



Durham
County Council



AN ILLUMINATING STORY

How County Durham is shaping a bright future



I LOVE
DURHAM



From multi-million pound developments to international arts events, County Durham's stock is rising. Having a unitary authority at the helm for the last decade has proved transformational, discovers Austin Macauley

Broadening horizons



Business district, Aykley Heads



County Durham is enjoying unprecedented levels of investment and has put itself firmly on the world stage. Some might say it is proof that fortune does indeed favour the bold. There is currently £3.8bn of economic development taking place across the county with a range of projects designed to seize on the opportunities for growth and capitalise on the area's growing reputation as a place to do business.

Everyone from global brands to cutting-edge start ups are making County Durham their home, lured in part by the stunning natural environment, excellent connectivity and its biggest asset of all – the local skilled workforce.

The council itself will soon be on the move, swapping outdated County Hall for a new HQ in the centre of Durham. The new offices will be a third of the size of the current 1960s building, providing new ways of working and relocating 800 staff to key sites in towns across the county. It's a win-win, moving 1,000 staff to the city



New council headquarters

centre will boost footfall while paving the way for 6,000 high quality jobs by turning its old site into a much-needed business district. But this upturn in fortunes, at a time of national economic uncertainty, is no fluke. In fact, it's been a decade in the making.

Since launching as a new unitary authority in 2009, Durham County Council has made economic growth its overriding priority. Leader Cllr Simon Henig describes the change as a key turning point, creating 'a very different organisation that's focused on the whole county and much more outward looking'.

It also ushered in a more collaborative approach to driving prosperity. The council, businesses, other public sector agencies and communities all play their part in working towards a shared vision for the county.

A great example of that ethos in action is the memorandum of understanding agreed between Durham University and the council. It commits them to working in partnership to raise the national and international profile of both the county and the university in order to attract talent and investment to benefit local communities. The move comes at a critical time with the university investing £1bn over 10 years to bolster its standing as one of the

An inspired move: creating a flexible council

The council's new HQ, located by the riverside in Durham city centre and adjacent to other eye-catching developments, will facilitate modern working while saving in running costs. Having a newly built home will enable the council to operate in a more efficient way – helped further by encouraging more staff to travel to work sustainably.

By moving 1,000 staff into the heart of the city, the council will also be helping to boost the local economy and the new offices will include a café and civic spaces that are open to the public.

'By locating our new HQ in the city centre, we'll increase footfall, help the local economy and act as a catalyst for attracting other businesses into the city,' says chief executive Terry Collins.

It's just part of the council's ambitious programme that will transform the way it works.

One of the key challenges it has is ensuring services respond to the needs of residents and employers across 900 square miles with 12 main towns and some 300 smaller villages.



When the local authority moves to its new HQ in two years' time, 800 staff will relocate to one of four strategic sites across the county in Crook, Seaham, Meadowfield and Spennymoor, boosting each town's footfall in the process.

Through the Inspire Transformation Programme, the council will modernise services and workplace practices. The four offices already house multi-disciplinary teams focused on those local areas and further investment will

support staff to work more smartly and flexibly.

'Staff have been directly involved in the changes,' explains Lorraine O'Donnell, director of transformation and partnerships.

'We have people working in different ways, in very different jobs and so changes have to work for each team. This is all about supporting staff to be more productive by giving them the right tools and conditions in which to thrive. We have good levels of staff morale and creating the environment for a better work-life balance will improve that even further.'

'We finished our offices at Crook last year. It's now open plan with hotdesking and a vivid colour scheme chosen by staff. It incorporates photographs taken by staff and at our offices in Spennymoor; we have just held a competition among staff to take photos of the local area.'

'The winning entries have been turned into giant pictures and put on the walls. It helps give a sense of pride and ownership as well as showcasing the creative talents of our staff.'



Cllr Simon Henig, leader of Durham County Council

County Durham is clearly an area that is moving forward.

We are seeing multi-million pound economic development and regeneration schemes across the county, major cultural and sporting events - and our national and international profile just keeps rising.

When businesses look at the county as a place to locate, they know where they are coming to. They're clear on who we are and how we can help them. Businesses and investors say they can see exactly what our strategy is.

That's because we work together with businesses and our public sector partners, through initiatives like Powered by People, to present the county as a place with great assets and an abundance of opportunities.

The county wasn't even on the longlist of sites for the Hitachi facility to build trains in the UK. We came from nowhere to win and now Hitachi Rail Limited is building Azuma trains for LNER at Newton Aycliffe.

I'm not so sure successes like this would have been achieved without a unitary authority.

Being a unitary authority gives us sharpness as an organisation and a greater ability to work collaboratively and focus on the whole of County Durham and look across the piece, whether it's our economy, regeneration, culture or tourism.

We are able to think on a bigger scale for events or developments such as those we're now seeing in Durham, Seaham and Bishop Auckland.

Now we're one organisation serving over half a million people, we're attracting events and investment that reflects our size and scale.

We're growing at a time when other areas are not and I see no reason why the city of Durham can't become the Cambridge of the north.



Teaching and Learning Centre, Durham University

world's leading academic institutions. But perhaps what sets the council apart has been its willingness to take risks from the outset and put culture at the heart of its strategy to boost tourism and drive economic growth.

Replacing the old county and seven district councils, the new council came into being in the middle of an economic downturn and with public sector austerity looming.

It would have been understandable if the focus had been purely on establishing the new organisation, dealing with the legacy of eight organisations and coping with financial pressures. However, in 2009 the council decided to bid for UK City of Culture status for Durham. It didn't win but the move helped to raise aspirations and create a mindset that has remained to this day, says chief executive Terry Collins.

'Culture is a powerful lever for economic development and we've increased our cultural budgets to help us on our journey.'

The same year the council commissioned Lumiere, which is now the UK's biggest light festival and has returned to the city on alternate years ever since. Durham has even branded itself Place of Light to highlight its distinctiveness. At the time of writing, the city is buzzing with excitement in preparation for the tenth anniversary festival and has high hopes of exceeding the 240,000 visitors it attracted in 2017 as the county marks 2019 as its Year of Culture - promoted as #durham19.

Together with a myriad of other cultural and sporting events - Chester-le-Street hosted the Cricket World Cup earlier this year - it's raised the county's international profile.

'I have never been more excited about Durham,' says Terry. 'When you look at everything that's happening - £1bn investment from the university, the developments, investment and cultural events like Lumiere - it's game changing for the county. People will look back in years to come and say, "they had the opportunity, they grasped it and we are so much better for it".'

While multi-million pound developments and world-renowned arts events grab the headlines, at the heart of the county council's success are 14 area action partnerships (AAPs). AAPs are essentially Durham's

solution to concerns that a large unitary authority would create remoteness and make it difficult for residents to connect with the council. A board of 21 members, including seven public and seven partner representatives, six county councillors and one parish council participant, leads each AAP.

AAPs receive £100,000 a year to spend on local priorities - supplemented by members' budgets.

'It's really important that we have forums for local people to talk about local issues,' says Simon. 'It allows people to have a discussion and get straight to the point without the bureaucracy. We cover a large geographic area with city, coastal and rural areas, so we needed to create a structure that allows residents to go somewhere more local.'

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Terry Collins, chief executive, Durham County Council

When they marked their tenth anniversary earlier this year, AAPs had delivered more than 6,000 community projects, engaged over 30,000 people and helped secure funding in excess of £100m.

They are also being used to help identify priorities for an enhanced towns and villages regeneration programme. Since 2010 the council has spent around £12m to ensure every corner of the county receives investment in everything from public realm improvements to support for high street businesses. That investment has now been boosted to £2.5m a year.

'More people attend AAP meetings than ever did the district council meetings,' says Simon. 'They are unlocking the door to partner bodies and helping us to find out what the key local issues are.'

'They're also sustaining the work of local organisations through grants. That's every bit as important as the big economic regeneration schemes.'

KEY FACTS

- County Durham - a unitary authority since 2009
- £3.8bn planned investment across the county
- 2,230 sq km
- 16,500 employees
- Almost 520,000 population
- Home to UNESCO World Heritage Site (Durham Cathedral and Castle) and UNESCO Global Geopark (North Pennines)

A county on the move

The council's proactive and collaborative approach to driving economic growth is creating an abundance of exciting projects across the county – from sustainable new communities to high tech business hubs



Milburngate riverside development

'Durham County Council always finds a way. Some of the issues we have asked them to deal with – most councils would say "it's too difficult".'

Allan Cook, managing director, Arlington Real Estate

Durham: a cutting edge riverside development

Slowly but surely, the western gateway into Durham is taking shape with modern architecture providing a bold contrast to the city's historic skyline. The latest and largest of these riverside developments is Milburngate, a 450,000 sq ft mixed-use scheme worth £200m that will include new apartments, a hotel, restaurants and offices.

Allan Cook, managing director of Arlington Real Estate, which is leading the development, describes Milburngate as 'a huge scheme for a small city' and says it will help to broaden Durham's appeal to residents and visitors.

'It's a beautiful, historic city that's underdeveloped,' he says. 'I would say that as I'm from here and I'm a developer! There has been a push back against

developments in the past and I think that's because they haven't been good enough. More recent developments are of a high quality and that's changed perceptions.'

He adds: 'We have worked in many cities and Durham County Council is good to work with. What's great is access to the executive team and the politicians. The leader is always available. Most people would think, "of course they would want to be involved". But you'd be surprised how many councils are not like that.'

That approach has also helped secure the development of a new strategic site – Integra 61 – at junction 61 of the A1(M) on the outskirts of Durham city, providing a home to the largest logistics and manufacturing development in the north with 2,000,000 sq ft of space.

Sedgefield and Newton Aycliffe: innovation in expanding business parks

North East Technology Park, better known as NETPark, is one of the fastest-growing science, engineering and technology parks in the UK.

It's home to 35 cutting edge companies including Kromek Group plc, leading supplier of radiation detection components, the Centre for Process Innovation (CPI) National Printable Electronics Centre and its Graphene Application Centre.

It is also a hub for internationally-renowned researchers from across the region, including the NETPark Research Institute – the base of Durham University's world-leading work on instrumentation and semiconductors. Based in the town of Sedgefield, public sector investment in the park's expansion has created

555 jobs and last year saw the opening of CPI's National Formulation Centre.

At nearby Newton Aycliffe, the Forrest Park project will see a £153m expansion of the Aycliffe Business Park where new road and energy infrastructure improvements have already been completed. The investment is expected to create up to 3,200 jobs over the next 20 years.

The business park is already one of the largest in the UK with more than 500 companies based there, predominantly in the manufacturing and engineering industries, with established companies including Gestamp and 3M. Together they employ around 10,000 people – making it the biggest single employment site in the county.



NETPark, Sedgefield



South Seaham Garden Village

Seaham: new enterprise zone and garden village

The coastal town of Seaham is known for its rich coal mining history but its future is very much focused on manufacturing, engineering and logistics. Situated on the outskirts of the town and connected by a new road to the A19, the £120m Jade Business Park has enterprise zone status and will encompass up to 1,000,000 sq ft of space once completed. Currently under construction, the first tenant has already been announced as Sumitomo Electric Wiring Systems Europe, an expanding Fortune 100 company.

Close by will be South Seaham Garden Village, one of 19 flagship developments across the country recently confirmed by the Government. The new settlement

is being led by a partnership of the council, housing association Home Group and Tolent Construction.

The garden village will include 1,500 homes. More than half of the development will be managed green space with parkland, sports facilities and more than three miles of paths and cycle ways.

The centre of the garden village will feature shops and a café, a primary school and a health and wellbeing community hub. There will also be an innovation hub for new and existing businesses, along with the region's universities, to bring the latest research and innovation insight into the development of all aspects of the garden village.



Durham: business district and a new History Centre

When the council moves to its new, purpose built offices in Durham city centre in 2021 it will pave the way for a £400m business district and up to 6,000 jobs at Aykley Heads and a new History Centre on the outskirts of the city.

There are already more than 40 companies on the Aykley Heads site to the north of the city, including fast-growing Atom Bank – recently ranked 17th in the 50 Best Places to Work in the North East – and Business Durham, the council’s economic development arm.

Vacating and demolishing the outdated and oversized County Hall will enable the council to fully realise the potential of this highly desirable site, characterised by easy access and a tranquil green setting; described as one of the best locations in the UK.

‘We need somewhere that’s more suited to today’s local authority,’ says leader Cllr Simon Henig. ‘That means somewhere quite a bit smaller. At the same time, by vacating the site we can create the new History

Centre and open up a new business park in Durham in a stunning location that’s walking distance to the mainline station with easy access to Edinburgh and London. We know Durham can punch above its weight; but it needs business sites to do that so we can attract more firms like Atom Bank to move here.’

The current County Hall houses an extensive archive of the county’s history which is accessed more than one million times each year. The archive will be moved to the new History Centre. Run by the council, it will be based in Grade II listed Mount Oswald Manor on the outskirts of the city, which will be restored and refurbished.

Open to visitors, it will tell the story of the county’s history and heritage through historic records, photographs and objects, but will also host exhibitions, activities and events and provide a countywide outreach programme for children, schools and communities. The decision to invest in a new History Centre for Durham was backed by all 14 area action partnerships.

Consett: regenerating a former steelworks

Over the last few years Project Genesis has turned what was a symbol of industrial decline into a catalyst for growth and prosperity.

Consett’s huge former steelworks site has gradually been regenerated through more than £200m of investment to create shops, parks, workshops, offices and, crucially, hundreds of new jobs. It’s now one of the county council’s key strategic employment sites.

What was a 700-acre site set aside for a single purpose

is now a burgeoning community with two substantial residential developments completed and further schemes in the pipeline.

There are also plans to improve the Sea to Sea (C2C) cycle route that runs through Consett and sees hundreds of cyclists pedal from the north west to the north east. As well as physical improvements, there will be artworks to help visitors and residents understand the history of the area and its steelmaking heritage.

People power

Feedback from employers constantly reinforces one of County Durham’s great strengths – the skills, loyalty and resilience of local people.

With that in mind, the council and the business community have launched Powered by People, a movement to shout about the area’s strengths and inspire employers and developers to invest in the county. Created at the request of businesses to help them promote the county, more than 50 businesses have become Powered by People ambassadors.

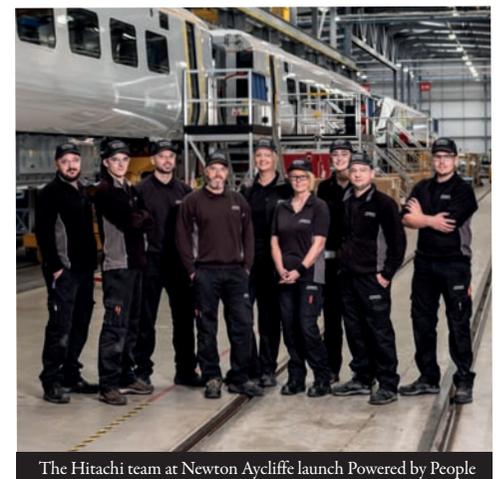
The council’s economic development arm, Business Durham, provides businesses with a promotional toolkit to adopt the campaign on a dedicated website, www.durhampoweredbypeople.co.uk, enabling them to be proud and vocal ambassadors for it.

Nic Marshall, chief executive of customer contact specialist ResQ, based in Seaham, says: ‘We wholeheartedly support Powered by People.

‘For a council to share those values is rare and heartwarming because it shows that it’s truly entrepreneurial.’

Business Durham’s managing director Brian Archer, says: ‘We have secured more inward investment in this region than the other eight English regions. There are a number of reasons. The people here are very loyal, there’s real pride and a fantastic work ethic making them a committed workforce. That’s what powers our businesses.’

Business Durham has proved its focussed approach to supporting businesses pays off. Examples include the purchase of Salvus House at Aykley Heads to create a thriving business community under one roof, investment opportunities through the £20m Finance Durham Fund in partnership with Maven Capital Partners, and the County Durham Growth Fund, an Economic Regional Development Fund to support capital projects.



The Hitachi team at Newton Aycliffe launch Powered by People

Durham University: £1bn investment programme

One of the area’s greatest assets, Durham University, is building for the future through a £1bn investment programme.

It has already opened a centre for teaching and learning along with Ustinov College at Sheraton Park, a new high quality accommodation for postgraduates that’s located a mile from the city centre on the western side of Durham.

Over the next few years, there will further investments in new mathematical and computer science facilities, a business school and new colleges as well as refurbishing existing buildings.

A world top 100 university, the investment is designed to build on its reputation and open up new avenues for excellence.

Aside from the capital investment, the university is a major player in the local and regional economy and contributes around £1.2bn in GVA every year through



Teaching and Learning Centre, Durham University

its 4,300 staff, 18,700 students, and the supply chain it supports.

It’s long been a key partner for the council with the two organisations working together on developments

such as NETPark in Sedgefield and on promoting the Durham: Place of Light brand. That relationship was strengthened further through a memorandum of understanding, signed in 2017, committing them to work together ‘to raise the national and international profile of County Durham and Durham University with governments, businesses and others to attract talent, money and business and benefit local communities.’

And as a member of the County Durham Partnership, the university is contributing to a vision for the next 15 years through Durham 2035 with a key role in creating a thriving economy and attracting ‘more and better jobs’.

‘The ambition of the county council is to have a more high-tech future and the university is a part of that,’ says the university’s vice chancellor Stuart Corbridge. ‘It’s been incredibly encouraging. Every university has to work with their local council and I do think we have a particularly good relationship.’

Shining a light on County Durham's strengths

County Durham has become a hotbed of culture as it harnesses tourism to drive prosperity



The fact that Durham is now as synonymous with Lumiere as it is its famous cathedral, castle and university speaks volumes about the event's success.

What originally started out back in 2009 as a one-off has become UK's biggest light festival, returning on alternate years ever since. Once this year's event has been completed, it will have attracted more than a million people. For locals and visitors alike, it physically and metaphorically casts Durham in a different light – illuminating the city in a variety of magical ways.

The four-day biennial festival has been an unequivocal success. When it returned for the first time in 2011 the number of visitors doubled and, on current trends, Durham can expect to see a quarter of a million people take in Lumiere this month.

In addition, the pre-festival dinner has become an important business networking event, raising the city's profile among the investment community and with local government across the region.

It has so far generated £28m in economic value through increased trade in the local economy, from hotels to restaurants to lighting and technical companies.

No wonder then that the council and its partners have adopted the branding, Place of Light, and are using the tenth anniversary festival to mark a Year of Culture with a packed programme of events throughout the county.

But perhaps even more important is the way in which Lumiere has changed perceptions inside and outside the county and created an environment for culture to thrive. From hosting the region's biggest book festival to the brass festival and food festivals in Seaham and Bishop Auckland, the council's ambition to put culture at the heart of tourism and economic growth has come to fruition. The programme continues to grow and this year saw an expanded Durham City Run Festival with a Families on the Run event hosted by Paula Radcliffe.

As chief executive Terry Collins puts it: 'Lumiere is exactly what the county needs. When it first started, we were ready for something bold to raise the bar and set the scene for the future.'

'As a result of Lumiere and other cultural and sporting activities throughout the county – we're showing it as a place to invest, work and live.'

The festival's organiser Helen Marriage, director of arts organisation Artichoke, remembers the precise moment she knew Lumiere would be a winner.

'I came up in 2009 to see my mother, who lives in

Durham. I got off the train thinking about Lumiere and how you could create an outdoor gallery at night and stood looking down at the city and thought "I can do this".

'It's got such great contemporary and historic architecture, such a great vista.'

But Helen admits she didn't foresee quite how successful it would be – to a point where internationally renowned artists are clamouring to take part.

'I thought it would be great but nothing like this.'

COUNTY DURHAM'S VISITOR ECONOMY

- 19.71 million visitors annually (based on 2018)
- £914m value of tourism
- 11,998 (FTE) jobs supported by tourism
- £28m+ so far generated by Lumiere
- 840,000 visitors to Lumiere between 2009-17
- 1 millionth visit expected during the 2019 festival



Durham City Run Festival



Brass Festival

People locally feel proud of it. The world's attention is on this small city in the north of England. I haven't found anywhere in the world where the word "installation" is so commonly used!

'In a way, Lumiere really belongs to Durham because of the way the city is prepared to turn itself inside out to make it happen.'

'From the artists' point of view, they can see the possibilities of how they can use a particular place or street and the area's social history.'

It has also provided opportunities for local artists to reach the world stage, both at Lumiere and elsewhere, and inspire younger generations through a programme in schools and communities across the county run by Artichoke outside of the festival.

Allan Cook, managing director of Arlington Real Estate, chairs the Lumiere board. 'There's a big outreach programme with community engagement,' he says. 'We have funding to lever the benefits of the festival, for example we work with kids who live 15 miles from the city who have never visited Durham. Lumiere has changed perceptions for visitors, people across the wider



Lumiere Durham

county and people in the city centre.’

An event of Lumiere’s scale requires a lot of organising and strong partnerships have been critical to its success, according to Helen. ‘I think the really important thing is it’s a partnership between us and the county council. Without their support it would never be possible.’

‘It’s the mindset of the organisation, from top to bottom – whether it’s highways, licensing or economic development – saying “what can we do to help?”’

The key to Lumiere and the success of the council’s wider strategy around culture-led economic development and regeneration is sustainability. County Durham has had a tourism management plan in place for more than a decade and it is regarded as best practice around the world.

‘We’re seeing growth in visitor numbers of approximately 2% year on year,’ explains Michelle Gorman, managing director of Visit County Durham.

‘It’s sustainable growth and therefore sustainable tourism. We manage the impact of tourism appropriately, we don’t do things retrospectively, we engage with our communities because we realise how important residents are to tourism. We don’t suffer from the effects of over tourism here, we’re a destination with wide-open spaces and uncrowded places with very little visitor congestion.’



Bishop Auckland has a thousand years of history to shout about and a £200m project is bringing its story to life

A grand day out

As a tourist attraction, its offer is rather enticing: ‘Come and explore a thousand years across seven venues in one beautiful setting.’

Step by step, The Auckland Project is creating a unique visitor destination of international standing and rejuvenating the town of Bishop Auckland in the process. The £200m project, which began in 2012, is the brainchild of founder and philanthropist Jonathan Ruffer.

Auckland Castle, once home to the Prince Bishops during a period when County Durham was effectively an autonomous ‘buffer’ zone between England and Scotland, has just re-opened following a three-year conservation programme.

It’s the latest addition to a wealth of attractions that includes Auckland Tower, the Mining Art Gallery and Deer Park and will soon welcome the Spanish Gallery, the estate’s 17th century Walled Garden and the first museum in England to celebrate the history of faith in Britain and Ireland.

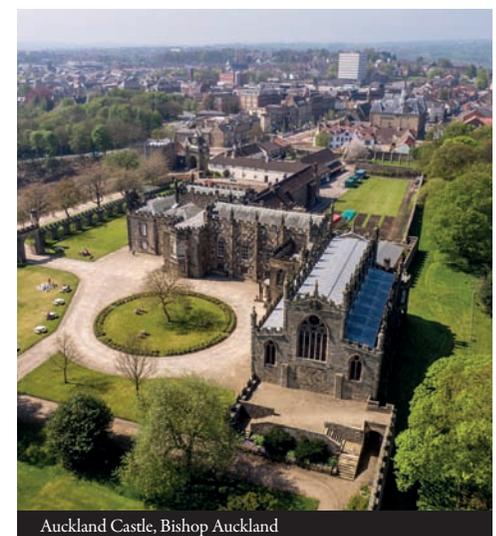
‘It will become a significant part of the Durham story and a really compelling visitor hub,’ says Michelle Gorman, managing director of Visit County Durham.

‘As with most market towns, Bishop Auckland’s reason for being – retail – had been declining, but now in the high street you can see signs of improvement. It will take a number of years but The Auckland Project gives people so much confidence.’

Leader Cllr Simon Henig believes it reflects the growing confidence across the county.

‘Just a few years ago no one would have expected to see what we’re now seeing – museums and attractions at a national and international level. There’s been a lifting of horizons.’

Bishop Auckland also hosts Kynren, a spectacular outdoor live heritage show charting 2,000 years of British history, myth and legend. It is staged at dusk each weekend throughout the summer with a cast and crew of 1,000 professionally trained volunteers.



Auckland Castle, Bishop Auckland

Cricket puts Durham on the world stage

When Rihanna was spotted by the world’s media among spectators in Chester-le-Street at a Cricket World Cup match, it gave the county the kind of profile you simply cannot buy.

However, while the global superstar’s appearance may have been a lucky break, it could be argued that’s the kind of thing that happens when you host major sporting events.

The council has made sport a key part of its strategy to drive economic growth through tourism and raise the county’s profile.

Hosting Ashes’ matches in 2013 proved to be a major success and this was followed up this year with the Cricket World Cup as millions of TV viewers were treated to shots of the stunning backdrop to matches at Durham County Cricket Club’s ground.

With the England and Wales Cricket Board, the



council also set up free fanzones in Durham city centre to encourage fans to stay locally during the tournament.

Around 70,000 fans from all around the world came to the county to enjoy the cricket with around 27,000 using the fanzones.

COUNTY DURHAM



POWERED

Investment

- £3.8 billion already planned
- 305 hectares of land for development
- Range of strategic employment sites
- 100,000 new jobs in next 5 years
- 3,400 businesses have relocated, set up or expanded in the last 4 years
- 40 multinationals have invested or reinvested in the last 3 years
- One of the fastest growing visitor economies in the UK

Talent

- Durham University is in the World Top 100
- Strengths in technology, engineering and manufacturing
- 11 colleges including New College Durham, one of the UK's first Institutes of Technology, and UTC South Durham, one of the first business / education technical colleges
- 50% of students study STEM subjects - the highest in any UK region

Living

- 26,000 new homes by 2035
- Competitive wages and house prices
- Home to the UNESCO, World Heritage Site Durham Cathedral and Castle
- World class cultural programme including Lumiere - the UK's largest light festival
- Open space in abundance including North Pennines AONB, a UNESCO Global Geopark and the historic Durham Heritage Coastline

BY PEOPLE



- 45 mins from Newcastle airport
- Less than 3 hours from London
- A1(M) and A19 run through the county
- Close to all north east international ports

