



# Northamptonshire Innovation Ecosystem Analysis Workstream 3 – Report

JUNE 2025

# Foreword

---



*Dr Cathy Smith  
Dean of Research and  
Knowledge Exchange,  
University of  
Northampton*

Innovation is the lifeblood of economic growth and prosperity, as we navigate the complexities of the modern economy, the ability to innovate becomes crucial in driving sustainable development, creating high-value jobs, and ensuring resilience against global competition. The importance of innovation extends beyond individual businesses; it is a cornerstone of our local and regional strategy. By investing in research and development, supporting collaboration between businesses and institutions, and nurturing a culture of creativity, we can unlock new opportunities and drive economic progress. This approach not only enhances productivity but also attracts new investments, positioning Northamptonshire as a leader on the global stage.

Northamptonshire boasts a rich tapestry of industries, from high-performance technology and advanced manufacturing to logistics and creative sectors. Our county is home to some of the most dynamic and forward-thinking businesses in the UK, and their success stories highlight the transformative power of innovation. However, while we excel in fostering start-ups, we must address the challenges of scaling these businesses to ensure long-term growth and stability.

# Foreword

---

As we look to the future, our commitment to innovation will be pivotal in overcoming challenges and seizing opportunities. By prioritizing innovation, we can build a resilient, inclusive, and prosperous economy that benefits all residents and businesses in Northamptonshire.

The University of Northampton (UON) commissioned this report to better understand the innovation characteristics of the locality and the role UON must play in driving innovation within our industrial base. We recognise that we cannot do this alone, and the report has been co-produced by a steering group of key partners, it has been informed by consultation with businesses and key stakeholders, and it is also supported by a comprehensive evidence paper.

This report recommends how Northamptonshire can overcome some of the challenges we face, build on its past and shape its future as an innovative county in the future economy. It outlines how we can look to deliver product, service and process innovations which make the most of our natural assets and translate our research excellence into commercial opportunity. In doing so, it sets out an approach that embraces key sectors within our economy.

Let's embrace this journey together with confidence and determination, knowing that our collective efforts can pave the way for sustained economic growth and a thriving community.

# Contents

A. What makes this report important for Northamptonshire?	P. 5
B. Introduction	P. 6
C. Executive Summary	P. 9
D. Northamptonshire Innovation Ecosystem Assessment	P. 17
E. Assessing Key External Opportunities and Threats	P. 42
F. SWOT Analysis and Key Recommendations	P. 54
G. Contributors and Acknowledgements	P. 65
H. Appendix I: Characteristics of Successful Innovation Ecosystems	P. 66
I. Appendix II: Northamptonshire's Innovation Northamptonshire Innovation Leaders and Exemplar High Growth Businesses	P. 69
J. Appendix III: Definitions and Abbreviations	P. 103

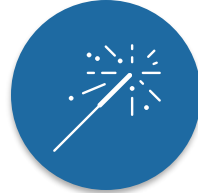


# A. What makes this report important for Northamptonshire?



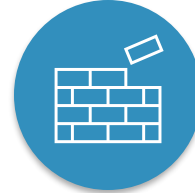
## GROWTH POTENTIAL

Northamptonshire has some commendable business growth stories, but there is a need to increase economic productivity.



## CATALYST FOR CHANGE

This report aims to be a catalyst for change, facilitating discussions on the key assets and resources required to boost innovation and collaboration.



## BUILDING AN ECOSYSTEM

The intention is to build and nurture a thriving innovation ecosystem. The report provides a set of actionable, evidence-based recommendations that will support future economic policy, strategy, and vision for both local authority areas.



## SWOT ANALYSIS

The report assesses Northamptonshire's innovation ecosystem examining its strengths and weaknesses based on key success factors of thriving ecosystems, while also identifying growth opportunities and potential threats for businesses.



## SUPPORTING INNOVATION DIFFUSION

The report analyses startups and scaleups in Northamptonshire's sectors with the highest growth rates to understand the innovation assets responsible for their transformation. These learnings provide insights to support innovation diffusion across the county's business population over time.

## B. Introduction – Context and Project Objectives

### CONTEXT



**Innovation is key** to the UK and Northamptonshire Economic Strategies. All evidence suggests that innovation will be crucial in driving growth, addressing global challenges and maintaining competitiveness.



**Northamptonshire faces a productivity gap**, with a Gross Value Added (GVA) per employee of £61,000 in 2022, compared to the national average of £68,000.



Despite a **4.6% increase in new business registrations**, **the county's startup survival rates are lower than the UK average**. 94% of businesses survive their first year, but only 37% after five years, compared to 40% nationally.

### PROJECT OBJECTIVES



Create an ecosystem analysis that **comprehensively explores and analyses** Northamptonshire's innovation capabilities, resources, and potential for growth.



Create a set of **clear evidence-based and actionable recommendations** that will feed into the future economic policy, strategy, and vision for both West and North Northamptonshire local authority areas.



Help **shape the role of the University of Northampton** in supporting the delivery of the vision and associated recommendations.

## B. Introduction – Research Approach and Methodology

1

### Desk Research and Analysis

#### 1. Innovation Ecosystem Case Studies Review

- a) Analysed exemplar regional innovation ecosystems in Boston, Eindhoven, and London to identify key learnings, best practices, and key success factors.

#### 2. Northamptonshire Innovation Capability Assessment

- a) Identified sectors with the highest growth rates –i.e., advanced engineering, food and drink manufacturing, logistics, and construction.
- b) Analysed startups and scaleups in these sectors to provide a broad understanding of the innovation assets responsible for their transformation and development.
- c) Conducted a literature review to identify other innovation assets (inc. workforce skills initiatives and investment flows) supporting firms in Northamptonshire.

2

### Stakeholder Research

#### 1. Stakeholder Engagement

- a) Conducted 28 in-depth interviews with key industry stakeholders, involved small, medium, and large businesses.
- b) Held two roundtable events hosted by the Federation of Small Businesses; and the Silverstone Technology Cluster.
- c) Collected survey responses from the broader business community.

#### 2. Stakeholder Interview Analysis

- a) Analysed interviews to corroborate the initial desk research hypotheses / findings.
- b) Identified recurring themes aligned to the key success factors for building a thriving innovation ecosystem.
- c) Evaluated the strengths and weaknesses of the Northamptonshire innovation ecosystem based on these key success factors.

3

### Insights and Recommendations

#### 1. SWOT Analysis

- a) Synthesised information gathered from desk research and stakeholder research to create a SWOT analysis of the Northamptonshire innovation ecosystem.
- b) Identified core strengths / competencies and established clusters; and areas that require development / improvement.
- c) Assessed key growth opportunities for various organisations (small, medium, and large) across the county; and the potential external threats restricting the ability of firms to realise their ambitions.

#### 2. Recommendations and Final Report

- a) Formulated actionable recommendations following further analysis, and a steering group workshop session.
- b) Consolidated the key insights and recommendations in a concise Northants innovation ecosystem final report.

## B. Introduction – Characteristics of Successful Innovation Ecosystems

Thriving innovation ecosystems are typically developed by connecting smaller innovation districts (IDs) or knowledge clusters within a wider area or region. The key success factors are consistent for all communities of innovation.



### Innovation Ecosystem



#### 1. Aspiration & Bold Vision

To build confidence, ambition, and buy-in with stakeholders. A unique identity and brand helps communicate the ecosystem value proposition for businesses and people. It provides a way to define near-and long-term success measures to keep on track.



#### 2. Clusters & Partner Strategy

Local leaders and developers build clusters based on the regions existing skills, infrastructure and institutional strengths of anchor organisations. Leveraging market trends strategically to support developing new value propositions.



#### 3. Capital & Funding

Develop an integrated innovation funnel that spans from ideation, commercialisation, startups, to scaleups – to attract investors, including venture capital. For example, physical spaces (hubs / accelerators) to showcase startups.



#### 4. Talent & Community Building

A coordinated talent strategy and pipeline is critical for successful ecosystems. Attracting, retaining, and developing talent relies on creating relatable aspirations and the presence of appealing anchor institutions.



#### 5. Real Estate, Infrastructure & Place Making

Building local environments including suitable commercial space for prioritised sectors; residential spaces; open public spaces; and "place-making" infrastructure where people want to work, live, and play is essential.



#### 6. Diversity, Equality & Inclusion

Successful ecosystems embrace inclusive growth, where local community building and shared prosperity is prioritised. Local leaders implement policies and initiatives that create opportunities for disadvantaged communities.

# Executive Summary

A summary of the key findings and recommendations following the detailed evaluation of Northamptonshire's innovation ecosystem – aligned to the key success factors for building a thriving innovation ecosystem.



# Northamptonshire Innovation Assets



The University of Northampton



Made in Northamptonshire



The Growth Hub



West & North Northamptonshire Councils



Lord Lieutenants



Vulcan Works



Moulton, Tresham, & Northampton College



## Logistics

19 high growth scaleups

Over 2200 businesses



37% enterprise growth in 5 years

The Golden Logistics Triangle



SEGRO

The Northamptonshire Logistics Forum



Motorsport Valley



The Northamptonshire Manufacturing Forum



Silverstone UTC



## Advanced Engineering

27 high growth scaleups

Over 250 advanced engineering businesses

Silverstone Tech Cluster



## Food and Drink Manufacturing

16 high growth scaleups

Over 150 businesses



Landex

The Food and Drink Forum

Food & Drink Innovation Centre



38% enterprise growth in 5 years

The Food and Drink Awards

## C. Aspiration and Bold Vision [1/6]

---

### Key Findings

- The county lacks **innovation leadership**. There are inspirational leaders in the form of businesses, individuals, and institutions, that act as enablers. However, there is a lack of a cohesive leadership group.
- Northamptonshire lacks an overarching **clear vision** to build consensus and buy-in with key stakeholder groups.
- The county lacks a **unique identity (brand)** to communicate the innovation ecosystem value proposition through storytelling / messaging.
- The county does not instill a sense of **ambition and confidence** amongst individuals in Northamptonshire.

### Recommendations

- Create an Innovation Leadership Body:
  - An independent Innovation Leadership Body comprising business leaders from different sectors in Northamptonshire, the growth sectors (advanced engineering, food and drink manufacturing, logistics), educational establishments, local government and other stakeholders.
  - Empowered to develop the strategic vision, coordinate efforts, engage with other bodies and drive innovation initiatives across the county.
- Develop the innovation vision and the supporting strategy:
  - A clear, forward-looking innovation vision that aligns with the county's economic aspiration and ambition.
  - A comprehensive strategy that outlines the key initiatives, resources, and partnerships needed to turn the vision into reality.
- Develop a unified county brand and marketing strategy:
  - Craft a cohesive identity and brand for Northamptonshire highlighting its strengths, success stories, and unique value proposition to support an innovation ecosystem.



## C. Clusters and Partner Strategy [2/6]

---

### Key Findings

- **Silverstone** is the most notable cluster in Northamptonshire. It has a strategic focus on **Advanced Engineering** and Innovation. It includes Silverstone Tech Cluster (STC) that runs networking events amongst other initiatives to facilitate greater collaboration and business support.
- Northamptonshire has an abundance of **logistics** parks, including the forthcoming SEGRO Logistics Park. The county also sits within the Logistics Golden Triangle with a high density of distribution facilities.
- Northamptonshire has several large anchor institutions in the **food and drink sector**, a strong agriculture sector, and developing food tech sector.
- Northamptonshire has a lot of **construction** businesses. However, the sector was difficult to engage with and seems to lack the networking and physical assets for an innovation cluster.
- Northamptonshire has sector-based clusters, but there is no evidence of a **deliberate cluster and partner strategy**.
- The University of Northampton and the colleges do not have an **anchor role** in key sectors. However, the University's graduate pipeline does fill roles in local businesses, particularly healthcare and logistics.

### Recommendations

- Enhance University-Sector Partnerships:
  - Strengthen partnerships between University of Northampton and key county sectors.
  - Improve engagement with businesses to tailor curricula to industry needs and facilitate knowledge/technology transfer through initiatives like Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTPs) or accelerators.
  - Facilitate more collaborative research centres where university faculties and industry professionals co-develop solutions for local challenges.
  - Consider incubators focused on key sectors. These incubators should offer specialised facilities, industry connections, and tailored support programs to nurture startups in these sectors.

## C. Executive Summary – Capital and Funding [3/6]

---

### Key Findings

- Northamptonshire lacks an **integrated innovation funnel** that spans from ideation, commercialisation, startups, to scaleups – to attract investors, including venture capital.
- There are success stories of **grant funding** and whilst some scaleups in the region have received Innovate UK funding to support their growth and development, the overall uptake of Innovate UK funding opportunities by small-and-medium sized enterprises (SMEs) in the county is low.
- One of the reasons for low levels of private investment was the **lack of business education** and the inability to effectively communicate with funds managers.
- There appears to be a lack of awareness or understanding about suitability to qualify for UKRI funding opportunities – and the availability of **R&D Tax Credits**.
- Northamptonshire's startup rate is good but transitioning these businesses to become **scaleups** is challenging due to a lack of funding and resources to support firm growth.

### Recommendations

- Improve Access to Funding and Support
  - Streamline processes and increase awareness about available funding sources, grants, mentorship programs, and support services for innovation and business growth.
  - Explore partnerships with angel investors and venture capital firms.

## C. Executive Summary – Talent & Community Building [4/6]

---

### Key Findings

- There is high demand for greater **business support** for innovation. There are insufficient levels of business support and the support that does exist lacks effective marketing and communication.
- Whilst business support can be improved, there is recognition of the **business representative organisations** and **initiatives** organised in the county to bring individuals and businesses together. Vulcan Works, Eagle Labs, Digital Northants, FSB, the Lieutenancy, STC and many more were recognised for the events and support they provide.
- However, there is an insufficient volume of **physical spaces** and **networking events** dedicated to fostering innovation.
- The county does not appear to have a **coordinated talent pipeline strategy** – although talent and skills shortages is a UK wide challenge, particularly in STEM subjects.
- A lot of businesses were hiring nationally or internationally because there was not a strong **local talent pool**, particularly in the areas of technology and advanced engineering.
- Several locations were identified as **excellent pieces of real estate** that act as hubs, areas for collaboration, and venues for initiatives.

### Recommendations

- Establish a Centralised Innovation Hub
  - Create a centralised, physical and online, one-stop-shop innovation hub in Northamptonshire that consolidates resources, facilities, mentorship, and support services for startups, entrepreneurs, and businesses across various sectors. This could be a developed and strengthened version of the Growth Hub's resource.
- Develop a Strategy for Local Talent Pipeline
  - Develop a comprehensive, collaborative talent pipeline strategy that connects local employers, University of Northampton, colleges, and schools in Northamptonshire.
  - This strategy should build on existing strategies (e.g.. LSIP, STC Skills Programme, etc.), and existing partnerships.

## C. Executive Summary – Real Estate, Infrastructure & Place Making [5/6]

---

### Key Findings

- Northamptonshire's largest towns and key industrial areas are dispersed over a large area. There is a need for strategic placemaking policies and initiatives that include improved transportation infrastructure to allow for **better physical connectivity** across the county to support innovation.
- The county has no towns that incorporate **innovation districts** with a high agglomeration of diverse range of businesses and mixed-use real estate to enable walkability. This supports more collaboration activity to develop new propositions which ultimately encourages large capital investments to the area.
- There is good land supply that can support sustainable future economic development opportunities. Furthermore, the **low cost of land** and rent is strength.
- There are plans for some **major infrastructure investment** in the county such as the Kettering Energy Park and digital infrastructure projects. However digital infrastructure was raised as a concern, with some suggestions Northamptonshire is slow to adopt.

### Recommendations

- Enhance the visibility and utilisation of existing innovation assets
  - Increase awareness and usage of existing innovation hubs and assets, such as Vulcan Works and the University of Northampton's facilities, by launching targeted outreach campaigns, workshops, and innovation networking events.
- Increase use of private spaces to support collaboration and innovation
  - Increase awareness of private spaces available for innovation activities such as Cosworth's advanced manufacturing centre, Digital Manufacturing Centre at Silverstone.
- Review place making strategy
  - Consider a unified, county-wide place making strategy.

## C. Executive Summary – Diversity, Equality and Inclusion [6/6]

---

### Key Findings

- Many companies in sectors like logistics and construction are developing **innovative HR policies** to address the poor public perception about working environments. Initiatives observed include employee ownership trusts and innovative benefits packages aimed at treating their employees well.
- The University of Northampton was commended in interviews for its diversity and focus on **social impact**. In 2024 they hosted the international UnderOne Festival that brings together DEI & HR professionals to network, collaborate and share knowledge through workshops.
- However, Northamptonshire does not appear to have an **integrated strategic plan** developed by local leaders that includes policies and initiative to support diffusion of innovation and technology into low-income and disadvantaged communities – thereby supporting local economic prosperity.

### Recommendations

- Undertake a review to capture all existing diversity, equality and inclusion projects and initiatives in the county with a specific focus on initiatives for disadvantaged communities.
- Agree the priorities for an innovation diversity, equality and inclusion strand, and create an appropriate action plan.
- Expand and the broaden the reach of existing successful social impact programs in the county e.g. Prologis warehouse and logistics training program.
- Establish partnerships with local non-profits, social enterprises, and community groups to collaborate on impactful projects, ensuring alignment with the county's innovation goals.

# D. Northamptonshire Innovation Ecosystem Assessment

An analysis of Northamptonshire's strengths and weaknesses based on the key success factors of an innovation ecosystem. This section includes a summary of main themes identified from the desk research and stakeholder interviews, supported by quotes and case studies.



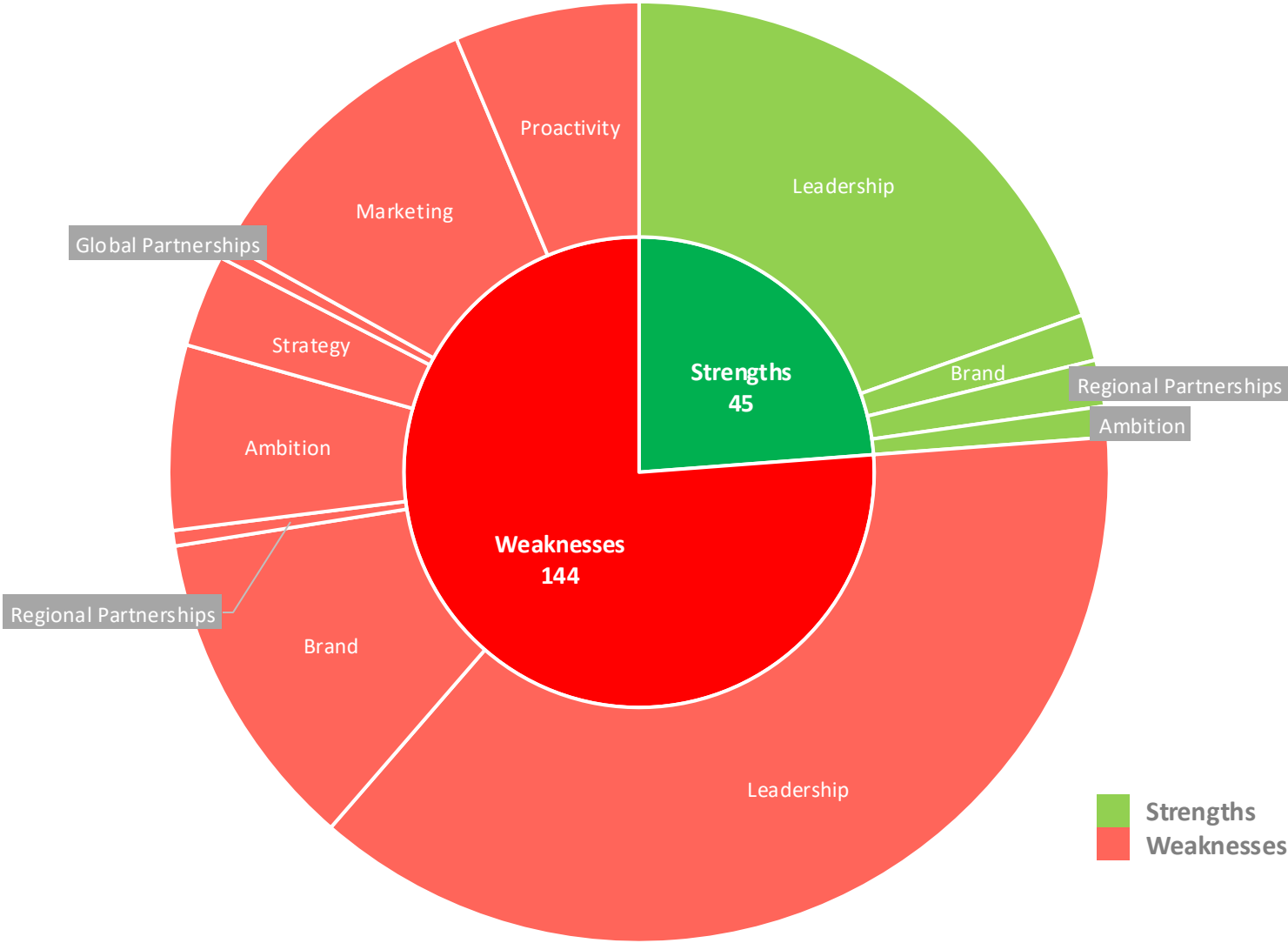
# Aspiration and Bold Vision

## Interview Themes

**Aspiration and Bold Vision** - To build confidence, ambition, and buy-in with stakeholders. A unique identity and brand helps communicate the ecosystem value proposition for businesses and people. It provides a way to define near-and long-term success measures to keep on track.

The central theme focused on leadership, specifically the absence of a clear innovation or cluster leadership group. As a result, the county's branding and marketing have not been developed.

Interview themes categorised and counted by strengths and weaknesses



Survey and interview responses related to Aspiration and Bold Vision are grouped into themes and tagged as weaknesses or strengths. For example, there were 144 comments on the weaknesses of Aspiration and Bold Vision in the county, and the most common theme is a weakness in leadership.



# Aspiration and Bold Vision

## Strengths and Weaknesses Overview



The county lacks **innovation leadership**. There are inspirational leaders in the form of businesses, individuals, and institutions, that act as enablers. However, most comments focused on a lack of leadership and a lack of a leadership group.



Northamptonshire lacks an overarching **clear vision** to build consensus and buy-in with key stakeholder groups.

- Some clusters such as Silverstone Technology Cluster (STC) have identified their strategic priorities but there is a lack of alignment to a broader Northamptonshire vision.
- A challenge is the physical location of Silverstone which sits across two counties.



The county lacks a **unique identity** (brand) to communicate the innovation ecosystem value proposition through storytelling / messaging.

- The issue is considered by some a problem with the counties lack of a brand, whilst other feel there is a brand, it is just poorly marketed. To support an innovation ecosystem, the region's unique strengths and identity must be communicated.



There are no near-and-long term **success metrics** to monitor progress.

- Although North Northants and West Northants Councils are developing their economic growth strategies that are expected to have a focus on innovation.

*"We're really lacking some leadership and direction.  
I think this is why everything is so siloed."*

Martin Lewis-Stevenson, Director, Pulse Group Media

*"I wouldn't say there is a clearly led innovation initiative for the county that I am aware of."*

Kevin Matthews, CEO, Scott Bader

*"I think there needs to be, like the STC, some sort of special interest group which is led by some of the industry leaders who ultimately take a custodian kind of approach to it."*

Dolores Sanders, Co-Founder and Strategic Director, Total Control Pro

*"There is not sufficient clarity around the questions: Who are we? What do we do? What's significant?"*

Dominic Hopkins, Joint Head of the Central England Office, HCR Hewitsons

*"A target focuses people's minds."*

Rob Howe, Head of Learning Technology, The University of Northampton

# Aspiration and Bold Vision

## Strengths and Weaknesses Overview

---



The county does not instill a sense of **ambition and confidence** amongst individuals in Northamptonshire. Forming a positive vision and a culture is essential.



It is vital that an effective innovation leadership group does not **replicate mistakes** made in the past.

***"We have lots of ideas but simply not the confidence to take that and do something with it."***

Dominic Hopkins, Joint Head of the Central England Office,  
HCR Hewitsons

***"We tried to put a committee together of people, but it became a talking shop."***

Anonymous

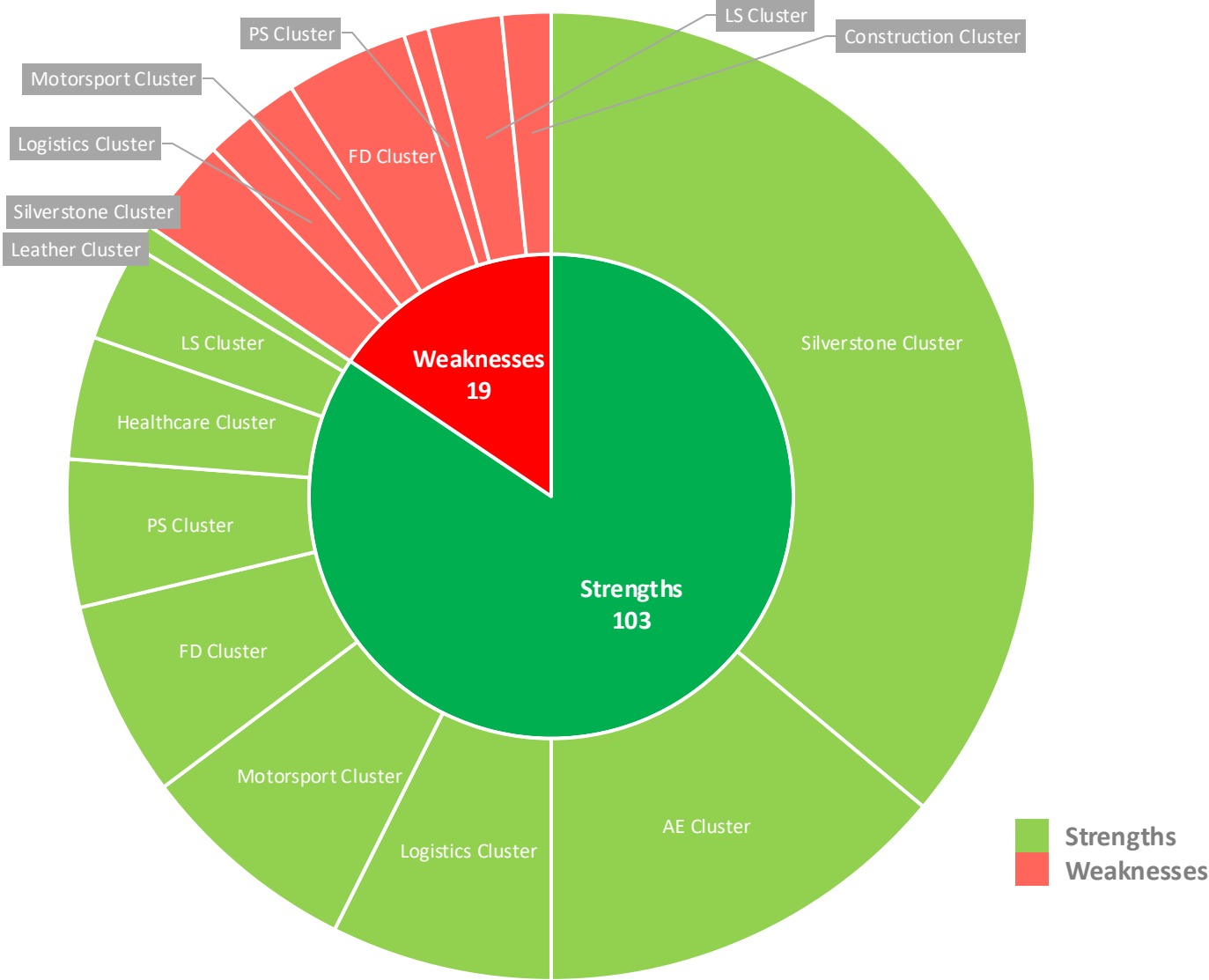
# Cluster and Partner Strategy

## Cluster Interview Themes

**Cluster and Partner Strategy** - Local leaders and developers build clusters based on the regions existing skills, infrastructure and institutional strengths of anchor organisations. Leveraging market trends strategically to support developing new value propositions.

Cluster and partner themes relating to industry clusters highlights the existing strengths and anchor institutions in advanced engineering, logistics, and food and drink.

Interview themes categorised and counted by strengths and weaknesses



Survey and interview responses related to Cluster and Partner Strategy are grouped into themes and tagged as weaknesses or strengths. For example, there were 103 comments on the strengths of Cluster and Partner Strategy in the county, and the most common theme is the strength of Silverstone.

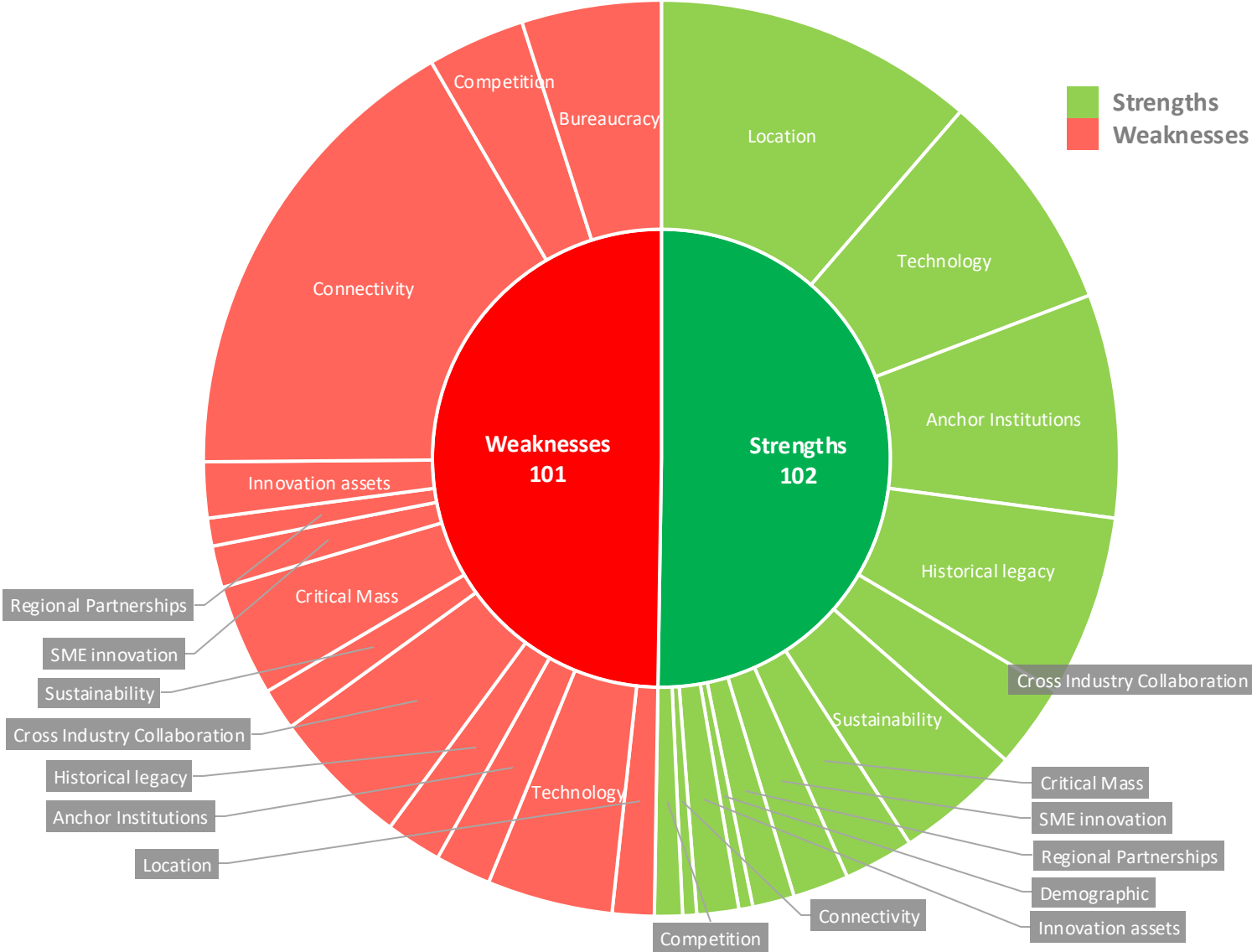
# Cluster and Partner Strategy

## General Interview Themes

**Cluster and Partner Strategy** - Local leaders and developers build clusters based on the regions existing skills, infrastructure and institutional strengths of anchor organisations. Leveraging market trends strategically to support developing new value propositions.

Discussions covered a wide range of themes. Key areas of focus included the lack of connectivity, the region's excellent location, and the strengths and weaknesses of technology adoption.

Interview themes categorised and counted by strengths and weaknesses



Survey and interview responses related to Cluster and Partner Strategy are grouped into themes and tagged as weaknesses or strengths. For example, there were 102 comments on the strengths of Cluster and Partner Strategy in the county, and the most common theme is the strength of the location..

# Clusters and Partner Strategy

## Strengths and Weaknesses Overview



**Silverstone** is the most notable cluster in Northamptonshire that has a strategic focus on Advanced Engineering and Innovation. It includes STC that runs networking events amongst other initiatives to facilitate greater collaboration.



Northamptonshire has an abundance of logistics parks, including the forthcoming Segro Logistics Park that is expected to deliver easy access to motorways, ports, railways, and airports. The county also sits within the **Logistics Golden Triangle** with a high density of distribution facilities.



Northamptonshire has several large anchor institutions in the **food and drink sector**, a strong agriculture sector, and developing food tech sector.



While Northamptonshire has sector-based clusters, there is no evidence that points to a deliberate **cluster and partner strategy** involving local leaders.

- In Logistics, our research found no local cross-sector strategy to capitalise on market trends and build new value propositions, though some firms have partnerships with robotics companies outside the county.



The county faces a broader issue of weak cross-sector collaboration and **connectivity**. Travel between different parts of the county is difficult, limiting communication between areas and clusters. Even within clusters, communication is sometimes questioned.

*“STC is a real jewel in the crown in terms of activity.”*

Lewis Stringer, Senior Manager of the UK Network Team,  
British Business Bank

*“Undoubtedly you've got a heritage in motorsport.”*

Anonymous

*“We do have some incredible logistics operations. It's exciting.”*

Dolores Sanders, Co-Founder and Strategic Director,  
Total Control Pro

*“Northamptonshire hits well above its weight for food manufacturing. You have got some innovative brands like Weetabix, Whitworth, and Heygates.”*

Duncan Farrington, Managing Director, Farrington Oils

*“Feels like there could be opportunity in those sectors [logistics and advanced engineering] working together.”*

Johnny Wake, Managing Partner, Courteenhall Farms

*“Quite a few of these [businesses] in their own bubbles, doing their own thing, but not so well connected.”*

Clare Elsby, Head of People & Culture, Elsby & Co

*“Different components of the ecosystem are not always joined up to connect and collaborate.”*

James Geary, Managing Partner, EMW Law LLP and Hassan 23  
Shah, Partner, EMW Law LLP



# Case Study

## Advanced Engineering Cluster



Industry

**Advanced Engineering**



Turnover

**£100m**



Location

**Northampton South**



Employee count

**572**

£100M

Turnover Growth

£50M

£0M



# Cosworth

Cosworth boasts a rich heritage. Leveraging its reputation for high quality and innovation in motorsport, the business has successfully diversified into a broader range of technologies and industries. The most significant shift has been its focus on sustainability, whilst also expanding into new sectors such as production vehicles, smart mobility, aviation, defense, and marine.

In 2014, Cosworth opened a state-of-the-art manufacturing facility, positioning the company at the cutting edge of automotive manufacturing. The business exemplifies the regional cluster strength in motorsport and advanced engineering.

*“Since we’ve become involved in the cluster, it’s been a real eye opening and very positive experience. It enables us to not be insulated in our thinking, we get to sit down and discuss innovative ideas, look at new technologies, manufacturing processes and materials. We get to understand how other people are using them. I think Pim and his team have been able to foster a collaborative culture on Silverstone itself which is very valuable.”*

**Nicholas Greenway, Global Director of Marketing and Sustainability, Cosworth**



# Clusters and Partner Strategy

## Strengths and Weaknesses Overview



Whilst there are multiple organisations and established institutions in the **construction** sector, they do not seem to come together to form a cluster. Engagement with the sector was limited and the sector lacks a level of innovation identified in other industries.



The **University of Northampton and the colleges** do not have an **anchor role** in all of the key sectors. However, the University's graduate pipeline does fill roles in local businesses, particularly healthcare and logistics.



Northamptonshire has a **heritage in shoemaking** albeit majority of manufacturing activity is concentrated at high-end brands.



While challenges remain, there is a growing desire for **less bureaucracy** and **greater collaboration** among the two councils. It is essential to foster trust and cooperation to achieve a more unified county.



In some instances, the **critical mass** of businesses and people was noted as a weakness, particularly in the life sciences sector. Some interviewees suggested a more regional approach to combat the critical mass issue (i.e., lack of an agglomeration of businesses).

*"I wouldn't say we are known for construction."*

Louise Wall, CEO, Northamptonshire and Milton Keynes Chamber of Commerce.

*"I'm not even sure that University of Northampton is doing particularly anything to actually drive innovation."*

Anonymous

*"We have a strong heritage in innovating products going back, we have created a shoe industry that has a reputation worldwide. That has not happened without innovation"*

Dominic Hopkins, Joint Head of the Central England Office, HCR Hewitsons

*"What's my biggest business challenge? I never hesitate. I say it's planning permission."*

Anonymous

*"Their [the two councils] perceived lack of collaboration could be an obstacle to achieving county-wide initiatives."*

Anonymous

*"I think it's about critical mass and I'm not sure that Northamptonshire on its own has enough."*

Rob Purdie, Advisory Board, Central Arc Angels

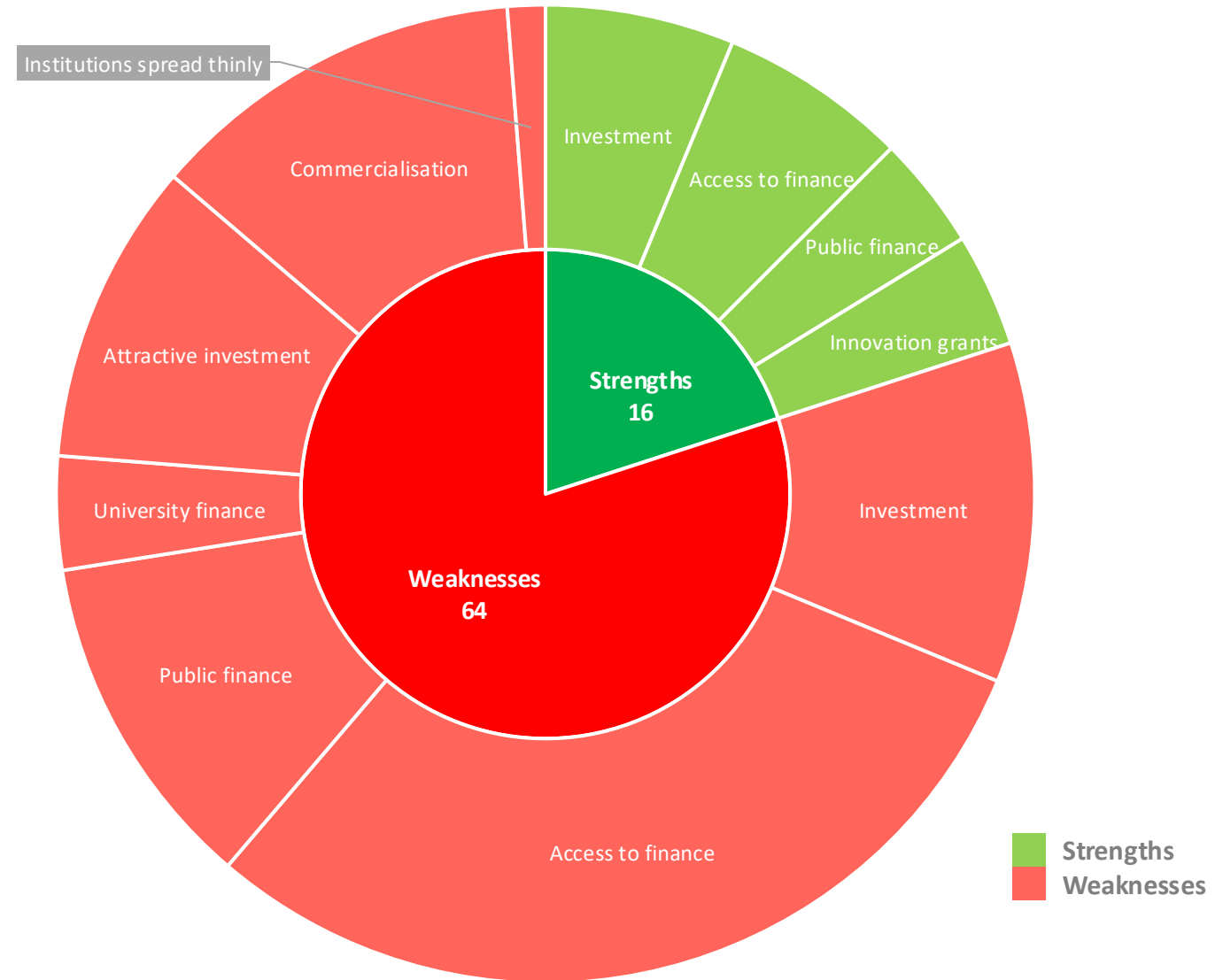


# Capital & Funding Interview Themes

**Capital & Funding** - Develop an integrated innovation funnel that spans from ideation, commercialisation, startups, to scaleups – to attract investors, including venture capital. For example, physical spaces (hubs / accelerators) to showcase startups.

The themes in interviews focused on the difficulty in accessing various types of finance and the desire to focus on supporting commercialisation of fledgling ideas and products.

Interview themes categorised and counted by strengths and weaknesses



Survey and interview responses related to Capital & Funding are grouped into themes and tagged as weaknesses or strengths. For example, there were 64 comments on the weaknesses of Capital & Funding in the county, and the most common theme is the weakness of access to finance.

# Capital & Funding

## Strengths and Weaknesses Overview



Northamptonshire lacks an integrated **innovation funnel** that spans from ideation, commercialisation, startups, to scaleups – to attract investors, including venture capital.

- Angel investment activity and Venture Capital investment appears to be low. However, some companies, for example in the STC appear to have attracted international inward investment.
- While physical spaces like Vulcan Works are available to foster collaboration, our research so far did not reveal any local accelerators programs or similar spaces to showcase startups, perform hackathons, or other activities to foster growth.



There are success stories of **grant funding** and whilst some scaleups in the region have received Innovate UK funding to support their growth and development, the overall uptake of Innovate UK funding opportunities by small-and-medium sized enterprises (SMEs) in the county is low.

- Several businesses commented on the difficulty of accessing funding due to the arduous process or the significant capital demands.
- Whilst grants are successful for some businesses, they are often the wrong approach to financing. More options and easier access to finance is essential.

*“You don't really have active VCs that I'm aware of, there is not that sort of infrastructure in the area.”*

Kevin Matthews, CEO, Scott Bader

*“There's lots of money floating around but people really don't know how to access that.”*

Rob Purdie, Advisory Board, Central Arc Angels

*“A forum to discuss different avenues of growth, including private equity investment, would be welcomed.”*

Nicole Wong, Investment Manager, LDC

*“We have had various funding opportunities through Innovate UK.”*

Dolores Sanders, Co-Founder and Strategic Director,  
Total Control Pro

*“I occasionally do see people looking for grants when what they actually need is revenue, they need investment, they need a different approach.”*

Rob Purdie, Advisory Board, Central Arc Angels

# Case Study

## Grant Funding



Industry

**Advanced Engineering**



Turnover

**Unknown**



Location

**South Northamptonshire**



Employee count

**34**

Employee Growth



# Dumarey Flybrid

Before their acquisition and renaming, Flybrid received six grants from Innovate UK, totalling £1.48m between 2012 and 2017, with an additional £1.93m secured between 2017 and 2021.

The most notable and recent grant, amounting to £1.43m, supported a project in collaboration with UK partners to develop cutting-edge electric motors, inverters, and flywheel energy storage systems. This initiative resulted in the establishment of three new manufacturing centres, the creation of 750 jobs, and significant reductions in CO2 emissions, thereby driving advancements in the UK's hybrid and electric vehicle technology.

Throughout its journey, Dumarey Flybrid's steady influx of grants provided a critical platform for innovation, enabling the company to develop new technologies in partnership with other organisations. This collaborative approach played a pivotal role in their growth and facilitated the launch of sustainable technologies into the market.



# Capital & Funding

## Strengths and Weaknesses Overview



One of the reasons for low levels of private investment was the lack of **business education** and the inability to effectively communicate with funds managers.



There appears to be a lack of awareness or understanding about suitability to qualify for **UKRI** funding opportunities – and the availability of **R&D Tax Credits**.



Northamptonshire's startup rate is good but transitioning these businesses to become **scaleups** is challenging due to a lack of funding and resources to support firm growth.

- A high volume of startups were identified in most key sectors examined.



Local professional services firms operating in key sectors are accessing business support services, though a more integrated approach and signposting could improve their utilisation within the county.



The University lacks spinouts and is not successful at **commercialisation**. Businesses would like to see the university take a more active role in supporting businesses in accessing finance and commercialising products.

*"Businesses in the East Midlands particularly are very bad at putting in business plans. We don't have the specific expertise locally; Milton Keynes and Birmingham would be the nearest finance hubs."*

Clare Elsby, Head of People & Culture, Elsby & Co

*"The danger with VCs is they probably don't fully understand the technology they're investing in, which makes it hard for them to gauge the risk or often contribute fully."*

Rob Lewis, Managing Director, TotalSim

*"I think the university doing spin outs, for example, and being more engaging with the business community, like the Angel Network."*

Rob Purdie, Advisory Board, Central Arc Angels

*"None of the universities are great drivers of commercialisation [in the locality]. Only two that probably buck that trend are University of Nottingham and Cranfield."*

Lewis Stringer, Senior Manager of the UK Network Team,  
British Business Bank

*"I think the issue we've got is some of these small guys make absolutely brilliant products but the packaging needs work, and they've got no way of commercialising it."*

Tom Warner, Founder, Warner's Distillery

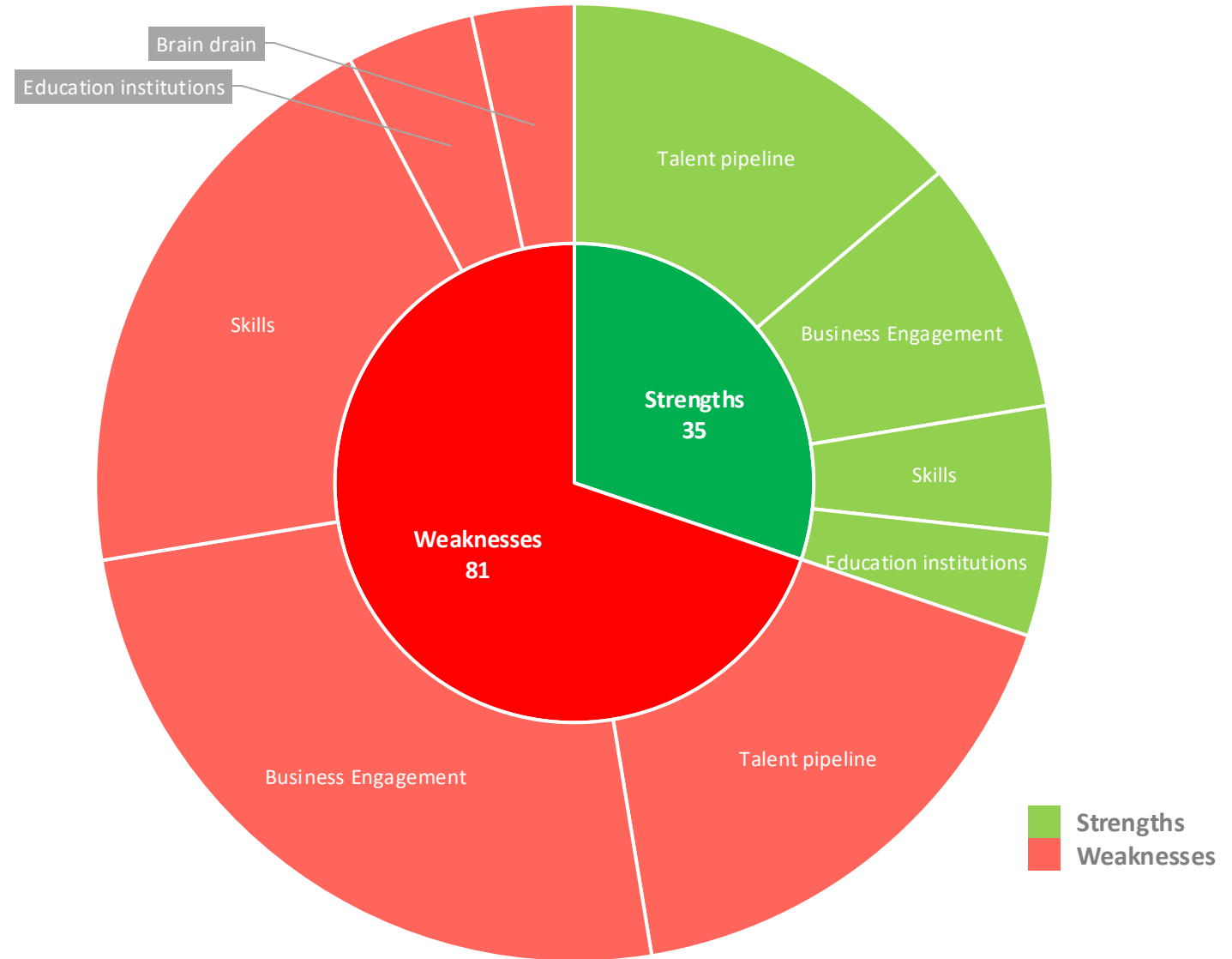
# Talent & Community Building

## Education Interview Themes

**Talent & Community Building** - A coordinated talent strategy and pipeline is critical for successful ecosystems. Attracting, retaining, and developing talent relies on creating relatable aspirations and the presence of appealing anchor institutions.

Focusing on the educational institutions and skills in the region revealed a desire for these institutions to better align with and engage the business community, helping address the shrinking talent pools in key sectors.

Interview themes categorised and counted by strengths and weaknesses



Survey and interview responses related to Talent & Community Building are grouped into themes and tagged as weaknesses or strengths. For example, there were 81 comments on the weaknesses of Talent & Community Building in the county, and the most common theme is the weakness of business engagement.

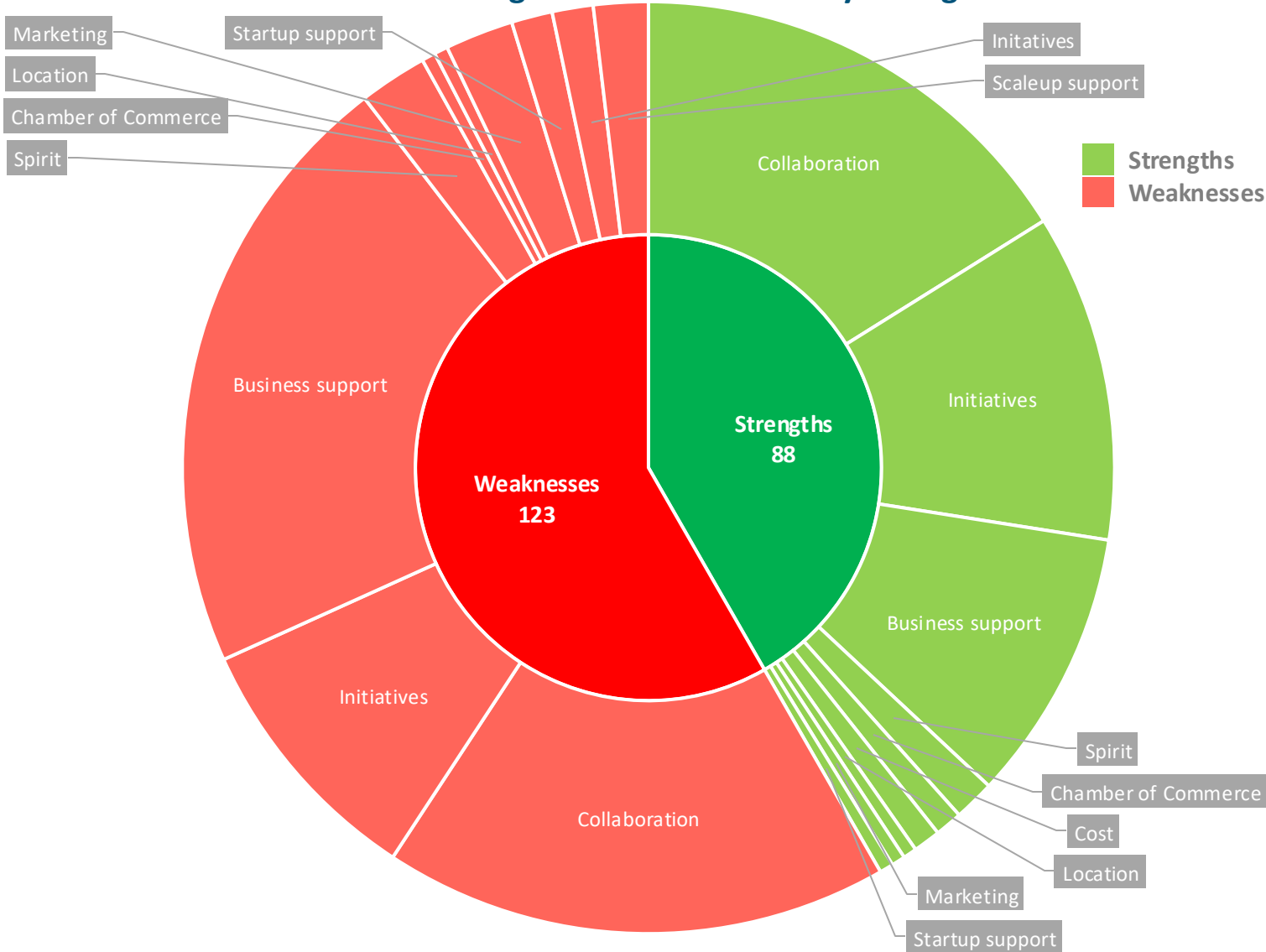
# Talent & Community Building

## Education Interview Themes

**Talent & Community Building** - A coordinated talent strategy and pipeline is critical for successful ecosystems. Attracting, retaining, and developing talent relies on creating relatable aspirations and the presence of appealing anchor institutions.

When discussing the broader community, there was a clear demand for enhanced business support, as well as the continuation and improvement of collaborative activities and networks.

Interview themes categorised and counted by strengths and weaknesses



Survey and interview responses related to Talent & Community Building are grouped into themes and tagged as weaknesses or strengths. For example, there were 123 comments on the weaknesses of Talent & Community Building in the county, and the most common theme is the weakness of business support.



# Talent & Community Building

## Strengths and Weaknesses Overview



There is high demand for greater **business support** for innovation. There are insufficient levels of business support and the support that does exist lacks effective marketing and communication.

- Business support demands ranged from basic hand holding on general business matters, finance, facilities, grants, technical support, and much more.
- Interviewees felt the business representative organisations had a bigger role to play including the Growth hub, FSB, and the STC.
- There is desire for clarity, a one stop shop, more conferences on support, and better support from organisations.



Whilst business support can be improved, there is recognition of the **business representative organisations** and **initiatives** organised in the county to bring individuals and businesses together. Vulcan Works, Eagle Labs, Digital Northants, FSB, the Lieutenancy, STC and many more were recognised for the events and support they provide.



However, there is an insufficient volume of **physical spaces** and **networking events** dedicated to fostering innovation. There is a desire for more focused and structured initiatives to encourage greater collaboration within Northamptonshire.

*"I would like to see it [support groups] as a way of channeling, funneling funding, raising up ideas, supporting people, supporting the county."*

Rob Howe, Head of Learning Technology, The University of Northampton

*"We need to embrace everyone who wants to start new business, and I don't think we're reaching the people who could really bring some great skills and value to us. And as a result, they start businesses in isolation and that doesn't serve anybody very well."*

Dolores Sanders, Co-Founder and Strategic Director, Total Control Pro

*"I think the food and drink awards are great at bringing together lots of different organisations particularly within the sector."*

Simon Derrick, Head of Sustainability, Blue Skies

*"I've never been invited to an innovation themed day."*

Kevin Matthews, CEO, Scott Bader

*"I just wish there was a lot more of them [events]."*

Andy Long, Managing Director, DaniHar Technology

*"I think every day is a school day and everybody can learn from everybody."*

Tom Warner, Founder, Warner's Distillery



# Case Study Collaboration



Industry

**Food and Drink**



Turnover

**£137m**



Location

**Daventry**



Employee count

**5588**

£150M

Turnover Growth

£75M

£0M



## Blue Skies

Blue Skies engages in collaborations for social initiatives and research to address and overcome various challenges. Partnerships include working with the University of Northampton (UON); every year an innovation competition is run giving students a chance to pitch sustainable business ideas.

Collaborations also stretch into R&D such as working with the UON for a social impact study, the University of Birmingham to develop a biodiversity measurement framework, and launching the Fresh Produce Impact Hub for organisations and research partners to tackle sustainability challenges together. The businesses research and collaboration is essential for innovation and development.

*“There is a sustainability challenge called FRESHPACT which Blue Skies setup with UON looking to support the fresh produce sector and beyond. It is about understanding what the shared challenges organisations have and finding solutions to change and address those, whether it's through a call for proposals, access to grants, or just by making those connections.”*

**Simon Derrick, Head of Sustainability, Blue Skies**

# Talent & Community Building

## Strengths and Weaknesses Overview



Some local FE colleges and the University of Northampton (UON) have courses and **projects with firms in the key sectors** examined, for example Moulton College and the UON in Food and Drink Manufacturing.



The county does not appear to have a coordinated **talent pipeline strategy** – although talent and skills shortages is a UK wide challenge, particularly in STEM subjects. The county like other regions has developed a local skills improvement plan.



Furthermore, the university and colleges are not always **aligned to local business clusters**, particularly advanced engineering. One reason for this is the engagement from the university is sometimes poor.



There was a concern about the access to skills in the region. A lot of businesses were hiring nationally or internationally because there was not a strong **local talent pool**, particularly in the areas of technology and advanced engineering.

*"I work really closely with the three colleges in terms of food and drink. We've got an amazing food and drink Innovation Centre at Moulton College, which was funded through the LEP and has a focus primarily on training young people"*

Rachel Mallows, Managing Director, The Mallows Company

*"In order for us to lean into talent and future skills you need to have industries, academia and councils working together with the same goal to say, well, here's the facilities, here's the business cases, here's the training and here's the roadmap where we can make sure that we've got these skills by 2030 that don't exist today."*

Ashley Burton, Regional General Manager, GXO

*"I've tried to get involved in Northampton University and also Northampton College, not really got much kind of engagement"*

Andy Long, Managing Director, DaniHar Technology

*"We don't see a lot of synergy between higher education and high-performance technology in this county, there is definitely room for improvement."*

Rob Lewis, Managing Director, TotalSim

*"Sadly, a lot of them are starting to retire now. We have a major skills gap here."*

Andy Long, Managing Director, DaniHar Technology

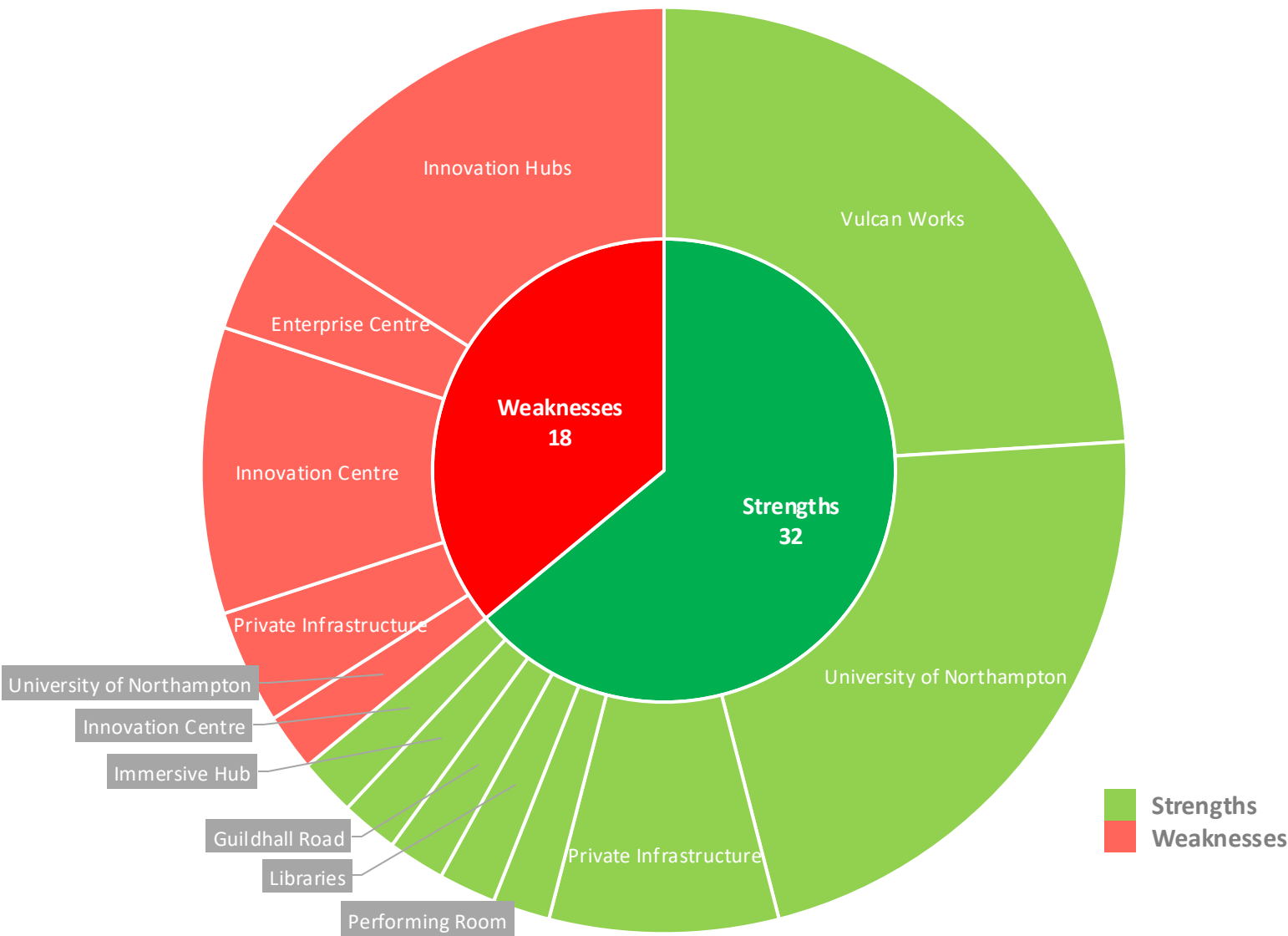
# Real Estate, Infrastructure & Place Making

## Locations Interview Themes

**Real Estate, Infrastructure & Place Making** - Building local environments including suitable commercial space for prioritised sectors; residential spaces; open public spaces; and "place-making" infrastructure where people want to work, live, and play is essential.

Comments on various locations in the county highlighted strong positivity around Vulcan Works, the university, and private infrastructure. However, there is demand for more targeted innovation hubs.

Interview themes categorised and counted by strengths and weaknesses



Survey and interview responses related to Real Estate, Infrastructure & Place Making are grouped into themes and tagged as weaknesses or strengths. For example, there were 32 comments on the strengths of Real Estate, Infrastructure & Place Making in the county, and the most common theme is the strength of Vulcan Works.

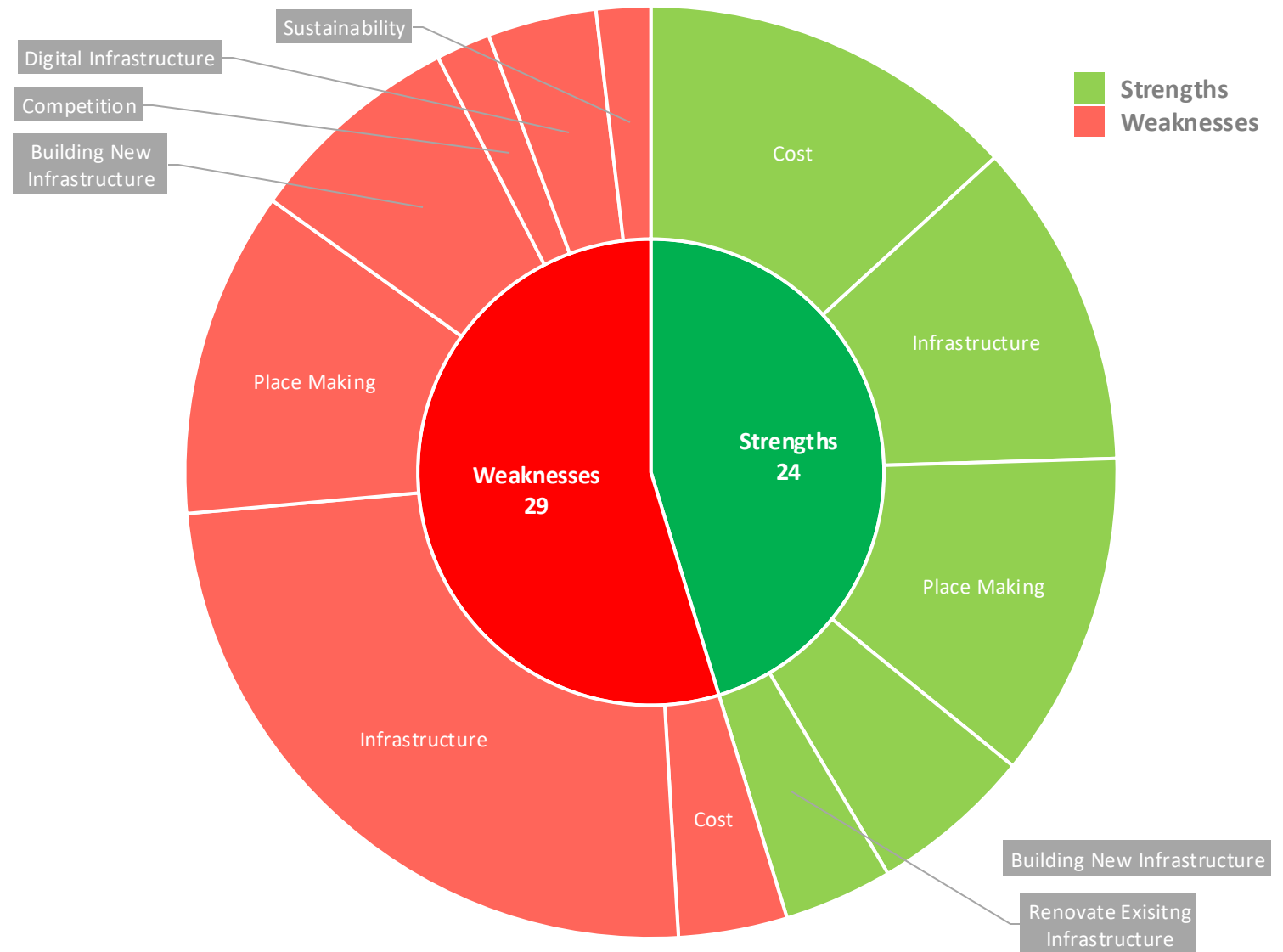
# Real Estate, Infrastructure & Place Making

## General Interview Themes

**Real Estate, Infrastructure & Place Making** - Building local environments including suitable commercial space for prioritised sectors; residential spaces; open public spaces; and "place-making" infrastructure where people want to work, live, and play is essential.

The relatively low cost of living is a strong incentive for businesses and residents. However, concerns remain about the region's public infrastructure, with a desire to create a more connected county featuring attractive and desirable locations.

Interview themes categorised and counted by strengths and weaknesses



Survey and interview responses related to Real Estate, Infrastructure & Place Making building are grouped into themes and tagged as weaknesses or strengths. For example, there were 29 comments on the weaknesses of Real Estate, Infrastructure & Place Making in the county, and the most common theme is the weakness of infrastructure.

# Real Estate, Infrastructure & Place Making

## Strengths and Weaknesses Overview



Northamptonshire's **geographic location** offers significant advantages for all sectors. The logistics cluster has boomed because of the location, as well as good agricultural land that supports growth of the local Food & Drink manufacturing sector.



Several locations were identified as excellent pieces of **real estate** that act as hubs, areas for collaboration, and venues for initiatives. The most referenced were the Vulcan Works and the University. Along with public venues, there are several private locations mentioned that could be opened more often for community use.



The county has significant **private real estate** in key sectors such as the SEGRO Logistics Park Northampton (SLPN) in logistics; advanced engineering albeit concentrated mainly in Silverstone; and large food and drink manufacturing sites such as Weetabix and Carlsberg.



The county is developing locations to improve **attractiveness and quality of life**, but there was a desire to create more vibrant and interesting places for people to live and work.

***"The access is brilliant, great road network, brilliant rail network, not far from London."***

Phil Zeidler, Chair and Non-Executive Director, BigZee Consulting

***"The [University of Northampton] campus could be a real driver for greater activity in the marketplace."***

Lewis Stringer, Senior Manager of the UK Network Team, British Business Bank

***"I went to an event at DMC and I was very impressed with the technology and what they're doing. You get a better sense of that being in the space and seeing it in firsthand."***

Nicholas Greenway, Global Director of Marketing and Sustainability, Cosworth

***"Northamptonshire has got some fantastic companies but the towns haven't necessarily caught up. County wide it doesn't feel to me that it's necessarily a vibrant, lively place."***

Duncan Farrington, Managing Director, Farrington Oils

***"Northamptonshire is suffering and could be looking over the border at what is happening in Buckinghamshire where there is a lot of positive development taking place."***

Stuart Pringle, Managing Director, Silverstone Circuits



# Real Estate, Infrastructure & Place Making

## Strengths and Weaknesses Overview



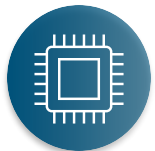
Northamptonshire's largest towns and key industrial areas are dispersed over a large area. There is a need for strategic placemaking policies and initiatives that include improved transportation infrastructure to allow for better **physical connectivity** across the county to support innovation. This encourages development of more spaces where people want to "work, live, and play".



The county has no towns that incorporate **innovation districts** with a high agglomeration of diverse range of businesses and mixed-use real estate to enable walkability. This supports more collaboration activity to develop new propositions which ultimately encourages large capital investments to the area.



There is good land supply that can support sustainable future economic development opportunities. Furthermore, the **low cost of land** and rent is strength.



There are plans for some **major infrastructure investment** in the county such as the Kettering Energy Park and digital infrastructure projects. However digital infrastructure was raised as a concern, with some suggestions Northamptonshire is slow to adopt.

*"The county is being split into two, and it's almost like the A14 is a barrier between what the north and south of Northamptonshire."*

Chris Lambert, Technical Director, Datasense

*"What we have is more affordable housing, more affordable commercial space, better commercial space."*

Rob Purdie, Advisory Board, Central Arc Angels

*"Digital infrastructure is getting better but I think we are slightly behind the curve."*

Chris Lambert, Technical Director, Datasense

# Diversity, Equality & Inclusion

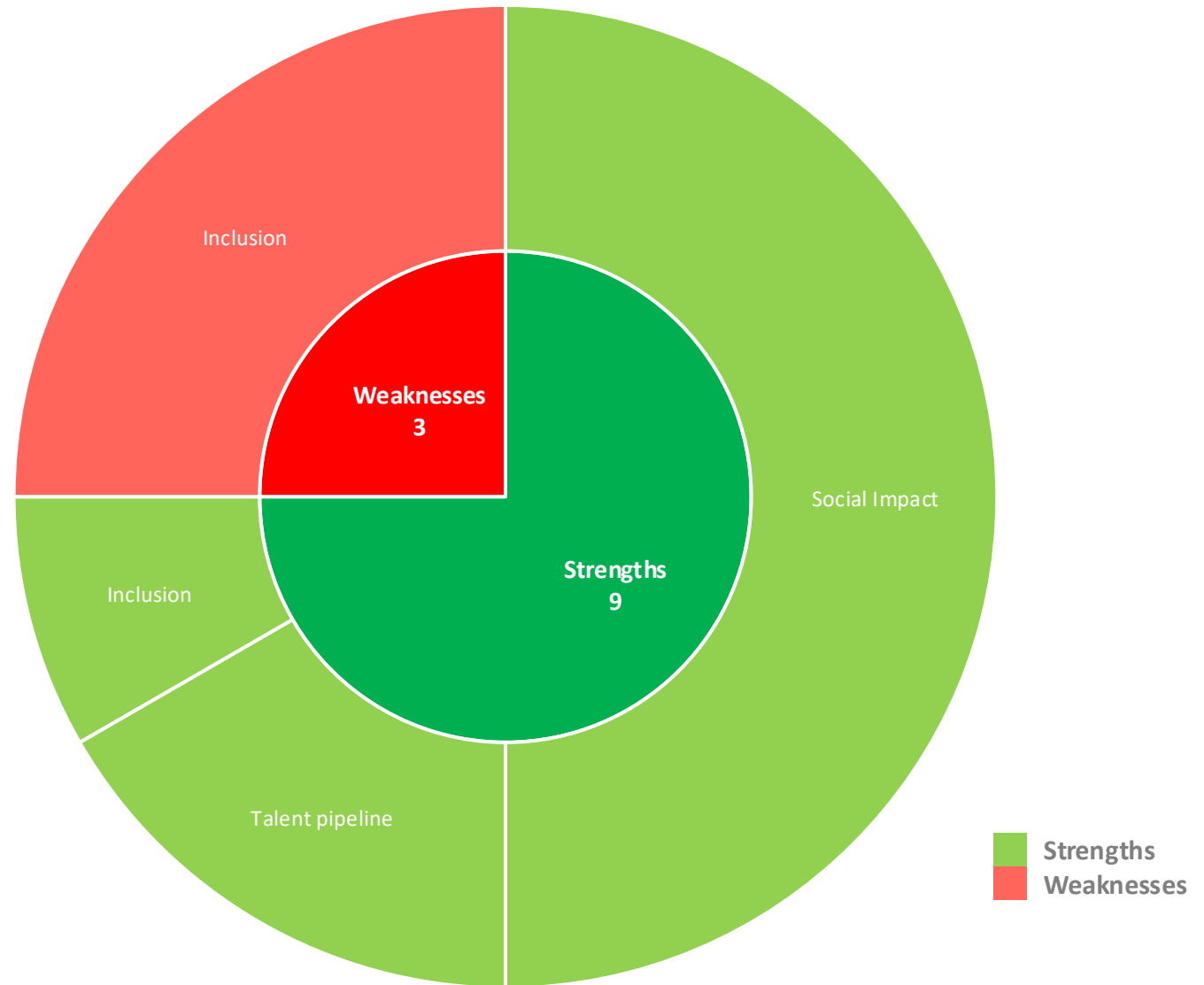
## Interview Themes

### Diversity, Equality & Inclusion -

Successful ecosystems embrace inclusive growth, where local community building and shared prosperity is prioritised. Local leaders implement policies and initiatives that create opportunities for disadvantaged communities.

The social impact of the university is a strength for the region and efforts to build the talent pipeline have been successful.

Interview themes categorised and counted by strengths and weaknesses



Survey and interview responses related to Diversity, Equality & Inclusion are grouped into themes and tagged as weaknesses or strengths. For example, there were 9 comments on the strengths of Diversity, Equality & Inclusion in the county, and the most common theme is the strength of social impact.



# Diversity, Equality, & Inclusion

## Strengths and Weaknesses Overview



Many companies in sectors like logistics and construction are developing **innovative HR policies** to address the poor public perception about working environments. Initiatives observed include employee ownership trusts and innovative benefits packages aimed at treating their employees well.



One business has a **training programme** to support disadvantaged individuals, and the course has been highly effective.



**The University of Northampton** was commended in interviews for its diversity and focus on **social impact**. In 2024 they hosted the international UnderOne Festival that brings together DEI & HR professionals to network, collaborate and share knowledge through workshops.



However, Northamptonshire does not appear to have an **integrated strategic plan** developed by local leaders that includes policies and initiative to support diffusion of innovation and technology into low-income and disadvantaged communities – thereby supporting local economic prosperity.

***“On the innovation side we need a diverse representation as well.”***

Anonymous

***“A programme which is training a lot of people from a wide variety of backgrounds including individuals with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.”***

James Straw, Director of Capital Deployment and Leasing, Prologis

***“University of Northampton have focused on things such as social impact and social businesses. Absolutely fantastic.”***

Lewis Stringer, Senior Manager of the UK Network Team, British Business Bank

# Case Study

## Equality



Industry  
**Logistics**



Turnover  
**£32m**



Location  
**Kettering**



Employee count  
**270**



# Logistex

Logistex transitioned to an Employee Ownership Trust (EOT) in 2018, shifting its ownership structure to empower employees. Under this model, employee-owners share in the company's success, ensuring that as the business thrives, so do its workers. This is encapsulated by the statement on the company website which reads “As an EOT it is much more than just being able to share in the profit and success of the business. Your opinion matters and you become an integral part of the team. You’ll be a name, not just a number, where your contribution will be truly valued.” There was a significant spike in turnover growth after the change was made to the company structure.

Furthermore, Logistex upholds employee-centred values such as teamwork, trust, and safety to foster a transparent and positive work environment. Financial reward and a healthy working environment results in a good company culture, an environment that is key for sustainable growth.



# Assessing Key External Opportunities and Threats

An analysis of key external factors presenting opportunities and threats for Northamptonshire businesses. This section includes a summary of the main themes identified from desk research and stakeholder interviews, supported by quotes and case studies.

# Opportunities

## Interview Themes

### Identifying External Opportunities for Innovation and Growth -

Interviews consistently highlighted technology as a major opportunity, with significant potential to transform all key business sectors in the region. Sustainability also emerged as a critical area of focus, alongside partnerships with neighbours and regional bodies.

Interview themes categorised and counted by opportunity



*Survey and interview responses related to opportunities are grouped into themes. Word size relates to the number of comments on the opportunity.*

# Threats

## Interview Themes

**Identifying external threats to mitigate impact** - The most pressing threat facing the county is competition from neighbouring regions. This threat manifests in several ways, including the potential to attract businesses and talent away, thereby weakening the county's competitive edge. Additionally, the nationwide shortage of skills and talent is a significant concern, further exacerbating these challenges and posing long-term risks to growth and development.

### Interview themes categorised and counted by threats



*Survey and interview responses related to threats are grouped into themes. Word size relates to the number of comments on the threat.*

# Opportunities and Threats

## Competition and Collaboration



A major opportunity and threat considered by several stakeholders was the **threat of competition** and the **opportunity of collaboration** with neighbouring regions.



Predominantly there was concern that neighbouring regions are more **attractive innovation hubs** in comparison to Northamptonshire. The threat is businesses may leave the area or businesses will setup in other counties.



Several interviewees have relationships with **competing universities** like Cranfield, Warwick, or Nottingham.



The **connectivity** and **cohesiveness** of the county is **threatened by neighbouring regions**. Whilst these region provide opportunity for businesses, the draw of alternative locations can undermine collaboration within the county.

*“One of the problems with the Oxford Cambridge Arc is I don't think Northamptonshire is in the centre of it. I think Bedford and Milton Keynes are in the centre of it.”*

Rob Purdie, Advisory Board, Central Arc Angels

*“My first port of call is the University of Nottingham. They've got a food science team, lab space and they're very good at getting grant funding. I don't know if the University of Northampton have got the same facilities.”*

Tom Warner, Founder, Warner's Distillery

*“If you are in the north of the county, you might be thinking of your relationship with Leicester, Peterborough or Cambridgeshire. If you're in the south of the county, you might be thinking of your relationship with Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire. Everywhere is looking somewhere else and not into the centre.”*

Dominic Hopkins, Joint Head of the Central England Office, HCR Hewitsons

*“The biggest thing is that we lose all of our young talent. My grown-up children left Northampton. They had no desire to stay.”*

Dolores Sanders, Co-Founder and Strategic Director, Total Control Pro.

# Opportunities and Threats

## Competition and Collaboration

---



Several opportunities to **collaborate with regional partners** were raised in interviews. The opportunities to work alongside external partners, capitalise on their successes and strengths, and draw business to the region to share success. The critical mass of the region rather than the county could open more opportunities.

***“...potential relationship between Northampton and Milton Keynes seems to be more real.”***

Lewis Stringer, Senior Manager of the UK Network Team, British Business Bank

***“If we play our cards right, Ox Cam should be an opportunity, it's logical.”***

James Geary, Managing Partner, EMW Law LLP and Hassan Shah, Partner, EMW Law LLP

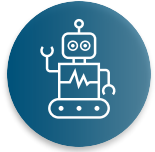
***“Both life sciences centres of Oxford and Cambridge are running out of space and are expensive places to be.”***

Kevin Matthews, CEO, Scott Bader



# Opportunities and Threats

## Technology



**Automation and digital technologies** offer significant opportunities for Northamptonshire businesses to raise productivity levels and develop new value propositions. Particularly in sectors associated with Northamptonshire like advanced engineering.



Research indicates that several companies across all key sectors are leveraging these technologies in their businesses and to develop new products/services. Interviewees were particularly complimentary of the **logistics sector** and the **adoption of technology**.



**Access to finance** and **key resources** (local knowledge and digital skills) to support investment in R&D projects are potential threats to exploiting the opportunities presented.



The use of **AI and data** will change the way business's function, and the skills required in organisations. This acts as both an opportunity to capitalise on efficiencies and new products, but also threatens jobs and could leave businesses and individuals behind.



There is a lot of **competition for large technology projects funding**, for example Milton Keynes and other cities have undertaken 5G and autonomous vehicle testing.

*"If there is an area of opportunity, I think it is going to be in technology, particularly in its applicability to industrial customers, because Northamptonshire has a very strong industrial base."*

Mike Bray, Group Lead of Innovation, R&D and DesignSpark, RS Group

*"Look at some of the advancements in robotics that are taking place in big warehouses."*

Rob Purdie, Advisory Board, Central Arc Angels

*"The whole area around AI and data, I think, is going to fundamentally change everything we do, and those people, business and regions that can adapt the quickest will be best placed to thrive in the future. AI will allow businesses to drive efficiencies which can help redeploy resources into more strategic objectives."*

Stuart Smith, Head of Public Sector, dbfb communications

*"Milton Keynes, they have ambitious big projects that they'll put on around autonomous 5G testing, driverless vehicles, and other things like that."*

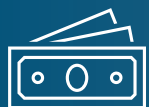
Richard Beards, Project Manager, Digital Northants

# Case Study Technology



Industry

**Logistics**



Turnover

**£28m**



Location

**S. Northamptonshire**



Employee count

**241**

Turnover Growth

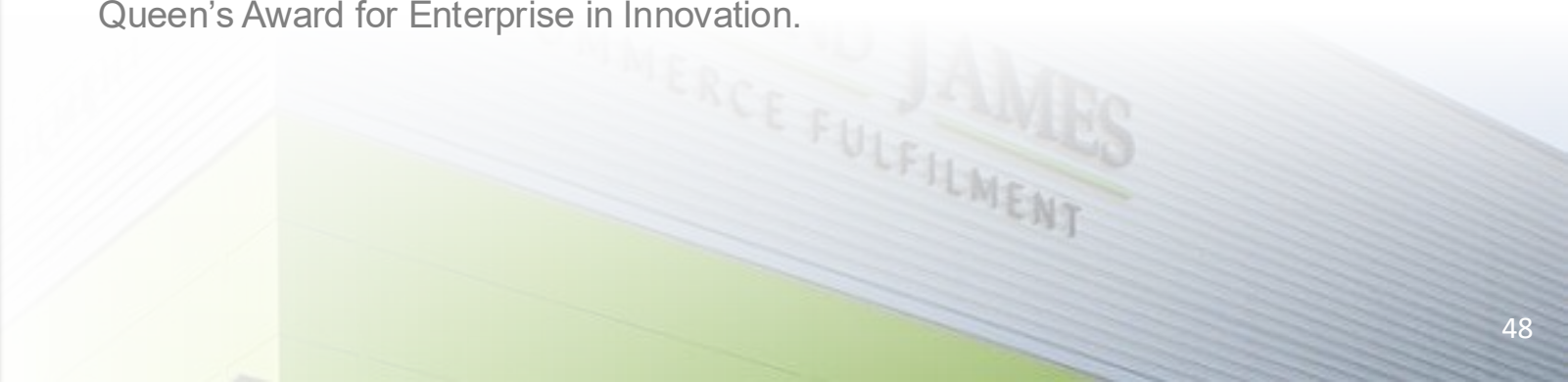


## James and James Fulfilment

James and James was created to challenge the industry and create a technology-led solution which is fit for the online retail market. The logistics industry has often been slow in its adoption of technology, so James and James's modern and fresh approach to fulfilment is disrupting the sector. The business has scaled very quickly and expanded to North America and Oceania.

The business's value proposition is their award-winning cloud-based software platform, ControlPort, which allows for order fulfilment from multiple channels and countries in one place, along with live order tracking.

Clients have access to insights through reporting on inventory and SKU performance, helping business owners run and grow their businesses more effectively. ControlPort's innovative capabilities were recognised with the prestigious Queen's Award for Enterprise in Innovation.



# Opportunities and Threats

## Sustainability



**Net zero**, energy security, building sustainable and resilient supply chains, waste reduction, and applying technology to sustainability are important opportunity areas for Northamptonshire.



There are various **public and private investment funding** options available to support sustainability value propositions.



Research indicates that many of the county's businesses across all key sector reviewed are developing propositions to take advantage of the focus on **sustainability** and **the green economy**.



There will be **competition for funding** to support sustainability projects. Northamptonshire as a region will need to showcase its value proposition – through branding and storytelling / messaging at a national UK level.



The regions clusters in **food and drink** manufacturing and **automotive engineering** are uniquely positioned to take advantage of opportunities in the sustainability space.

***"There are opportunities in EV vehicles and smart mobility."***

Andy Long, Managing Director, DaniHar Technology

***"In agriculture, there is a huge scope for research and innovation going forward."***

Duncan Farrington, Managing Director, Farrington Oils

***"Agriculture is in a particularly strong position to offer environmental solutions, like carbon sequestration and biodiversity net gain."***

Johnny Wake, Managing Partner, Courteenhall Farms

***"We've already invested in a megawatt of solar and we generate our own power 80% of the time. We're effectively off grid here at the circuit. We are not alone in wanting to be at the forefront of this next phase of climate management."***

Stuart Pringle, Managing Director, Silverstone Circuits

***"If we're serious about climate change, if we're serious about green energy and a green economy, then we need these enablers, and that is transportation and power generation."***

Stuart Pringle, Managing Director, Silverstone Circuits

# Case Study

## Sustainability



Industry

**Food and Drink**



Turnover

**Unknown**



Location

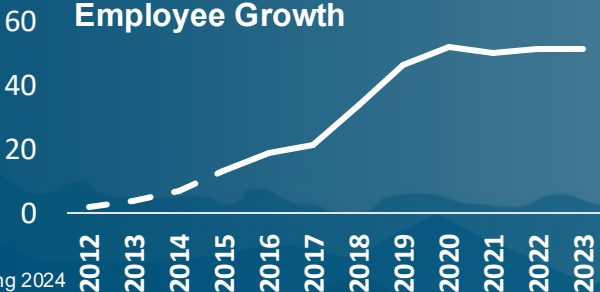
**Kettering**



Employee count

**51**

Employee Growth



# Warner's Distillery

Since its inception, Warner's Distillery has placed a strong emphasis on sustainability, aiming to create high-quality drinks in harmony with the surrounding environment. This commitment is encapsulated in their core value: "Striving to do right by the planet and be united in spirit."

Sustainability sits front and centre in their decision making. In recent years they have transitioned to 100% renewable energy, recycle 87% of waste, and have managed to save 2000 litres of water a day utilising smart meters.

*"We've launched a brand earlier this year called Trash and Treasure where all the flavouring uses food waste from other manufacturers. We've got a tropical rum flavoured with pineapple and mango peels from a prepared fruit factory in Corby. We've got a banana rum flavoured with bananas from Bedfordshire. We've got a citrus vodka made with lemon peels from Kent. We've got a raspberry vodka made with wonky raspberries from Herefordshire"*

**Tom Warner, Founder, Warner's Distillery**



# Opportunities and Threats

## Funding and Investment

---



A lot of research and development and innovation requires public money. The **future funding cuts** to publicly funded bodies, public investment and investment in education could significantly impact the future.

***“There’s talk of the Uni investing in infrastructure, but a potential lack of funding could hamper that.”***

Rob Howe, Head of Learning Technology, The University of Northampton

***“The two authorities are under immense financial pressures. I think there could be further trouble down the line.”***

Anonymous



# Opportunities and Threats

## Talent and Skills

---



The UK is facing **significant skills shortages** across several industries and there is significant competition between industries (and geographic locations) for skilled workers. One of the industries most commonly commented on in interviews is advanced engineering.



The **constrained talent pool** makes it challenging to develop a healthy talent pipeline in Northamptonshire to support the current and future requirements of local businesses. Future requirements are expected to change considerably, with a **digital** and **technology focus**.



The UK government has recently launched a new body to integrate the skills landscape and **boost national skills** (The Skills England Bill). More information about the plan and implementation next steps is anticipated in due course.

*"I think the biggest challenge that most businesses have is the skills gap because we've just not had people taking engineering apprenticeships', or vocational training, which results in fewer people being able to fill these type of jobs."*

Martin Lewis-Stevenson, Director, Pulse Group Media

*"Retaining or securing talent are consistently one of the top three topics exec teams quote as their primary issues. We need to spotlight the exciting career opportunities that are available here to help retain talent in this region."*

Nicole Wong, Investment Manager, LDC

*"The industry is only going to change and become more digitalised, more tech is going to be needed. 50% of employees that we've got today are going to need re skilling by 2025."*

Ashley Burton, Regional General Manager, GXO

# Opportunities and Threats

## Legislation, Politics, and Regulatory Change

---



The new UK government has recently announced a plan to raise the **target for house building** that will involve an overhaul of the planning system. This presents a significant opportunity for Northants given the availability of land to support the necessary infrastructure investment for any future increases in the local population.



There are local stakeholders that may not support proposed development of rural areas due to prioritising **environmental concerns over social sustainability**.



There have been several supply chain shocks in recent times caused by Covid, wars, and political factors. The result is an increase in **onshoring manufacturing and distribution**. Furthermore, the boom in ecommerce is growing demand for distribution and logistics.

***“There is potential for house building and increasing the population size.”***

James Geary, Managing Partner, EMW Law LLP and Hassan Shah, Partner, EMW Law LLP

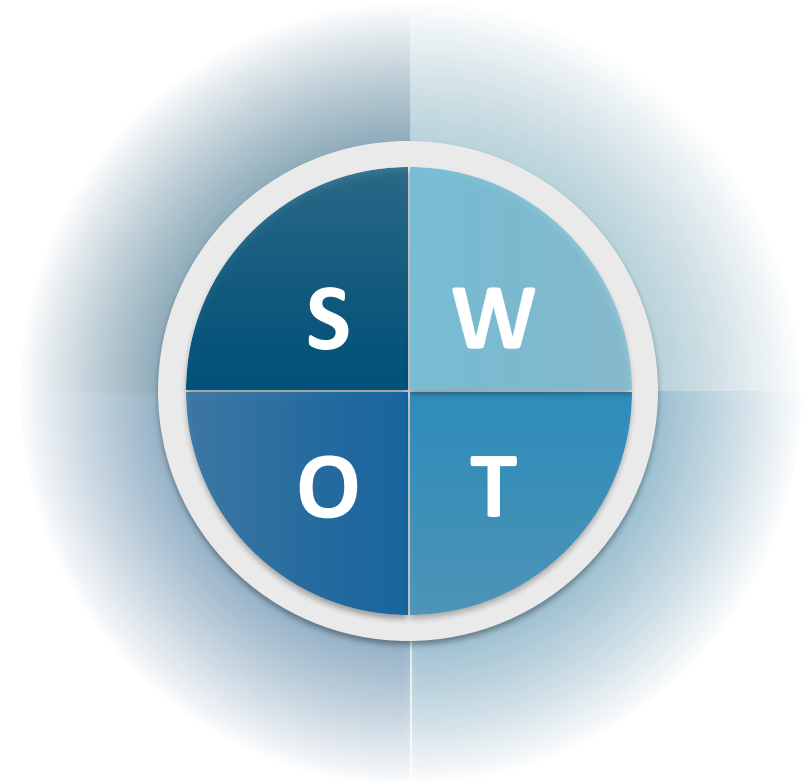
***“Supply chain shocks across the world really impact businesses. And many UK businesses are trying to protect themselves from these shocks by having more stock held in the UK or bringing manufacturing closer to home.”***

James Straw, Director of Capital Deployment and Leasing, Prologis



## E. SWOT Analysis and Key Recommendations

A Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT) analysis based on desk research of innovative Northamptonshire businesses and interviews with key stakeholders in the county. These insights inform key recommendations for developing Northamptonshire's innovation ecosystem.

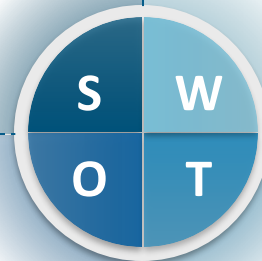


- **Northamptonshire** is **centrally located** and benefits from **easy access** to the rest of the UK with good road and rail transport links.
- **Heritage** in shoemaking, motorsport, and stately homes.
- The county has **notable clusters** in **advanced engineering, logistics, and food & drink manufacturing** that leverage the competencies, infrastructure, and brand equity of anchor organisations.
- The **Silverstone brand** is a critical advanced engineering asset for the county.
- There is a **good volume of startups** in most sectors examined, but the **transition to scaleups is challenging**.
- **Vulcan Works** and **Digital Northants** are key assets that support **ideation** and **collaboration**, but more physical spaces and networking events are required.
- The county has **major institutions** and **commercial real estate** with **good land supply** that can support **sustainable future economic development opportunities**.

- The county lacks **leadership**, a **clear vision**, or **branding** to build consensus and buy-in with key stakeholder groups.
- Bureaucracy and slow decision-making acts as a barrier; future leadership should be **business led**, but in **partnership with authorities**.
- There isn't a clear strategy to build-out clusters and partnerships, lacks an innovative talent strategy and the LSIP is focused on colleges.
- The University of Northampton does not have an **anchor role** in **key sectors**.
- Lack of **innovation districts** with a **high agglomeration** of diverse businesses and mixed-use real estate to enable walkability and encourage **greater collaboration**.
- **Poor physical connectivity** between towns/municipalities in the county.
- Northamptonshire lacks an **integrated innovation funnel** to **attract investors**.
- **Insufficient business support** from existing providers (for example Digital Northants) and a lack of incubators, limited funding options, and much more.
- Large businesses need to act as **proactive and engaged anchor institutions**.

- **Net zero, energy security, building sustainable and resilient supply chains**, and **applying technology to sustainability** are important opportunity areas.
- **Automation** and **digital technologies** offer significant opportunities for local businesses to raise **productivity levels** and develop new **value propositions**.
- Investment in UK **life sciences / biotech sector** to build critical mass could present an opportunity for Northamptonshire based on its **central location** within the **Ox-Cam geography**.
- **Government plans** to raise the **house building target** involves an overhaul of the planning system, which is a major opportunity given the county's land supply.
- The launch of **Skills England** could support development of a **local talent pipeline**.

- Northamptonshire faces **competition** from other regions for **funding** to support initiatives such as **sustainability** and **life sciences development**. The region will need to showcase its value proposition – e.g., through **branding** and **storytelling / messaging** at a national UK level.
- **Access to finance** and **key resources** (local knowledge and digital skills) to support investment in **R&D projects** are potential threats to exploiting **automation** and **digital technology** opportunities.
- The UK is facing **significant skills shortages** across several industries and there is **significant competition** between industries and regions for skilled workers.



# F. Key Recommendations: Aspiration and Bold Vision 1/2

## Recommendations

### Create an Innovation Leadership Body

- Form an independent Innovation Leadership Body comprising business leaders from major sectors (advanced engineering, food and drink manufacturing, logistics), educational establishments, local government and other stakeholders.
- The body will require a chair who is well connected, respected, and visionary. Different options for chairship exist including that of an independent chair – this was suggested during stakeholder interviews and should be given consideration in order to accelerate collaboration.
- This body should be empowered to develop the strategic vision, coordinate efforts, engage with other bodies, and drive innovation initiatives across the county (see next bullet).

### Develop the innovation vision and the supporting strategy to deliver

- Create a clear, forward-looking innovation vision that aligns with the county's economic goals, providing a unifying direction for future growth and development.
- Design a comprehensive strategy that outlines the key initiatives, resources, and partnerships needed to turn the vision into reality, ensuring measurable goals and timelines to track progress and impact.

## Next Steps

- Create terms of reference for the innovation leadership body.
- Consult with county stakeholders to ensure buy-in and alignment with other initiatives.
- Define the skills and experience required for the body.
- Recruit the chair.
- Identify and recruit key regional leaders and stakeholders to join the body, ensuring a diverse and representative membership.

- Develop stakeholder engagement plan to gain buy in to the purpose of, and the approach to development of the strategy.
- Analyse further elements of the innovation ecosystem to develop the strategy.
- Undertake process to develop the vision, strategic priorities, and action plans.

## F. Key Recommendations: Aspiration and Bold Vision 2/2

### Recommendations

#### Develop a unified county brand and marketing strategy

- Craft a cohesive identity and brand for Northamptonshire highlighting its strengths, success stories, and unique value proposition to support the innovation ecosystem.
- Consider three sector (Food and Drink Manufacturing, Advanced Engineering, Logistics) brand strategies that support the overall Northamptonshire brand.
- Implement a targeted marketing strategy to attract talent, businesses, and investment.

### Next Steps

- Conduct stakeholder consultations to assess their perspectives on a unified county brand, and confirm status of existing projects.
- Develop feasibility & cost-benefit analysis outlining the potential costs, benefits, and risks of implementing a unified county brand.

## F. Key Recommendations: Clusters and Partner Strategy

### Recommendations



#### Enhance University-Sector Partnerships

- Strengthen partnerships between University of Northampton and key county sectors.
- Improve engagement with businesses to tailor curricula to industry needs, and facilitate knowledge/technology transfer through initiatives like Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTPs) or accelerators for example Defence and Security Accelerator.
- Facilitate more collaborative research centres where university faculties and industry professionals co-develop solutions for local challenges. This could focus on sectors such as logistics, sustainability, and advanced manufacturing, ensuring real-world application of university research.
- Consider incubators focused on key sectors. These incubators should offer specialized facilities, industry connections, and tailored support programs to nurture startups in these sectors.

### Next Steps

- Develop the University “offer” to key county sectors.
- Establish the sectors the university should act as an anchor institution and innovation supporter.
- Develop and define sector collaboration plans with appropriate budget and resources.

## F. Key Recommendations: Capital and Funding

### Recommendations



- Streamline processes and increase awareness about available funding sources, grants, mentorship programs, and support services for innovation and business growth.
- Explore partnerships with angel investors and venture capital firms.

### Next Steps

- Create a Digital Portal where all information related to funding opportunities, grants, mentorship programs, and support services can be accessed by entrepreneurs, startups, and SMEs in Northamptonshire.
- Further develop a formal network that brings together local and regional angel investors, venture capital (VC) firms, and high-net-worth individuals interested in supporting innovation in Northamptonshire. This network should facilitate regular pitch events where startups and scale-ups can present their business ideas to potential investors, and networking.



# F. Key Recommendations: Talent and Community Building 1/2

## Recommendations



- Create a centralised, physical and online, one-stop-shop innovation hub in Northamptonshire that consolidates resources, facilities, mentorship, and support services for startups, entrepreneurs, and businesses across various sectors. This could be a developed and strengthened version of the Growth Hubs resource.
- This hub should be a collaborative effort between University of Northampton, unitary councils, and the private sector, strategically located to maximise accessibility and impact.
- Ensure the innovation hub fosters a vibrant ecosystem by hosting regular events, workshops, and networking opportunities, encouraging collaboration and knowledge-sharing among startups, businesses, and key stakeholders.

## Next Steps

- Commission a comprehensive feasibility study to assess the demand for the innovation hub, identify the most suitable location, and determine the necessary facilities, resources, and services.
- Begin the process of securing funding for the hub by identifying and approaching potential investors, grant sources, and partners.
- Establish a committee to oversee the planning and development of the innovation hub.
- Develop a detailed operational plan outlining the hub's structure, governance, and sustainability model, ensuring long-term viability and alignment with regional innovation goals.

## F. Key Recommendations: Talent and Community Building 2/2

### Recommendations

#### Develop a Strategy for Local Talent Pipeline

- Develop a comprehensive, collaborative talent pipeline strategy that connects local employers, University of Northampton, colleges, and schools in Northamptonshire. This strategy will ensure that the local education system aligns with the needs of the local economy, enabling students to gain the skills and experiences necessary to thrive in the workforce while addressing the talent needs of employers.
- This strategy should build on existing strategies (e.g.. LSIP, STC Skills Programme, etc.), and existing partnerships this creating formal partnerships between schools, colleges, and local businesses, with agreements outlining the roles and responsibilities of each party in supporting the talent pipeline.

### Next Steps

- Create a talent steering committee that includes representatives from local employers, University of Northampton, schools, colleges, universities, and government bodies. This committee will guide the development and implementation of the talent pipeline strategy, ensuring all stakeholders are aligned and invested.
- Identify, develop, and promote collaborative projects where students work on real industry challenges provided by local companies, while also designing mentorship and internship programs that connect students with regional employers, offering businesses fresh insights and giving students valuable hands-on experience to bridge the gap between education and employment..

## F. Key Recommendations: Real Estate, Infrastructure & Place Making

### Recommendations

#### Enhance the visibility and utilisation of existing innovation assets

- Increase awareness and usage of existing innovation hubs and assets, such as Vulcan Works and the University of Northampton's facilities, by launching targeted outreach campaigns, workshops, and innovation networking events.
- The area around the Vulcan Works leading down to the University could offer a promising start to an innovation district.

### Next Steps

- Create a “network”, comprehensive directory and promotional strategy that highlights the available resources, spaces, and opportunities for innovation in Northamptonshire.

#### Increase use of private spaces to support collaboration and innovation

- Increase awareness of private spaces available for innovation activities such as Cosworth's advanced manufacturing centre, Digital Manufacturing Centre at Silverstone.

- Create a directory of private spaces in the county available for the whole ecosystem to utilise.

## F. Key Recommendations: Real Estate, Infrastructure & Place Making

### Recommendations

#### Review place making strategy

- Consider a unified, county-wide place making strategy.

### Next Steps

- Consider feasibility and agree scope.
- Develop a unified vision statement and aspirations of the county.
- Align the place making strategy with existing unitary development plans, ensuring integration with infrastructure, transportation, housing, and economic initiatives for coordinated growth.

## F. Key Recommendations: Diversity, Equality and Inclusion

---

### Recommendations

#### Expand Social Impact Initiatives

- Expand and the broaden the reach of existing successful social impact programs in the county such as the Prologis warehouse and logistics training program which has already delivered significant social value.

### Next Steps

- Undertake a review to capture all existing projects and initiatives.
- Establish partnerships with local non-profits, social enterprises, and community groups to collaborate on impactful projects, ensuring alignment with the county's innovation goals.
- Agree the priorities for an innovation diversity, equality and inclusion strand, and create an appropriate action plan.

# G. Contributors and Acknowledgements

---

## Contributors

- Adrian Pryce, University of Northampton
- Cathy Smith, University of Northampton
- Greg Ward, North Northants Council
- Helen Miller, University of Northampton
- Jennifer Thomas, FSB
- Louis Devayya, West Northants Council
- Pim Van Baarsen, Silverstone Technology Cluster
- Ruth Roan, Growth Hub
- Sophie Richardson, University of Northampton
- Vicky Hlomuka, West Northants Council

## Acknowledgements

- Andy Long, DaniHar Technology
- Ashley Burton, GXO
- Chris Lambert, Datasense
- Clare Elsby, Elsby & Co
- Darren Smith, Vulcan Works / Oxford Innovation Space
- Dolores Sanders, Total Control Pro
- Dominic Hopkins, HCR Hewitsons
- Duncan Farrington, Farrington Oils
- Fabrizio Barillari, SCP Rapid Prototyping
- Hassan Shah, EMW Law LLP
- Helen Russell, The Right Track Consultancy
- James Geary, EMW Law LLP
- James Straw, Prologis
- Johnny Wake, Courteenhall Farms
- Kevin Matthews, Scott Bader

- Lewis Stringer, British Business Bank
- Louise Wall, Northamptonshire and Milton Keynes Chamber of Commerce
- Martin Lewis-Stevenson, Pulse Group Media
- Mike Bray, RS Group
- Neil Smith, SM Growth Hub
- Nicholas Greenway, Cosworth
- Nicole Wong, LDC
- Paul Minton, Strategic Growth Services NL
- Phil Zeidler, BigZee Consulting
- Rachel Mallows, The Mallows Company
- Richard Beards, Digital Northants
- Rob Howe, The University of Northampton
- Rob Lewis, TotalSim
- Rob Purdie, Central Arc Angels
- Simon Derrick, Blue Skies
- Stuart Pringle, Silverstone Circuits
- Stuart Smith, dbfb communications
- Tom Warner, Warner's Distillery

## Roundtables

- FSB roundtable participants, hosted by Digital Manufacturing Centre, Silverstone
- Silverstone Tech Cluster participants, hosted by HCR Hewitsons

## Whitecap Consulting

- Edelyn Nazri
- Foluso Laguda
- James Lee
- Lal Tawney
- Tavleen Lakhan



# Appendix I:

# Innovation Assets and Characteristics of

# Successful Innovation Ecosystems

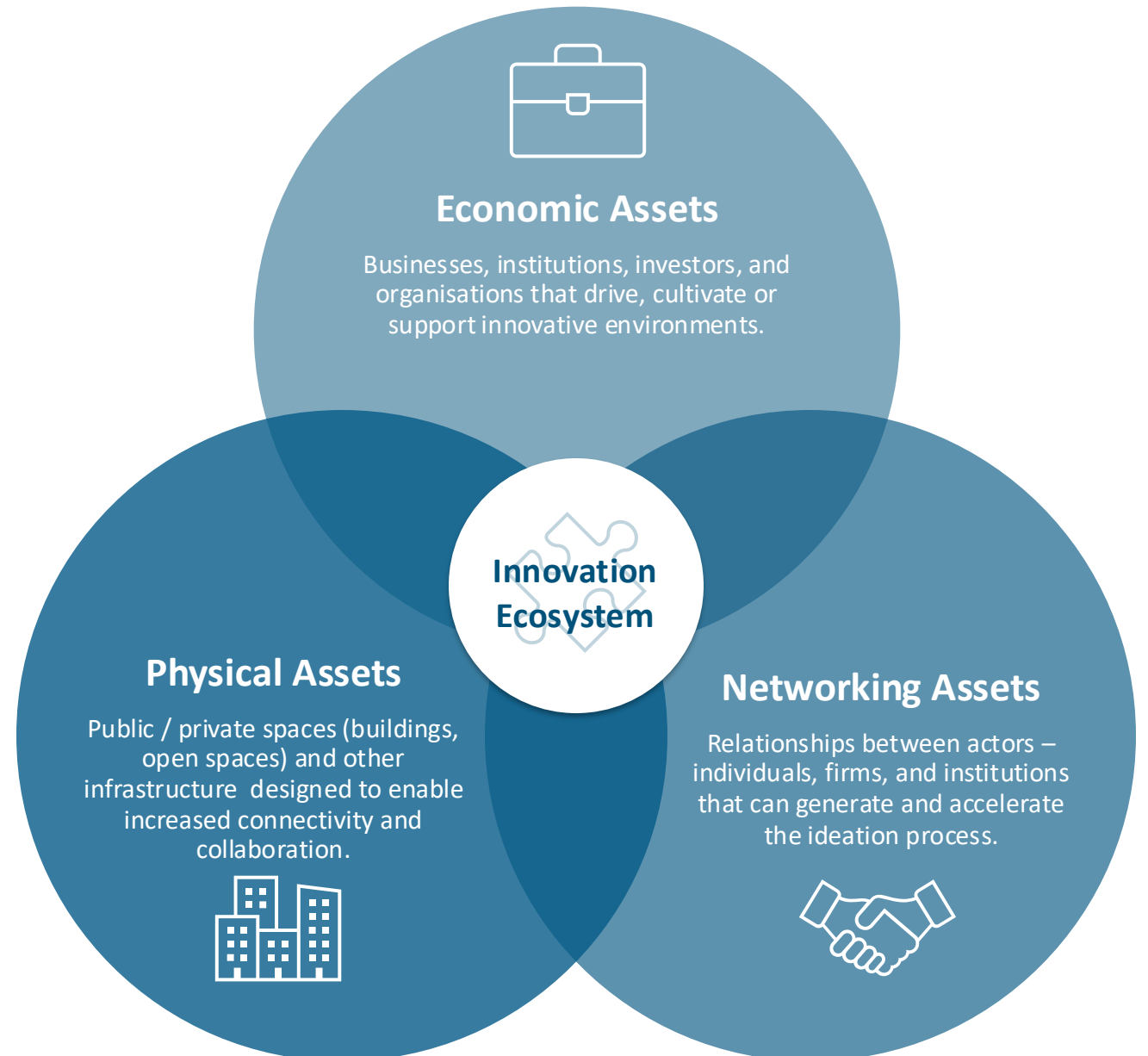
The components of a successful innovation ecosystem involves understanding the economic, physical, and networking assets necessary for its creation. This section highlights the assets needed and the key success factors essential for building and sustaining such an ecosystem. Assessing Northamptonshire clusters using the following assets and metrics establishes a useful benchmark for the county.

# The Asset That Create An Innovation Ecosystem

Innovation is defined as delivering something different that has a measurable impact for the innovation target. All innovation communities (districts, hubs, and ecosystems) involve combinations of economic, physical, and networking assets – that generate economic, financial, and social benefits.

Boston-Cambridge, Eindhoven, and London have been reviewed as representative case studies of successful innovation ecosystems\*. They offer key learnings and best practices from diverse locations, multi-stakeholder collaborations, strategies, and processes – useful for developing the Northamptonshire innovation ecosystem.

## Innovation Assets Framework: Involves Economic, Physical, and Networking Assets



\*The analysis of Boston-Cambridge, Eindhoven, and London innovation ecosystem case studies – and a review of plans for developing an innovation ecosystem in Sheffield is available in the Workstream 1 Report.

# The Characteristics of Successful Innovation Ecosystems

In the case studies reviewed, thriving innovation ecosystems have been developed by connecting smaller innovation districts (IDs) or knowledge clusters within a wider area or region. The key success factors are consistent for all communities of innovation.



## Innovation Ecosystem



### 1. Aspiration & Bold Vision

To build confidence, ambition, and buy-in with stakeholders. A unique identity and brand helps communicate the ecosystem value proposition for businesses and people. It provides a way to define near-and long-term success measures to keep on track.



### 2. Clusters & Partner Strategy

Local leaders and developers build clusters based on the regions existing skills, infrastructure and institutional strengths of anchor organisations. Leveraging market trends strategically to support developing new value propositions.



### 3. Capital & Funding

Develop an integrated innovation funnel that spans from ideation, commercialisation, startups, to scaleups – to attract investors, including venture capital. For example, physical spaces (hubs / accelerators) to showcase startups.



### 4. Talent & Community Building

A coordinated talent strategy and pipeline is critical for successful ecosystems. Attracting, retaining, and developing talent relies on creating relatable aspirations and the presence of appealing anchor institutions.



### 5. Real Estate, Infrastructure & Place Making

Building local environments including suitable commercial space for prioritised sectors; residential spaces; open public spaces; and "place-making" infrastructure where people want to work, live, and play is essential.



### 6. Diversity, Equality & Inclusion

Successful ecosystems embrace inclusive growth, where local community building and shared prosperity is prioritised. Local leaders implement policies and initiatives that create opportunities for disadvantaged communities.

# Appendix II:

# Northamptonshire Innovation Leaders and Exemplar High Growth Businesses

To effectively assess the economic, network, and physical assets of Northamptonshire businesses, as well as their innovative behaviours, focusing on high-growth sectors is essential. High-growth sectors are often strong indicators of innovation, as businesses within these industries tend to leverage new ideas, technologies, and processes to drive expansion. Therefore, understanding the behaviours and dynamics within these growing sectors is key to a comprehensive analysis of innovation in the region.

# Northamptonshire

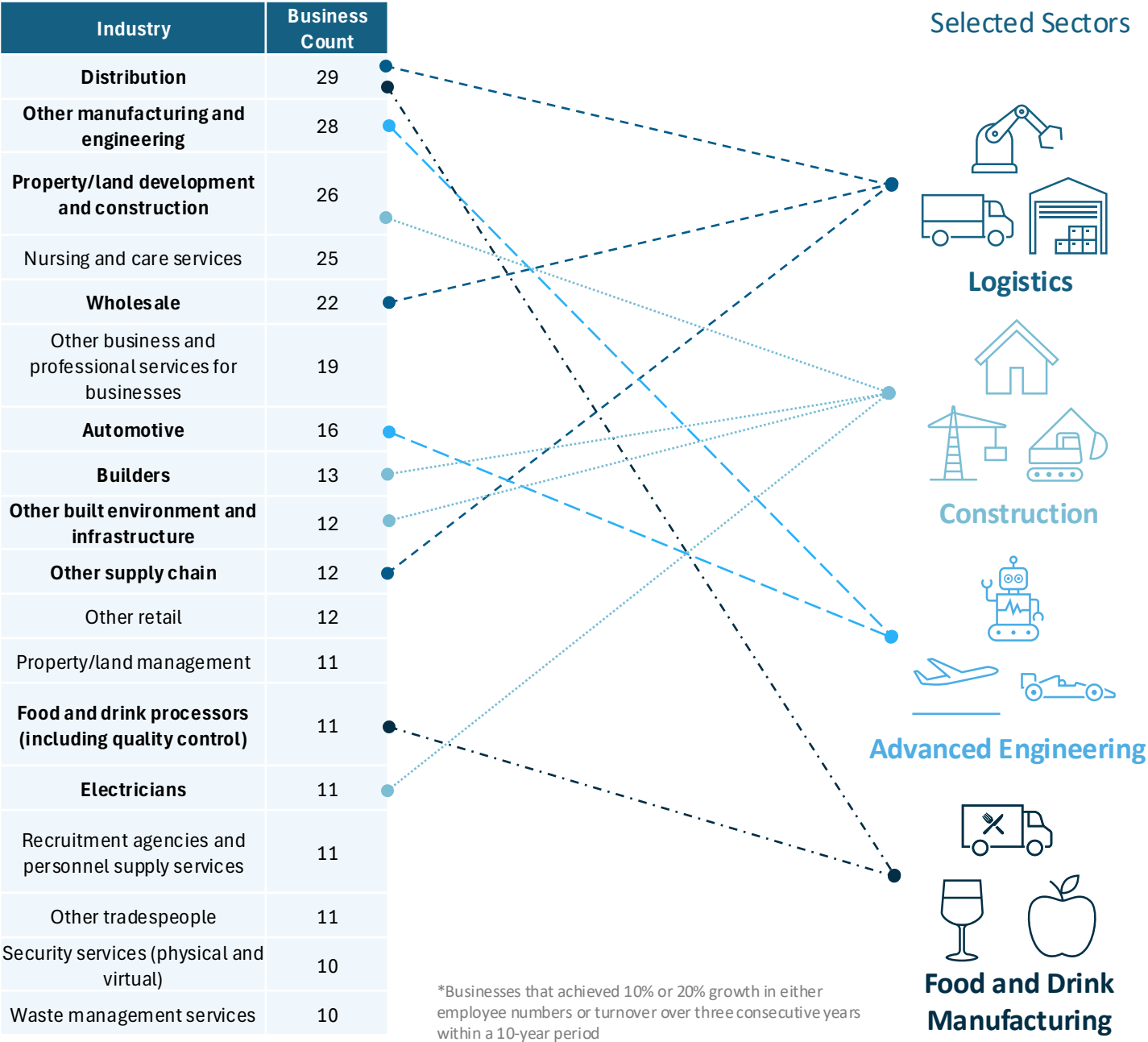
## Sector Selection Process

Innovation ecosystems are built around high growth clusters. To assess Northamptonshire’s current business ecosystem, an analysis of business counts and sizes was conducted, focusing on prominent clusters. The review determined the sectors for analysis in the report.

In addition, discussions with the report’s steering group provided insights into innovation activity across multiple industries, which influenced the selected sectors.

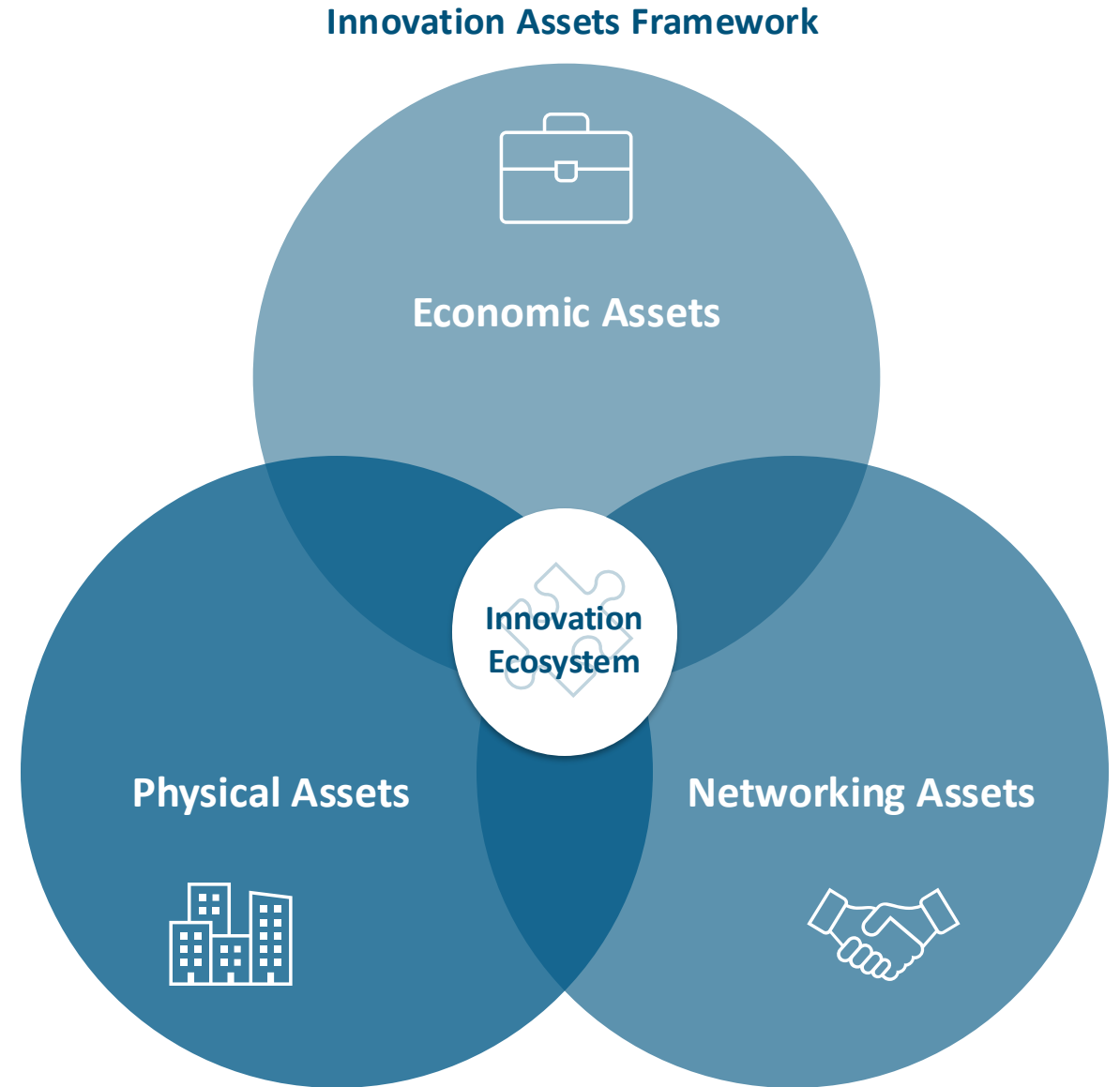
Four key sectors of logistics, food and drink manufacturing, advanced engineering, and construction were identified and examined in detail.

Northamptonshire High Growth\* Business Count by Sector



# Northamptonshire Innovation Assets by Sector

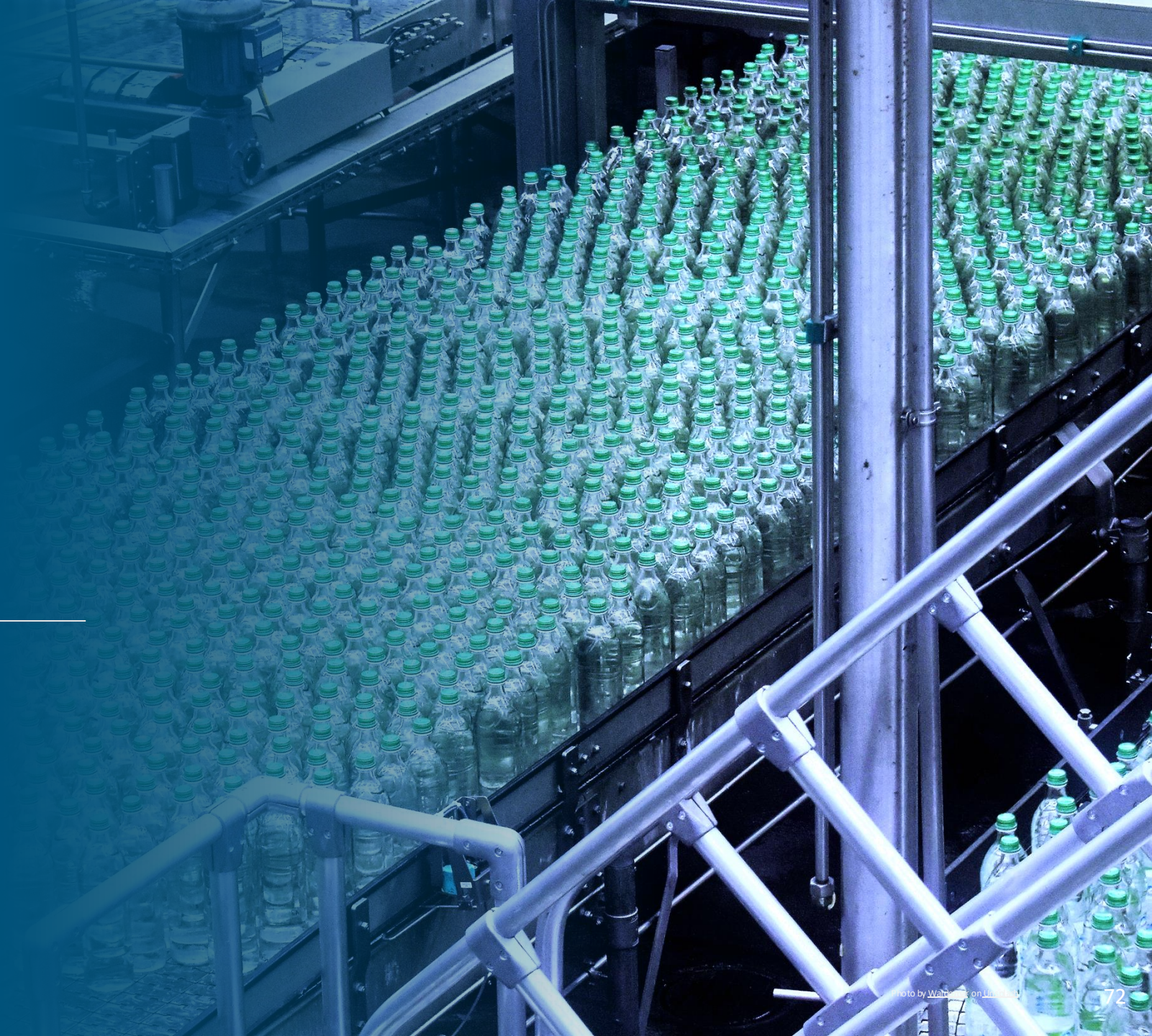
Utilising the innovation asset framework to explore Northamptonshire's clusters in Food and Drink Manufacturing, Advanced Engineering, Logistics and Construction involves identifying their current innovation assets, sector growth, high-growth scale-up companies, and geographic areas of business activity.





# Food and Drink Manufacturing

---





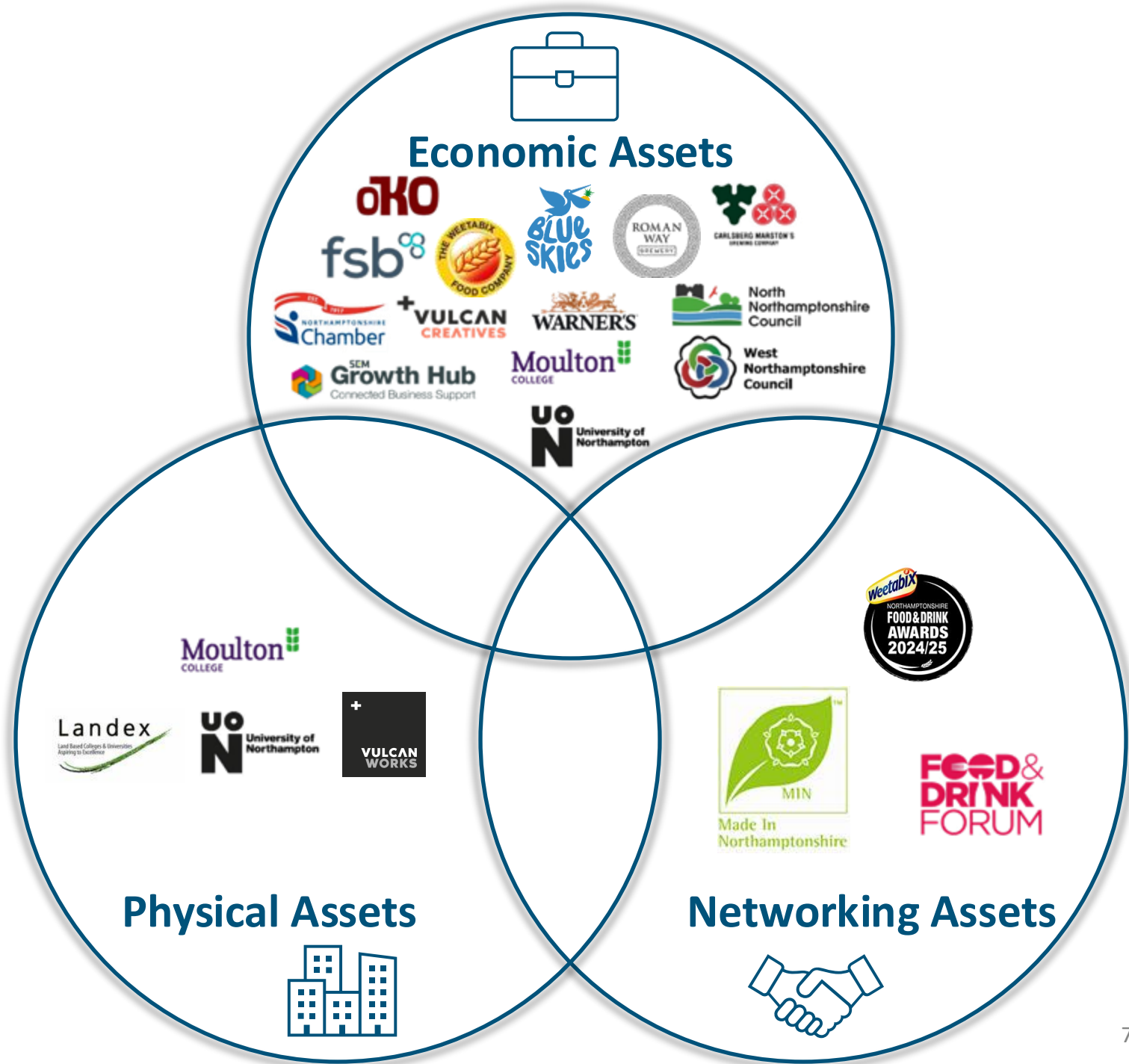
# Food and Drink Manufacturing Innovation Asset Framework

There are **155** food and drink manufacturing businesses\* across Northamptonshire.

Institutions and organisations such as North and West Northamptonshire Councils, academic institutions, and support organisations are economic assets essential for supporting innovation.

The sector also includes a variety of physical assets like the Food and Drink Innovation Centre located in Moulton College and Landex located in UON which supports land-based occupations.

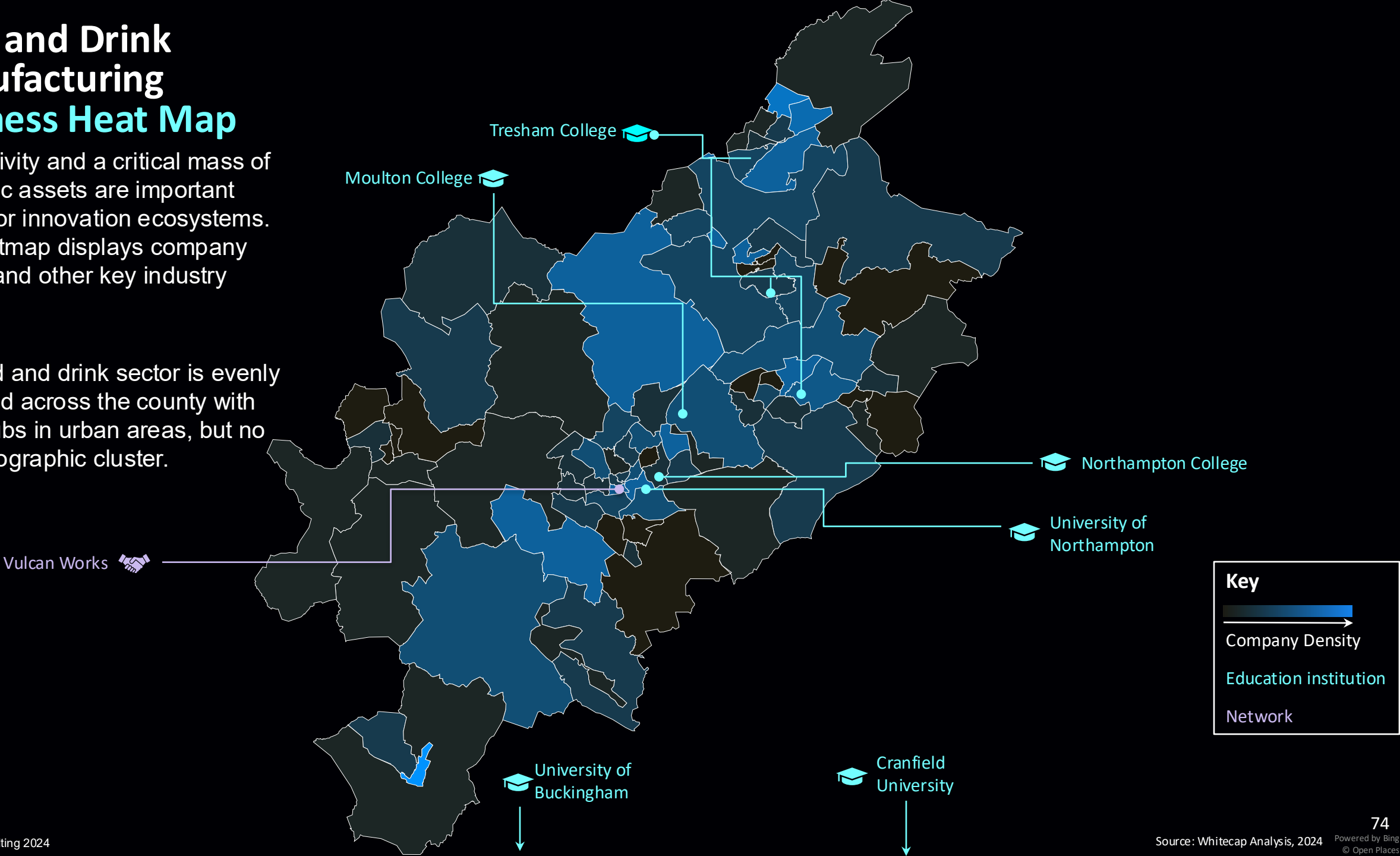
Furthermore, the region boasts networking assets such as The Food and Drink Awards and Made In Northamptonshire.



# Food and Drink Manufacturing Business Heat Map

Connectivity and a critical mass of economic assets are important factors for innovation ecosystems. The heatmap displays company density and other key industry assets.

The food and drink sector is evenly dispersed across the county with some hubs in urban areas, but no clear geographic cluster.



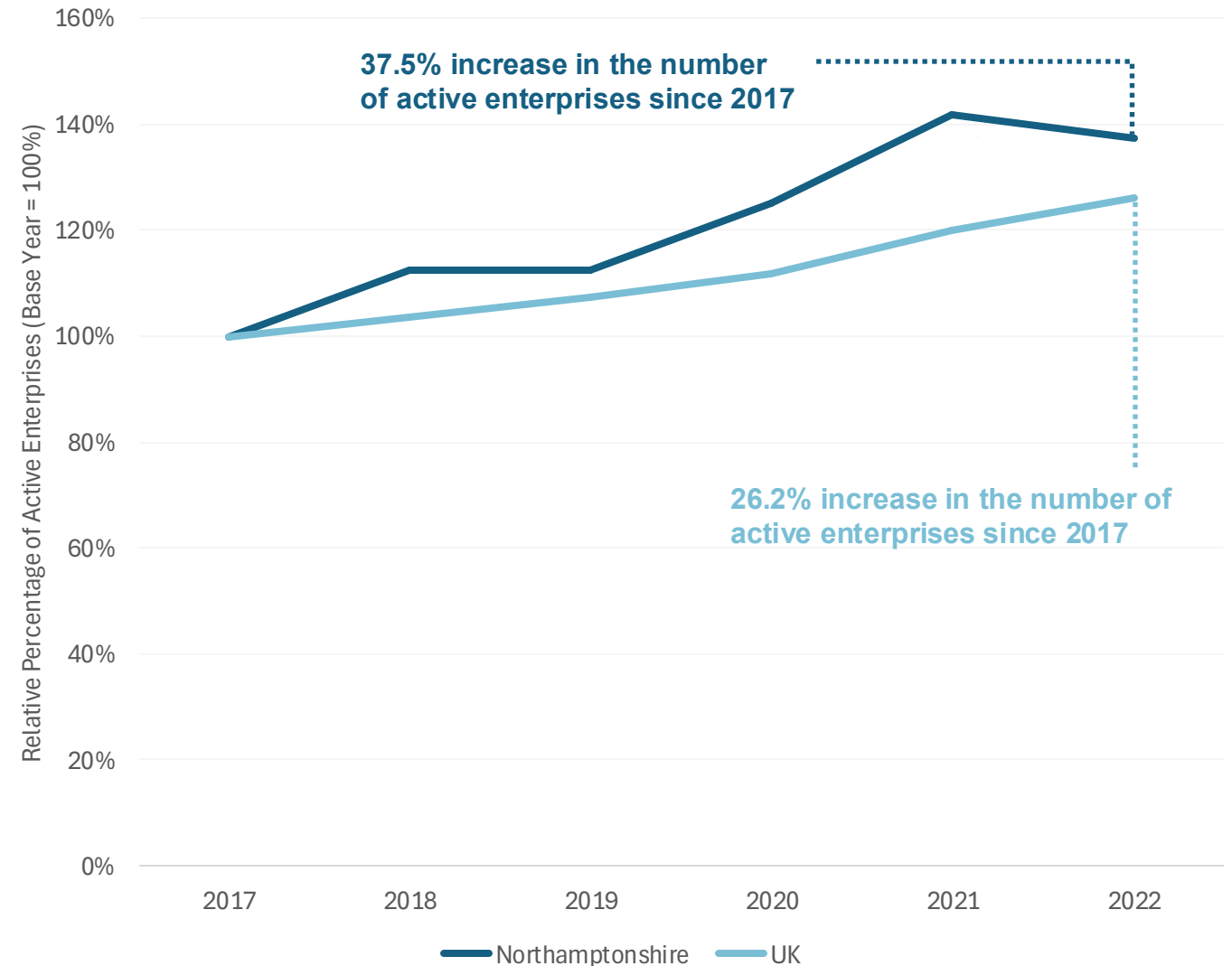
# Food and Drink Manufacturing Active Enterprises

Measuring the number of active enterprises offers insights into the sustainability of a sector, revealing its growth and stability. Benchmarking these figures against UK averages highlights whether the sector's growth or decline is keeping pace with, exceeding, or lagging behind national trends.

Northamptonshire's enterprise landscape has experienced more fluctuations, whereas the UK has shown a more stable growth pattern.

From 2017 to 2022, the number of active enterprises in Northamptonshire increased from 120 to 165, reflecting a faster growth rate. In comparison, the UK saw a more moderate rise, from 11,245 to 14,190. While the sector is expanding nationally, Northamptonshire's growth is notably outpacing the broader UK trend.

Relative Change in the Number of Active Enterprises for Food and Drink Manufacturing



# Food and Drink Manufacturing: Scaleup Analysis

A study was conducted on companies in the food and drink sector in Northamptonshire. It focused on businesses that achieved 10% or 20% growth in either employee numbers or turnover over three consecutive years within a 10-year period, classifying them as scaleups and high-growth scaleups, respectively.

**16 high growth scaleups** were identified as shown by the table. Three scaleups were chosen for an in-depth case study review to explore the innovative behaviours and strategies driving their expansion.\*

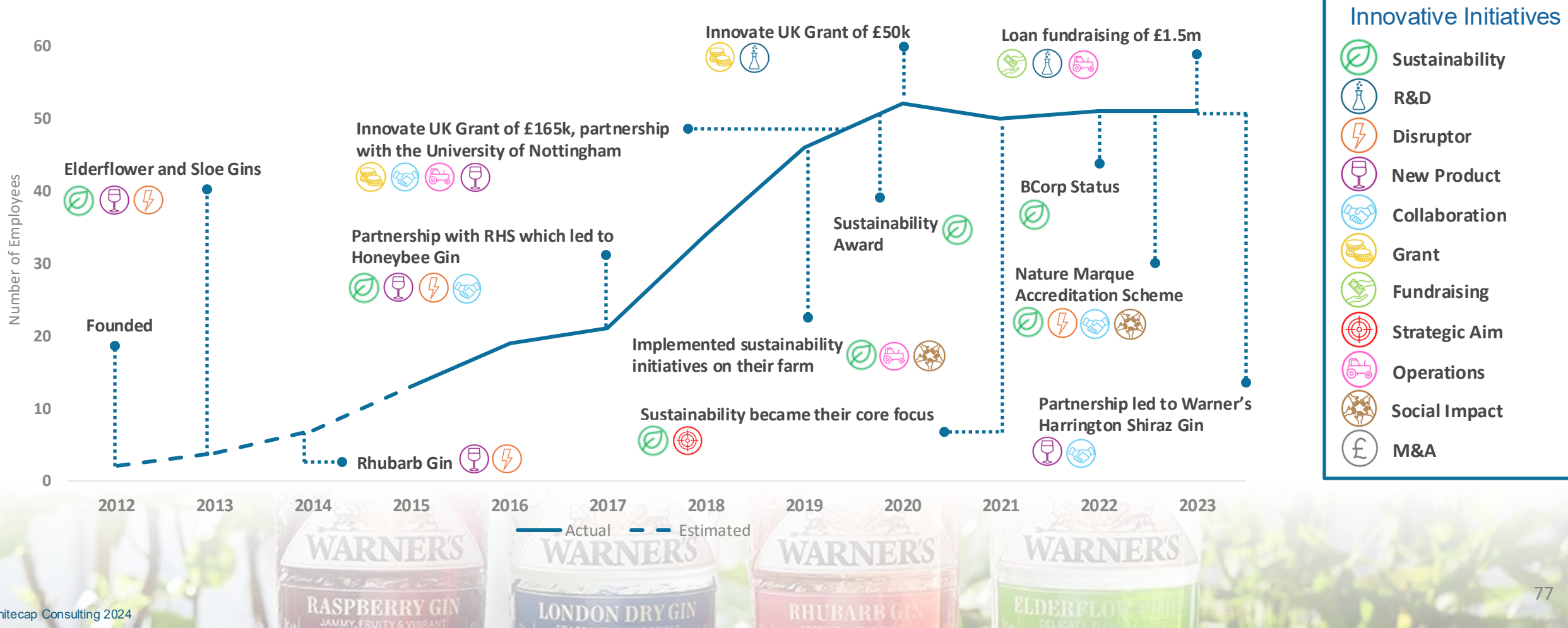
Understanding these initiatives, behaviours and strategies highlights how these scaleups represent an economic strength for the region, serving as models of successful innovation and growth. Additionally, they contribute valuable insights for a SWOT analysis of the region.

Names	Employee Count	Turnover	Location	Description
Avara FOODS Limited	6475	£1,510,234,000	South Northamptonshire	Sells wholesale poultry.
Blue Skies Holdings Limited	5134	£136,790,000	Daventry	Growing, exporting and packaging fruit and manufacturing a variety of fruit juices.
Fine Lady Bakeries Limited	708	£42,886,000	Daventry	Manufactures and sells bakery and confectionery goods.
Carlsberg Marston's Brewing Company Limited	575	£775,170,000	Northampton South	A joint venture between Carlsberg UK and Marston's PLC to brew beverages.
Heygates Limited	269	£281,742,000	Daventry	Growing and milling flour and grains
Alpro (UK) Limited	227	£166,084,000	Kettering	A European company manufacturing plant-based products.
Tmi FOODS Limited	198	£50,038,000	Northampton South	Produces cooked bacon, meat-based and plant-based products.
Carr's Flour Mills Limited	194	£139,669,000	Wellingborough	UK-based company that has been milling flour for almost 200 years.
Cerelia UK Ltd	150	£101,025,000	Corby	Produces pie, pizza, pastry, and sweet goods.
The Heavenly Bake Company Ltd	62	No Data	Wellingborough	Produces and sells a range of baked snacks.
Cooke'd Meat Co. Limited	53	No Data	Wellingborough	Produces cooked meats, ready-to-eat products.
Warner's Distillery Limited	51	No Data	Kettering	Produces small batch dry gin.
Baronie UK Limited	45	£23,208,000	Corby	Chocolate producers.
Charles Jackson & Co. Limited	45	£46,287,000	Daventry	Offers a range of services surrounding the growing of cereals, including storage, processing and haulage.
The Good Loaf Cicc	17	No Data	Northampton South	Produces artisan bread with locally-sourced ingredients.
Global Pacific Processors UK Limited	No Data	£141,602,960	South Northamptonshire	Grows and distributes fruits for wholesale.

\*The analysis of the three high growth scaleup case studies are available in the Workstream 1 Report.

# Food & Drink Manufacturing: Case Study – Warner’s Distillery

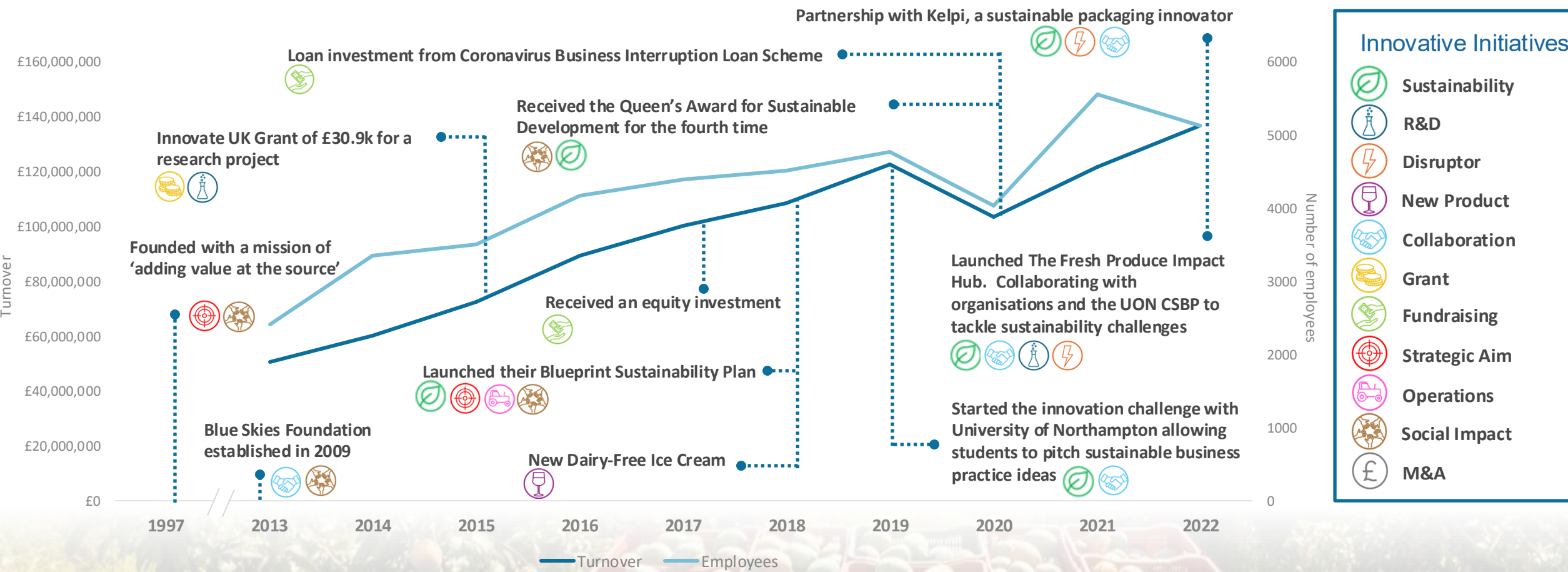
Warner’s Distillery has harnessed sustainability as a catalyst for strategic focus, fostering innovative partnerships and driving R&D, leading to transformative growth.





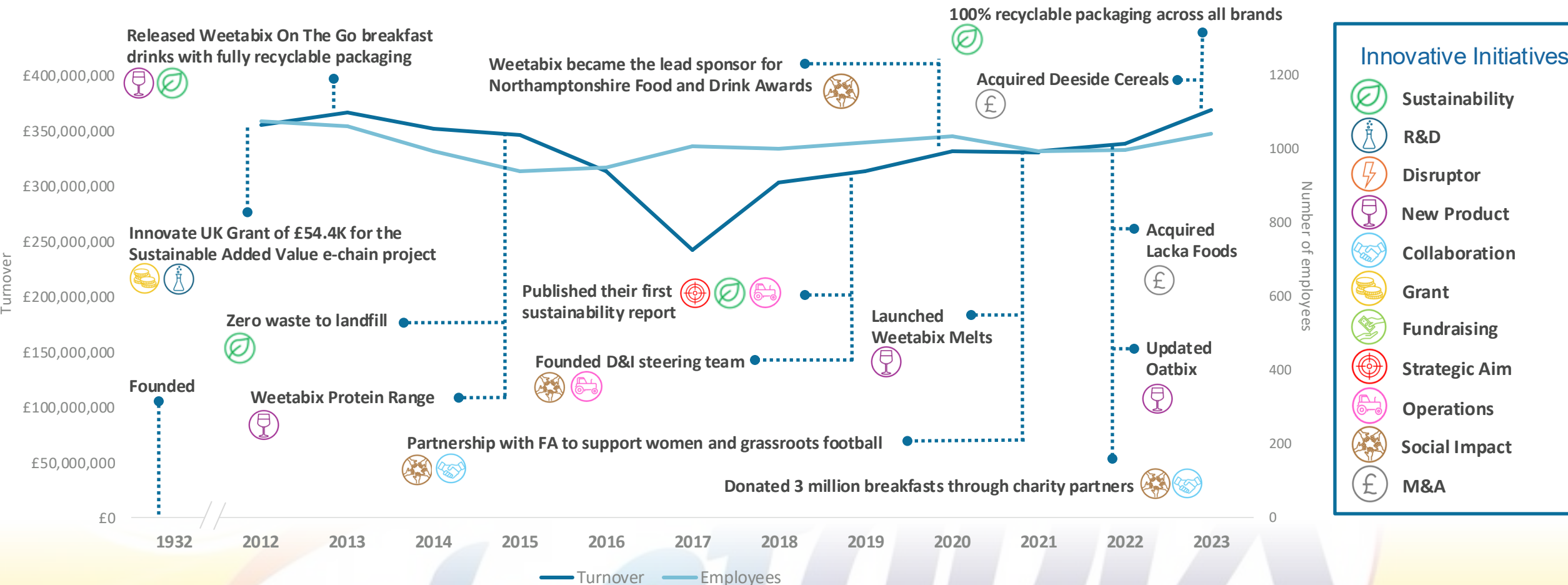
# Food & Drink Manufacturing: Case Study – Blue Skies

Social impact represents a key driver for the development of Blue Skies. This has supported development of sustainable products and fostered its collaboration arrangements with industry and academic partners.



# Food & Drink Manufacturing: Case Study – Weetabix

Weetabix continues to introduce new products based on its original biscuit. The company has introduced a variety of innovative marketing campaigns alongside a focus on sustainability and social impact.



# Advanced Engineering

---



# The Northamptonshire Advanced Engineering Cluster

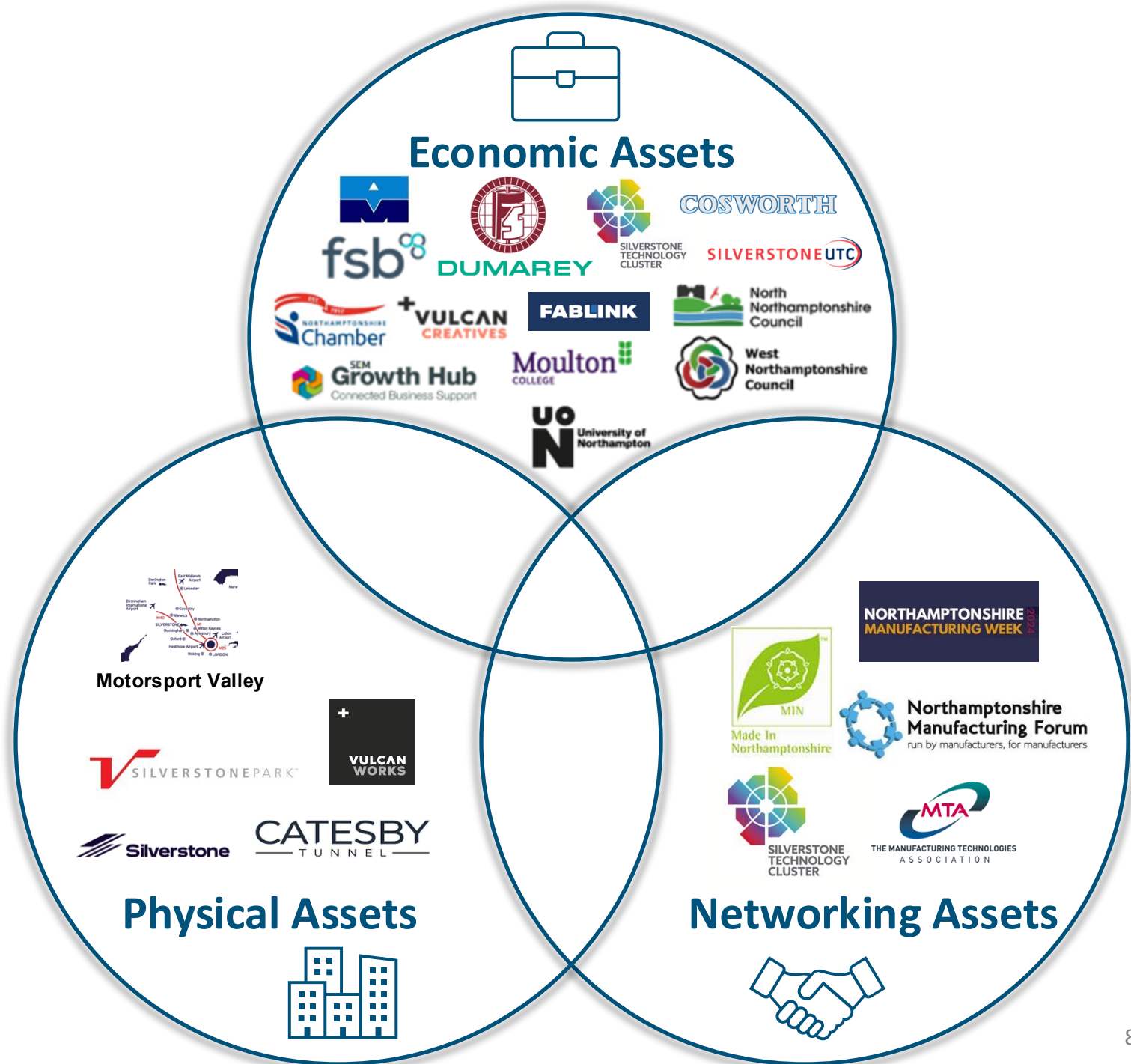
There are **250** advanced engineering businesses\* dispersed across Northamptonshire.

Institutions and organisations such as North and West Northamptonshire Councils, academic institutions, and support organisations are economic assets essential for supporting innovation.

The sector also includes a variety of physical assets like Silverstone park and motorsport valley.

Furthermore, the region boasts networking assets such as Silverstone Technology Cluster, Advanced Engineering Trade shows and trade bodies such as The Manufacturing Technologies Association.

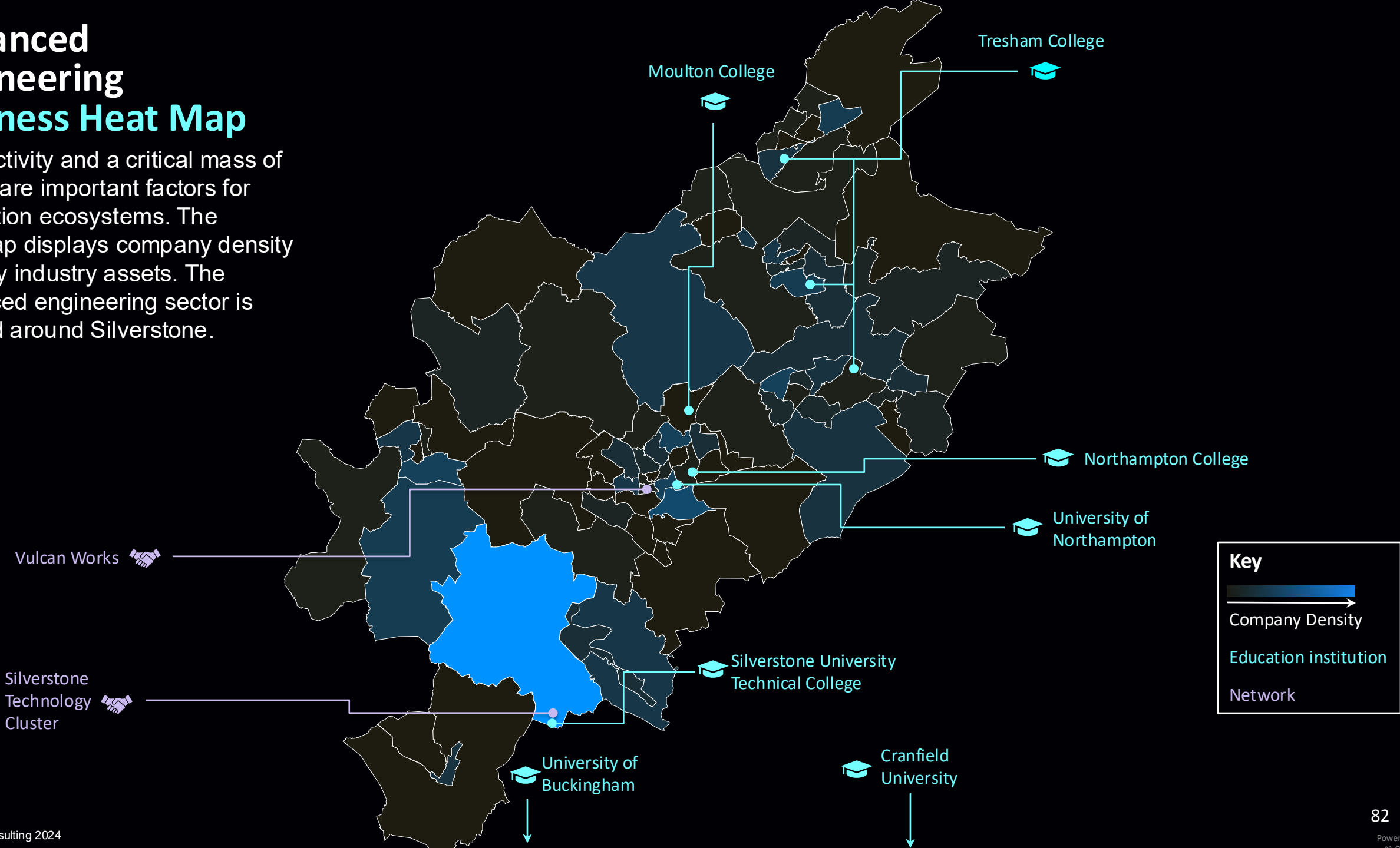
\*SIC Codes in Divisions 20, 21, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 33, or Class 7112.  
Whitecap then excluded companies which did not operate in advanced engineering.





# Advanced Engineering Business Heat Map

Connectivity and a critical mass of assets are important factors for innovation ecosystems. The heatmap displays company density and key industry assets. The advanced engineering sector is centred around Silverstone.

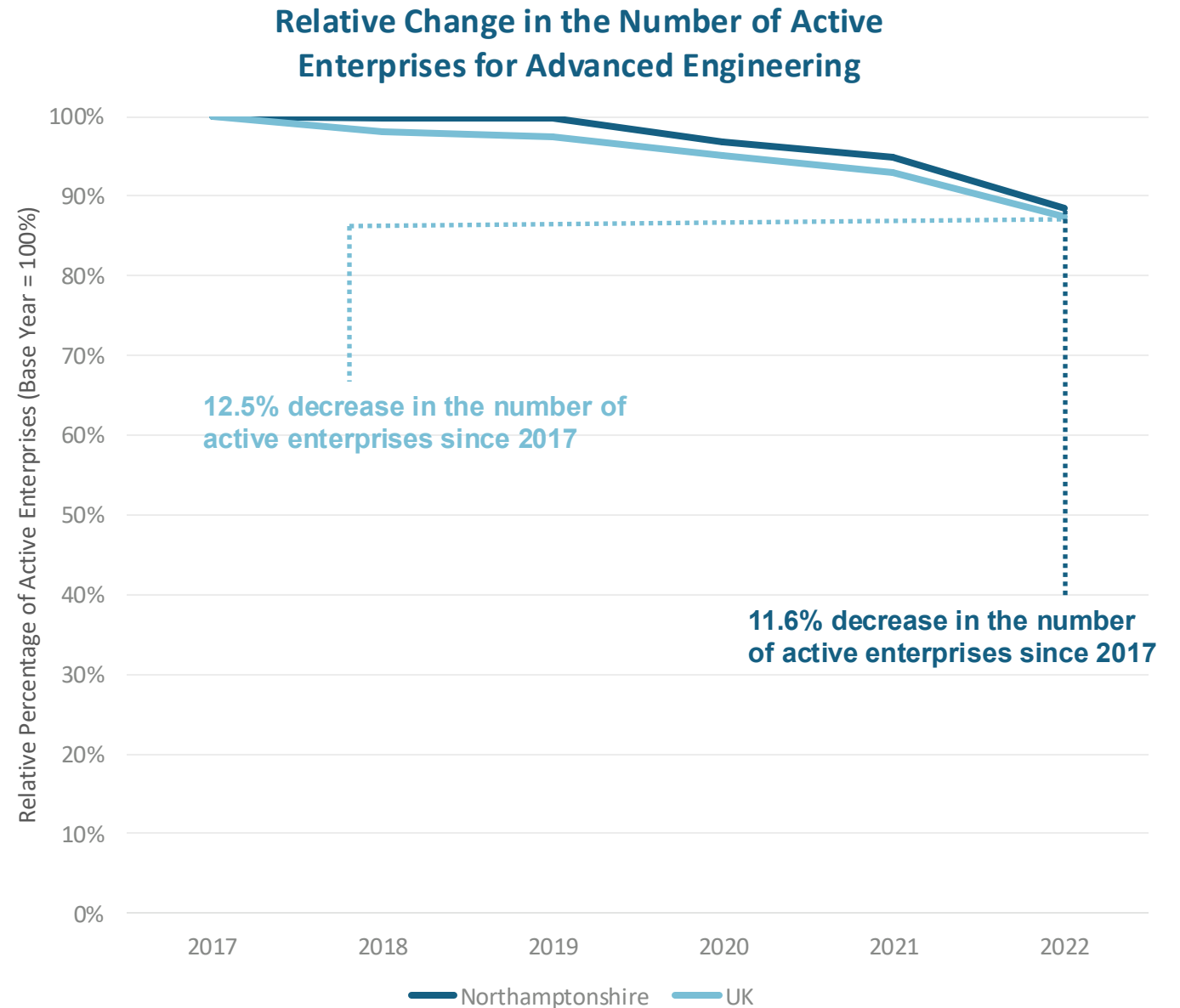


# Advanced Engineering: Active Enterprises

Measuring the number of active enterprises offers insights into the sustainability of a sector, revealing its growth and stability. Benchmarking these figures against UK averages highlights whether the sector's growth or decline is keeping pace with, exceeding, or lagging behind national trends.

Northamptonshire's enterprise rates closely mirrored those of the UK. While both regions have experienced comparable declines, Northamptonshire has fared slightly better. However, the shrinking number of enterprises still poses a potential threat to the ecosystem.

From 2017 to 2022, the number of active enterprises in Northamptonshire fell from 1,680 to 1,485, while the UK saw a decline from 152,890 to 133,780. Both regionally and nationally, the sector is grappling with contraction





# Advanced Engineering: Scaleup Analysis

A study was conducted on companies in the advanced engineering sector in Northamptonshire. It focused on businesses that achieved 10% or 20% growth in either employee numbers or turnover over three consecutive years within a 10-year period, classifying them as scaleups and high-growth scaleups, respectively.

**26 high growth scaleups** were identified as shown by the table. Three scaleups were chosen for an in-depth case study review to explore the innovative behaviours and strategies driving their expansion.\*

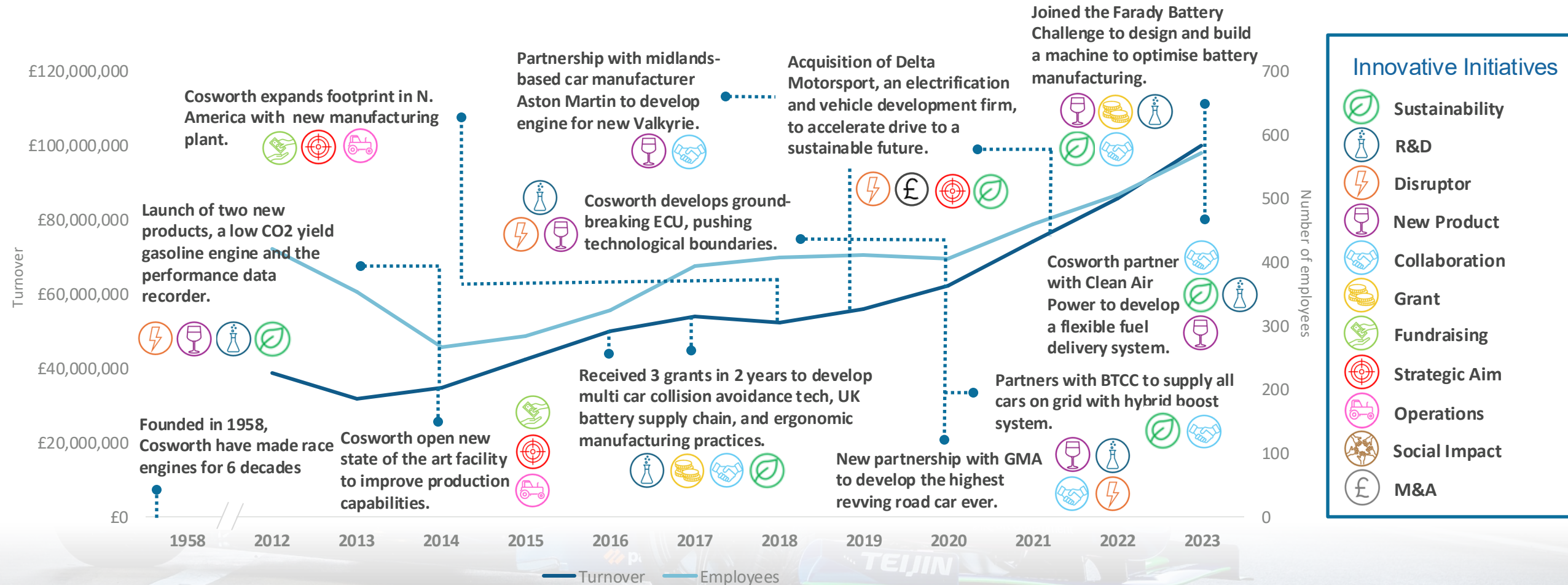
Understanding these initiatives, behaviours and strategies highlights how these scaleups represent an economic strength for the region, serving as models of successful innovation and growth. Additionally, they contribute valuable insights for a SWOT analysis of the region.

\*The analysis of the three high growth scaleup case studies are available in the Workstream 1 Report.

Names	Employee Count	Turnover	Location	Description
Fablink Group Holdings Limited	688	£84,467,000	Daventry	Designs and manufactures a variety of metal products including parts and pressings, fuel tanks, operator cabs and complex structures to automotive and power generation industries.
Cosworth Limited	352	£58,598,000	Northampton South	Designs and manufactures a range of products for motorsport teams and high performance vehicles.
Logistex Europe Ltd	270	£31,794,000	Kettering	Provides a range of services for warehouse automation systems, from design and installation of systems management software to code scanners and fork lift trucks.
Midland Automation Limited	225	£56,403,000	Wellingborough	Distributes electrical components, process control and automation products.
Acro Aircraft Seating Limited	129	£24,209,000	Daventry	Manufacturing passenger seats for aircrafts.
RML Group Limited	125	£14,111,000	Wellingborough	Manufactures and develops sports car chassis, engines and electronics for the automotive industry.
Ilmor Engineering Limited	97	£17,143,000	Daventry	Designs and manufactures engines for cars, planes and boats but specialises in race car engines.
Hitech Global Holdings Limited	83	£24,064,000	South Northamptonshire	Operates an automotive racing team.
Cad-It UK Ltd	69	No Data	Daventry	An Industry 4.0 solution provider that specialises in technologies such as Additive Manufacturing, Augmented Reality, and Industrial Internet of Things.
Gtechniq Ltd	69	£12,559,000	Daventry	Develops and sells ceramic paints and hydrophobic coatings for a different vehicles.
Delta Cosworth Limited	68	£7,012,000	Northampton South	Develops low carbon technology for cars, such as battery and control systems.
Miswa Chemicals Limited	65	£17,774,000	South Northamptonshire	Manufactures a variety of chemical based products within the automotive and household goods sectors.
Red Arch Manufacturing Limited	53	No Data	Daventry	Designs and manufactures automotive accessories and parts such as engine, exhaust and electrical components.
AF Corse UK Ltd	48	£43,812,000	South Northamptonshire	A racing team and official partner of Ferrari.
Dumarey Flybrid Limited	34	No Data	South Northamptonshire	Provides energy storage and management solutions for various industries.
Harting Limited	34	£39,353,000	Northampton North	Electrical, electronic and optical connection, transmission and networking, manufacturing mechatronics and software creation.
Partner Electronics Limited	29	No Data	South Northamptonshire	Provides electronic engineering support, to maximise the benefits of electronics in businesses.
Bspoke Global Networks Limited	27	No Data	South Northamptonshire	Provides communications services and technologies to teams and track operators in the motorsport industry.
Total Control Pro Limited	18	No Data	Northampton South	Develops production tracking software.
Silverstone Composites Limited	17	No Data	South Northamptonshire	Offers composite manufacturing services with a focus on bespoke products for the motorsport and automotive sectors.
Technifast Ltd.	17	No Data	Corby	Manufacturer and distributor of specialist engineering fasteners and components for various industries.
GFM (UK) Limited	15	£1,483,159	Wellingborough	Specialises in planning, development and production of highly precise cutting machines.
Maylan Limited	9	No Data	Corby	Manufacturer of precision machined components and assemblies.
E.A.T. (Holdings) Limited	5	No Data	Kettering	Offers sub-contract engineering services and manufactures machinery and component castings.
WYCKE H Limited	3	No Data	South Northamptonshire	Operates a carbon fibre engineering company, supplying businesses with composite materials.
Cte Advanced Technologies Ltd	No Data	No Data	Northampton North	Designs and manufactures precision components and thermal insulation solutions for the motorsport and automotive, but also serves other complementary industries.

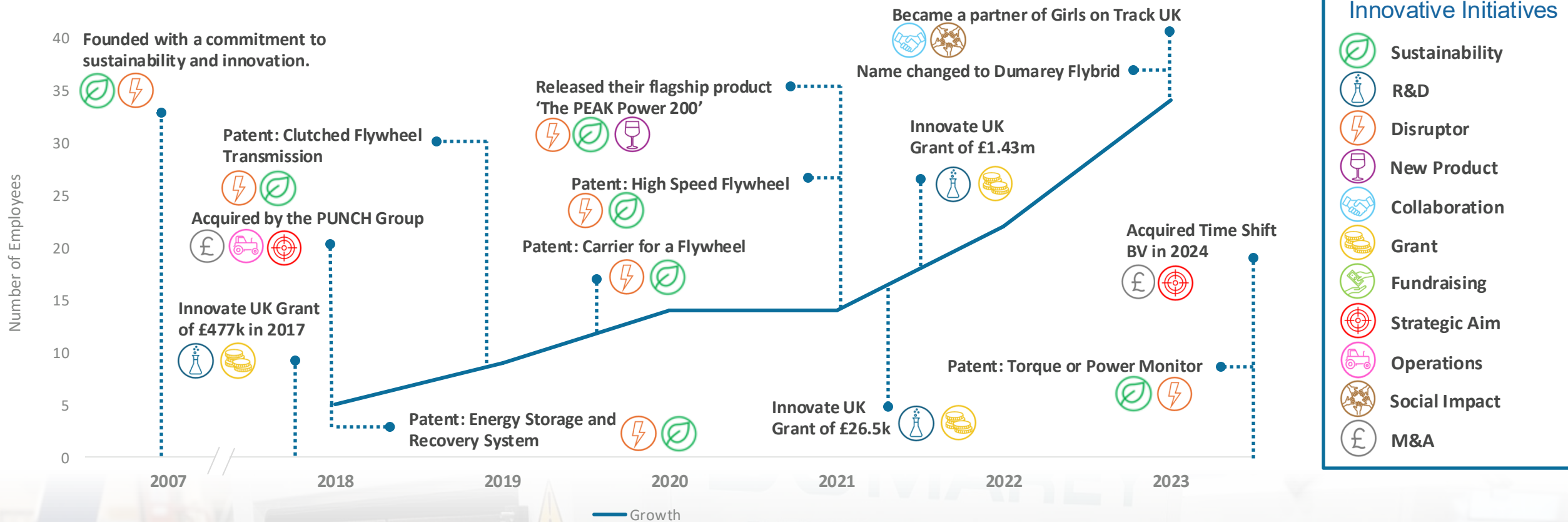
# Advanced Engineering: Case Study – Cosworth

Cosworth have developed an expertise in motorsport. Through investment in R&D and diversification they now deliver advanced engineering in other sectors, including technology and sustainability.



# Advanced Engineering: Case Study – Dumarey Flybrid

Since its inception in 2007, Dumarey Flybrid has focused on advancing technologies for capturing, optimising, and reusing energy. The company's consistent innovation is supported by grants and secured through patents, highlighting its commitment to pioneering sustainable energy solutions.

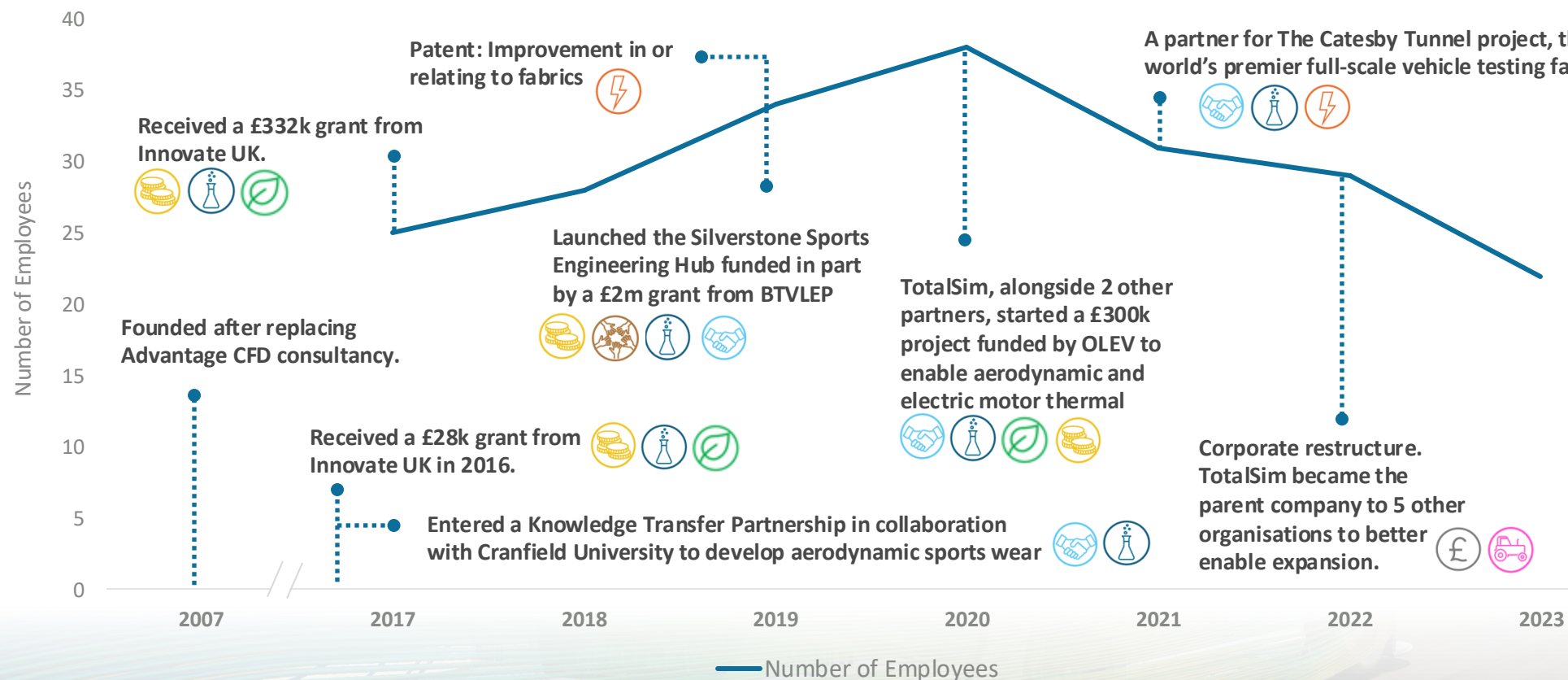


ENERGY STORED, POWER DELIVERED

PUNCH | Flybrid

# Advanced Engineering: Case Study – TotalSim

TotalSim's journey has been defined by continuous R&D, receipt of grants, and collaborations with others. This has enabled them to create facilities and solutions that benefit not just their own operations, but the Advanced Engineering community.



## Innovative Initiatives

- Sustainability
- R&D
- Disruptor
- New Product
- Collaboration
- Grant
- Fundraising
- Strategic Aim
- Operations
- Social Impact
- M&A



# Logistics

---



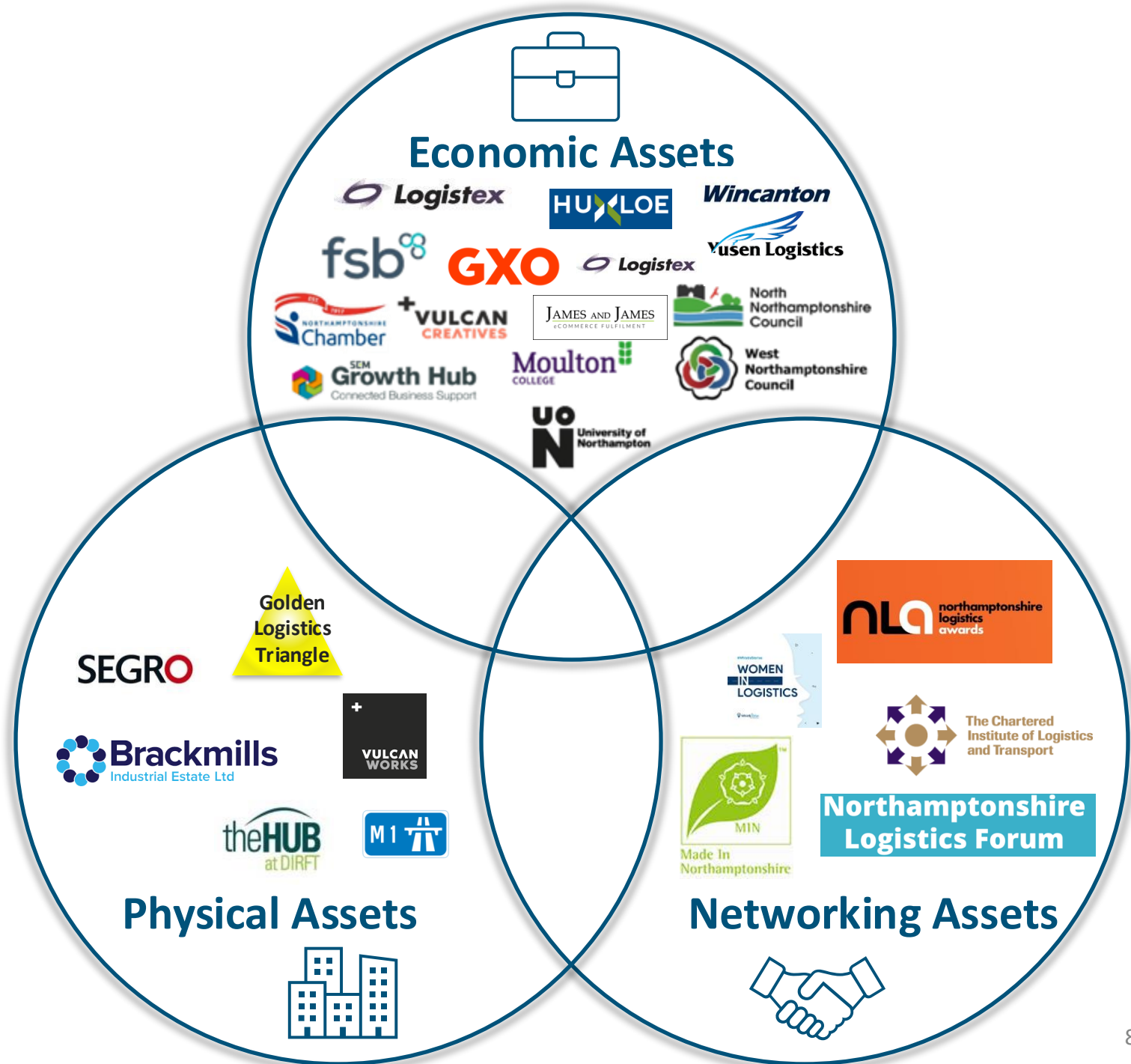
# The Northamptonshire Logistics Cluster

There are over **2000** logistics businesses\* dispersed across Northamptonshire.

Institutions and organisations such as North and West Northamptonshire Councils, academic institutions, and support organisations are economic assets essential for supporting innovation.

The sector also includes a variety of physical assets like the various logistics hubs, rail hubs, and road networks.

Furthermore, the region boasts networking assets such as The Northamptonshire Logistics Awards and the Women In Logistics events.

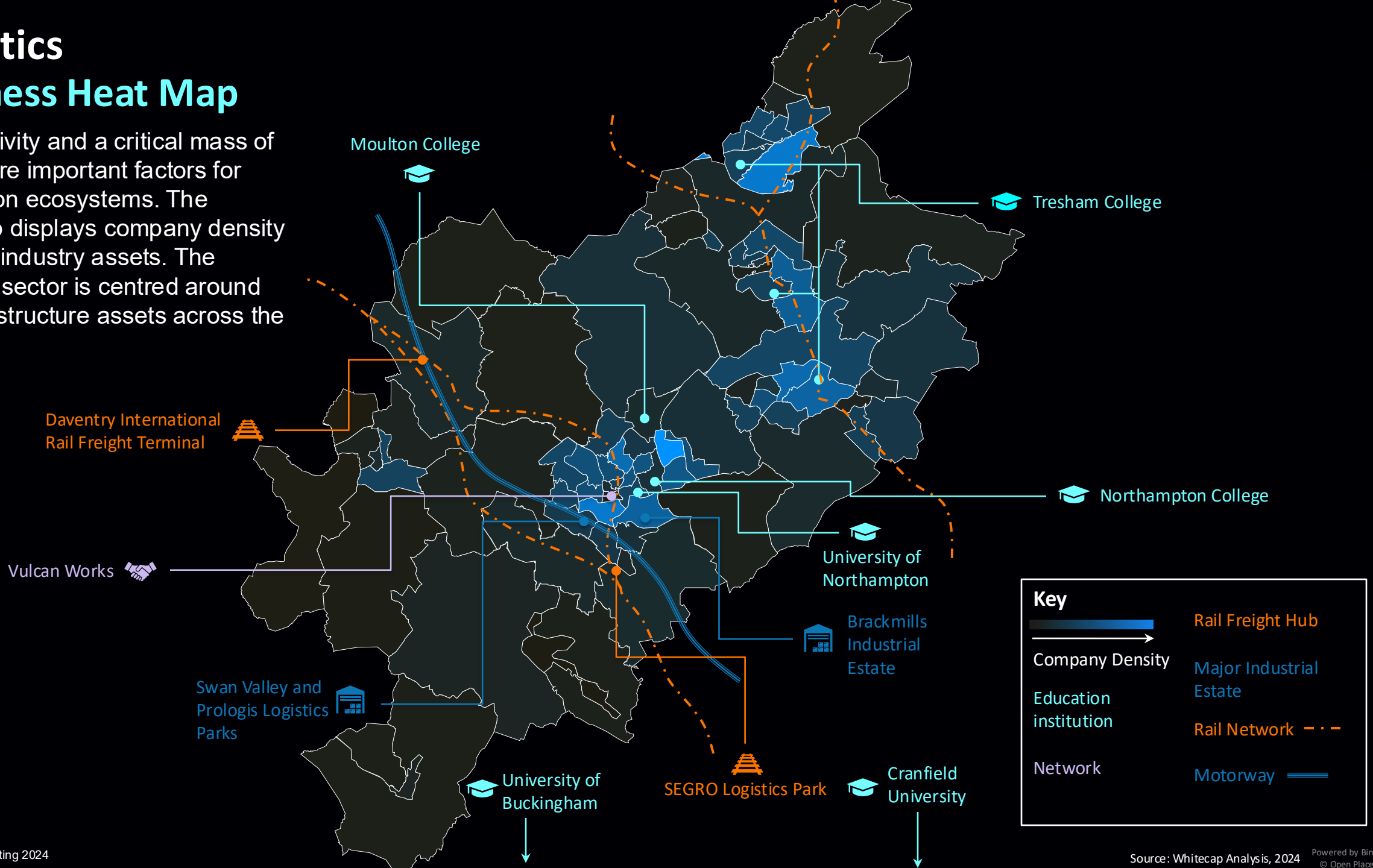


\*SIC Codes in Divisions 53, Groups 49.2, 49.4, 50.2, 50.4, 51.2, 52.1, or 52.2.



# Logistics

Connectivity and a critical mass of assets are important factors for innovation ecosystems. The heatmap displays company density and key industry assets. The logistics sector is centred around the infrastructure assets across the county.



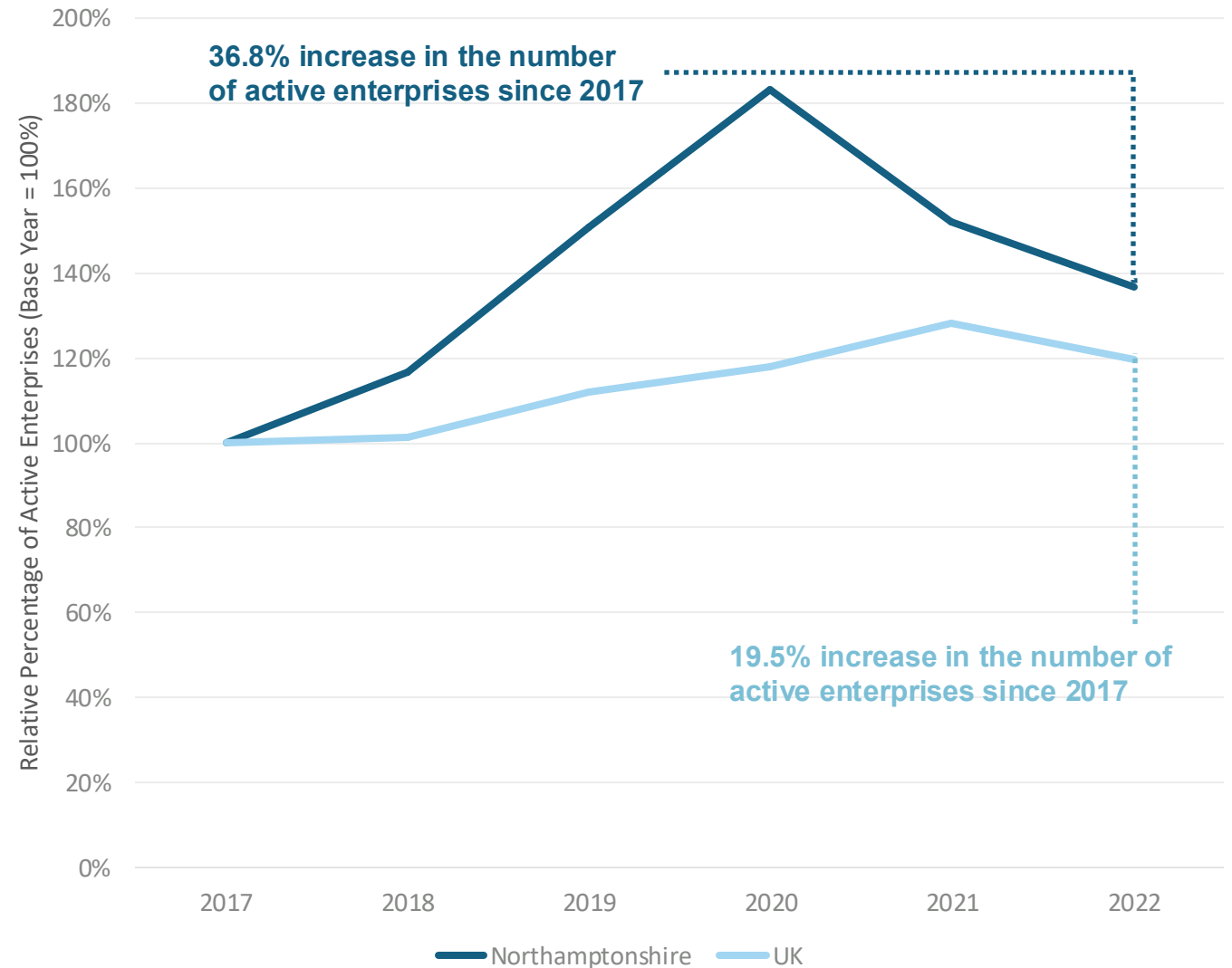
# Logistics: Active Enterprises

Measuring the number of active enterprises offers insights into the sustainability of a sector, revealing its growth and stability. Benchmarking these figures against UK averages highlights whether the sector's growth or decline is keeping pace with, exceeding, or lagging behind national trends.

Northamptonshire saw rapid expansion in 2018 and 2019. However, since 2020, the region has faced a sharper decline in enterprise numbers. In contrast, the UK exhibited a steadier growth pattern, experiencing a small drop off in 2021.

From 2017 to 2022, the number of active enterprises in Northamptonshire rose from 3,365 to 4,605. Comparatively, the UK saw a rise from 75,985 to 90,830. Although the sector is expanding nationally, Northamptonshire is achieving growth at a faster rate.

Relative Change in the Number of Active Enterprises for Logistics



# Logistics: Scaleup Analysis

A study was conducted on companies in the logistics sector in Northamptonshire. It focused on businesses that achieved 10% or 20% growth in either employee numbers or turnover over three consecutive years within a 10-year period, classifying them as scaleups and high-growth scaleups, respectively.

**19 high growth scaleups** were identified as shown by the table. Three scaleups were chosen for an in-depth case study review to explore the innovative behaviours and strategies driving their expansion.\*

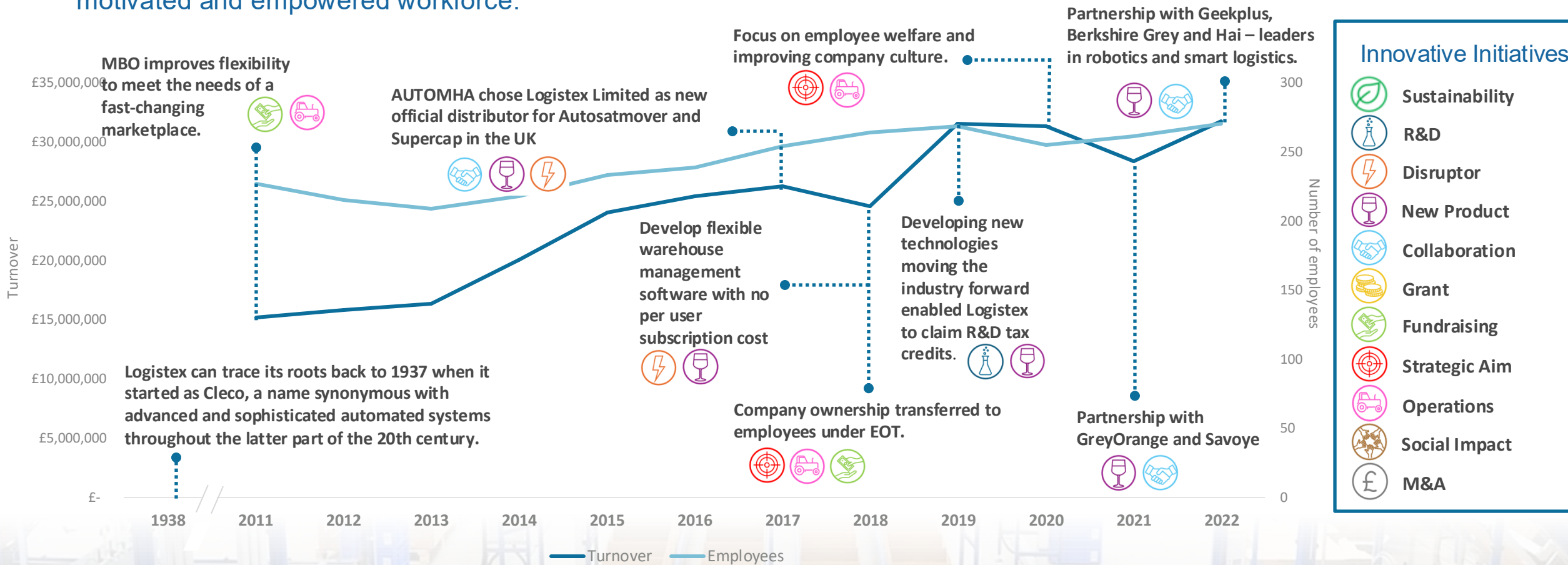
Understanding these initiatives, behaviours and strategies highlights how these scaleups represent an economic strength for the region, serving as models of successful innovation and growth. Additionally, they contribute valuable insights for a SWOT analysis of the region.

Names	Employee Count	Turnover	Location	Description
GXO Logistics UK II Limited	8754	£402,291,000	Northampton South	GXO Logistics is an American global contract logistics company that manages outsourced supply chains and warehousing, and reverse logistics for blue-chip customers in over thirty countries.
Acumen Automotive Logistics Limited	76	£14,210,000	South Northamptonshire	Acumen Logistics specializes in transportation and logistics services for leading car manufacturers and importers.
Barton Petroleum (Holdings) Limited	100	£150,883,000	Wellingborough	Barton Petroleum supplies a range of lubricant, fuel and oil products for businesses and individuals.
C. BUTT Limited	130	£18,031,000	Northampton South	C Butt Ltd is a family-owned warehousing and transport solutions provider.
Extran Medica Limited	62	No Data	Northampton South	Extran Medica provides medical courier services for private and national healthcare.
George Varney (Bulk Services) Limited	57	£10,966,000	Daventry	George Varney Bulk Services is a family-owned company that specializes in bulk tipper haulage, operating a fleet of over 30 44-tonne bulk artic tippers.
James and James Fulfilment Ltd	241	£28,368,000	South Northamptonshire	James & James is a fulfilment partner for eCommerce brands, providing real-time inventory reporting and order fulfilment to help businesses scale their operations.
Keen & Able Limited	50	£3,967,638	Northampton North	Keen and Able is a professional and reliable home delivery company specializing in furniture deliveries and bed installations.
Ontime Automotive Limited	83	£16,663,000	South Northamptonshire	Ontime specializes in vehicle transport services, offering a worldwide car transport and vehicle delivery service by road, sea, or air.
Sloane Helicopters Limited	84	£39,464,000	Daventry	Sloane Helicopters sells and maintains helicopters, as well as providing a helicoptering chartering service and operating a flying school.
CTSTransport Group Ltd	40	No Data	Corby	CTSTransport Group Ltd is a UK-based transport and logistics company that provides a complete supply chain solution.
Fidelity Supply Chain Solutions Ltd	41	No Data	Daventry	Fidelity Fulfilment provides global eCommerce fulfilment and 3PL solutions, including warehousing and Just-in-Time solutions.
HUXLOE Logistics Ltd	41	£57,941,000	Kettering	Huxloe Logistics provides distribution services for retailers.
Instant Despatch Services Limited	33	No Data	Wellingborough	Loup keeps your supply chain moving with the most effective, efficient and economical transportation and logistics solutions on the market.
NX Logistics Ltd	43	No Data	Northampton North	We offer a flexible suite of secure logistics and warehousing solutions for goods that require an extra level of care
Prigmore Haulage Ltd	25	No Data	Wellingborough	Prigmore Haulage provides a range of haulage services.
Robinsons Autologistics Limited	42	No Data	Corby	Robinson Group is a family run business providing a high-quality vehicle delivery service to all areas of the motor industry.
Sas Logistics Limited	36	No Data	South Northamptonshire	SAS Tech Services is an all-in-one Managed Service Provider that offers IT management, support, and logistics services for small and large businesses.
T J G Logistics Limited	14	No Data	Corby	We are a transport, commercial repairs and storage specialised company based in Corby, Northamptonshire.

\*The analysis of the three high growth scaleup case studies are available in the Workstream 1 Report.

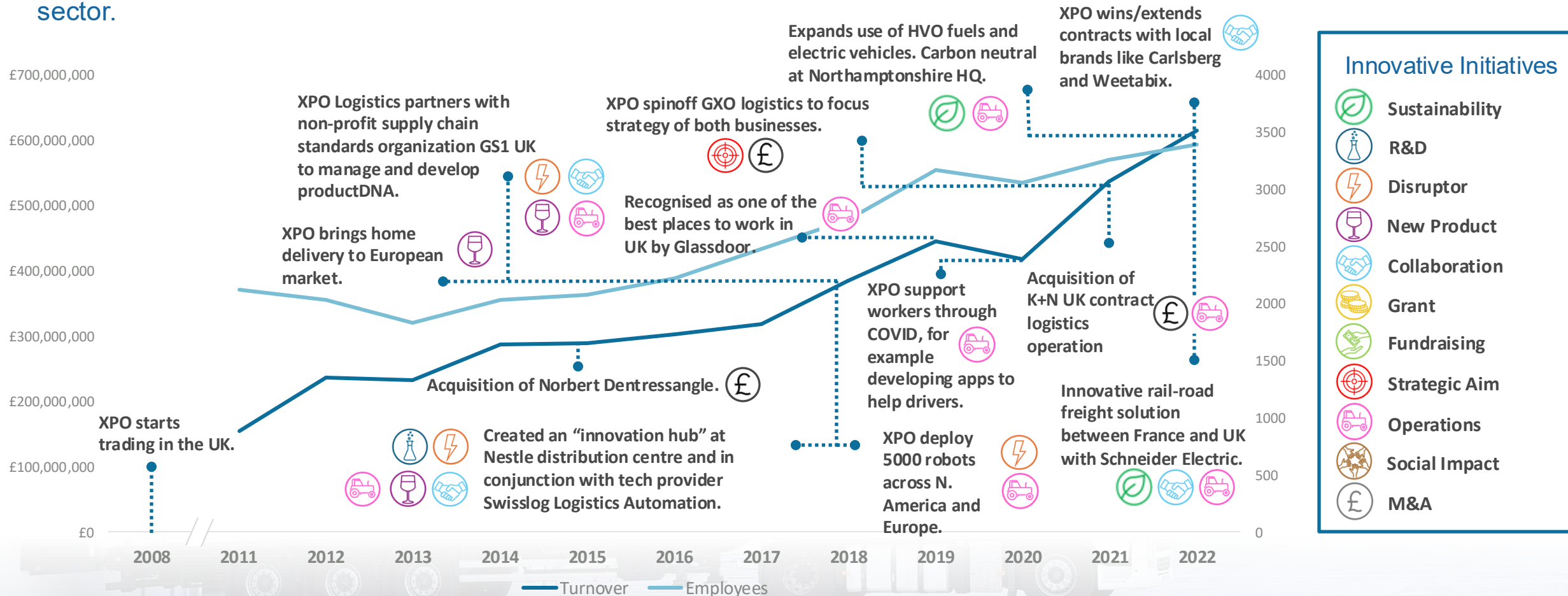
# Logistics: Case Study – Logistex

Through investment and development of their technology, alongside partnerships with the most innovative robotics firms, Logistex have created a competitive value proposition. Their people focused approach means they have a motivated and empowered workforce.



# Logistics: Case Study – XPO Logistics

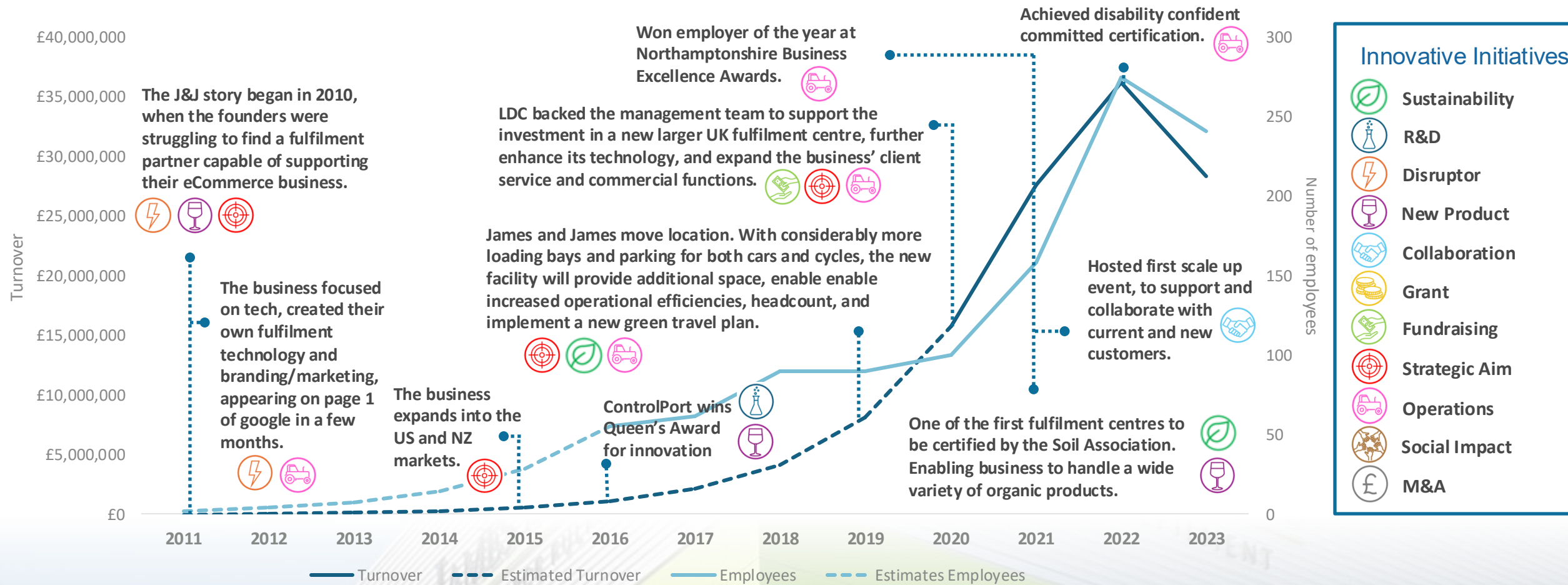
XPO have quickly scaled their business through acquisition and diversifying their offering to clients. Investment in technology and sustainability, as well as partnerships with large brands means Logistex are pioneering in the logistics sector.





# Logistics: Case Study – James and James Fulfilment

James and James Fulfilment’s technology led and client focused approach to fulfilment has disrupted the ecommerce space and led to significant growth. A healthy and rewarding company culture has created a positive work environment.





# Construction

---

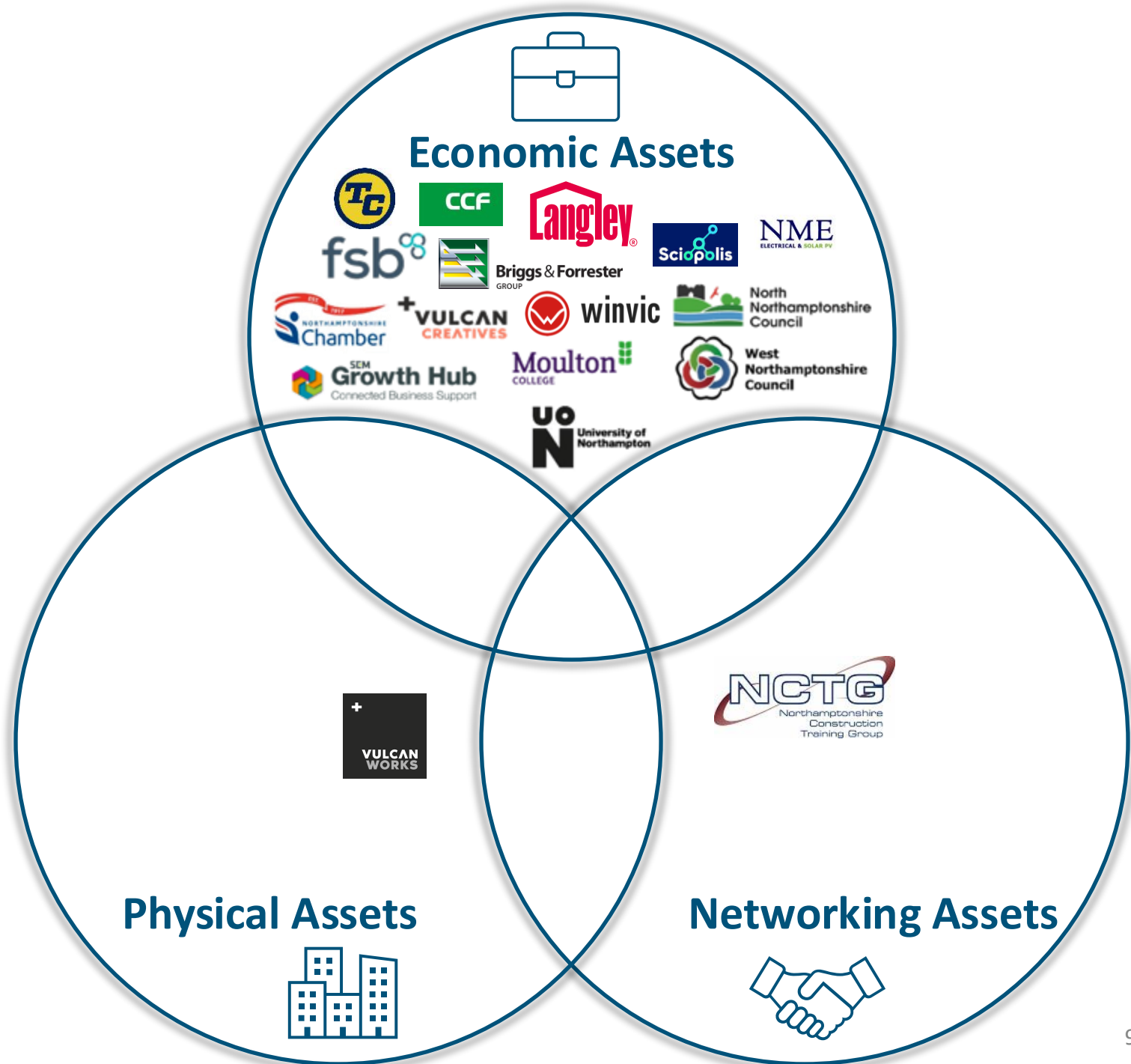


# The Northamptonshire Construction Cluster

There are over **3600** construction businesses\* dispersed across Northamptonshire.

Institutions and organisations such as North and West Northamptonshire Councils, academic institutions, and support organisations are economic assets essential for supporting innovation.

Whilst the sector has a large number of economic assets, it seems to lack communal physical assets and networking assets. This suggests the cluster is not as developed as an ecosystem compared to other sectors reviewed. The spotlight on innovation report by the FSB found that the construction sector had the lowest level of innovation compared with other sectors.

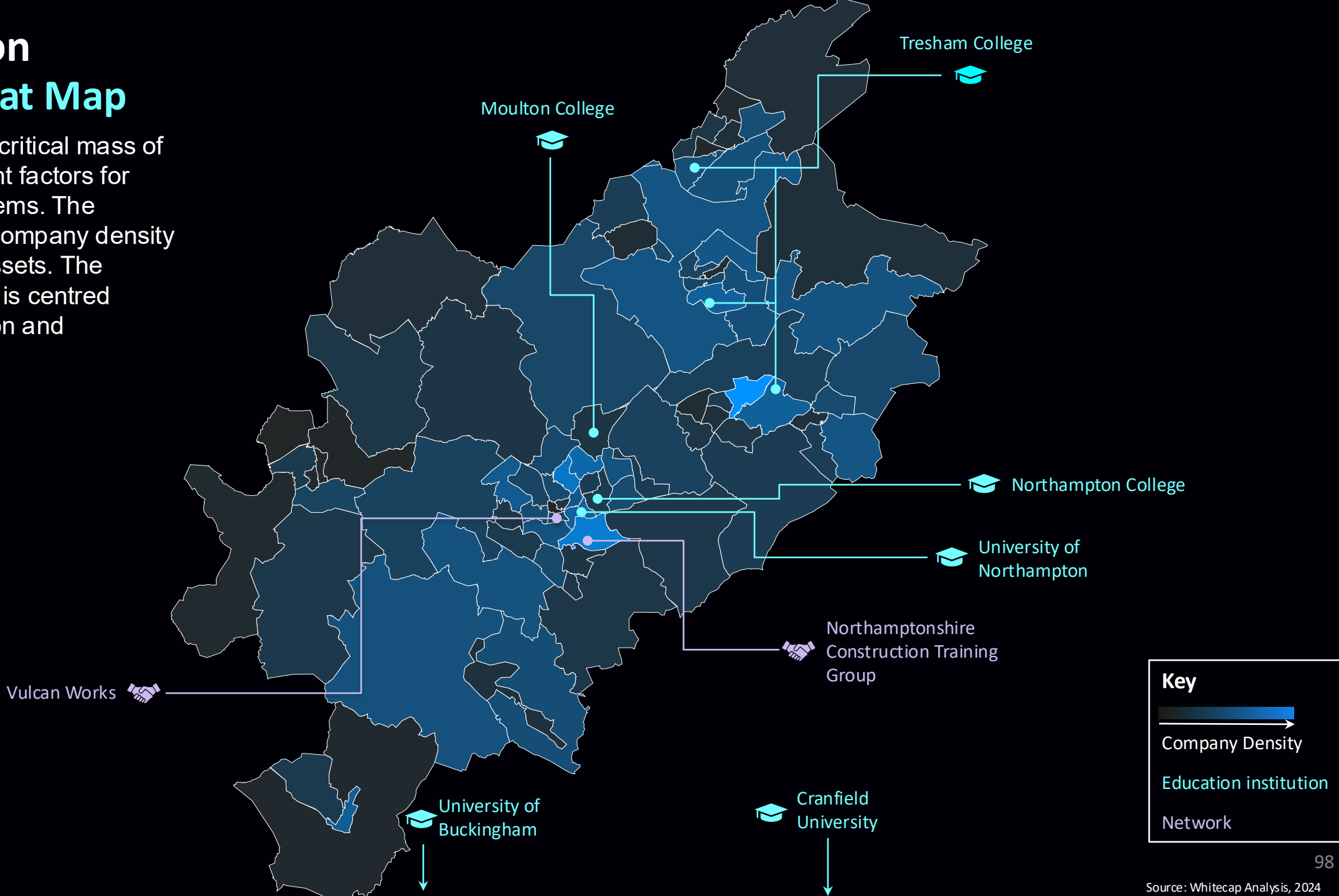




# Construction

## Business Heat Map

Connectivity and a critical mass of assets are important factors for innovation ecosystems. The heatmap displays company density and key industry assets. The construction sector is centred around Northampton and Wellingborough.



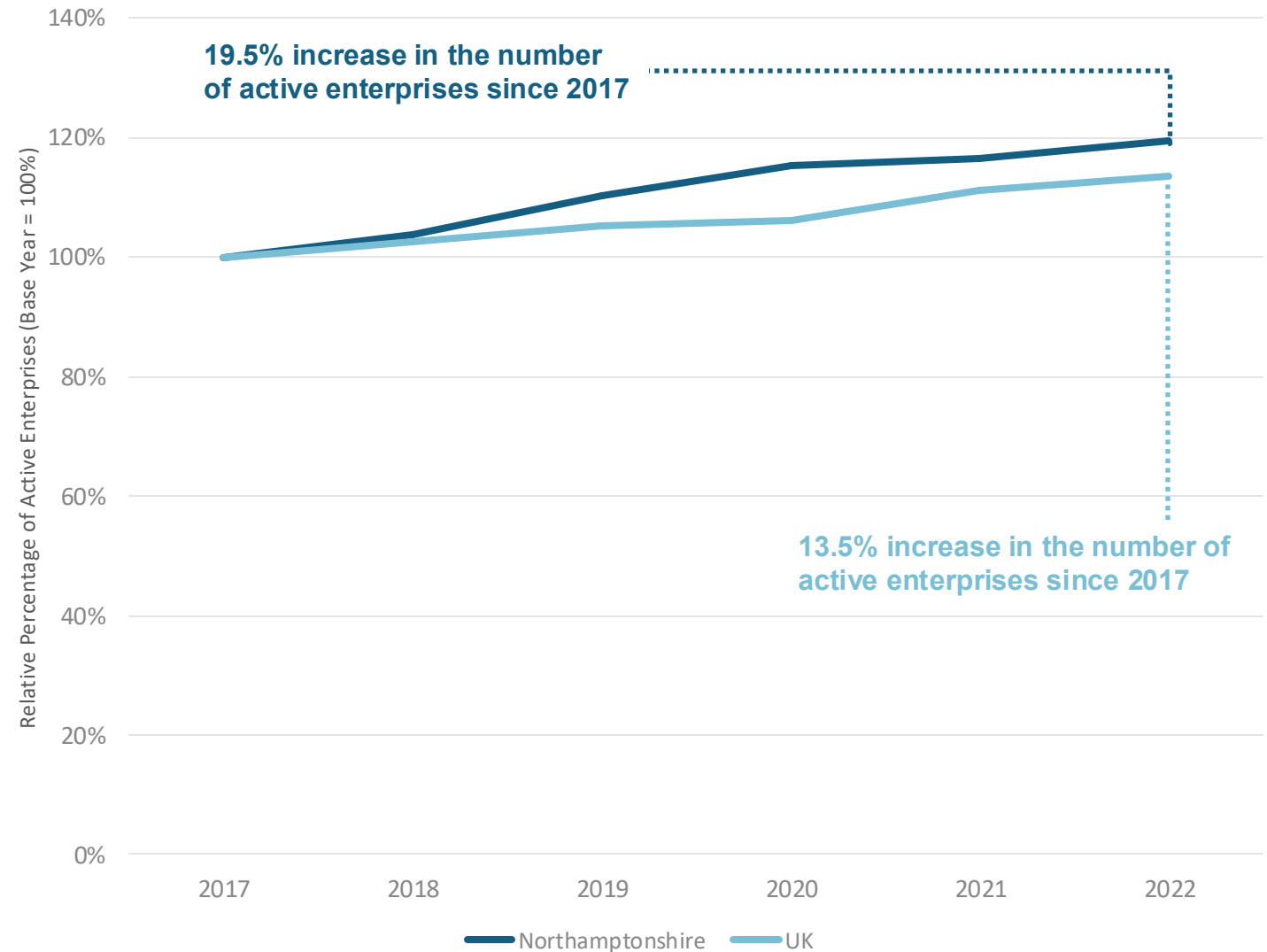
# Construction: Active Enterprises

Measuring the number of active enterprises offers insights into the sustainability of a sector, revealing its growth and stability. Benchmarking these figures against UK averages highlights whether the sector's growth or decline is keeping pace with, exceeding, or lagging behind national trends.

Northamptonshire's enterprise growth mirrored the UK. While both have seen similar upward trends, Northamptonshire has performed slightly better, with a higher increase in the relative change in the number of enterprises.

From 2017 to 2022, the number of active enterprises in Northamptonshire grew from 4,640 to 5,545, compared to the UK's rise from 370,530 to 420,430. This shows that the sector is expanding both regionally and nationally, but at a slightly faster rate in Northamptonshire.

Relative Change in the Number of Active Enterprises for Construction



# Construction: Scaleup Analysis

A study was conducted on companies in the construction sector in Northamptonshire. It focused on businesses that achieved 10% or 20% growth in either employee numbers or turnover over three consecutive years within a 10-year period, classifying them as scaleups and high-growth scaleups, respectively.

**51 high growth scaleups** were identified as shown by a selection in the table. Two scaleups were chosen for an in-depth case study review to explore the innovative behaviours and strategies driving their expansion.\*

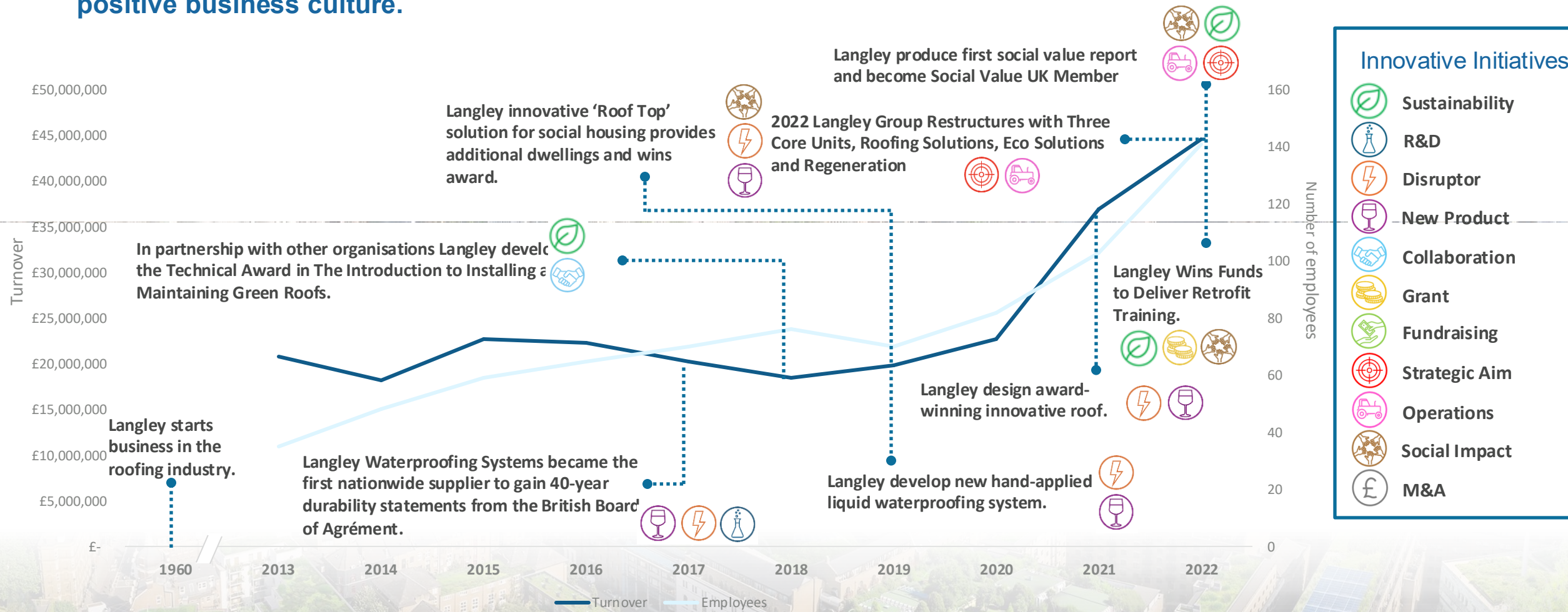
Understanding these initiatives, behaviours and strategies highlights how these scaleups represent an economic strength for the region, serving as models of successful innovation and growth. Additionally, they contribute valuable insights for a SWOT analysis of the region.

Names	Employee Count	Turnover	Location	Description
Mills Carpentry, Building & Maintenance Limited	19	No Data	South Northamptonshire	Mills Carpentry, Building & Maintenance Ltd is a family-run business providing domestic and commercial carpentry services.
Langley UK Limited	136	£44,356,000	Daventry	Langley installs roofing and waterproofing systems in domestic and commercial properties.
Holm OAK Estates Limited	57	£23,024,000	Daventry	Phoenix Surfacing provides a range of surfacing services, including construction and maintenance.
KGBP Ltd	34	No Data	Corby	KGBP offers a full range of construction services, including maintenance, alterations, extensions, and new builds for residential and commercial clients.
Snowdon Homes Ltd	44	£25,441,000	Wellingborough	Snowdon Homes Ltd is a privately-owned housebuilding and development company.
Melius Homes Limited	30	No Data	Kettering	Melius Homes designs, fabricates, and constructs high quality, affordable, and energy-efficient new homes.
M R Industrial Services Ltd	58	No Data	Corby	M.R Industrial Services provides structural and architectural steel, roofing and cladding, specialist pipework and engineering, impact protection, design, fabrication, installation, and health & safety services.
Granemore Group Ltd.	9	£52,646,000	Kettering	Granemore Group provides a range of civil engineering and project management services.
Integral Electrical Solutions Limited	24	No Data	Daventry	Integral Electrical Solutions is a licensed electrical contractor and electricians company offering services in industrial and commercial applications.
EB Designs Limited	42	No Data	Daventry	A team of reatail specialists that deisgn retail spaces for brands.
7 Formation Limited	46	£37,988,000	Corby	7formation Ltd are a nationwide fit-out principal contractor who specialise in both internal and external build solutions.
Mulberry Commercial Developments Holdings Limited	145	£263,411,000	South Northamptonshire	Mulberry Developments is a privately owned and funded Property Developer with over 20 years' experience of delivering projects, which includes over 9 million sqft of industrial & logistics space.
Winvic Construction Limited	537	£1,217,423,000	Northampton North	A multidisciplinary main contractor excelling in the delivery of construction and civil engineering projects across the UK.
Steve Farmer Plumbing & Heating Ltd	18	No Data	Northampton North	Local family run company with gas safe engineers and qualified plumbers.
Nene Valley Fire and Acoustic Ltd	59	No Data	Wellingborough	Nene Valley Fire & Acoustic offers fire protection installation services.
Mida Civil Engineering Limited	32	£33,034,000	Northampton North	MIDA Civil Engineering Ltd specializes in providing pre-construction services, site clearance and remediation, earthworks and enabling works, infrastructure and civil engineering works, groundworks, and landscaping services to complex, challenging projects. They prioritize excellence, safety, sustainability, and innovative solutions in all their endeavours.
JSJ Construction (Midlands) Limited	14	No Data	Daventry	Construction company in Northampton.
Park Lane Windows Ltd	20	No Data	Northampton North	Park Lane Windows is a FENSA-registered installer of double-glazed windows, doors, conservatories, orangeries, porches, and roofline products to businesses and residential properties

\*The analysis of the two high growth scaleup case studies are available in the Workstream 1 Report.

# Construction: Case Study – Langley

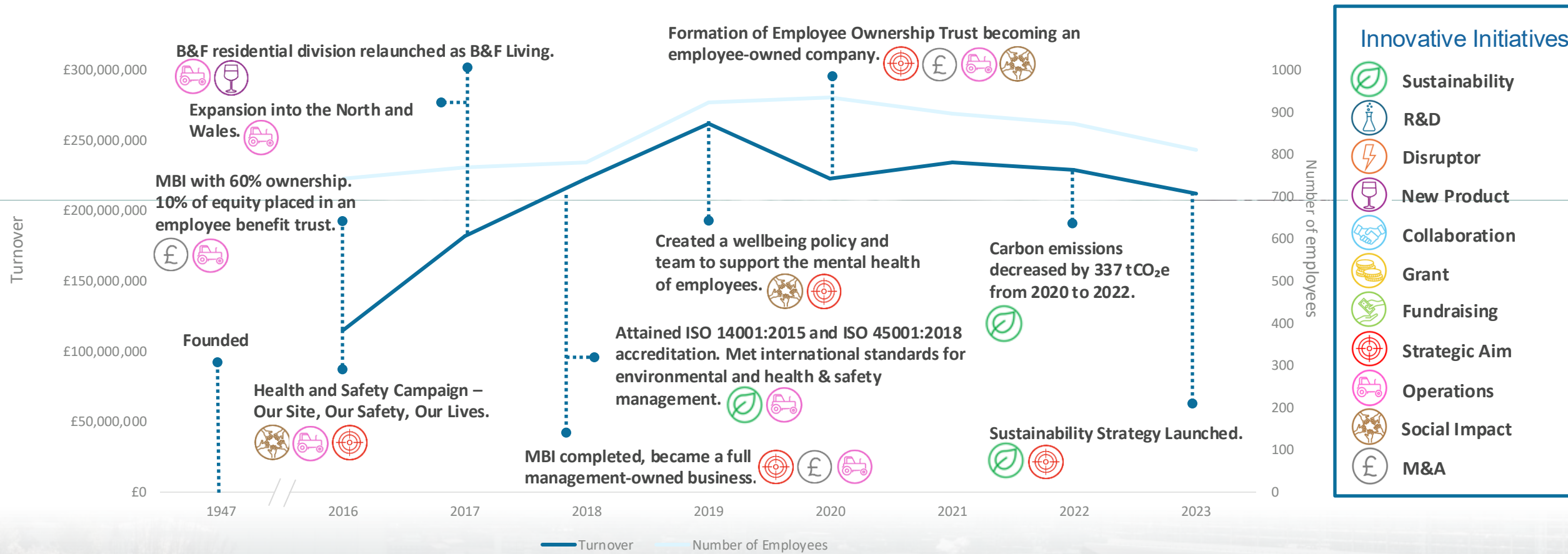
Langley’s value proposition of providing bespoke end-to-end roofing solutions, innovative new products and advanced roofing solutions has resulted in significant growth. Their focus on ESG and social value drives a positive business culture.





# Construction: Case Study – Briggs & Forrester

The Briggs Forrester Group is renowned for its expertise in building services. In recent years, they have concentrated on sustainable practices and have placed a strong emphasis on valuing and supporting their people.



# Appendix III:

# Definitions and Abbreviations

A detailed glossary of key terminology and frequently used abbreviations featured throughout the report.

# Definitions and Abbreviations – 1/3

## Definitions

- **Active Enterprise Rate:** The number of active enterprises per 1000 people in a given year.
- **Beauhurst:** A platform providing detailed data on every UK private company (high growth, accelerators, funds etc) offering insights into performance and activities.
- **Economic Assets:** Represents businesses (large, medium-sized, and small enterprises); institutions (government and academic); and support organisations that drive, cultivate or support economic development.
- **Enterprise Birth Rates:** The proportion of enterprises incorporated in the given year from the total number of active enterprises.
- **Enterprise Death Rates:** The proportion of enterprises that became inactive that year from the total number of active enterprises.
- **High Growth Scaleups:** Firms that have seen average annualised growth (in terms of employees or turnover) of at least 20% or more per annum over a triennium and have at least 10 employees at the start of that period.
- **Innovation:** Delivering something that has a measurable impact for the innovation target (e.g., customers, employees, and society).
- **Innovation Anchors:** Major organisations (such as universities, large corporations, etc) that play a pivotal role in a region's innovation ecosystem by providing essential resources and support for economic and community development, thereby attracting economic activity to the area.
- **Innovation Assets:** Resources that support or and drive innovation including physical infrastructure, intellectual property, human capital, financial resources, technology, networks for knowledge sharing etc.
- **Innovation Capabilities:** Skills, resources and processes that enable individuals or organisations to problem solve, generate new ideas and turn them into tangible products and services.
- **Innovation Districts (ID) / Knowledge Cluster:** Geographically defined areas designed to promote innovation and economic development by clustering similar companies, infrastructure, research institutions and support services to facilitate collaboration and synergies.
- **Innovation Ecosystem (IE):** A network of interconnected organisations, research institutions, businesses and individuals working together to foster innovation, support entrepreneurship and drive economic growth in a specific region or industry.
- **Innovation Markers:** 11 key innovation markers have been established to gauge various ways a company engages in innovative activities. These are sustainability, R&D, disruptor, new product, collaboration, operations, strategic aim, fundraising, grant, social impact and M&A.
- **Key Sector:** An important industry vital to the region, recognised for its size, growth potential, and significant impact on the local economy.
- **Networking Assets:** Resources and platforms that facilitate connections and interactions among individuals, organisations, and institutions. This includes professional networks, industry associations, and online communities that foster collaboration, knowledge sharing, and partnership opportunities.
- **Opportunity Sector:** An emerging industry with significant growth potential, driven by political agendas, technological advancements, trends, or market demands.
- **Physical Assets:** Public / private spaces (buildings, open spaces) and other infrastructure designed to enable increased connectivity and collaboration.
- **Scaleups:** Firms that have seen average annualised growth (in terms of employees or turnover) of at least 10% over a triennium and have 10 employees or more at the start of that period.

# Definitions and Abbreviations – 2/3

## Definitions Continued

- **SIC Codes:** Standard Industrial Classification codes used to categorise and identify different industries and business activities.
- **Startups:** Companies that are less than ten years old, have less than ten employees in the current year, and must not have reduced their workforce by more than 10 employees over the past ten years.
- **The Data City (TDC):** An AI-powered data platform offering an alternative to SIC Codes, which highlights growing sectors, clusters, and companies. It provides detailed statistics and insights that can be analysed.
- **Value Propositions:** Unique goods and services offered by a company that address specific market needs and differentiate it from competitors.
- **Walkability:** In planning terms, it is the accessibility of amenities by foot.

## Key Sector Definitions












- **Food and Drink Manufacturing:** Companies classified under SIC codes in divisions 10 or 11, which are involved in manufacturing food products or beverages.
- **Advanced Engineering:** Companies utilising cutting-edge technologies in their manufacturing processes, with SIC codes in divisions 20, 21, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 33, or class 7112.
- **Logistics:** Companies with SIC codes in divisions 53, groups 49.2, 49.4, 50.2, 50.4, 51.2, 52.1, or 52.2. These organisations manage or optimise the movement of goods from origin to consumption.
- **Construction:** Companies with SIC codes in Section F (divisions 41, 42, or 43), encompassing general construction and specialised construction activities for buildings and civil engineering works.

## Abbreviations

- **CSBP:** Centre for Sustainable Business Practices
- **ESG:** Environmental, Social, and Governance
- **FSB:** The Federation of Small Businesses
- **IE:** Innovation Ecosystem
- **IUK:** Innovate UK
- **LSIP:** Local Skills Improvement Plan
- **NNC:** North Northamptonshire Council
- **NIE:** Northamptonshire Innovation Ecosystem
- **NIEA:** Northamptonshire Innovation Ecosystem Analysis
- **OECD:** Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
- **PPP:** Public-Private Partnership
- **PRP:** Pan Regional Partnership
- **R&D:** Research and Development
- **SEM Growth Hub:** South-East Midlands Growth Hub
- **SEMLEP:** South-East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership
- **SMEs:** Small, Medium Enterprises, including micro enterprises
- **STC:** Silverstone Technology Cluster
- **STEM:** Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
- **SWOT:** Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
- **UON:** University of Northampton
- **WNC:** West Northamptonshire Council

# Definitions and Abbreviations: Innovation Markers – 3/3

We have analysed 11 key “innovation markers” that signal a company’s innovative activities.

Innovation Markers	Definition
 <b>Sustainability</b>	The principle that resources are finite and to preserve resources with long term view on priorities and wisely with activities not limited to using less resources, more renewable resources, using resources efficiently, and dispose of waste to not harm natural resources.
 <b>R&amp;D</b>	The series of activities that companies undertake to innovate. It is often the first stage in the development process that results in market research product development, and product testing.
 <b>Disruptor</b>	Describes a creative product or idea, usually by an up-and-coming company with fewer resources, that causes radical change in an existing market, sometimes even taking it over.
 <b>New Product</b>	A product the business is new to marketing it, it may serve a new target market the business has dealt with or a different need for an existing target market.
 <b>Collaboration</b>	The practice of working together with internal and external connections to pool resources, create value, solve problems and achieve shared goals and objectives.
 <b>Operations</b>	Activities that businesses engage in on a daily basis to increase the value of the enterprise and earn a profit such as produce, market and distribute goods and services.
 <b>Strategic Aim</b>	Long term objectives in place to achieve vision and fulfill mission and guide direction of the organisation.
 <b>Fundraising</b>	Process of gathering money or other resources to fund activities aimed to accelerate business growth such as buying new equipment or boosting production.
 <b>Grant</b>	Financial award from a government entity to serve a specific purpose.
 <b>Social Impact</b>	Activities undertaken to address social needs of the community or that of employees.
 <b>M&amp;A</b>	Process of combining companies either through outright purchase of one company (acquisition) or combining two firms into one legal entity (merger).

### **LEEDS**

Platform, New Station Street  
Leeds  
LS1 4JB

0113 834 3133

### **NEWCASTLE**

TusPark  
27 Grainger Street  
Newcastle upon Tyne  
NE1 5JE

0191 543 6976

### **MANCHESTER**

4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Arkwright House  
Parsonage Gardens, Manchester  
M3 2LF

0161 826 2338

### **BRISTOL**

Future Space  
Filton Road, Stoke Gifford  
Bristol  
BS34 8RB

0117 911 5873

### **MILTON KEYNES**

Elder Gate  
Milton Keynes  
MK9 1LR

01908 041228

### **BIRMINGHAM**

Alpha Works  
Alpha Tower  
Birmingham  
B1 1TT

0121 314 1101