

**Report of the Executive Director Core Services  
and the Executive Director Growth and Sustainability,  
to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC)  
on 27 June 2023**

**Towards a 'One Inclusive Economy Strategy' and Action Plan for Barnsley**

## **1.0 Introduction**

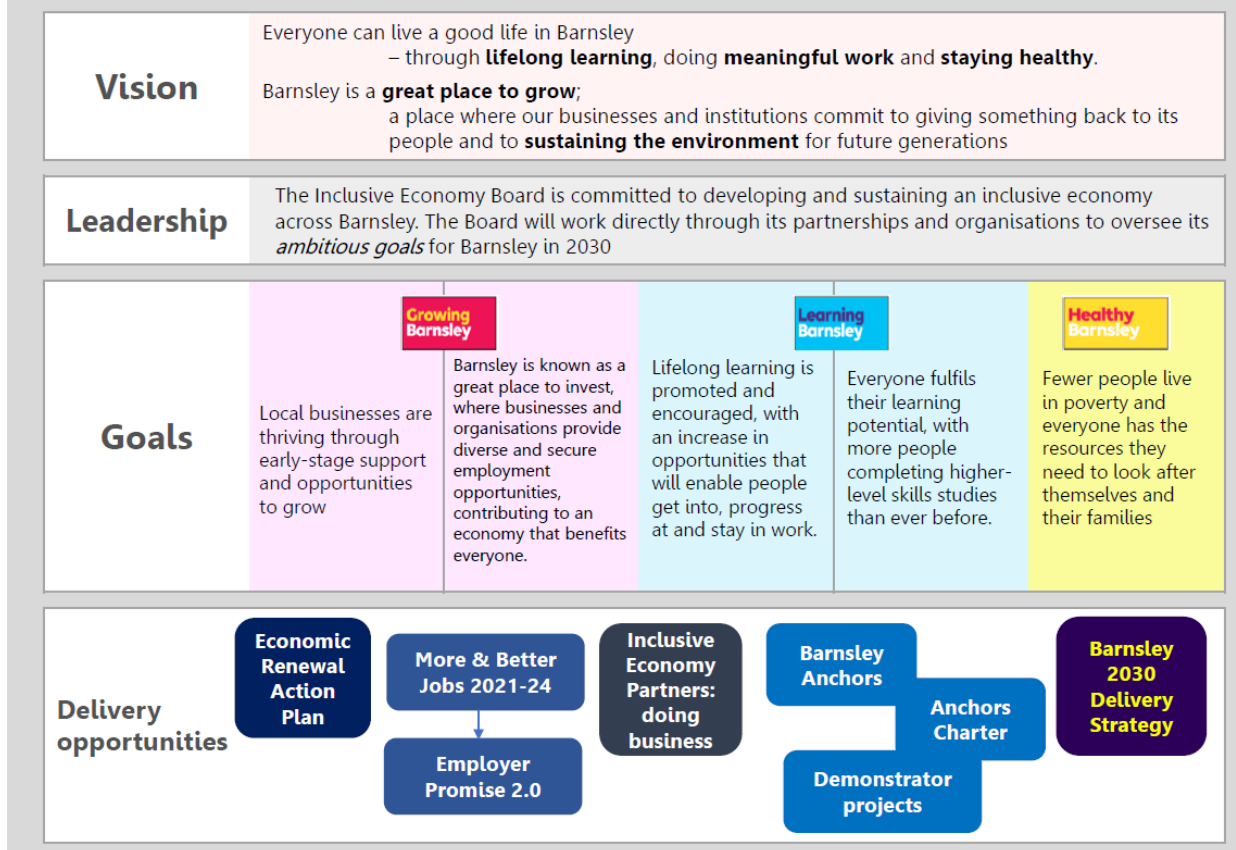
- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Overview & Scrutiny Committee with an outline of the work done to date to develop an Inclusive Economy and how the Inclusive Economy Board is approaching the development of a One Inclusive Economy Strategy and Action Plan for the borough.
- 1.2 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting provides the opportunity for OSC Members to be involved in shaping the One Inclusive Economy Strategy and Action Plan for Barnsley by providing feedback, comments and recommendations on this work. This includes the proposed content of the strategy, the partners involved, objectives identified, and any other considerations Members may wish to highlight.

## **2.0 Background**

- 2.1 The Barnsley Inclusive Economy Board (IEB) was set up following a Peer Review in 2019 of the Barnsley Economic Partnership which subsequently disbanded.
- 2.2 The key messages from the review recommended:
- Development of an Inclusive Economy Strategy and consistent narrative
  - Ensuring there is a shared vision for inclusive growth
  - Develop a plan for influencing regional strategy
  - Assess the fragility of the Barnsley business base
  - Develop sector-specific skills pathways
  - Incorporate the carbon agenda
  - Develop social value with key stakeholders
  - Consider transport challenges
  - Develop citizen engagement
  - Focus on place-based growth
- 2.3 The role of the IEB, as mapped out in the Terms of Reference, was specifically focused on delivering an Inclusive Economy for Barnsley. It will ensure opportunities are maximised and inequalities reduced to allow everyone in Barnsley to benefit from its economic growth and prosperity.
- 2.4 Practically the work of the board was to prioritise three important areas: -
- Driving forward a jobs led economic recovery; mitigating the impacts of Covid-19;
  - Providing effective oversight to ensure the delivery and success of the Glassworks scheme;
  - Responding to the Inclusive Economy Peer Review, helping to shape and deliver Barnsley's aspirations in relation to jobs and businesses; contributing to achieving Barnsley's 2030 aspirations.

- 2.5 The board's brief was to establish a dynamic and positive environment, providing a platform for creativity, collaboration and innovation. Most importantly the board will foster a commitment between partners to work together with a coordinated approach to the delivery of a shared vision for Barnsley. The board will act as an exemplar for Barnsley, highlighting the benefits of true collaboration and partnership delivery, encouraging this approach at all levels.
- 2.6 There was a recognition that, while the delivery of an Inclusive Economy was a wide-ranging endeavour, the board would use their experience, skills and expertise to prioritise a number of key areas where resources and efforts could be best deployed, and which would have the greatest impact.
- 2.7 The outcome of efforts will be evidenced not only by the improved economic position of Barnsley regionally, nationally and internationally, but also by the reduction of disparities within the borough. Barnsley's position as one of the best places to live and work would be improved.
- 2.8 The Board brought together a group of high-level influential individuals from the public, private sectors and third sectors with the appropriate skill sets, experience and commitment to drive forward delivery towards an inclusive economy in Barnsley.
- 2.9 The work of the IEB began while we were still living under the cloud of Covid and many businesses were in lockdown or with employees being furloughed or in crisis. The Coronavirus pandemic hit the economy hard. This was particularly felt in Barnsley, with legacy issues of already lower than average levels of economic activity, health inequalities and some particularly deprived communities. In response to the National Government's Roadmap out of national lockdown in February 2021, the Council and its partners worked together to develop Barnsley's Economic Renewal Action Plan (RAP). This was a short-term plan focusing on the immediate issues and opportunities to aid Barnsley's economic recovery. The plan was 'owned' by the Barnsley Inclusive Economy Board, working through its sub-groups to co-ordinate its delivery, focusing on:
- People:** Supported to work and adapt to the new economy;  
**Employers and Businesses:** Supported to adapt, consolidate and thrive;  
**Places:** Supported through place-based investment to create jobs, offer vibrant local economies and transform our communities.
- 2.10 The RAP was very successfully delivered at pace to support Barnsley businesses, residents and communities and was one of the first key pieces of delivery orchestrated and supported by the IEB.
- 2.11 It should also be noted that the establishment of the IEB pre-dated the adoption of the [Barnsley 2030 Strategy](#), the vision of Barnsley as 'the place of possibilities' and the Barnsley 2030 outcomes framework. As the Outcomes framework evolved, a number of the outcomes of the Barnsley 2030 Framework were to be overseen by the IEB including a number of outcomes under Growing Barnsley and Learning Barnsley. The IEB also understood its key role in supporting the wider determinants of health and wellbeing and the links its work has to the Healthy Barnsley outcomes, and its key role to play in supporting the delivery of the Sustainable Barnsley outcomes.
- 2.12 In the first 6-9 months, the IEB also spent time defining what we meant by an Inclusive Economy and the vision we have for an inclusive economy in the borough – see diagram below:

# Barnsley's emerging Inclusive Economy Strategy



2.13 The first two years of the work of the Commission focussed on two key areas:

- The importance of having thriving 'Urban Centres' in order to have an inclusive economy. This includes the Town Centre as well as outlying 'Principal Towns'. This not only includes retail development, business growth and expansion, but also looking at options for empty properties, as well as having a thriving cultural offer to encourage people into these urban spaces. Investment has been made in improving shop fronts and urban spaces, utilising and employing local people to do the work, creating significant 'social value' through, for example, bringing local businesses and communities together as well as improving relationships between the Council and local businesses.
- The '[More and Better Jobs Strategy](#)' to support residents to get ready for, get into and progress at work. This strategy is led by the Council but is a borough strategy for all partners to take up. The strategy has been reviewed with the IEB and focuses on transformative actions and adds value to existing activities. Data shows that unemployment in Barnsley is low (3.3%) compared with regional (4%) and national (3.7%) figures (June 2022). However, figures for Barnsley show that youth unemployment is higher than elsewhere, and that labour inactivity rates have soared. The group noted that labour inactivity is mainly driven by people who are long-term sick, of which, for the majority, this is due to poor mental health. A key challenge is to grow the skills in the adult population and support them with career development, as well as developing digital skills. There are a number of new big businesses in Barnsley; however, there is a disconnect between job-seekers knowing what they do, as well as a lack of awareness about what their 'employment offer' is.

### **3.0 Work with the Overview & Scrutiny Committee's Task & Finish Group**

- 3.1 The IEB has been in place for 2.5 years now and in the 2022-23 municipal year, was the focus of a very helpful review of its work with a specially convened Task and Finish Group (TFG) of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC).
- 3.2 As part of its work programme the OSC agreed to undertake a TFG investigation into what is being done to ensure an inclusive economy and good economic growth in Barnsley. This followed on from the OSC's previous work on poverty, acknowledging that Barnsley needs to have a sustainable inclusive economy which benefits all communities in order to reduce poverty in the borough. The OSC was also mindful that young people in Barnsley identified 'Jobs, Money, Homes and Opportunities' as their number one concern in the 2022 'Make Your Mark Campaign'.
- 3.3 The Review took place between September 2022 and January 2023, with the findings being shared with the Council's Cabinet on 22 March 2023.
- 3.4 The TFG welcomed knowledge of the IEB's work with stakeholder groups and their focus on 'wicked challenges', such as connecting individuals to job vacancies. Also, that this work has resulted in the development of a logistics academy at Barnsley College to help with developing skills for the jobs available locally. The group acknowledged the future plans for the IEB including development of an Inclusive Economy Strategy.
- 3.5 The TFG also noted that a key challenge is to grow the skills in the adult population and support them with career development, as well as developing digital skills. Individuals need to recognise the skills they have and the transferability of them, as well as being open to learning new ones. The TFG also discussed the lack of consistent, good quality careers advice available for all ages. There are a number of new big businesses in Barnsley; however, there is a disconnect between job-seekers knowing what they do, as well as a lack of awareness about what their 'employment offer' is.
- 3.6 The TFG also highlighted the importance of 'anchor' institutions in Barnsley and as the local largest employers, how they can influence the development of an inclusive economy. Similarly, it was positive to hear of Barnsley College developing several Sector and Employer Academies and Sector Alliances. The TFG welcomed plans for an IEB sub-group to focus on poverty and noted the lived experience and voices of residents being critical in this, as well as the voice of officers from across Council services who provide front-line service delivery.
- 3.7 The TFG were reassured by the amount of work being done in this area and made a series of recommendations in order to support the continual improvement of these services, including consulting with the Overview & Scrutiny Committee on the proposals for an Inclusive Economy Strategy.

### **4.0 Current Position**

- 4.1 As also recommended by the OSC TFG, a current review is being undertaken of the membership of the IEB. The IEB is due to have a change of Chair due to the term of the current Chair coming to an end, so this will also be considered as part of the review. Current members will have served more than the initial two-year term so it is timely to review the makeup of the Board and make sure it is fit-for-purpose going forward and reflects our anchor organisations, public sector bodies, the voluntary community sector, Small to Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs) and the various sectors in the borough, as well as the diversity of our communities. Proposals for revised membership will be brought back into the IEB at the end of July.

- 4.2 The Principal Towns and Local Centres programme is well underway and has its own Programme Board, overseeing progress of the action plans in each of the Principal Towns and the delivery of key identified priority projects in Local Centres.
- 4.3 Regular reports on the success of the Glass Works and Town Centre improvements are presented into cabinet. The diversity of the offer is a key element of the Town Centre Action Plan – a report will be brought back annually to Cabinet on the progress of the action plan against key milestones.
- 4.4 A future report will also be brought into Cabinet on the four-year Heritage Action Zone Project on Eldon Street which runs from 2020-24.
- 4.5 A plan for the Night-Time Economy, developed with our Public Health Colleagues and Night-Time Economy partners will also focus on supporting a safe and diverse night-time economy in the town centre and principal towns.
- 4.6 A key success for the town centre was recently securing £10.3M Levelling Up Funding for a suite of projects for young people in the town centre under the banner of ‘Barnsley Futures’. The projects include:
- Development of a new facility called ‘Northern Academy of Vocal Excellence’, a new permanent home for Barnsley Youth Choir.
  - Refurbishment of the YMCA building on Blucher Street to enhance its HOME (Help Our Mental ‘Ealth’ space and support service as an accessible health and wellbeing hub for young people in the borough.
  - Design and delivery of a new outdoor activity park alongside the YouthZone (see below).
  - Enhancements to the frontage of the Civic and a refurbishment and capital programme to open up the building to Eldon Street once more, offering a new café-bar and creation spaces for young people and creative practitioners aged 18 to 30.
- 4.7 The Levelling Up Project also supports the well-advanced work to develop a YouthZone for Barnsley directly opposite the Interchange, offering world-class facilities and learning opportunities for the borough’s young residents.
- 4.8 Considerable work is underway to ensure the town centre is older-people friendly through initiatives like ‘Take a Seat’ and other work by Age UK and the voluntary/community sector working with local businesses.
- 4.9 Through the ‘More and Better Jobs’ strategy work and the Employability and Skills team, an all-age Careers Advice service is being developed to ensure people of all ages and at all stages of life have access to informative and bespoke careers information, advice and support.
- 4.10 The Council has also designed the ‘Pathways to Work’ Commission which will identify a set of solutions to support those who are economically inactive to move back into employment. It will be an independent Commission drawing on a pool of experienced experts as well as the voices and experiences of local residents to develop and co-produce pathways for this cohort to move back into work and experience the benefits of meaningful work.
- 4.11 A key component of this may be an all-age advice service delivered at a hyper-local level so it is easy to access and place-based.
- 4.12 The Council’s Employment and Skills service is working closely with this sector to capture positive stories of people who work in the sector through text and video. These are being shared via the Council’s website and social media channels and have been very well-received.

Advertisements highlighting the flexibility and rewarding career opportunities in these sectors have been promoted in railway and bus stations. This work is ongoing and will be embedded in the Inclusive Economy Communications Plan.

- 4.13 The IEB will be drawing up a Communications Plan in the next three months, including the More and Better Jobs Communications Plan, and has also designed an 'Invest in Barnsley' platform to attract greater levels of inward investment into the borough.
- 4.14 The 'Enterprising Barnsley' website has also had a refresh to enable it to support more businesses to start up and grow in the borough.
- 4.15 The Communications Plan will also create a web platform for the work of the IEB to share its work and the development of the IE strategy with a wider audience of residents, organisations and businesses.
- 4.16 Together, the development of an overarching strategy for an Inclusive Economy and the associated Action Plan(s) will offer a one-stop-shop that demonstrates what the Council and its partners are delivering to improve people's lives and places in the borough.
- 4.17 There are a wide range of economic, health, equality and diversity issues connected to the Inclusive Economy work that will impact directly and indirectly upon the local community. These would be picked up and elaborated on in an Equalities Impact Assessment carried out on the Strategy and Action Plan.

## **5.0 One Inclusive Economy Strategy**

5.1 The Strategy will bring together a number of pieces of work carried out by the Council and its partners including:

- Levelling Up for Barnsley statement by the Council - <https://www.barnsley.gov.uk/services/our-council/barnsley-2030/levelling-up-barnsley/>
- The Local Plan 2019-2033 which maps out all of the key employment sites, housing sites and mixed-use sites for development as well as the Planning Framework for all developers - <https://www.barnsley.gov.uk/media/17249/local-plan-adopted.pdf>
- Principal Towns Investment Plans and Goldthorpe Town Investment Plan
- Town Centre Urbed Spatial Plan - <https://barnsleymbc.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s84824/Town%20Centre%20Plan%20by%20Urbed%20Public%20Consultation.pdf>
- Our emerging Housing Strategy (which incorporates the Berneslai Homes strategy for our Council-owned Housing stock)
- Our emerging Cultural Strategy to 2030
- Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy (in development)

5.2 It will also align with the following strategies:

- Transport Strategy - <https://www.barnsley.gov.uk/media/22023/barnsley-transport-strategy.pdf>
- Health and Wellbeing Strategy - <https://www.barnsley.gov.uk/media/19957/barnsley-hwb-strategy-final-web.pdf>
- Active in Barnsley Strategy - <https://www.barnsley.gov.uk/services/sport-and-leisure/active-in-barnsley/#:~:text=The%20Active%20in%20Barnsley%20Strategic,of%20everyday%20life%20for%20everyone.>

- Mental Health & Wellbeing Strategy - <https://www.barnsley.gov.uk/media/19957/barnsley-hwb-strategy-final-web.pdf>
- Integrated Care Strategy for South Yorkshire - <https://barnsleymbc.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s105163/Appendix%201%20-%20SY%20Integrated%20Care%20Partnership%20Strategy%202023%20Summary.pdf>

5.3 At its May meeting, the IEB agreed that the objectives of One Inclusive Economy Strategy would be to:

- Create an environment across the borough that enables enterprise to flourish and businesses to grow through business support, access to talent, high-quality workspace, networks, innovation and investment / access to finance
- Grow more and better jobs for Barnsley residents
- Ensure residents of all ages have the pathways and connectivity they need to access employment and learning opportunities for a fulfilling life
- Develop thriving sustainable urban centres and economies across the borough with good employment & housing – in our town centre, principal towns and local centres
- Tackling poverty through positive action; supporting everyone to be economically active and make a contribution

5.4 The Action Plan would map out in detail the actions the Council is taking with its partners to achieve these strategic goals and identify how we best deploy our own resources (human and financial) to achieve the strategic aims.

5.5 The Action Plan will also contain details of how the IEB and its partners will:

- Deliver the actions associated with the strategies above
- Develop an Anchors / Good Business Alliance to build on the existing Employer Promise/Charter
- Identify ways to retain the Barnsley pound in Barnsley and deliver greater social value through the combined spend of our partners
- Develop a Barnsley Index to capture place-based integrated data-sets to help understand the economic and social profile of the borough in the round
- Tackle poverty through positive action

## **6.0 Future Plans & Challenges**

6.1 As well as the challenges and plans outlined above, there are major barriers to be considered, in particular the Cost of Living crisis and the Cost of Doing Business crisis. These will be picked up as part of future reports.

6.2 Next steps for the strategy development process are mapped out below:

- Define Inclusive Economy for Barnsley
- Position Inclusive Economy within Barnsley 2030 vision and ambitious goals
- Build a profile of our economy and the key challenges so the strategy can be insight-led through Barnsley Index of Deprivation
- Identify our key opportunities and ambitions; plug strategic gaps (e.g. Business support ecosystem)

- Draft outline strategy to bring together key existing Barnsley strategies (Local Plan, Place-Based Investment Plan, More & Better Jobs, Housing strategy, Health and Wellbeing strategy, Children & Young People's (CYP) Plan, Climate Change strategy) aligned to other South Yorkshire strategies
- Map, Engage and involve our key stakeholders to get to final strategy
- Bring together Barnsley 2030 partners to collaborate on delivery plan:
  - More and Better Jobs Employer Promise & Employer partnerships
  - Anchor Institution Network and Charter
  - Good Business Alliance with Chamber of Commerce

6.3 The development process will involve a range of Boards (including the Barnsley 2030 Board and the IEB) as well as some external support, over a period of six months. A final draft of the Strategy will be produced by the end of 2023.

## **7.0 Invited Witnesses**

7.1 The following witnesses have been invited to today's meeting to answer questions from the committee:

- Kathy McArdle, Service Director Regeneration and Culture, Barnsley Council
- Tom Smith, Head of Employment & Skills, Barnsley Council
- Ken Coupar, Economic Policy Officer, Barnsley Council
- Sarah Cartwright, Head of Strategic Housing, Barnsley Council
- Mark Hempshall, Place, Policy & Equalities Manager, Barnsley Council
- Dr Andy Snell, Public Health Consultant, Barnsley Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
- Carrie Sudbury, Chief Executive, Barnsley & Rotherham Chamber of Commerce
- Sarah Harrison, Chair of More & Better Jobs Sub-Group of the IEB and Careers Advisor at Horizon Community College, Barnsley
- Ben Hindley, Keep Moat (Housing Developer)

## **8.0 Possible Areas for Investigation**

8.1 Members may wish to ask questions around the following areas:-

- What are the greatest challenges with regards to creating and delivering a 'One Inclusive Economy Strategy and Action Plan' for Barnsley?
- Are there any opportunities or developments over the coming years that you expect Barnsley to benefit from?
- Can you describe what community engagement will look like, including work with young people, so that the voice of residents is reflected in the Strategy and Action Plan?
- What is being done to engage with businesses not directly involved with the work of the IEB and how can they contribute to the delivery of the Strategy/Action Plan?
- How will regional partners be involved in the development and delivery of the Strategy and Action Plan, such as South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (SYMCA)?



- What are the challenges associated with developing a strategy so that it complements and does not conflict with other existing strategies? What key points need to be considered?
- Given that poverty exists amongst our most hard to reach communities, how will you ensure that this work develops a truly 'Inclusive Economy'?
- Given that labour inactivity in Barnsley is mainly driven by poor mental health, what, if any, specific actions will be incorporated into the Strategy/Action Plan?
- How were the objectives identified, which will have the greatest impact upon residents and how will you know if they have been achieved? Are there any 'quick wins'?
- How will you ensure that challenging but realistic performance measures will be in place to monitor delivery of the Strategy and Action Plan? Will these be taken from existing frameworks or are there plans for a new suite of indicators?
- To what extent are partner agencies engaged in this work and how will they be enabled to lead on initiatives rather than it all being Council-led?
- What is being done to ensure that the housing market reflects the needs of the population, including affordable and social housing?
- How will the carbon agenda and social value improve outcomes for residents? What more needs to be done to develop these areas?
- How much influence/involvement does the group have in transport arrangements for the borough and what are the associated barriers to achieving an inclusive economy? Have any solutions been identified?
- How would you describe the breadth and quality of the current lifelong learning offer in Barnsley and what more needs to be done?
- How will you know if the Levelling Up Funding has delivered value for money?
- What can Elected Members do to best support this work?

## 9.0 Background Papers & Useful Links

- Overview and Scrutiny Committee Task and Finish Group Report on an Inclusive Economy in Barnsley (Cab.22.3.2023/8):  
<https://barnsleymbc.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s104974/Report.pdf>
- Barnsley Council Social Value Policy  
<https://www.barnsley.gov.uk/media/17296/social-value-policy.pdf>

Several other strategies referenced can be accessed digitally via the links provided in the main body of the report.

## 10.0 Glossary

IEB	Inclusive Economy Board
OSC	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
RAP	Renewal Action Plan
TFG	Task and Finish Group

## 11.0 Officer Contact

Jane Murphy/Anna Marshall, Scrutiny Officers, [Scrutiny@barnsley.gov.uk](mailto:Scrutiny@barnsley.gov.uk)  
14 June 2023