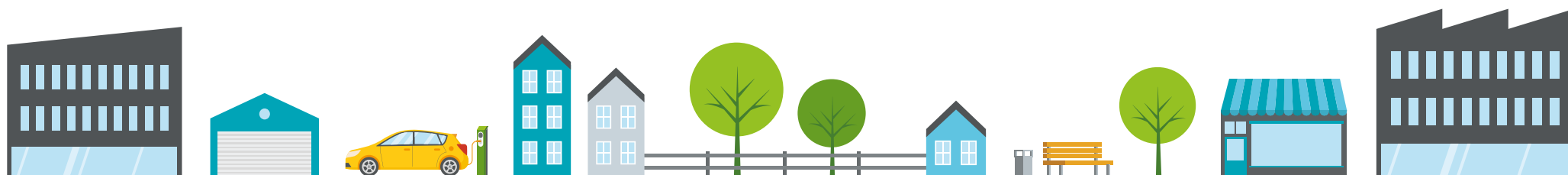


Havant Borough Council

Regeneration and Economy

Strategy (2026–2036)

Putting **People** at the heart of **Place** and **Prosperity**



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Foreword

Havant is a borough of distinctive communities, enterprising businesses and exceptional natural assets.

Our Town Centres, coastline and transport connections give us a strong foundation. This strategy sets out how we will build on those strengths so that growth brings visible benefits to people across the borough.

We also recognise the challenges before us. Some communities face deep-rooted inequality; too many residents encounter barriers to skills and good work; businesses are adapting to rising costs and rapid change; and our Town Centres need renewed confidence and investment. Addressing these issues will require clear priorities, sustained effort and a willingness to work differently.

Our ambition is for a strong, inclusive and resilient economy, built around places where people are proud to live and work, businesses can thrive and investors want to invest. People, place and prosperity run through this strategy. We will focus on regenerating Town Centres and priority neighbourhoods, supporting our business base and emerging sectors, and creating clearer pathways into skills, jobs and enterprise.

This is a long-term vision to 2036, backed by practical delivery priorities for the next three years. Havant Borough Council will lead with purpose,

but lasting change can only be achieved in partnership—with residents, businesses, community organisations, education and skills providers, neighbouring authorities and regional partners. As devolution and local government reform reshape the public sector, we will continue to champion the whole of Havant Borough and keep the borough's needs and opportunities at the heart of decision-making.

I look forward to working with our communities and partners to turn this shared ambition into lasting progress and greater prosperity for all.



Councillor Gillian Harris - Leader of Havant Borough Council

Introduction

This strategy builds on Havant Borough Council's previous [Regeneration & Economy Strategy 2022–36](#). It sets out a pathway to shape and strengthen the area currently forming the borough of Havant as it moves towards new ways of working through Devolution and taking priorities forward through regional and local partners.

Havant benefits from a strong strategic location, with excellent road and rail transport connections and a diverse mix of coastal, urban and rural environments. However, it continues to face a number of challenges, with significant pockets of deprivation and inequality, skills gaps, high street decline and a limited land supply for much-needed new development.

The focus going forward remains on **strengthening the economy** by:

**Accelerating the
regeneration of
the Town Centres**



**Supporting its
business base**



**Creating
pathways for
skills and jobs**



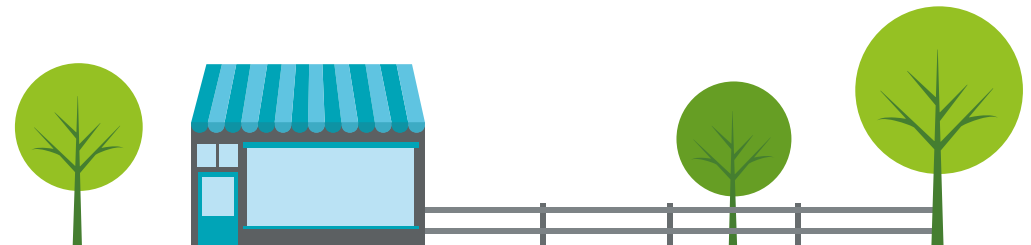
Coupled with the emerging Local Plan, this strategy provides a clear and coherent framework for growth.

It outlines a long-term vision, which is both ambitious but also realistic and deliverable. The vision is supported by a shorter-term delivery plan, focused on tangible and deliverable interventions that will act as stepping stones to achieve the long term vision.

While led by Havant Borough Council, implementation of this strategy will require collaboration and partnership working.

This strategy provides:

- A platform for joint working across the public, private and third sector.
- The basis for positive and ongoing stakeholder engagement.
- The foundation for the effective delivery of projects, programmes and initiatives.
- A tool to support inward investment and secure funding support.



Background

The previous strategy was produced just as the country was emerging from the Covid pandemic. Aligned to national policy initiatives such as 'Build Back Better' and 'Levelling Up', it focused on economic recovery and investment in infrastructure, regeneration and programmes to support businesses and communities to reset, providing a foundation for sustainable growth.

Since the publication of the Regeneration & Economy Strategy in 2022, there have been significant shifts within the local, national and global context, including:

Changes to the local and national political landscape and associated policy shifts.



Dynamic movements within the national and global economic, market and fiscal conditions.



A series of geopolitical events creating global instability.



Nationally, the country has seen a period of rising inflation and interest rates, coupled with shifts in the labour market and changes to both working patterns and consumer behaviours.

Rising energy costs have further put pressure on households and businesses, supporting the accelerated drive towards more renewable sources.

High construction costs, labour shortages and pressure on land availability has resulted in a national housing shortage, with skills gaps and inequalities for some of the most deprived communities widening further.

Havant has not been immune to these pressures:

- **Local businesses** have come under increasing pressure, particularly those in the manufacturing, service and retail sector, with high street vacancy rates increasing.
- Rising development and infrastructure costs have widened **viability gaps**, with the development and investor sector responding cautiously.
- The rapidly changing labour market coupled with broader financial pressures has led to a widening of the **skills gap** in some key areas.
- Pressures on **public sector finances** have meant reduced capacity to intervene and support.

Despite these challenges, the area has many strengths to build on and there is much that can be done to stimulate economic recovery, growth and resilience, while helping businesses and communities to innovate, build resilience and flourish.



National Policy Context

The Government's [Plan for Change](#) seeks to set the foundation for strong economic growth, with a number of relevant emerging policies including:



Housing

A target of 1.5m new homes, the establishment of [New Towns](#) and a raft of associated initiatives aimed to accelerate house building.



Commerce

The [UK Modern Industrial Strategy \(2025\)](#) looks to build on the nation's key sector strengths, stimulate business growth and drive inward investment.



Planning

The new [National Planning Policy Framework \(NPPF\)](#) and the introduction of strategic planning are intended to remove barriers to create a more investment-friendly and enabling, planning framework.



Skills

The creation of [Skills England](#) in 2025 saw a renewed commitment to correcting the fragmented skills landscape and making it easier for people to access the skills and training they need.



Pride in Place Programme

The [Pride in Place Programme](#) is a significant national community-led regeneration programme targeted on the most deprived areas in the Country.



Local Government Re-organisation (LGR)

Potential restructure of local authorities to create Unitary Councils, to drive efficiencies and increase effectiveness.



High Street

A new central Government High Street Strategy is expected in 2026 intended to revitalise and boost struggling Town Centres.



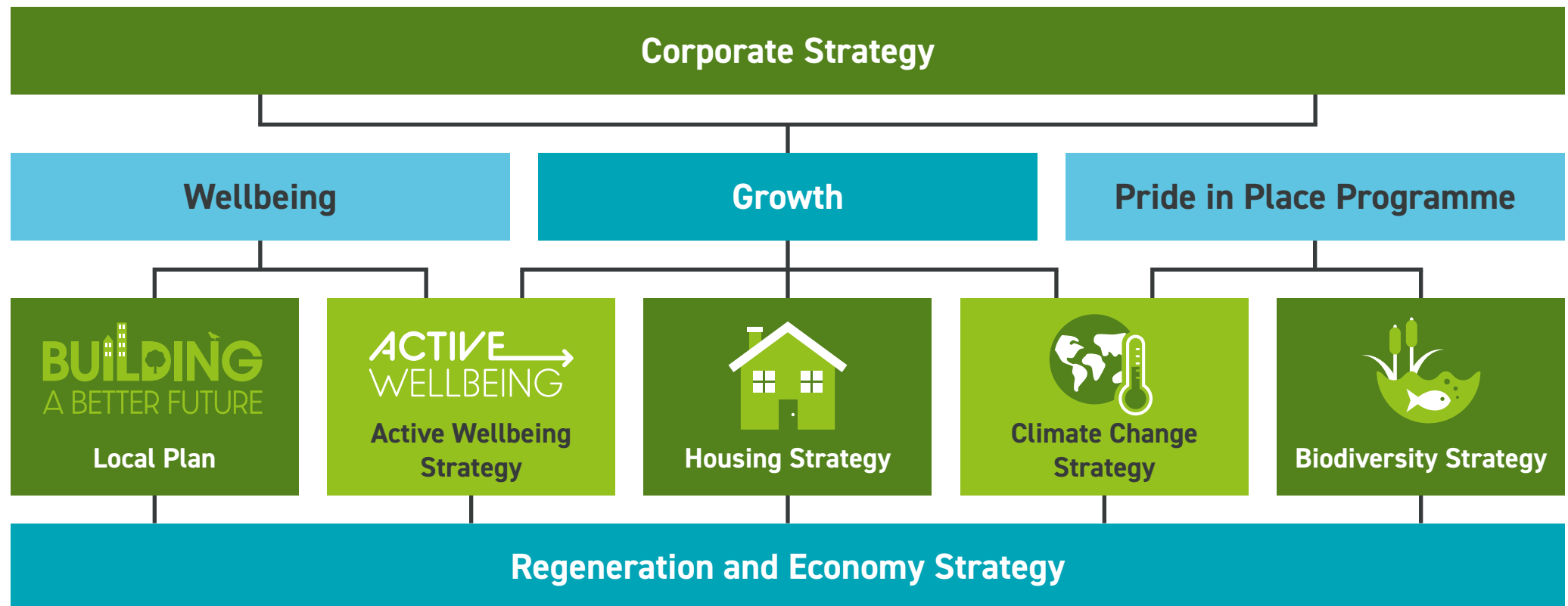
Devolution

Transfer of decision-making powers and funding to Strategic Authorities.

Local Policy Context

More locally, Havant has also seen policy shifts, with a new [Corporate Strategy](#) focused on **Growth, Pride In Place Programme and Wellbeing**.

In addition to the Corporate Strategy and current Regeneration and Economy Strategy, the Council has a clear policy framework in place to support economic growth and positive placemaking.





Emerging Local Plan: Building a Better Future

Setting out a robust and enabling framework for growth.



Housing Strategy

A long term vision to address the housing challenges and deliver the homes needed.



Climate Change Strategy and Biodiversity Strategy

Setting out a plan to achieve a net zero borough alongside a framework for action towards nature recovery.



Active Wellbeing Strategy

A blueprint for creating an integrated health and wellbeing offer.



Devolution and potential Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)

Will be a further significant shift. Bringing Havant together with other local authorities such as Portsmouth, Fareham and Gosport in parallel with Devolution will see powers and funding passed to a new [Mayoral Combined Authority](#).



Economic Picture

Without significant intervention, the economic outlook for Havant remains challenging.

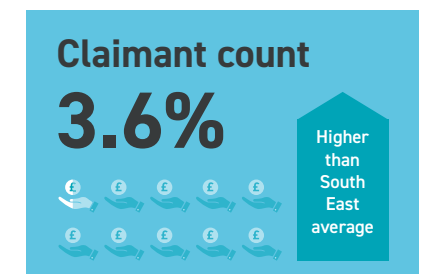
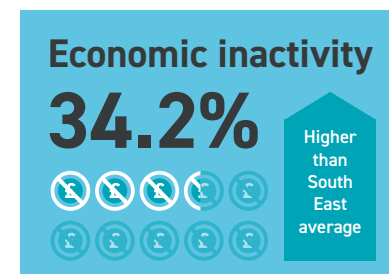
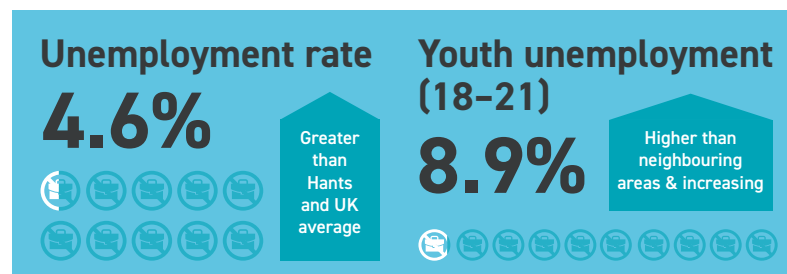
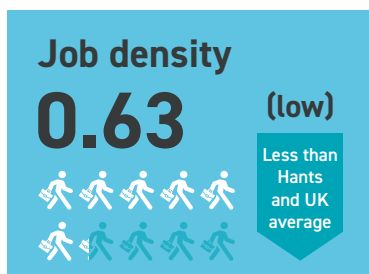
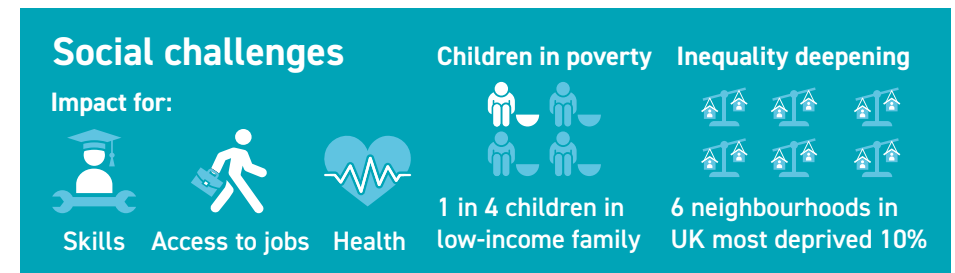
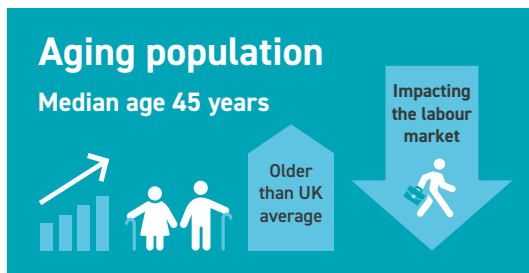
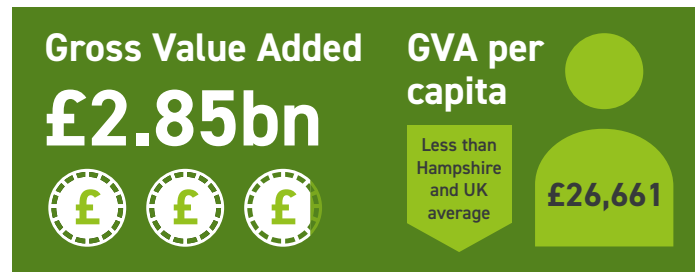
The borough of Havant contributes around £2.85bn into the national economy through goods and services each year. Reflective of the number of retired residents and high levels of out-commuting for work, this equates to only around £26,662 per person, which is around 34% below the national average.

Unemployment rates are rising and are similar to the national average, but higher than regional figures. Job density is low at 0.63 jobs, meaning less than 3 jobs available for every 4 adults in the borough.

Economic inactivity is a measure of those (of working age) out of work or not actively seeking employment. This is noticeably higher for Havant than surrounding areas across Hampshire (which is around 15–18%) and may include things such as those with long term sickness or family care obligations.

Havant is diverse, with some affluent neighbourhoods, alongside real pockets of **deprivation**. Areas like Leigh Park, Wecock and Stakes form part of six areas in the borough that feature in the 10% most deprived places in the Country. 1 in 4 children live in low income families, with direct links to health and wellbeing outcomes. There are significant **skills gaps**, with **youth unemployment** at around 9% and around 20% of the working age population having no qualification — significantly higher than the national average (circa 7%) and than the Hampshire average (circa 5.5%).





Challenges and Opportunities

Havant faces clear challenges, but it is also a place full of real opportunity, and it has many strengths to build on.

Being situated between the coast and countryside, with strong rail and road connections east, west, and north to the capital, gives it a **strategic competitive advantage** in terms of business growth and investment opportunities. Opportunities through Local Government reform will open up access to new partnerships and provide scope to re-shape its economy, including potential growth in new sectors.

Havant is rightly proud of its legacy of **business innovation** and its strong SME business base provides a strong foundation to support accelerated growth in emerging sectors. The high quality natural environment, particularly around the coast, gives significant opportunity to grow its **leisure, visitor and tourism economy**.

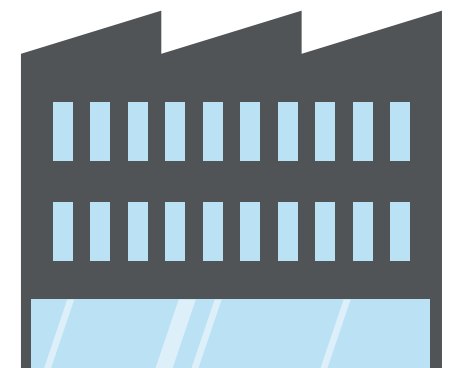
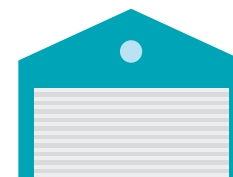
Its Town Centres and High Streets are struggling as a result of economic and behavioural shifts, as are most around the Country. However, with **targeted intervention and investment**, they have the potential to remain at the heart of the community, acting as hubs for economic growth and activity.





The Council also has much to build on around its successful **Youth Hub and Skills Zone**, working in partnership with Department of Work & Pensions (DWP). New opportunities through a changing skills landscape and Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs) will provide scope to grow partnerships, build capacity and access new funding to address skills gaps and support both young people and those of working age. Both Portsmouth City Council and Hampshire County Council have supportive Skills Strategies, highlighting the challenges and opportunities for the Havant area.

Community-led [Pride in Place Programme](#) for Leigh Park and Wecock, will bring a much-needed focus, energy, capacity and funding to support some of the borough's most deprived areas.



S



- Strategic location with strong connectivity.
- Strong Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) base.
- Sector strengths in logistics and services.
- High quality environment with access to coast and countryside.
- Good life satisfaction and wellbeing levels.

W



- Transport congestion and car dependency.
- Rising unemployment levels, economic inactivity and low job density.
- Pockets of deprivation and inequality.
- Skills gap.
- Limited high growth sectors and reliance on service sector.
- Ageing population.
- Housing affordability.
- High Street decline.

O



- Pride in Place Programme Emerging growth sectors.
- Climate-resilient design.
- Town Centre renewal.
- Community-led regeneration models.
- Stronger partnerships.
- Coastal tourism and visitor potential.
- Devolution.

T



- Economic, political and fiscal instability.
- Environmental risks.
- Community resistance.
- Competition for funding.
- Regulatory delays.
- Devolution.



Progress to Date 2022–2026

Sustainable Places

Havant Town Centre

- Meridian Centre - active asset management.
- Bulbeck Road disposal and redevelopment.
- Market Parade acquisition.
- Rail footbridge investment.
- High Street Task Force.
- Public realm improvements.
- Street Art projects.
- Vacant Shop Scheme grants.
- Town Centre Manager post created.
- Changing Places Toilet installed.
- Plaza Campus options developed.
- Havant Town Centre Group.

Waterlooville

- Town Centre Masterplan – extensive consultation and formal adoption.
- Circa £2m High Street public realm project - funding secured and in development.
- Quick Win Programme implemented, including:
 - Vacant Shop Scheme grants.
 - Street Art Project delivered.
 - Traders Association established.
 - Engagement with key landowners and developers on key sites.
- Pride in Place Programme (£20m) - Wecock.

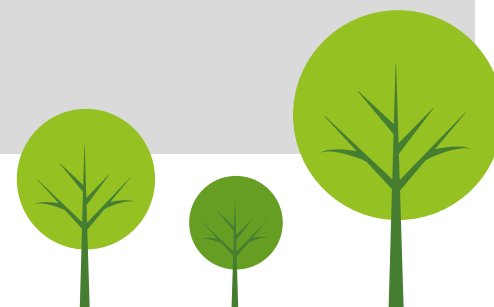
Leigh Park

- Solent Freeport status (Dunsbury).
- Youth Hub delivery.
- Leigh Park Community Campus feasibility/project development.
- Pride In Place Programme (£20m).
- Dunsbury Way site - £150,000 secured from One Public Estate for feasibility study.
- Park Parade and Greywell Centre public realm - funding and preliminary designs.
- Vacant Shop Scheme - £150,000 grants awarded.

Harbour and Coastal Communities

- Seafront Strategy developed.
- Signage scheme in delivery.
- Disabled access walkway improvements implemented.
- Changes Places toilet installed.
- Seafront defence investment.
- Concessions approach developed.

Pride in Place Programmes (Leigh Park and Wecock)



Better Business

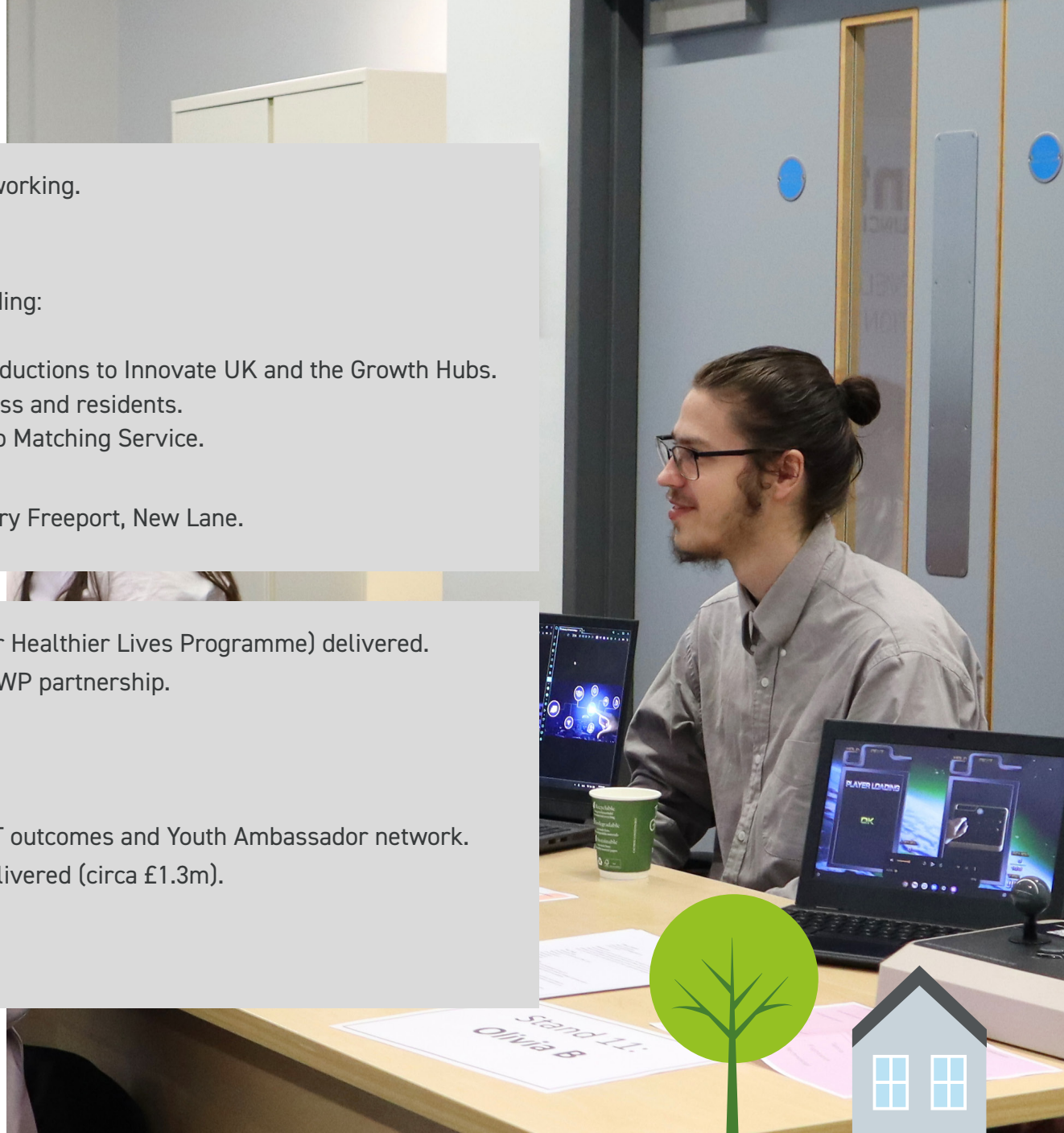


- Havant Business Partnership networking.
- Business Newsletter.
- Pop-up employer sessions.
- Business support initiatives including:
 - Access to finance and grants.
 - Business start up support introductions to Innovate UK and the Growth Hubs.
 - Redundancy support for business and residents.
 - Access to skills through the Job Matching Service.
- Inward Investment initiatives.
- Strategic site support e.g. Dunsbury Freeport, New Lane.

Successful People



- Link Up Leigh Park (Economies for Healthier Lives Programme) delivered.
- Leigh Park Youth Hub delivery - DWP partnership.
- Kickstart Programme delivered.
- Apprentice Programme delivered.
- Skills Zone and Skills Newsletter.
- Mentoring scheme to reduce NEET outcomes and Youth Ambassador network.
- UK Shared Prosperity Projects delivered (circa £1.3m).
- Youth Employment Scheme.
- Green Skills Initiative.



Key Achievements - Snapshot 2022–2026



600 businesses supported



£400K + CIL funded open space and play area upgrade



Over 500 young people helped into employment



£4M+ new development Dunsbury Park



£40M community-led Pride in Place Programme



£7M Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) awarded



£500K DWP funding secured for Youth Hub programme



1330 new homes built



£1.3M shared prosperity funding secured and projects delivered

Horizon

£3M Waterloooville Leisure Centre project



£1M+ CIL funded public realm and access projects delivered



£40M+ key infrastructure projects committed



£1.6M brownfield land release fund awarded

Link Up
LEIGH PARK

£500K Health Foundation Link Up Leigh Park funding



455 affordable homes built

2036 Vision and Themes

This Regeneration & Economy Strategy directly supports the Council's vision for a; *future borough; whose communities are resilient and economically and socially vibrant, which is made up of places that people and families want to live, work and enjoy and whose residents are proud to champion their natural surroundings* — [Corporate Strategy](#).

Vision

This strategy focusses on supporting the place and the economy, with people firmly at the centre. Its vision is for a; *strong, inclusive and resilient economy, built around places where people are proud to live and work, businesses have the opportunity to thrive and investors are keen to invest.*



Priorities

This strategy is structured around three core cross-cutting themes:

People



People are at the heart of this strategy, with the overall aim to improve their quality of life and create opportunities for them to thrive. They also play a vital role in shaping the place and the economy of an area. The focus is on:

- Ensuring residents have the opportunities to access skills and jobs.
- Putting communities at the heart of placemaking and regeneration.
- Supporting businesses to thrive.
- Engaging with a wide range of stakeholders.

Place



A focus on positive placemaking will strengthen a place's identity, increase civic pride, attract investment and improve quality of life for its communities. Interventions will focus on creating high quality environments with the infrastructure and facilities needed, delivering homes for all and the spaces businesses need to thrive. While the strategy has a borough-wide focus, targeted interventions will be centred on four core areas, identified as those key areas of need and/or opportunities for growth:

- Havant Town Centre
- Waterloooville Town Centre
- Leigh Park
- Harbour and Coastal Communities

Prosperity



A strong, inclusive and resilient economy forms the backbone of a successful place. Creating conditions for long term economic growth, supporting businesses, developing opportunities for growth in key sectors and attracting investment will be critical to creating a sustainable Havant.



Themes and Priorities

Vision	A strong, inclusive and resilient economy, built around places where people are proud to live and work, businesses have the opportunity to thrive and investors are keen to invest.		
Themes	People	Place	Prosperity
Priorities	• Create cohesive and connected communities. • Design active and healthy spaces and places. • Support delivery of the right mix of good quality homes. • Create and support skills pathways and employability. • Support people so they can enable their businesses to start, grow and thrive.	• Deliver high quality public realm with improved open and green spaces. • Sustainable regeneration of our Town Centres: • Havant Town Centre • Waterlooville • Leigh Park • Support our Coastal Communities, strengthening the visitor and leisure economy with continued investment in coastal defence. • Support delivery of Infrastructure and facilities. • Foster and encourage community and civic pride - Pride In Place Programme.	• Promote and support access to: • Skills pathways • Training • Employment opportunities • Support local businesses. • Promote green growth. • Promote an inclusive economy. • Promote inward investment. • Create thriving high streets and places for commerce. • Promote meanwhile uses of vacant space. • Explore emerging growth sectors.

Delivery Framework



Targeted interventions, strong partnership working and a clear focus on outcomes will be critical to the successful delivery of the strategy:

- A **phased approach** will ensure early realisation of tangible benefits, while laying the foundation for long term transformational change and aligning to the timescales around Local Government reform.
- The Council will **work proactively** with those neighbouring authorities along with the new Combined Authority, to ensure shared challenges and priorities are targeted, as well as support a successful transition.
- While action will be **focused and targeted**, the approach will remain **flexible**, ensuring that it can respond to changing economic conditions, future funding opportunities and community needs.
- The Council's role as **Place Leader** will remain critical, driving forward and coordinating delivery, championing the place and creating investor confidence.
- **Collaboration and joint working** will also be key, with a range of private and public sector stakeholders playing a vital role in delivery.
- Delivery will be underpinned by **robust governance**, evidence-led decision-making and clear monitoring and reporting mechanisms.

The following section sets out a **framework for delivery**, based on:



Why

The evidence and case for intervention and action.



What

The actions and interventions that will be taken.



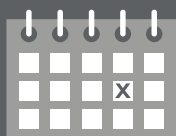
How

How actions will be resourced, delivered and managed.



Who

Who will lead, support and partner — and who are the key stakeholders.



When

A timeline and phasing approach for delivery.





Why - The case for investment

The case for action and intervention is clear. Havant falls behind many of its neighbouring authorities in terms of economic performance, but positively, this is coupled with a wide range of opportunities that can be capitalised on. While national and global forces are undoubtedly having an impact on the local economy, there is much that can be influenced locally and this has shaped the focus and priorities as set out in this strategy, with a clear case for:

- **Investment in regeneration and placemaking initiatives**, with a focus on Town Centres and those other priority areas that require improvement and investment. Direct investment and delivery by the public sector can be coupled with alignment of service delivery (e.g. highways and public realm projects) to support the vision for the places.
- Challenges around low job density and high economic inactivity rates support the case for supporting the borough's **business base and growth activities**, including exploring emerging sectors and continued effort to promote opportunities for inward investment.
- Given the evidence around skills gaps and the impact on residents wellbeing, there is a clear case for investment in supporting **skills pathways** and helping people to access to employment, with a particular focus on improving the prospects of young people.



What - Actions and interventions

This strategy is supported by a set of Delivery Priorities, which will form the basis for action over the next 3 years. Delivery will focus on a blend of early deliverables, designed with deliverability in mind so that tangible benefits can be realised. This will be coupled with work to develop a pipeline of investible projects, to support longer term transformational change.

Interventions will be shaped around three core programmes of work:

Regeneration and Placemaking Programme



Investment in the places to improve, enhance and transform them, supporting economic growth and community wellbeing.

Business and Growth Programme

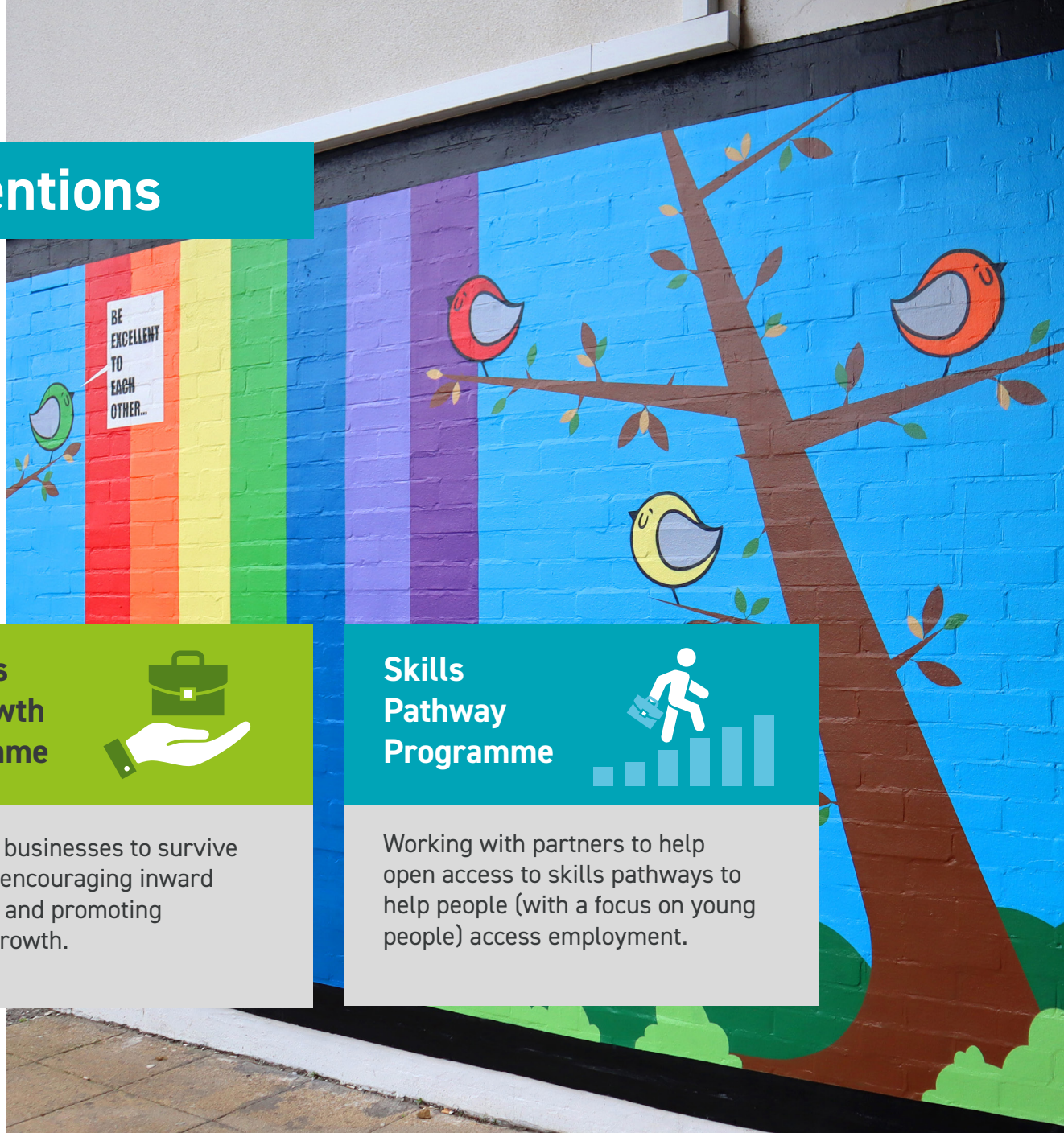


Supporting businesses to survive and thrive, encouraging inward investment and promoting economic growth.

Skills Pathway Programme



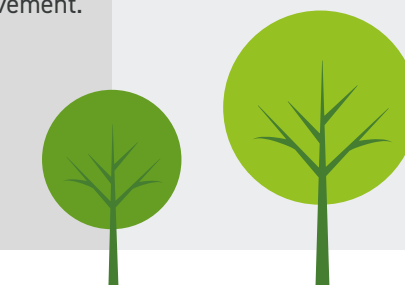
Working with partners to help open access to skills pathways to help people (with a focus on young people) access employment.



Delivery Priorities 2026–2029

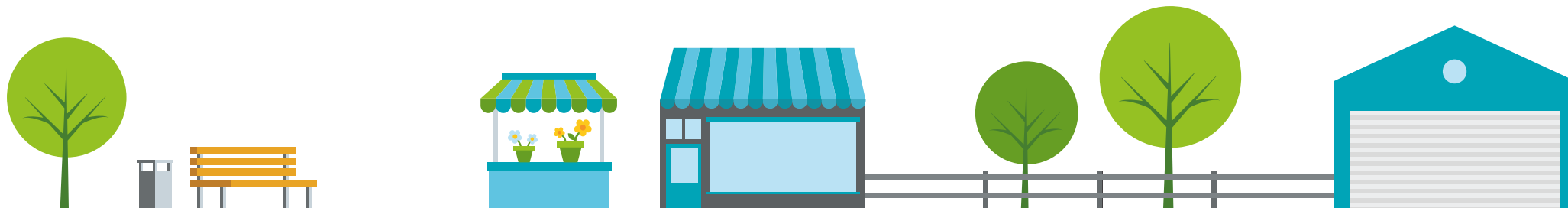
Regeneration and Placemaking Programme

	Havant Town Centre	Waterlooville	Leigh Park	Harbour and Coastal Communities
Objectives	Support development of a living, thriving and active town, that acts as an economic focal point for the wider area.	Promote regeneration of the Town Centre to support local businesses and increase confidence for future investors.	Create a place that people are proud of, where prospects for jobs are enhanced and where communities are strengthened.	Create sustainable and thriving coastal communities, working with the natural environment to foster an inclusive and flourishing economy.
Actions	- Havant Gate: - Market Parade East. - Public realm package (including Havant Park). - Station Forecourt improvement. - Town Centre Improvement Package: - Management and stewardship. - Public realm, public art & street scape. - Vacant shop scheme. - High Street activation. - Civic Plaza pipeline development. - Meridian Place: - Bulbeck Road disposal. - Meridian Centre Asset Management. - Meridian Place pipeline development.	- Public Realm Improvement - project delivery. - Best use of HBC assets: - Car parks - Landholdings - Properties and buildings - Key investment and development sites. - Leisure Centre Improvement.	- Support community-led Pride in Place Programme. - Community Campus project delivery. - Environmental enhancements.	- Branding and identity development. - Public Realm initiatives. - Concessions strategy. - Infrastructure enhancements e.g. coastal defence and Hayling Billy. - Best use of HBC assets. - Events and activities. - Project pipeline development.



Delivery Priorities 2026–2029

	Business and Growth Programme	Skills Pathway Programme
Objectives	Develop and sustain a strong, green and inclusive business base, aligning to emerging sector strengths.	Develop and promote skills pathways to enable access to a wide range of skills, training and development opportunities.
Actions	1. Start up and business growth support (Growth Hub). 2. High Street support initiatives. 3. Connecting and promoting growth sectors and supply chain. 4. Inward Investment promotion.	1. Youth and Employment Hubs. 2. Employment and Skills Centre project (Leigh Park). 3. Skills Zone (Borough wide). 4. Skills and Employment Support (inc. Green Skills). 5. Promotion (e.g. newsletter/apprenticeship schemes/connect2work). 6. Section 106 Employment and Skills Plans.



How - Approaches to delivery

A blended approach to delivery will be taken, with projects, programmes and initiatives delivered either by the public sector, private sector or in partnership:

- Delivery mechanisms will include **direct delivery**, such as new or improved infrastructure or enhancements to the public realm.
- A large number of projects are likely to be delivered through **partnership working**, where stakeholders will pool expertise and resources to work on shared initiatives.
- The Council's continued role as Place Leader will be vital to the success of the strategy, as will that of the future Unitary Council. The Council is well placed to **champion and promote** the borough at regional and national levels, using its influence and networks to open up opportunities for investment and broader funding support.
- Through best use of **public sector assets**, it may be possible to deliver some tangible schemes that can act as catalysts for wider development, creating market and investor confidence.
- Many of the **services** the public sector already provide can support positive placemaking and economic growth, so alignment of these services to support the overall vision will be key.
- The public sector has **regulatory and statutory powers**, that can also be used to support the ambitions, including the Council's critical role as Local Planning Authority.





Programme Management

Strong programme management and good governance will ensure the projects are delivered effectively, risks are managed and full benefits realised, with regular monitoring and reporting through the appropriate structures.



Funding and Financing

The Council has a strong track record of being ambitious in seeking and securing funding to support its regeneration and economic growth ambitions. It will continue to pursue all opportunities, lobbying and promoting the opportunities to investors, funders, decision-makers and policy makers.



Who - Leads, Partners and Influencers



Partnerships

Public sector works in partnership with other public and/or private sector parties to jointly deliver and/or fund key projects, programmes and initiatives.



Private Sector

Private sector investment and direct delivery, to include; landowners, developers, investors, businesses, landlords and tenants.



Public Sector

Public sector to directly deliver projects through use of assets, resources, service delivery, skills and expertise. Public sector may include Havant Borough Council, The MCCA, new Unitary Council Local Authorities, Hampshire County Council, Homes England and other public partners. This may also include public sector funders, decision-makers and policy makers.

When - Roadmap, Phasing and Timelines

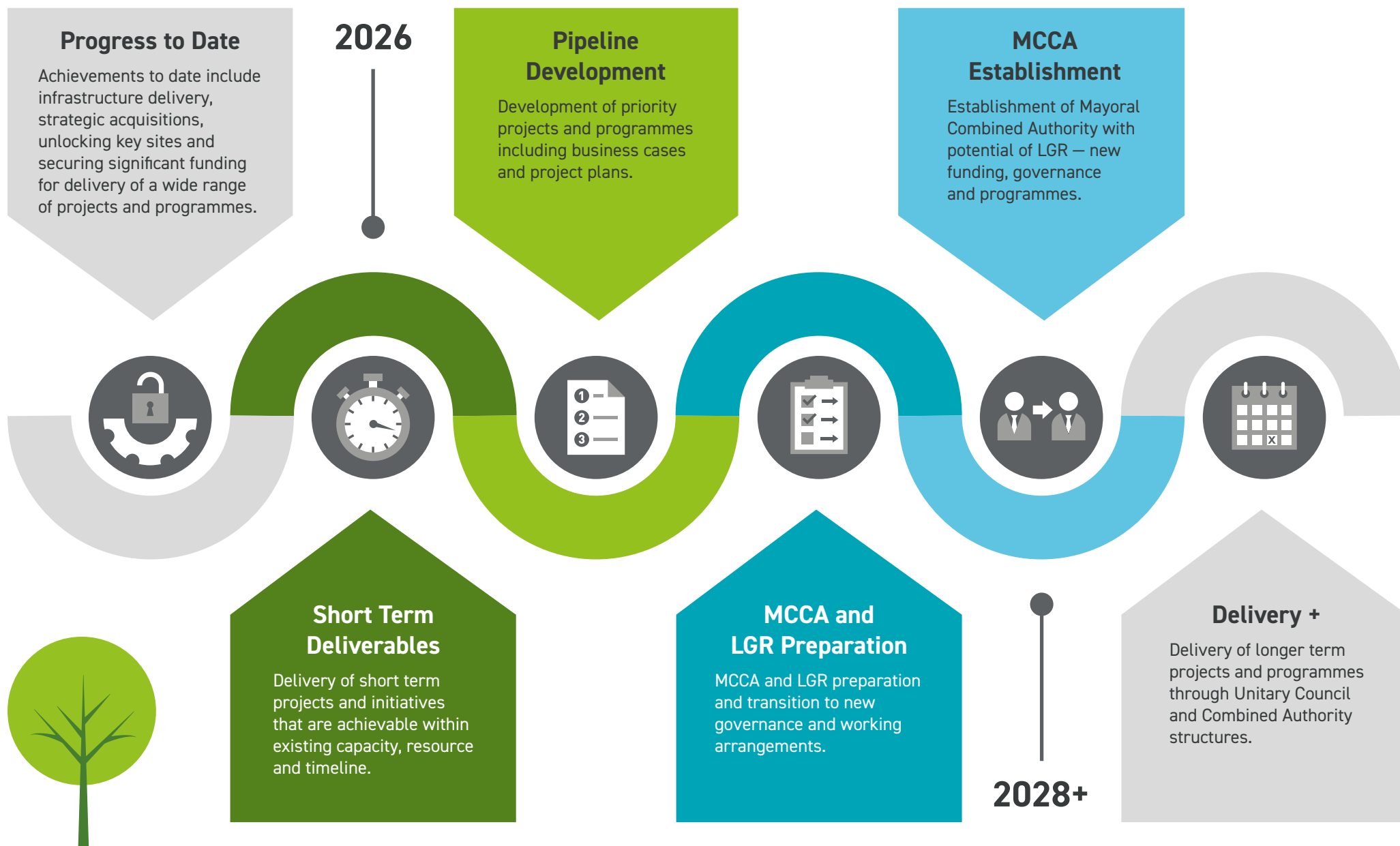
Delivering regeneration and economic growth requires a long term commitment. Work will be delivered in phases, aligned to what is achievable, supports local priorities and delivers the most benefit.

Havant Borough Council may form part of a new Unitary Authority working alongside the new MCCA.

While this means some inevitable disruption and a period of significant change, it also offers opportunities to access new funding streams, pool resource and expertise and work at larger scales, delivering efficiencies and potential much more far-reaching benefits.

Significant progress has already been made, but a next phase of *early deliverables* will enable momentum to be maintained and benefits realised, acting as stepping stones towards delivery of the longer term goals. In parallel, work will be done to prepare a future pipeline of investment-ready projects, putting Havant in pole position for future support and investment.





Engagement and Communication

Havant Borough Council remains committed to engaging with its residents, businesses and stakeholders in an open and transparent way. The Council's aim is *to build resilient and empowered communities who are effectively informed, engaged and involved in defining and designing local priorities, front-line services and informing council decision-making in areas that impact their lives.*

In line with the [Council Engagement Strategy \(2024–26\)](#), the Council will work with local communities, key stakeholders and wider partners to:

Establish strong and robust channels to support two-way inclusive engagement.

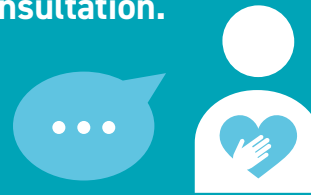


Demonstrate as part of future decision-making how the Council has taken the views of stakeholders into account.



Engagement and consultation is likely to take place at **project level** and will be bespoke according to the nature of the project along with the impact on and role of stakeholders.

Be clear upfront on the role of engagement, whether for information sharing, participation or consultation.



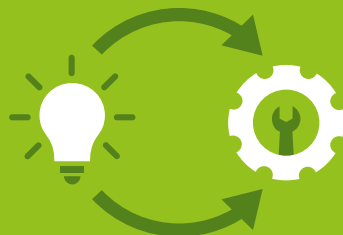
Use a wide range of engagement approaches, including the use of digital technology along with more traditional methods.



Stakeholders



**Policy and Decision
Makers**



Delivery Bodies



Influencers



Businesses



Investors and Funders



Landowners



**Residents and
Communities**



Visitors



Havant Borough Council

Regeneration and Economy Strategy (2026–2036)

Putting **People** at the heart of **Place** and **Prosperity**

Havant
BOROUGH COUNCIL