

BRADFORD ECONOMIC GROWTH STRATEGY WORKSHOPS

Key workshop themes

Bradford district and its partners held the Economic Growth Strategy workshops to seek your views to develop the focus of the strategy, identifying actions that will bring most benefit to Bradford's economy. It is thanks to the contributions from hosts, speakers and attendees that we captured productive feedback to shape our strategy.

Throughout the series of #bradfordeconomy workshops, a number of themes were frequently discussed as opportunities to capitalise on to best grow the Bradford district economy. These themes are set out in the word cloud on the right. The following analysis summarises the key messages from the six workshops.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS **INFRASTRUCTURE**
bradford and leeds joint economy
AFFORDABLE PROPERTY **SMEs** **producer city** **Our young economy**
school-business links

The Bradford economy: what the evidence tells us

We asked stakeholders to identify priority opportunities to best build upon and deliver economic growth within the district. The following issues were raised:

- **Transport infrastructure, education and skills:** These are intrinsically linked. Higher skills are needed to access good quality employment opportunities and effective transport infrastructure is required for people to commute within and beyond the district.
- **Business mentoring:** Creating a competitive district involves the transfer of knowledge from established businesses to the young economy.
- **Supporting young urban residents:** Positioning Bradford as a changing district with young people at its heart, providing mentoring opportunities and a high quality built environment will help to retain our young population and attract new businesses and residents to the district.

Bradford district in the North

Stakeholders identified the following key priorities that will unlock growth locally, regionally and nationally:

- Engaging with young people to develop their role in the future economy of the district.

- Improving east-west connectivity, and recognising the role investment within the district will play in unlocking pan Northern connectivity and growth.
- Supporting investment and innovation in advanced manufacturing companies to align regional, national and international connections.

Leeds and Bradford – growing together

Combined, the economy of Leeds and Bradford is larger than Birmingham. Stakeholders feel that the economies of Bradford and Leeds are both interwoven and disconnected at the same time, suggesting there are more opportunities for collaboration between the two cities. Stakeholders identified the following as the priorities needing delivery to grow a stronger joint economy:

- Develop a **joint team** approach on specific opportunities, such as spatial planning, skills and connectivity.
- Create collaboration around a **joint global brand** that raises awareness of the area for investment purposes.
- Proactive approach to infrastructure is needed, particularly transport to shorten the time between Bradford district and Leeds to allow more **fluidity in the joint economies and labour markets**.

Bradford's young and future economy

We asked stakeholders what the opportunities and challenges are to develop and support the young and future economy. The key message was the need to equip young people for opportunities outside the district while offering opportunities within Bradford district. Including by:

- Developing the role of the University and FE institutions, skills development, youth involvement, training, mentoring, apprenticeships and work experience.
- Connecting teachers to the working world.
- Developing creative spaces and attractive places to attract and retain young people.
- Adopting a proactive approach to delivering digital infrastructure for young people and for the growing business start-ups and SME sector.



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Our globally connected city and district

Bradford district has a wide range of global connections based on language, culture, family and business links. These connections are a key opportunity when encouraging SME growth and business start-ups. Other key messages included:

- Opportunity for peer to peer support between experienced businesses trading internationally and those taking their first international steps.
- Bradford district should encourage the aspiration and delivery of businesses exporting their products or services to assist in building global networks.
- There are nested identities that Bradford district should draw on when trading internationally, including Northern Powerhouse and British brands.

Sector strengths and opportunities

Stakeholders focused on the opportunities needed to develop a sustainable and diverse Bradford district economy. Key messages included:

- The need for **communication** across businesses and sectors to identify areas for **collaboration** and supply chain opportunities.
- Developing skills and **encouraging career aspirations** across a range of sectors, building links

between businesses, universities and colleges to **improve employability** and creating feedback loops to connect skills with economic opportunity.

- Promoting Bradford district's profile including manufacturing, financial and professional, creative, digital and energy as important and growing sectors.
- **Promoting and supporting SMEs and entrepreneurs** within Bradford district.
- Supporting economic growth through **transport infrastructure, housing delivery, place-making and high quality working spaces.**



In each workshop, we asked stakeholders for a single word that best describes the Bradford district economy. The combined responses from the six workshops are captured below, with the biggest words representing the most popular views. The feedback shows that there is a positive image of Bradford district as a diverse and growing economy that has the potential to flourish further.

