

Locality working



Dewsbury and Mirfield Summary

Summary

Socio-Demographic profile

In population terms Dewsbury and Mirfield is the largest of the seven localities. In the north it is highly urbanised, whilst to the south it is more rural and sparsely populated.

The population of Dewsbury is culturally and ethnically diverse. Over a fifth of the locality's residents are from minority ethnic backgrounds, mostly Pakistani and Indian. Mirfield's population in comparison is mostly White.

It has a relatively young population, particularly in the Asian community, and it is forecast that there will be considerable growth in the number of residents in the coming years.

Widespread deprivation exists across the locality, with the exception of Mirfield, Hanging Heaton and parts of Thornhill.

Vision

Dewsbury and Mirfield will build on its strategic position. It will provide an environment that will encourage growth in high income businesses and allow residents to access more employment opportunities in the wider City Region through improvements to its transportation infrastructure.

Creative business will be encouraged, and business capacity will be improved through the redevelopment, together with the creation of new sites on the border of settlements.

The river and canal corridor will have developed into a flagship resource combining a green network with recreational, housing and business uses. This will need to be balanced against the risk of flooding in the area. We will make sure our community has the best possible opportunity to benefit from this new vibrant locality.

We will support young people to achieve the highest educational attainment levels whilst enjoying a healthy and active lifestyle due to the resources we have secured for them.

Key health inequalities will be tackled to ensure residents are able to make the best use of the opportunities that are available.

Our community is key to enabling us to achieve this vision and we will make sure all the different communities that make up our locality are engaged and involved.

Working together, the council and partner organisations will make sure residents are supported throughout their life to improve their skills to match the employment opportunities locally and in the Leeds City region.

The search for affordable housing will be met by new developments (including high density) and improvements to existing properties.

Findings and key priorities

Dewsbury and Mirfield locality needs to realise the potential of its location and promote economic growth. To do this a number of challenges will need to be addressed through planning processes and involvement from residents in innovative ways. These can be separated according to the four themes of the Kirklees Local Area Agreement:

Safer, stronger communities

Dewsbury and Mirfield has a settled population with a strong sense of identity and attachment to the major settlements. However, community relations at a neighbourhood level show a lack of cohesion. This will remain a key priority for continued action.

Crime is falling but there is still a need to continue targeting particular crime classifications, sub-locality crime hotspots and residents fear of crime.

Children and young people

The low level of educational attainment and skills is a key challenge. In some areas the percentage of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) stands at two and a half times the Kirklees average.

There is an actual and/or perceived lack of activities and facilities for young people that need further work. Children and young people should be involved in the work and opportunities taken to promote positive interactions between young people of different backgrounds.

Other issues are:

- measures to address the large numbers under child protection
- the affordability of childcare.

Healthier communities and older people

There is a need to work together to address various health problems faced by the residents, young and old, where levels of good health are generally the lowest in Kirklees. Problems include:

- high rates of infant mortality
- alcohol misuse
- high smoking rates
- obesity rates in women of child bearing age
- fitness and level of activity for young people

The population growth will increase pressure on housing and work will need to be continued and improved to ensure the housing needs of the locality are met in terms of affordability and quality.

Economy and enterprise

The poor perception of the locality internally and externally needs addressing. The priority is to create attractive settlements for living, working and leisure to assist economic growth and attract external investment.

The strategic location is already a major positive in terms of the links and access to the wider city region economy, but equally a major threat is the transport infrastructure's inability to cope with the increasing congestion.