

DEVOLUTION DELIVERS. IN 2022



Annual Report 2022

**NORTH
OF TYNE**
~~~~~  
**COMBINED  
AUTHORITY**





# FOREWORD



**MAYOR DRISCOLL**  
North of Tyne

## WELCOME TO THE NORTH OF TYNE COMBINED AUTHORITY'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2022.

Like the rest of Britain, austerity has wreaked havoc here. Alongside recession, economic chaos and post-covid recovery, it's been – as they say – an interesting year.

The North of Tyne Combined Authority (NTCA) is about solutions. The climate crisis has caused us to rethink how our economy works. The cost-of-living crisis means we've looked at the affordability of technology, travel and time off to gain skills. Businesses who are struggling to stay afloat have received support. We're creating the conditions for a secure future for everyone.

We're exceeding our jobs target. We are supporting business to save jobs and we are the number one region for inward investment. We've made 14 years' progress in three and a half years.

We are investing in businesses, infrastructure, and people. It's not just about money; it's also about who decides how it's spent. It will always be better for local people to decide. I know that

our decisions have created local solutions. From Offshore Wind to Crowdfunding. From the Tyne Taskforce to Broadband in your home. From the Northumberland line to the Lindisfarne Gospels exhibition. Big and small investments are in harmony with building an inclusive economy and making the North East a powerhouse of wealth generation.

The North East is a wonderful place to live. The people are friendly and hard working. The landscape is beautiful, our heritage impressive. We have world-leading industries. In this modern economy, people are productive because they are happy, healthy and have the skills to contribute. Everything flows from this. Good work, with proper pensions, decent pay and opportunities for professional development. Living in a warm home. Being part of a community. NTCA are delivering our vision.

All the evidence in this report shows that the North East will be the beating heart of the Green Industrial Revolution - where everyone has a chance for a good life!



**DAME REDFEARN**  
DEPUTY MAYOR  
North of Tyne

If this year has been about anything, it's been about showing how devolution has worked. To show that partnership makes change. To demonstrate how a shared vision and collective action can make a difference to all the people we serve.

English devolution is in its infancy, but our adult education system is devolved in the North of Tyne and the results speak for themselves – since devolution we've seen a 49.7% increase in enrolments to adult education, with 96% of those enrolled completing their course and getting a qualification. The difference this will make to thousands of people in finding, keeping and progressing in work is inestimable. I wonder what gains we will make with greater devolution and the numbers of people who will benefit? It's exciting and challenging, and we must provide opportunities for more people across our patch, they deserve nothing less.

We are contending with the realities of deprivation in the North East. Around 38% of children in the region live in poverty, the

highest level in the country. I am personally saddened by this. I have spent a lifetime tackling poverty. As ever, the NTCA Cabinet does not stand by. Instead, in partnership with our Local Authorities, we have created a programme that can make a difference. Our child poverty programme, with welfare support through the school gate is now operational; work to support children and young people experiencing financial hardship and poverty proofing audits have begun. This is a pilot. We expect to learn from it and expand it. This is just the beginning.

Whilst 2022 has been a challenging year, I have seen that our collaboration can support every child, every young person and every adult to be the best that they can be. Making a contribution to their community and our economy, and rightly receiving the rewards. From education to skills, to good jobs, to progression and success – devolution is making a difference.

# OUR TOP FIVE ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2022



**4635+**  
new jobs in the pipeline  
for growing businesses



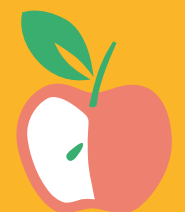
**34,526**  
courses for people  
to get good jobs



**46 017**  
employees  
covered by the  
Good Work  
Pledge



**110 000**  
visitors  
celebrating our  
region at our  
events



**Supported**  
**189**  
schools tackling  
poverty and  
inequality in  
attainment





## HELPING TV TRAINEES GET THEIR BIG BREAK ON ITV'S 'VERA'



Katie Jenkins, aged 22, and Kerry Ward, aged 25, worked on set as part of the film crew shooting the new series of Vera in Newcastle, thanks to North East Screen's Crew Academy Bootcamps, funded by the North East Screen Industries Partnership and NTCA.

The bootcamps are part of a £25m investment by the BBC in the North East to make more programmes, support independent production companies and create new jobs.

It is the corporation's largest investment in the region for decades. It's also an example of the Combined Authority working with the wider region, to grow a crucial creative sector and develop new talent.

Kerry, who studied Film and TV Production at Northumbria University, worked as a sound trainee.

She said: "Being a sound recordist is a dream come true. I've been shadowing the microphone placements, checking I'm not in the eye line or reflections while filming."

"Being on set is very different to learning at university. I've been making loads of new connections and getting to see how things really work. Learning the basics in this way will really help my future."

Katie, who worked as a camera trainee, said it was a thrill to see her work on TV. "There's a sense of on-set community that I really enjoy," she said. "Everybody's always willing to help if I need it. They say if we teach you now, then you'll know for the next time. You end up forming close relationships with the team through working together. I've made a lot of friends."

The Crew Academy Bootcamps offer training for anyone over the age of 18 in the basics of working in film and TV production, from networking skills, CV writing, set etiquette and finding jobs. They also run masterclasses, workshops, careers and networking events, on-set open days and placements providing the bridging gap to industry.

## GOOD WORK PLEDGE



The year 2022 saw the NTCA's employment kitemark pass a new milestone. In September we celebrated our 65th sign up to our 'Good Work Pledge'.

The scheme helps employers prove their credentials as good places to work, highlighting their determination to provide secure jobs with development opportunities, fair representation, and wages that provide a decent standard of living.

At the time of writing, as many as 85 organisations – ranging from accountants to cleaning companies – have gained the status as good employers. These include:

- Mortal Fools, multi-award-winning theatre, drama, and creative learning charity
- Blackfriars, AA Rosette-winning restaurant
- For The Love of The North, the popular gift and print shop

Mayor Driscoll said: "Every employer in the region should aspire to be a good employer. And those that are should proudly pin their colours to the mast by signing our Good Work Pledge. Hats off to those that already have."



## RECYKE Y'BIKE



For Ahmed Elsafy, who is disabled and has a background in engineering, learning how to repair bikes with Recyke y'bike has been key to his rehabilitation – boosting his fine motor skills, coordination, and self-confidence.

The grassroots North East charity – which specialises in refurbishing donated bicycles, saving thousands from landfill – was able to take it up a gear and expand their services in 2022, thanks to a £7,000 cash boost from our Crowdfund North of Tyne scheme. You can find out more by searching for 'Crowdfund North of Tyne' online.

## BREATHING NEW LIFE INTO ASHINGTON HIGH STREET



North of Tyne contributed £1.9m to the Ashington High Street Innovation Programme to help make the Northumberland town a better place to live and work.

The investment will create jobs, help local traders, bring empty buildings back into use, and accelerate plans to attract visitors. We're tackling the issues that affect local communities directly, helping local businesses and the community make Ashington a vibrant, happy place to live.

## NORTHUMBERLAND LINE



We backed a plan to kickstart a £130m transformation of towns linked by a restored railway line running from Ashington to Newcastle Central Station. An investment of £10m will be used to create an economic corridor boosting jobs, businesses, and homebuilding along the Northumberland Line passenger route. It will help the region take pressure off road travel. It's testament to what can be achieved by three councils working together as the Combined Authority.

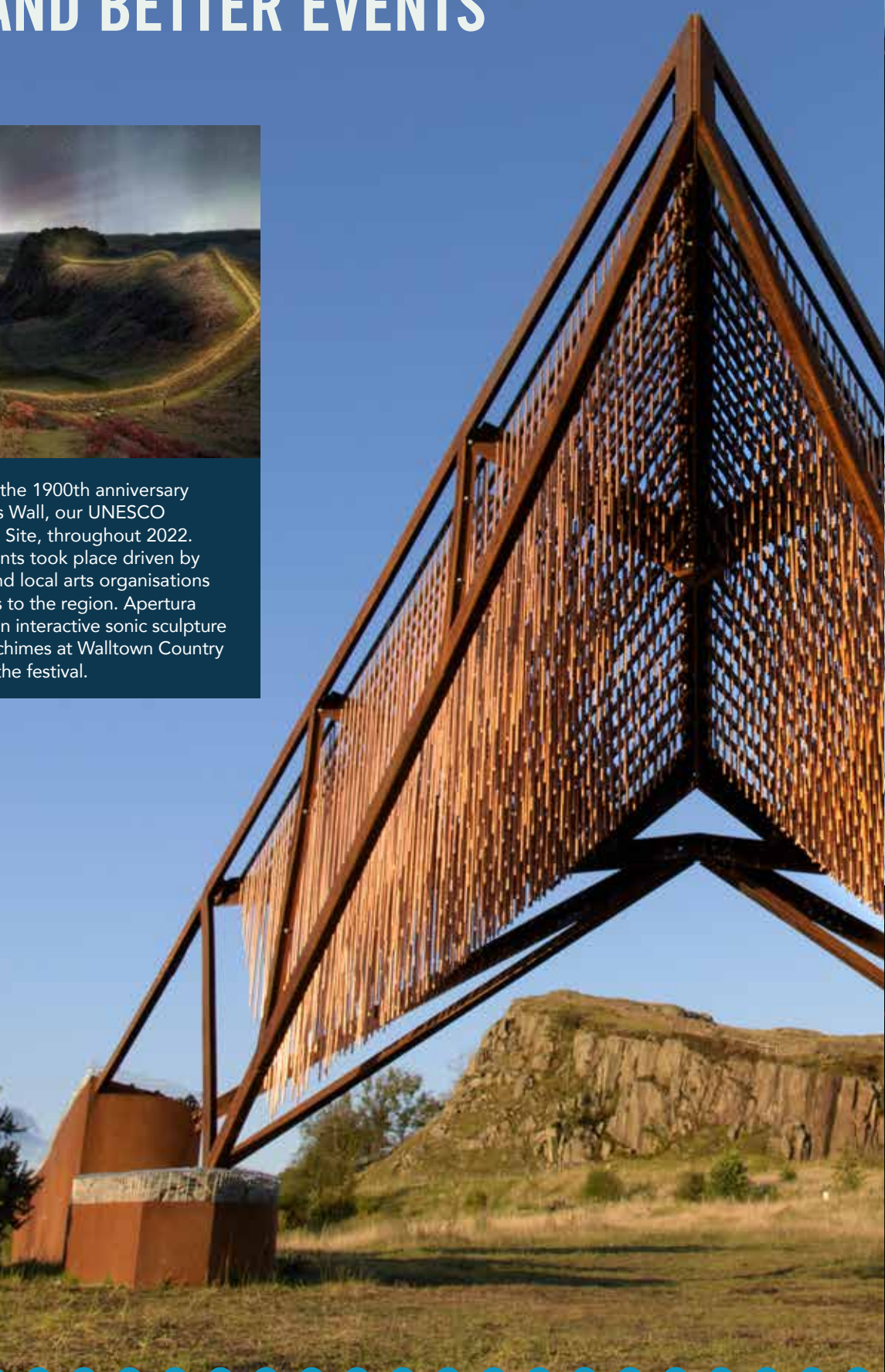


# BIGGER AND BETTER EVENTS



1

**1 & 2** We celebrated the 1900th anniversary of the Hadrian's Wall, our UNESCO World Heritage Site, throughout 2022. Over 3,000 events took place driven by communities and local arts organisations bringing visitors to the region. Apertura (pictured) was an interactive sonic sculpture featuring wind chimes at Walltown Country Park as part of the festival.



2



3

**3** Inspired by the Gospels' themes of light, sheep and pilgrimage, our Illuminated Sheep arts trail encouraged locals and thousands of visitors to find their inner shepherd in preparation of the arrival of the Lindisfarne Gospels. #FindTheFlock.

**4** The Rugby League World Cup Cultural Festival took place in Newcastle in October 2022. This ambitious festival brought together audiences for sport and art, designed to ensure the Cup brings a long-lasting legacy for our region.



4



5

**5** 'Morph's Epic Art Adventure' trail hit the streets of North Tyneside in early 2022 attracting over 60,000 visitors. Twenty individually designed iconic Morph sculptures were located around the borough's town centres.



6

**6** North of Tyne Under the Stars was a magical art event enjoyed by over 44,000 visitors in early 2022. We worked with Pinwheel and DAT Events to light up the dark nights by telling stories through building projections, sound installations and fire.



7

**7** Over 56,000 visitors attended The Laing Art Gallery's landmark 2022 exhibition. 'The Lindisfarne Gospels' celebrated the most spectacular surviving manuscript from early medieval Britain as it returned to the North East.



8

**8** The second North Sea Weekender took place in October 2022. Extending the visitor season with two long weekends of outdoor activities, including surfing, kayaking, food, and music events.



## CHILD POVERTY PREVENTION PROGRAMME



We are committed to giving every child in our region the opportunity to thrive. Against a backdrop of increasing child and in-work poverty in the North East we have been delivering our Child Poverty Prevention Programme pilot.

The programme evidences ways in which Combined Authorities can support activity to tackle the causes and symptoms of child poverty. Working closely with three providers, local authorities, schools and local leaders, our pilot programme included:

- Talking to people about what works, with 12 schools completing poverty audits with a total of 3351 pupils consulted, and 264 parents and 155 staff and governors surveyed
- Supporting disadvantaged pupils and families in nine schools across the North of Tyne
- Delivering 11 family learning courses to 72 families
- Improving advice given with 130 referrals made for local people covering a range of issues including benefits, debt and energy. These referrals have resulted in over £71,000 in income gains for residents
- Working with employers in small workshops to help them understand the realities of poverty and how they can help. 52 organisations have taken part so far.

Our programme is designed to get families past the embarrassment of asking someone for help. Drop-in sessions are proving successful as parents don't need to wait for an appointment.

Workshops are also working well with employers who want to support their workforce during these testing times. We are still encouraging more organisations to sign up.

We have worked closely with local authority partners recruiting to our schools programme since March 2022. The Child Poverty Prevention Programme pilot will be delivered in full by August 2023.



## SWEET DREAMS ARE MADE OF THESE...



Manufacturing runs in Matt Stephenson's blood. His father had two successful businesses and inspired the entrepreneur in him. "I just like making things", he said.

Matt and his wife, Cath, established 'Sweet Dreams' in Cramlington. The family-owned chocolate maker is now well-known for their best-selling 'Choc Nibbles'. Being a small company in a space dominated by big brands helped them to carve out a niche.

In 2022 they had new cause to celebrate: a £92,000 award from the North of Tyne Growth Fund. The cash boost enabled Sweet Dreams to create jobs; buy machinery; expand into a new factory; and increase its product range to include chocolate bars and, soon, vegan products.

Stephenson said: "It's the first time we ever had any support... Our chocolate bar line wouldn't have happened without NTCA's investment. We've got an exciting thing here – and the new funding took the pressure off."



## INCREASE IN SUPER FAST BROADBAND IN RURAL AREAS



We have one of the fastest-growing technology sectors outside London, and the rollout of 'full fibre' internet in rural areas helps everyone benefit. We are working with infrastructure providers and Government to get homes and businesses access to some of the fastest, most reliable broadband in Europe. Last year 42,000 got access to full fibre, with 3,000 of those in rural locations. Full fibre coverage is now up to 44%.

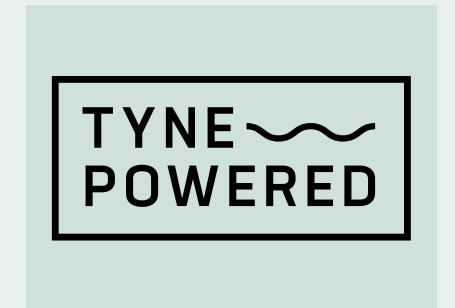


## COMMUNITY SUPPORT IN BENWELL



The Riverside Community Health Project operates out of the historic Carnegie Building in Newcastle's West End. It received a £100,000 boost from our Community Hubs Investment Fund, enabling it to deliver many more activities to local families.

At a bustling 'stay and play' group, local grandmother, Mary, explained how such sessions had bolstered the confidence of her 18-month-old granddaughter, who was previously unable to socialise with other children because of COVID-19 restrictions.



## TYNE TASKFORCE



We set up a Tyne Taskforce to promote the River Tyne as a world leader in the offshore and renewable energy sectors.

The taskforce is a collaboration of MPs, councillors, businesses, the Offshore Renewable Energy (ORE) Catapult, the Port of Tyne, local authorities, and the North of Tyne Combined Authority. It will boost investment in the Tyne by future-proofing the river's infrastructure and unlocking key development sites to support the creation of thousands more jobs.





## OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL



Our strategic skills plan 'Opportunity for All' puts skills at the centre of NTCA's economic ambitions to create an inclusive economy for all our residents. To succeed we believe there needs to be a collaborative approach to planning, with providers and employers working together to make the most of their specialist strengths and sharing resources where appropriate. This is how we will help create the future workforce we need.

This year our skills offer got much bigger.

In addition to our existing **£25M Adult Education Budget** we also were responsible for:

**+ £5M**

**for Skills Bootcamps** - targeted training, focused on economic growth areas where current job vacancies exist.

**+ £5M**

**for Skills for Growth** - specific training for work in the green, digital, and creative sectors.

**+ £4.1M**

**for Multiply** - a numeracy programme to strengthen peoples' capability and confidence at dealing with numbers.

To make our plan a reality we launched a Flexible Procurement Framework for Post 16 Skills providers in November 2022. This new framework is an opportunity for providers to get involved and join up the region's skills and training offer, reduce duplication and make sure it will reach those communities most disadvantaged.

## LEARNING ON THE JOB IN SCOTSWOOD



Owen Tierney, from Fenham and Alex Walker, from Scotswood, both aged 17, started apprenticeships at New Tyne West Development Company, The Rise which is building new homes in Scotswood. They followed in the footsteps of 15 apprentices to have already learned a new trade on the project.

The company is a public-private partnership between Newcastle City Council and Keepmoat Homes. It has benefited from a £2.9 million grant from our £24m Brownfield Housing Programme.

Apprentice joiner, Alex developed his skills working with contractor Newbuild Joinery – while being supported in other areas of learning by Newcastle College. He said: "I've really enjoyed the work so far. I'm learning new things and the atmosphere on the site is great."

Owen undertook a bricklaying apprenticeship with support from contractor Brickwork Direct. He said: "I'm delighted to be given this opportunity. It's great to be working on such a prominent North East site."



Geoff Scott, Social and Economic Impact Manager with build partner Keepmoat Homes, said: "It is fantastic to again be creating opportunities for local young people to learn trades which are much in demand. Owen and Alex have applied themselves brilliantly and we look forward to helping them progress in their learning."

## NEW SKILLS AND A NEW JOB



Andy Smith, 35, never thought he'd find himself in a foodbank, but that's exactly what happened after the lockdown forced him to fold the business he had built up over ten years.

Andy joined the four-week Skills Bootcamp course with RMF in July 2022, taking a course in driving heavy vehicles. But he got more than he'd bargained for by taking part.

After completing four weeks of training along with practical and theory tests, Andy then attended the careers' day which was included in the course. It is designed to introduce participants to recruitment agencies for future employment.

RMF were impressed by Andy and offered him a Trainee Heavy Plant Operations Instructor role following a successful interview. "I'd never thought about training as a career," he said, "but I've always been a people person and I've got the construction background."

Andy's life has now changed beyond recognition.







## TRAINING THE GREEN ENERGY SECTOR



Our business investments have helped one North Tyneside offshore specialist become the lead training provider for the green energy industry. C&D Access used £150,000 from the Combined Authority to win work offering safety training and drone inspection services to the Dogger Bank Wind Farm, which is under construction in the North Sea.

The grant, funded by the European Regional Development Fund and NTCA, paid for the refurbishment costs of a new larger premises to house the first confined space drone simulator in Europe. This will allow for drone training in a safe environment specialising in the offshore wind industry.

C&D Access project manager Ana Gamarra said: "Our goal is to be the main training provider in the region for Dogger Bank, which will be the world's largest offshore wind farm. We'll be providing all the competences and trained personnel required".

They will offer drone training simulations including the inspection of offshore tanks and wind turbine stacks and blades where the pilot cannot keep direct eye contact with the drone being used for the examination.

Pilots who complete the training will be certified to work in a range of industries including the renewable, petrochemical, oil, and gas sectors.

Growth Fund Project Manager Mike Baker said: "When you see what NTCA support has enabled other local businesses to do – the new or extended buildings, the factories that are now more fully equipped, with more people, and more activity going on – it's really satisfying.

These projects wouldn't have gone ahead at the scale or in the timeframe they have otherwise. It has given companies the confidence to take the leap and invest in their business, knowing that some of the risk is offset or a funding gap is bridged."



## VERISURE KEEPS EXPANDING



Alarm company Verisure praised the role played by the North of Tyne Combined Authority in the firm's most recent expansion. We worked with Verisure, Europe's largest alarm provider, to bring them to Newcastle in 2020.

Since then the company has invested £3.5m to move to office space across three floors at Quorum Business Park, housing 1,200 employees. Verisure has created 770 jobs since its opening and is anticipated to approach 1,200 in the next three years, ahead of the firm's initial forecast of 1,000 jobs after ten years.

This year it has filled roles including customer service, sales, operations, data analysts, telesales, technical advisors and technicians. It is also seeking to appoint new and more complex roles such as, 'first responders' who can handle emergency situations.

Verisure Managing Director Gabino Sanchez said the number of staff at the centre of excellence had expanded twice as fast as expected, to meet sales growth.



## TECH START-UP WITH GLOBAL AMBITIONS



Nikhil Patel and business partner Tom Bunten created online racing resource Grid Finder with the help of the Ignite Pre-Accelerator digital coaching labs, funded by NTCA. The five-month programme is designed to drive digital business growth.

One of 15 founders to gain £10,000 in equity-free grant funding, weekly workshops, and access to business mentors, Nikhil said; "Talking to Ignite really revealed the scale of ambition open to me. The number one piece of advice I can give any founder would be to join the Accelerator or pre-accelerator schemes; the experience and advice available is invaluable."



## HELPING PEOPLE INTO WORK



Diversity NE supports people who are neurodivergent or have a learning need. The project aims to increase their prospects of getting a job and progressing in employment. In 2022 it supported 121 participants with 16 participants moving into work and 9 participants into education or training on leaving the project. This is complicated work, and the project is delivered by the North East Autism Society (NEAS) and Azure Charitable Services, experts in the field. It is funded by both NTCA and European Social Fund and runs until December 2023.



## EQUALITIES ASSEMBLY




The Mayor's Equalities Assemblies brought together local residents who face barriers to finding good work because of their age, gender, race, disability, and other protected characteristics. The rooms – online and in person – were buzzing with ideas about how we can help our communities try to reduce and remove some of these barriers.


In 2023, we will follow through on some of these ideas in the hope of bringing about lasting and meaningful change.



# WHAT WE'VE ACHIEVED IN ONLY ONE YEAR



Pledged support to **24** community projects through North of Tyne Crowdfunding




Engaged with **200+** residents through MQT, Equalities Forum and Commonplace



A further **224** businesses supported by rural growth fund



**22** businesses supported to develop products to help us all age better




Launched Employability Plan - strategy to help more people access work



**£107.41m** invested in 130 projects to create and protect jobs\*  
\* Life-time total



**18 500+** people accessing advice and opportunities through the online Apprenticeship Hub




Leveraging **£292.02m** private sector leverage\*  
\* Life-time total



Unlocking barriers to jobs, skills and productivity along the river Tyne through the Tyne Powered partnership



Investing **£6m** in renewing our towns and highstreets




Helped **899** people get 'work ready'



Celebrating our area by bringing over **110 000** visitors to local events



A further **£4.8m** invested in offshore renewable energy



Investment plan for UKSPF bringing additional **£51.2m** to the area for businesses, communities, and people



Supported **110** SMEs to go digital



Investing **£10m** in communities along the Northumberland Line Economic Corridor to support digital infrastructure, housing, skills and business growth



Investing up to **£6m** to support rural businesses communities and environments to thrive



Investing **£4m** in social enterprises and community businesses to help them innovate and grow



**£2.85m** invested in careers in screenwriting across the region



**490** residents supported to gain skills through employer-led Skills Bootcamps

**GOOD WORK PLEDGE** ✓  
**46 017** employees working in organisations recognised for providing Good Work



Secured **£0.5m** to unlock 5G capabilities in public infrastructure



With North East partners negotiated a new devolution deal bringing **£4.2bn** to our region

## AND SO MUCH MORE...

**NORTH OF TYNE**  
COMBINED AUTHORITY