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Foreword

North East Mayor Kim McGuinness

As North East Mayor, I'm on a mission to make our region the home of real opportunity. This document sets out how we will build the infrastructure which creates that opportunity. I was elected to make this great region even better, and that means leading a Mayoral Combined Authority dedicated to delivering the manifesto endorsed by the public.

Devolution for me means empowering people with the agency they deserve to get the change they want to see. The public decides a path for their region; we deliver. Our local authorities have made great progress in unlocking the benefits of devolution for our region, and now we build on those strong foundations. This Mayoral Combined Authority, through its devolution deals, holds a range of tools to aid in this delivery, but we do not take these deals as our starting point – they are the path to mission delivery on behalf of the public.

My vision is for a North East at the centre of the UK economy, a fairer and greener economy, an economy that enables every child – regardless of their background – to thrive. A region where decisions about the North East are taken by the people of the region.

This Corporate Plan sets out how we, as an organisation, will focus on delivering that vision via the policies the public have backed in my manifesto and the Cabinet's Portfolio Plans.



Foreword

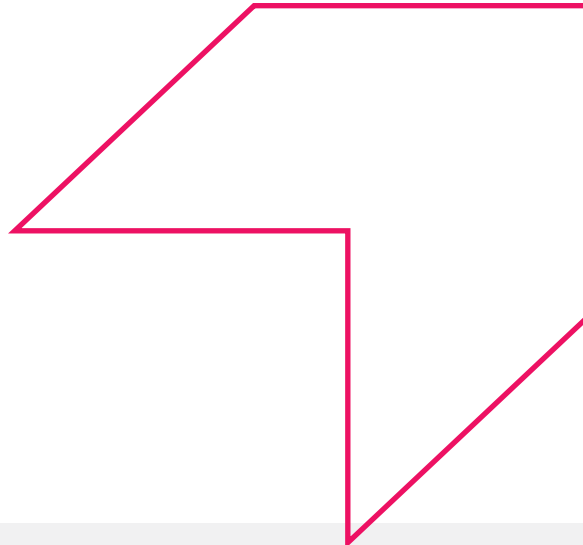
Chief Executive, Dr Henry Kippin

This plan brings together the strategic priorities of our Mayor and Cabinet into a blueprint for delivery. It shows what we will deliver and how we will do it – through strong collaboration, innovation, and a clear focus on impact.

Devolution offers the North East a once-in-a-generation opportunity. Through our devolution deal and subsequent trailblazer deal we have negotiated new powers, funding and the convening authority to create better outcomes for our communities, businesses and places. Our job is to translate this into clear delivery and impact on the ground. We are already demonstrating this through major investments in skills, transport, housing and people – and as a team we will ensure this continues and grows.

We are also tasked by the Mayor and Cabinet to strive for more – preparing the ground for deeper devolution and ensuring we are fit for purpose to deliver on their political ambition. We will continue to engage across sectors, convene at scale, and innovate with investors and government as we do this – ensuring the North East is home to the best and most productive Combined Authority.

None of this is possible without collaboration, inclusivity and strong team values. We are building a new organisation that will need to continue adapting and evolving with the times we are in. Our committed team is ready to deliver.



About the North East

North East England is unique in its diversity. It is also uniquely placed to become the home of real opportunity.

Our Combined Authority stretches from vibrant and fast-evolving cities to wild, open countryside and coastlines; whose communities are custodians, living and working in an historic natural environment. It is no surprise that a major film company wants to create new studios here, with the sweep of locations North East England can offer.

The strength of our ports along the North Sea coast are just one reason why our region will be home to the green energy revolution, supporting a new generation of offshore wind and providing the bedrock for innovation in sustainable industries, while also being gateways for global trade.

The automotive sector is firmly established here, but the supply chain that feeds the Nissan plant in Sunderland also does business across the UK and world; it is only one part of an advanced manufacturing sector found right across the region, and with a strong export record around which we can build a growing economy that works for everyone.

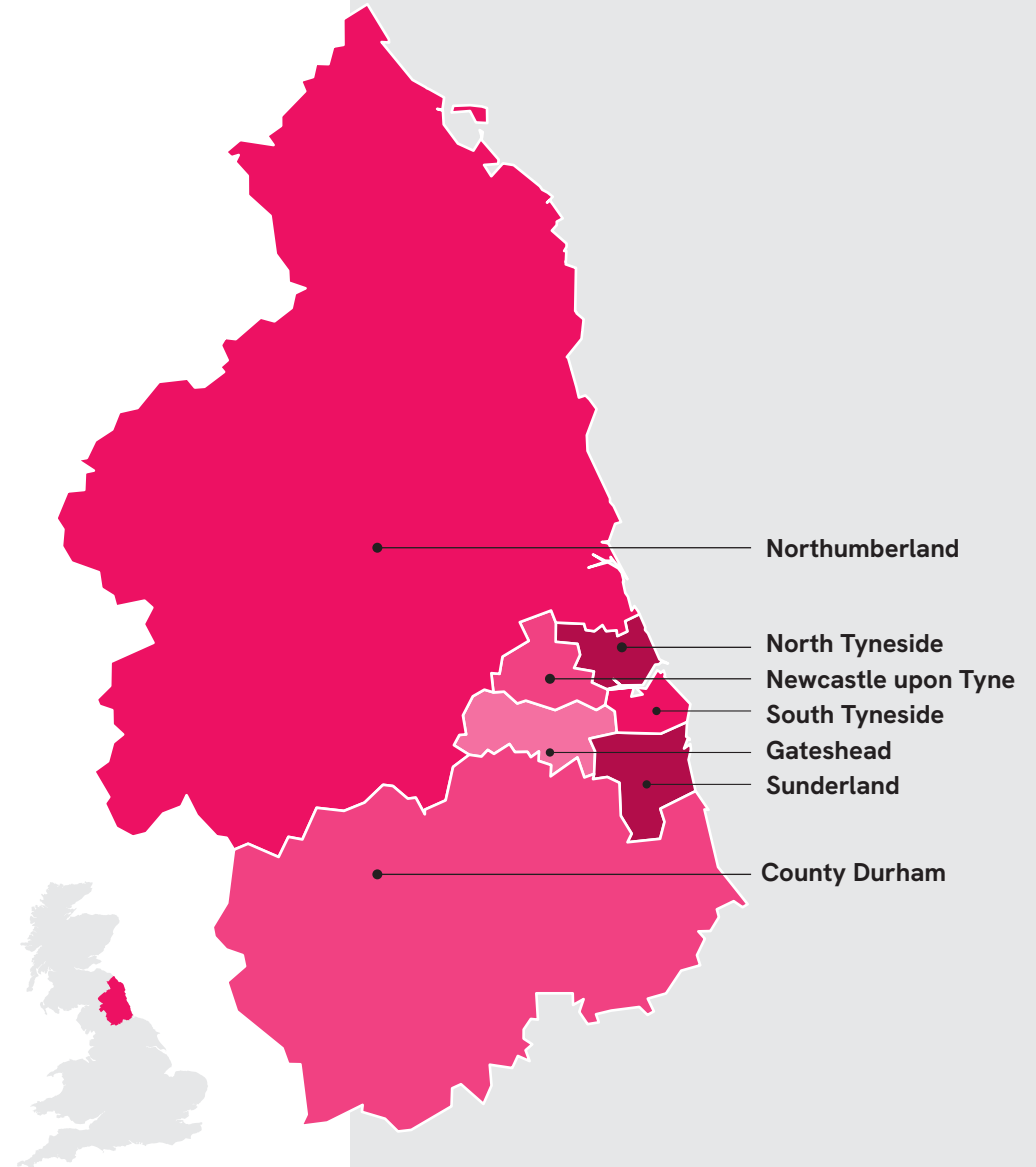
Our Combined Authority also spans some of the most affluent places in the north of England, and some of the

most deprived. This is not a simple picture: we know that communities facing real challenges can be found in our cities, towns and countryside alike, with poor housing and poor transport infrastructure and services — both significant barriers to opportunity.

Most of all, North East England has a powerful tradition of working in partnership to get things done. These partnerships work between public, private, education, voluntary and industrial sectors. It is also a home to world-class sporting and cultural venues and events, underpinned by eclectic and fast-changing grassroots creativity and energy.

Our Mayoral Combined Authority is well-placed to build on this tradition of partnership and the pride people have in the places they call home.

A journey through our region – from Berwick to Barnard Castle – is a unique experience, taking you from coastal and rural communities to vibrant city centres, passing cutting-edge industries and crossing rivers that will be home to a new energy revolution.



Our five missions



1. Home of real opportunity

This Corporate Plan brings together many different strategies and documents, including the Mayor's manifesto and the Cabinet Portfolio Plans, in one document.



2. A North East we are proud to call home

Our Corporate Plan is deliberately structured around the same five missions of the Local Growth Plan, reflecting our commitment to being a delivery-focused Combined Authority.



3. Home to a growing and vibrant economy for all

This Mayoral Combined Authority will focus on delivery, ensuring we have real impact. This means setting clear, long-term goals that contribute to a bold vision of change. This Corporate Plan lays out clear and ambitious plans, but also serves to ensure as an organisation we are not spread too thin or diverted off-course. Built into this plan are the long-term goals and the early steps that will get us there.



4. Home of the green energy revolution

The Mayoral Combined Authority will own this Corporate Plan as its shared focus, empowering its team to deliver focused change. We will work with organisations including local authorities,



5. A welcoming home to global trade



transport operators, businesses, trade unions, colleges and universities, and our NHS across the North East on a shared commitment to improving lives. We have a strong reputation for working in collaboration with government and we will build on this partnership approach.

The overall aim of these five missions is to increase opportunity, create more well-paid employment, improve transport connections, build a greener North East, and reduce child poverty. These aims are built into our Local Growth Plan and Cabinet Portfolio Plans. Our missions set out in this Corporate Plan are underpinned by detailed directorate delivery plans and our investment framework. Powering these missions is our commitment to devolving more powers out of Westminster wherever possible. The North East Combined Authority believes people acting locally produces better results than having our decisions taken for us from afar. We will continue to push for ambitious devolution deals and a single settlement with government.

Our Corporate Plan sets out our four-year plan and will be reviewed annually.

How will we track our progress?

Our ambitions are transformational, and we know change takes time.

We monitor our progress in a number of ways.

Our missions will inform everything we do. We'll track our progress by:



Regional indicators

Monitoring the region's progress against a set of national measures to ensure we are heading in the right direction



Activities

Collating what our investments and directorates are delivering across our region



Outputs

Capturing the short term results of our investments and delivery to understand immediate benefits

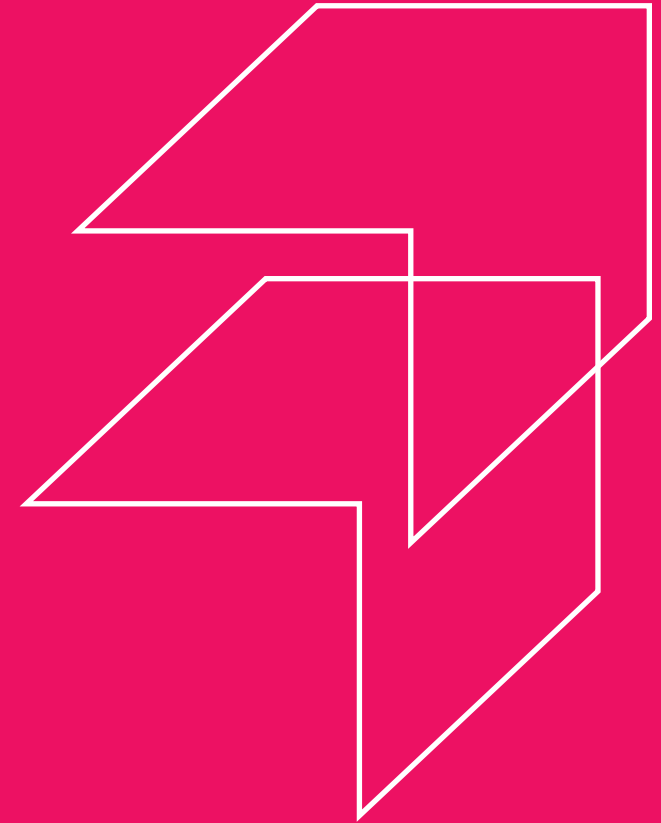


Outcomes and impact

Capturing and understanding the longer-term outcomes of our investments and delivery to determine regional impact

Our Performance Management Framework provides more information about how we will approach monitoring and reporting progress and performance.

Our missions



1. Home of real opportunity

This Mayoral Combined Authority will work to create opportunity for all, ensuring inclusive growth and good public services are spread across the North East. Our region is a great place to live and work, but too many people face challenges to success. We will implement policies which help to overcome those challenges – from skills training to child support.

The Mayoral Combined Authority will invest in the foundations of the economy and remove barriers that prevent people succeeding. This work will be done in partnership with businesses, local authorities and trade unions, and will be designed around the needs of the people of the North East. We will help our residents to thrive by providing all-age career support, starting in schools. We'll help people progress by funding skills programmes relevant to our region. Our employment support programmes will help residents with multiple and complex needs at a personal level, providing training and help with transport costs.

By investing in our residents we will also ensure that we have a skills base that enables growth in the North East economy, both in terms of our existing sectors and our emerging strengths.

But we will also support people at the neighbourhood level. We will see that in action as we explore support for the expansion of Sure Start-style services across the region, improved housing for all, work with schools on education improvement, and backing community groups with access to funds. Public service reform will be central to our plans to reduce child poverty and support families.

We'll see this opportunity mission in action at a regional level in our growing cultural and sporting sectors, with Mayoral Combined Authority support to ensure everyone can participate.

In the short term we will deliver:



A North East Child Poverty Reduction Unit.



Develop plans for a Mayor's childcare grant for people returning to work.



A Mayor's opportunity fund and social finance fund.



Launch a High Streets Commission to better support the local economy.



A New Deal for North East Workers, bringing together our skills support, job creation and good employer campaigns under one focused brand, supported by our Skills and Employment strategies.



2. A North East we are proud to call home

Where we live matters. The people of the North East are rightly proud of their local identity and want services and policies that support them to live here. The North East Combined Authority delivers the strategies and programmes that help make this happen. From better transport to more social housing, from a thriving creative economy to sustainable rural communities, this Mayoral Combined Authority will deliver in a way that aligns to the priorities of local people.

We will work with partners including local authorities, housing providers and Homes England to deliver more affordable and social housing, ensuring everyone has access to a good home. As part of this, we'll invest in communities and in making our housing stock meet the needs of residents. We'll also work to secure more devolved powers to support renters.



In the short term we will:



Implement the Mayor's Local Transport Plan, following extensive public consultation, improving transport for all users.



Work to bring buses back under public control with the Angel Network.



Transform the daily experience of Tyne and Wear Metro users by bringing the new trains into service.



Introduce a Spatial Development Strategy.



Deliver more good homes by reforming brownfield sites and building more affordable housing and social housing.



Establish and deliver a regional events and culture programme.



Implement a North East Environmental Stewardship, Coast, and Rural Growth Investment Plan.



3. Home to a growing and vibrant economy for all

This Mayoral Combined Authority will support businesses to create jobs across the North East. We will ensure people have the skills to access work and provide the right conditions for economic growth. We will ensure support and investment in a wide range of economic drivers: from advanced manufacturing to the cultural sector, from skills training to good transport.

This focus will see the Mayoral Combined Authority work with our businesses, universities, and the research and innovation catapults to unlock higher levels of R&D and innovation funding, and to ensure the region transitions to a digitally enabled economy that supports people in employment.

We will ensure economic growth reaches all parts of the North East, with targeted support for rural and coastal areas.

It's important that we continue to sell the North East, and the Mayoral Combined Authority will progress a North East brand that builds on our remarkable creative, cultural, sports, and visitor economy assets, in alignment with our investment in these areas.



In the short term we will:



Agree and implement the North East's first Local Growth Plan, including support for the foundational economy throughout.



Ensure local businesses have access to investment support.



Invest in our creative industries, both in their physical infrastructure and access to skills training, in line with our Local Growth Plan.



Develop options for a Mayoral Development Corporation.



Deliver early Investment Zone priorities.



4. Home of the green energy revolution

We will grasp the opportunity that net zero presents to the North East. Not only will we transition to a green economy, creating thousands of jobs and reducing carbon emissions, we'll build the new technologies and solutions needed for the UK to decarbonise too.

We'll ensure we're the natural choice for new industries that need access to clean energy, development land, natural resources, and a skilled workforce. The Mayoral Combined Authority will encourage innovation, support green businesses to grow, and ensure residents have the skills to take advantage of the immense jobs potential that the transition brings.

We will take a central role in driving regional net zero activity through convening others, and by developing the regional strategy and policy framework that sets our course. We'll provide a compelling net zero vision that provides many more jobs and opportunities for our communities, creating better places for people to live, work and play, and which protects and restores our unique North East nature and landscapes.

It is important the transition to a more climate-friendly North East is a just one, which takes the people of the region with it. We will ensure there is a route for people to benefit from these economic and social changes.

In the short term we will:



Invest in infrastructure, innovation, and skills to drive forward the North East offshore wind industry and create new jobs and careers.



Create thousands more job opportunities in electric vehicle manufacturing.



Increase electric vehicle charge points and zero emission buses.



Work with our education providers to create a green energy super academy.



Create a Green Superport, providing a framework for our ports to collaborate and present our world-leading offer.



Explore plans set out in the Mayor's manifesto for a North East Carbon and Nature Marketplace to offset carbon in local projects, improving lives and restoring nature.



5. A welcoming home to global trade

The North East is an exporting powerhouse and the Mayoral Combined Authority will build on that global reputation to maximise international opportunity. We will secure more global inward investment and increase our export output, including a focus on our cultural exports.

We will position the region to attract national institutions and refresh our international inward investment and visitor capabilities. This will be seen in our investment in infrastructure, and key sites to unlock private sector investment.



In the short term we will:



Secure more investment in the North East that leads to good quality jobs.



Expand our relationships with other countries to build links and opportunities for North East businesses.



Engage with potential inward investors; understanding their needs and helping them overcome barriers to locating in the region through an inward investment fund.



Implement refreshed Access to Finance/Regional Wealth programmes.



The role of the North East Combined Authority and how we operate



The role of the North East Combined Authority and how we operate

The North East Combined Authority exists to serve the people of the region by delivering the Mayor's manifesto in line with the devolution deals agreed with government. Our purpose is to create a better North East on their behalf, ensuring people here have access to opportunity and that the economy thrives.

We give local people more control over the things that matter most to them.

Rather than central government making decisions about the area, a lot more can be decided here in the region by the Combined Authority. This close working between the councils means we can speak with one voice, which helps when we want to make the case for the North East nationally and internationally.

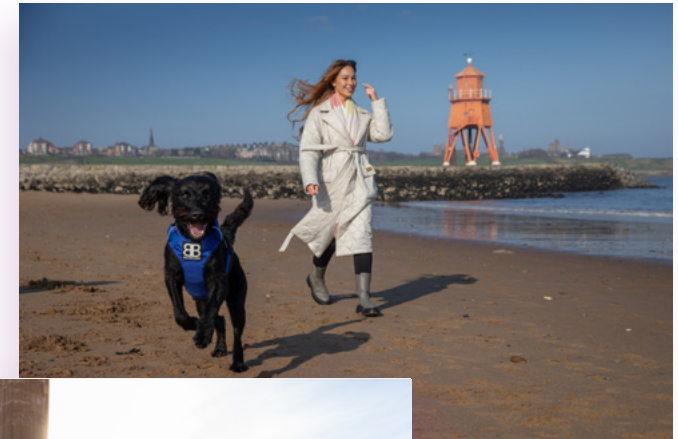
We secure devolved powers from Westminster for the people of this region and work in partnership with others both locally and nationally to deliver a shared vision for the North East.

Our vision is set by the Mayor and her Cabinet, and the Mayoral Combined Authority delivers on this vision through the five key missions set out in this document.

The North East Combined Authority is a purpose-driven organisation that will measure its success on the impact of these missions.

We know working together is the best way to get more good done for the North East, so we work closely with organisations and people from all across the region. These include health trusts, emergency services, voluntary organisations and local businesses.

In 2024 we began work on the Local Growth Plan, a plan that sets out our joint endeavour alongside government to deliver opportunity across our region. As an organisation we are committed to delivering this economic masterplan on behalf of the North East.



Our governance

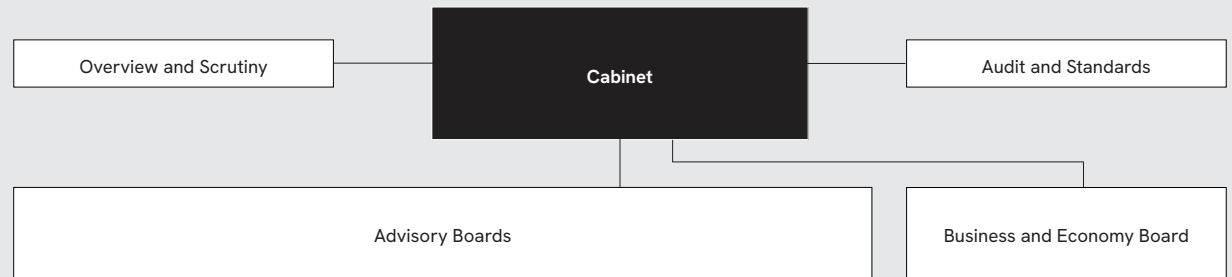
The North East Combined Authority is democratically governed by the Mayor and the Cabinet.

The Combined Authority makes its decisions with transparency, efficiency, and accountability. How we do this is outlined in our Constitution and our Single Assurance Framework, which explain how we manage our:

Governance

Communication

Programme Assurance



Cabinet

Cabinet is the decision-making body of the North East Combined Authority and is chaired by the Mayor. Cabinet is made up of the Mayor, and the Leaders and Mayors from the seven local authorities which form the North East Combined Authority. There are two non-voting members representing the business and community and voluntary sectors.

Committees

We have two committees.

The Audit and Standards Committee is concerned with the robustness of the Combined Authority's arrangements to implement its policies and to manage its resources. It is also responsible for promoting and maintain high standards of conduct by members of the Combined Authority and its committees.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee scrutinises policy decisions and other action taken by the Mayor and Cabinet, its impact on the area and its inhabitants, and seeks to influence decision-makers by making reports and recommendations.

Advisory Boards

We have member-led advisory boards aligned to the Cabinet portfolio areas, set out on the next page, and a Business and Economy Board. All of these Boards support members of the Combined Authority in overseeing the delivery of the vision, ambitions and programmes of activity set out in the Corporate Plan and associated plans and strategies. The Boards are not decision makers but are an important part of ensuring the work of the North East CA is inclusive and collaborative by bringing together key stakeholders and expertise to provide advice and a regionwide view to their portfolio lead.

Our Cabinet and portfolios

The Cabinet of the North East Combined Authority works together with the Mayor to create a better North East. Their Cabinet portfolios are embedded in the five organisational missions.

Our Cabinet is made up of the leaders and Mayors of the seven local authorities which came together to start the devolution journey on behalf of the region.



North East Mayor Kim McGuinness

Economy

Kim unites the North East voice. She chairs the North East Combined Authority Cabinet and ensures all communities have a say in the future of the North East. The Mayor leads delivery of her manifesto, holds specific devolved powers, including over transport arrangements, and leads for the Cabinet on North East economic growth.



Councillor Michael Mordey

Finance and Investment

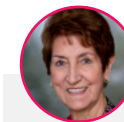
The Finance and Investment portfolio is responsible for the ongoing success of the North East in securing opportunities from inward investment, including by maximising the impact of the Investment Zones. The portfolio is responsible for ensuring that the Combined Authority makes the best use of its financial resources and for overseeing its project assurance processes; this includes ensuring that we incorporate the impact on reducing child poverty within our assessment processes.



Councillor Amanda Hopgood

Culture, Creative, Tourism and Sport

This portfolio will leverage and realise the region's cultural, creative, heritage, visitor and sport assets, and opportunities to help deliver a vibrant, sustainable and inclusive economy and better outcomes for our residents. We will seek to increase leisure and business tourism and ensure a thriving creative sector, including supporting music, writing and screen industries.



Dame Norma Redfearn DBE

Housing and Land

The Housing and Land portfolio is responsible for developing policy approaches around housing, strategic regional infrastructure, and spatial planning and regional growth. This includes unlocking more new homes, including more affordable and social housing; taking steps to improve the vitality of our high streets, town and city centres; reducing CO2 emissions; and to improving housing quality.



Councillor Tracey Dixon

Education, Inclusion and Skills

Through the work of the Education, Inclusion and Skills portfolio we will work with a diverse range of partners, employers and communities to deliver new and ambitious approaches to growing a more inclusive economy, including encouraging good work that helps to lift residents – especially our children – out of poverty.



Councillor Martin Gannon

Transport

The Transport portfolio is responsible for creating a greener, more inclusive and integrated transport network which is aligned with the economic needs of the region and which benefits our residents through better health outcomes.



Councillor Glen Sanderson

Environment, Coast and Rural

The Environment, Coast and Rural portfolio will develop new solutions to natural environment, coastal and rural challenges. We will deliver sustainable, inclusive growth; and tackle inequality, improving the wellbeing and quality of life of all our people, communities and businesses.



Councillor Karen Kilgour

Public Sector Reform

This portfolio carries out a convening role for the reform of public service in our region, bringing together local authorities, cross-sector partners, and national government to transform the North East's public services and tackle underlying inequalities. The role has a particular focus on child poverty and health inequalities, as well as leading on the Radical Prevention Fund identified in the North East devolution deal.

Our people and culture

Our values

Strive for brilliance

One team

Make it happen

Be inclusive

Drive sustainability



Corporate culture: our vision for the future

At the North East Combined Authority, we aspire to build a culture that reflects the values and ambitions of a new, forward-looking organisation. As we grow, we want to nurture a diverse and talented team committed to delivering meaningful outcomes for the people of our region. We will be purposeful in everything we do, where each individual not only takes ownership of their role but also contributes to the collective success of the organisation.

Our vision is to create a community that fosters inclusivity, where every voice is heard, and everyone feels a sense of belonging. We are committed to nurturing an environment where our colleagues can thrive; where opportunities for career growth, personal development, and continuous learning are abundant. As one united team, we will inspire each other to reach our fullest potential, creating a joyful and fulfilling workplace that enables us to deliver our best every day.

Wellbeing will be at the heart of our culture. We aim to ensure that every individual feels safe, supported, and well-balanced in their personal and professional lives. Flexible working arrangements, access to health and wellness programmes, and a focus on work-life balance will underpin our commitment to wellbeing, enabling our team to bring their best selves to work.

Our design for success

Our organisational design will reflect a commitment to our policies, mission, and strategic objectives. Built on a foundation of shared values and purpose, this structure will support our culture and drive our success. We will continuously innovate, evaluate, and refine our model to ensure it remains aligned with the needs of our organisation and the region we serve.

Our people: building a passionate workforce

We want to attract people who share our values, bring enthusiasm, and seek challenges that allow their skills, knowledge, and experience to benefit the wider team. We are committed to investing in future talent through graduate and apprenticeship programmes, building lasting careers that contribute to the growth of our local communities.

Above all, we will care for one another and take pride in the work we do - for each other and for the communities we serve - making our mark as we strive to make a lasting impact on our region.

Equality, diversity and inclusion

Inequality is one of the biggest challenges facing our region. It drives poor social and economic outcomes for many of our citizens and communities. It also poses a significant risk to realising the full potential presented by the North East devolution deal.

But inequality is not inevitable. We are on a mission to be known as the home of real opportunity. A place where people's life chances are not dictated by where they live or the personal characteristics they hold. Where everyone has the chance to contribute to the region's success and is able to access what they need to live well, now and in the future.

Our approach to advancing equality in every aspect of our work includes:

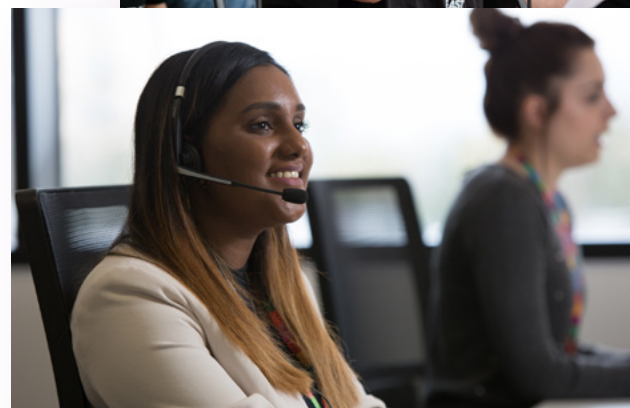
Publishing equality objectives that focus on priority equality issues and lead to improvements in policy-making, service design, resource allocation and employment.

Using equality impact assessments to design and deliver programmes that focus on increasing access to opportunities for our most marginalised citizens and communities.

Developing a strategic relationship with our voluntary, community and social enterprise sector, recognising their role as anchors in their neighbourhoods, supporting some of our most marginalised citizens and communities.

Developing an approach to co-design and collaboration that ensures that the voices of our most marginalised citizens and communities are reflected in our plans.

Taking steps to ensure the diversity of our workforce reflects the populations we serve.

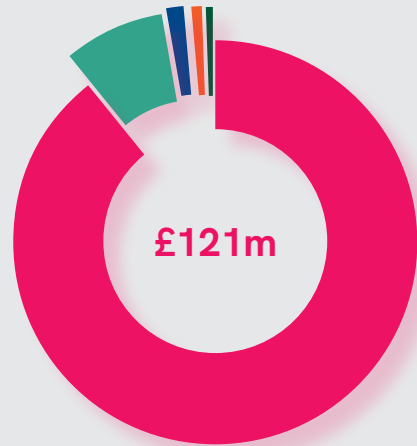


Our resources

In delivering the missions and objectives set out in this corporate plan, we manage our resources in a way that maximise value for money when weighed against the benefits they deliver. Our investment framework and assurance processes are the tools we use to do this: these set the principles we apply in deciding where and how to invest; and how we appraise, monitor and evaluate specific programmes of work.

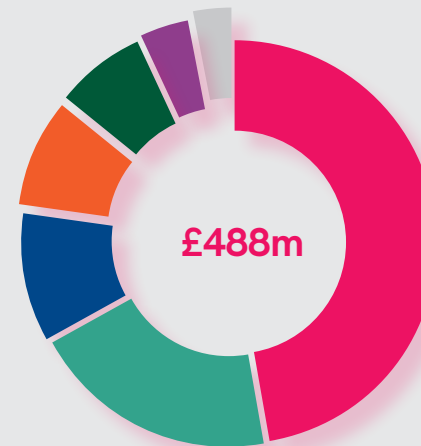
The pictures on the right set out where our funding comes from and how it is spent. The proposed investment plans indicate the areas in which we expect to invest in the coming year, whilst the two corporate budget and expenditure charts show the costs we incur in running the Combined Authority. Of our £121m corporate budget, [£90m] is funding to Nexus, Northumberland County Council and Durham County Council for the running of buses and Metro, whilst the majority of the remainder relates to the salaries of the employees of the North East CA.

Draft funding of 2025-26 Corporate Budget



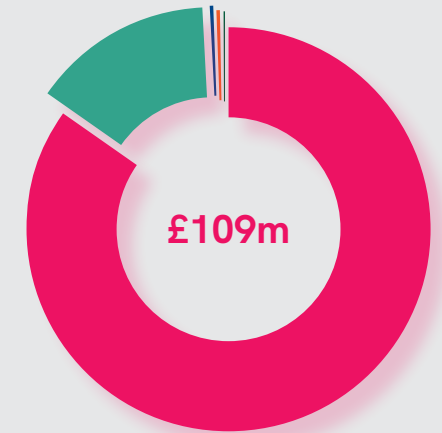
● Grants and contributions	£107.861m
● Tunnel tolls	£9.872m
● Interest	£1.730m
● Other income	£0.834m
● Recharges	£0.509m

Proposed investment plans 2025-2026



● Sustainable transport	£231.144m
● Skills	£96.285m
● Programme and Business Support	£49.502m
● Tyne Tunnel	£42.792m
● Investment sites	£35.615m
● Housing	£18.680m
● Growth of low carbon sectors (Investment Zone)	£13.886m

Draft 2025-26 Corporate Expenditure Budget (including transport levies)



● Supplies and services	£92.226m
● Employees	£15.450m
● Premises	£0.433m
● Third party payments	£0.399m
● Transport	£0.008m

A team that enables delivery

The North East Combined Authority has centralised corporate services to enable the organisation to grow and operate productively and efficiently. They all play a central role in our team.

Governance

The Governance Team facilitate decision making and ensure other people can see that happening. The team supports the Cabinet and committee structures of the North East CA, its Advisory Boards and other meetings and provides advice to its Members, its officers and the public on how decisions are made and the application of the rules and procedures set out in the Constitution to meet the requirements of the law and associated regulations.

Communications

Communications is a strategic enabler that ensures the organisation is clear, consistent and impactful. It aligns stakeholders with the organisation's vision, builds public trust, and drives audience engagement. By effectively promoting initiatives and successes, our approach to communications strengthens organisational reputation and ensures messages support strategic goals, drive activity and inspire action.

Transformation

Transformation drives our ability to adapt and thrive in a rapidly changing environment. It enables the assessment, review, and implementation of new, effective ways of working. Investing in transformation will nurture an innovative culture, ensuring processes and systems continuously improve to meet the future demands of our organisation.

Performance management

Performance management is crucial for aligning the organisation's resources and efforts with strategic objectives. By setting clear targets, tracking progress, and maintaining accountability through regular reporting and feedback, it enables a delivery focused, impact-driven culture while championing continuous improvement.

Evidence and insights

Evidence and insights form the foundation for informed strategic planning, by anchoring investment decisions in data and intelligence that aligns with our core missions. Our goal is to craft strategies and delivery plans that directly address the needs of the North East and its communities, ensuring that we achieve maximum impact. By incorporating qualitative insights such as lived experiences and individual stories, we add depth to our data, making it more actionable and relevant to our missions.

Evaluation

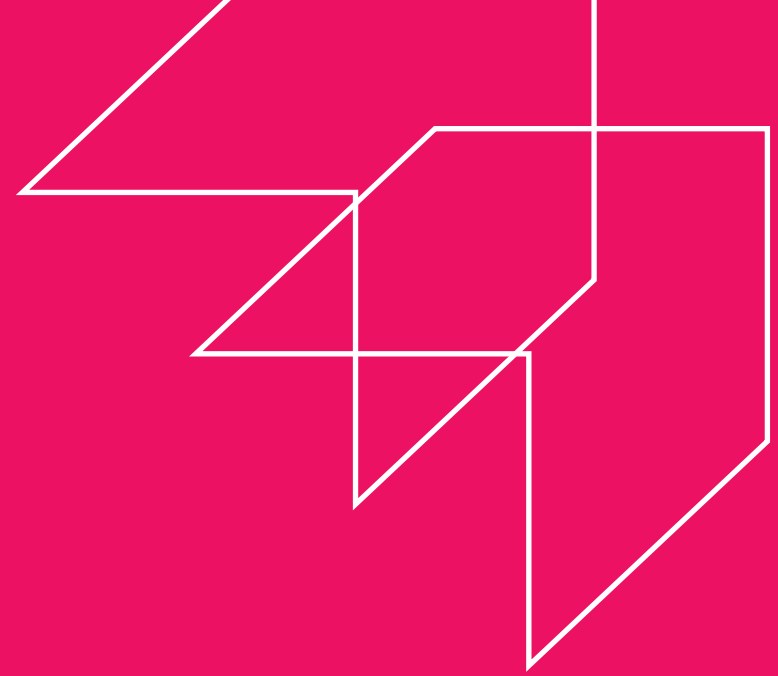
Evaluation is essential for measuring the effectiveness of our initiatives, refining strategies, and optimising resource allocation. Through the Gateway Review – a government-mandated evaluation that enables access to future investment funds – we commit to a cycle of continuous improvement in our strategic priorities and delivery. Evaluation also allows us to adopt best practices and reflect on lessons learned, ensuring that each project aligns with our mission and drives meaningful, impactful results.

Finance and investment assurance

Finance and investment assurance ensure resources are deployed effectively, in line with internal and external regulations, and aligned with strategic priorities. They provide oversight, mitigate risks and help to guarantee that investments deliver both value for money and impact. By evaluating and reporting on the financial health and long-term sustainability of budgets, projects and programmes, they ensure the organisation is fiscally responsible and capable of achieving its strategic goals, fostering trust and accountability.

Business support

Supporting programme delivery with outstanding, comprehensive business support services creates an environment where core teams have the resources, information and support they need to operate efficiently, adapt quickly and grow sustainably, achieving positive outcomes for the organisation, its partners and stakeholders.



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