



The space to build  
a better business

## North East Business & Innovation Centre (BIC)

Candidate brief for the appointment of our Chief Executive  
Salary c£100K





**Kevan Carrick**  
Chair, North East  
Business Innovation Centre

## Chair's Welcome Statement Chief Executive Officer Recruitment

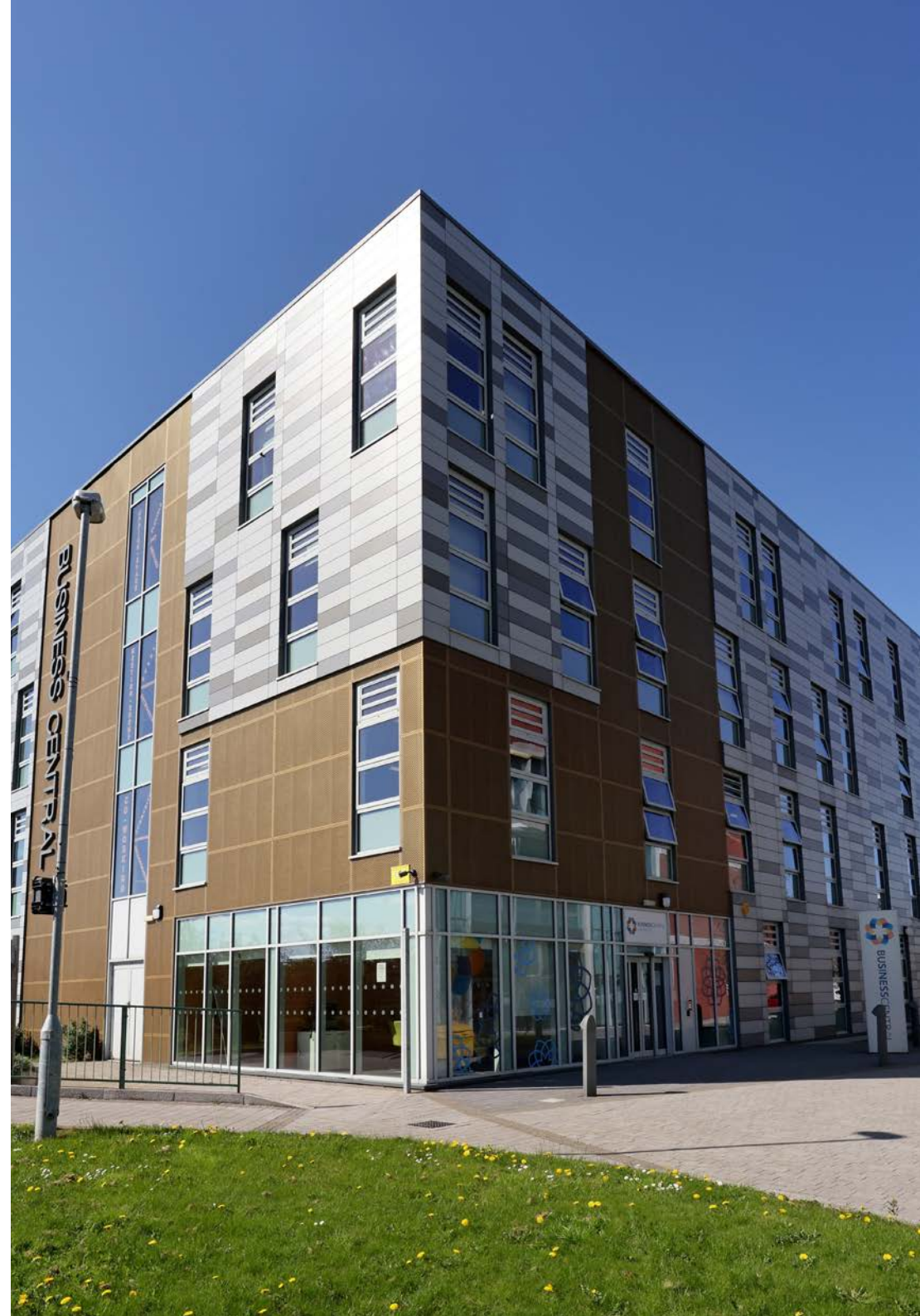
For over three decades, the North East BIC has been one of the region's most enduring forces for economic good.

Since our formation in 1994, we have helped more than 8,000 people start businesses, supported over 1,000 companies to innovate and grow, and provided the flexible, affordable workspace that has created thousands of jobs across Sunderland, Darlington, and Washington. That is a legacy built on purpose, not profit — and it is one we intend to build on.

As a not-for-profit social enterprise, everything we do is driven by a single conviction: that the right support, at the right time, in the right environment, can transform an idea into a thriving business and a thriving business into a stronger community.

We reinvest what we earn back into the region — into new services, better facilities, and programmes that open doors for entrepreneurs of every background, including veterans, social enterprise founders, and first-time business owners.

Today, we are home to more than 400 businesses across our seven centres, and our reach extends across the North East region — through innovation programmes, business growth support, IT and telecoms services, and a network of advisers who give freely of their expertise so that others may succeed.



## A Region on the Rise

This is a pivotal moment — not just for the BIC, but for the North East itself. The region is experiencing a genuine economic renaissance, and the scale of opportunity is striking. From clean energy and advanced manufacturing to digital, AI and the creative industries, the North East offers a powerful combination of strategic sites, specialist assets, talent and collaboration — and regularly achieves the highest number of foreign direct investment jobs per capita of any UK region.

The headline numbers tell a compelling story. An AI Growth Zone for the North East is set to unlock more than 5,000 new jobs and attract £30 billion in investment, as the region positions itself as one of the largest data hubs in Europe. At the same time, Dogger Bank Wind Farm — the world's largest offshore wind project — will deliver £6.1 billion to the UK economy and support over 28,000 full-time equivalent years of work in the North East and North Yorkshire alone. Just this month, NatWest Group pledged £20 billion in funding over the next ten years to drive economic growth across the North of England, a signal of serious long-term institutional confidence in the region.

Underpinning all of this is a new spirit of regional ambition and coordination. The North East Mayoral Strategic Authority has championed a “bottom-up” approach to economic development, emphasising local leadership — part of a wider effort to address long-standing regional inequalities between North and South. The BIC is proud to play an active role in that endeavour.

Over many years we have built strong, trusted partnerships with the Mayoral Strategic Authority and with local councils across the region working alongside them to align our programmes with the wider priorities of economic inclusion, skills development, and place-based growth. These are not transactional relationships; they are genuine partnerships, grounded in shared values and a common commitment to making the North East a place where enterprise can flourish for everyone, not just the few.

Our next Chief Executive will inherit these relationships as one of the BIC's most significant assets — and will be expected to deepen and extend them.

For the BIC, this is not background noise — it is our operating environment, and it is full of possibility. The entrepreneurs, innovators, and growing businesses that will power this next chapter of the North East's story are exactly the people we exist to serve. We intend to be at the heart of it.

## The Leadership We Need

We are searching for a Chief Executive who shares our values as deeply as they command their craft.

The North East BIC is, at its heart, a social enterprise. Every square foot of workspace we manage and every business programme we deliver exists to create a measurable, positive impact on our communities. But to deliver on that social mission, we must be exceptionally well-run, financially resilient, and commercially sharp. Our social purpose is fuelled by our commercial success; the more robust we are as a business, the more good we can do for our region. We need a leader who understands that commercial discipline and social purpose are not in tension — they are, in the right hands, mutually reinforcing. You will need the entrepreneurial acumen to spot new revenue streams, optimise our assets, and navigate a competitive landscape, alongside the empathy and vision to ensure those successes always serve our core purpose of economic inclusion.

You will inherit a highly respected organisation with strong foundations, genuine community trust, and a talented, committed team. What we need from you is the strategic vision to see what the BIC can become, and the commercial leadership to take us there.

If you are energised by the prospect of shaping the economic future of the North East — and if you believe, as we do, that business done well is one of the most powerful forces for good there is — then I warmly invite you to read on...

**Kevan Carrick**

Chair, North East Business Innovation Centre

26 May 2026

# Job Description

Job Title: Chief Executive

Responsible to: Board of Directors

Contract: Full Time (37 hours per week)

Salary: c£100,000

Location: Sunderland, North East England

## Role Overview

The Chief Executive is the most senior executive director of the North East Business & Innovation Centre (BIC) and its subsidiaries and divisions.

Reporting to a non-executive Chair and accountable to a Board comprising seven additional non-executive directors, the Chief Executive is responsible for the overall strategic leadership, governance, operational performance, and financial sustainability of the organisation.

The postholder will lead a successful well established not-for-profit, private sector-led enterprise support organisation that plays a significant role in the regional business support ecosystem.



## Purpose of the Role

To provide strategic direction, leadership and management to ensure the continued success, sustainability and growth of the BIC and its subsidiaries.

Specifically, the Chief Executive will:

- Develop and agree with the Board an annual Business Plan for the delivery of enterprise and business support across the region.
- Deliver agreed objectives and performance targets while integrating longer-term strategic priorities.
- Direct and manage organisational resources effectively and efficiently.
- Lead organisational development and internal change initiatives.
- Promote exceptional client service standards and maintain strong external stakeholder relationships.
- Ensure the organisation operates to the highest standards of governance, compliance and accountability.



# Key Responsibilities

## 1. Strategic Leadership & Planning

- Develop, agree and deliver the annual Business Plan aligned to the organisation's mission and strategic objectives.
- Formulate and implement long-term strategies to ensure sustainability and growth.
- Identify emerging opportunities, risks and funding streams within the regional and national enterprise landscape.
- Lead innovation and continuous improvement across the organisation.

## 2. Governance & Board Relations

- Maintain effective communication with the Board and ensure robust governance arrangements are in place.
- Prepare Board agendas, reports and supporting documentation in a timely and professional manner.
- Keep the Board informed of all matters relating to significant developments.
- Ensure compliance with all statutory and regulatory requirements.
- Provide the company secretarial function, ensuring proper corporate governance standards are maintained.

## 3. Financial Management

- Oversee the financial management of the organisation, ensuring strong internal controls and reporting mechanisms.
- Ensure effective budgeting, forecasting and financial planning.
- Safeguard the financial sustainability of the BIC and its subsidiaries.
- Ensure compliance with funding body requirements and audit standards.

## 4. Operational & Project Oversight

- Direct and manage organisational resources to deliver high-quality services.
- Oversee the governance and delivery of all publicly funded projects.
- Ensure performance monitoring and reporting systems are robust and effective.
- Lead internal change programmes where required.

## 5. Human Resources & Leadership

- Provide strategic oversight of the Human Resources function.
- Lead, motivate and develop senior management and staff.
- Promote a positive organisational culture aligned with the values and ethos of the BIC.
- Ensure appropriate workforce planning, succession planning and staff development.

## 6. Compliance, Quality & Risk Management

- Ensure compliance with Health and Safety legislation.
- Oversee systems and procedures to maintain:
  - ISO 9001 Quality Management Standard
  - Cyber Essentials Plus (or equivalent cyber security standards)
  - Shine accreditation (or relevant sector accreditations)
- Maintain effective risk management frameworks.

## 7. External Relations & Representation

- Represent the BIC at meetings, presentations, conferences and events.
- Raise the profile of the BIC and promote its services regionally and nationally.
- Develop and maintain strong partnerships with public, private and third-sector organisations.
- Act as an ambassador for enterprise and business growth across the region.

## Representational & Governance Responsibilities

### National

- Director, National Enterprise Network

### Regional

- Member, North East Combined Authority (NECA)  
– relevant business community committee
- Chair, Northeast Enterprise Agencies Ltd
- Director, Dynamo North East

### Local

- Director, Sunderland Business Partnership
- Director and Chair, TEDCO Business Support (Subsidiary)
- Director and Chair, Northumberland Business Services (Subsidiary)



# Person Specification

## Essential Knowledge & Experience

- Strong knowledge of the regional private and public sector business support environment.
- Experience of strategic leadership at senior executive level.
- Experience of financial oversight and budget management.
- Experience of forming, developing and leading partnerships.
- Understanding of governance within publicly funded programmes.
- Experience, or at minimum sound knowledge, of the social enterprise sector and its ethos.

## Skills & Competencies

- Excellent communication and influencing skills.
- Strong leadership and people management capability.
- Commercial acumen and strategic thinking ability.
- Ability to operate effectively at Board level.
- Political awareness and stakeholder management skills.
- High levels of integrity and accountability.

## Key Relationships

- Board of Directors.
- Senior Management Team.
- Staff across BIC and subsidiaries.
- Funding bodies and public sector partners.
- Private sector clients and stakeholders.
- Regional and national enterprise networks.



# Remuneration & Benefits

## Salary

- Competitive senior executive salary commensurate with experience, qualifications and track record.
- The remuneration package will reflect the scale, responsibility and strategic importance of the role.
- Salary to be agreed by the Board.

## Performance-Related Review

- Annual performance review conducted by the Chair on behalf of the Board.
- Remuneration reviewed annually in line with performance, organisational outcomes and financial position.

## Pension

- Access to an appropriate workplace pension scheme.
- Employer contribution in line with organisational policy (details provided at offer stage).

## Holiday Entitlement

- Generous annual leave entitlement.
- In addition to statutory public holidays.
- Flexibility around leave arrangements subject to business requirements.

## Flexible Working

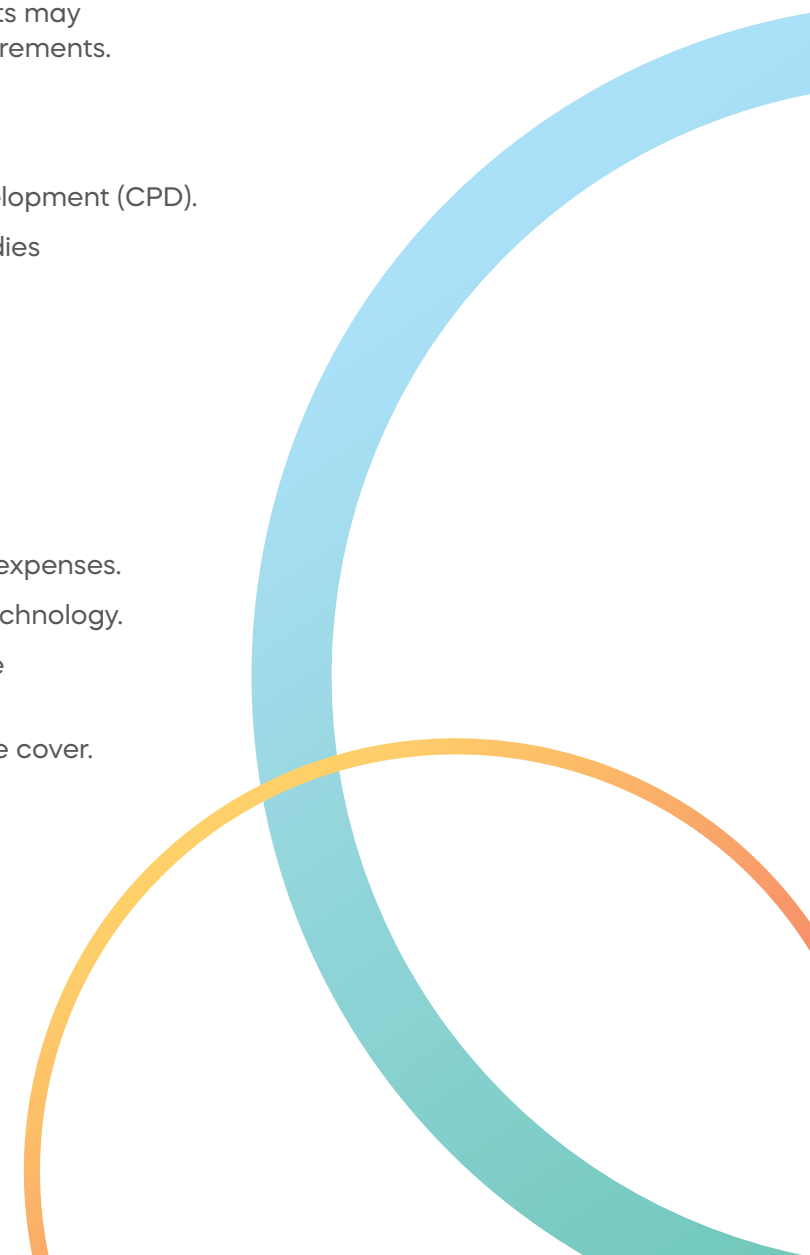
- Full-time (37 hours per week)..
- Hybrid and flexible working arrangements may be available subject to operational requirements.

## Professional Development

- Support for continuing professional development (CPD).
- Membership of relevant professional bodies supported where appropriate.
- Access to leadership and executive development opportunities.

## Other Benefits

- Access to employee wellbeing initiatives.
- Reimbursement of reasonable business expenses.
- Appropriate IT equipment and mobile technology.
- Mileage and travel reimbursement in line with organisational policy.
- Directors' and Officers' Liability Insurance cover.





## Meet the BIC Team

At the North East BIC, we help businesses start and grow in spaces and places that work. Our bespoke packages provide start-up support and guidance for scaling businesses to innovate and thrive.

Since opening our doors in 1994, we've supported more than 8,000 companies to start up across the region, helping to create thousands of jobs and enabling more than 1,000 businesses to achieve their growth ambitions.

Today, around 400 businesses are based across our seven centres in Sunderland, Washington, and Darlington, employing approximately 1,600 people.



## Our Board



**Paul McEldon**  
Chief Executive



**John Anderson**  
Lifetime President



**Kevan Carrick**  
Chairman of the Board

Kevan has been in business for over 50 years, as a chartered surveyor and mediator. His board roles as director, partner and chair have involved acquisitions, disposals and mergers for both business and charities. He acts as mentor to businesses and has run several successful companies. He has contributed to the economic regeneration and growth of the whole North East region through JK Property Consultants as co-founder and partner advising on developments such as East Quayside, St James's Boulevard, International Advance Manufacturing Park, Sunderland economic plan, Teesside International Airport and logistics park, and latterly Middlesbrough and Hartlepool Masterplans.



**David Howell**  
Non-Executive Director

David joined Wearside TEC in 1990, bringing 15 years of private sector experience. He played a pivotal role in the creation and development of the North East BIC, helping transform reclaimed shipyard land into a thriving hub for enterprise and innovation. As Director of Operations, David oversaw multiple expansion phases, led initiatives such as the Product Development Unit and BIG IDEAS youth programme, and consistently delivered occupancy rates above 90%. He championed regional collaboration through the GAIN network and represented BIC across Europe via EBN.



**Sophie Milliken**  
Non-Executive Director

Founder and CEO of Moja Group, helping entrepreneurs and execs boost their profiles and become recognised authorities in their industries. A multi award-winning businesswoman, proud mum, and passionate advocate for the North East, Sophie co-founded City Ladies Networking, hosting events in Newcastle, London and Paris. She also chairs Smart Works Newcastle, where she's doubled the number of unemployed women supported with interview coaching and clothing, and is a Founding Ambassador for Every Child Needs a Mentor. Host of the hit podcast Beyond the Bio, Sophie's third book, From Unknown to Unforgettable is out now. She was awarded an MBE in 2023 for services to business and education.



**Kevin Howell**  
Non-Executive Director

Kevin Howell is a pioneering tech leader and CEO of Howell Technology Group (HTG), with over 30 years' experience driving digital innovation across the UK. Passionate about the North East, he's committed to making it a national leader in technology through HTG's Microsoft Centre of Excellence, skills development, and community engagement. As a Non-Executive Director for the BIC, Kevin brings strategic insight and a deep commitment to fostering innovation, helping shape the region's future as a hub for digital excellence.



**Laura Middleton**  
Non-Executive Director

A seasoned entrepreneur and community marketing expert with a proven track record of building successful businesses over the past decade, including a notable exit in 2021 and her first investment in 2023. As a Non-Executive Director for the North East BIC, she brings invaluable strategic acumen and champions the region's entrepreneurial spirit. Passionate about making entrepreneurship accessible to all, Laura is committed to inspiring and empowering the next generation of North East business leaders, fostering innovation and a thriving regional ecosystem.



**Andrew Marsh**  
Non-Executive Director

Andrew's background spans both the public and private sectors, with 20 plus years' experience as a Managing Director for companies in everything from engineering & manufacturing, to technology services. Having led multi-million pound P&Ls, Andrew is a renowned specialist in business transformation with an impressive track record of repeatedly creating sustainable growth. Andrew runs six chief executive coaching groups in the North East, providing support and development for CEOs, MDs business owners and inspiring leaders from a wide range of non-competing industries.

## Our Team

Meet just a few of the dedicated people who help drive our business forward. While we can't feature everyone here, this snapshot gives you a glimpse of the many talented individuals who have helped shape the BIC's success.



**Vanessa Wood**  
Regional  
Property Manager



**Gillian Middleton**  
Innovation &  
Enterprise Manager



**Lilla Preston**  
Marketing &  
Special Projects



**Colin Turnbull**  
IT & Finance  
Manager



**Michelle Booth**  
Social Enterprise  
Manager



**Debbie Simpson**  
Tenant  
Business Adviser



**Doreen Howard**  
Centre Manager



**Steph Drinkald**  
Assitant  
Centre Manager



# BIC Strategic Plan 2026 - 2029

## CORE IDEOLOGY

### CORE VALUES

- Customer success drives our service.
- Working together for good.
- We respect difference and value the contribution of every member of the team
- Down to earth and practical,
- Expert business advice for entrepreneurs,
- Proud of our strong roots in the North East and our longstanding collaboration and partnerships.

### Board Principles

- Act in best interests of NEBIC and leave personal bias at the door
- Collective accountability
- Value every voice and encourage constructive challenge
- Focus on solutions and forward steps not history or blame
- Build a sustainable NEBIC future BIC business and strategic direction.
- Communicate openly clearly and, concisely to foster trust and ensure all stakeholders are informed about the BIC business and strategy

### OUR PURPOSE

To create an ethical, sustainable and socially focused environment where enterprise can flourish. We exist to support and encourage start-ups and growing businesses on their journey from ideas to scale, providing advice, training, collaboration, and incubation. By combining commerciality with social value, we create opportunities that enable businesses to thrive, communities to benefit, and the region to prosper

## LONG-TERM

### ORGANISATIONAL FLY WHEEL



### Our Vision – 5 year horizon

Over the next five years, the North East BIC will be a leading player in transforming the North East economy into a thriving ecosystem of innovation, inclusive entrepreneurship, and sustainable enterprise and growth

### OUR CORE FOCUS

a)The promotion or encouragement of industrial or commercial activity or enterprise within the UK with reference to encouraging the formation of new businesses and development of existing businesses ;b)to develop, secure, and provide training, advisory, consultative and other support services and advice to and for individuals and businesses c) the provision and maintenance of business accommodation;

### VALUE PROPOSITION

We build business success in the North East, through Knowledgeable, independent and Inspirational People. Through:

- **Empowering entrepreneurs and businesses** to start, scale, and succeed through tailored incubation, investment readiness, and growth support.
- **Positioning the BIC as the region's leader in innovation**, where sustainability, technology, and social value are embedded in every venture.
- **Championing the responsible use of AI and emerging technologies**, helping organizations boost productivity, resilience, and long-term competitiveness.
- **Building a connected Growth Zone network** linking business, education, and local government to unlock opportunities for investment, innovation, and skills.
- **Delivering measurable regional impact** in job creation, leadership, and inclusive participation — supporting the North East becomes the UK benchmark for sustainable, values-driven growth.

## External Review

- need for secure office space,
- funding landscape shifting given priorities
- AI,
- legislation e.g. social infrastructure on developments,
- sustainability e.g. use of land, preventing development, global warming, carbon neutral targets
- disruptive politics
- cost of living and increased taxes,
- barriers to entry for start ups,
- more interest in setting up business due to bleak jobs markets,
- increased cost of employment,
- cost of entry to our market medium risk

### Conclusion:

While political and economic uncertainty create barriers to growth, social and technological shifts are generating new opportunities for entrepreneurship and incubation support. NEBIC is well positioned to respond by providing flexible space, advisory services, access to funding routes, and sustainable solutions that align with emerging market needs.

## Top Risks

- Commissioning and funding landscape for our services reduces or disappears meaning we need a diverse income stream with no over reliance on one sectors/client
- Competitors and/or new entrants become better equipped to be successful in our markets meaning we need to remain agile to market changes/demands and ensure our digital offerings
- Our premises age and new sustainability rules means our assets will become cash draining and increase working capital demands. Must maintain a robust investment/capex programmer
- We fail to identify trends and seize opportunities
- Cultural adaptability

## SWOT REVIEW

### Strengths (Internal)

- reputation,
- longevity in sector
- adaptability,
- in tune with the client group,
- great case studies,
- strong partnerships,
- strong balance sheet,
- competitive great team,
- flexibility of terms,
- great facilities

### Weaknesses (Internal)

- what are we?
- lack of clear corporate marketing strategy,
- public funding red tape,
- perception of geographical reach no Tyneside presence,
- sector skills / recruitment to scale

### Threats (External)

- funding (public),
- economic downturn,
- funding for enterprise in schools,
- rising costs / utilities / buildings,
- hands tied with public funding,
- adaptation to environmental standards
- not keeping up with digital advancements (i.e. making tenants sign ups frictionless);
- ignoring diverse needs

### Opportunities (External)

- more business centers (e.g. Newcastle),
- NE Silicon Valley,
- partnerships and collaborations (e.g. Microsoft),
- local talent pool,
- working on schools (earlier in the eco system),
- streamline costs and back office (AI)
- Investment fund possibilities,
- smart / secure office buildings, start up services,
- closure of other support service providers.

# STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

**Year 1** **Date** 2026/27

Financial EBITA Net current asset ratio % of public sector income  
 Customer – net promoter score  
 System - occupancy  
 Cyber – Microsoft score ,cyber essentials + maintained  
 People – staff survey

**Year 3** **Date:** 2029/30

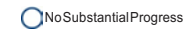
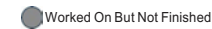
Metrics  
 Same as year 1

Strategic Objectives(Top 3-5)

Key Initiatives (Top 3-5)

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="radio"/> Balance of public sector and commercial sector income streams with no-one sector/client more than [20% of income]</li> <li><input type="radio"/> Strategic EBITDA growth of c20%</li> <li><input type="radio"/> Digital Centre of Excellence</li> <li><input type="radio"/> Be the go to provider of choice across the NE</li> <li><input type="radio"/> Build meaningful partnerships with funders, investors, politicians, corporates and education institutes</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="radio"/> Secure new contracts and build a pipeline of commercial services, whilst maintaining our strength in public sector services</li> <li><input type="radio"/> Deliver the 2026/27 P&amp;L financial performance</li> <li><input type="radio"/> Develop and push the ICT and Digital service lines demonstrating growth</li> <li><input type="radio"/> Position NEBIC as a hub for innovation/incubation</li> <li><input type="radio"/> Developed and create at least 2 strategic partnerships</li> </ul> |
|--|--|

Scoring Key



## Quarter 1 Priorities

- Conclude Sunderland Software City position – division or separate company
- Build a baseline financial model inc kpis to be adjusted following approval of business cases in latter priorities actions
- Continue to pursue publicly funded business support contracts for start, early-stage support
- Develop a business case for Ai developments at the BIC with board members
- Undertake an audit to further Improve our back office operations using digital/AI

## Quarter 3 Priorities

- Establish plans to engage with the wider enterprise ecosystem (educational institutions, talent pools)
- Meet with contacts identified in quarter 2 and feedback discussions to the board
- Feedback results of AI
- Build a 3 year financial model as a result of this strategy and business cases for AI/incubation/property
- 

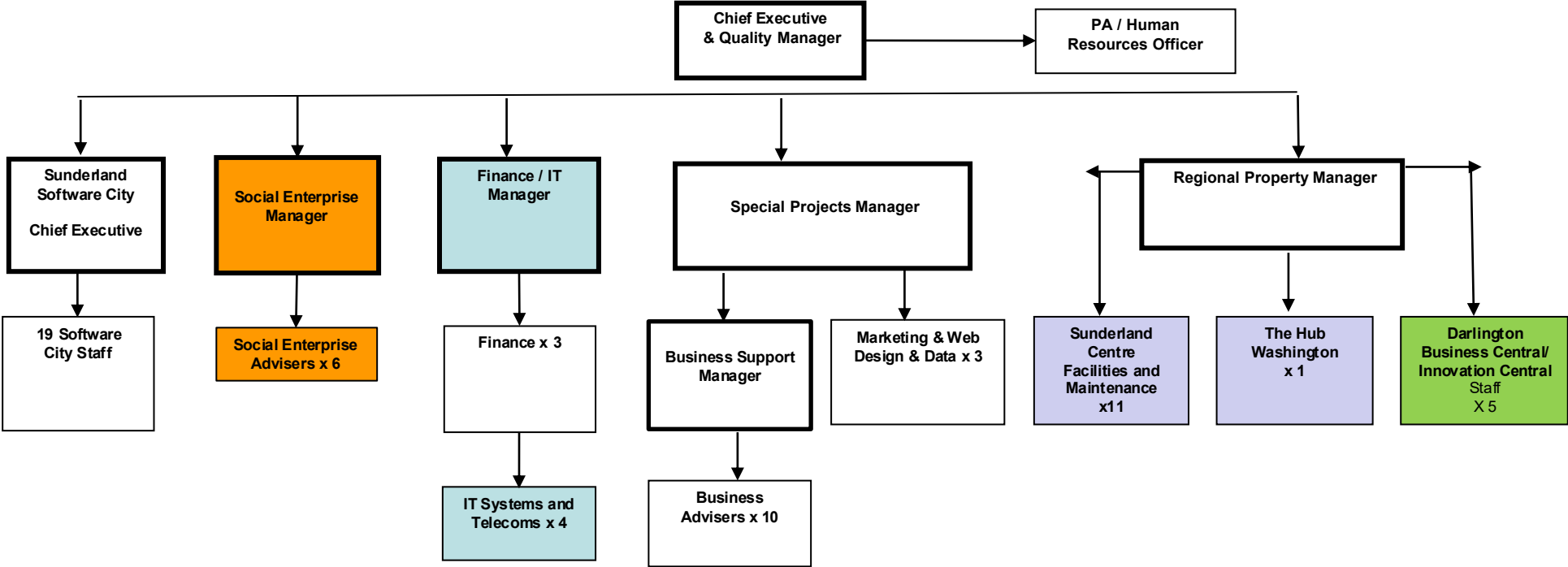
## Quarter 2 Priorities

- Establish the outlines of a business case for a possible NEBIC Investment Fund for start ups
- In conjunction with the above investigate an incubation offer
- Agree a list of local authority contacts to approach re partnership arrangements re
- Dependent upon cost benefit analysis deliver ai/ automation projects identified in qtr1
- Obtain legal advice on setting up an investment company for possible premises developments

## Quarter 4 Priorities

- Reflect on year 1 and consider any changes to strategy
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# BIC Company Structure



## Applying for this role

We are inclusive, supporting different perspectives to drive innovation.

We are constantly looking to improve the diversity of our organisation and invite applications which reflect the diversity and demographics of our community including applications from BAME, LGBTQ communities and those with a disability.

### Key dates for interview

Closing date for interviews, 19th June.

Informal meetings, week commencing the 13th July.

Formal interview, Thursday 23rd July.

Castle Peak Group is acting as our retained consultancy on this appointment. Candidates should apply by emailing a full cv and covering letter to James Carss at [james.carss@castlepeak-group.com](mailto:james.carss@castlepeak-group.com)





The space to build  
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