

BUSINESS IN DURHAM

POWERED

BY PEOPLE



There are those that think and those that do. Some with ambition and some who inspire. Those that make the rules, and others that rewrite them. There's the loyal, the determined, the creators, the changers. Those who encourage, those who are proud. Some that have discovered it and some that have never imagined being anywhere else. There are those that harness the power, and those that create it. It takes all sorts. And together, we thrive. We make our county different.

This is Durham. **Powered by People.**



“Speak to any business that’s relocated here and they’ll tell you it’s all about the passion and willingness, and the energy to succeed.”

Other parts of the country talk about education, GVA, investment... or how well-connected they are, what facilities they have and their vision for their region. Of course, we could do the same; but the fact is, in Durham we’ve a lot more besides.

We have a World Heritage Site and top University in Durham City. We have an excess of water and energy, and a transport infrastructure with the capacity to grow. We have a great coastline to the east and the beautiful moorlands to the west. But our biggest asset of all – the one that makes a real difference to any business – is our people.

They’re enterprising, ambitious and tenacious. They’re renowned for being hardworking and passionate about what they do, as well as adaptable and willing to embrace new opportunities.

That’s why Durham’s people have played such a key part in the transformation of the county over the last 20 years, involving a wide variety of businesses and a huge range of skills.

It’s a transformation that still surprises many visitors, as does our attitude of helping others wherever possible, and it reflects the welcome new businesses can expect.

Our people are our strength, our inspiration, our advantage. They’ll loyally support you, whether you’re new to the area or Durham born-and-bred, to achieve your ambitions and enjoy greater success. Which is why they’re so good for business. Your business.

We have the capacity to do so much more, and a real desire to move forwards and get things done. With over £3.4 billion planned investment in the county, we’re excited about the future, and keen to help those that want to make their future here.

Now it’s time to tell the rest of the world what we have to offer. So these are some of our stories. We hope you enjoy them.

James Ramsbotham
Chief Executive,
North East England
Chamber of Commerce

BUSINESS IN DURHAM

Long established companies include GSK, Thorn Lighting and Husqvarna; **technology trailblazers** include Atom bank, Kromek and PolyPhotonix

Business sectors include financial, professional and business services, automotive supply, precision engineering, electronics, health and pharma

Strengths in technology, engineering and manufacturing 15% of the county’s employment as compared with 8% in the UK as a whole

3,400 businesses relocated, set up or expanded here in the last four years

40 multinationals have invested and re-invested in the county in the last three years



READY FOR BUSINESS

A range of strategic sites available with both established and bespoke options

5 universities across the region

50% of students study STEM subjects the highest number of any UK region

66% of students are studying in their home region, the highest proportion in England, so it's easier to recruit/retain staff

11 colleges delivering academic and work-based learning opportunities with over 300 advanced manufacturing-related courses

Labour market costs are 86% of the average for England

“There’s a real appetite for business and genuine desire for success here.”

Originally from near Manchester, I've spent much of my life elsewhere. After travelling I lived in Paris for 8 years, followed by nearly 20 in central London. I first came to Durham when the National Centre for Printed Electronics was being created in NETPark, Sedgfield. I realised that I had the opportunity to set up a new business and be a pioneer in the new high-tech centre, avoiding getting swamped by the general 'noise' of Cambridge or London.

That was over 10 years ago. The early years were challenging but Business Durham's enthusiasm and support was crucial to success. Importantly, Durham University is close by and accessible; a lot of our talent has come from the University. Now a few years have passed, there is a critical mass of people and skills in high tech industries, and many exciting similar companies.

NETPark has grown considerably; it's a facility in a great location. It's one of the UK's best science parks and gives us access to multi-million pound assets and equipment that we would never normally get.

My own company, PolyPhotonix has developed a treatment for one of the most common causes of blindness, Diabetic Retinopathy. We are now working in Europe, the Middle East, South America and the U.S. As we become global, our ambition is to drive it all from County Durham.

My own experience here has been nothing but positive. My life living in London was wonderful – it is easily the best city in the world, but I absolutely love living in the North East. The quality of life is one of the best in the UK.

Richard Kirk
Chief Executive Officer,
PolyPhotonix

“WE HAVE TO CONSTANTLY UP-SKILL TO MEET THE NEEDS OF INDUSTRY IN THIS FAST-MOVING ENVIRONMENT.”

Dawn Fairlamb Vice-Principal
of New College Durham

That's the view of Dawn Fairlamb, Vice-Principal, New College Durham. “For us it's always about having a career, not just a qualification. We offer every vocational course you can think of, apart from land based, and try to get work placements for all our students. The upcoming 'Technical-Level' qualification requires students to do an industry placement of between 45 and 60 days alongside their studies.

I'm passionate about making sure all our students have every opportunity, and we do that by working closely with employers. They tell us what they need, and we constantly invest in resources, so our students can see what businesses want and gain the required skills and knowledge. It's a real partnership. So much so, we work with employers to design degree courses around their

particular needs, giving students even better career prospects – as we've seen from our destination data of students who progress into employment or further study.

We're always looking at how best to prepare or up-skill people for the world of work, to make sure they contribute to their community as well as the economy. It's a crucial part of what we do.”



“There’s immense power in the people here to make things happen.”

‘Kynren’ was always an ambitious project. An open-air spectacular on a grand scale, bringing to life 2,000 years of history in an engaging way. It’s fun, live theatre, similar to the opening ceremony of London 2012 in many ways, but also much more. Jonathan (Ruffer, philanthropist and investment manager) and I wanted to create a world-class production to turn Bishop Auckland into an international destination, attract investment and empower the community.

We harnessed the community spirit by bringing the group together with a common purpose. There could have been no better place than County Durham, as the spirit here built a strong group with a high level of engagement and emotional attachment to what they’re doing. Being part of Kynren is like being on a sports team, rather than just a ‘volunteer’. They combine a strong sense of community with a sense of pride for what they achieve together.

Anne-Isabelle Daulon
Co-founder,
Eleven Arches

MAKE A REAL DIFFERENCE

14 Area Action Partnerships bring together local people, councillors and partners to set local priorities and explore ways to address them

The County Durham Economic Partnership has over 60 public, private and voluntary sector organisations involved in economic development and regeneration

£2 million is distributed annually by County Durham Community Foundation on behalf of businesses to support community projects and individuals in County Durham and Darlington

More than 1,000 volunteers aged 5 to 81 are professionally trained and contribute thousands of hours to put on Kynren

Year 1 set-up cost £35 million, and each year the production costs £4 million – a high level of investment. But it works because of its rich content, with the history and heritage of the region, and the right people behind it; Kynren is orchestrated by a cast and crew of 1,000 volunteers, all demonstrating passion and commitment.

‘Yes we can’ summarises County Durham. People here make things happen. They have an inner ability to be adventurous and be bold – a sort of ‘pioneer’ spirit – taking what they do to a level that puts them on the map and inspires others. It’s one of the county’s greatest assets, and something businesses should harness.

“IT’S ABOUT TRYING TO WORK MORE ACTIVELY IN A CO-ORDINATED WAY WITH DURHAM BUSINESSES IN THE COMMUNITY.”

Michelle Cooper
CEO of County Durham
Community Foundation

Michelle Cooper is CEO of County Durham Community Foundation. Their remit is to work with individuals and businesses wanting to invest in and support their communities, typically through cash donations, using the Foundation as the vehicle for their giving to create a clear charitable community link.

“Often owners of businesses are passionate about the area in which they were brought up and will very actively support activities in those areas.”

Distributing around £5 million in grants last year, the Foundation ensures the donations they receive help change people’s lives by supporting community projects and

individuals across the County Durham and Darlington areas.

“I see an amazing amount of positivity and generosity in this region.”



“People do business with people; and here we’re all about building trusted relationships and supportive networks.”

Being County Durham born-and-bred, I daresay I’m biased. But there’s something here that I’ve not found anywhere else, and that’s a sense of partnership, a real spirit across all businesses of working together.

There’s none of that arrogance you sometimes get, you know, that idea of ‘I win, great, you lose, tough’ here it’s more ‘we can all win together’. There’s a willingness to open up contact books and make introductions to help you achieve what you want to achieve. Businesses and people all working together. There’s a pride in helping the next generation flourish, and Durham thrives on people doing business with people.

The FSB represents 4,000 businesses, and we organise many events to bring businesses together. Networking here isn’t the usual sharp-elbowed, shiny-suited handing out of business cards though; it’s about bringing people together in a really collaborative way.

It’s not just the businesses here that are ambitious and keen to move forward either. From the University and colleges partnering with businesses to embed the right skills, to the council breaking down barriers to create opportunities, the whole area seems confident in what it wants to do and knows its own strengths. Look at Aykley Heads: it’s a massive project to transform the region, develop FinTech and create opportunity – not many places are forward-looking and innovative enough to do that.

What that says is ‘If you want to give it a go, give it a go here’. And why wouldn’t you?

The old industries had a sense of community, and that’s evolved as new industries have come along; as ever though, if your business invests in a community up here, the community will invest in your business.

Simon Hanson
Federation of Small Businesses

HELP AT HAND

Business Durham is the economic development organisation for the county delivering the environment for business and economic growth and bespoke support including:

£20 million Finance Durham fund to support the growth of businesses located in the county

Research, economic intelligence and ideas to support your business case

Connections to professional, legal and financial advice, including access to funding and incentives

Access to centres of excellence, networks and cluster groups

Help to find the right property from science labs and clean rooms to office space and industrial units

Assistance with **recruitment and training**



“THIS IS MORE THAN JUST A LOCAL AUTHORITY; THESE ARE PEOPLE WITH A REAL PASSION FOR WHAT THEY’RE INVOLVED WITH.”

Geoff Hunton Development Director, Merchant Anglo

With now over £100 million investment and supporting over 1,350 jobs at the facility, and many thousands in the supply chain (over 80% being within a 50 mile radius), Hitachi Rail Europe is a huge deal for the whole North-East, not just Durham. But they wouldn’t have chosen Newton Aycliffe without the support we got from the county council and Business Durham.

Approachability is key, especially senior people. They involve businesses in the decision-making process, and if there’s a problem they’ll solve it with the right people at the right level. I’ve been in construction all my life, and the USP here is the people: they have the right approach.

There were challenges of course – getting rail lines there, moving bridges and so on – but the positivity is incredible. It was a real partnership, an attitude of ‘what can we do about it?’. They could see the bigger picture, and what you see at Merchant Park is the result of private and public sectors working seamlessly together.



MOVE MORE FREELY

ROAD

A1(M) connecting the North of England to the South and Scotland, and **A19** running through the county

RAIL

The **East Coast Mainline** runs through the county and its station at Durham City provides a quick connection to all major cities; **London is less than 3 hours away**

AIR

Newcastle International Airport is 40 minutes by road (55 by rail and light rail) from Durham City and connects to major hubs including Heathrow, Schiphol, Dubai and Paris

PORTS

Bulk cargo is served by **3 key ports in the region** on the rivers Tyne, Wear and Tees

“You can move in and out of the county much easier than a metropolitan area such as London, Manchester and Birmingham.”

When I was setting up my own business I came here because I know the people, I know what you get, I'm happy here. There's not much you can't do in Durham.

It's a big area, but well-connected. You've got the East Coast mainline; the A1 links and A19 links are all good; the ports and Newcastle Airport are just 30 to 40 minutes away. You can travel around a lot faster than you could any major city and commute up and down the county without many problems.

We've excellent digital and professional communities too. Our business networks help any business coming in – the County Durham Engineering & Manufacturing Network, for example, links over 200 companies across this area and beyond.

We've a lot to be proud of in County Durham. For families it's a great place to live; but look at our industrial heritage. Strong in engineering and manufacturing (I'm an engineer by trade), with some really big businesses here: Gestamp, Husqvarna, 3M, GSK, Hitachi.

More importantly, we've smaller and medium size businesses doing really good things too – including some very innovative stuff. People here have adapted to the changing environment well, with a strong work ethic and the right skills.

In short, Durham's a nice place to be and a great place to work. That's why people are so passionate about it.

David Land
North East Local
Enterprise Partnership

“THERE ARE GOOD MENTORS HERE – BUSINESS PEOPLE IN DURHAM WANT TO SEE OTHER BUSINESSES DOING WELL.”

Allison Raper Owner,
Teesdale Cheesemakers

We've won over 22 awards for our cheeses since we started in 2016 – not bad, for a family business run from our home. We're looking at moving to a 20-acre smallholding, which will give us more capacity and scope to explore new avenues. We increased turnover by 34% last year, even though we thought we were at full capacity already. We've always had a lot of support from the county council. We really feel like we can talk openly with them to see how we can do what we need to do, and how they can help our business to grow.

You have to be passionate when you're a small business, but we've had good mentors – Durham businesses are very generous with their time, and their advice is invaluable.

Networking's helped too – it led to winning the Teesdale Business Awards in our first year. Things like that make you realise we're onto something here.

There's a lot of exciting things going on right now. I really can't see how a business coming here wouldn't do well.



“In the digital age ‘community’ refers to more than just the physical – but here it’s something identifiable and binding and personal.”

For me, the whole North-East is a ‘village’, let alone Durham. It’s a tight-knit, transparent environment with people willing and able to share the skills they have. This reaches wider than the county, as I think we’re richer for being near to Newcastle, Teesside and Wearside too.

However, from this central point in the region you can access all sorts of brain power and expertise. The skill set is here because these are places where people want to live. They’ve grown up here and care about the place, or they have come here to study or work and decided this is home.

The environment offers something for everyone. This morning, for example, I got up at 4.30am and went salmon fishing on the River Wear. I got home for 8am and saw my kids for breakfast, then came up to work which is 5 minutes from home. This evening I’ll be leaving at about 5.45pm to watch one of my lads play cricket in a village in East Durham. I think that sums up the quality of life you get in Durham.

There’s a very strong school gate community here too – the University brings a worldwide group together in Durham City for example, and sport is a big part of residents’ identity. I’ve got to know a lot of business people through my children’s football and cricket.

As well as these personal and family benefits, this is a region with a huge depth of opportunity for employers. People here are loyal to good employers, and they genuinely care about businesses that come and bring good jobs and good people with them.

Atom bank is all about people – we focus on our customers and build their bank around them. So it’s no surprise that we should be successful in a place where people come first.

Edward Twiddy
Chief Innovation Officer,
Atom bank

A BETTER WORK LIFE

Average house prices in the county are **44.8% of the national average**

Median income of full-time employees in the North East is **£2,500 higher pa** than South East employees (£4,000 for Londoners) when expressed in North East prices, wages go further

County Durham is one of the **safest places to live, work and visit**, with Durham Police Authority the only one in the UK rated ‘Outstanding’

UNESCO World Heritage Sites Durham Cathedral and Castle, and 1/3 of North East England designated as an **Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty**

63% of school students achieve **five or more A* - C grades** (national average 59%)



“OUTSIDE OF WORK THERE’S PLENTY TO DO, WITH WORLD CLASS ATTRACTIONS AND ENTERTAINMENT. IT’S DEFINITELY A GREAT WAY OF LIFE.”

John Adamson
Owner, Ramside Estates

I think most folk outside of the county aren’t aware of what goes on here these days. But those who do are drawn to the quality of life.

In Durham, it’s easy to get wherever you need to – there isn’t the congestion you have around the big cities. You’re surrounded by green fields, only a few miles from the sea, and can go up to Weardale or Teesdale or into Northumberland or The Lakes.

There’s plenty happening...the University’s a magnet for people and creates many spin-offs. And whilst a lot of culture is centred around the Cathedral and city, there’s so much going on across the county with events as diverse and crowd drawing as Lumiere and Hardwick live music festival, with bands like the

Kaiser Chiefs and Happy Mondays headlining.

It’s great for tourism, and even better if you move here. Durham people are adaptable, well-educated and hard-working. And they still have that tough Northern grit, but now it’s called a ‘can-do’ attitude.



“There’s a large number of people who work hand in hand to move things on – they have a very proactive mentality and approach.”

In Durham, we have a very active council with a willing workforce that works with business leaders, as well as an active North East England Chamber of Commerce. We are a big exporting region with an attitude of ‘let’s get on with it’.

The University plays an important part in the region. Durham is in the top 100 universities worldwide and is consistently in the top 10 in the UK. We contribute to life here in so many ways – such as culture, investment and working with business.

“The business leaders I’ve met up here are very pragmatic and self-confident and will all tell you the North East has a huge amount to contribute.”

We partner local organisations with capital investment projects like NETPark and our Durham City campus; as a University, we have great ambitions and by the time we’ve finished with these projects we’ll have invested around £1 billion. We have close links with many businesses too – I’ve found the dense business ecosystem here means you form strong relationships very easily with a wider range of people.

We want to make Durham even more enterprising and see more spin-outs from our scientists, the business school and our students; we also know research and development is important, with a need to provide research, for example into surface sciences and energy, which will be used by businesses.

“No big commutes, the beauty of the area, the Dales, the coast – it’s very attractive.”

Equally attractive to any business though, is the lifestyle here – especially compared with more southerly locations. This is an unbelievably friendly place. I’ve lived all over the country and the people up here are quite special. It’s no exaggeration to say the quality of life makes living here a joy on a daily basis.

Professor Stuart Corbridge
Vice-Chancellor and Warden,
Durham University

INVESTING IN DURHAM'S FUTURE

Durham University is in the **World Top 100**

£4.9 million awarded from the UK Government's Connecting Capabilities Fund to the **Northern Accelerator**, a collaboration with other regional universities to deliver a step change in commercialising research to deliver economic impact

£3.4 million invested in **The Durham City Incubator** - a unique partnership between Business Durham, Durham University and New College Durham to increase new business start-ups and graduate retention

£1 billion planned capital investment by Durham University by 2027

40+ companies spun out from Durham University since 1997



“There are many great reasons for moving here, living here, starting a family here and growing a business here – I feel very passionately about that.”

NOW IS THE TIME

A total of £3.4 billion planned investment in the county

100,000 more jobs to be created by 2024

£1,200 improvement in GVA per annum (on target to achieve aim of £49,000 by 2020)

305 hectares of land for strategic and general employment development and **25,992 new homes by 2035**

£370 million Aykley Heads, Durham City planned investment with the potential creation of **6,000 private sector jobs**

I'm always amazed at the reaction when people come here and see how beautiful the county is. Often, they have an image of heavy industry that's 30 or 40 years out of date. Then they discover that the reality is, you're always close to countryside, there's a huge variety of landscapes and historic buildings and it's really easy to get around the entire region.

“There's a lot of positivity and things are moving forward at a pace.”

For businesses, we've many other attractions of course. Really competitive costs, good access to ports to make importing and exporting easier and great sites available across the county. But the biggest attraction of all is our people and their positivity.

They're very enthusiastic, loyal and adaptable. There's a huge variety of skills here, and a strong pool of well-educated talent ready to step into whatever career they want. Our job is to make it as attractive as possible for businesses to come here and create jobs for our young people.

“We need to be as responsive as we can be to help businesses grow.”

We're working to rapidly move our economy forward. We rolled out superfast broadband as a priority, as it's so important for businesses. We have really strong partnerships across the county, collaborating with many different organisations and the University to make things happen. We'll do everything we can to help businesses have whatever they need.

There's a real momentum here, and we're just getting into our stride. This is an exciting time - we'd like everyone to see what we have to offer, and we invite everyone to be part of it.

Simon Henig
Leader, Durham
County Council

Discover how Durham's people can help power your business.

Visit

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