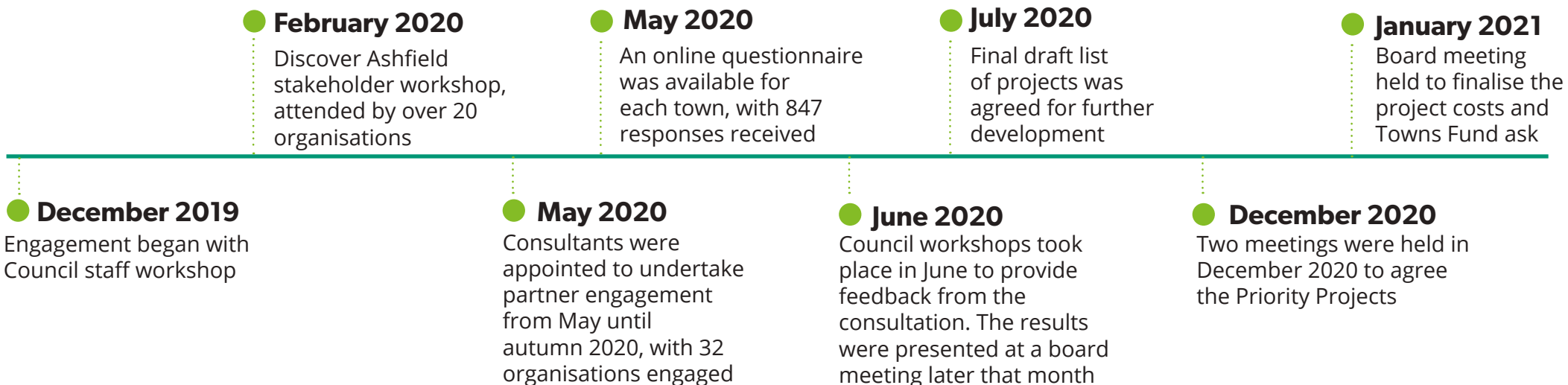
Since the stakeholder event work has been ongoing with partners to develop projects including D2N2, Nottingham Trent University, Nottinghamshire County Council, Inspire and education providers.

During the engagement there was a specific emphasis on **Skills and Enterprise Infrastructure**, recognising that this was a weakness in the area. Consultants were appointed to undertake partner engagement from May until autumn 2020, with 32 organisations engaged.

Our approach for **public and business consultation** was to develop a draft list of projects which could be funded through the Towns Fund, using ideas from the workshops. We considered it important to provide examples of the type of projects which would be eligible to increase levels of interest and engagement. There was also the opportunity and encouragement for the submission of other ideas.

During May 2020 an online questionnaire was available for each town, with 847 responses received for Sutton and 524 for Kirkby, a c.4% response rate. There was a good geographical spread of responses across both town areas. We addressed concerns about inclusion through Ashfield Voluntary Action contacting community groups to offer a paper-based version.

Urban regeneration and employment projects were particularly well supported across both towns, in particular proposals for Skills and Enterprise. There was also a high level of support for improvements to parks and open spaces and upgrading and creation of cycling routes, and a good level of support for sports hubs. Projects at the two stations were well supported and there was high level of support for a relief road in Kirkby.





For **Kirkby Town Centre** there was generally support for developing sites in the town centre for mixed use, including residential, as well as a café at the plaza and redeveloping vacant retail units on the pedestrianised high street.

For **Sutton Town Centre** there was support for contracting the retail offer, through encouraging businesses to relocate from Outram Street into the centre and re-purposing vacant units on Low Street. There was also support for redesigning the main public space at Portland Square.

The #MyTown campaign provided 57 suggestions and comments for Kirkby and 87 for Sutton. All suggestions submitted up until June 2020 were incorporated into the feedback to the board. Comments provided after June were monitored and any new suggestions which were eligible were fed-back through the board for consideration.

The majority of comments for Kirkby focused on road repairs and the one-way system, as well as requests for more shops.

Comments for Sutton were more varied, ranging from comments on improving roads and repairing potholes to better opportunities for young people, as well as improvements to the town centre.

## Kirkby - 57 suggestions

**“The one way system is shocking you can s[i]t for hours in heavy traffic going nowhere”**

**“a complete upgrade of our roads and pavements, which doesn’t include the usual and unacceptable patchwork fixes”**

**“can we have some decent shops please eg clothing shops, green grocers, perhaps another supermarket...a decent market eg selling fresh fruit, veg, meat, haberdashery, clothing, hardware”**

## Sutton- 87 suggestions

**“Better shops, bars and market”**

**“More useful shops no more banks building societies and estates agents”**

**“.. .we also need some more investment in businesses that can help the young people get involved with valuable industry. This would not only bring revenue to the area, but would also encourage young people to stick around and build lives here”**



**“The town is dated. Please improve the walkways and benches in the town”**

**“just make the place look good and make it some where people want to shop”**

Council workshops took place in June to provide feedback from the consultation and the results were then presented at a board meeting later that month where it was agreed to set up a steering group of board and ward Council members to develop the vision for the TIP and establish a draft list of projects.

The steering group met to refine the project list in order to build consensus and ensure engagement and support. A number of projects were voted to be dropped at this stage due to limited support, concerns about the timescale/ likelihood of delivery and cost. For Kirkby these included the development of the derelict Annesley Hall Grade II Listed site for a hotel/ spa wedding venue and for Sutton, developing camping sites and de-pedestrianisation in the town centre.

At the next board meeting in July the final draft list of projects was agreed for further development. Over the next few months subsequent meetings were used to provide an update on projects and the board discussed issues and areas for focus. Two meetings were held in December 2020 to agree the Priority Projects. A Council ward members meeting was also held in December to present the project list and receive feedback. In January 2021 a board meeting was held to finalise the project costs and Towns Fund ask.

We continue to engage with residents, businesses and partners as we further develop the Priority Projects. The Discover Ashfield Board and Ambassador network facilitates wider engagement with businesses, schools and residents and will help to ensure that engagement will continue during project development and delivery.

**Private sector** engagement to date has included working with the agents of development sites, including the Patco (Kirkby), Lane End (West Kirkby Gateway) and Pond Hole (North Kirkby Gateway). Vision West Nottinghamshire College, Sutton Community Academy and Nottingham Trent University have been engaged throughout the process, as board members and as part of the development of the education projects.

Our ambition is to attract significant private sector investment to support delivery of our Town Investment Plan, with £3.8m secured to date, including in-kind contributions, and a target of c.£19.75m.



**“Create multi-agency community hub”**

**“Ensure good access for patients including sufficient parking provision”**

## Part Two

# Strategy

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The previous sections describe how the Kirkby and Sutton area is experienced as a place in which to live, visit, work, study and do business; we have explored the area's heritage often rooted in industry, its challenges and the barriers to economic and social prosperity and its potential, particularly around its connectivity and industry specialisms. ICON

In this section we set out a vision for the town that is transformative and deliverable and discuss how this vision aligns with national and more local policies.

We have developed a strategy to realise this comprehensive vision through four Themes for Change; in order to deliver a series of realisable and manageable initiatives. The following section describes a journey from overall vision to objectives and ultimately proposes a programme of Priority Projects which can be taken forward through Towns Fund investment.

# Towns' Vision

Through a workshop with Discover Ashfield board members and representatives of Kirkby and Sutton District Council members we developed the vision, the Themes for Change and the goals for the Towns Fund investment plan.

Our vision for the Kirkby and Sutton area is:

**To create a great place to live, visit, work, study and do business**

Our focus for Kirkby is:

**To improve health and wellbeing and create sustainable living**



Image: Hayley Buxton

Our focus for Sutton is:

**To create a place where enterprise thrives, with great places to visit**



The vision is adapted from Discover Ashfield's mission and the four Themes for Change are: Be Healthy, Be Happy, More to Discover, Succeed in Ashfield and Greener Ashfield. The first three themes are taken from Discover Ashfield and Greener Ashfield from a Council corporate theme. The Discover Ashfield mission was developed in 2018, following a series of workshops undertaken with focus groups representing business and the local community (Annex 4 – Engagement Plan).

We developed the following goals to deliver the Themes for Change:



### Goals:

- Great visitor attractions
- A walking & cycling network
- Thriving town centres

### Goals:

- Better opportunities for learning and employment
- Strong and growing economy

### Goals:

- More learning and jobs in sustainable construction
- Greener homes, businesses and travel options
- Council to be Carbon Neutral by 2027

### Goals:

- Reduced health inequalities
- Great sports facilities and opportunities for activity
- Consolidated and accessible health services

Taken together the four Themes for Change create an overarching strategy for transformation. In the following pages we move to a more granular view of each theme, and introduce the individual projects that will meet the challenges.

# Theory of Change



## Goals:

- Reduced health inequalities
- Great sports facilities and opportunities for activity
- Consolidated and accessible health services

## Output

- Upgraded sports facilities
- Enhanced high street and town centre experience that prioritises the health, safety and mobility of pedestrians

## Impact

Reduced health inequalities, people are more active and feel happier, with excellent facilities for sport and activity.

## Outcome

- Consolidated & new health facilities



## Goals:

- Great visitor attractions
- A walking & cycling network
- Thriving town centres

## Output

- New or upgraded cycle or walking paths
- Enhanced high street and town centre experience
- Improved convenience and sustainability of travel options to and from places of work & places of interest
- Increased town centre footfall

## Impact

- Strong visitor and cultural offer
- Vibrant Town Centres

## Outcome

- Improved arts, cultural and heritage offer that is more visible and easier for residents/visitors to access
- Improved affordability, convenience, reliability, sustainability of travel options to and from places of work and interest (especially shops and amenities)
- Enhanced townscape that is more attractive and more accessible to residents, businesses and visitors
- Increased visitor numbers



### Goals:

- Better opportunities for learning and employment
- Strong and growing economy



### Goals:

- More learning and jobs in sustainable construction
- Greener homes, businesses and travel options
- Council to be Carbon Neutral by 2027

### Output

- Delivery of quality commercial space in key locations (town centres, gateway)
- Increase in capacity and accessibility to new or improved skills facilities
- Increased and closer collaboration with employers
- Increase in the breadth of the local skills offer that responds to local skills needs
- Increase in the amount (and diversity) of high quality, affordable commercial floor space
- Increase in the amount of shared workspace or innovation facilities
- Increased benefit for the public education over the long term

### Outcome

- Increased utilisation of digital channels, by businesses, to access and/or supply goods and services
- Increase in skills, incl. digital
- Increased employment
- Innovation based business growth
- Increased share of young people and adults who have relevant skills for employment and entrepreneurship
- Increased number of enterprises utilising high quality, affordable and sustainable commercial spaces
- Increased number of start-ups and/or scale-ups utilising business incubation, acceleration and co-working spaces

### Impact

- Reduced digital exclusion
- Increased skills & employment
- Innovation based growth

### Output

- Reduced carbon
- Upgraded train stations
- New & upgraded road infrastructure
- New, revived, or upgraded train and tram lines and stations
- Reduced congestion within the town and reduced carbon

### Outcome

- Infrastructure upgrades to bus services
- Increased use of sustainable energy
- Electric vehicle infrastructure
- Encouraging further investment from network operators

### Impact

- Resilient to Climate Change
- A better environment
- Sustainable businesses
- Greener travel options

# Spatial Strategy and Priority Projects

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# Spatial Strategy

Planned investment is focused on the town centres: Kirkby - £24.77m, including gateway sites and edge of centre sites and Sutton - £22.75m including gateway sites and edge of centre sites (this figure includes the £8.2m investment from the Future High Streets Fund programme). Other investment is focused on a number of sites within the Towns Fund boundary: skills and innovation: £40.22m; developing the visitor economy and sports provision: £16m; and Greener Ashfield: £3m.

The Towns Fund programme provides overall investment into the Kirkby and Ashfield area of over £97m, with a total Towns Fund ask of £61.7m and a co-funding target of £36m.

The maps shows the level of planned investment across the area and includes other confirmed investment, including Kirkby Leisure Centre and the Future High Street funded projects.



## Project appraisal and prioritisation

The project appraisal and prioritisation process is provided in Annex 1. The process involved scoring 38 project ideas which had been agreed by the board across the factors of: Strategic Fit to the vision; Deliverability; Additionality; Economic outputs and Leveraging of wider funding. Projects were rated across the categories from Very Good to Very Poor and were also given a risk rating to determine an overall score. 24 of the projects passed this initial gateway process which included five projects included within the Future High Streets bid for Sutton. Projects were presented to the steering group and a vote took place to determine which should be included in the priority list.

Development work was then undertaken to determine outline designs and costings. The project appraisal was reviewed in December 2020 to determine any adjustments required to the scoring following the development work and funding bid outcomes. At the December board meetings it was agreed to move the South Sutton Gateway & Parkway project to the pipeline list; look at refocusing the Patco site project; reducing the budget for the Library Innovation centres and West Kirkby Gateway, and review the costs for the North Kirkby Gateway site.

Once confirmation of Future High Streets funding was confirmed five projects were removed from the priority list. This process created a final list of 17 Priority Projects for Towns Fund investment.

The table opposite shows the full list of projects which were taken through the appraisal process.

Priority Projects	Projects not included
North Kirkby Gateway	Market Place new build
Kirkby Sports Hub	Note: included in FHSF but reviewed and removed from both programmes in Jan 2021, due to impact of Covid-19 and increase in vacancies
Sutton Lawn Sports Hub	South Sutton Gateway & Parkway
Cycling and Walking routes	Note: included but removed in Dec 2020 due to advice from East Midlands Railways that Network Rail investment would not be available due to Covid impact
Visitor Digital Offer	Health Hub Site at Portland Street, Kirkby
Sherwood Observatory Science Discovery Centre and Planetarium	Kirkby College
Kings Mill Reservoir Lesiure Development	Diamond Avenue Site
Portland Square, Sutton Refurbishment	Warwick Close Site & Coxmoor
Automated Distribution & Manufacturing Centre	Sherwood Business Park
Sutton Construction Centre	Annesley Hall
Kirkby Civil Engineering Centre	District Parks & Open Spaces Development
Sutton Library Innovation Centre, with Kirkby Satellite	Electric Vehicle Charging
West Kirkby Gateway & Public Transport Centre Note: industrial units at Lane End removed from the scheme due to overall project cost, but included as a pipeline project	Town Centre Internet & Mobile Connectivity
High Street Property Fund	Tourism Wi-Fi
Patco site, Kirkby	Camping Site
Green Ashfield	Public Car Parking
Skills & Enterprise programme	
<b>Future High Streets Fund</b>	
Maker Space	
Sutton Academy Theatre	
Low Street -repurposing of vacant retail space	
Fox Street pop-up food & car park	
<b>Pipeline projects</b>	
Maid Marian line / East Midlands Hub	
Kings Mill Railway Station	
Industrial Units, Lane End	
South Sutton Gateway and Parkway	

# Priority Projects

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In the next section we introduce each Theme for Change, the intended impact and the intervention themes they align to. We then go on to discuss the Priority Projects, providing an overview and rationale, estimated costings and outcomes and outputs.

# Be Healthy, Be Happy

Reduced health inequalities, people are more active and feel happier, with excellent facilities for sport and activity.

## Intervention Framework Themes:

Urban regeneration, planning and land use; Arts, culture and heritage

**Our ambition is to provide access to good quality green spaces, sport and leisure opportunities, active travel options and accessible healthcare. This will help to address health inequalities and support people to increase activity and make healthy lifestyle choices.**

The Be Healthy, Be Happy programme will deliver:

- Sports hubs at Kingsway Park, Kirkby and Sutton Lawn
- North Kirkby Gateway and Health Hub
- Sorrel Drive Play Area, Kirkby (accelerated project).



# North Kirkby Gateway

Project cost: **£15.929m** Towns Fund request: **£10.789m** Co-funding: **£5.140m**

Revenue Towns Fund: **£0.25m**

Revenue Co-funding: **£0.07m**

Acquisition and redevelopment of an underused town centre site for a health hub and housing will transform the northern part of the town around the Plaza. The new building will provide a central health hub for GP surgeries, a drive-through pharmacy and space for the Portland Pathways project. The Pathways project is a local skills and employability initiative, working with employers to support people with learning difficulties and disabilities to access employment. In addition there will be a new build café on the Plaza. To the rear of the gateway building, the redevelopment of the 'Pond Hole' site will provide up to 38 new low energy homes and with affordable housing. The redevelopment will include rationalising the surrounding highways layout.

The health provision will free up land to the north east of the Plaza which is currently occupied by health providers for re-development. We will work with land agents and developers to bring the sites forward for Class E uses - Commercial, Business and Service

## Rationale:

There are 12 GP surgeries, dental practices and pharmacies within a 200 metre radius of the town centre. Consolidating as many of these services as possible onto one site will bring multiple health benefits and will free up land in front of Morrison's, creating a development opportunity.

Info from NHS to be added

A vacant factory shop and adjoining 'Pond Hole' site are located on the west side of the Plaza and are underdeveloped. The 'Pond Hole' site is used for storage and is part of a former landfill site which has been on the market since 2018. The redevelopment of the site will provide the opportunity to remediate the land and contribute towards addressing shortages in housing and development of a brown field site. High quality, low energy, affordable homes will be provided in a sustainable location, helping to improve the quality of the environment. Housing development within the town centre will support businesses and services and increase footfall.

The new health hub and café adjacent to the plaza area will create an active frontage and increase footfall and vibrancy in this area of the town providing informal surveillance of the Plaza.

## Impact

- More people living in the town centre, more local spend
- More opportunities for community and cultural activities
- Attractiveness and perceptions of the area improved
- Modernised and improved health facilities
- Facilitates wider development and higher long-term investment
- Increased sustainable energy use



## Outputs

- Delivery of quality residential or commercial space in key locations (town centres, gateway areas, employment sites)
- Increased and closer collaboration with employers (Portland Pathways project)

## Outcomes

- Enhanced high street and town centre experience that prioritises the health, safety and mobility of pedestrians
- Enhanced townscape that is more attractive and more accessible to residents, businesses and visitors
- Remediation and/or development of abandoned or dilapidated sites
- Increased share of young people and adults who have relevant skills for employment and entrepreneurship



# Kingsway Sports Hub

Creation of a sports hub at Kingsway Park with improved grass football pitches and changing rooms and a new bowls pavilion to complement the existing provision of a synthetic pitch, netball/ tennis courts and multi-use games area.

## Rationale:

Rationalisation of football facilities at the nominated Kirkby hub site to increase the quality of provision and enhance maintenance meets the priorities of the Council's Playing Pitch Strategy. The hub-type model is supported by the FA and Football Foundation, concentrating facilities on hub sites can increase quality and reduce maintenance costs.

The site is included as a priority for investment within the FA's Local Football Facilities Plan for Ashfield (Ashfield LFFP: <https://localplans.footballfoundation.org.uk/local-authorities-index/ashfield/ashfield-local-football-facility-plan-2-/>)

The existing bowls pavilion is a temporary structure which is over 30 years old, in poor condition and too small. The new build will provide a low-carbon replacement which will be sustainable in the long term.

## Impact

- Better recreation and sports facilities with greater capacity
- Improved maintenance and reduced costs

Project cost: **£1.1m** Towns Fund request: **£0.734m**

Co-funding: **£0.366m** Football Foundation, Section 106



## Outputs

- New and upgraded sports facilities

## Outcomes

- Improved sport and activity offer that is more visible and easier for residents/visitors to access

# Sutton Lawn Sports Hub

Project cost: **£2.9m** Towns Fund request: **£1.533m**

Co-funding: **£1.367m** Football Foundation: £1.103m  
Sutton Academy: £0.264m

Creation of a hub site for football and other sports, with improved, and new grass pitches, new changing facilities, improved access and additional parking and an additional 3G pitch (Synthetic all-weather surface) together with refurbishment of the existing 3G pitch and tennis courts, including replacement LED floodlighting.

## Rationale:

Rationalisation of football facilities at the nominated Sutton hub site to increase the quality of provision and enhance maintenance meets the priorities of the Council's Playing Pitch Strategy.

The site is included as a priority for investment within the FA's adopted Local Football Facilities Plan for Ashfield (Ashfield LFFP: <https://localplans.footballfoundation.org.uk/local-authorities-index/ashfield/ashfield-local-football-facility-plan-2-/>)

An inclusive community football academy will be set up at the site, targeting participation by girls, disabled people and over 50s and the surrounding area where some of the most deprived parts of Sutton are located.

## Impact

- Better recreation and sports facilities with greater capacity
- Attractiveness and perceptions of the area improved
- More inclusive opportunities for football



## Outputs

- New, upgraded or protected sports facilities

## Outcomes

- Improved sport and activity offer that is more visible and easier for residents/visitors to access

# More to Discover

A strong visitor and cultural offer, and vibrant town centres

## Intervention Framework Themes:

Urban regeneration, planning and land use; Arts, culture and heritage

**Our ambition is to broaden and improve the visitor and cultural offer and its promotion, and to create vibrant towns. Developing regionally renowned attractions by exploiting our assets we will start to fulfil our potential as a place. We will create a unique education and landmark visitor attraction.**

The More to Discover programme will deliver the following:

- Visitor digital offer
- Sherwood Observatory Science Discovery Centre and Planetarium
- Kings Mill Reservoir leisure development
- Cycling and Walking network
- Kirkby Indoor Market (accelerated project)

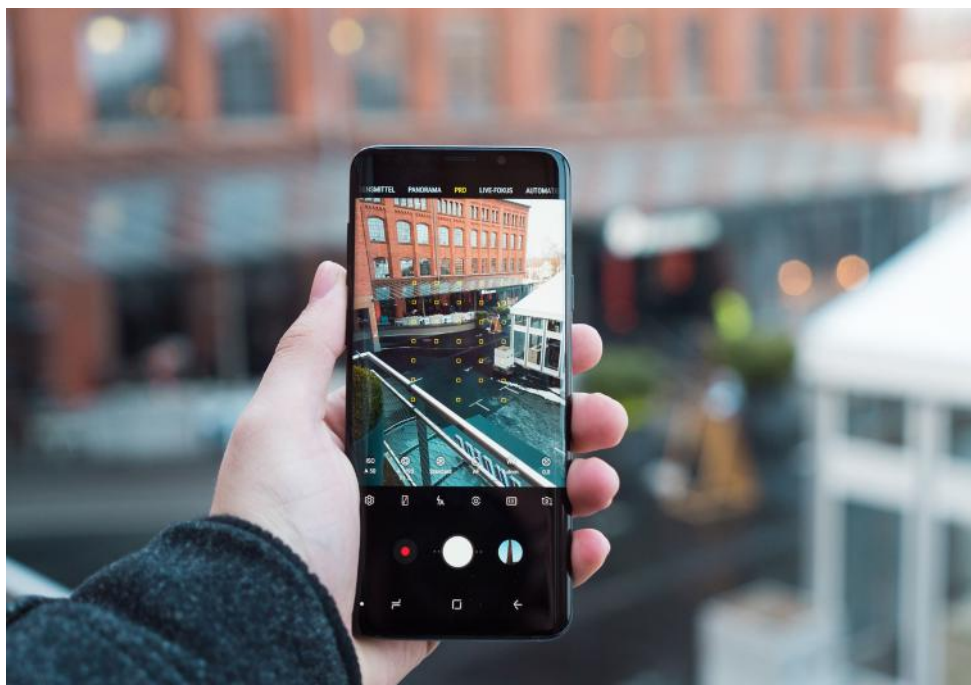




# Visitor Digital offer

A new Discover Ashfield website and Augmented Reality experience app will tell the great stories of the area; showcasing it as an attractive place to live, visit, study, work and do business. The website will focus on developing the visitor economy and promoting visitor attractions, as well as the business theme to promote the area for investment and provide information for businesses. It will also provide useful and engaging information for residents, further developing the Love where you Live and Be Healthy, Be Happy themes.

The AR experience app content will be focused on visitor attractions and will include mapping features to direct users to points of interest along a trail. Gamification elements will include tracking locations and unlocking achievements.



Project cost: **£0.225m** Towns Fund request: **£0.220m**

Co-funding: **£0.005m**

## Rationale:

The current website requires significant investment to improve the quality of the information and ensure that it meets the needs of users. It currently has very low usage and feedback from a recent study found that people did not find it useful or engaging.

Development of the site and the app will enable more effective promotion of the new visitor attractions and business support being delivered through the Towns Fund.

It will also link to the 5G Connected Forest project which will bring the stories associated with Robin Hood and the ancient woodland of Sherwood to life in a new way.

## Outputs

- Upgraded digital platform to promote visitor attractions and events, business and community events and initiatives.

## Outcomes

- Improved promotion of arts, cultural and heritage offer that is more visible and easier for residents/visitors to access

## Impact

- Increased visitor numbers
- Increased awareness of visitor offer
-

# Sherwood Observatory Science Discovery Centre and Planetarium

Project cost: **£6.2m**

Towns Fund request: **£2.25m**

Co-funding: **£3.95m** HLF & Donors

To create a unique education and landmark visitor attraction with the existing observatory building extended and refurbished and the creation of a new planetarium, utilising a half-submerged, brick built Victorian underground reservoir. The new centre will deliver inclusive and innovative community and educational programming with a focus on promoting astronomy to visitors of all ages and engaging people in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) related subjects. The centre will bring science to life in fun, entertaining and informative ways and support the skills and knowledge essential for future employment.

## Rationale:

This project provides the opportunity to create a unique visitor attraction, generating income and employment through the visitor economy and helping raise the profile of the area as a place to visit. Visitor demand at the observatory is already high and is increasing year on year.

The project will utilise a redundant structure and will allow visitors access to a hidden heritage asset.

The focus on STEM related subjects will raise awareness of the opportunities a career in STEM can unlock which will support projects within the Succeed in Ashfield theme.

As the UK enters the 'Fourth Industrial Revolution', a time of significant technological, and economic shift, STEM will be one of the accelerating forces for economic growth.

Research undertaken on behalf of the British Association of Planetariums shows that people from deprived areas are under-represented in the visitor statistics for planetariums.

The project has been funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund for a Stage 2 funding application.



## Outputs

- New, upgraded educational and visitor venue
- Availability of new specialist equipment
- Increase in capacity and accessibility to new or improved skills facilities
- Increased benefit for the public education over the long term

## Outcomes

- Improved cultural and heritage offer that is more visible and easier for residents/visitors to access

## Impact

- Greater engagement with STEM
- More and better visitor attractions

# Kings Mill Reservoir leisure development

Provision of a new flagship leisure building and outdoor adventure area. The leisure building will accommodate opportunities for a night time economy, events and meeting space along-side growth in water sports and recreational activities.

Initially Nottinghamshire County Council Mill Adventure Base will invest £1m in new public outdoor adventure facilities including climbing, high ropes and trail activities. The outdoor facilities will also be improved by construction of a new beach area aiding access to the water for boating and future proposals for open water swimming and inflatable courses. An additional 183 parking spaces will also be provided to accommodate the increasing visitor numbers to the new facilities.



Project cost: **£4.192m** Towns Fund request: **£2.544m**

Co-funding: **£1.648m**

## Rationale:

The reservoir site is a key gateway to Ashfield from Mansfield and is central to expanding the area's visitor economy.

The site has seen significant investment in the last two years, via the £1.8m Heritage Lottery funded Mills Waters project which has delivered essential de-silting work for water sports, habitat creation, a heritage centre and upgrade of the café, and restoration of an historic viaduct and additional car parking. This project will build on the previous investment and create a greater choice of leisure facilities, establishing the site as a major visitor destination.

## Outputs

- New and upgraded sports and leisure facilities
- Delivery of quality commercial space in key gateway location

## Outcomes

- Improved sport and activity offer that is more visible and easier for residents/visitors to access

## Impact

- A thriving visitor economy
- Greater choice and access to recreation and sports activities
- Improved site management and more resilient land and water ecology
- Improved sustainability of Adventure Base
- Higher local spend, new opportunities for businesses
- Attractiveness and perceptions of the area improved

# Cycling and Walking Network

Project cost: **£2.583m** Towns Fund request: **£1.938m** Co-funding: **£0.645m**

To provide a comprehensive network of high quality walking and cycling routes, with a first phase being delivered through the accelerated funding. Upgrading sections of existing routes, and the creation of new sections will support the development of the visitor economy and provide improved connections to key employment areas and public transport links.

The main routes being upgraded and/or created are: Hucknall-Kirkby-Sutton-Mansfield, Sutton - Derbyshire, Huthwaite - Sutton and Sutton- Sherwood Observatory. The route navigates through the town centres linking to Sherwood and Castlewood Business parks to the south and west and visitor attractions including Mill Waters at Kings Mill Reservoir, the Science Discovery Centre, Planetarium and Observatory, and Hardwick Hall to the east and north respectively picking up links to residential areas throughout.

## Outputs

- New or upgraded cycle or walking paths

## Outcomes

- Improved affordability, convenience, reliability, and sustainability of travel options to and from places of work and places of interest (especially shops and amenities)

## Rationale:

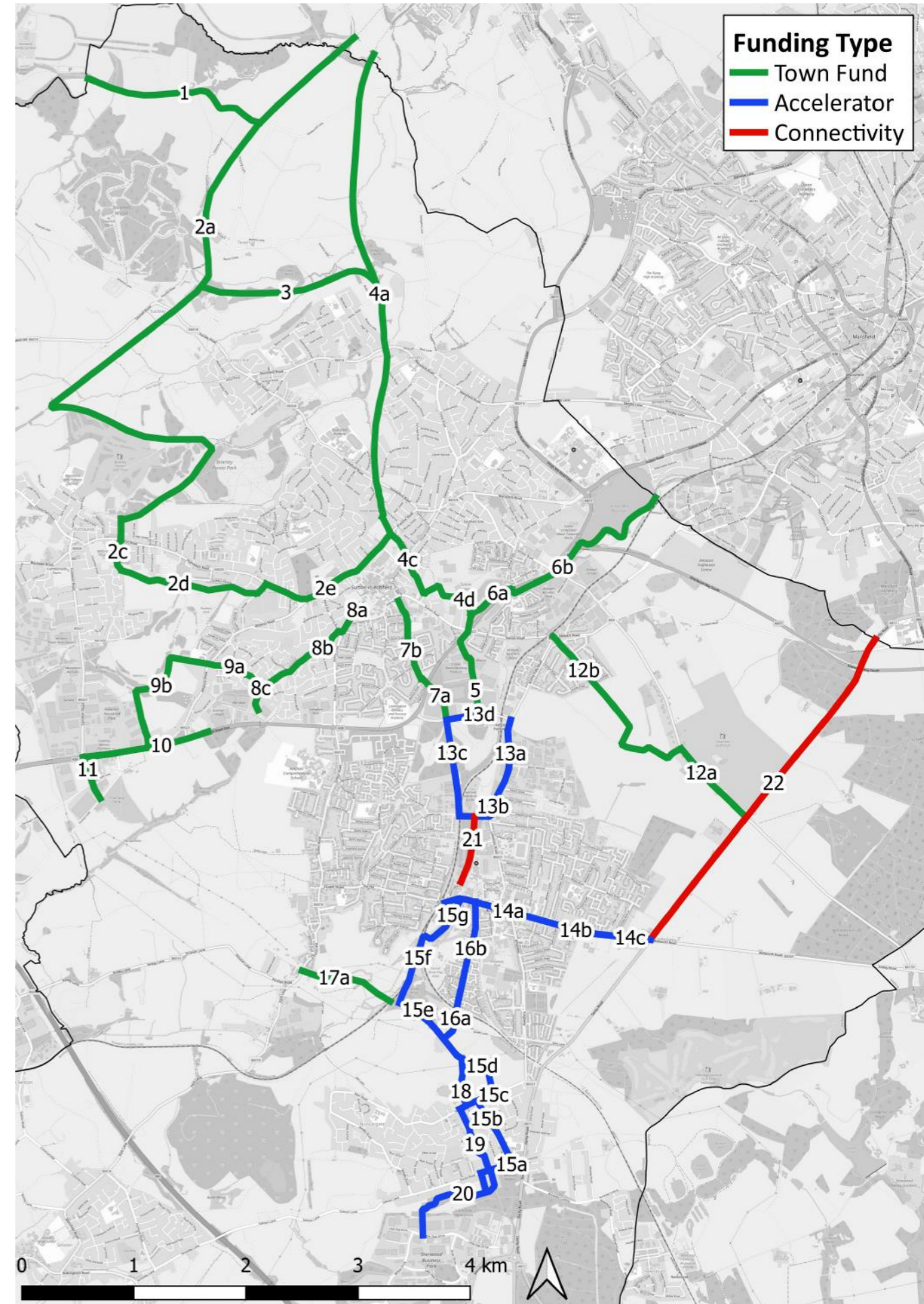
A cycling and walking network which is predominantly off-road will provide a number of benefits including: providing opportunities for safe and active travel to work; recreational opportunities for all, and those less confident, or learning to cycle and developing the visitor economy. The network of routes also connects to existing and planned visitor attractions including Sherwood Observatory, Hardwick Hall and Mill Waters at King Mill Reservoir.

Road safety and traffic are the most common reasons cited by people for not cycling more. Off road routes provide safe opportunities for children and adults at all levels of ability to gain confidence and enjoyment using traffic free routes. Ashfield is below the national and regional average for active travel. Removing and reducing barriers to active travel will help to reduce the number of local car journeys and lead to improvements in health and wellbeing and air quality. This project was very well supported in the public consultation, with one of the highest rates of support of any project at 77%.

## Impact

- Increased visitor numbers
- Stronger visitor economy
- Reduced car use and traffic congestion
- Improved connections between homes, work and visitor attractions
- Better air quality
- Reduced health inequalities

**This project was very well supported in the public consultation, with one of the highest rates of support of any project at 77%.**



# Portland Square, Sutton

Project cost: **£0.866m** Towns Fund request: **£0.73m** Co-funding: **£0.136m**

The project will refurbish Portland Square to create high quality public realm in the heart of the town, attracting more people to visit the town centre. The space will be reconfigured to improve connectivity between key areas of the town and create space for businesses to expand their offer outdoors. The scheme will also green up the urban environment with tree planting and landscaped areas.

## Rationale:

There is a need to improve the main public space in the town centre to create a more attractive and interesting place to attract people and to complement the projects being delivered around the town through the Future High Streets Fund. These include the development of the Fox Street site for a pop-up food offer which will create a direct link to the square, increasing footfall into this area.

The vacancy rate around the square is c.23%, which is more than 8% higher than the town centre. Businesses will be encouraged to provide an outdoor offer to increase vibrancy and to attract new businesses.

Greening up the town was highly supported during the public consultation, increasing tree cover and landscaped areas will make the town centre more attractive and increase dwell times.

## Outputs

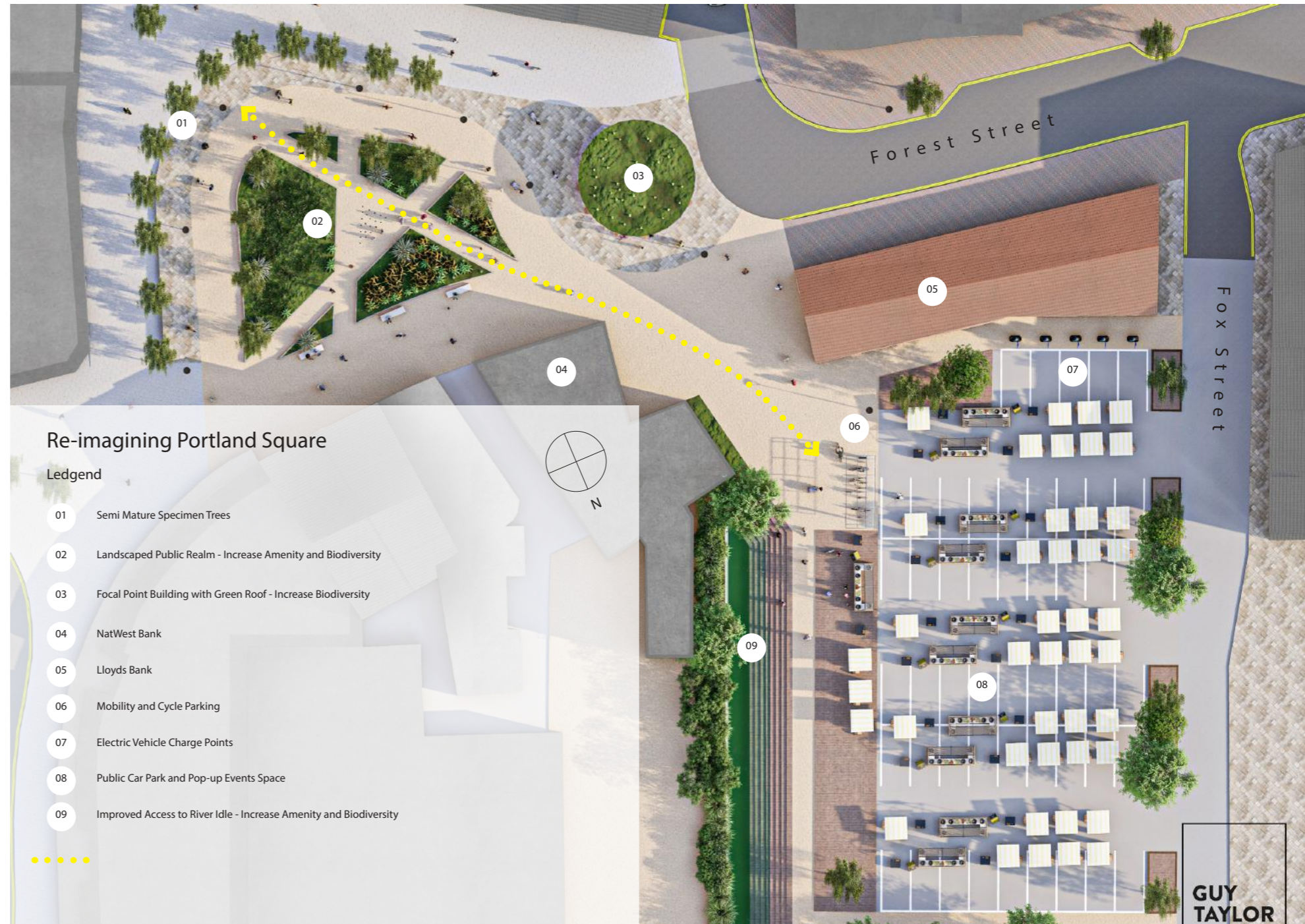
- Delivery of upgraded public space
- Increased footfall
- Reduced vacancy rates

## Outcomes

- Enhanced townscape that is more attractive and more



**“Turn Portland square into a nice communal area with regular events, get rid of the eyesore outdoor market or move it and improve it, fill empty shops and bring back life to the town!”**



## Impact

- Increased use of public space
- Attractiveness and perceptions of the area improved
- Reduced vacancy rates, increased footfall
- Better air quality
- Improved outdoor market
- Facilitates private sector investment from new

# Succeed in Ashfield

Reduced digital exclusion, Increased skills & employment and Innovation based growth

Intervention Framework Themes:

Skills infrastructure; Enterprise infrastructure

**Our aim is to create a place where all businesses can thrive, from start-ups to established businesses and those looking to relocate, with a focus on innovation. A place where people of all ages can access the training and support they need to develop skills and choose a career path. Preparing people to meet the challenges of employers in the key growth sectors of logistics and construction; levelling up education attainment and increasing the number of learners studying in the area. Our investment will raise productivity and prosperity attracting high value jobs and driving up workplace earnings.**

**We will develop skills capacity, facilities and curriculum to deliver higher level skills to serve the developing needs of the advanced manufacturing and distribution industries. This will significantly reduce risks around automation and develop a reputation for the local area that will attract inward investment and high value jobs.**

**Increasing digital connectivity and harnessing innovative technologies will support the productivity demands of trade, industry and education, providing the platform from which new and vibrant enterprises can be launched and can succeed. Making these opportunities widely accessible will create better opportunities for social mobility and improved quality of life. By supporting local businesses to improve their digital and online presence for an improved customer experience we will put in place the infrastructure that enables us to flourish and prosper.**

The Succeed in Ashfield programme will deliver:

- Automated Distribution and Manufacturing Centre
- Construction and Civil Engineering Education Centres
- Enterprising Ashfield
- Library Innovation Centres



# Automated Distribution and Manufacturing Centre (ADMC)

Project cost: **£30m**

Towns Fund request: **£20m**

Co-funding: **£10m**

The Midlands' distribution, logistics and specialist manufacturing community, along with many parts of the UK, are at risk of being left behind by overseas competitors due to the slow adoption of automation.

Through consultation with this sector, the concept of a purpose-built innovation facility has been developed, targeted at improving international competitiveness and inward investment attractiveness. The ADCM will support the adoption, integration and expansion of automated technologies for businesses; locally and across the Midlands region in a sustainable manner.

The ADCM will focus on providing:

- Automation equipment technology and solution demonstration to businesses considering adopting or expanding automated processes/systems and who want to gain insights into how automation is employed and the barriers to implementation they may face.
- A prototyping and test facility, where businesses can work with equipment suppliers, systems integrators and university partners to develop solutions to the automation challenges; without having to reduce their own capacity or invest in staff resource.
- An early-stage innovation capability where businesses already using automation can work with researchers, equipment suppliers and systems integrators to test the potential of emergent technologies.
- Access to skills training to meet the increasing need for talent and upskilling by employers to meet the requirement of automation technology. This will link to Vision West Nottinghamshire College's (VWNC) Automation and Robotics programme and the emerging higher-level education programmes being developed by Nottingham Trent University (NTU).

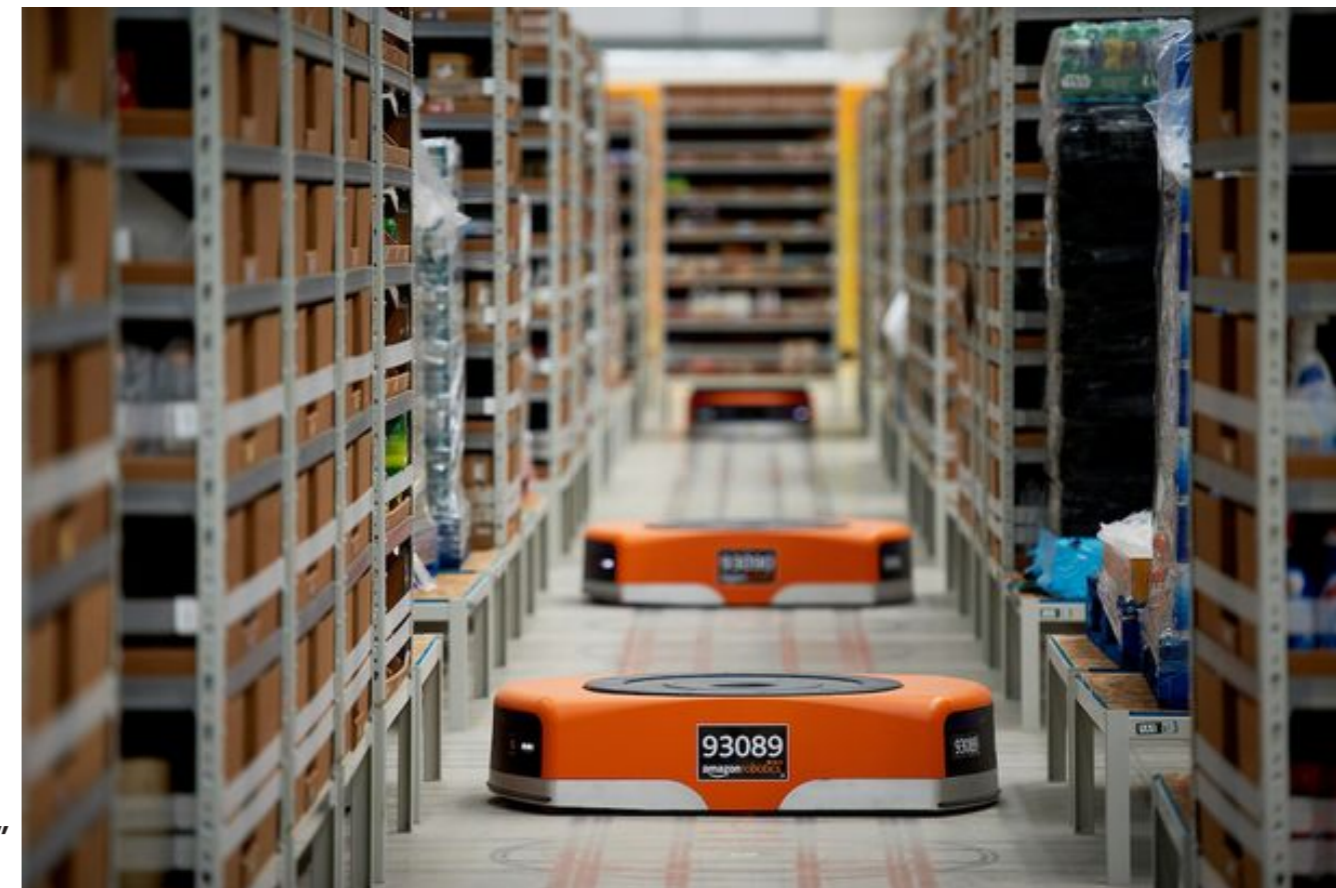
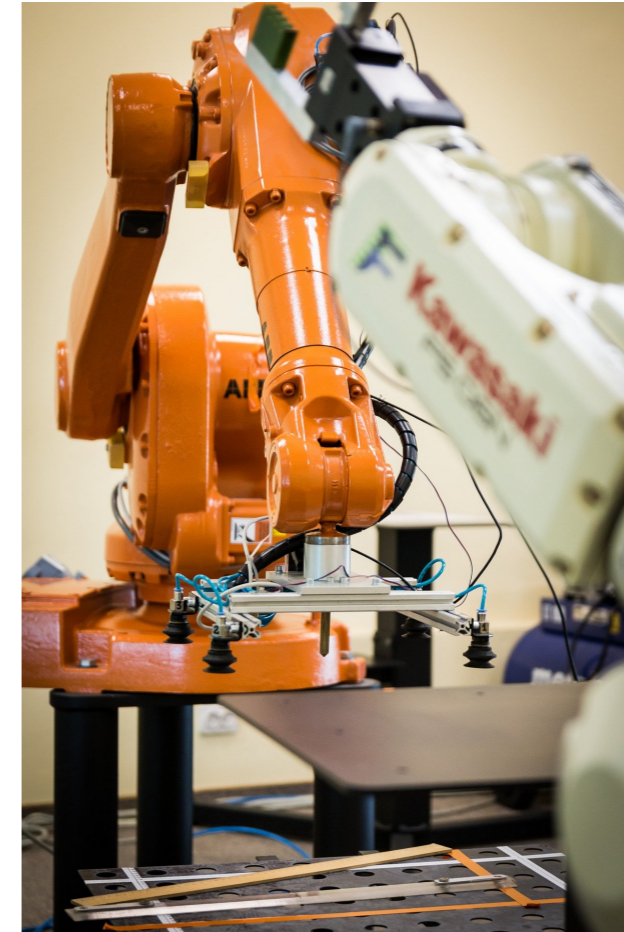
400 businesses have been contacted regarding the ADCM and their feedback has helped shape ADCM provision. The Manufacturing Technology Centre (MTC), part of the High Value Manufacturing Catapult (HVMC), have also contributed to its outline design.

The ADCM is the first of its kind in the UK. It will be the centrepiece of inward investment activity within Ashfield, will support aligned activity in other Towns Fund bids (including the Smart Innovation, Supply Chain and Logistics Zone proposed in Newark), be a key element of the forthcoming D2N2 LEP and LLEP Freeport bid, as well as being a sentinel project for the economic levelling up agenda across the Midlands region.

**"There is a lack of skilled people within the automation industry in the UK. Centres like this will only improve the situation. It is also a great place to showcase advanced automation technologies and invite multiple companies for open days. Plus work with companies on specific automation projects".**  
- Global leader in automation

**ADMC is "aligned to our priorities on improving skill and employment levels and on promoting digital skills and low carbon industry. ADCM has potential for international reach and will be a flagship project for the whole region"**  
-D2N2 LEP

**"We are developing batteries for use in robotics and automated systems. The new centre would be an invaluable testing ground with potential new customers"**  
- Local company



# Automated Distribution and Manufacturing Centre (ADMC)

## Rationale:

The 2019 report from the Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Committee: The Automation and the Future of Work, investigated the state of automation in the UK. It highlighted that the UK's slow adoption of automation and a lack of action at a national level, is leaving entire regions of the country at risk of being left behind by G7 competitors.

With the support of the MTC, the project team has analysed some of the causes of this slow roll out. These were tested with a range of businesses interested in either adopting or supporting the adoption of automation in the Midlands and wider UK.

These discussions confirmed many of these challenges including:

- the limitations of large-scale automation equipment and systems integration capacity in the UK;
- the restrictions on growth faced by smaller UK based equipment and integration companies,
- the lack of capacity within distribution and specialist manufacturing companies to absorb the introduction of automation within their facilities;
- a lack of awareness of the opportunities and barriers to automation adoption within the smaller businesses;
- a lack of awareness of automation and digitalisation opportunities within the region's University base; and
- a significant need for trained talent and upskilling and re-skilling training programmes in this field, particularly within the larger companies. The need to integrate innovation and skills support was emphasised by many consultees.

The concept of the ADMC was developed to address these challenges. Its adoption within the Ashfield District is particularly pertinent given the nature of planned economic growth in this area, linked to distribution, logistics and specialist manufacturing (e.g. Healthcare and Medical Technology manufacturing), as well as need to equip its population with skills to increase their employment prospects in this sector. In doing so, it will help address the low rates of high-level skills and restricted social mobility in the area and also aid the post Covid-19 recovery.

Ashfield is also well positioned to attract inward investment and to support businesses both locally and in the cities of Derby, Nottingham and Sheffield. With the support of VWNC and NTU, who have recently opened a campus in Mansfield, a Research & Innovation, and Teaching & Learning "platform" is already under development on which to base the ADMC, allowing the development of a proposition unlikely to have been imagined in the area previously. It will also align with the Enterprising Ashfield business and skills support programme.

The MTC, based in Ansty, Coventry, and Advanced Manufacturing Research Centre (AMRC – and also part of the HVM catapult network), based in Rotherham, have confirmed that they will be prepared to support the detailed development of the ADMC and in principal play a part in delivery of operations to ensure that the ADMC is linked into the wider HVM Catapult network and national innovation and productivity ecosystem. This approach will ensure that ADMC provides value beyond the local area while ensuring that national capability is made readily available to companies within the local area. This will draw on their experience of building research translation and skills-based organisations in aligned manufacturing sectors.

The project team have made some 400 companies aware of the ADMC. Most spoken to recognise the need to invest in technology and skills in order to compete for and benefit from the potential onshoring opportunities that are emerging from Government's decisions to improve national resilience. Many have expressed an interest in it and over 20 have offered letters of support, including large companies such as Boots, Next and DHL. These are included in Section 1, Annex 6.



## Outputs

- Provision of specialist digital technologies to meet the needs of specific sectors
- Delivery of quality residential or commercial space in key locations (town centres, gateway sites)
- Increase in capacity and accessibility to new or improved skills facilities
- Availability of new specialist equipment
- Increased and closer collaboration with employers
- Increase in the breadth of the local skills offer that responds to local skills needs
- Increase in the amount (and diversity) of high quality, affordable commercial floor space
- Increase in the amount of shared workspace or innovation facilities
- Other schemes to support enterprise and business productivity and growth

## Outcomes

- Increased share of young people and adults who have relevant skills for employment and entrepreneurship
- Increased number of enterprises utilising high-quality, affordable and sustainable commercial spaces
- Increased number of start-ups and/or scale-ups utilising business incubation, acceleration and co-working spaces

## Impact

- More higher value jobs and higher skills
- Ashfield seen as a place to invest
- Reputation of area enhanced
- Increased productivity and growth



A partnership project with Vision West Nottinghamshire College (VWNC), Inspire, Portland College and Sutton Academy to provide a new Level 1 construction facility at a gateway site in Sutton which complements VWNC higher level courses at its campus in Kirkby. It also builds on the success of the current offer at the academy and Inspire in engaging with more disadvantaged learners. The Portland College campus will provide a satellite education centre for students with complex disabilities.

The facility will deliver training to young people aged 16 – 18. For learners with an Education Health and Care plan (up to the age of 24) a satellite centre will be developed at Portland College to provide a fully accessible and challenging entry to construction in a bespoke, purpose built environment. This will cater for additional needs including positive behaviour support, access to a multi-disciplinary therapy team and a specialist delivery team. This intensive work on education, independence and employability skills provides the foundations to progression to the Ashfield Construction Centre.

Means for progression will be built into the designs for the centre, reinforced through active management to ensure managed transition between the varied provisions offered by the partner organisations. Support staff and a minibus fleet are in place to support staged transition.

Our ambition is to take a leading role in providing outstanding education and training within the Construction, Building Services and Engineering sectors and to lead the way in raising standards within industry, with a focus on sustainable construction methods. The centre will provide courses in all construction professions such as bricklaying, carpentry and joinery and plastering; Building Services including electrical installation, plumbing and heating, as well as motor vehicle mechanics and functional skills/GCSEs in English, maths and ICT. Line to be added re ICT

There is also the potential for expansion for future delivery in more specialist areas, such as Principal Learning for Construction and the Built Environment, Construction & Design Management (CDM), BIM, concreting, formwork, steel fixing and scaffolding.

## Impact

- More people educated to a higher level and have high value jobs
- Less young people classed as NEET
- More older people having second career
- More disabled people in work
- Attractiveness and perceptions of the area improved

## Rationale:

Skills provision needs to be responsive to the demand for jobs in the local economy, helping to address constraints on economic growth in the region. Construction labour demand is forecast to grow significantly over the next five years and the new centre will help to meet this demand by increasing the number of qualified learners.

An increase in learner numbers this academic year has and the impact of the pandemic have led to an increase in space demands for VWNC and Portland College. In addition one of the colleges is required to find an alternative site to operate from within the next two years. Collaboration between the colleges will improve outcomes for learners and also attract young people who would otherwise be at risk of becoming NEET.

The project will transform a key gateway site in Sutton, realising regeneration benefits for the town, including increased footfall into the town centre from the college.

## Outputs

- Remediation and/or development of dilapidated sites
- Increase in capacity and accessibility to new skills facilities
- Availability of new specialist equipment
- Increased and closer collaboration with employers
- Increase in the breadth of the local skills offer that responds to local skills needs
- Increased benefit for the public education over the long term
- Increased progression into mainstream Further Education for learners with an EHC plan

## Outcomes

- Enhanced townscape that is more attractive and more accessible to residents, businesses and visitors
- Increased share of young people and adults who have relevant skills for employment and entrepreneurship
- Increased share of young people and adults who have relevant skills for a low carbon economy
- Increased diversity of training options for learners with an EHC plan



# Ashfield Civil Engineering Centre

Project cost: **£3.103m** Towns Fund request: **£2.103m** Co-funding: **£1m**

**Vision West Nottinghamshire College (VWNC) requires additional capacity to develop a new curriculum area with a focus on trades related to civil engineering, transport and environmental engineering.**

The project involves the acquisition of a site in Sutton in close proximity to the existing construction and engineering centres. The development of this site will allow the provision of a new curriculum area thus increasing progression and job opportunities for local people. The vision is to replicate an outdoor working site which will provide real world experience for young people, better preparing them for work in these industries. A small facilities building will provide toilets, showers, lockers, kitchenette and office.

Developed in partnership with national employers such as A Plant, the site will offer provision within groundworks, scaffolding, plant movement, rail and highways operations.

The curriculum would complement the new curriculum being developed for the Ashfield Construction Centre project and is a key component of the vision to create a regional skills hub in Ashfield.

The principles of site and project management would be embedded across the broad spectrum of construction offering, enabling students to add significant value to multi-disciplinary teams in industry.

New courses would span the following areas:

- Construction Engineers - transportation of materials and site development, evaluating logistical operations, reviewing contracts and coordinating contractors
- Structural Engineering - bridges, flyovers and other buildings
- Transportation Engineering - construction and maintenance of all forms of public transportation systems including roads, railways, ports and airports
- Geotechnical Engineering – understanding soil science and material science as well as the mechanics and hydraulics involved in safely designing a range of structures and buildings
- Environmental Engineering - solid waste treatment/management, treatment of water sources and improving the quality of water and air. Understanding of atmospheric sciences and hydrology.

## Outputs

- Remediation and development of abandoned or dilapidated sites
- Increase in capacity and accessibility to new or improved skills facilities
- Availability of new specialist equipment
- Increased and closer collaboration with employers
- Increase in the breadth of the local skills offer that responds to local skills needs
- Increased benefit for the public education over the long term

## Outcomes

- Increased share of young people and adults who have relevant skills for employment and entrepreneurship

## Impact

- More people educated to a higher level and have high value jobs
- More older people having second career

## Rationale:

Due to site constraints at the existing engineering and construction centres in Kirkby and Sutton, an additional facility is required to expand the number of learner spaces. This is part of VWNC's development programme to support the future requirements for skills for more specialist construction areas and seeks to address the skills shortage in a rapidly changing construction industry.

The development of HS2, significant planned construction on development sites across the region as well as skills shortages within the rail and highways industries make the case for such a development compelling. An ICE report commissioned in 2018 highlighted that more than 25% of senior managers overseeing projects reported significant challenges on projects as a result of skills shortages. Major areas of weakness were cited as specific technical skills, the ability to work on multi-disciplinary projects and an understanding of the broader context of a project. The report also highlighted that 50% of employers were unable to fill job vacancies due to skills shortages.

Data analysis of job opportunities within the East Midlands projects a 14% increase in job openings to 2023 within the skills areas that will be provided at the new centre.

There is a risk to the local area of a significant migration of skilled workers to significant projects in the south of England which will create a greater skills deficit in the Midlands region. This project will help to address this threat by increasing the number of learners and the breadth of the skills offer.



# Enterprising Ashfield

Project cost: **£7.221m** Towns Fund request: **£3.855m** Co-funding: **£3.366 m**

This project will deliver Nottingham Trent University's comprehensive and established Start-up to Scale-up business support package from the business hub in Sutton. There are four main streams to the business support package:

**Headstart** – equipping young entrepreneurs with the skills and knowledge to establish, grow and sustain their own business. The programme will also support skilled technical workers, made redundant due to the pandemic, to establish new-start businesses in growing markets by enhancing their skills and by providing financial support.

**Support for Growth** – working with SMEs to take advantage of opportunities in high priority sectors – for example upgrading digital technologies and upskilling workforce; providing expert workshops and facilitating peer support. The programme will enable businesses to increase their growth potential, improve productivity and enhance job creation opportunities by innovating products, processes and services, and accessing new markets.

**Skills** – with a strong focus on digital skills, working with businesses to identify skills needs - individuals will develop their skills through a range of training and upskilling opportunities and businesses can realise improvements in their innovation, productivity and competitiveness.

**Graduate talent** – for businesses with an identified and immediate capacity need that can't be met quickly enough by the skills development programme, short term, part-funded Graduate Placement opportunities will be made available.

## Rationale:

Due to the ongoing impacts of the pandemic and rising unemployment there is an urgent need for specialist support for workers and businesses. Young people and the over 50s in particular will benefit from a comprehensive skills and enterprise programme to ensure that they can access the support they need to start or change their career. Businesses will also require specialist support to adapt, grow and access new markets due to the impacts of the pandemic and the UK's exit from the European Union.

Reflecting the emerging D2N2 digital strategy, the programme has a focus on Digital Upskilling, which was recognised as a key priority in the Make UK report Digital Skills for a Manufacturing World, which showed that a third of companies didn't undertake any digital training in 2019.

Evidence from NTU's programmes demonstrates the transformational impact graduates can have on a business, particularly for businesses that haven't employed a graduate before and many of these placements have led to permanent employment.



Image: Jeanette Carter

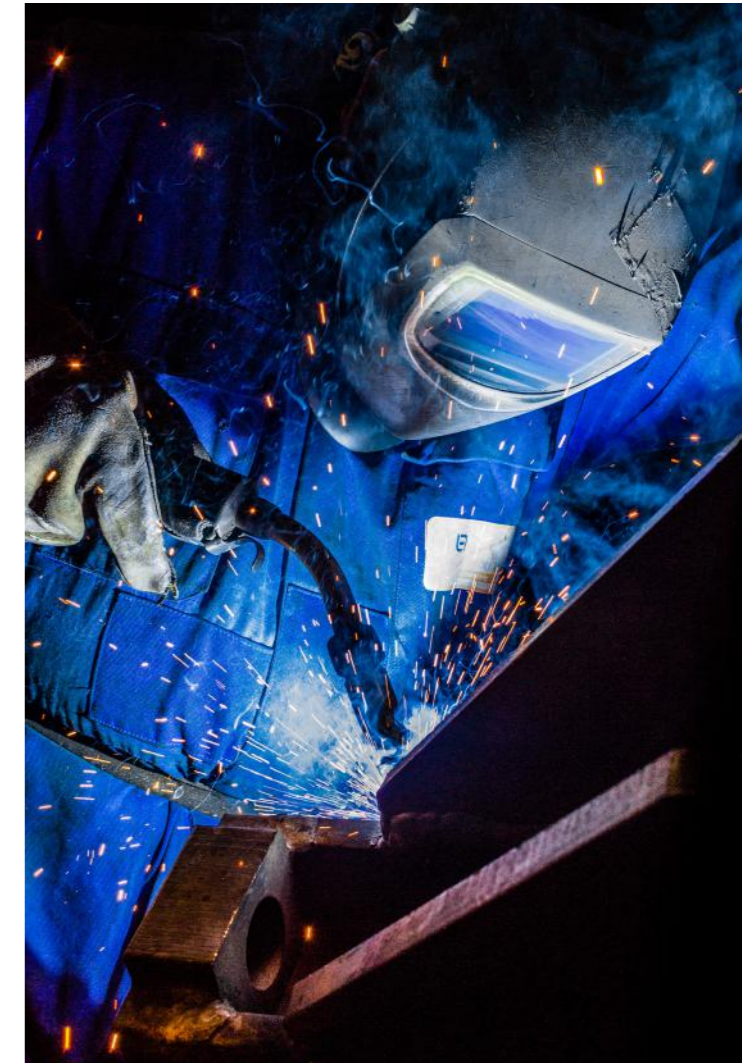


Image: James Eaton

## Outputs

- Increase in capacity and accessibility to new or improved skills facilities
- Increased and closer collaboration with employers - **325 businesses supported to grow, increase their productivity**
- Increase in the breadth of the local skills offer that responds to local skills needs
- Other schemes to support enterprise and business productivity and growth - **160 graduates to be placed into local businesses on short-term internships**

## Outcomes

- Increased share of young people and adults who have relevant skills for employment and entrepreneurship - **225 early stage entrepreneurs to start a business; 1,000 people to enhance their skills**
- Increased number of start-ups and/or scale-ups utilising business incubation, acceleration and co-working spaces

## Impact

- More businesses start up and succeed
- More businesses provide graduate opportunities
- More older people having second career

# Library Innovation Centres

Creation of a multi-use hub for a range of information, digital, cultural and community services to support a wider range of activity to facilitate innovation, learning, cultural programmes and community activity, with a focus on digital skills.

The main Innovation Centre at Sutton will provide a venue for small business conferences, seminars and networking through the refurbishment of a disused lecture theatre and re-purposing of adjacent areas.

The innovation centres at Kirkby and Sutton will provide digital access and access to technology, a job seeker/ employability hub / Information Advice and Guidance services and Adult and family learning and skills programmes as well as community led activity – Inspire ‘community makers’ coffee & chat.

A mobile unit will be used to provide digital learning in areas outside of the town centre.

## Impact

- More people feel confident using digital devices and services
- More people can access services online, reducing costs and improving efficiency

Project cost: **£1.06m**

Towns Fund request: **£0.66m**

Co-funding: **£0.4m**

## Rationale:

The project will help to address digital exclusion across the area and support people to gain digital foundation skills. People can go on to gain more advanced digital skills through the provision at Vision West Notts. College, providing a clear pathway for development.

The mobile provision will ensure maximum reach, particularly within harder to reach communities such as Leamington and Coxmoor, as well as areas with higher numbers of older people and industrial estates.

## Outputs

- New and upgraded theatres and libraries
- Increase in capacity and accessibility to new or improved skills facilities
- Increase in the breadth of the local skills offer that responds to local skills needs
- Increased benefit for the public education over the long term

## Outcomes

- Improved arts, cultural and heritage offer that is more visible and easier for residents/visitors to access
- Increased share of young people and adults who have relevant skills for employment and entrepreneurship

# Greener Ashfield

Resilient to Climate Change, a better environment, with sustainable businesses and greener travel options

Intervention Framework Themes:

Urban regeneration, planning and land use; Arts, culture and heritage

**Our ambition is to work with partners to bring key assets and ideas together to pioneer innovation and application of green technology to drive longer term growth and productivity.**

**Green Ashfield is a cross-cutting theme for the programme; new build for all projects will include sustainable energy solutions, including solar and ground source heat. Together with enhanced public realm, connectivity to greenspaces and the natural environment, and sustainable transport, the programme will promote health and wellbeing, and contribute to sustainable living and climate change challenges. This will include creating a modal shift for connectivity into and around the towns that promotes positive health outcomes through cycling and walking, reducing congestion and carbon emissions and improving air quality.**

The Greener Ashfield programme will deliver:

- New low-carbon homes at the North Kirkby Gateway site
- Reduced carbon emissions through utilising sustainable energy for existing buildings
- High Street Property Fund
- West Kirkby Gateway & public transport hub



# West Kirkby Gateway

Project cost: **£7.168m**

Towns Fund request: **£4.462m**

Co-funding: **£2.706m**

Development of the area around Kirkby Railway Station to create a thriving gateway to the town and to support future Network Rail investment.

The project encompasses the station and surrounding area as well as a site on the opposite side of Urban Road, off Lane End.

At the station a transport hub will be created with bus pull-ins and a new long-stay car park with electric vehicle charging and secure bicycle storage. Land acquisition will facilitate future access improvements by Network Rail and the train operator.

A gateway building will be located at the Lane End site which will provide business start-up units at ground floor with residential above. The project includes upgrading a section of Lane End which is unadopted.

## Rationale:

The project develops the concepts identified in the Station Masterplan study undertaken in 2019/20 and supports the feasibility work being undertaken in 2021 for upgrading the Maid Marian line for a passenger service.

There are significant access issues at the station, the acquisition of land to facilitate improvements will lay the foundations for future investment. The current operators East Midlands Railways have a longer-term objective to upgrade the station by providing a building with toilets and food/beverage, platform shelters and improved access.

Provision of additional parking will facilitate increased use of the rail network and provide additional long-stay parking for the town centre. Overall the project will encourage increased use of public transport, help address air quality issues and reduce carbon emissions.

The Lane End site has been vacant for over 20 years and is located at the west gateway to the town. There is an opportunity to transform the site and surrounding area. The provision of the business start-up units in the gateway building would meet the demand for integrated space for start-ups, collaboration and training as businesses will be linked to support provided at the Sutton Maker Space by Nottingham Trent University and other partners.

## Impact

- More people living in the town centre, more local spend
- Attractiveness and perceptions of the area improved
- Reduced car use and traffic congestion, better air quality
- More business start-ups
- Facilitates wider development and increased private sector investment



## Outputs

- New, revived, or upgraded train station
- Upgraded road infrastructure
- Bus infrastructure upgrades e.g. digital bus shelters with Real Time information
- Wider cycling infrastructure such as cycle parking
- Remediation and development of abandoned or dilapidated sites
- Delivery of quality residential and commercial space in key locations - gateway area
- Increase in the amount (and diversity) of high quality, affordable commercial floor space
- Increase in the amount of shared workspace or innovation facilities

## Outcomes

- Encouraging further investment from network operators
- Enhanced townscape that is more attractive and more accessible to residents, businesses and visitors
- Increased number of enterprises utilising high-quality, affordable and sustainable commercial spaces
- Increased number of start-ups and/or scale-ups utilising business incubation, acceleration and co-working spaces



**The station proposals are “great as long as they make them accessible to all. Have you ever tried to get a wheelchair or a buggy onto the platform at Kirkby?” Station Masterplans consultation**

At the core of this initiative is the drive to deliver sustainable economic regeneration with the long term objective of achieving zero carbon. All projects included within the Towns Fund programme will embed sustainable energy infrastructure: with new builds including sustainable energy sources and electric vehicle charging and cycle parking provided where appropriate.

This project focuses on existing Council assets and retrofitting of sustainable heating and lighting solutions.

A programme of projects will be developed, a number of buildings have been identified to date, including shop units on Kirkby high street and park buildings, including Sutton Lawn & Kingsway Park pavilions where solar or air source energy systems will be provided, along with the replacement of standard floodlighting with LEDs.



## Rationale:

The project will contribute to the government's commitment to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 and will support the Council's carbon reduction ambitions, working with Nottingham City Council who are recognised as one of the leading Councils for their work on Climate Change. A carbon management plan is being developed to pioneer innovation and application of green technology to drive longer term growth and productivity. The Council submitted a bid to the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme to retrofit solar to a number of Council-owned buildings and this complements a bid to the Green Homes Grant Scheme for works to Council houses.

## Outputs

- Increased number of buildings and facilities utilising sustainable energy sources

## Outcomes

- Reduction in carbon emissions
- Improved air quality

## Impact

- Reduced carbon and better air quality
- Reduced revenue costs
- Increased promotion of sustainable energy

# High Street Property Fund

Project cost: **£1m**

Towns Fund request: **£0.9m**

Co-funding: **£0.1m**

This project involves the purchase, repurposing and refurbishment of high street properties. It will focus on areas in greatest need of intervention, for example Outram Street and the high streets in Huthwaite and Stanton Hill in Sutton, Kirkby high street and Annesley in Kirkby.

A sustainable scheme will be created with a housing company set up to manage a portfolio of properties to buy, sell and rent. The income from the rental and re-sale of properties will then be invested to buy more properties, creating a sustainable cycle of investment. The properties will generally be converted for residential use and all will incorporate sustainable energy solutions. This project includes the units where the new Kirkby Indoor Market is being created which are being funded through the Accelerator Fund. Through the property fund we will convert the first floor of these units for residential use. This project will also provide work experience for learners from construction courses at Vision West Nottinghamshire College (VWNC).

## Impact

- More people living close to amenities, more local spend
- Attractiveness and perceptions of the area improved
- Higher private sector investment
- A more resilient high-street with reduced vacancy rates
- Increased sustainable energy use

## Rationale:

Vacancy rates for retail premises on neighbourhood high streets and particularly on Outram Street on the edge of Sutton town centre are particularly high and a long-term re-purposing strategy is required. This project will facilitate the contraction of Sutton town centre and local high streets.

Generally the properties have had little or no investment for many years, are in poor condition and detract from the high streets. Together with the changes in shopping habits the properties generate little interest from commercial investors and intervention is required.

There is high demand for housing within the District and this project will help to meet this demand by providing good quality low-carbon homes.

VWNC is expanding its construction provision and needs a reliable source of good quality work experience placements for its students, which is a course requirement.

## Outputs

- Remediation and development of abandoned or dilapidated sites
- Delivery of quality residential and commercial space in key locations (town centres, gateway areas)

## Outcomes

- Enhanced townscape that is more attractive and more accessible to residents, businesses and visitors



# Portland Street Sustainable Housing

The site bordering Portland Street in Kirkby, on the edge of the town centre comprises vacant commercial properties, and a mix of dilapidated retail with a small number of residential properties covering an area of 1.4 hectares. We will purchase land and property to complete the land assembly for a sustainable housing development adjacent to the North Kirkby Gateway.

A partnership project with Ashfield District Council housing, Homes England and a private sector developer to bring forward high quality, low carbon, affordable housing. The development will include a new road link to the adjoining Patco development site to improve traffic movement in the town centre. The Patco site is a 2.7 hectare vacant commercial site which is being brought forward for development by the land owner. Jointly the sites provide 4.1 hectares of land on the edge of the town centre, suitable for housing and commercial development. A link road through the two sites would improve access to the development and reduce pressure on town centre routes.



Project cost: **£1.368m** Towns Fund request: **£0.759m**  
Co-funding: **£0.609m**

## Rationale:

The project will bring forward an underdeveloped area of north Kirkby, developing the site for housing will deliver high quality, low energy affordable homes helping to improve the quality of the environment. Development of this area will improve the appearance of a gateway on the main north/ south route through the town.

Developing this brownfield site in the town centre will support local businesses and services and help to minimise short distance journeys by car and help to address the housing shortage in the District.

## Outputs

- Remediation and development of abandoned or dilapidated sites
- Delivery of quality residential and commercial space in key locations (town centres, gateway areas)

## Outcomes

- Enhanced townscape that is more attractive and more accessible to residents, businesses and visitors

## Impact

- More people living close to the town centre, more local spend
- Facilitates wider development and increased private sector investment
- Attractiveness and perceptions of the area improved
- Secure tenure for families on low incomes and better environment for children
- Increased sustainable energy use

# Accelerated Projects

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The following projects have been funded by £1.5m from the Accelerator Fund programme, with over £1.6m of co-funding.

## Hornbeam Park Play Area, Kirkby

### Theme for Change: Be Healthy, Be Happy

The creation of a new play area on the Great Portland Estate.

#### Rationale:

A play area was being delivered at this site as part of the Council's Green Space Improvement Programme, additional funding from the accelerated fund has provided the opportunity to create a unique play area with an emphasis on natural play due to its location on the edge of the urban area.

## Cycling and Walking Network - Phase 1

### Theme for Change: More to Discover

Upgrading and improving the off-road cycling and walking route between Kirkby town centre and Sherwood Business Park over a distance of c.1.4km. Part of a Towns Fund Priority Project to provide a network of cycling and walking routes.

#### Rationale:

A cycling and walking network which is predominantly off-road, providing opportunities for safe and active travel to work; recreational opportunities and development of the visitor economy.

## Kirkby Indoor Market

### Theme for Change: More to Discover

This project will convert three retail vacant units on Kirkby high street for an indoor market, with future residential on the upper floor.

#### Rationale:

Kirkby pedestrianised High Street has the highest vacancy rates and business turnover within the town centre. Public consultation shows a demand for a wider variety of shops.

## Portland College Theatre and Sports Complex

### Theme for Change: More to Discover

A centre of excellence for disabled people in sport and theatre in the Kirkby and Sutton area. A regional leading, multi-use facility for sports, performance & teaching, with an innovative glass sports floor and retractable bleacher seating.

#### Rationale:

Complements other community facilities at the college which are free to access for local community groups and schools and part of the development of the area's visitor economy.

## Low Street, Sutton

### Theme for Change: Succeed in Ashfield

Purchase of two properties on Low Street, the high-street in Sutton. The properties will be repurposed for residential on the upper floors and for micro businesses, education and youth support hub at ground floor.

#### Rationale:

Vacancies are concentrated at the western end of the high street with many of the properties in poor condition. This is making the area look run down and contributing to lower footfall and vibrancy.



# Future Projects

# 1

## Maid Marian line / East Midlands

Upgrading of an existing mineral line for a passenger service will connect the area to the East Midlands Hub at Toton and realise the benefits of HS2.

# 3

## West Kirkby Gateway Phase 2: Industrial Units, Lane End Phase 3: Kirkby Station Access

Redevelopment of 1.94 hectare site for high quality, low carbon industrial units to provide a mix of sizes, suitable for start-ups and more established businesses.



# 2

## Kings Mill Railway Station

The potential for a second Sutton station will be investigated through the Restoring Your Railways project being undertaken in 2021.

# 4

## South Sutton Gateway and Parkway

Sutton Parkway station works will upgrade the existing station and provide new facilities to include a bus pull-in, increased parking provision with electric vehicle charging, secure bicycle storage and improved accessibility.



# Kirkby and Sutton Town Investment Plan - Financial

	<b>Current Projects – FUNDED</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Co-funding</b>	
<b>Accelerator Fund</b>	Hornbeam Park Play Area, Kirkby	0.178	0.103	ADC
	Cycling and Walking Network - Phase 1	0.2		
	Kirkby Indoor Market	0.3		
	Portland College Theatre and Sports Complex	1.6	1.5	
	Low Street, Sutton Property Purchase	0.65		
	Kirkby Leisure Centre	15.5	3	Sport England, LEP, ADC
<b>Future High Streets Fund</b>	Sutton Theatre	6.2	0.1	ATTFE
	Low Street Property Purchase and Repurposing		1.6	ADC
	Fox Street Pop-up Food Market & Car Park		0.1	ADC
	Maker Space and Business Hub		0.2	ADC
	<b>Towns Fund Priority Projects</b>			<b>Towns Fund</b>
	North Kirkby Gateway	15,929	5,140	10,789
	Kirkby Sports Hub	1,100	366	734
	Sutton Lawn Sports Hub	2,900	1,367	1,533
	Cycling and Walking Routes	2,583	645	1,938
	Visitor Digital Offer	255	5	220
	Science Discovery Centre and Planetarium	6,200	3,950	2,250
	Kings Mill Reservoir Leisure Development	4,192	1,648	2,544
	Portland Square, Sutton	866	136	730
<b>Regional Influence Projects</b>	Automated Distribution and Manufacturing Centre	30,000	10,000	20,000
	Ashfield Construction Centre	11,981	5,000	6,981
	Ashfield Civil Engineering Centre	3,103	1,000	2,103
	Enterprising Ashfield	7,116	3,366	3,750
	Library Innovation Centres	1,060	400	660
	West Kirkby Gateway	7,168	2,706	4,462
	Green Ashfield	3,000	800	2,200
	High Street Property Fund	1,000	100	900
	Portland Street Sustainable Housing	1,368	609	759
	<b>Total</b>	<b>98,891</b>	<b>37,238</b>	<b>61,653</b>
	Regional influence projects	44,434	16,000	28,434
	Total minus regional	54,457	21,238	33,219
	Maid Marian line / East Midlands Hub	Costings to be developed		
	Kings Mill Railway Station	Costings to be developed		
	West Kirkby Gateway – Phase 2: Industrial Units, Lane End; Phase 3: Kirkby Station Access Improvements	Costings to be developed		
	South Sutton Gateway and Parkway	Costings to be developed		

# Strategies, partnerships, programmes and investments

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In this section we discuss how the town investment plan has been informed by local and national strategies and the partnerships which have supported its' development. We also outline recent and current programmes and investments which complement the Priority Projects.

## Strategic Overview

The graphic below shows how the Priority Projects align with national, regional and local strategic aims. More detailed information is provided in Annex 3

Strategy	Alignment	Project
<b>National</b>		
Our Plan to Rebuild, UK Government's COVID-19 recovery strategy	New opportunities, sustainable practices; jobs, skills and infrastructure; clean, green recovery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Automated Distribution and Manufacturing Centre (ADMC)</li> <li>Ashfield Construction and Engineering Centres</li> <li>all projects from Succeed in Ashfield</li> <li>North and West Kirkby Gateways</li> <li>Portland Street Sustainable Housing</li> <li>Green Ashfield</li> </ul>
A New Deal for Britain	New homes, skills crisis, gap in opportunity and productivity and connectivity between the regions, unite and level up. Build back better, greener and faster	
Clean Growth Strategy	Decarbonising UK economy through 2020s, meeting national and international commitments to tackle climate change	
UK Industrial Strategy	Boost productivity, backing businesses to create good jobs, increase earning power with investment in skills, industries and infrastructure	
UK Digital Strategy	Giving everyone access to the digital skills they need: helping businesses become digital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ADMC</li> <li>Library Innovation Centres</li> <li>Enterprising Ashfield</li> </ul>
Skills for jobs: lifelong learning for opportunity and growth	Engagement of employers and business groups, working with colleges to develop skills plans to meet local needs. Employers key role in shaping higher technical qualifications and curriculum. Flexible student finance to enable adults to retrain; places FE colleges at the centre of levelling up and ensuring industry has the skilled workforce it needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ashfield Construction and Engineering Centres</li> <li>Enterprising Ashfield</li> </ul>
<b>Regional</b>		
Midlands Engine Strategy	Skills shortage; lack of entrepreneurship and economic dynamism; regeneration of town centres; productivity growth; UK's biggest carbon turnaround	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ADMC, Ashfield Construction and Engineering Centres</li> <li>Library Innovation Centres, Enterprising Ashfield, Green Ashfield, North and West Kirkby Gateways, Portland Square, Portland Street Sustainable</li> </ul>
D2N2 LEP: Local Industrial Strategy		
Economic Recovery and Growth Strategy	Recovery and rebuilding; skills needs; low carbon innovation; clean low carbon growth; skills infrastructure to align education and skills systems with business needs; supporting businesses to access the talent needed; equipping people with the skills and pathways to succeed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ADMC, Ashfield Construction and Engineering Centres</li> <li>Library Innovation Centres</li> <li>Enterprising Ashfield</li> <li>North and West Kirkby Gateways</li> </ul>
VISION 2030 - the Strategic Economic Plan	High-value economy, prosperous; healthy and inclusive; enhancing the quality of places, revitalising town centres; levelling up; Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ADMC, North and West Kirkby Gateways, Kirkby and Sutton Lawn Sports Hubs, Ashfield Construction Centre, Portland Square, Library Innovation Centres</li> </ul>
LTP3 Transport strategy	Improving the quality of the environment; sustainable communities; reducing the need to travel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cycling and Walking network, North and West Kirkby Gateways, Portland Street Sustainable Housing</li> </ul>
Nottinghamshire Visitor Economy strategy	Strong visitor economy; focus on walking and cycle routes; thriving town centre night time economies; inspiring new visitors to come to the area, with improved marketing and promotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cycling and Walking network</li> <li>Kings Mill leisure provision</li> <li>Sherwood Science Discovery Centre and Planetarium</li> <li>Visitor Digital Offer</li> <li>Portland Square</li> </ul>
Nottinghamshire Place Strategy	Improve the appearance of towns as lively and attractive places that generate jobs and meet changing shopping and leisure habits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>North and West Kirkby Gateways</li> <li>Ashfield Construction Centre</li> <li>Portland Square</li> </ul>
Visit, Sleep, Cycle, Repeat	Encourage visitors to explore further; support the growth of tourism and cycling-related businesses; off-road cycle network Sherwood Forest - The Peak District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cycling and Walking network</li> <li>Sherwood Science Discovery Centre and Planetarium</li> <li>Kings Mill Reservoir leisure provision</li> <li>Visitor Digital Offer</li> </ul>

Strategy	Alignment	Project
<b>Local</b>		
Discover Ashfield	A great place to live, visit, work and do business – investment plan uses three of DA’s themes: Be Healthy, Be Happy, More to Discover and Succeed in Ashfield	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All of the projects from the three DA themes and Greener Ashfield projects</li> </ul>
Ashfield and Mansfield Plan for Growth	Encouraging enterprise and business growth; improving infrastructure; stimulating investment. Enhance higher-level skills, apprenticeships; reduce/remove barriers to new business creation and growth; easy access to business support; promote the area; develop and sustain the vitality of towns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ADMC, Ashfield Construction and Civil Engineering Centres,</li> <li>Enterprising Ashfield,</li> <li>North and West Kirkby Gateways, Portland Square, Visitor Digital Offer</li> </ul>
Ashfield District Council Corporate Plan	Health and Happiness; Homes and Housing; Economic Growth and Place; Cleaner and Greener. Re-invigorate and re-purpose town centres by bringing empty buildings back into use; diversifying town centre economy; facilitate economic growth around transport hubs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All of the projects from Be Healthy, Be Happy, More to Discover and Succeed in Ashfield</li> </ul>
Ashfield Economic Recovery Plan	Reducing inequalities, revitalising town centres, addressing climate change and being Brexit-ready; skills, business and employability support; development of skills strategy; diversify and access new markets and support business start-ups; harness innovation and ‘Green Recovery’ opportunities; access economic recovery funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ADMC</li> <li>North and West Kirkby Gateways,</li> <li>Enterprising Ashfield, Ashfield Construction Centre, Portland Square, Greener Ashfield, Library Innovation Centres</li> </ul>
Local Plan	Housing growth; local economy; health of town centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>North and West Kirkby Gateways, Portland Street Sustainable Housing, ADMC, Ashfield Construction Centre, Portland Square, Library Innovation Centres</li> </ul>
Kirkby and Sutton Station Masterplans	Concept plan from the Kirkby Station Masterplan informed the design brief for the West Kirkby Gateway project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>West Kirkby Gateway</li> </ul>
Maid Marian Rail Extension Masterplan	The masterplan includes improvement and development of the Kirkby Station area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>West Kirkby Gateway</li> </ul>
Kirkby Town Centre Masterplan	Town Centre Core - place making improvements, consolidate commercial, leisure offer, reinvigorate to maximise opportunities for regeneration and investment. Civic Square (Plaza) - activity, vibrancy and full potential - North Kirkby Gateway scheme. Portland Street Sustainable Housing scheme - opportunity for link to the potential Patco development site, redevelop area north of Portland Street for housing. Gateway schemes: residential densification of the town centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>North and West Kirkby Gateways</li> <li>Portland Street Sustainable Housing</li> </ul>
Sutton Town Centre Masterplan	Ashfield Construction Centre - key gateway site; refurbishment of Portland Square and the four FHSF projects - vision of an active and vibrant town centre with a mix of uses, more people living, working and visiting, an environment residents are proud of; strengthening connections, linking key destinations and promoting activity. Vision for Portland Square: high quality, accessible public space, community activities, visitors, enlivening the town centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ashfield Construction Centre</li> <li>Portland Square</li> <li>Library Innovation Centre</li> </ul>
Ashfield Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2021-25/ Notts. Integrated Care Partnership priorities	Kirkby investment plan vision: create a place with better health and wellbeing. All new build in both towns will maximise opportunities for healthy places; providing sustainable living, reducing carbon, improving air quality; providing accessible health care within Kirkby town centre; enhanced public open space and new facilities at Kingsway Park, Sutton Lawn and Kings Mill Reservoir to encourage visitors and active participation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>North Kirkby Gateway</li> <li>Kirkby and Sutton Lawn Sports Hubs</li> <li>Kings Mill Reservoir Leisure Development,</li> <li>Ashfield Construction and Engineering CentresPortland Square</li> </ul>
Ashfield District Council Community Engagement Strategy (CES) 2020-2023	The Towns Fund Engagement Plan follows the seven principles of the CES and aligns with three of the aims: Develop stronger relationships with people in Ashfield; Collaborate more closely with the residents of Ashfield, create solutions together; Increase number of projects utilising community engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All projects</li> </ul>
Ashfield Public Open Space Strategy	Priorities of: Improving the quality of public spaces and Increasing public satisfaction and use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kirkby and Sutton Lawn Sports Hubs, Portland Square, Kings Mill Leisure Development</li> </ul>
Ashfield Playing Pitch Strategy	Kingsway Park and Sutton Lawn identified as priority/ hub sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kirkby and Sutton Lawn Sports Hubs</li> </ul>
Ashfield Local Football Facility Plan	Identifies opportunities to target investment. 11 priority projects to transform facilities; Kingsway Park and Sutton Lawn identified as priority sites for investment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kirkby and Sutton Lawn Sports Hubs</li> </ul>



## Partnerships

The Discover Ashfield Board has renewed purpose and focus through the Towns Fund initiative and board membership has been widened and strengthened. The Board provides a strong partnership approach for taking forward the Towns Fund Investment Plan and will continue to oversee the development and implementation of the TIP. Ashfield District Council will act as the accountable body for any successful grant awarded.

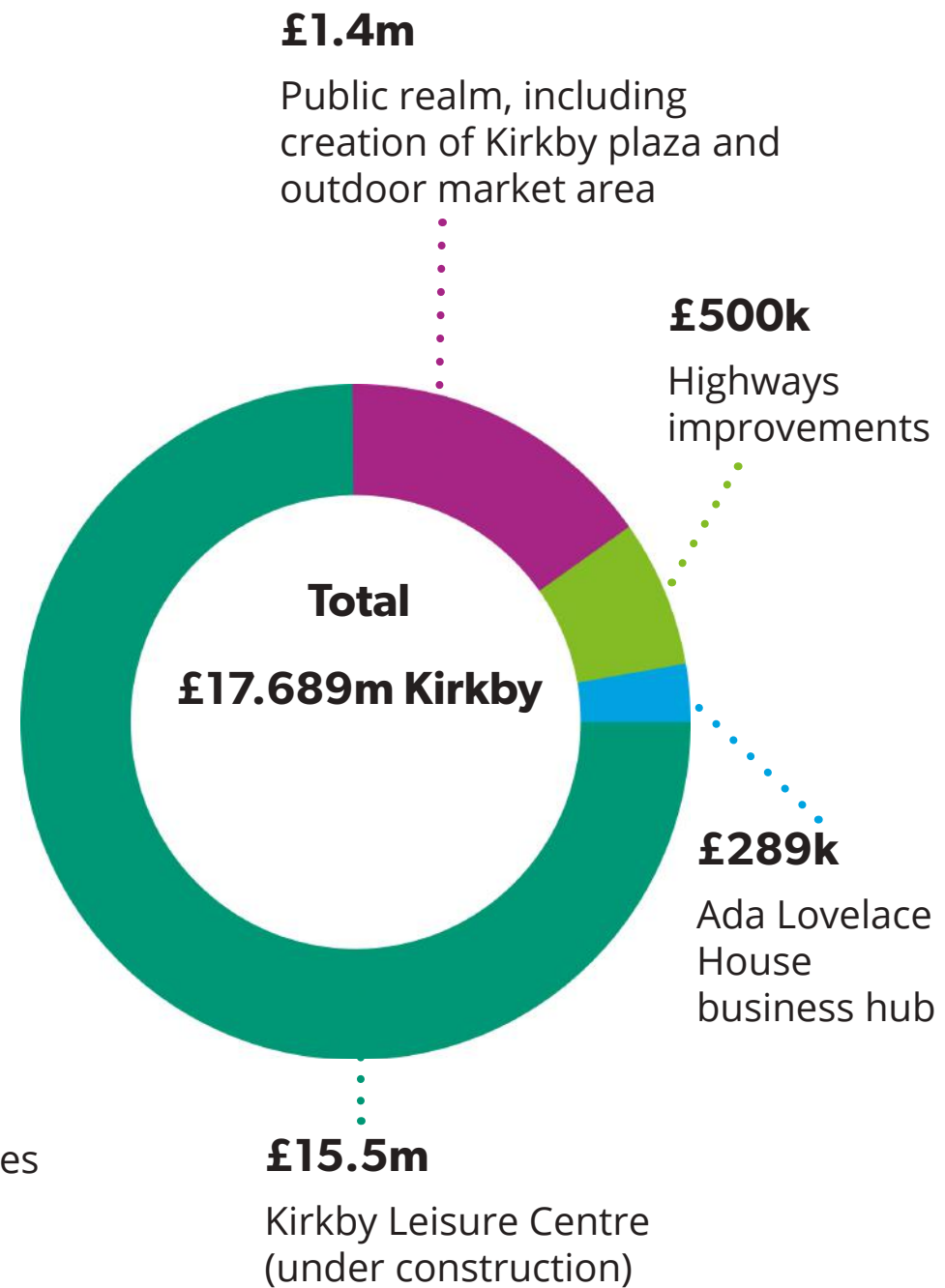
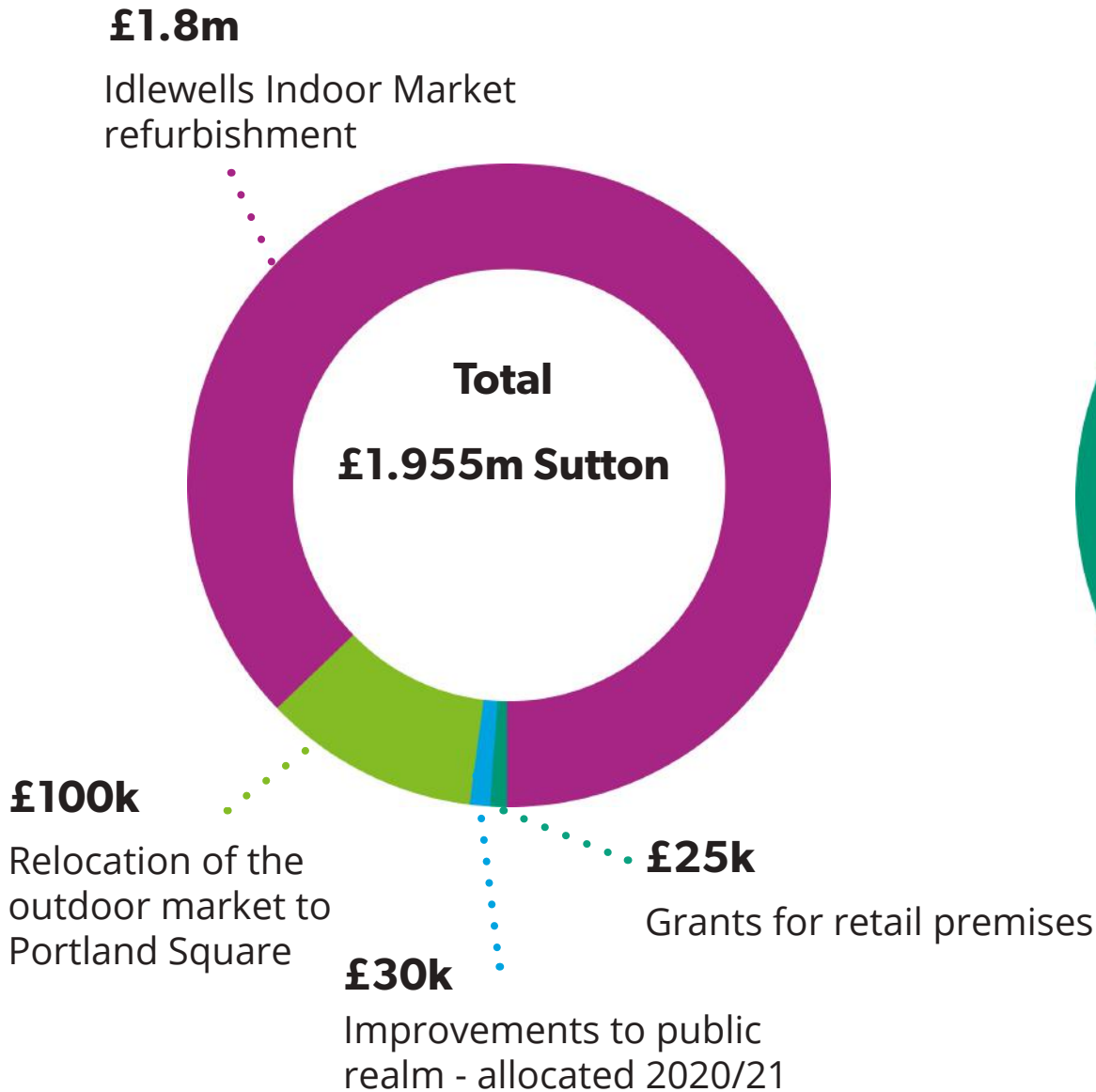
There are a number of partnerships in the area which are aligned, and support delivery of Discover Ashfield's mission, with further information provided in Annex 3. The infographic below shows the links between the partnerships.



## Programmes and investments

Ashfield District Council as the accountable body has a proven record of delivering projects as well as working in partnership with stakeholders.

Investment over the past five years is shown here in the infographic.



**Part Three**

# **Delivery**

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The delivery plan for the projects within our Town Investment Plan is included in Annex 2 which demonstrates how we will successfully deliver our project programme within the Towns Fund timeframe.

The Discover Ashfield Place Board will continue to have oversight of the Town Investment Plan, with monthly meetings to review progress and address issues. The theme leads for the Discover Ashfield Board will act as the sponsor for projects within their remit, Ashfield District Council's Regeneration Board will also have an oversight role.

Ashfield District Council and partners have a strong track record in capital project delivery and management of funding programmes. Prince 2 project management principals will be utilised to deliver projects. The Council will act as the accountable body for the project programme.

The Council's Place Team will coordinate project delivery, including development of the business cases for the projects, together with project partners including the five education partners; Mansfield and Sutton Astronomical Society, Inspire, Nottinghamshire County Council and East Midlands Railways. The majority of projects are at outline business case stage and will be developed into full business cases in-line with the HM Treasury Green Book five case model, through specialist consultancy support. The Discover Ashfield and Council Regeneration boards will provide scrutiny at business case development stage and the project sponsor will oversee the process.

Assessment of the deliverability of projects was undertaken during the prioritisation process, this will be reviewed as part of the business case development. Risk assessment and management has been undertaken at a high-level during prioritisation and project development stages and will continue during business case development, with a risk register developed for each project.

An independent appraisal of the business cases will be undertaken by a specialist consultancy, in advance of being presented to the two boards for approval. Business cases will be submitted with a summary of details on the development, delivery, monitoring and evaluation of the project programme. Quality assurance processes and monitoring and evaluation will be developed as part of the delivery programme.

Social value principals will be utilised in procurement of the projects to secure wider social, economic and environmental benefits such as investment in local skills, apprenticeships and upskilling; opportunities for SMEs, local supply chains and sustainable construction. The social value framework for the project programme will be developed and agreed with the Board. The Council's procurement partner Nottingham City Council will manage the procurement process for the project programme.

PROJECT DELIVERY PLAN - Financial Year commencing 1st April																						
		2021/22				2022/23				2023/24				2024/25				2025/26				
		Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
<b>1.00</b>	<b>Heads of Terms</b>																					
1.00	Negotiate Heads of Terms																					
<b>2.00</b>	<b>Approval and Mobilisation</b>																					
2.01	Agreement of Heads of Terms																					
2.02	Consultant Appointments																					
2.03	Programme Execution Plan																					
<b>3.00</b>	<b>North Kirkby Gateway</b>																					
3.01	Pre-Development																					
3.02	Works																					
3.03	Operation																					
<b>4.00</b>	<b>Kirkby Sports Hub</b>																					
4.01	Pre-Development																					
4.02	Works																					
4.03	Operation																					
<b>5.00</b>	<b>Sutton Lawn Sports Hub</b>																					
5.01	Pre-Development																					
5.02	Works																					
5.03	Operation																					
<b>6.00</b>	<b>Cycling &amp; Walking Routes</b>																					
6.01	Pre-Development																					
6.02	Works																					
6.03	Operation																					
<b>7.00</b>	<b>Visitor Digital Offer</b>																					
7.01	Pre-Development																					
7.02	Works																					
7.03	In use																					
<b>8.00</b>	<b>Science Discovery Centre and Planetarium</b>																					
8.01	Pre-Development																					
8.02	Works																					
8.03	Operation																					
<b>9.00</b>	<b>Kings Mill Reservoir Leisure Development</b>																					
9.01	Pre-Development																					
9.02	Works																					
9.03	Operation																					
<b>10.00</b>	<b>Portland Square</b>																					
10.01	Pre-Development																					
10.02	Works																					
10.03	In Use																					
<b>11.00</b>	<b>Automated Distribution &amp; Manufacturing Centre</b>																					
11.01	Pre-Development																					
11.02	Works																					
11.03	Operation																					
<b>12.00</b>	<b>Ashfield Construction Centre</b>																					
12.01	Pre-Development																					
12.02	Works																					
12.03	Operation																					
<b>13.00</b>	<b>Ashfield Engineering Centre</b>																					
13.01	Pre-Development																					

13.02	Works																				
13.03	Operation																				
<b>14.00</b>	<b>Enterprising Ashfield</b>																				
14.01	Pre-Development																				
14.02	Delivery																				
<b>15.00</b>	<b>Library Innovation Centres</b>																				
15.01	Pre-Development																				
15.02	Works																				
15.03	Operation																				
<b>16.00</b>	<b>West Kirkby Gateway</b>																				
16.01	Pre-Development																				
16.02	Works																				
16.03	Operation																				
<b>17.00</b>	<b>Green Ashfield</b>																				
17.01	Pre-Development																				
17.02	Works																				
17.03	Operation																				
<b>18.00</b>	<b>High Street Property Fund</b>																				
18.01	Pre-Development																				
18.02	Works																				
18.03	Operation																				
<b>19.00</b>	<b>Portland Street Sustainable Housing</b>																				
19.01	Pre-Development																				
19.02	Works																				
19.03	Operation																				

**Key**  
■ Float  
■ Rent Free/Letting