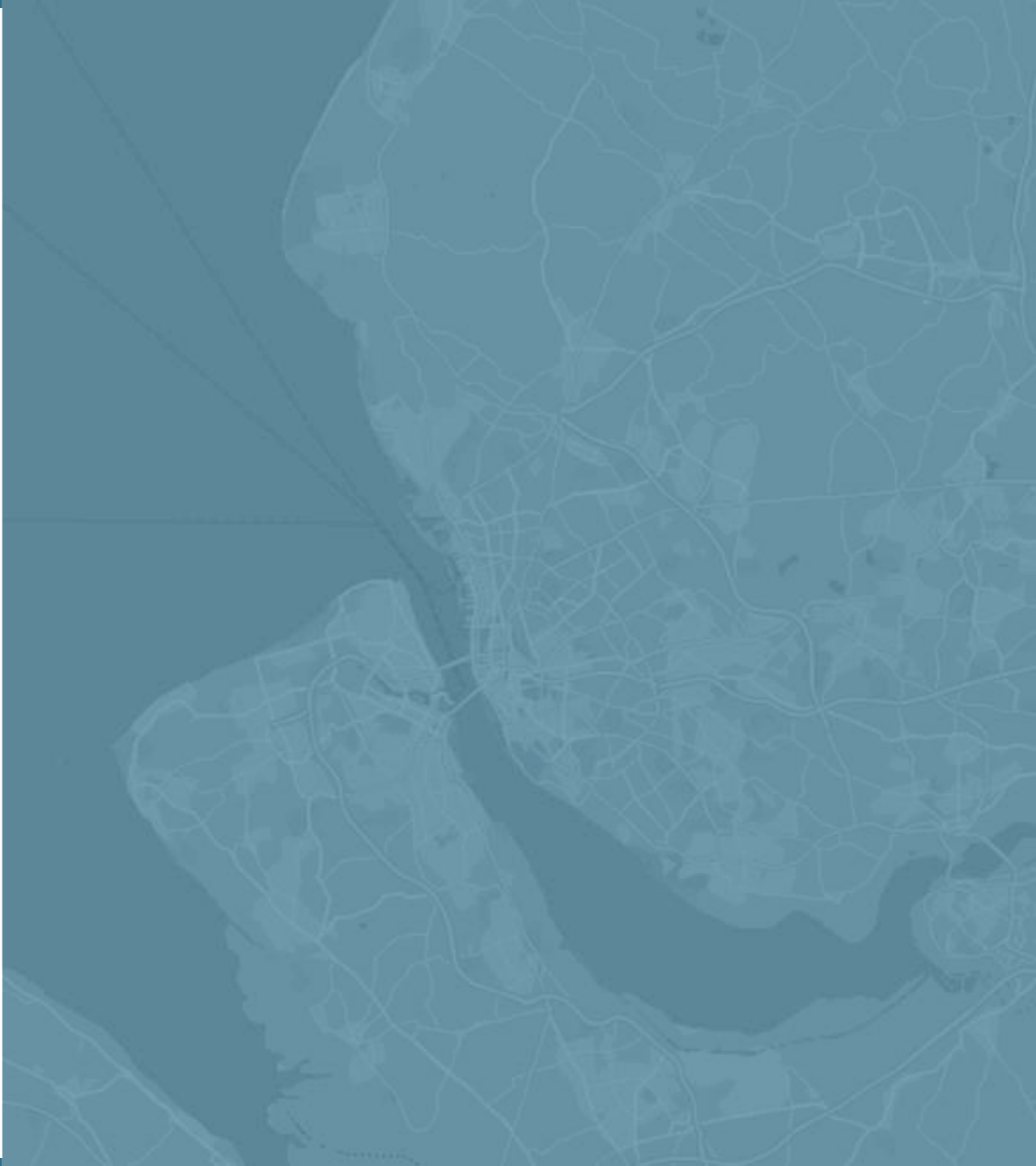


Metro Dynamics

Our offer to places in the UK



At Metro Dynamics, we **care** about places, our clients, and our colleagues.

We are an **independent** organisation, **curious** about our work, and **collaborative** in our approach. We strive to **make a difference** in all that we do.

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The importance of place

Places are now the engines of social & economic progress

At Metro Dynamics, we believe that places – towns and cities – are now and will increasingly be the driving force of the economic development and social progress in the UK. They will be the places where solutions to climate change and a growing global population are developed and made real. They should also be places where people have access to more opportunities and better, fairer and more inclusive living.

In recent times, places have also come to be at the nexus of several strategic and existential challenges for the UK. From post-Brexit economic recovery, the need for accelerated energy transition, our national response to deglobalisation following the re-emergence of war in Europe and the cost-of-living crisis, places find themselves at an unprecedented moment, where both the deepest impacts and the solutions to these issues will be found.

Metro Dynamics was founded to add lasting capacity to places, and we are passionate about the next phase of their complex and exciting future. From our beginnings in supporting devolution, we have worked with central government departments, cities, universities, investors and businesses. We advise people working and investing around the country on all aspects of how to make their place better, from physical development and regeneration to innovation and business support, to inclusive growth, skills, and public health.



Our offer to places

Expertise and experience

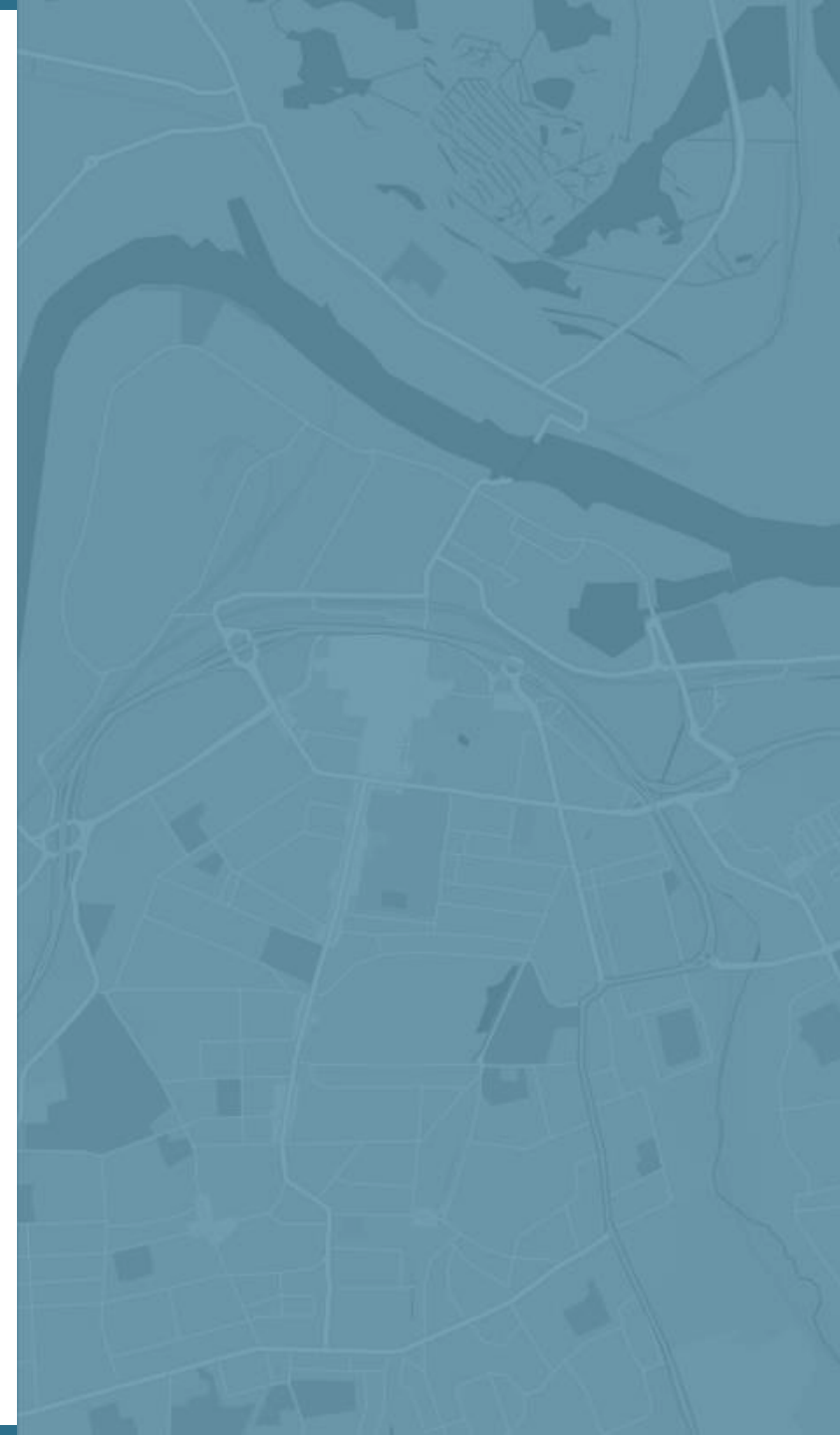
Metro Dynamics has vast experience in public and private sectors, with expertise in project delivery, finance, economics, politics and communications. Our team of thought leaders and opinion formers has the power and influence to drive change – setting agendas and tackling big issues.

Exceptional ability to communicate

As well as our skills in specialist subject areas, our team is unified by the ability to communicate well to influence and advise our clients and their partners. Our experience means we listen, empathise and understand.

Enthusiasm and belief

We are passionate about local communities and their future. It's not just our knowledge about cities and towns as engines of social and economic progress that sets us apart, it's our commitment to helping them achieve their potential.





Trusted advisors

We understand the complexity of making strategic and tangible change at a local level. Our services therefore span the whole change lifecycle, from research and analysis to strategy and implementation.

Across all our services, we bring lived experience and expertise of the economics and politics of place and how to bring these together to deliver positive outcomes.

Our skill areas

Independent research. Original research on key issues for local places, working in partnership with academic institutions to produce thought leadership for public and private organisations.

Bespoke analysis and insight. Evidence bases and tailored analysis using quantitative and qualitative data to create a detailed, bottom-up understand of the picture on the ground in local places.

Strategy development. Evidence-based strategies that drive action in your place, developed through collaborative and iterative means to build consensus for change across place partners and stakeholders

Funding bid and business case development. Green book compliant business cases with the evidence and analysis to make compelling cases to senior governance, resulting in successful approval and funding.

Project development and mobilisation. Sustainable projects designed meet your strategic objectives in realistic timeframes, with clear resourcing, risk mitigation and reporting from mobilisation.

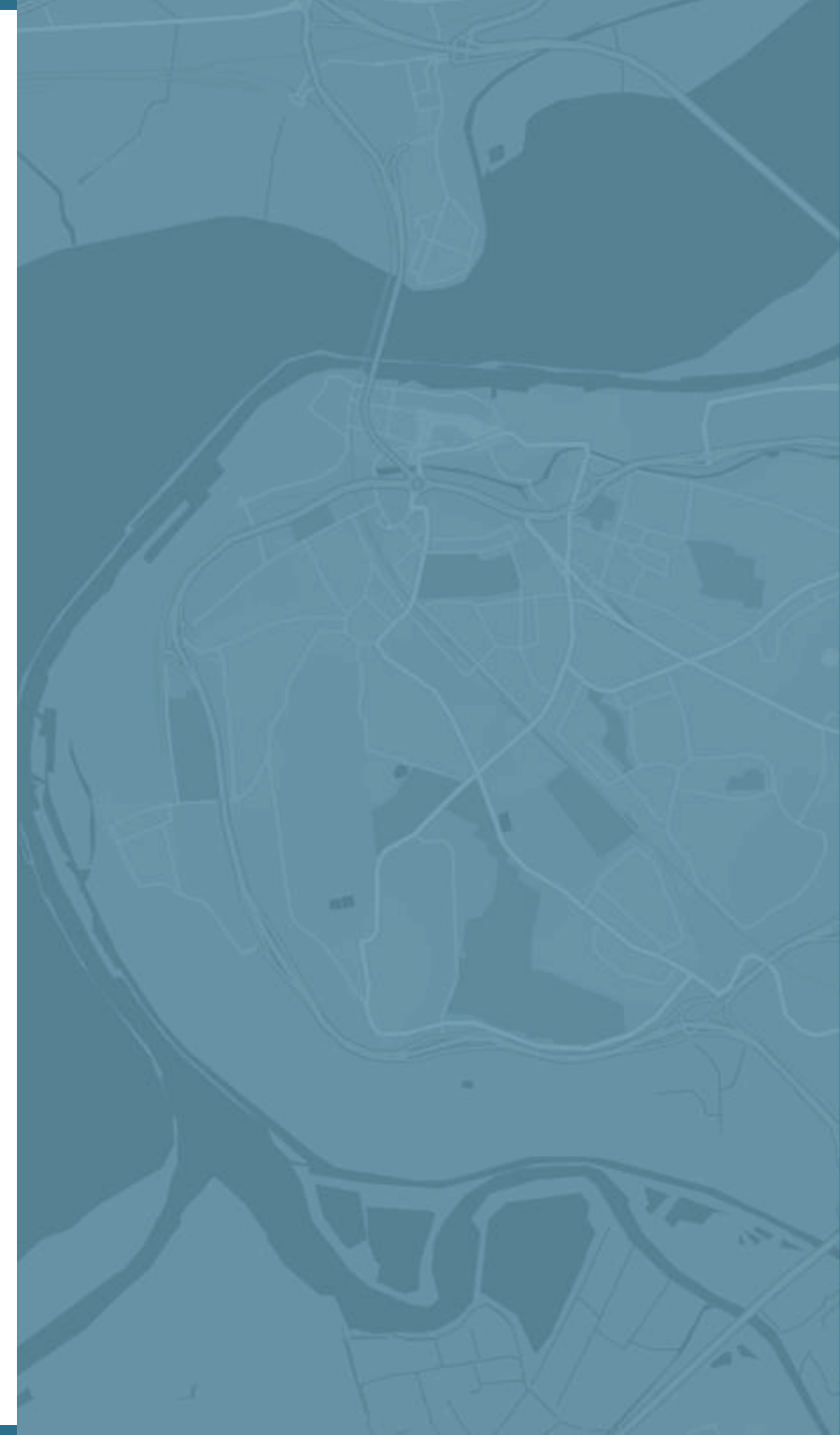
Regeneration and investment support. Technical, economic and strategic capabilities to develop evidence-based plans, bringing investors, institutions and partners together to support key place opportunities.

Monitoring and evaluation. Constructive and robust approaches to assess the impact of interventions, working collaboratively with project teams to design projects and processes that have impact at the centre

An independent business

Metro Dynamics was founded in 2015 to add lasting capacity to places. Since then, we have grown to a team of 30 consultants, across two regional offices, with a track record of success. How we do business is important to us and connects closely to how we work with our clients. This has led us to adopt the Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter in 2020 and become employee-owned in 2022, with an employee-owned trust chaired by our independent non-executive Chair, Pat Ritchie CBE.

For places, this means we are committed to supporting you to achieve their goals through supportive, inclusive and collaborative means, and developing solutions that are economically viable, sustainable and deliver meaningful social value. This is reflected in our company values, shown below, which together describe how we work as a team and with you.



Our values

Caring – We care about the people we work with and for. We are open to everyone, and value different viewpoints, approaches, talents, and backgrounds. Good work depends on the people who work here, and we invest in our colleagues to help them develop.

Independent – We are objective with every project and think carefully about what is right for our clients, a place and its people. A private company with no external shareholders, unaffiliated with political parties, we review the evidence and come to shared positions on points of principle.

Curious – We are interested in how places work, finding ways for local economies to become stronger and more resilient. We strive to innovate, developing new approaches and products to both solve our clients' problems, and to advance the causes we believe in.

Collaborative – We work closely with each other and with our clients. The best work comes from partnership and developing ideas together. We take time to understand how best we can support each other and the people we work with, sharing our expertise, knowledge, and skills.

Making a difference – Our work makes things happen. We meet our clients' needs and help them to improve outcomes for people in places. To do this, we maintain high standards and hold to our values, working efficiently and developing processes that put our skills to the best use.

A strong track record

Devolution – Supported flagship devolution deals from their outset, including Greater Manchester, West Midlands and the North of Tyne. We have provided strategic capacity, analysis and ideas to develop compelling proposals and to successfully navigate the local political landscape to build consensus.

Inclusive innovation – Supported places to encourage innovation in local economies in a way that benefits all. This includes work for the Connected Places Catapult, where our analysis and framework identified 10 places with the greatest innovation potential, and the city of Belfast, where we designed an innovation district.

Investment support – Provided strategic and technical support to secure investment and land for development, most recently for the Cambridge Biomedical Campus. We led a programme of engagement, visioning and analysis to successfully make the case to a variety of stakeholders from investors to local residents.

Business case development – A strong track record of developing Green Book compliant business cases for both public and private sector clients. We have deep experience across several government schemes and have secured large amounts of funding from the UKSPF, the Towns Fund and the Levelling Up Fund.

Inclusive growth and recovery – Helped places to embed inclusive growth principles through local objectives, decision-making and monitoring frameworks and action plans. With the onset of Covid-19, we have used our expertise to support recovery, for example developing the Pan-London Recovery Framework.

Independent research and bespoke analysis – Created objective insights for places and bespoke analysis for clients. Examples include our Zoom Shock dashboard of current and future town centre trends, the Future of Urban Centres for Key and Core Cities and a places economic vulnerability analysis for DLUHC.



Our futures skills and capabilities

For this framework, we have highlighted our specific futures services in the following pages.

Horizon Scanning Indexes development

Indexes are widely used by funding bodies for prioritising future investment and intervention. Indexes have a number of major advantages, particularly in a period when policy is evolving, and socio-economic trends continue to change. These include having the ability to determine a single number (index score) to easily rank and compare places and the impact of interventions, while at the same time having the ability to drill down to identify the contribution of subcomponents and use weighting to respond rapidly to changes in policies, priorities and objectives. We have strong expertise in developing indexes. For example, as part of *the Homes England – Horizon Scanning: Future Opportunities Commission, (2022) commission*, **we developed a framework for understanding the potential of future housing development to unlock economic growth** in places throughout England. We developed the criteria, quantitative framework, and qualitative information by which places were assessed and identified a shortlist of emerging opportunity areas (EOAs) for the Homes England Strategic Growth Team to co-develop projects at scale. The work involved the **development of two composite indicators or indexes**. The first indicator focused on ‘Barriers to economic growth’ - to evaluate places based on the extent of barriers to growth in the local economy; whilst the second looked at ‘Opportunities for Growth’ - to evaluate places based on the presence of assets that could be leveraged to promote growth. Both indexes captured a combination of socio-economic, housing, land, and political indicators. The results from the indexes analysis were combined with a range of place-based qualitative information to identify places for future investment.

Scenario Analysis

We have strong expertise in setting scenarios informed by robust evidence. We work with our clients to think about what the insights from the evidence mean, what is certain/uncertain, and develop scenarios to establish where we see cause and effect and establish the potential risks, rewards and implications. For example, as part of the *Lincolnshire County Council, Strategic Infrastructure Delivery Plan update (2021) commission*, we drew on local development strategies and our research of Lincolnshire’s economy to develop **a set of scenarios to think through the implications of the uncertainty introduced by the pandemic, with remote work and the spatial distribution of economic activity of particular importance to infrastructure strategy**. The result of the scenario analysis was used to build a framework for categorizing infrastructure projects and make the case for local and national investment.

Trend analysis

We frequently embed trend analysis as a core part of developing new place strategies, conducting research and analysing data to build out a rich picture of different trends and how they will impact. We worked with the York, North Yorkshire and East Riding Local Enterprise Partnership to develop a bold and compelling strategy to set the area's towns up as drivers of economic growth and productivity. Through a combination of research and analysis, town visits and stakeholder interviews on key themes, our work aimed to develop a deep understanding of how economic, technological, social and environmental trends are likely to impact YNYER LEP's towns in the future and what can be done to ensure these towns are able to harness opportunities and mitigate future challenges. Our recommendations were geared towards ensuring the long-term vitality and productivity of the area's towns and have been taken forward as part of the recent York and North Yorkshire Devolution Deal.

Forecasting

Both before and following the Covid-19 pandemic, forecasting has been a useful capability that we have leveraged to support our clients to develop new policy and forward planning. In 2021, we were commissioned by employment and skills provider Seetec to develop a series of employment forecasts for the South West and South Central regions. We produced a report which contained employment forecasts at a local authority level and regional level, by sector for three different scenarios corresponding to different rates of recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic / response to other long-term trends and factors such as Brexit. The forecasts used a range of inputs and data – including OBR national forecasts, ONS data on unemployment and employment, and analysis of expected sectoral trends. We also developed a brief executive summary explaining the high level results of the projections to inform Seetec's future business planning and service development, a report which explains the methodology and discusses the broad employment trends which inform the forecasts, as well as a detailed appendix containing all of the forecast outputs. The forecasts were used to cost Seetec's bid for the Restart programme, helping them to price and articulate their service in the light of considerable uncertainty about the trajectory of post-covid employment recovery. As a result of the forecasting, Seetec secured the Restart contract for South West England.

Vulnerability and real-time data analysis

This has become increasingly marked during the COVID-19 pandemic period in which the global and national response has resulted in a severe economic shock with impacts on all places in the UK. This work involves 'looking back' and understanding the impact of the pandemic, in order to look forward and develop future policy. For example, as part of our work with MHCLG on *Economic Resilience (2019/20)* we developed an **analysis of the vulnerability of local places in England to economic shocks. This informed policy development on future resilience and the identification of the kinds of interventions that might help local places in the future to respond to such shocks.** Our Economic Vulnerability Analysis assessed vulnerability and resilience based on a unique index and provided up to date analytical data on England's 33 NUTS2 areas and one representative Local Authority Area in each. We also developed a dashboard using Power BI for use in relation to tracking COVID-19 induced economic impacts.

Balanced scorecards

This tool can be extremely useful in managing technology and innovation. Our Balanced Scorecards are an innovative methodology developed as a way of comparing the performance of places in order to answer specific research questions. For instance, which places are most economically vulnerable, or which cities in the UK are best to invest in innovation. As part of the Legal & General, Top 25 Cities (2019) commission, we produced a set of balanced scorecards detailing the innovation strength and investment readiness of 18 cities across the UK to demonstrate how well equipped they were to maximise the value of future investment in innovation.

Prioritisation frameworks

These are becoming increasingly important in a period where funding for investments are extremely competitive. Places need tools to be able to prioritise interventions, understand risks and optimise financial resources. As part of the *Lancashire Independent Economic Review Commission (2021)* we undertook an independent economic analysis to inform the future direction of the Lancashire economy. We examined the variation and commonality in industrial mix across the districts, identified key specialisms using LQ analysis, and undertook extensive engagement with utilities industries leaders and bodies, local government, and community organisations, to understand challenges and investment opportunities that could reshape Lancashire's economic geography. The study culminated in **a set of specific principles for future decision making and a prioritisation framework** for the development of a regional investment pipeline. The prioritization framework was informed by the evidence base we developed and presented as an easy-to-use and streamlined set of criteria and categories to bring coherence and direction to future investment decisions.

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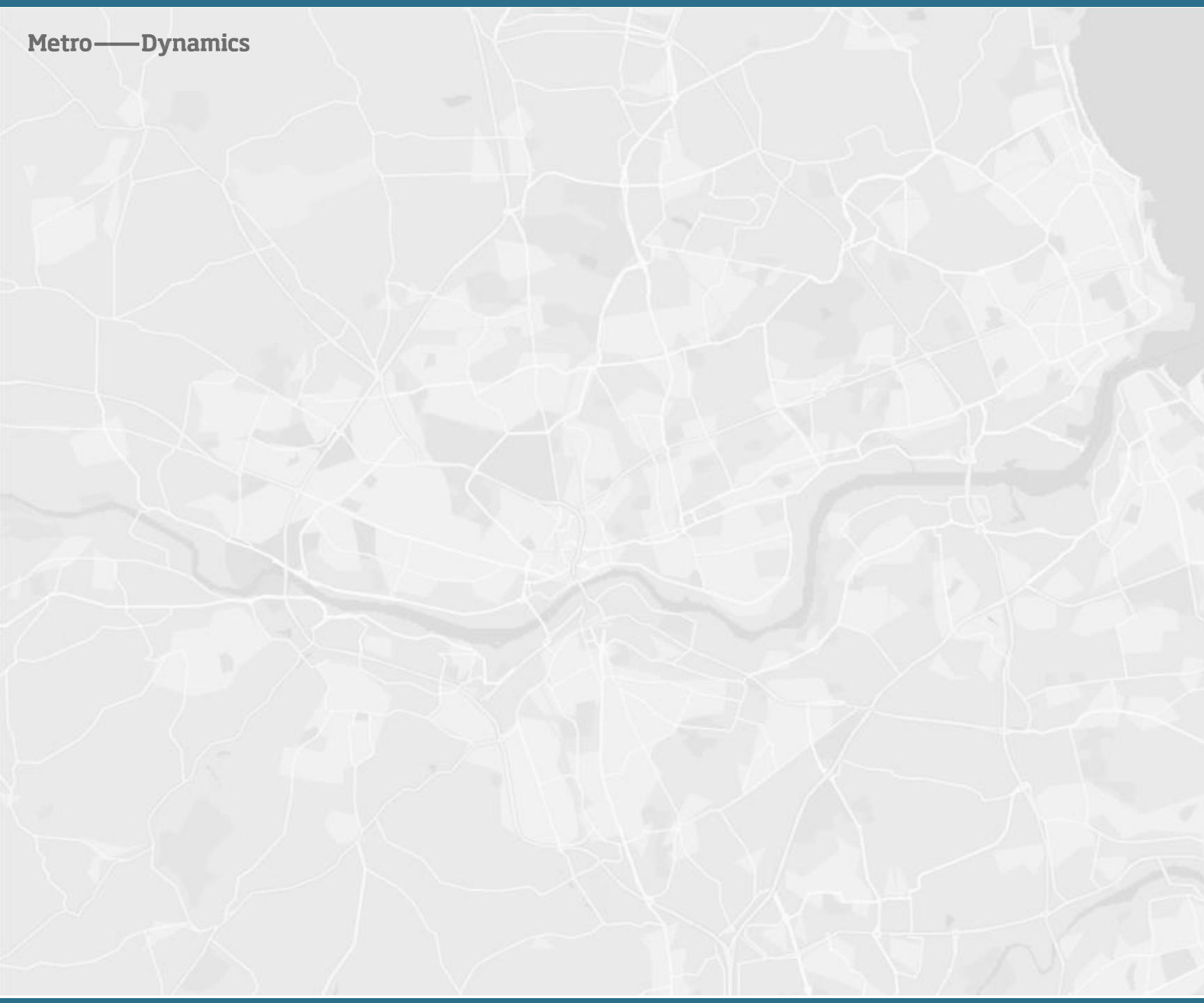
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Futures strategy development

We embed future thinking into our wider strategy, policy, and project development with places, and so are skilled at translating the outputs of futures work into policy and for policy makers. We use a range of processes and techniques to achieve this and believe firmly in the power of group working in workshops or similar seminars in supporting policymakers to unpack, understand and respond to future trends. We frequently use well-known futures frameworks, such as SWOT and PESTLE to help our clients identify opportunities and risks both based on futures analysis or as part of developing futures thinking in any particular place. Similarly, we utilise our robust strategy development framework (shown below) to logically work through four pillars of inquiry to envision where we want to get to, from where we are now. We combine our expertise in data and spatial analytics with our skills in facilitating meaningful consultation to draw out the key insights about local economics and places to develop a robust quantitative and qualitative evidence base to underpin strategy development. From these insights, we identify priorities and actions. We use logic chain models to test the rationale and links between the evidence, priorities, and actions. We work iteratively with places to test and develop the interventions for the evidence base, ensuring that the strategy is distinctive and true to the place and economy.

Understanding futures through data

We recognise the importance of presenting data and information in an accessible and interesting way, making comparisons easy and enabling policy makers to quickly understand future scenarios and trends, linking possible actions and decisions to this evidence. Through our use of innovative dashboards, charts and maps we can provide market leading assessments of places at range of geographic areas, including at town and MSOA level. We develop **data dashboards in Power BI and GIS maps** to interactively show stakeholders key data and analysis results. We use interactive filters within our dashboards that enable the user to breakdown visualised data in multiple different ways, providing deeper insight and exploration than what is feasible through a static visual. Our dashboards are easy to use and navigate with clearly defined button selectors that transfer you to different types of data analysis and visualisation. Links to more detailed data sets and workbooks or source data enable easier future updates and manipulation, so that change can be monitored over time. Dashboards can be connected to real time online datasets so that when new data is published the visuals within will automatically update. A modular design will mean that individual data sets can be swapped in and out easily, including for different audiences if required.



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