

People and Jobs



ACHIEVING THE VISION

To achieve the vision, the region needs to focus on four key factors:

- 1 Developing **Job Linkages** between people without work and employers with vacancies.
- 2 Growing **Local Employment** – in areas remote from growth as well as already successful areas.
- 3 Improving the **Health** of the current and potential workforce – particularly focusing on reducing the number of incapacity benefit claimants.
- 4 Responding to **Population Change** and the impacts of an older population.

These factors are expanded into specific objectives in the tables on pages 34 to 36. The tables list the key actions required to achieve these objectives, with the transformational actions highlighted. Some actions elsewhere in the RES closely relate to specific objectives in this chapter. These actions are shown as colour-coded numbered links.

NORTHWEST CONTEXT

The three City-Regions of Manchester, Liverpool and Central Lancashire are the key growth drivers of the Northwest, with the potential to lift the long term economic growth of the region. They are also areas with acute needs. Significant cities/towns with economic potential include Crewe, Chester, Warrington, Lancaster and Carlisle.

The Northwest has significant concentrations of worklessness. £3 billion of the GVA gap is caused by fewer people working than the England average. Recent employment rates for men have fallen, yet those for women have risen, although there remains significant gender disparities in employment. Five of the six districts where this worklessness is concentrated are within or close to areas of job growth in Liverpool, Manchester and Cheshire/Warrington. There are a number of areas with few or virtually no economic drivers. Barrow is the one district with high concentrations of worklessness remote from areas of major growth.

Despite recent improvements, there are still major concentrations of deprivation and poor conditions restricting economic growth, closely associated with health inequalities and high crime.

There is a lack of strategic alignment between public and private investment and delivery mechanisms at all levels. People living in more deprived communities often do not have the skills, education, health and transport to access employment.

There is a failure to unlock the economic potential of the region's diverse but currently disadvantaged communities, as well as discrimination within the labour market itself.

The changing age structure of the population means that older people will comprise a greater proportion of a shrinking workforce, which in turn emphasises the need to attract and retain more skilled people.

Northwest facts

- The Northwest employment rate is 73%, 2% behind the England average. The Northwest would need 80,000 more people in work to bridge the gap.
- 90% of the gap is in six districts – Liverpool, Manchester, Knowsley, Halton, Salford and Barrow.
- Disadvantaged groups also fare significantly worse – the employment rate for disabled people is 28% (England average 34%), and for some black and minority ethnic communities 40% (England average 48%).
- 9% of the working age population is on Incapacity Benefit – at 400,000 this is the largest number of any region.
- 40% of unemployment in the region is in the 10 districts with the best record for recent employment growth.

ACTIONS	REASON	LEAD
Job Linkages		
Tackle barriers to work:		
41. Promote employment/recruitment practices with employers to recognise the value of diversity and tackle discrimination in the labour market	There is a strong business case for eliminating discrimination in employment practices. This also reduces barriers to some groups accessing the job market, eases labour market pressures and promotes social cohesion	25 26 60 62 79 Jobcentre Plus ACAS
42. Develop childcare initiatives and raise the importance of childcare with employers	Overcomes childcare as a barrier to employment/training and supports DfES 2008 childcare targets, including promotion of the childcare tax credit schemes	Local Authorities Jobcentre Plus
Link workless people and vacancies to improve employment rates:		
43. Deliver support to improve peoples' prospects of getting a job (employability activities) and reduce the high level of Incapacity Benefit claimants, focused on: ➤ HMR and URC areas ➤ Halton and Knowsley	These areas have the lowest employment rates, so maximum impact can be made. Key issues include delivery of enhanced Pathways to Work Pilots (Northern Way) and evaluation of the most effective approaches to tackling worklessness	11 26 52 57 Jobcentre Plus/ LSC SRPs
44. Develop and deliver intensive support for those groups with low employment rates compared to England: ➤ Disabled people ➤ BME communities ➤ Lone parents ➤ Ex-offenders ➤ Over 50's	Improving the employment rate of these specific groups will have a major impact on overall employment rates and on realising economic potential	Jobcentre Plus/ LSC
45. Develop job brokerage to link employers with vacancies and workless individuals	Targeted support to employers is needed to ensure vacancies are accessible to people from disadvantaged locations/communities. Intensive work with these individuals is needed to ensure they are aware of and have the skills to access those jobs (including work trials/pre-employment training). Large employment sectors and opportunities in Cheshire/Warrington, Manchester and Liverpool offer good opportunities to make linkages. The public sector has a key role in its locational and employment decisions	Jobcentre Plus/ LSC
46. Develop innovative approaches, including intermediate labour market activities, to engage and motivate people in work/training	Many people need appropriate support to develop their confidence and the core, transferable and advanced skills to re-enter work at appropriate levels. This will help tackle persistent pockets of low skills attainment and aspiration. Key issues include seamless delivery between the public and voluntary sector and the use of sport and culture to motivate people	Voluntary Sector/ Jobcentre Plus

ACTIONS	REASON	LEAD
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Local Employment		
Stimulate economic activity in areas remote from growth:		Linked to many other actions
47. Develop and implement an integrated economic plan for East Lancashire including support for advanced manufacturing and improved accessibility to growth in Preston and Manchester	East Lancashire is a regional/national HMR priority. Central to creating sustainable communities is the need to restructure the area's very low performing economic base	Lancashire Economic Partnership
48. Implement the Blackpool Masterplan, including Blackpool as the priority location for regional casino development in the UK	Blackpool is a key regional/national tourism asset, but with major concentrations of economic and social need. Regeneration is needed if it is to compete in the international market place for visitors and investment	Re Blackpool Lancashire Economic Partnership
49. Develop and implement the Barrow Masterplan, including support for marine & leisure developments	There are major opportunities to diversify the area's economic base, to help to close the gap in economic performance	Cumbria Vision West Lakes Renaissance
50. Develop and implement an integrated economic plan for West Cumbria, including support for nuclear decommissioning activity	Nuclear decommissioning offers opportunities of regional/national significance, important to improving the fragile economic prospects of the area, as well as developing a strategic regional response to the issue	Cumbria Vision West Cumbria Task Force
51. Diversify the economic base and support sectors with growth potential in the rural economy, focusing on the lagging rural areas of Allerdale, Copeland, Lancaster and West Lancashire	These are areas with a significant rural population, where there has been consistent under-performance and where there is disadvantage recognised by DEFRA	Rural Development Partnerships SRPs
Develop local employment and business start-up opportunities in areas remote from growth and areas with low employment rates:		3 11
52. Develop and encourage employment creation in or near deprived areas, focused on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ HMR areas ➤ URC areas ➤ Halton and Knowsley 	Part of the solution to the problems of deprived areas is to encourage employment into those areas. These areas are either remote from growth or with low employment rates. Large employment sectors offer good opportunities due to their widespread local presence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Local Authorities ➤ URCs ➤ Local Authorities
53. Develop business start up and support services focused on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ HMR and URC areas ➤ Halton and Knowsley 	These areas are either remote from growth or with low employment rates where business start-up can support employment and delivery of quality local services. Key issues include support to social enterprises and voluntary/community sector activities with the potential to become sustainable enterprises	Business Link Local Authorities/ Voluntary Sector

ACTIONS	REASON	LEAD
Local Employment (continued)		
Support and sustain conditions for growth in areas with strong economic drivers:		Linked to many other actions
54. Capitalise on the strengths and key assets of the cities of Manchester, Liverpool and Preston as key drivers for city regional growth	These three cities have major strengths and their success is essential to city-regional growth, the potential of which is being further explored in the City-Region Development Programmes	Sub-Regional Partnerships
55. Develop plans to capitalise on ongoing private sector investment around Crewe, Chester, Warrington, Lancaster and Carlisle	These areas are already successful and this needs to be maintained for the benefit of the regional economy. They have particular opportunities on which to build, including the development of a critical mass of knowledge-based business	Sub-Regional Partnerships
56. Implement plans to ensure ongoing growth in the rural economy as part of the Regional Rural Delivery Framework	While the rural economy contributes significantly to the prosperity of the region, considerable change and support is needed to secure sustainable growth in the future	Sub-Regional Partnerships
Health		
Improve the health of (potential) workers and reduce the number of incapacity benefit claimants:		43 112
57. Identify, and contribute to minimising or removing, the major causes of ill-health in the region, including tackling issues around mental ill-health and reducing the level of incapacity benefit claimants	Ill health is a significant cost to businesses and reduces the region's potential workforce. Key issues to tackle include the promotion of smoke-free policies, access to healthy food, reducing the effect of alcohol and cooperation with the medical profession to reduce sickness absence	SHAs/ Jobcentre Plus NIMHE
58. Encourage organisations to develop healthy workplaces and become health promoting organisations	Healthy workplaces are vital to tackling days lost through ill health and sickness. Key issues include the development of a Northwest Healthy Workplace Strategy and access to Occupational Health services	Workplace Health Direct Employers
59. Promote access to sport and physical activity to improve health, employee fitness and increase productivity	Encouraging more active communities leads to wider social benefits. Physical activity and sports programmes contribute to a range of agendas, including crime reduction, social inclusion and urban regeneration	Sport England
Population Change		
Retain and attract people to the region:		95
60. Develop transitional programmes (including English for Speakers of Other Languages) for migrant workers and promote best practice in their employment	Many people who have skills to offer the Northwest are unable to utilise them due to barriers such as the transition of qualifications and basic English skills	LSC
61. Promote the quality employment opportunities available in the region to attract and retain people, especially young people	The region needs to attract and retain more skilled people to increase the size of the workforce, innovate and drive business forward. In-migration is a key opportunity	Employers LSC
Respond to an older workforce and fewer young people:		34 44
62. Promote the benefits of older workers to business and raise awareness of the impact of an ageing workforce and fewer young people	Companies need to understand the role/needs/benefits of older people in a shrinking workforce and the different product demands of an older population	5050 Vision

KEY SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL OUTCOMES

According to independent assessment, implementation of the actions above is likely to lead to the following outcomes when measured against the UK Priorities for Sustainable Development.

a) Sustainable Consumption and Production

The emphasis upon improving employment opportunities in areas of deprivation and/or low economic growth should reduce disparities of economic performance within the region. Improved employment opportunities in areas of deprivation should also deliver indirect social and health benefits and improve the image of parts of the region. In-migration to the region provides the opportunity to enhance regional culture and support employment growth. The impact of population increases in areas remote from economic growth, including rural areas, should provide those communities with a more sustainable future. However, it may also increase pressure on environmental resources and existing infrastructure.

b) Climate Change and Energy

Providing employment opportunities in areas suffering from deprivation, together with proposed supporting actions on skills and infrastructure, should improve accessibility for local communities and reduce their need to travel.

c) Natural Resource Protection and Environmental Enhancement

The emphasis on improving economic activity in areas with strong economic drivers as well as in areas remote from growth, including locations important to the rural economy, will improve accessibility to job opportunities for local communities. However, the corresponding economic growth may exacerbate existing environmental problems within strongly performing areas such as city centres, without appropriate mitigation measures. For example, the impact on air and water quality. In the more remote parts of the region, growth should sustain local needs without undue impact on the natural environment.

d) Sustainable Communities

A number of actions will enable wider sections of the community to access employment and also enhance social development. For example, tackling barriers to work and providing improved support networks. Actions addressing worklessness and support for improvements in the health of workers, workplaces, and a promotion of access to sport and physical activity, will address issues associated with health and health inequalities. The development of a regional casino in Blackpool may lead to some adverse social and health impacts although steps are being taken to mitigate these and ensure that the wider community benefits.