



Driving growth **and prosperity:**

**Economic Development
Strategy 2016**





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Foreword

This strategy for growth and prosperity has developed through a partnership between Telford & Wrekin Council and the Telford Business Board, which is playing a strong and growing role in driving economic growth at both a local and regional level.

As partners, we are ambitious for Telford's residents and businesses and we value our borough for its diverse communities, the strength and potential of our economy and for the quality of both our urban and rural environment.

In this document we have set out how, through a collaborative approach between the public and private sectors, we will encourage enterprise and innovation, enabling our business community to flourish and to drive economic growth. It is only through economic growth that we can create secure employment and lifestyle outcomes that will strengthen families and raise levels of economic independence for the benefit all of our borough's households and communities.

But, we will not over-promise and are taking a simple approach to our economic strategy; too many strategies are over-complicated and do not deliver their ambitions. At a time of limited resources, we will focus on actions that have the greatest potential to deliver jobs and growth for Telford.

We are calling our approach to growth 'Enterprise Telford', which reflects our view that all communities across our Borough can contribute to and benefit from

economic growth. We believe that by harnessing Telford's strengths in terms of business, people and place we can unlock jobs and create growth that will improve the lives of all our residents and support business productivity.

With a diverse business base and as a key contributor to the West Midlands economy, Telford is ideally positioned to be an important player in new and emerging regional partnerships. We believe that, working together, the Council and the Telford Business Board have a vital role to play as enablers, bringing together partners and organisations in the Borough. However, we also have a vital role as ambassadors for Telford, speaking up for the Borough on the regional and national stage.

We do not underestimate the challenges, but we will work hard together and with our other partners in the private, education and third sectors to exploit the clear opportunities that exist for our Borough.



Cllr Shaun Davies
Cabinet member for
Business, Neighbourhood &
Customer Services,
Telford & Wrekin Council



Paul Hinkins
Chair,
Telford Business Board



Vision and strategy

At the heart of Enterprise Telford is our shared vision:

'To promote Telford's role as a major contributor to the West Midlands economy; to focus on those things that will do most to unlock jobs and create growth that will improve the lives of all of the people who live in our Borough and; to make Telford a natural home for investors, innovators and entrepreneurs'.

Enterprise Telford does not restrict our aspirations for growth to a specific zone or employment site; it recognises the potential of our whole Borough to contribute to economic growth.

There are three things that underpin Enterprise Telford and will help us deliver our vision:

Business meaning a 'business friendly' operating environment for businesses across our Borough. This includes the critical issues that underpin business growth such as clear and effective business support, access to finance, the local regulatory environment (particularly relating to planning) and inward investment.

People meaning the workforce within our Borough and how the skills of our workforce are aligned to business needs and opportunities both now and in the future.

Place meaning the sense of place and the infrastructure that underpins growth including transport connectivity, broadband access, our employment areas, housing and employment land, environment, cultural assets and quality of life.

Linked to these are six key actions that will enable us to deliver our vision for Telford:

- 1 Create business friendly conditions to increase the number of successful businesses.
- 2 Grow sectors around opportunities and support sectors that underpin employment across the Borough.
- 3 Stimulate and support innovation across all business sectors.
- 4 Improve the skills and talent pool of the Borough to make it business relevant.
- 5 Transform physical and digital connectivity.
- 6 Optimise all the assets of the Borough to make it a first-class place to live, work and invest.

We should not underestimate the significant assets of our Borough, from strategically important businesses and a continuous rich heritage of innovation, to one of the top conference venues in the country. We have unparalleled environmental assets in a World Heritage Site and the largest Town Park in the West Midlands. Added to these we have growing digital capacity, increasingly connected transport infrastructure, a skilled workforce and a growing number of graduates.

Through our unique growth deal with the Homes & Communities Agency we also have control over 400 acres of employment land and sites for close to 3000 new homes and the commitment from Government to invest over £44m into site preparation and essential infrastructure to deliver this land to the market - giving Telford all the ingredients essential for growth.





Regional Context

Government's policy of increasing the devolution of powers to the regions presents a number of challenges and opportunities for the Borough which will require us to speak up loudly for Telford on both the regional and national stage.

The Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) model was established by Government in 2011 with the intention of increasing the private sector's influence and role in creating and directing economic strategy at a local level. Telford & Wrekin is a partner in the Marches LEP with Herefordshire and Shropshire, and the Chair of the Telford Business Board also sits on the LEP Board.

The Marches covers a huge geography which brings challenges, not least created by the predominantly rural nature of Herefordshire and Shropshire whose focus is on rural market towns. The economic strategy for the Marches LEP is set out in its Strategic Economic Strategy 2014, which is currently being updated with refreshed data.

Whilst we will continue to promote Telford's interests as part of the Marches LEP, a potential realignment of powers is emerging with a radical shift of power away from Whitehall as a result of the new West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA). This is the new government structure being initiated for the West Midlands by the 7 Metropolitan Authorities, which will act together to deliver their economic and transport objectives and co-ordinate the functions that deliver them.

The Combined Authority will be in a strong position to negotiate with Government the devolution of power and resources from the national to the local level. Telford's businesses and communities retain strong connections into the conurbation with supply chain links growing as the Borough's automotive sector benefits from proximity to investors like JLR. It is for this reason that we have become a Non Constituent Member of the WMCA.



Furthermore, emerging from this and from the Government's intention (declared in June 2015), of handing power back to the people of the Midlands, is the concept of a 'Midlands Engine' to overarch Combined Authorities as well as LEP's. The Midlands Engine will focus on themes of co-operation where this will significantly impact on the economic growth potential of the Midlands, such as transport and inward investment. Government has already committed £5m of investment into a Midlands transport strategy and to enhanced promotion of the Midlands to foreign direct investors through UKTI.

Whilst there are challenges to be met, Telford is uniquely well placed to capitalise on these emerging regional changes, because of its predominantly urban nature, its geographical location and its strength in manufacturing.

The West Midlands represents a highly connected economic market and Telford can benefit from closer working on a number of key issues, including transport connectivity. With growing international competition from new and emerging markets, and the threat of future off-shoring of the automotive supply chain, the promotion of the West Midlands in a more joined up manner is

beneficial. Telford has the potential to support the economic objectives of both the West Midlands Combined Authority and the Black Country LEP as our competitively priced and ready to go land offers potential to overcome an obstacle to growth in the wider West Midlands area.

Telford can also benefit from its position as the urban focus of growth in the Marches. The Borough's potential for housing and jobs growth gives us strength in competing for scarce Government funding, but also our location makes us a gateway to Wales and Ireland which is a key trading partner for the UK and the wider European Union.

The Council is also seeking the devolution of powers to the Borough that will support its Enterprise Telford approach to growth, and we will continue to engage with the West Midlands Combined Authority to ensure that Telford is recognised as a key partner and player in the West Midlands Engine.

Local context

We have described how at a regional level Telford has the potential, with its central location and supply of ready to go development land, to compete strongly for inward investment and to be a key player in the West Midlands Engine.

Locally, Telford is enjoying a period of growth with potential for further growth being generated by a number of factors. The number of company expansions across the Borough is increasing, with growing demand for land and property to accommodate expansion. In the last two years we have supported the expansion of 13 of the Borough's strategic businesses who have made multi-million pound investments.

In 2016 the Council signed a unique Land Deal with HCA and DCLG which, over the next 10 years, will see Government commit £44.5m from land sales in Telford into site preparation and infrastructure to deliver growth. In return, the Council will take responsibility for the marketing and disposal of all HCA residential and commercial land assets working with investors and existing businesses through Enterprise Telford to develop bespoke investment opportunities and driving delivery of 2,800 new homes and 8,500 new jobs.

Telford's offer to investors is being enhanced by the expansion of our two Universities. The Telford Innovation Campus of Wolverhampton University is making significant investments into its engineering and manufacturing faculty, with a particular focus on automotive manufacturing and the international renown of Harper Adams University with its food and drink academy will grow further with the opening of its agri-tech research centre which has significant backing from the private sector.

Our successful campaign to keep the MOD in Donnington, with its historic links to the community and significant number of local jobs, means that we now have an expanding facility including a £70m MOD fulfilment centre that is a major enhancement to Telford's position as a centre for the logistics sector.

Telford's physical and digital connectivity is a key part of our strong offer to inward investors and supports economic activity and growth through access to markets nationally and internationally. Transport funding secured through the Government's Growth Deal is enabling the Council to deliver the infrastructure needed for transport growth and to ensure skills capacity. The Council and its partners BDUK and BT are jointly funding the Superfast Telford programme which will bring superfast coverage to at least 98% of the Borough by 2017.

The strength and development of the Telford Business Board is another positive for the local economy as its role expands as a key player in supporting growth and inward investment.

No consideration of economic growth should forget the significance of our heritage, leisure and cultural assets, with our World Heritage Site, Town Park, new Southwater development, expanding Shopping Centre and our attractive Borough Towns creating a strong and varied offer for the local, day and tourist visitor. There are local challenges however, and these need to be addressed if we are to drive growth.

Whilst Telford has an impressive supply of land, there is a shortage of certain categories of property, particularly for manufacturing and warehouse space for small to mid sized businesses. The cost of a new build can be prohibitive for these businesses, some of whom struggle to find funding or to meet the increased cost of rent.

Telford also has issues of unemployment and underemployment and business partners highlight skills shortages across sectors and an ageing workforce in some sectors that could hamper growth.

The 2015 update of the Index of Multiple Deprivation shows that Telford needs to address deprivation and

levels of NEETS, demonstrating the need for a balance in the types of employment that we generate.

If we are to generate growth that will benefit all of our communities, it is vital that we support our Borough Towns to maximise their potential. In common with high streets across the country, some of our Borough Town high streets are struggling with empty retail premises and with under utilisation of living space above them. These high streets need to attract the local and day visitor if they are to survive and this will require innovation and imagination. We must do more to 'capture' the visitor when they visit our World Heritage Site, to ensure that they appreciate our whole visitor offer, spreading economic benefit.



Making it happen

Bringing together partners and organisations across the Borough and working collaboratively with our LEP and regional neighbours where we share priorities and opportunities, the Council and Telford Business Board will act as enablers of growth.

We will use resources to guide investment into priorities which support our Enterprise Telford approach and will embrace the third sector as a significant partner with the potential to support growth.

Our focus will be on six key actions, each of which is now explored in detail.

Growing the number of successful businesses

We want to see more successful start-ups, attract more entrepreneurs, support home grown entrepreneurship, see greater volumes of international trade and have stronger businesses, employing more, local, people. Successful businesses are essential if we are to provide a better deal for all of the Borough's residents, improving health outcomes, improving skills levels and providing more and better paid jobs.

We are committed to creating the conditions and support for business to flourish, to become more competitive, and increase productivity and profitability.

Our 'business supporting' approach was first set out in 2013 when we launched 'Invest in Telford' and created a strong team of business support and inward investment professionals dedicated to helping our businesses to grow. Co-located with teams responsible for public sector land and property, planning and skills since 2013 this coordinated approach has supported the creation of 630 new jobs and secured in excess of £2m grant funding for businesses across all sectors and at all stages of development.

At a national level, Government has now recognised that the business support landscape is overcrowded and confusing and so have started the process of

streamlining and simplifying support through their Business is Great campaign and website.

At a local level, LEP's have been tasked with creating Business Growth Hubs, which will streamline support through a local website and physical 'hubs'. The principle behind the physical hub model is that they become a 'one stop shop' for support that is delivered through a wide range of national, regional and local providers.

We believe that the Growth Hub model offers a great opportunity for us to deliver support in an accessible way, and that is appropriate for all our companies from early stage to SME, right through to global players.

In Telford, the Growth Hub is being delivered through a collaboration between the Council's Business Support and Investment team, Telford Business Board and the University of Wolverhampton and the Marches LEP. We want businesses to think of the Hub as a 'junior partner' in their business - there to support and enable, with a great network of connections, links to in depth knowledge of business and access to investment finance whether in the form of grants, loans, equity, or crowd sourcing.

Business Growth Hub, Telford

Telford's Business Growth Hub is located at the Telford Innovation Campus, Priorslee. The Hub offers a welcoming and inspiring environment and is managed by staff from the Council's Inward

Investment and Business Support team who will ensure that support meets the needs of our local businesses and that the support on offer from local, regional and national schemes is complementary and co-ordinated. The Hub is also open to use by businesses whether for hot-desking, meetings or webinars, with a visualisation suite that offers state of the art digital facilities.

Networks and collaboration

The role of the Telford Business Board in the Growth Hub is central to its success and to effective collaboration between the public and private sectors. The Board's Sector Champions are creating networks of business people who can share knowledge, experiences and ideas to accelerate growth in their own businesses and each others. These networks will all be connected through the Growth Hub – strong networks mean better business and successful businesses understand the value of collaboration.

The University of Wolverhampton is hosting the Growth Hub at the Telford Innovation Campus, Priorslee. The University is leading the field and has an international reputation of knowledge transfer. Through the Growth Hub, the University can engage with businesses in collaborative research and development which will generate new commercial opportunities.

High growth start-ups

Almost all businesses in the UK (99.9% in fact) are small or medium sized. Through the Hub we recognise that the term SME encompasses a broad range of businesses, from the sole trader to the high end manufacturer and our support reflects this. We offer support that is tailored to the stage of development and potential to grow of each business or potential business that we engage with.

However, within our SME's there will be a small number of exciting and promising companies with the potential to have a significant impact on economic growth and job creation; it is universally recognised that the success of companies like these has a disproportionate effect on economic output. Successful places are those that focus on these high growth companies; their success tends to be based on

innovation and the jobs they create are usually more highly skilled and highly paid. The knock-on effect of their growth is therefore felt not just from more employment but also from the benefits of higher tax receipts which helps to fund public, social and infrastructure spending.

Through the Hub we are creating the environment and are delivering the support that these start-ups need to expand and make the transition from start up to mature company. This might be access to finance, support with skills and recruitment, coaching and mentoring, support to export access to research and development facilities through expertise locally as well as the regional and national Catapults.

Bespoke sector support

Through the Hub we will increasingly bespoke business support for sectors with targeted programmes of activity that reflect the diversity of our business base. The Council's Business Support and Investment team will work increasingly closely with the Telford Business Board and Sector Champions to support the identification and removal of barriers to growth across all sectors.

The digital age

The UK is world class in many aspects of the technical and digital economy, including digital advertising and marketing, data management and analytics, software development and e-commerce. However, not all businesses are making the most of the digital opportunity with many not appreciating the benefits or thinking that being online isn't relevant to their business; 36% of SME's in the UK have no website,



however those businesses that have developed their on-line capacity all report an increase in sales.

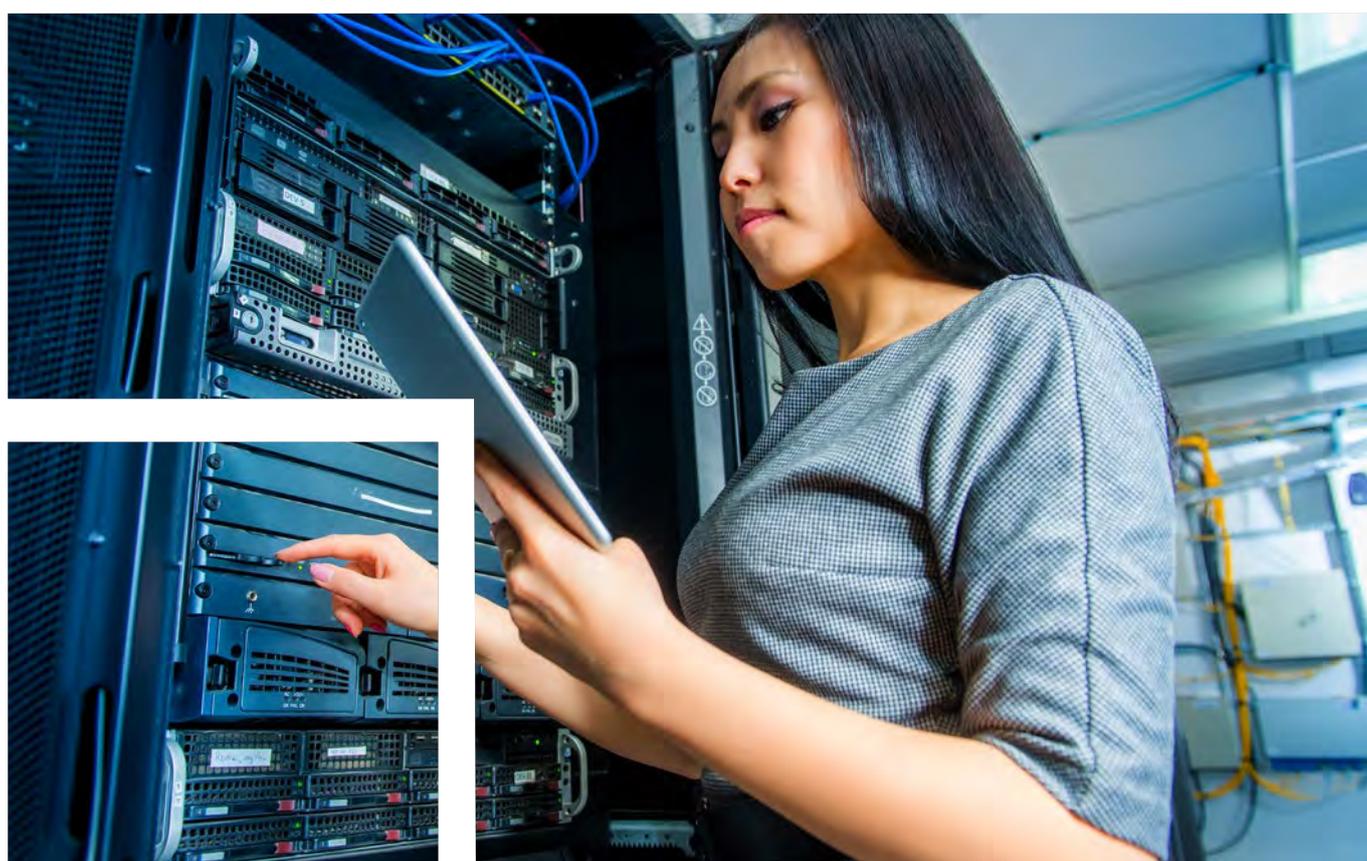
Through the Hub we will help Telford businesses to unlock the value of the digital age from cloud services to back up data and support for project management. We will help businesses to see how social media can create brand awareness and grow supply chain relationships and its a good way for businesses to share information and influence opinion as well as strengthen relationships.

Businesses of all shapes and sizes can find ways to benefit from the digital age, even some traditionally lower-tech companies can see the benefits and in more industrial settings progressive manufacturers are using all sorts of high-tech solutions to support smart production processes.

Cyber-security

By 2017 the estimated value of the cyber-security sector will be £3.4billion. This is an indication of the importance of this sector to business growth and security and is why we will be working with the University of Wolverhampton and the nationally recognised Malvern Hills Cyber Security Centre, as well as West Mercia Police to support and protect our businesses.

Through the Hub businesses will have access to Cyber Essentials, making sure that they have effective firewalls, passwords and access restrictions in place. Our support will recognise that a businesses workforce is often the weakest link in cyber security and so will give access to workforce training for smaller businesses through a 'cyber-bites' programme.



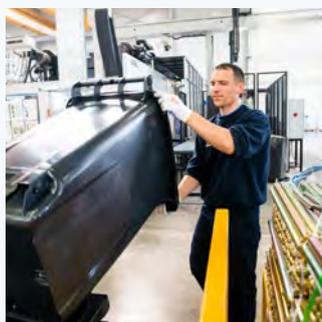
Building on our sector strengths and opportunities

We must make the most of the opportunities that we have. We want to see growth in high value, high potential sectors to underpin long-term prosperity and we want to keep diversity in our economy to future proof against sector failure (such as potential over-heating in the automotive sector) and we want to capitalise on the social enterprises and trading third sector organisations which already exist in our Borough.

Alongside this, we must address still unacceptable levels of unemployment particularly NEETs, under-employment and poverty by promoting growth in areas where significant and sustainable job creation can be achieved.

Finally, we must attain the best possible results from Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) by linking our FDI strategy to sector opportunities.

The Borough's economy is relatively well diversified and well represented in a number of growth sectors, both manufacturing and service.



With all this in mind, we will focus on a three track approach to supporting business growth. Within each of these categories there will be particular opportunities, but the approach reflects the realities of our economy in the short to medium term and also our potential for longer term prosperity:

High Growth, High Value Added to provide high skill, high salary employment. This will include advanced manufacturing, particularly automotive and 3d printing, digital and agri-technology.

High Volume, High Job Creation to create larger numbers of low to medium skilled employment. This will include some food and drink and construction employment and tourism, retail and hospitality.

High FDI Potential with greatest potential for new investment such as automotive, food and drink manufacturing (including agri-tech) and logistics.

Within these categories, Telford has some strong potential for sector growth and new investment and our inward investment activity will be carefully targeted at opportunities within the following sectors:

Manufacturing and advanced engineering

Telford's sector diversity and resilience is revealing and dispels the idea that the UK is a country that no longer makes anything. Despite an increasingly competitive global environment, strong domestic demand is boosting production levels across a wide range of manufacturing activities and investment in new facilities, machinery, research and recruitment by Telford manufacturers is creating a solid outlook for growth.

Telford has seen investment from global players such as BAE, GKN and Stadco and these offer a solid platform for growth, but other manufacturing businesses still have to reach their full potential.

Our Growth Hub and Telford Business Board Sector Champions will support Telford manufacturers to achieve their potential by collaborating to strengthen supply chains and by supporting businesses to commercialise and take up the latest technological processes. The Hub will also recognise the increased



‘servitisation’ of the advanced manufacturing sector, where increasingly businesses offer technical services outside their core activity requiring specialist skills such as digital and marketing.

Advanced manufacturing also offers potential for new investment, particularly FDI from the automotive sector. UKTI has recognised the potential for growth in the automotive supply chain by the establishment of the Drive West Midlands initiative, which is promoting the region internationally. Telford is working in partnership with Marketing Birmingham, Invest Black Country and with Stoke and Staffordshire to position our Borough as a key player in this initiative.

Food and drink (including Agricultural technology)

Food and drink companies are the toast of the UK economy, bringing 16,000 new products to market each year. In Telford these companies range from micro businesses to major businesses with internationally known brands such as Muller and Dairy Crest.

In Telford this sector has the advantage of the proximity of Harper Adams University College which has enhanced its international reputation with the establishment of the Regional Food Academy and who are now developing a national agri-engineering centre. These could stimulate private sector investment from agri-tech and high value manufacturing sectors, creating the potential for significant numbers of high value added jobs in for example agri-tech research and development and niche food and drink production.

The strength of the Harper Adams ‘brand’ offers a unique opportunity for Newport, where we have employment land allocated that is ideally placed to benefit from sector growth. We have created an inward investment proposition for Newport that will link the Harper Adams ‘brand’ to new employment sites, offering the proximity of Harper Adams and access to its research, development and technical support as part of this proposition. We will continue to work closely through the UKTI Agri-Tech Organisation to promote this sector through trade missions and events and support the sector supply chain through the Telford Growth Hub and Sector Champion.

ICT and digital

We have already shown how digital optimisation is essential for business growth and government research identifies ICT as a key growth area.

Telford has yet to develop a strong cluster for the ICT and digital sector that can compete for investment at a national level. We have the benefit of the E-Innovation Centre at the Telford Innovation Campus where around 40 small businesses use digital technologies based in incubation space and at the other end of the scale we have Capgemini as the largest private sector employer in the Town. However, digital start ups are now out-growing their incubation space, and recent changes to the delivery of HMRC’s contracts has changed the landscape potentially risking local jobs and impacting on this key sector, although the establishment of Telford by HMRC and Capgemini as a regional digital centre is reassuring.

Growth in this sector is essential if Telford is to retain and attract highly skilled sector workers; and if we are to support the increased 'servitisation' of the advanced manufacturing sector. There are opportunities and we will work to maximise these. We are prioritising the safeguarding of jobs with our largest ICT employer by promoting Telford as an ideal regional base for HMRC, offering excellent value for money and high quality office space, the skills and the location to compete strongly with the rest of the West Midlands.

Telford is now home to UKTI's ICT and Digital 'dealmaker'; Tim Luft of Woote is promoting the West Midlands internationally as a destination for investment in this sector and he is also the Telford Business Board's Sector Champion. We will continue to work with him and the Board to attract new investment, but also to support growth in our existing ICT and Digital businesses by securing for our Growth Hub a partnership with the national Digital Catapult, which is seeking to expand to outposts across the UK. This would create a strong incentive to investment, but would also support growth in our existing businesses through direct access to sector research and technical support.



The Enterprise Telford Pledge:

Our offer to investors

Enterprise Telford does not restrict our aspirations for growth to a specific zone or employment sites; it recognises the potential of our whole Borough to contribute to economic growth.

Since the launch of our Invest in Telford campaign in 2013, we have secured significant new investment in our Borough. However, like all UK destinations, we face challenges from rapid global urbanisation. This trend is increasing purchasing power which will open new markets for our products, but may also close doors as manufacturing is shifted closer to the source of consumption.

For this reason, we must continue to work to raise Telford's profile and must have a competitive offer to add to the strengths that form the core of all of our sector propositions: our competitive and ready to go land and affordable and flexible office space; our central location and accessibility; our skilled workforce and lower labour costs; our balance of urban centre and quality rural and semi-rural surrounds.

We have therefore developed an Enterprise Telford 'pledge' to business, that will offer both new investors and existing businesses (across all sectors) with the potential to grow and benefits that will compete strongly with the Government's Enterprise Zone initiative. These will apply wherever in the Borough a business proposes to invest.

Through our Enterprise Telford pledge investors will benefit from our unique experience of successfully matching investor expectations to tailor-made support. Our 'business winning, business supporting' approach brings together all the Council's business facing teams - planning, property, design, skills, business rates and business support - through a dedicated account manager. Support could include:

Access to finance: through our Growth Hub we will support businesses from start-ups to larger SME's to access a range of grant funding (particularly through the European Funding Programme 2014-2020) that will support initial investment, expansion or diversification into new products or processes.



Enhanced intervention levels: with 10 of our Wards across the Borough benefiting from Assisted Area status, our Hub will support SME's to achieve higher grant intervention levels. Assisted Area status also means that new investors larger than SME's can benefit from Regional Aid.

Consultancy support: we will offer free, professional consultancy support to assist potential or existing and growing investors to access grant finance and to advise on all types of risk capital such as private equity, public equity, venture capital money, crowd sourcing and business angel investment.

High quality infrastructure: we will ensure that wherever a business chooses to invest in our Borough, we have high quality infrastructure provision in place to support their investment including access, energy and broadband provision.

Business friendly planning regulation: we will ensure that investors benefit from quick planning validation, comprehensive and timely planning advice including planning obligations and conditions that maximise certainty prior to major investment.

Workforce support: through the Growth Hub we will help investors attract and recruit staff with access

to state of the art digital facilities to assist with recruitment. Our Growth Hub will provide a one stop brokerage service to meet all skills, training, work experience and apprenticeship needs.

Tailored business support: through the Growth Hub we will offer a tailored programme of business support, access to Business Sector Champions and collaborative business networks and to high quality research and development support through our Universities.

A red carpet welcome: together with our business partners and through our experienced Investment and Business Support Account Managers we will offer a red carpet welcome to investors.

We offer a fast and efficient property service through our Inward Investment and Asset & Property teams and working with local Property Agents, arrange quick and flexible property viewings. We offer opportunities through our Telford Growth Fund to acquire land and buildings and deliver bespoke accommodation solutions with leaseback options and long term property management services.

The Growth Hub will offer free hot-desking and meeting facilities to assist new investors during their

relocation, with full business support on hand. Where more space is needed during relocation or while new premises are under construction, new investors can benefit from up to 12 months rent free office space, subject to availability.

The Council's in-house Design & Build service, can project manage a client's construction of new, purpose-built premises and offer a complete relocation support package and our Building Control team offer experienced support. Both of these services can attract discounts depending on the scale of investment and job creation.

Inward investment marketing:

Through our Enterprise Telford marketing activity we must effectively promote the Borough as a premier location for inward investment and business expansion.

The Council's investment since 2013 in a specialist team of Account Managers has paid dividends, with more than 130 investment or expansion enquiries handled since 2013 and 21 business investments secured, creating over 350 jobs. This level of activity looks set to continue with economic growth driving increased productivity and expansion potential for existing companies and with FDI enquiries and investments in the UK outstripping other comparable EU economies.

Our Investment Team will continue to prioritise account management, engaging with our Top 150 FDI and home grown companies, supporting them to achieve their growth potential and ensuring that those looking to expand stay in our Borough.

The Team will build on our unique selling point, developing bespoke propositions for new employment sites, particularly Newport and T54, which have the potential for strong growth in the food and drink and advanced manufacturing sectors.

We will market these sector opportunities through UKTI's specialist teams, particularly working with the Automotive Investment and Food and Drink/Agricultural Technology Organisations. We will also collaborate with partners across the West Midlands in attendance at key industry exhibitions and events where we have a shared interest, such as the Advanced Manufacturing Exhibition

and Automechanika, where we will seek to generate leads and develop relationships with intermediaries such as land and property agents. We will seek funding through the European Funding Programme 2014-20 to support our inward investment marketing activity.

UKTI outward trade delegations are a particularly good way to generate leads and we will work with them targeting India (where investors are looking for joint ventures, mergers and buy-outs), America, Mexico (where there are at least 6 large and expanding body in white companies), China and South America. We will also use the international reputation of Harper Adams University to promote Telford through the Universities activities in South America and China.

Finally, the team will utilise the Growth Hub as a key feature of our investment propositions, but also using it as a means to link to overseas destinations and promote Telford businesses through webinars and other interactive events.



Stimulate and support innovation

We recognise the importance of innovation led businesses to Telford's economic growth and the power of collaboration between businesses and universities to generate new commercial opportunities. More than 8,000 knowledge transfer partnerships between universities and businesses were formed in the last decade and Government has recognised the importance of this by investing £89m of new funding in the UK Catapult network.

We understand that in business, innovation is driven by three things:

- a wish to commercialise new discoveries
- a commercial challenge or an opportunity to improve or develop a new product or offer
- customer demand for improved products and services.

Each of these needs a different approach and we will work with partners through the Growth Hub to develop a range of actions that will encourage innovation in products, processes, services and business processes.

Access to finance: through the Growth Hub we will work to ensure that Telford businesses (at all stages of development) are able to access the wide range of funding that will be available through the European Funding Programme 2014-2020, which can support research, product development and new processes that will lead to growth and create new jobs.

University partnerships: the Growth Hub will work in partnership with the two leading Universities in our Borough; Wolverhampton with its reputation for knowledge transfer in advanced manufacturing and Harper Adams with its international reputation for food and agricultural technology. The Growth Hub will also link Telford businesses with national centres of excellence such as the catapults.

High growth business support: we will use the significant funds available through the European Funding Programme to enhance SME competitiveness

by creating programmes of support. Telford Business Board Sector Champions and industry specialists will contribute to the design of these programmes, with a particular focus on innovation and increasing new products and processes.

Centres of excellence: we will recognise Telford's existing strengths and seek to support and capitalise on these to create 'centres of excellence' that can compete on a national and international level. In particular, we will focus on:

Rapid prototyping and composites:

Many Telford businesses are using leading-edge technologies in the production of their products and we will support and strengthen this by ensuring strong relationships are forged between businesses and the University of Wolverhampton.

The manufacturing services of the University at the Telford Innovation Campus are the subject of significant new investment which will have the potential to give local manufacturers a competitive edge. In particular, 3d or additive printing which is transforming manufacturing (the global 3d printing market is expected to be worth \$16.2 billion by 2018) and which can accelerate prototyping and testing and drastically speed up time to market and responsiveness to changes in consumer demand.

Resource efficiency-environmental technologies in advanced manufacturing:

Many manufacturing sectors are highly dependent on raw materials which may become scarcer in the future as a result of environmental pressures and increasing competition from developing economies. By 2030 the increased global population will need 140% more water and 250% more land.

Manufacturers could halve product costs by re-using materials and components and EU research suggests that simple resource efficiency measures could reduce costs by 10billion Euros across the EU manufacturing sector.

Through the Growth Hub and Sector Champions we want to support collaboration across supply chains



to help manufacturers make more efficient use of resources and to re-use and re-cycle. We want to help our businesses explore markets for sustainable products, design out waste, use lightweight materials and manage supply chains better.

With our Universities and businesses we believe that there is an opportunity for Telford to position itself as a Centre of Excellence for Environmental Technologies in Advanced Manufacturing. In Ricoh, we have a Telford based company that is leading the way in this field and is recognised by Pinsent Masons in its recent report on the key trends for manufacturing in the next 20 years. Ricoh has cut its CO2 emissions and use of resources by using technology to work in different ways: it now aims to deal with 20% of customer calls remotely, so reducing fuel use and CO2 emissions; it has reduced the amount of stock carried by engineers by allocating them to particular customers and; is recirculating more components back into the supply chain reducing its dependency on raw materials and saving money.

We will ensure that the support and assistance is available through the Growth Hub to encourage collaboration and networking between our businesses to spread and encourage the adoption of new ideas and technology and will promote and market Telford to achieve recognition for our strength in this field.

Improve our skills talent pool

A skilled workforce and increased productivity are essential to driving growth in existing businesses and securing inward investment. Telford businesses, particularly in the manufacturing sector, need to meet the twin challenges of an ageing workforce and changes in the kinds of skills they need. In common with businesses across the UK, our businesses need to address the current productivity gap, which can be the result of a blend of factors including low levels of capital investment and insufficient expenditure on research and development, but is also a result of low workforce skills.

We want to see aspiration increased and far more opportunities created to reduce inequality and promote inclusion. In particular, we want to ensure

that young people and adults are given the skills to succeed in employment and this should include higher level skills as offered by our colleges and universities. We know that key to success is the need for far greater alignment between employers and training providers to create a demand-led skills system.

We recognise that the employment and skills system is highly complex; too complex for people in businesses to navigate without support and that support can be biased towards certain provision that may or may not be in the best interests of the individuals or businesses being supported.

We are supporting the alignment and simplification of support to both individuals and businesses with an explicit connection between the two. We are focussing on the identification of current and future employment opportunities and supporting local people to access those opportunities whether they are in formal education, in work or unemployed.

Brokerage service

Removing barriers to engagement

Through the Growth Hub we will deliver an innovative brokerage service focussed on encouraging business engagement and support for local schools to ensure employers gain a stake in their potential employee's future. This 'Life Ready Work Ready Programme' will broker links between schools and employers that will create real-world work opportunities and help to substantially grow the number of apprenticeships and access to work experience and employment schemes offered to our young people.

Our brokerage service will increase employer level input into careers advice (starting from primary age), linking schools, colleges, employers, careers and enterprise organisations. This will be complementary to the National Enterprise Company approach and also to our Job Box Programme which has had great success in supporting young people into work and training and is to be continued and broadened to support job seekers of all ages. The Programme forms a key part of the Enterprise Telford pledge, delivering bespoke skills programmes that will deliver a pool of suitably trained local people to meet business needs.

Apprenticeship challenge

An apprentice is a huge asset and at a national level all political parties have recognised that apprenticeships will play a significant part in ensuring that we are able to meet the increasing demands of business. Locally we are challenging the undeserved perception of apprenticeships as the poor relative to university for young people and an overly bureaucratic system which has made it extremely difficult for some small businesses to participate. Through the work of the Hub and our local apprentice grant scheme alongside Government plans to give employers more say over the workings of the system from 2017, we're committed to significantly increasing apprenticeship development and growth of STEM take up in schools .

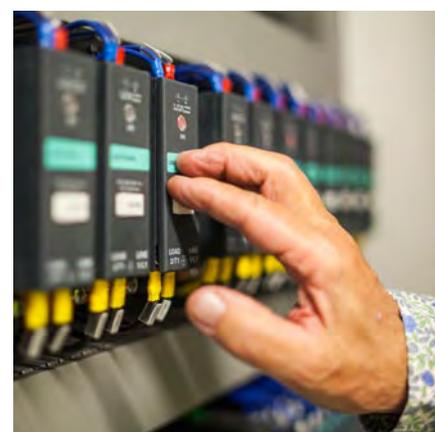
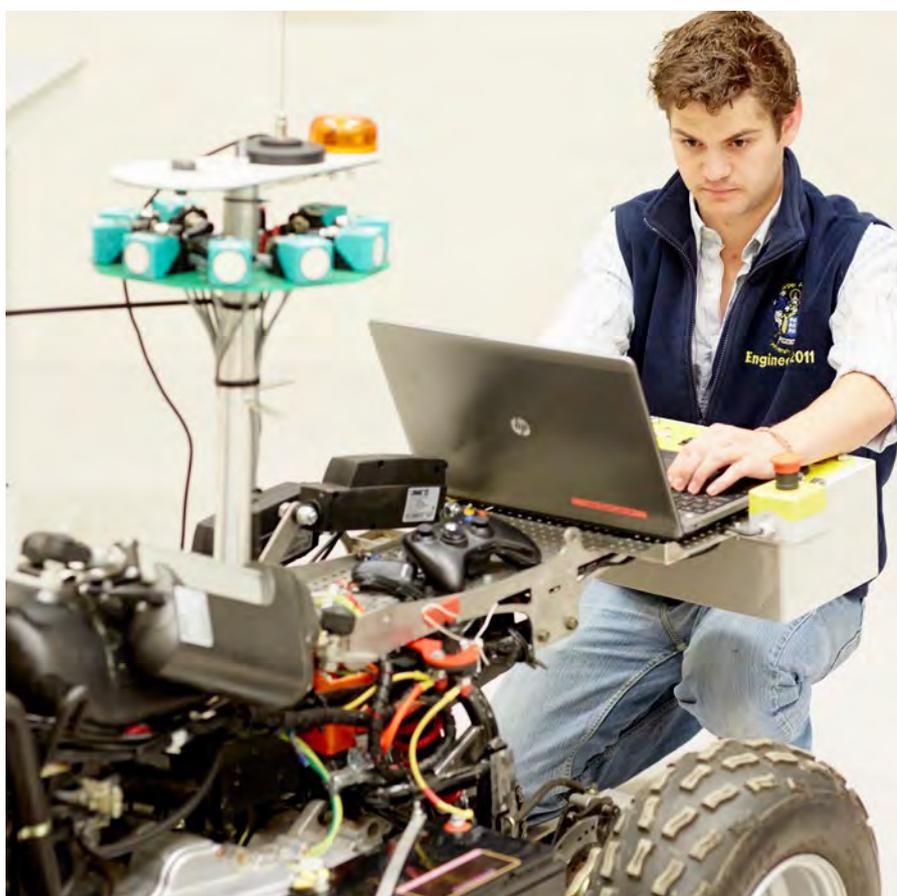
Through the Growth Hub brokerage service we are working with businesses to help them recognise the huge advantages that an apprentice could bring. We will also continue to give practical assistance and grant funding to help smaller companies take up or

share apprenticeships, removing the red tape that is a barrier to businesses.

Sector specific business support

Our targeted business support activity (referred to in Section 1) will include the design of support modules to address the skills challenge, particularly for our manufacturing sector. By 2030 our manufacturers will need fewer manual workers and more people with broader capabilities across IT, design, data analytics and customer service, who may well cost more to employ. Automation and intelligent robots will then add further complexity, whether they replace workers entirely or are used to enhance their performance.

Working with our Sector Champions and linking with schools and local colleges, we will look at how promoting STEM subjects and new training and retraining schemes can secure the future capabilities manufacturing will need, including hybrid skills. We need to recognise that increased automation need not represent a negative scenario as it could bring





opportunities and new workforce skills benefitting both workforce and businesses.

We will also work with businesses and our universities to tap into the raw talent of graduates to generate new ideas. The breadth of solutions being pioneered by knowledge partnerships is wide-reaching and they give students the commercial experience and skills they need to get their foot on the first rungs of the career ladder.

Strengthening families

We see our skills strategy in the context of the challenges that Telford still faces with significant pockets of deprivation where levels of unemployment are still high and levels of educational achievement are poor.

We are determined to address these challenges to ensure that all our communities can be part of Telford's growth and will ensure that we support businesses of all sizes and across the borough, to retain a balance in our local economy. We are working with partners to transform public services through a 'strengthening families' model which will address a legacy of worklessness and support families to economic independence.

Improve our physical and digital connectivity

Telford's central location and connectivity to both the wider West Midlands and beyond is a key part of our strong offer to inward investors. We recognise this and the essential role that transport and digital connectivity play in supporting economic activity and growth: it enables access to markets nationally and internationally; improves labour market efficiency; unlocks employment and housing sites; reduces the costs of doing business and; stimulates business investment and innovation.

Transport connectivity

Our strategic approach to transport connectivity has secured over £40m of Government funding since 2011 to maintain, improve and create infrastructure needed for growth across the Borough. Our 'Transport

Growth Strategy' sets out the future transport needs of the Borough to 2031 and it will inform our continued lobbying (within the context of the Marches LEP) to benefit directly from the more than £70 billion worth of investment in transport infrastructure that Government has committed to deliver over five years to 2020.

We want to continue to improve the quality and reliability of connectivity within the Borough, which is a key enabler of supporting people into work and sustaining employment. Telford enjoys purpose built infrastructure including serviced employment parks designed to sustain industrial and business growth, however the New Town legacy (the separation of employment and residential development and the reliance on car travel) has created a barrier to communities in our more deprived estates where car ownership rates are lower.

We will also lobby at a regional and national level for integrated rail and rapid transit networks that connect Telford with quick, frequent services and that increase business access to HS2 stations and Birmingham Airport but also that strengthen route development West through Wales to Ireland. We will lobby for an increase in the number of train services and the electrification of the Shrewsbury to Wolverhampton line to provide faster services to Birmingham and London and unlock the freight potential of the Telford International Rail Freight Terminal. We will do this by influencing the work of Midlands Connect through our membership of the Marches LEP transport body, but also through our Associate Membership of the Combined Authority for the West Midlands.

Digital connectivity

Digital connectivity is essential for business growth and we are ensuring through our Superfast Telford programme that 98% of our Borough will have Superfast broadband coverage by 2017 and aspire to achieve 100% coverage by 2020.

We will go further than this by working through the Growth Hub to ensure that businesses optimise the benefits of Superfast connectivity. Effective use of digital technology can improve the efficiency of factories, enable service-based business models and

allow producers to get closer to customers and to collaborate across the supply chain. Through the Hub we will deliver a broadband optimisation programme that will support our high growth businesses to understand the huge value of digital connectivity to business.

Optimise our physical, cultural and environmental assets

To ensure that our whole Borough benefits from our Enterprise Telford approach, we need to deploy all of our physical, cultural and environmental assets to maximum effect to ensure that the Borough is a vibrant place to live, work, visit and invest.

Land for growth and leisure

Telford has the benefit of extensive commercial and housing land which makes us stand out from our competitors regionally and nationally; we have a 5 year land supply and permission for 13,000 new homes and 400 acres of ready to go commercial land. We recognise the importance of this to our inward investment offer and are building on our successful role as agent acting for the Homes & Communities Agency (HCA).

The Telford Land Deal between the Council, HCA and DCLG will drive growth through asset disposal. This deal will enable us to recycle land value up-lift into site preparation and infrastructure improvements that will underpin growth, increase competitiveness of our land offer beyond Enterprise Zones and will allow us to ensure that the jobs created are accessible to and benefit our local communities, including those furthest from the workforce.

We recognise the importance of brownfield sites and are investing in bringing forward more constrained public sector sites to support growth. At the same time, we are recognising the contribution of green space to the environment and quality of life of our residents with our 'green guarantee' programme which will safeguard over 100 green sites of community value for the future.

Energy security

Increased pressures of population growth mean that energy security will be an important consideration for future growth. We have already outlined how we will work with our businesses to improve their resource efficiency. We will also continue to take practical steps, working with the private sector, to secure the long term energy security of our Town. We have already developed a successful solar farm and the Southwater District Heating system is providing low cost energy. We will now review the potential of the Southwater system to expand and will continue to roll out low energy LED streetlighting across the Borough.

Culture and tourism

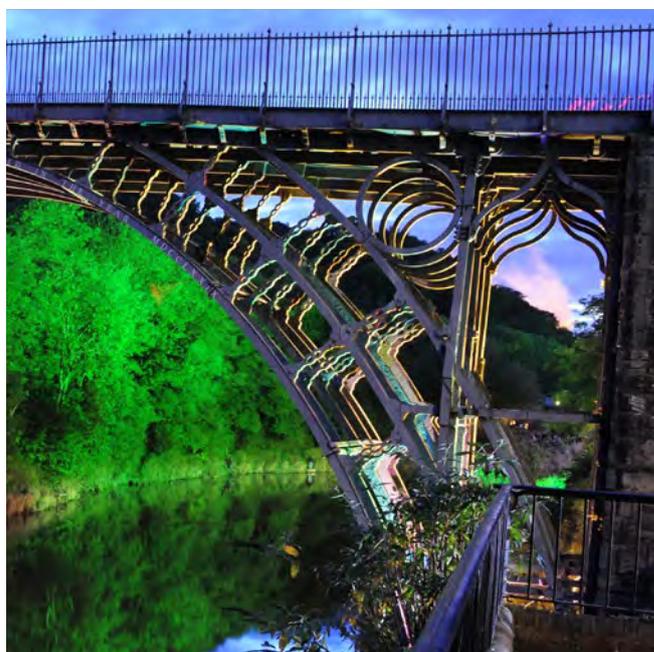
Visit England suggests the potential for strong growth in England's visitor economy over the next decade and both business and leisure tourism are important components of the Borough's economy.

Through our Destination Telford programme we will deploy all of our cultural and environmental assets to maximum effect, ensuring that these assets are packaged, branded and marketed to achieve economic growth, particularly from the local and regional visitor markets.

We will identify the particular assets of our key Borough Towns including Newport, Wellington and Oakengates and work in partnership with local bodies and communities to develop these. We will work with partners in the Town Centre, Southwater and Ironbridge Gorge to develop complementary activities and offers that will create wider economic benefit.

We will also recognise the importance of business related tourism to the Borough, working with the Telford International Centre, Town Centre hotels and other partners to promote our business tourism offer and to maximise the conversion of business visitors to leisure tourists. We will continue to develop our 'Ambassador' programme, harnessing the potential of business leaders to attract new events, conferences and exhibitions to the Borough.

We will prioritise raising the quality of life for all of our residents by creating access to high quality and locally responsive cultural programmes and will build through this a strong shared sense of identity and increasing engagement in civic life.



Measuring success

We recognise that we must measure success if we are to understand the impact of our Enterprise Telford approach.

Across our six priority activities, these are the indicators that we will measure against 2016 benchmark figures:

1 Create business friendly conditions to increase the number of successful businesses

Increased number of new business start-ups and growth in take-up of business support through the Growth Hub

Increase of school activity to encourage entrepreneurship from an early age

2 Grow sectors around opportunities and support sectors that underpin employment across the Borough

Higher levels of start-ups through sector specific and targeted support and an increase in GVA and productivity levels

Increase in inward investment enquiries and number of existing business expansions

3 Stimulate and support innovation across all business sectors

Increase in grant funding secured by businesses for diversification, expansion and innovation

4 Improve the skills and talent pool of the Borough to make it business relevant

Increased take-up of apprenticeships and increased progression rates

Increased number of higher level apprenticeships and graduate placements

Reduction in unemployment levels and in particular of NEETS through co-ordinated and locally driven support programmes

An increase in the percentage of the working age population with NVQ3+

Reduction in the percentage of employers reporting skills gaps by 2020

5 Transform physical and digital connectivity

Superfast Broadband infrastructure to 100% of the Borough

Increase in transport capacity to accelerate delivery of new homes and employment sites

6 Optimise all the assets of the Borough to make it a first-class place to live, work and invest

Maximised availability of high quality, readily available brownfield development for housing and employment

Increase in membership of the Visitor Economy Forum

Increase in leisure and business visitors to the Borough



Enterprise Telford

Business, Development and Employment
Telford & Wrekin Council
Wellington Civic Centre
PO Box 457
Wellington
Telford TF1 1LX

01902 567589