

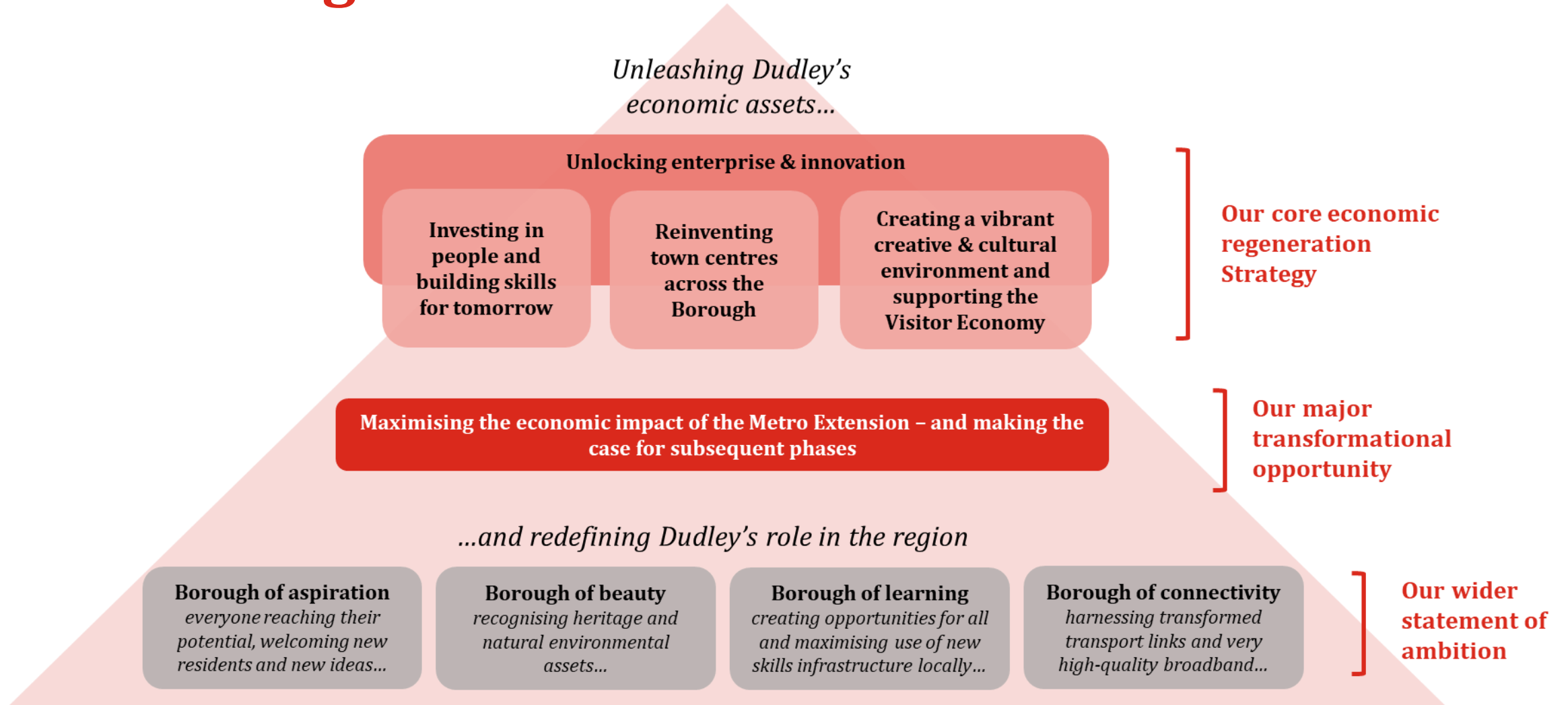
Driving forward the Economic Regeneration Strategy – at scale and pace

Economic ambition for the Borough

By 2033, Dudley will be a place where...

- new businesses are formed and existing businesses grow – including in new sectors
- inward investors choose to locate
- local people develop new skills and are able to ‘pivot’ as new opportunities come to the area
- town centres are vibrant and sustainable, and attractive both to local people and visitors
- the quality of the natural and built environment (including heritage assets) are recognised at the heart of the visitor economy and more generally
- communities and businesses are connected by a high quality transport infrastructure across the borough
- significant progress is being made towards net zero carbon
- everyone can reach their potential

Our strategic framework



Theme 1: Unlocking Enterprise & Innovation

Objective

To reposition Dudley as a **borough of enterprise and innovation**, and ensure that existing businesses are fully part of this redefined role

Rationale

Dudley has seen - and will see - **significant economic restructuring and change**. Yet its businesses appear to be innovative and resilient - if fragmented as a 'community' and invisible in wider economic narratives. The borough has seen major investment in an innovation infrastructure, **but this needs to be used more effectively**. It also has **outstanding digital connectivity**. There are **challenges linked to employment land** which need to be addressed. However Dudley as a whole needs to be a confident borough in economic terms, promoting its knowledge-based competencies and re-defining its role within and beyond the West Midlands.

Theme 1: Unlocking Enterprise & Innovation

Action areas

1. Developing an enhanced business support package to enable more local businesses to 'pivot' and thrive, including in the transition to net zero carbon
2. Building, animating and promoting networks among SMEs in Dudley, allowing for collaboration and knowledge sharing, and improving (for example) access to finance
3. Drive forward Dudley's innovation capabilities in relation to advanced manufacturing and technology, and promote new innovation institutions (BCIMO, etc.) locally.
4. Invest in innovation facilities across the Borough, especially where they support new and emerging sectors and contribute to a more diverse, knowledge-based economy.
5. Promoting 'Digital Dudley' as a focus for existing businesses and inward investment
6. Developing provision for early-stage businesses in different parts of the borough
7. Developing an effective approach to brownfield employment sites (through land assembly, etc.)
8. Enhancing the dialogue between local businesses and skills providers to ensure that 'the right skills' continue to be available locally
9. Crafting a new narrative (to be used within and beyond the West Midlands) to promote Dudley as a borough of enterprise and innovation (particularly in knowledge intensive sectors) with outstanding digital connectivity

Theme 2: Reinventing town centre across the Borough

Objective

To create **vibrant town centres** with evolving economic, social and community roles

Rationale

Town centres in Dudley - like many elsewhere - have seen **significant change** over recent years, some of it related to the restructuring of retail. A **new vision** is needed for its town centres. This must recognise and respect the differences between them, whilst **re-inventing future roles** which are defined in partnership with local communities and businesses. More generally employers across the borough, including those in the public sector, need to **recognise the role they can play** in helping to sustain town centre economies.

Theme 2: Reinventing town centre across the Borough

Action areas

1. Supporting partnership working in town centres to deliver change
2. Supporting a more innovative retail sector on high streets across the borough
3. Re-energising Dudley's towns through a redefined the mix of uses in town centres (through planning policy and direct investment into land/property)
4. Working with public sector employers to encourage greater use of town centre amenities across the borough

Theme 3: Investing in people & building skills for tomorrow

Objective

To ensure that **people are equipped for economic life**, and that employers can find the skills they need

Rationale

With changing technologies and economic change, **job roles are evolving quickly**. It will be important that skills and training provision keeps pace. This will mean that **local people and more and better opportunities**, and that employers can find the skills they need.

Theme 3: Investing in people & building skills for tomorrow

Action areas

1. Strengthening links between employers, schools and providers to equip people for changing jobs
2. Supporting local people to access skills, training and education opportunities, especially those currently furthest away from the labour market
3. Leveraging new investment coming into the borough to deliver skills and training opportunities for local people
4. Develop Dudley's higher education offer

Theme 4: Creating a vibrant creative and cultural environment, and promoting Dudley's Visitor Economy

Objective

To **build creativity** and ensure that the borough is **culturally enriching** for residents, workers and visitors

Rationale

Increasingly, culture and creativity are seen as core economic assets - and Dudley has important assets in relation to both. These need to be **used and supported**, and their wider role in economic regeneration needs to be encouraged. The borough also benefits from strong VE assets, many of which have a catchment that extends across the region and beyond. They therefore have a wider role in bringing people and investment into the borough.

Theme 4: Creating a vibrant creative and cultural environment, and promoting Dudley's Visitor Economy

Action areas

1. Developing a stronger 'package' across different VE attractions within the borough, helping to increase visitor numbers, dwell time and spend
2. Delivering more cultural events, particularly in the town centres, helping to change perceptions of the borough
3. Forging stronger links between the cultural and creative sectors to shape town centre regeneration
4. Exploring the feasibility of new sport and/or cultural infrastructures within the borough
5. Promoting Dudley as a 'creative borough' and providing more adaptable and affordable workspaces for creative businesses

Unlocking transformation through the Metro Extension

Objective

To **maximise the impacts** from Metro Extension, particularly in redefining the borough's role in the West Midlands

Rationale

The Metro Extension is a very important infrastructure investment, but it must be completed, used and harnessed as an economic driver too. This requires a proactive response and one that seeks out the opportunities to leverage opportunities linked to it.

Unlocking transformation through the Metro Extension

Action areas

1. Maximising the economic impact of the first phases of Metro extension by identifying and promoting development and regeneration opportunities along the route
2. Ensuring that disadvantaged people in Dudley are able to benefit from new opportunities linked to the Metro Extension
3. Making the case for future phases of the Metro as well as championing other options for improved connectivity i.e. Very Light Rail.