

AGENDA

No.	Item	Presenting	Pages
Meeting Business Items			
1.	Apologies for Absence	Chair	None
2.	Declarations of Interests Members are reminded of the need to declare any disclosable prejudicial interests they have in any item being discussed during the course of the meeting. In addition, the receipt of any gift or hospitality should be declared where the value of it was thought to have exceeded £25 (gifts) or £40 (hospitality).	Chair	None
3.	Chair's Remarks	Chair	None
4.	Minutes - 5 September 2022	Chair	1 - 4
5.	Matters Arising	Chair	None
6.	UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) Investment Plan - draft paper for WMCA Board	Fiona Aldridge	5 - 38
7.	Trailblazer Devolution Deal Scrutiny Working Group - Summary Report	Steve Bowyer	39 - 88
8.	Minutes: Transport Scrutiny Sub-Committee - 8 September 2022	Chair	89 - 92
9.	Work Programme (a) Overview & Scrutiny Committee (b) WMCA Board Forward Plan	Chair	93 - 102
10.	Date of Next Meeting Thursday 20 October 2022 at 10.00am (Mayoral Q&A - Policy)	Chair	None



West Midlands Combined Authority

Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Monday 5 September 2022 at 10.00 am

Minutes

Present

Councillor Cathy Bayton (Chair)	Association of Black Country Authorities
Councillor Naeem Akhtar (Vice-Chair)	Coventry City Council
Councillor David Barker (substitute)	Birmingham City Council
Councillor Andrew Burrow	Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor Ellen Fenton	Association of Black Country Authorities
Councillor Ian Kettle	Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor Nigel Lumby	Shropshire Non-Constituent Local Authorities
Councillor Martin McCarthy	Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor Karen Simms	Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor Mike Sutherland	Staffordshire Non-Constituent Local Authorities
Councillor Paul Sweet	City of Wolverhampton Council
Councillor Jamie Tennant	Birmingham City Council
Amanda Tomlinson	Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership
Councillor Vera Waters	Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council

In Attendance

Gareth Bradford	Executive Director for Housing Property & Regeneration
Dan Essex	Governance Services Manager
Clare Hatton	Director of Employment & Skills
Rob Lamond	Head of Strategy & Analysis, Housing Property & Regeneration
Lyndsey Roberts	Scrutiny Officer

Item No.

79. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mike Chalk (Worcestershire Non-Constituent Local Authorities), Councillor Lauren Rainbow (Birmingham) and Councillor Ken Wood (Birmingham).

80. Minutes - 11 July 2022

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 July 2022 were agreed as a correct record, subject to an amendment to minute no. 74 ('Skills Provision Review') to include concerns that the report expressed a focus on level 3 and above qualifications.

81. Matters Arising

(a) Review of Governance

The Governance Services Manager reported that work continued on the governance review, and it was anticipated that a report would be presented to the next meeting of the WMCA Board.

82. Helping to Deliver Affordable and Social Housing Scrutiny Review Recommendations - Update on Progress

The committee considered a report of the Executive Director for Housing, Property & Regeneration that provided an update on the work of the WMCA and its partners in implementing and responding to the recommendations from the Overview & Scrutiny Committee's review of Affordable and Social Housing.

At its meeting on 21 July, this committee identified the provision of affordable and social housing within the region as a key area of focus for 2021/22. The recommendations arising from the review were reported to the WMCA Board on 18 March 2022.

The committee received clarification on the definition of public land and affordable housing, which the Government defined as land in public ownership, and with regards to regional affordable housing, the WMCA reviewed local household incomes and the different type of housing required within local authority areas. The Head of Strategy & Analysis agreed to share the regional affordable housing definition.

In terms of best value, the West Midlands Public Land Charter asked public owners to take a long-term strategic approach to the disposal and development of land and to look to support inclusive growth. The WMCA continued to work together with Transport for West Midlands to consider how it could unlock land using transport investments and infrastructure corridors. The Head of Strategy & Analysis agreed to share the West Midlands Public Land Charter.

The committee discussed and shared comments on the affordable housing target and the affordable housing pilot project in the region. The proposal in development was seeking to deliver 100% affordable delivery on specific sites in the region, alongside other wider policy ambitions including zero carbon modular constructed homes. Members welcomed the pilot project and requested to receive further updates and briefings at future meetings on the development of the pilot and delivery of modular and zero carbon homes.

In addition, the Executive Director for Housing Property & Regeneration informed the committee of the work being undertaken on the development of a Future House Building Strategy that includes approaches to improving energy efficiency. It was noted that a report would be submitted to a future meeting of the committee.

The committee questioned whether the WMCA consulted with The Almshouse Association, as its approach was different to that of a housing association. The Executive Director for Housing Property & Regeneration agreed to look into this further and would report back via the Affordable Housing Strategy. It was subsequently reported that a meeting with the Association had been diarised for November.

The Chair reported that she had received communication from Birmingham's Fair Housing Campaign in relation to the provision of transit sites and accessibility to services. The WMCA was currently in dialogue with local authorities and would respond accordingly.

Resolved:

- (1) The progress that has been made in the implementation of the recommendations of the 2021/22 Overview & Scrutiny review undertaken to examine the role and remit of the WMCA to deliver affordable and social housing within the West Midlands be noted.

83. Skills Provision Scrutiny Review - Updated Scope

The committee considered an amended scoping document for the forthcoming Skills Scrutiny Review, which incorporated the committee's comments made at the last meeting.

Whilst the importance of a wide range of skills was recognised, it was important that residents could obtain access to the initial skills required to progress. The Chair emphasised the need for the review to encompass the specific needs of the regional areas.

Resolved:

- (1) The amended scoping document for the forthcoming scrutiny review be agreed.

84. Grant Register

The committee considered a report of the Executive Director of Finance & Business Hub that provided an update on the grant register which contained all current 'live' grants where the WMCA was the accountable body, and captured a comprehensive total of grants, awarding body, time period for delivery and a description of what the grant delivered.

The committee discussed a number of the specific grants including the Rough Sleeping Initiative, Sustainable Warmth and Technical Bootcamps and requested further details on these. The Head of Finance Business Partnering & Strategic Planning noted the comments made and agreed to provide an update to the committee.

Resolved:

- (1) The Grant Register be noted.

85. Minutes: Transport Scrutiny Sub-Committee - 14 July 2022

The committee received the minutes of the Transport Scrutiny Sub-Committee on 14 July 2022

Resolved

- (1) The minutes of the meeting held on 14 July 2022 be agreed.

86. Work Programme

The committee noted a work programme of items that were to be reported to future meetings.

Resolved:

- (1) An additional meeting of the committee be held on 17 October 2022 to review the UK Shared Prosperity Fund submission and a report on findings of the Trailblazer Devolution Deal Scrutiny Working Group.

87. Date of Next Meeting

Thursday 20 October 2022 at 10.00am (Mayoral Q&A on WMCA Policy)

The meeting ended at 11.15am



Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Date	Monday 17 October 2022
Report Title	UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) Investment Plan – draft paper for WMCA Board
Portfolio lead	Councillor Brookfield Portfolio Lead for Economy & Innovation
Accountable Chief Executive	Laura Shoaf, Chief Executive, WMCA Email: laura.shoaf@wmca.org.uk
Accountable Employee	Dr Julie Nugent, Executive Director for Economic Delivery, Skills and Communities, WMCA Email: Julie.Nugent@wmca.org.uk
Report has been/will be considered by	Directors of Economic Development (21/9) Economic Growth Board (23/9) Finance Directors (22/9) Mayor and Met Leaders (14/10) WMCA Board (28/10)

Recommendation(s) for action or decision

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee to note that the WMCA Board will be recommended to:

- i. Approve the submission of the UKSPF Investment Plan to the Department of Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DHLUC) to secure the West Midlands £88m allocation for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, for the next 3 years. Note that the Investment Plan should be submitted as soon as possible, given that all other authorities have already submitted their Plans and that year 1 funds are to be spent by 31 March 2023.
- ii. Delegate authority to submit the initial UKSPF Investment Plan, and to accept any funding awarded as a result of this submission, to the Portfolio Lead for Economy and Innovation, in consultation with the Executive Director of Economic Delivery, Skills and Communities, and the WMCA Section 151 Officer.
- iii. Delegate to the Portfolio Lead for Economy and Innovation, in consultation with the Executive Director of Economic Delivery, Skills and Communities, and the WMCA Section 151 Officer, the final arrangements for the 4% administration allocation.
- iv. Agree the next steps outlined at section 5 and delegate to WMCA officers and the Portfolio lead, the implementation of the Investment Plan.

1. UK Shared Prosperity Fund: Background

- 1.1 UKSPF is a central pillar of the UK Government's Levelling Up agenda. Its primary goal is to build pride in place and increase life chances across the UK, with three key investment priorities around 'Community and Place', 'Supporting Local Business', and 'People and Skills' (including adult numeracy programme, Multiply).
- 1.2 WMCA has been identified as the lead authority and accountable body for UKSPF across the 7 Met area, with responsibility for developing its investment plan, and for delivery of the Fund thereafter. The CA welcomes the opportunity to lead a strategic and joined-up approach, working with local authorities to identify local and regional investment priorities that support our levelling up ambitions.
- 1.3 The overall UKSPF allocation for the WM 7 Met area is set out in the table below. While government has stressed that overall investment in UKSPF, including Multiply, is comparable at a national level with that previously available through European Structural Funds, directly available funding through UKSPF for the CA area is lower than previously available via ESF and ERDF, particularly in years 1 and 2.

2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-25	Total
£10,729,170	£21,458,339	£56,220,848	£88,408,357

- 1.4 As well as advocating for further investment in the region, it is therefore critical that we allocate existing funds where they can have most impact for places, residents, and businesses across the region. We have worked in partnership with Local Authorities and LEPs to develop an approach to UKSPF that enables strong locally focused delivery, embracing the principles of double devolution, whilst maintaining the need for overall regional impact.
- 1.5 We have also worked with local partners to identify the risks associated with the transition between EU funding and UKSPF and there is work underway to mitigate the impact of reduced funding on critical programmes and strands of work – for example, employment support. However, it is also clear that the quantum of funding will be significantly less.
- 1.6 We will continue to lobby government for additional investment in key areas, including through the Trailblazer Devolution process, and for maximum flexibility in the deployment of UKSPF. This is particularly pertinent given funding for 'people and skills' is not available until 2024/25, creating a potential 'cliff edge' with the end of current EU funds and the start of UKSPF that will impact on a number of projects, and presents risks to local partners, including LAs, Universities and the VCS, who have funded posts with this. We will also continue to lobby for an overall funding allocation for the Spending Review period, rather than three annual allocations, to provide us with more flexibility in meeting local need.

2. Our Approach

- 2.1 The July WMCA Board approved the submission of an outline initial investment plan by 1 August, recognising the need for further work to be undertaken to determine priorities, local allocations, and administrative costs. This outline investment plan was based on the working assumption that:
 - 2.1.1 Up to 50% of UKSPF funds would be focused on 'Supporting Local Business' - to provide support to local businesses, including taking forward key recommendations from the West Midlands Business Support Review, agreed previously by WMCA Board. This will be

developed with and by LAs, to ensure a broadly consistent approach to supporting businesses across the region, whilst also ensuring support is locally targeted and embedded with local delivery arrangements (eg in local authorities), complementing other local support and services to businesses.

- 2.1.2 50% would be prioritised individually by local authorities, particularly in terms of directing local place and communities, and people and skills provision.
- 2.2 It was agreed that a final detailed plan would be submitted to the October meeting of the CA Board for approval, and that there would need to be a clear rationale for any funds retained exclusively by the WMCA. It should be noted that all other regions have now submitted their Investment Plans, which are currently being assessed.
- 2.3 In developing our plan further, we have reflected the key principles agreed and the feedback received from Met leaders and officials:
 - 2.3.1 *Provision for 'communities and place' and 'people and skills' should be directed by Local Authorities* – the investment in local provision in these areas will be determined by each local authority, in line with the principles of double devolution. The Investment Plan provides a summary of overall priorities and expected outputs. Funding for this activity will be passed directly to LAs through a back-to-back grant agreement. The CA will be responsible for overall monitoring and reporting to government on progress.
 - 2.3.2 *Where possible, alternative sources of funding should be used to reduce the pressure on the UKSPF budget* – We have worked with each local authority to identify alternative sources of funding for activities relating to people and skills. This has enabled us to increase the overall amount of investment, reduce pressure on UKSPF, target funding on areas of need and support local skills priorities.
 - 2.3.3 *The proposed investment in business support should be co-designed with Local Authorities, taking forward the key recommendations of the WM Business Support Review, with a clear commitment to local delivery and alignment with other business support and services. While a working assumption was made that 50% of funds would be used to support local business, this activity should be properly costed as the model is developed* – A costed approach to business support has been developed in partnership with local authorities based on these principles. The overall amount of funding for business support activities is £42.4m – which equates to 50% of UKSPF, but 37.5% of the overall investment pot. (See table at paragraph 2.5)
 - 2.3.4 Within this, £20.2m will be passported to local authorities to fund business advisers and provide direct support for businesses to improve competitiveness, growth and productivity. These will be embedded with local arrangements – for example, local authorities or Growth Hubs (where these remain, subject to local preference). In line with the recommendations of the West Midlands Business Support Review, previously agreed at Board, the advisors will work within an agreed regional framework or hub and spoke arrangement which will be overseen by the Economic Growth Board. The intention is to have a consistent offer to businesses across the region, which will include signposting to other services, whilst maintaining maximum local flexibility and links to other local support. The detail of how the hub and spoke arrangement will work is being developed with local authorities and will be brought to the Economic Growth Board for approval.

2.3.5 £22.2m of the business support funding will be for cross-regional specialist programmes. This includes supporting cluster leadership across the region linked to the Plan for Growth, commissioning support for foreign direct investment, support to decarbonise businesses and help secure additional growth capital. These programmes will be designed and commissioned with local authorities and activity will be signposted through local SME business advisers and delivered locally.

2.3.6 *There needs to be a clear rationale for any funds for business support held by and delivered through the CA.* Of the £42.4m allocated to business support activity, the majority will be delivered locally – through a network of local SME advisors – and/or will be targeted at local businesses. This is consistent with the direction of the West Midlands Business Support Review and decisions of the WMCA Board.¹ Of this, a minimal amount (c.£0.8m, or 1.9%) will likely be held and delivered by the WMCA as the central hub, helping the network of locally embedded SME advisors. Further detail about that model is being co-designed and will be brought to the Economic Growth Board for decision. The model also builds upon the direction of the Levelling-Up White Paper, integration of LEP functions into the WMCA (ahead of a decision by the WMCA Board in January 2023) and pursuit of more devolved powers and funding through the Trailblazing Devolution Deal. For example, the cross-regional network of locally embedded SME Growth Advisors and a small coordination hub within the WMCA will:

- align the cohesive, universal offer which is overseen by the Economic Growth Board, using advice from private and university partners and the Directors of Economic Development.
- connect strongly with offers from the private sector, business organisations and universities to ensure this is targeted at the needs of the region's businesses;
- champion how further powers and resources can improve support for businesses;
- use data and analysis to proactively target businesses according to regional and local priorities;
- support overall co-ordination and professional development of the network of business advisors, in line with the West Midlands Business Support Review;
- support the development of the clusters previously prioritised by Board in the West Midlands Plan for Growth;
- co-ordinate marketing activity to promote support available to businesses.
- provide required reporting and assurance to government.

2.3.7 *There should be an open and transparent approach to the use of the 4% admin fee, reflecting the balance of work required locally and regionally* – The details of this are being finalised, and we recommend that the final plan is signed off by the Portfolio Lead in consultation with the Executive Director of Economic Delivery, Skills and Communities, and the WMCA Section 151 Officer. However, our expectation is to allocate funds to each Local Authority, as well as the Combined Authority, to support the management, monitoring and evaluation of UKSPF. This will be fair and proportionate to activity. This fund will also cover monitoring and evaluation and additional legal costs, including guidance to local authorities on the management of subsidy control.

¹ The four major changes set by the WMCA Board following the West Midlands Business Support Review:

- Put in place a modern customer journey, built around the user not the provider.
- Implement a new approach to account management, covering the largest firms, investors and SMEs, with the LEP Growth Hubs, local authority teams and the West Midlands Growth Company operating as a fully integrated support ecosystem.
- Replace the current large number of schemes which were coming to an end with new premium products aimed at specific sectors, supply chains and issues, and delivered region-wide at scale.
- Carry out a campaign to drive up demand and usage.

2.4 The West Midlands Investment Plan for UKSPF is set out in **Annex A**. This has been developed through the Economic Growth Board, and with the support of officers from across each local authority and LEP. The plan is deliberately high level, setting out the broad priorities and outcomes that we want to achieve, but leaving us with sufficient flexibility to respond to changing needs.

3. Funding Methodology

3.1 The WMCA allocation is based on a national approach that adopted a 70:30 methodology, of population and ‘need/economic resilience’. As part of the more detailed work undertaken over the summer, the Portfolio Lead for Economy requested officers consider how we might achieve a more equitable split of UKSPF funds across the region. **Annex B** sets out further details on the methodology used by HMG to determine the initial calculations of funding for the region. It also sets out the implications of changing the balance away from population and the impact on investment in local areas. Other local Leaders have been clear that they do not expect to see a decrease in UKSPF investment their areas.

3.2 We have therefore looked at ways of maintaining overall levels of investment but moving to a methodology that is more weighted to local need. This includes:

3.2.1 *Ensuring a minimum level of investment in business support services in all areas.* This includes:

- Taking a more sophisticated approach to business support, recognising that specialist services will be available to all businesses across the region.
- Establishing a ‘floor’ for the number of locally embedded advisors to ensure a minimum service is available.
- Integrating support for local enterprise, entrepreneurship and start up within the business support offer.

3.2.2 *Maximising the use of other funds and ensuring these are targeted on areas of most need.* This includes:

- Focusing Multiply investment in areas with poor numeracy and with low levels of existing spend on adult numeracy. It should be noted however, that these are notional allocations, with actual spend determined by learner demand. We will work with LAs and providers to stimulate demand across the area.
- Using alternative funding streams, such as the Adult Education Budget, to support local skills priorities.

3.3 This has enabled us to increase the overall level of targeted investment in the region, while ensuring a greater focus on need than the UKSPF funding formula, as outlined in the table below.

	Notional UKSPF allocations: HMG methodology ¹	UKSPF: local allocations	Multiply ²	AEB investment on local skills priorities ³	UKSPF: Business Support		Total spend
					Spend through Local Authorities	Specialist programmes delivered across the WM	
Birmingham	36,375,301	17,460,144	5,670,266	tbd	7,223,891	9,000,000	39,354,301
Dudley	9,367,406	4,496,355	2,299,220	1,800,000	2,233,830	2,300,000	13,129,405
Sandwell	9,817,228	4,712,269	1,886,555	2,600,000	2,279,633	2,500,000	13,978,457
Walsall	8,374,365	4,019,695	1,785,434	1,200,000	2,132,714	2,100,000	11,237,843
Wolverhampton	7,831,883	3,759,304	1,434,078	2,600,000	2,077,476	2,100,000	11,970,858
Solihull	5,310,432	2,549,007	1,126,312	1,200,000	1,660,731	1,400,000	7,936,050

Coventry	11,331,741	5,439,236	2,565,268	2,125,000	2,591,726	2,800,000	15,521,230
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¹ 4% top slice for administration has been removed prior to the budget being allocated across investment priorities or geographical areas.

² Notional Multiply allocations for adult numeracy training spend in each area have been calculated using a model based on need, existing provision, and our assessment of likely take-up based on previous procurement. Figures include training funds granted to LAs as well as funds to be procured. Multiply investment is focused on adults in work. LAs are also able to use AEB investment to support unemployed or inactive adults.

³ These figures for AEB spend on training in local areas are based on proposals for local skills priorities put forward by each LA. We will continue to work together to identify further opportunities to use AEB funds to relieve pressure on UKSPF.

3.4 It should be noted that Sandwell remain concerned about the methodology and believe the distribution of UKSPF funding to be unfair. They are discussing their position with their leader.

4. Focus on business support

4.1 The ‘Supporting Local Business’ theme of the SPF Investment Plan has been developed based on the West Midlands Business Support Review, led by LEPs, the WMCA and Local Authorities in 2021. The overall vision is to boost business growth and jobs across the region by providing businesses with an integrated customer journey through a consistent West Midlands offer, with specialist programmes and a campaign to boost take-up. Here we elaborate on the necessary ingredients of the overall approach across:

- Strategy – what we’re committed to achieve through our shared plans and principles
- Economic conditions – the major changes underway in our economy and future unknowns
- Funding mix – quantum, timescales, levers we control, options
- Powers and institutions – aligning with the Trailblazing Devolution Deal discussions to boost local delivery and influence
- Understanding impact in places.

4.2 Our strategy is to boost business growth using the approach that set our economic Trailblazing Devolution aims and tackles the relatively low levels of firm productivity in the West Midlands by:

- Catalysing additional growth in high-value clusters where the region has comparative advantage and private sector confidence to create good jobs².
- Attract more firms at the productivity frontier using FDI, particularly where they are able to add further strategic value to the region.
- Help indigenous frontier firms to expand.
- Help firms with mid-level productivity to move to improve through innovation, investment, internationalisation and excellent management and leadership.
- Prompt firms with low productivity to assess their business models and strengthen incentives to change.

4.3 The Business Support Review emphasises that business support must be agile to stay relevant to economic and business conditions in West Midlands. In doing so, support will need to react to immediate needs whilst positioning for long-term sustainability and growth. This means:

- Providing immediate help and advice to help SMEs weather the spike in costs of doing business, covering energy, raw materials, finance and wage increases.
- Proactively targeting firms and supply chains to shift to higher value added and more resilient activities like decarbonising business processes or adapting to new Rules of Origin requirements.

² As set out in the West Midlands Plan for Growth - <https://wmca.euwest01.umbraco.io/media/vd3fjeot/plan-for-growth.pdf>

- 4.4. The SPF is a major funding stream, but it is important to reflect how this sits as part of a cohesive system of public and private support with different connected components including:
- Private sector activity from business organisations, banks, accountants and professional advisers – both paid for and free
 - Charity and non-profit activity, such as The Prince's Trust on young people's entrepreneurship and Business in the Community toolkits and support.
 - National programmes such as the national business helpline for basic signposting advice about starting a business, the Help to Grow programmes delivered by Business Schools, DIT export support, British Business Bank and the Intellectual Property Office's work on patents.
 - Paid-for and free support from universities and Catapult centres, including Knowledge Transfer industry partnerships and spinout support.
 - Locally funded activity, including support to BIDs, local markets and high-streets and social enterprises.
- 4.5 The amount of SPF dedicated to the business support system (£42.4m) over the SPF period is heavily backloaded. The universal view of Directors of Economic Development is to seek to smooth the funding profile over 2023/4 and 2024/5 because 2022/3 sees significant activity through existing Growth Hubs and ERDF-funded programmes. While comparisons with previous support is very difficult, the balance of the proposed position reflects a deliberate decision to invest in **locally embedded** SME Advisor capacity for intensive relationship management to drive the integrated customer journey. With limited SPF resources, this means there will be significantly fewer specialist commissioned programmes than are currently funded through ERDF.
- 4.6 The new delivery model address fragmentation and lack of capacity in some areas (e.g. data and promotion). SME Advisers will work as a coordinated network across the region but be locally embedded in a way that works; potentially in local authorities, a university, Chamber, charity or Growth Hub with neighbouring areas. Through a Business Support Officers task and finish group, the WMCA will co-design with local authorities the specialist programmes to deliver the strategic priorities of net zero transition, investment readiness and business competitiveness and tailor commissioning and delivery options. Decisions will be made by the Economic Growth Board and WMCA Boards, according to the level of financial commitment. The WMCA will also use Trailblazer Devolution Deal discussions to empower the delivery model by embedding as far as possible nationally commissioned activity.
- 4.7 The final dimension is a robust impact and evaluation system to capture the effect in places and ensure this is visible and accountable to local partners and business groups. Our ambition is for this to capture both the impact of WMCA-commissioned activity, wider national / publicly funded support and private and third-sector offers.
- 4.8 Using the structures and priorities from the West Midlands Business Support Review, local authorities, the WMCA and LEPs have shaped a costed model for activity to begin in April 2023. Details and commissioning specifications need to be developed over the next three months, along with a chance to respond to any decisions on funding by central government or regional partners. This model sees £20.2m delivered locally over the next two years, within a connected regional system under the direction of the Economic Growth Board.

	Function	Detail	Proposed SPF allocation (p.a. in years 2 and 3)
Core system	SME Growth Advisors and Strategic Relationship Management: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide locally-embedded support, diagnostic and signposting to local small and medium-sized businesses and entrepreneurs / social enterprises. Works proactively with (<500) most significant firms¹, linking local, regional and national conversations and intelligence to catalyse growth opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 70 Advisors in places (100% funded): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 22 in Birmingham 9 in Coventry 8 in Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall & Wolverhampton 7 in Solihull Small coordination/mgmt team £0.5m for campaign to drive take-up 	£7.4m
	FDI and Internationalisation: <i>FDI activity (reactive and proactive) along with capital attraction work and profile-raising</i>	Commissioning of West Midlands Growth Company.	£1.6m
	Cluster Leadership: <i>Funding for organisations convening firms within primary clusters and leveraging additional investment.</i>	Support to be developed following West Midlands Plan for Growth priorities	£0.9m
	Specialist advice and grant support to improve SME competitiveness, resilience and create jobs	Programmes to be developed to help firms in current cost of doing business crisis, emphasising practical support to boost efficiency/productivity.	£4.5m
Specialist targeted programmes	Decarbonisation advice and grants	Programmes to be co-developed with LAs and agreed by Economic Growth Board	£4.5m
	Investor readiness training	Programmes to be co-developed with LAs and agreed by Economic Growth Board	£1.1m
	Advice and services to support trade and export	Connect to other funded provision	£0
	Business leadership, management and workforce planning	Connect to other funded provision	£0
	Advice and grants for entrepreneurs and start-up	Determined and delivered locally	SME Advisors
	Health and wellbeing advice	Connect to other funded provision	£0

¹strategic relationship management has previously been considered by the Strategic Economic Development Board (November 2021). It agreed that strong, coordinated relationship management with the most strategically important firms provides important benefits to the region's communities and supply chains. Further detail on the delivery models should be developed as/when resources are available and Strategic Relationship Management has been a significant element of Trailblazer Devolution Deal discussions.

5 Next Steps

- 5.1 Subject to the approval of this report, WMCA will submit the UKSPF Investment Plan to release its £88m allocation. A draft version is set out in Annex A, reflecting the ambition and priorities of the region at the current time. The Plan does not require details of local allocations or project proposals.
- 5.2 Our UKSPF allocation is comprised of 3 annual allocations, against the following profile, with limited flexibility to carry funds between years.

2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-25	Total
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- 5.3 WMCA will continue working with key stakeholders including DLUHC to identify options to accelerate the availability of funding in the first year, particularly in relation to business support activity. Here, the availability of Growth Hub and ongoing ERDF programmes means that there is a fairly good business support offer in the region, before a cliff-edge in April 2023. Directors of Economic Development have therefore recommended that UKSPF funding for business support should be focused on financial years 2023/24 and 2024/25 to the value of c.£21m per year.
- 5.4 WMCA will also continue to work with key stakeholders to develop the details underpinning the 4% administration arrangements for approval under delegations, as documented within the recommendations to this report.
- 5.5 Recognising the challenges associated with maximising spend in year 1 and avoiding any clawback, the WMCA are keen to progress mobilisation of delivery activity as a priority. In order to support this the following steps/actions will need to progress by the CA and Local Authority Partners.

End Oct	WMCA Submit Investment Plan and Supporting Annexes to Government for review/approval
Oct – Nov	WMCA to work with LA partners to develop/refine delivery schedules for inclusion in back-to-back agreements – building on data already provided for the development of the Investment Plan Annexes to align with DLUHC M&E requirements
Oct – Nov	A Business Support Officers task and finish group (CA and LA partners) will draft specifications for business support (for yr2 delivery), with the intention to procure in good time to ensure smooth transition from existing to new funds and progs. This group will report into the monthly Directors of Economic Development standing meeting.
Nov	Government review/clarification questions issued on Investment Plan submission for WMCA response
End Nov (est)	Government approval of the Investment Plan and Deliverables and issue Funding Award Letter/Agreement to WMCA
Early Dec	WMCA Legal, Finance, Procurement, Data and Assurance leads to carryout a review of the funding agreement issued and subject to no issues/clarifications, approve receipt of funding/sign agreement.
Early Dec	WMCA Legal to begin work drafting back-to-back agreement templates for issuing to LA partners
Mid Dec	Back-to-Back Agreements and schedules of delivery activity issued to LA partner legal teams to review, sign off and return to WMCA
Late Dec/ early Jan	Subject to receipt of signed funding agreements from LA partners delivery activity can commence
Jan/Feb	Commissioning of Business Support activity for Yr 2 / Yr 3 to commence

- 5.6 DLUHC recognise that the Plan has been produced quickly and will be subject to change as projects are further developed and agreed, and investment responds to changing local priorities. Negotiations for our Trailblazer Devolution Deal (TDD) are also ongoing, which includes asks around additional flexibility within / between funds. If relevant additional sources of funding are secured through the TDD process, we will look to reassess priorities and re-deploy UKSPF funds in light of this. DLUHC have confirmed that there will be opportunities for review throughout the funding period.
- 5.7 As set out in the UKSPF prospectus, we are required to seek support for our approach from local partners and MPs. This process is underway, led by the portfolio holder, and is advisory only. Approval of the final Investment Plan is the responsibility of the CA Board.

6 Financial Implications

6.1 The overall UKSPF allocation for the WM 7 Met area is as follows:

2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-25	Total
£10,729,170	£21,458,339	£56,220,848	£88,408,357

6.2 Currently there are expected to be restrictions to UKSPF around carrying over funds between years; and the ineligibility of spend on 'people and skills' before 2024/25. We have challenged this through a letter to the Minister and have received a response to confirm that no changes will be made. We will continue to seek flexibilities here through our engagement with the new ministerial team. Therefore, any changes to profile are at the risk of WMCA and the Local Authorities.

6.3 A maximum of 4% of the total allocation can be utilised to support the administrative costs of managing the fund and options around the utilisation of this funding are being considered.

7 Legal Implications

7.1 There are no immediate legal implications as a direct result of this report. Legal will continue to advise on the preparation of the investment plan and any agreements entered into as a result of any funding being awarded.

7.2 Should the final grant terms and conditions place at risk the full award being realised by WMCA (i.e. through under performance in year), then the impact of this will need to be passed on to project sponsors (LAs) through appropriately worded funding agreements. Mitigations around the impact of those risks crystallising would also need to be considered at a local level (i.e. by LAs).

8 Equalities Implications

8.1 There are no immediate equalities implications arising from this report.

9 Inclusive Growth Implications

9.1 As outlined in section 3, we have sought to utilise UKSPF, and align it with wider funds, to ensure a greater focus on need than the UKSPF funding formula adopted by HMG. This includes ensuring a minimum level of investment in business support services in all areas and maximising the use of other funds and ensuring these are targeted on areas of most need.

10 Geographical Area of Report's Implications

10.1 The report covers the 7 West Midlands Combined Authority metropolitan areas.

11 Other implications

11.1 None.

Annex A: Draft UKSPF Investment Plan (attached)

Annex B: Allocations methodology

1. Launched as part of the Levelling Up White Paper, UKSPF is a central pillar of the UK Government's Levelling Up agenda, with a primary goal of building pride in place and increasing life chances across the UK.
2. Allocations for each area of the UK have been determined through a national methodology [[UK Shared Prosperity Fund: allocations methodology - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-allocations-methodology)], through which:
 - Total allocations, at a minimum, match the size of some EU structural funds across the UK
 - Funding is distributed across all four UK nations, and to all MCAs and LAs within England.
 - The share of total funding allocated to LEPs matches what they were notionally allocated under ERDF and ESF in real terms (once Multiplier has been added in)
 - The share of funding allocated to each delivery geography (MCA or LA) is distributed on the basis of both population and need.
3. The distribution of allocations is based on 70% of the total allocation to each LEP being distributed based on LA population size and 30% using a [needs-based index](#) developed for the Community Renewal Fund. The needs-based index seeks to prioritise places that suffer from weak economic performance and are less equipped to resist and recover from shocks, and includes metrics relating to productivity, skills, unemployment, population density and household income.

WM 7 Met allocation

4. The West Midlands 7 Met area is considered to be a single delivery geography, in which WMCA is identified as the lead authority. Using the national methodology outlined above, our UKSPF allocation is as follows:

2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-25	Total
£10,729,170	£21,458,339	£56,220,848	£88,408,357

5. The allocation of funds across different geographies within the 7 Met area and between investment priorities can be locally determined. However, given HMG published LA level figures to illustrate how our allocation was arrived at, most LAs have used these to underpin their assumption of spend in their area.
6. Assuming 50% of overall funds would be distributed as local allocations (as agreed by CA Board), these would be distributed as follows:

Birmingham	Coventry	Dudley	Sandwell	Solihull	Walsall	Wolves
£17,460,144	£5,429,236	£4,496,355	£4,712,269	£2,549,007	£4,019,695	£3,759,304

7. However, some LAs have requested that, in determining local allocations, we explore an alternative methodology to that used by central government, to take greater account of need and better reflect the ambitions of the Levelling Up agenda. While this would not impact the overall funding envelope, it would rebalance investment towards those LAs with greater 'need' and away from those with larger populations.
8. In modelling this, we have developed a range of alternative scenarios, including basing allocations on 50:50 population/need and 30:70 population/need. Each of these adjustments

involve reducing allocations for Birmingham and Coventry and increasing allocations elsewhere. Implementing this would require political agreement from the leaders of these authorities.

	HMG model - 70% population, 30% need	50% population, 50% need	Difference from 70:30 model	30% population, 70% need	Difference from 70:30 model
Birmingham	£17,460,144	£12,417,598	-£5,042,546	£9,588,568	-£7,871,576
Coventry	£5,439,236	£5,043,436	-£395,800	£5,013,245	-£425,991
Dudley	£4,496,355	£5,735,002	£1,238,647	£6,176,942	£1,680,588
Sandwell	£4,712,269	£5,978,519	£1,266,250	£6,519,683	£1,807,413
Solihull	£2,549,007	£2,503,253	-£45,754	£2,970,364	£421,356
Walsall	£4,019,695	£5,269,014	£1,249,319	£5,893,777	£1,874,082
Wolverhampton	£3,759,304	£5,489,189	£1,729,885	£6,273,432	£2,514,128

9. In addition to these local allocations, we are also exploring how we can use wider UKSPF funds – Business Support Funds and Multiply – to rebalance investment towards areas of greatest need.
10. Furthermore, because it is not possible to invest in People and Skills interventions until 2024/24, the CA has been working with LAs to identify how it can deploy its wider skills investment to meet local priorities. This involves looking at how we use existing AEB and Community Learning grant funding in each area to meet skills and employment support priorities.

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UK Government

**LEVELLING
— UP —**

UK Shared Prosperity Fund

Investment Plan

Version 2
May 2022

Your location

To be eligible for funding, you will need to be applying on behalf of a lead authority in one of the [delivery geographies](#).

Select the lead authority

For Scotland and Wales only: Who else is this investment plan being submitted on behalf of? Select all that apply

Your details

Name: Dr Fiona Aldridge

Email address Fiona.Aldridge@wmca.org.uk

Phone number: 07775 698181

Organisation name: West Midlands Combined Authority

Local challenges and opportunities

In this section, we will ask you:

- If you've identified any challenges or opportunities, you intend to support
- Which of the UKSPF investment priorities these fall under

ARE THERE ANY LOCAL CHALLENGES YOU FACE WHICH FALL UNDER THE COMMUNITIES AND PLACE INVESTMENT PRIORITY?

(If yes) Describe these challenges, give evidence where possible

The West Midlands has enormous economic potential, where the success of our region is critical to the success of the UK more widely. Prior to the pandemic we were the fastest growing region outside of London, breaking through the £100bn economic output mark in 2019-20. This success was powered by a young and diverse population, a strong Higher Education base and many Good and Outstanding schools, colleges and training providers. We experienced growth in high value-added sectors, new investment and infrastructure, and a growing digital capability. However, underlying this growth there are significant issues with inequality, poverty, youth unemployment, low skills, poor health and school performance.

Our ambition is to build a better connected, more prosperous, fairer, greener and healthier West Midlands. Inclusive growth is at the heart of our vision. We want to build a region where people thrive in the places they live and work, a region that is focused on people as well as place.

In order to achieve this ambition, our [2021 State of the Region report](#) identified five key challenges to shape future strategic activities across partners. These were agreed through the WMCA Board:

1. Delivering good jobs

- a. Although employment has returned to pre-pandemic levels, parts of the region have low levels of employment and high levels of unemployment. Despite a tight labour market, part of the region continue to display stubborn levels of long-term unemployment
- b. WM has a strong start up rate, but with new businesses most vulnerable to economic shocks. The insolvency rate is also high.

2. Supporting thriving places and communities

- a. Affordable housing – the region is building houses at a good rate but house prices continue to rise, resulting in a decline in affordable housing and additional affordable rented homes
- b. Visitor numbers – prior to the pandemic, visitor numbers were growing steadily. The region relies heavily on business tourism which has been heavily impacted as a result of covid

3. Embedding our green ambitions

- a. The region is a net importer of energy, due to a lack of natural assets for renewables. Despite this, the low-carbon manufacturing sector is the fastest growing in the region.
- b. Even before recent price hikes, WMCA had one of the highest rates of fuel poverty.

4. Tackling inequality and levelling up

- a. While disposable income per person continues to rise, this remains lower than the UK average. Nearly 20% of the region is in the top 10% most deprived.
- b. Pre-covid, health life expectancy was improving, though a gap remains with the national average.

5. Preventing a lost generation

- a. Prior to covid, the WM was a strong apprenticeship performer. However, since then, we have seen a significant drop in opportunities for young people and with SMEs in particular.
- b. The WM has fewer people qualified to Level 4+ (37% vs 43% UK) and more people with no qualifications (9.6% vs 6.6% UK) compared to other areas.

In addition:

- Access to green space across the WMCA region is not equitable. Furthermore, as the population in the WMCA area increases, the levels of publicly accessible park and green space provision per person are likely to fall below the minimum standard of provision. Many of the same communities are also vulnerable to flooding and overheating. Measure to tackle this are outlined in the [West Midlands Natural Environment Plan](#).
- The region has in excess of 10,500 heritage assets, many of which are buildings that are not being used to their full potential, whilst costing a great deal to run and maintain. These assets have been mapped [here](#), and would benefit from further investment to build pride in place.
- The [social economy](#) in the WMCA area is diverse, but that diversity does not lead to asset wealth, or the rewards of growth being shared equitably. A literature review led by Locality (2020), indicated that diverse-led organisations are more likely to be micro enterprises (turnover of less than £10k per year), with lower levels of paid staff and barriers to accessing grants, funding and finance. Addressing this will help to address the region’s lower uptake of social investment.
- West Midlands Police has the highest crime severity score of all forces in England and Wales and a much higher rate of domestic abuse-related incidents per 1,000 population than other forces, leading to harm, disruption and homelessness for those women and children. This undermines the stability of communities and pride in place, and prevents victims from contributing to, or benefiting from social capital.
- [Research by Local Trust](#) has indicated that 20 wards in the WMCA area contain ‘left behind places’ with a lack of places to meet, lower levels of engagement and activity, and poor connectivity (in all respects) to the wider economy.

ARE THERE ANY LOCAL OPPORTUNITIES UNDER THE COMMUNITIES AND PLACE INVESTMENT PRIORITY THAT YOU INTEND TO SUPPORT?

(If yes) Describe these opportunities, give evidence where possible

As well as deploying UKSPF funds for the improvement of high streets and town centres, community and neighbourhood infrastructure, and local green spaces, we anticipate using funding within the ‘communities and place’ investment priority to build capacity and support local civil society and community groups.

ARE THERE ANY LOCAL CHALLENGES YOU FACE WHICH FALL UNDER THE SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESS INVESTMENT PRIORITY?

(If yes) Describe these challenges, give evidence where possible

Compared with other regions, the West Midlands has suffered the sharpest decline in economic output over the last two years, as a result of the Covid pandemic, supply chain disruptions and new trade frictions. The region is responding through the West Midlands [Plan for Growth](#) which pinpoints clusters where the region has comparative advantage and there is additional growth potential, alongside an ambitious Trailblazing Devolution Deal to secure more resources and powers for the region.

The West Midlands’ local context and needs include:

- Productivity (GVA per hour worked) is 11% lower than the national rate, with slower growth over last five years, particularly in Walsall, Dudley and Wolverhampton.

- Below average 5-year business survival rate in Coventry, Sandwell, Walsall, and Wolverhampton; lower job density across all areas except Solihull, and decreasing job density in Coventry, Dudley, Sandwell and Walsall.
- Declining high growth firms: 10% (over 5 years) and lower business demand for innovation.
- Job density is slightly below the national average, though this varies across the area from +22% in Solihull to -13% in Sandwell.
- Manufacturing remains important to the economy with the highest GVA of all sectors, though total employees has fallen (-10%).
- Information & communication and professional, scientific & technical sectors are the two fastest growth sectors in GVA terms with strong employment growth.

In responding to these challenges, we have identified four key areas of economic opportunity for the West Midlands which covers :

- **Support SMEs with low to mid-level productivity:** New jobs and higher wages depend on having more successful businesses. A 1% rise in productivity each year for 5 years, would increase output per head to £26,735, reducing the productivity gap from £17.4bn to £12bn and supporting higher wages.
- **Expand & attract frontier firms:** The number of £1m+ turnover firms is falling in the West Midlands (-0.8% in 2018/19), whilst it is rising in the UK overall (3.4% increase in the same period). Reversing this trend would deliver and safeguard significant numbers of jobs and opportunities for progression.
- **Catalyse growth in target clusters where the region has a competitive advantage:** 10,000 new jobs in priority sectors (Business, Professional & Financial Services, Creative & Digital and Low Carbon & Environmental tech) will provide more than twice as much output and higher wages than in non-priority sectors.
- **Support business transformation to boost jobs growth & safeguard existing jobs:** Supporting even a return to the 2018/19 job growth rate of c.1% through effective business support in priority sectors alone would create 22,857 new jobs and safeguard 135,000 jobs over 5 years, using Government figures.

ARE THERE ANY LOCAL OPPORTUNITIES UNDER THE SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESS INVESTMENT PRIORITY THAT YOU INTEND TO SUPPORT?

(If yes) Describe these opportunities, give evidence where possible

As a result of LEP integration and institutional change, public and private partners across the region are repositioning business support in the West Midlands in accordance with the West Midlands Business Support Review. The Supporting Local Business investment priority will be a central plank of the cohesive, sustainable system advocated by the Review, including an integrated customer journey and core support offer to firms across the West Midlands, but with flexibility to respond to hyper-local needs and opportunities. There will also be a range of commissioned specialist programmes targeting shared priorities including decarbonisation, improving investment readiness of firms and supporting firms to grow by adopting new technologies and processes

ARE THERE ANY LOCAL CHALLENGES YOU FACE WHICH FALL UNDER THE PEOPLE AND SKILLS INVESTMENT PRIORITY? (In Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland this should also include challenges relating to Multiply)

(If yes) Describe these challenges, give evidence where possible

The West Midlands has enormous economic potential, where the success of our region is critical to the success of the UK more widely. Prior to the pandemic we were the fastest growing region outside of London. This success was powered by a young and diverse population, a strong Higher Education base and many Good and Outstanding schools, colleges and training providers. We experienced growth in high value-added sectors, new investment and infrastructure, and a growing digital capability.

However, the region also faces long-standing challenges in relation to 'people and skills', including:

- **lower GVA per head** compared to national figures (£25.5k in the region compared to £30k nationally).
- **Relatively low employment and high unemployment**, particularly in some parts of the region.

- **Growing in-work poverty, driven by low wage levels** (average full-time wages in the WM 7 Met area are £2k lower than the national average).
- **Low skill levels in the population**, with fewer people qualified to Level 4+ (37% vs 43% UK) and more people with no qualifications (9.6% vs 6.6% UK) compared to other areas; 85% of residents are qualified to Level 1 (vs 88% UK), 72% to Level 2 (vs 78% UK) and 55% to Level 3 (vs 62% UK).
- **Persistent skills shortages** faced by employers; around 1 in 4 vacancies in the region are classed as 'hard to fill', particularly in roles that require advanced and/or higher skills
- **Lack of digital skills:** 56% of people in the West Midlands do not have the essential digital skills needed for work. As a result, the WM has the highest proportion of employers who say they find applicants with digital skills difficult to find (38%).
- **Uneven development and attainment by young people** through early years, primary, secondary and tertiary education and training (69% of children achieving a good level of development at the end of Reception, compared to 72% nationally in 2019).

More recently, the region was hit hard by Covid-19, with a high number of workers furloughed to the end of the scheme, alongside significant job losses and large numbers of benefit claimants. Young people and those from BME communities were hit hardest, particularly those who are less well qualified, and who live in areas with already high levels of unemployment and deprivation. While the economy has now begun to recover, this is uneven with a real risk that some places and people will be left behind. In particular, challenges remain in relation to:

- The **variability of recovery across the region**, across places, sectors and demographic characteristics. Recovery is slowest in areas with high levels of deprivation.
- A **high level of unfilled vacancies** reflecting where many businesses are struggling to fill roles due to labour market and skills shortages.
- **Pockets of high unemployment**, particularly among young people in some areas (Walsall, Sandwell, Wolverhampton)
- **Stubborn levels of long-term unemployment**, with 84,272 residents across the WMCA area claiming Universal Credit and Seeking Work, but who have been unemployed for 12+ months.
- **Economic inactivity**, with a growing number of older people and those with both short-term and long-term health conditions leaving the labour market.

ARE THERE ANY LOCAL OPPORTUNITIES UNDER THE PEOPLE AND SKILLS INVESTMENT PRIORITY THAT YOU INTEND TO SUPPORT? (In Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland this should also include challenges relating to Multiply)

(If yes) Describe these opportunities, give evidence where possible

Within the 'people and skills' investment priority, we intend to predominantly focus on employment support interventions, recognising the particular challenges faced in each local area and the need to preserve and develop critical local infrastructure. We will also focus on supporting digital inclusion and developing the digital skills required to access employment and progress at work. We have chosen not to prioritise wider skills interventions within our UKSPF. Instead, we will use alternative skills funding available to the region (Adult Education Budget, National Skills Fund, Multiply), to reduce the demands on UKSPF whilst increasing our overall capacity to deliver skills and training that meet the needs of local residents and businesses.

Interventions

In this section, we will ask you about:

- Interventions you've chosen for each year of funding
- Outcomes you want to deliver
- Any interventions that are not listed here
- How these interventions fall under the UKSPF investment priorities, and your rationale for them
- Interventions not included in our list will be assessed before being approved, where you will need to show a clear rationale, how the intervention is value for money, what outcomes it will deliver and how you will monitor and evaluate the intervention. This may include a theory of change or logic chain.

WHAT ARE THE OUTCOMES YOU WANT TO DELIVER UNDER THE COMMUNITIES AND PLACE INVESTMENT PRIORITY? SELECT ALL THAT APPLY.

Outcome	Tick if applicable
<i>Note – this section will be updated when finalised expenditure and deliverables info is shared with us by LAs.</i>	
Jobs created	✓
Jobs safeguarded	✓
Increased footfall	✓
Increased visitor numbers	✓
Reduced vacancy rates	✓
Greenhouse gas reductions	✓
Improved perceived/experienced accessibility	✓
Improved perception of facilities/amenities	✓
Increased number of properties better protected from flooding and coastal erosion	✓
Increased users of facilities / amenities	✓
Improved perception of facility/infrastructure project	✓
Increased use of cycleways or paths	✓
Increase in Biodiversity	✓
Increased affordability of events/entry	✓
Improved perception of safety	✓
Reduction in neighbourhood crime	✓
Improved engagement numbers	✓
Improved perception of events	✓
Increased number of web searches for a place	✓
Volunteering numbers as a result of support	✓
Number of community-led arts, cultural, heritage and creative programmes as a result of support	✓
Increased take up of energy efficiency measures	✓
Increased number of projects arising from funded feasibility studies	✓
Number of premises with improved digital connectivity	✓
None of the above	

SELECT THE INTERVENTIONS YOU INTEND TO USE WHICH MEET THE COMMUNITIES AND PLACE INVESTMENT PRIORITY. YOU CAN SELECT AS MANY AS YOU LIKE.

E1: Funding for improvements to town centres and high streets, including better accessibility for disabled people, including capital spend and running costs.
E2: Funding for new, or improvements to existing, community and neighbourhood infrastructure projects including those that increase communities' resilience to natural hazards, such as flooding. This could cover capital spend and running costs.
E3: Creation of and improvements to local green spaces, community gardens, watercourses and embankments, along with incorporating natural features into wider public spaces.
E5: Design and management of the built and landscaped environment to 'design out crime'.
E6: Support for local arts, cultural, heritage and creative activities.
E8: Funding for the development and promotion of wider campaigns which encourage people to visit and explore the local area.
E9: Funding for impactful volunteering and/or social action projects to develop social and human capital in local places.
E11: Investment in capacity building and infrastructure support for local civil society and community groups.
E12: Investment in community engagement schemes to support community involvement in decision making in local regeneration.
E13: Community measures to reduce the cost of living, including through measures to improve energy efficiency, and combat fuel poverty and climate change.
E14: Funding to support relevant feasibility studies.
E15: Investment and support for digital infrastructure for local community facilities.

DO YOU PLAN TO USE ANY INTERVENTIONS NOT INCLUDED IN THE COMMUNITIES AND PLACE LIST?

State the name of each of these additional interventions and a brief description of each of these

We do not plan to use any interventions not included in the communities and place list.

Explain how each intervention meets the Communities and Place investment priority. Give evidence where possible, including why it is value money and the outcomes you want to deliver.

n/a

Do you consider that any of these interventions may provide a subsidy to potential recipients of the funding under the intervention's planned activity?

All bids must also consider how they will deliver in line with subsidy control as [set out in the guidance](#).

Yes No

Detail the assessment you undertook to consider whether the intervention is a subsidy and any specific measures you will take to make sure the subsidy is permitted.

n/a

HAVE YOU ALREADY IDENTIFIED ANY PROJECTS WHICH FALL UNDER THE COMMUNITIES AND PLACE INVESTMENT PRIORITY?

Describe these projects, including how they fall under the Communities and Place investment priority and the location of the proposed project.

Specific projects under the communities and place investment priority have not yet been identified.

Do you consider these projects may provide a subsidy to potential recipients of the funding under the proposed planned activity?

All bids must also consider how they will deliver in line with subsidy control as [set out in the guidance](#).

Yes No

Detail the assessment you undertook to consider whether the proposed projects constitute a subsidy and any specific measures you will take to make sure the subsidy is permitted.

n/a

WHAT ARE THE OUTCOMES YOU WANT TO DELIVER UNDER THE SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESS INVESTMENT PRIORITY? SELECT ALL THAT APPLY.

Outcome	Tick if applicable
Jobs created	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Jobs safeguarded	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Increased footfall	<input type="checkbox"/>
Increased visitor numbers	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reduced vacancy rates	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Greenhouse gas reductions	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Number of new businesses created	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Improved perception of markets	<input type="checkbox"/>
Increased business sustainability	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Increased number of businesses supported	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Increased amount of investment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Improved perception of attractions	<input type="checkbox"/>
Number of businesses introducing new products to the firm	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Number of organisations engaged in new knowledge transfer activity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Number of premises with improved digital connectivity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Number of businesses adopting new to the firm technologies or processes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Number of new to market products	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Number of R&D active businesses	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Increased number of innovation active SMEs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Number of businesses adopting new or improved products or services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Increased number of innovation plans developed	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Number of early stage firms which increase their revenue following support	✓
Number of businesses engaged in new markets	✓
Number of businesses increasing their export capability	✓
Increased amount of low or zero carbon energy infrastructure installed	✓
Number of businesses with improved productivity	✓
Increased number of projects arising from funded feasibility studies	
Increased number of properties better protected from flooding and coastal erosion	
None of the above	

SELECT THE INTERVENTIONS YOU INTEND TO USE WHICH MEET THE SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESS INVESTMENT PRIORITY. YOU CAN SELECT AS MANY AS YOU LIKE.

E18: Supporting Made Smarter Adoption: Providing tailored expert advice, matched grants and leadership training to enable manufacturing SMEs to adopt industrial digital technology solutions including artificial intelligence; robotics and autonomous systems; additive manufacturing; industrial internet of things; virtual reality; data analytics. The support is proven to leverage high levels of private investment into technologies that drive growth, productivity, efficiency and resilience in manufacturing.

E19: Increasing investment in research and development at the local level. Investment to support the diffusion of innovation knowledge and activities. Support the commercialisation of ideas, encouraging collaboration and accelerating the path to market so that more ideas translate into industrial and commercial practices.

E20: Research and development grants supporting the development of innovative products and services.

E21: Funding for the development and support of appropriate innovation infrastructure at the local level.

E22: Investing in enterprise infrastructure and employment/innovation site development projects. This can help to unlock site development projects which will support growth in places.

E23: Strengthening local entrepreneurial ecosystems, and supporting businesses at all stages of their development to start, sustain, grow and innovate, including through local networks.

E24: Funding for new and improvements to existing training hubs, business support offers, 'incubators' and 'accelerators' for local enterprise (including social enterprise) which can support entrepreneurs and start-ups through the early stages of development and growth by offering a combination of services including account management, advice, resources, training, coaching, mentorship and access to workspace.

E26: Support for growing the local social economy, including community businesses, cooperatives and social enterprises.

E27: Funding to develop angel investor networks nationwide.

E28: Export Grants to support businesses to grow their overseas trading, supporting local employment.

E29: Supporting decarbonisation and improving the natural environment whilst growing the local economy. Taking a whole systems approach to invest in infrastructure to deliver effective decarbonisation across energy, buildings and transport and beyond, in line with our legally binding climate target. Maximising existing or emerging local strengths in low carbon technologies, goods and services to take advantage of the growing global opportunity.

E30: Business support measures to drive employment growth, particularly in areas of higher unemployment.

DO YOU PLAN TO USE ANY INTERVENTIONS NOT INCLUDED IN THE SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESS LIST?

State the name of each of these additional interventions and a brief description of each of these

We do not plan to use any interventions not included in the supporting local business list.

Explain how each intervention meets the Supporting Local Business investment priority. Give evidence where possible, including why it is value money and the outcomes you want to deliver.

n/a

<p>Do you consider that any of these interventions may provide a subsidy to potential recipients of the funding under the intervention's planned activity? All bids must also consider how they will deliver in line with subsidy control as set out in the guidance.</p>	
Yes	No
<p>Detail the assessment you undertook to consider whether the intervention is a subsidy and any specific measures you will take to make sure the subsidy is permitted.</p>	
n/a	

<p>HAVE YOU ALREADY IDENTIFIED ANY PROJECTS WHICH FALL UNDER THE SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESS INVESTMENT PRIORITY?</p>	
<p>Describe these projects, including how they fall under the Supporting Local Business investment priority and the location of the proposed project.</p>	
Specific projects under the supporting local business investment priority have not yet been identified.	
<p>Do you consider these projects may provide a subsidy to potential recipients of the funding under the proposed planned activity? All bids must also consider how they will deliver in line with subsidy control as set out in the guidance.</p>	
Yes	No
<p>Detail the assessment you undertook to consider whether the proposed projects constitute a subsidy and any specific measures you will take to make sure the subsidy is permitted.</p>	
n/a	

<p>WHAT ARE THE OUTCOMES YOU WANT TO DELIVER UNDER THE PEOPLE AND SKILLS INVESTMENT PRIORITY? SELECT ALL THAT APPLY.</p>	
Outcome	Tick if applicable
<i>Note – this section will be updated when finalised expenditure and deliverables info is shared with us by LAs.</i>	
Number of economically inactive individuals in receipt of benefits they are entitled to following support	✓
Increased active or sustained participants of UKSPF beneficiaries in community groups [and/or] increased employability through development of interpersonal skills	✓
Increased proportion of participants with basic skills (English, maths, digital and ESOL)	✓
Number of people in supported employment [and] number of people engaging with mainstream healthcare services	✓
Number of people sustaining engagement with keyworker support and additional services	✓
Number of people engaged in job-searching following support	✓
Number of people in employment, including self-employment, following support	✓
Number of people sustaining employment for 6 months	✓
Increased employment, skills and/or UKSPF objectives incorporated into local area corporate governance	✓
Number of people in education/training	✓
Increased number of people with basic skills (English, maths, digital and ESOL)	✓
Fewer people facing structural barriers into employment and into skills provision	✓
Increased number of people familiarised with employers' expectations, including, standards of behaviour in the workplace	✓
Fewer people facing structural barriers into employment and into skills provision	✓
Number of people gaining a qualification or completing a course following support	✓
Number of people gaining qualifications, licences, and skills	✓
Number of economically active individuals engaged in mainstream skills education, and training.	✓
Number of people engaged in life skills support following interventions	✓

Number of people with proficiency in pre-employment and interpersonal skills (relationship, organisational and anger-management, interviewing, CV and job application writing)	✓
Multiply only - Increased number of adults achieving maths qualifications up to, and including, Level 2.	
Multiply only - Increased number of adults participating in maths qualifications and courses up to, and including, Level 2.	
None of the above	

SELECT THE INTERVENTIONS YOU INTEND TO USE WHICH MEET THE PEOPLE AND SKILLS INVESTMENT PRIORITY. YOU CAN SELECT AS MANY AS YOU LIKE.

E33: Employment support for economically inactive people: Intensive and wrap-around one-to-one support to move people closer towards mainstream provision and employment, supplemented by additional and/or specialist life and basic skills (digital, English, maths* and ESOL) support where there are local provision gaps.

E34: Courses including basic skills (digital, English, maths (via Multiply) and ESOL), and life skills and career skills** provision for people who are unable to access training through the adult education budget or wrap around support detailed above. Supplemented by financial support for learners to enrol onto courses and complete qualifications.

E35: Activities such as enrichment and volunteering to improve opportunities and promote wellbeing.

E36: Intervention to increase levels of digital inclusion, with a focus on essential digital skills, communicating the benefits of getting (safely) online, and in-community support to provide users with the confidence and trust to stay online.

E37: Tailored support to help people in employment, who are not supported by mainstream provision to address barriers to accessing education and training courses. This includes supporting the retention of groups who are likely to leave the labour market early.

E38: Support for local areas to fund local skills needs. This includes technical and vocational qualifications and courses up to level 2 and training for vocational licences relevant to local area needs and high-value qualifications where there is a need for additional skills capacity that is not being met through other provision.

E39: Green skills courses targeted around ensuring we have the skilled workforce to achieve the government's net zero and wider environmental ambitions.

E40: Retraining support for those in high carbon sectors.

E41: Funding to support local digital skills.

DO YOU PLAN TO USE ANY INTERVENTIONS NOT INCLUDED IN THE PEOPLE AND SKILLS LIST?

State the name of each of these additional interventions and a brief description of each of these

We do not plan to use any interventions not included in the people and skills list.

Explain how each intervention meets the People and Skills investment priority. Give evidence where possible, including why it is value money and the outcomes you want to deliver.

n/a

Do you consider that any of these interventions may provide a subsidy to potential recipients of the funding under the intervention's planned activity?

All bids must also consider how they will deliver in line with subsidy control as [set out in the guidance](#).

Yes

No

Detail the assessment you undertook to consider whether the intervention is a subsidy and any specific measures you will take to make sure the subsidy is permitted.

n/a

ENGLAND ONLY: People and Skills interventions can only be used in 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 if you have identified a local voluntary and community provision, previously supported by the

European Social Fund, at risk of closure. If you have not identified a suitable provision, you will not be able to select interventions for 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 and your investment plan will not be approved.		
HAVE YOU ALREADY IDENTIFIED ANY PROJECTS for 2024-2025 WHICH FALL UNDER THE PEOPLE AND SKILLS INVESTMENT PRIORITY?		
Specific projects under the people and skills investment priority have not yet been identified.		
Describe the projects for 2024-25, including how they fall under the People and Skills investment priority and the location of the proposed project.		
n/a		
Do you consider these projects may provide a subsidy to potential recipients of the funding under the proposed planned activity? All bids must also consider how they will deliver in line with subsidy control as set out in the guidance .		
Yes	No	
Detail the assessment you undertook to consider whether the proposed projects constitute a subsidy and any specific measures you will take to make sure the subsidy is permitted.		
n/a		
HAVE YOU IDENTIFIED A LOCAL VOLUNTARY PROVISION AT RISK AS PART OF YOUR PEOPLE AND SKILLS INVESTMENT PRIORITIES?		
Yes	No	
(If Yes) Describe the local voluntary provision at risk and your rationale for supporting it.		
Provide the European Social Fund Project Names and Project References for this voluntary and community provision at risk.		
n/a		
What year do you intend to fund these projects? Select all that apply.		
2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
Describe the projects for 2022-2023 and 2023-2024, including how they fall under the People and Skills investment priority and the location of the proposed project.		
n/a		
Do you consider these projects may provide a subsidy to potential recipients of the funding under the proposed planned activity? All bids must also consider how they will deliver in line with subsidy control as set out in the guidance .		
Yes	No	
Detail the assessment you undertook to consider whether the proposed projects constitute a subsidy and any specific measures you will take to make sure the subsidy is permitted.		
n/a		

Approach to delivery and governance

In this section, we will ask you about:

- Structures you have in place to support delivery
- Support you have from stakeholders and the local community
- How you've engaged with MPs as part of your investment plan
- Opportunities you have identified to work with other places

Places need to show how MPs that cover the lead local authority have been engaged on the investment plan and whether they support it. More detail on the role of MPs can be found here.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND SUPPORT		
Have you engaged with any of the following as part of your investment plan? Select all that apply.		
Public sector organisations ✓	Private sector organisations ✓	Civil society organisations ✓

Describe how you have engaged with any of these organisations. Give examples where possible.

In developing our UKSPF Investment Plan, we have engaged extensively with a wide range of stakeholders – from the public sector, private sector and civil society – across the WMCA area. We will continue to engage with stakeholders as we develop detailed project and implementation plans, and review these throughout the duration of the programme.

Engagement has taken place through:

- A series of bilateral meetings with officers and leaders from the 7 Local Authorities that comprise the WMCA area.
- Engagement with existing networks and groups – for example LA/LEP skills officers’ group, LA/LEP Employment and Skills Boards, Colleges West Midlands, WMCA/Universities check-in meetings, West Midlands Combined Universities, Regional Business Council, WMCA Economic Impact Group, VCS Chairs Group, WMCA Faith Strategic Partnerships Group, WMCA Cultural Officers Group
- Engagement with WMCA taskforces and commissions – including homelessness task force, race equalities task force, Young Combined Authority
- Presentations for and meetings with individual organisations and sub regional groups/networks, on request – for example Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner
- A series of interactive webinars – open to all stakeholders, with recordings made available for those unable to attend
- Dedicated [webpage](#) and [email address](#) providing a single source of information and contact for queries.

Summarise the governance structures you have in place, including how any advisory panels or associated partnership groups are made up

WMCA have robust processes in place through a Single Assurance Framework (SAF) to ensure programmes meet our corporate aims and objectives. Our SAF is a set of systems, processes and protocols designed to provide the Combined Authority with a consistent approach for appraisal, assurance, risk management and performance through the lifecycle of a programme. This includes processes for ensuring accountability, probity, transparency and legal compliance, and for ensuring value for money is achieved across investments. This high level UKSPF Investment Plan has been taken through this SAF process, providing initial internal assurance and oversight. As we move into detailed project planning and delivery, project businesses cases will be developed using the green book 5 case business model which will also go through this SAF approval process.

In addition to the SAF processes, oversight, implementation and monitoring of the WMCA UKSPF Investment Plan and delivery activity will be the responsibility of the WMCA Economic Growth Board. Representation on this Board includes the WMCA Mayor and Leaders of our 7 constituent Local Authorities, Local Enterprise Partnership Chairs, Chair of WM Innovation Board, Chair of WM Growth Company and representatives from Midlands TUC, WM Chambers of Commerce and the Higher Education sector. The UKSPF will be monitored through this Board throughout the delivery period.

WMCA have also established a UKSPF Local Partnership Group, with representation across a wide variety of sectors, stakeholders and partners, aligned to the guidance as set out in the UKSPF Prospectus. A first meeting of the Group was convened to consider the outline Investment Plan and a second meeting took place in October to provide sector input and subject matter expertise into our more detailed proposals. Contact details for all members of the Group are provided on the [WMCA UKSPF webpage](#), alongside the terms of reference for the group, clearly outlining its role in supporting development of the Investment Plan, strategic fit and deliverability. Clear processes have been established around declarations of conflicts of interest and how these are managed as part of this Group.

The West Midlands Combined Authority Board provide final approval to submission of the plan and will receive updates annually as the plan is refined and programme delivery commences.

Confirm all MPs covering your lead local authority have been invited to join the local partnership group.

Yes

No

We have written to MPs sharing our Investment Plan and offering individual meetings to discuss this. All MPs were also invited to an MP engagement group. Local Authorities have also engaged with their local MPs in developing local plans. We will continue to engage with MPs as the programme develops.	
Are there MPs who are not supportive of your investment plan?	
Yes	No
(If Yes) Who are the MPs that are not supportive and outline their reasons why.	

PROJECT SELECTION	
Are you intending to select projects in any way other than by competition for funding?	
Yes	No
(If Yes) Describe your approach to selecting projects, and why you intend to do it this way.	
<p>The WMCA UKSPF Investment Plan has been developed in collaboration with our 7 Local Authority partners, recognising their key strategic and delivery role at a local level, aligned to local need. Through our detailed project planning process, a proportion of WMCA UKSPF funding will be awarded to support projects at a local level delivered by our Local Authorities, with a clear focus on community and place interventions.</p> <p>In developing more detailed project plans aligned to the objectives and interventions set out in our Investment Plan, we have established a process for Local Authorities to profile deliverables, including local interventions, outputs, outcomes and costs. Through regular one to one meetings with our Local Authority partners we will consider proposals in more detail, ensuring they are deliverable, compliant and will achieve maximum benefits to the area and region. We are also exploring opportunities to align regional and local offers through other funding streams, including our devolved AEB and Multiply, whilst also identifying opportunities for local projects or programmes to be expanded to cover a wider WMCA geography.</p> <p>Whilst the investment plan brings our local and regional proposals together into a clear consistent regional offer, we have a clear understanding of specific local interventions, outputs and outcomes that will form this wider plan. We will work with local partners as they progress to implementation, ensuring any onward commissioning of delivery activity is compliant with the requirements set out in the UKSPF MoU/Funding Agreement that is issued to the WMCA.</p> <p>The higher level interventions, outputs and outcomes as set in this plan have been considered by a number of Boards and Groups, both within the WMCA Governance process but also at Local Authority levels. This includes our WMCA UKSPF Local Partnership Group, WMCA/LA Heads of Economic Development, WMCA Economic Growth Board, West Midlands WMCA/LA Finance Directors, through to final approval by our WMCA full Board.</p> <p>Following submission and approval of the WMCA UKSPF Investment Plan, and a requirement of our WMCA assurance processes, we will update our UKSPF Programme Business Case to provide further detail on delivery activity against the themes set out in the UKSPF prospectus, for approval by our SAF Investment Board, aligned to the Green Book 5 stage business case model (as set out in the governance structures above).</p> <p>We have established a process to consider/assess at-risk VCS projects and brought together Local Authority partners and WMCA officers to consider businesses cases and potential to support these going forward. Our Local Authority partners have made commitments to work closely with the VCS sector in their areas, in particular to support delivery of community and place interventions. Our Local Authorities have also reviewed projects that have operated across more than one LA area and are working collaboratively to identify approaches to continue to support these projects or to re-shape offers based on current and evolving economic circumstances, ensuring flexibility can be built into local offers to meet changing needs and demands.</p>	

The processes proposed above are subject to the Grant Funding Agreement issued by government. In addition to this, full account is being given to the Government Functional Standards 015: Grants, and the Cabinet Office Guidance for General Grants. We anticipate a mix of open and closed/restricted competitions throughout the lifecycle of the programme and have dedicated legal, procurement and assurance resources who will ensure processes are compliant and transparent.

DO YOU INTEND TO WORK WITH OTHER PLACES ON ANY OF THE INTERVENTIONS WHICH FALL UNDER THE COMMUNITIES AND PLACE INVESTMENT PRIORITY?

Which interventions do you intend to collaborate on? Select all that apply.

Intervention	Tick if applicable
<i>A full list of nation-specific interventions is available in the relevant annex to the Prospectus.</i>	
Describe any interventions not included in this list?	
n/a	
Who are the places you intend to collaborate with?	
We do not currently intend to work with other places on any of the interventions under the communities and place investment priority.	

DO YOU INTEND TO WORK WITH OTHER PLACES ON ANY OF THE INTERVENTIONS WHICH FALL UNDER THE SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESS INVESTMENT PRIORITY?

Which interventions do you intend to collaborate on? Select all that apply.

Intervention	Tick if applicable
<i>A full list of nation-specific interventions is available in the relevant annex to the Prospectus.</i>	
Describe any interventions not included in this list?	
n/a	
Who are the places you intend to collaborate with?	
We have not identified specific interventions under the supporting local business investment priority where we intend to work with other places. However, we are keen to maintain relevant economic geographies where appropriate and will therefore review this as the programme develops.	

DO YOU INTEND TO WORK WITH OTHER PLACES ON ANY OF THE INTERVENTIONS WHICH FALL UNDER THE PEOPLE AND SKILLS INVESTMENT PRIORITY?

Which interventions do you intend to collaborate on? Select all that apply.

Intervention	Tick if applicable
<i>A full list of nation-specific interventions is available in the relevant annex to the Prospectus.</i>	
Describe any interventions not included in this list?	
n/a	
Who are the places you intend to collaborate with?	
We do not currently intend to work with other places on any of the interventions under the people and skills investment priority.	

PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY

How have you considered your public sector equality duty in the design of your investment plan?

We have considered the public sector duty in the design of our investment plan, particularly with regards to stakeholder engagement and in the selection of our interventions and outcomes.

How will you consider your public sector equality duty when implementing your investment plan, including in the selection of projects?

Our investment plan outlines our high-level approach to UKSPF, and we have not yet identified specific projects. As we select projects, we will consider the public sector equality duty in line with the Equality Act 2010. In developing projects, we will set out information on equalities impact, identification of affected groups based on protected characteristics, and what, if any, measures have been identified in response to these impacts. This will enable us to ensure equality considerations shape the design of projects and appropriate mitigations are put in place. As we move into delivery, through our monitoring and evaluation processes we will seek supporting qualitative and quantitative data against these impacts, in order to review how these are being delivered and managed.

RISKS

Have you identified any key risks that could affect delivery, for example lack of staff or expertise?

~~Yes~~ | No

(If Yes) Describe these risks or issues, including the contingency measures you have in place to mitigate them.

This is a high-level UKSPF investment plan, with projects not yet fully detailed. As this activity progresses, we will closely work with all delivery partners to capture and monitor any specific project level risks. We will develop a risk register with contingency measures to mitigate risk at both project and programme level.

We have identified a number of programme-level risks that could affect delivery, associated with the inability to carry funds across financial years and the inability to invest in 'people and skills' until 24/25. These parameters and processes impose national restrictions in a way that prevents us from being agile and responsive and are counter to the principles of devolution. We have outlined these risks and our proposals for mitigation to DLUHC ministers and officials.

At a regional level we have identified a risk to spend for year 1 activity. Our rationale for this is based on the short delivery window the WMCA and delivery partners will have to mobilise and move into delivery for year 1 activity, particularly where onward commissioning activity is required. To mitigate this, we are engaged in ongoing dialogue with partners to re-check activity and delivery timescales, as well as working with regional and local finance directors to establish processes now to progress mobilisation of delivery activity as soon as the Plan is approved.

Have you identified any key fraud risks that could affect UKSPF delivery?

~~Yes~~ | No

(If Yes) Describe these risks or issues, including the contingency measures you have in place to mitigate them.

Controls are in place within WMCA to identify potential fraud risks; these are incorporated into assurance and appraisal processes aligned to project development, award and delivery stages. This includes an internal review to check organisations are eligible to receive funding including cross checks at companies' house where applicable. Where delivery leads are looking to sub-contract or work with delivery partners, we will require a full flow down of funding agreement terms and conditions to be put in place.

Contract monitoring processes will be put in place throughout the lifetime of the UKSPF programme, replicating processes we already have in place for the Adult Education Budget (AEB), Community Renewal Fund and other funding streams, including regular reporting on financials, performance and milestones. Payment schedules will be put in place with delivery leads, this will include a requirement for leads to submit financial claims and supporting evidence. These are checked by WMCA Finance Officers and submitted to a payments and performance board, chaired by our S151 Officer.

Capacity and capability

In this section, we will ask you about:

- The capacity and capability of your team to manage funding
- The resources you have in place for work related to UKSPF

Your answers here will help us know how to support you with delivery. They will not affect the amount of funding you will get.

Answer as honestly as possible.

TEAM RESOURCE
<p>How many people (FTE) will be put in place to work with UKSPF funding?</p> <p>A total of 6.5 employees will be employed by the WMCA to oversee the implementation, marketing and communications, monitoring and reporting, and refresh requirements for SPF. This does not include existing internal WMCA resources who provide guidance and support on assurance, compliance, finance, legal, procurement, and data requirements.</p> <p>Our 7 Local Authority partners will also receive an allocation from the 4% management fee, to support local monitoring, reporting and oversight working closely with the WMCA UKSPF Programme Team.</p> <p>In-kind support is also being provided by the WMCA and Local Authorities in order to develop proposals, engage with local providers, oversee and lead on governance requirements, reporting and briefings and provide full oversight of the programme as it is developed and once in delivery.</p>
<p>Describe what role these people will have, including any seniority and experience.</p> <p>The dedicated resources will support as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • x1 Senior Delivery Manager, UKSPF – Leading day to day operational and contractual delivery. To have full oversight of UKSPF projects including performance, risks and issues. To work with delivery leads to ensure successful delivery of projects, share lessons learned, best practise and support annual updates to WMCA UKSPF Investment Plan. To provide updates to respective Boards, Meetings, Group on SPF activity. • x1 UKSPF Monitoring and Evaluation Officer – To provide performance management and monitoring of projects/programmes. To include contract, performance and relationship management and programme compliance. • x2 UKSPF Project Officers – To lead and support on development and implementation of projects including assurance support, advice, guidance and support to delivery partners and monitoring and managing risks. To support UKSPF Partnership Group and other forums as required. • X0.5 Modelling and Forecasting Analyst – To provide data support in compiling UKSPF returns and analysis against targets/delivery. • X 1 Delivery Manager: Business Support – to lead on development, implementation and oversight of SPF related Business support interventions. • X 1 Delivery Manager (Cluster Leadership) - responsible for convening and commissioning business-led cluster activities, including driving innovation and connections across the clusters to maximise benefits and opportunities in these areas. • x1 Marketing and Communications Officer – Senior level role providing support to the WMCA and 7 Local Authority Partners in raising awareness, good news stories and other related marketing and communications activities as required. • Resource Support will also be in place across our 7 Local Authorities to work with the WMCA team as outlined above. Providing project management, monitoring and evaluation capability on local delivery activity.

- Strong capability: Has extensive experience and/or a proven track record of delivery in this area.
- Strong capacity: High degree of confidence that there is enough staffing/resource to manage funding in this area.
- Some capability: Has previous experience of delivery in this area.
- Some capacity: Confident that there is enough staffing/resource to manage funding in this area.

- Limited capability: Does not have previous experience and/or no track record of delivery in this area.
- Limited capacity: Limited confidence that there is enough staffing/resource to manage funding in this area. Additional resource may be needed to support delivery.

CAPACITY AND CAPABILITY		
How would you describe your team's current experience of delivering funding and managing growth funds?		
Very experienced	Some experience	No previous experience
How would you describe your team's current capability to manage funding for procurement?		
Strong capability	Some capability	Limited capability
How would you describe your team's current capability to manage funding for procurement?		
Strong capability	Some capability	Limited capability
How would you describe your team's current capacity to manage funding for procurement?		
Strong capacity	Some capacity	Limited capacity
How would you describe your team's current capability to manage funding for subsidies?		
Strong capability	Some capability	Limited capability
How would you describe your team's current capacity to manage funding for subsidies?		
Strong capacity	Some capacity	Limited capacity

COMMUNITIES AND PLACE CAPACITY AND CAPABILITY		
Does your local authority have any previous experience of delivering the Communities and Place interventions you have select?		
Yes	No	
How would you describe your team's current capability to manage funding for Communities and Place interventions?		
Strong capability	Some capability	Limited capability
Describe the key capability challenges (if you have any) for delivering Communities and Place interventions. This may include challenges within your local authority and/or your local/regional delivery system.		
n/a		
Describe what further support would help address these challenges.		
n/a		
How would you describe your team's current capacity to manage funding for Communities and Place interventions?		
Strong capability	Some capability	Limited capability
Describe the key capacity challenges (if you have any) for delivering Communities and Place interventions. This may include challenges within your local authority and/or your local/regional delivery system.		
n/a		
Describe what further support would help address these challenges.		
n/a		

SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESS CAPACITY AND CAPABILITY		
Does your local authority have any previous experience of delivering the Supporting Local Business interventions you have select?		
Yes	No	
How would you describe your team's current capability to manage funding for Supporting Local Business interventions?		
Strong capability	Some capability	Limited capability
Describe the key capability challenges (if you have any) for delivering Supporting Local Business interventions. This may include challenges within your local authority and/or your local/regional delivery system.		

As a result of LEP integration and BEIS' decision to reduce funding to Growth Hubs by 50%, partners across the West Midlands are establishing the shape and structure of a future cohesive business support system that is co-designed and commissioned regionally, with local delivery. The West Midlands Business support review sets the vision direction, with the WMCA's Economic Growth Board taking on new decision-making responsibility. The challenges include the system's agility to work alongside private sector provision to meet changing business needs such as energy costs and changing market needs.		
Describe what further support would help address these challenges.		
Clear positions from Government about the structure and funding of business support activities, including the position on Growth Hubs, national programmes like Help to Grow and the local interface with national agencies like British Business Bank and HMRC.		
How would you describe your team's current capacity to manage funding for Supporting Local Business interventions?		
Strong capability	Some capability	Limited capability
Describe the key capacity challenges (if you have any) for delivering Supporting Local Business interventions. This may include challenges within your local authority and/or your local/regional delivery system.		
n/a		
Describe what further support would help address these challenges.		
n/a		

PEOPLE AND SKILLS CAPACITY AND CAPABILITY		
Does your local authority have any previous experience of delivering the People and Skills interventions you have select?		
Yes	No	
How would you describe your team's current capacity to manage funding for People and Skills interventions?		
Strong capability	Some capability	Limited capability
Describe the key capability challenges (if you have any) for delivering People and Skills interventions. This may include challenges within your local authority and/or your local/regional delivery system.		
n/a		
Describe what further support would help address these challenges.		
n/a		
How would you describe your team's current capacity to manage funding for People and Skills interventions?		
Strong capability	Some capability	Limited capability
Describe the key capacity challenges (if you have any) for delivering People and Skills interventions. This may include challenges within your local authority and/or your local/regional delivery system.		
n/a		
Describe what further support would help address these challenges.		
n/a		

SUPPORT TO DELIVERY UKSPF		
All lead authorities can use up to 4% of their UKSPF allocation to support the delivery of their chosen interventions but by exception, lead authorities will be able to use more than 4%. Are you planning to use more than 4%?		
Yes	No	
(If Yes) Explain why you wish to use more than 4%.		
n/a		

Approvals

Before submitting your investment plan, you should have approval from your:

- Chief Executive Officer
- Section 151 Officer
- Leader of your lead authority

Do you have approval from your Chief Executive Officer for this investment plan?

- Yes
- No

Do you have approval from your Section 151 Officer for this investment plan?

- Yes
- No

Do you have approval from the leader of your lead authority for this investment plan?

- Yes
- No

If you do not have approval from any of these people, please explain why this is:

n/a

Additional documents

You will have received an email giving you access to a folder where you will need to upload supporting evidence to your investment plan. All applicants must complete and upload the following spreadsheet to the folder prior to submitting their investment plan:

- UKSPF Expenditure Profile spreadsheet
- UKSPF Indicative Deliverables spreadsheet

Your investment plan submission will be considered incomplete without the required documents.

Have you completed and uploaded the two spreadsheets to the SharePoint folder as requested?

- Yes
- No

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Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Date	17 October 2022
Report title	Trailblazer Devolution Deal Scrutiny Working Group - Summary of Findings
Members Undertaking the Review	Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Accountable Employee	Ed Cox, Executive Director, Strategy, Integration & Net Zero email: ed.cox@wmca.org.uk

Recommendation(s) for decision:

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:

- (1) Endorse the conclusions of the working groups, as set out within the report, that will help to support and shape the Trailblazer Devolution Deal submission to Government being considered by the WMCA Board on 28 October 2022.
- (2) Receive further updates and briefings at future meetings of the committee on developments following the submission of the devolution proposition to Government.

Purpose

1. To consider the findings of the Overview & Scrutiny Trailblazer Devolution Deal Working Groups, which considered each of the Trailblazer Devolution proposals in detail.

Background

2. The Trailblazer Devolution Deal process is continuing with devolution proposals being developed across a wide range of themes. Proposals are being drafted in accordance with the principles and plans previously agreed by the WMCA Board. With more responsibility, there should be more accountability, and so the proposals have been tested by Overview & Scrutiny Committee to ensure that they have a clear focus on drawing down powers and funding from Government (including opportunities for 'double devolution' to the WMCA's constituent member authorities where appropriate), and ensuring that the roles and responsibilities of those constituent authorities were not being 'devolved' upwards.
3. At its meeting on 11 July, the Overview & Scrutiny Committee agreed to hold a series of working groups over the summer period to review each of the proposals in detail and to discuss the local benefits that could be delivered to each local authority area through the proposed Trailblazer Devolution Deal.

Emerging Themes and Considerations

4. The working groups met during August and September and was supported by the WMCA's Trailblazer Devolution Team. Overview & Scrutiny Committee invited each of the workstream leads to present and answer questions on each of the trailblazer devolution proposals that were grouped into four thematic areas:
 - Going Further & Faster
 - Rebooting the Economy
 - Increasing Pride in Place
 - Enabling Delivery

In addition, members also scrutinised the local benefits that could be delivered by the trailblazer devolution deal in each of the constituent and non-constituent authority areas.

5. After considering each of the trailblazer devolution proposals and the local benefits, a number of key themes/considerations emerged.

5.1 Investment sought compared to the scale of the ambition

The Working Group welcomed the scale of ambition outlined in the proposals in terms of the areas that were being addressed, but in some instances queried whether the investment being sought from Government was bold enough to ensure delivery. Although clearly greater sums would be welcome, in the main, officers considered that the financial asks were figures that would be more likely to be deemed reasonable by Government departments and in particular HM Treasury.

It was also noted that Government had firmly stated that there would be 'no new money'. However, it was recognised that many of the proposals within the Devolution Deal, although focused on financial issues, were seeking greater regional control of existing pots

of funding, or simplification of funding streams, rather than requesting new funding budgets.

5.2 Impacts from proposals

Working Group members provided invaluable insight into some of the challenges that their communities faced. This 'on-the-ground' perspective was incredibly valuable for officers both in terms of greater understanding of the issues being faced by residents and businesses within the region, but also as evidence and case studies to bolster discussions with Government colleagues.

Overall, it was also recognised that the Devolution Deal proposals focused on the strategic levers and controls that should be devolved to the region and authorities, rather than specific projects to be implemented through those enhanced levers.

These insights also reinforced the importance of representing 'people' in the proposals – rather than merely strategic measures and interventions. This perspective has been incorporated strongly into the 'West Midlands Levelling Up Growth Prospectus' which has been developed to accompany the emerging Deal proposals. This document reflects the importance, for example, in all communities in the region benefitting from 'levelling up' through inclusive economic growth and equal access to opportunities.

5.3 Priorities

Whilst the breadth and diversity of proposals was welcomed – with many clearly affecting clear and present challenges within the region – the Working Group did reinforce the importance of prioritisation of these proposals. Key focus areas were identified as: housing, transport, skills and climate change. Although this was not to the exclusion of other proposals, these areas reflected the greatest concerns for members' residents and there was genuine concern that spreading the capacity too thinly, given the level of resource being sought, would undermine delivery in these areas. As such, the committee recommended focusing on these four priority areas and the CA's core remit and should not focus on things like healthcare delivery, but rather on understanding how the CA can influence and enable better health outcomes and inequalities through the four thematic areas and its current devolved responsibilities.

5.4 Integration of strategic approaches

The interdependency between proposal areas became clear through discussions at the Working Group meetings: for example, the important relationships between skills and economic growth, or effective transport systems and easy access to employment opportunities. Although many of these areas were already well-integrated and connected, it was certainly noted that the Trailblazer Devolution Deal had highlighted even greater opportunities for the integration of approaches and measures which would continue to underpin the work of WMCA officers.

5.5 Partnerships

The positive engagement with, and contributions from, OSC members was warmly welcomed. This mirrored the wider support that had underpinned the development of the proposals overall: from the private sector through organisations such as the Regional

Business Council; local authorities through a range of regular engagement sessions; and through third sector organisations on topics such as social economy and digital inclusion.

This collaborative approach was recognised as important not only for the robustness of the proposal itself, it also demonstrated to Government that the Deal truly reflected the needs and aspirations of the region – a fundamental principle of enhanced devolution.

5.6 Actions

During the course of the Working Group meetings, a number of actions were highlighted by members and logged. These have been taken forward by officers, and with the exception of one outstanding action which is reliant on more detailed data being available, have all been addressed.

Financial Implications

6. There are no direct financial implications immediately arising out of the recommendations contained within this report.

Legal Implications

7. There are no direct legal implications immediately arising out of the recommendations contained within this report.

Equalities Implications

8. There are no direct equality implications arising out of the recommendations contained within the report.

Inclusive Growth Implications

9. There are no direct inclusive growth implications arising out of the recommendations contained within the report.

Geographical Area of Report's Implications

10. The local benefits of a devolution deal will impact constituent and non-constituent authorities.

Other Implications

11. There are no further specific implications arising out of the recommendations contained within the report.

READ-OUT FROM OSC TDD WORKING GROUP – MONDAY 22ND AUGUST 2022

OSC COMMENT	IN-MEETING RESPONSE	ADDITIONAL COMMENTARY
TRANSPORT		
Concerns over bus reliability, pricing and travel-time (vs car).	Sandbox will provide opportunities to test innovations to improve services through demand responsive systems.	<i>Important to note, that TDD is about bringing additional controls to the region, rather than delivering locale specific projects (eg BSOG would bring greater control of bus subsidies for targeting issues that affect citizens).</i>
Relationships with non-Con areas.	Opportunities to partner with non-Con areas – the more strategic we can be on these issues, the better.	
Inter-modal (and learning from abroad – eg Copenhagen).	Potential expansion of SWIFT. Enhanced technology solutions to help manage connections & passenger experience.	<i>Ed shared Copenhagen assessment – opportunity to share with other members perhaps? Also note tie in with WM Smart City Region – new Apps could improve passenger experience and inter-modal connections.</i>
Concerns over provision & safety of public transport – eg ‘out of hours’ to support care workers.	Sandbox will provide opportunities to test innovations to improve services through demand responsive systems.	<i>As per item 1 above: TDD can’t identify the actual projects to be delivered, but brings in the mechanisms to enable delivery.</i>
Behaviour change & influence: over reliance on ‘stick’ rather than ‘carrot’ to move people from car.	Again, relies on improving system fundamentally. Trials through Sandbox could provide attractive alternatives.	
HOUSING & REGENERATION		
Concern over ‘unbridled’ permitted development.	No attempt to subvert LA planning powers – but rather to integrate LA ambitions strategically with other opportunities.	
Important to support Net Zero targets at point of build.	Measures can be ensured through collaboration with LAs.	
Definitions of ‘affordable’ and opportunity for asset building through home ownership.	Aim of proposition is to broaden ‘affordable homes products’ which could also include ownership mechanisms.	<i>RL undertook to review CA website definition of ‘affordable’.</i>
WM SMART CITY REGION		
Opportunities to support GP engagement – but caution re over-reliance on digital.	Technology merely an aid to mainstream NHS services – not a replacement or perceived as a panacea.	
Concerns over obtrusive infrastructure and delays in 5G roll-out.	WM5G working closely with LAs over planning for infrastructure, and working with partners to accelerate roll-out.	<i>RF will also pick-up connectivity in Digital Infrastructure strand at OSC Working Group on Thurs 25/8.</i>

Query over energy challenges of running system; and energy cost gains through digital twin.	WM5G encourage collaboration to increase energy efficiency. Est 10% savings.	ACTION: RF to confirm by sharing Energy Report.
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GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

Really helpful meeting and valuable insights into the challenges that many of our communities are facing. It was also helpful in shining a light on the issues that we can address if we do attract enhanced powers to the region.

It's worth emphasising that the TDD opportunity focuses on the strategic powers, funding controls, or funding, that we would want to bring into the region to enable more effective delivery of priorities which are hard to address through a centralised funding/power approach – rather than specific interventions or initiatives. The projects or areas that those additional powers/funding could then enable would then follow the usual processes, with engagement and consultation, to ensure we're tackling the most important issues.

READ-OUT FROM OSC TDD WORKING GROUP – MONDAY 25th AUGUST 2022

OSC COMMENT	IN-MEETING RESPONSE	ADDITIONAL COMMENTARY <i>(italics - out of meeting comment)</i>
INDUSTRIAL DECARBONISATION		
One key element of decarbonisation is energy 'recovery'.	Energy recovery is one of the aspects addressed by advisers supporting companies – which is why it's so important to maintain that level of support as recommended in the proposals.	
Skills and behaviour change are important in transitioning to a decarbonised future.	Skills proposals (see below) will be geared towards ensuring the requirements and opportunities are met. Advice on in-work guidance is provided by support advisers as above.	<i>As well as the existing support networks, it's also worth noting the 'WM Net Zero Business Pledge' which encourages and helps businesses transition.</i>
The balance between devolved powers and funding requests.	These proposals do make the case for direct funding, but will also incorporate a blend of underwriting of interventions, coordination of land assembly, and in some instances accepted derogation of regulations.	<i>This 'blend' reflects the approaches proposed through the Housing & Regeneration asks for 'zoning'.</i>
ECONOMY		
Important to recognise the importance of education to underpin business support and growth.	This relationship is fully recognised and will inform the development of LSIP (local skills improvement plan).	
Important to learn from investment opportunities that have been lost to WM.	The TDD proposals seek to address the areas where WM is disadvantaged as a result of WMGC review and monitoring.	Important to note the crucial aspect of decreasing or challenged export opportunities and support.
R&D and innovation should be key mitigators of carbon and energy costs.	Aim behind innovation proposals is to build on existing R&D strengths, such as low carbon, and broaden new technologies.	
SKILLS & EMPLOYMENT		
Challenges over a 'WM Careers Service' when national contract just awarded.	Developing the TDD offer over the next 5 years, in collaboration with NCS, should position the region well for review at contract renewal.	
ESIF – UKSPF funding gaps.	WMCA will try to cover gaps where there is funding and remit to do so, but equally important to represent these issues in HMG fiscal events.	
Issue for long-term unemployed and confidence levels.	TDD proposals will enable the region to take a 'whole life' approach to upskilling including access to mentoring, wellbeing, and other advice.	
Concern over focus on formal Level 3 qualifications.	National targets on Level 3 – but TDD approach enables wider prioritisation,	

	including skills pathways to and beyond Level 3.	
DIGITAL INCLUSION		
Access to devices key challenge for many communities.	Funding will be targeted on areas of greatest need.	Work through the Coalition for Digital Inclusion is providing considerable insights into this area.
'Pay once' for data seems an ideal opportunity for tackling exclusion.	Would be a positive step, which needs a holistic approach to develop; some conversations already between HMG and data providers.	
Older generation at risk from exclusion & lack of confidence.	Certainly a priority for many LAs in the region and will be incorporated into the delivery aspects of the TDD.	Confidence and addressing the fear of crime has been picked up by partners in the Coalition (see above) whose work has underpinned TDD.
TDD: powers or funding.	Largely, in this instance, the proposals focus on funding as any powers would require national perspective.	
DIGITAL INCLUSION		
Disappointing that GMCA attracted greater Local Full Fibre Network funding.	Reinforces the strong collaborative approach evinced through TDD development.	
Ideal would be to install key infrastructure at point of build (housing and commercial).	Strongly encouraged – uncertainty over powers held by planning authorities to insist.	A: Clarify planning powers for requirement to install ducting as part of new development.
GENERAL OBSERVATIONS		
<p>Another extremely useful discussion that illustrated some of the challenges faced by communities in the region.</p> <p>Discussions also highlighted the necessity for TDD proposals to be 'cross-cutting' and integrate across particular themes: eg skills and addressing decarbonisation; access to employment and digital inclusion. This is recognised by officers who meet regularly and frequently to ensure complementarity.</p>		

READ-OUT FROM OSC TDD WORKING GROUP 3 – MONDAY 2nd SEPTEMBER 2022

OSC COMMENT	IN-MEETING RESPONSE	ADDITIONAL COMMENTARY <i>(italics – indicate comment only)</i>
FINANCIAL SIMPLIFICATION		
Important to understand the total amounts of money for each of the “40 streams” mentioned.	ACTION: CP to provide figures.	
Total sum of the ‘green’ items in the financial ask, and over what period.	£3bn over 30 years	
Important to understand the relationship between Council Tax cap, Transport Levy, and any notion of a Precept. Increased prosperity should be a pre-requisite before increased levies.	Critical to take a genuine ‘negotiating’ position with HMG at this point [eg the region will consider options on the basis of HMG devolved fiscal powers]. Unhooking Transport Levy from Council Tax Cap provides those opportunities.	
Significant interest in the progress of UKSPF.	Officers had developed an outline Investment Plan which would be considered at the October CA Board.	This will be considered through the usual OSC governance arrangements.
Express & Star quoted as indicating Council Tax increases were planned to cover Metro extension.	Confirmed as not the case: July CA Board had been clear in recommending a ‘mitigation’ strategy, not Council Tax increase.	
Consideration of a ‘One Pot’ approach as per GMCA.	Concerns over negotiating with a single department (DLUHC) who may not know the priority issues as well as, say, DfT, DfE etc.	
HOMELESSNESS		
Accessibility to decent homes: national rather than regional policy?	Approach is to use ‘pilots’ to advise how national policy could be developed.	
Long-term education vital in preventing homelessness.	Intergenerational engagement recognised and included in approaches.	
Increased ‘enforcement’ powers could require additional capacity within LAs.	LA enforcement requests will align with DLUHC proposals. Additional responsibilities should carry additional resource.	
Concern over Live-Work units and pressures on affordable housing numbers.	Challenge lies in ‘viability’ between high capital costs and deflated rents.	Cllr Burrow has shared contacts with relevant groups; team grateful and will engage directly.
DWP Support Fund is proving challenging.	Recommendation is to seek a formal duty to collaborate and for LAs to be able to influence DWP decision-making.	
SOCIAL ECONOMY		
Concern over methodology on identifying ‘left behind places’ – eg Dudley omitted.	TDD asks are geared to tackle that issue so that regional intelligence drives decision-making. ACTION: CS to share ‘Left Behind Places’	

Careful consideration over governance of Common Wealth Fund.	Good governance imperative. Options being explored: eg allocated fund with appropriate conditions, or model involving direct control from local members.	
Concern that support of this kind will not deliver 'hard' outcomes such housing and skills.	Outcomes will be clearly measurable including demonstrating how they support region's inclusive growth aims.	
Concern over costs of administering the fund.	Recognised that administration needs to be both efficient and well-governed.	
Essential to ensure the new fund is non-detrimental to existing funding.	Fund will be developed in a way which 'goes with the grain' of existing funding streams with strong LA input.	
CULTURE		
Query over period the £15m will cover.	3-4 years – depending whether awarded mid-financial year.	
Concern over whether the amount is sufficient to meet the scale of the ambition.	Figure considered to be realistic (and therefore achievable) and is comparable to legacy funding elsewhere.	
HEALTH		
Important to integrate education into health prevention activities.	LA Public Health teams already working closely with schools – keen that CA only engages where it adds value. ACTION: MA to reflect this point to DPHs.	
Concern over sharing of patient records digitally and why CA needs to play a role in this.	Important in understanding the determinants of good health. CA acting as a convenor but recognise sensitivities of data control.	
Should the proposals include a 'Healthy Food Strategy'?	Original TDD asks extended to 19 in total – reduced to ensure deliverability, so this has not been included.	
Reference to a meeting with LA DPHs.	Proposals are firmly based on the discussions at that meeting.	
Health is already a 'crowded field' – need to clarify role of CA in this.	CA convening role requested by ICBs but need to be careful about clear areas of responsibility for outcomes. CA to engage only where it adds value.	
Clear relationship between unemployment and health.	One of the key asks is directly focused on supporting individuals into employment – bringing greater flexibility to an existing (successful) programme.	
GENERAL OBSERVATIONS		
None specifically.		

READ-OUT FROM OSC TDD WORKING GROUP 4 – MONDAY 5TH SEPTEMBER 2022

OSC COMMENT	IN-MEETING RESPONSE	ADDITIONAL COMMENTARY <i>(italics – commentary only)</i>
DATA, OUTCOMES, ACCOUNTABILITY		
Benefits of CA being ‘data controller’.	Integrating data will enhance outcomes – eg TfWM accessing health determinants or economic issues.	
Avoid removing data collection from LA level.	Intention is not to remove data but to provide a shared data store regionally.	
Governance of accountability and how this would be enhanced.	Effectively, there is programme by programme accountability – elevated where necessary to bodies such as OSC. Consideration of a ‘Regional Public Accounts Committee’ to reflect role of PAC in Government.	
One issue affecting delivery (& therefore implicating accountability) is speed of funding coming through.	Key fundamental of the TDD proposal overall is to provide greater flexibility to funding streams which can assist speed and effect of delivery.	
CRIME, COMMUNITY SAFETY & RESILIENCE		
Need clarity on where fines and costs will rest with ‘Road’ related measures – ie implications for LAs.	Currently most sums return to HMT. Effectively, aim is to meet local costs through overage accrued and retained. Retained funds will then be distributed through local mechanisms such as the CSP’s / road safety partnership.	
Digital crime appears unrepresented.	Digital crime is a priority in the Police and Crime Plan, but is not within TDD asks. Focus for OPCC is on prevention through advice and training. Given the lack of geo-specificity, investigation & prosecution is a national issue, but currently no national collaboration akin to counter-terrorism.	
Concern over comment of offenders ‘staying in the community’, and lack of focus of prison rehabilitation & mental health.	Proposals aim to improve health support in prison to aid rehabilitation, and crucially avoid custodial sentences that can be counter-productive. The ‘regional’ approach proposed will enable community-sensitive considerations to be taken into account in the system overall.	
Clarity over road pavement parking powers.	Pavement parking features in the TfWM TDD asks for powers equivalent to GLA which should provide increased powers to LAs.	
Prevention of crime through early years engagement.	Full agreement. Requires system change: ethical use of data and tapering support to early years accordingly.	

RETROFIT		
Assessments on when to retrofit and when to demolish.	Approach is an economic one: property owners invest alongside public sector so will be able to make the call on viability.	
Important to develop the supply chain and skills pathways for retrofit.	CA's 'SMART Hub' and TDD proposals seek to give confidence to market to invest in new product development and training.	
Simplification of the complex world of different options available.	Role of proposed 'retrofit coordinators' is to understand the implications of each technology and advise accordingly to ease decision-making.	
Tech colleges providing training in retrofit.	ACTION: Information to be shared.	Details provided online during the meeting – to be shared as part of the notes.
LOCAL AREA ENERGY PLANNING		
Would this enable the CA to help steer private company set-up & relocation?	Absolutely: better planning across infrastructure systems to create the right conditions for businesses to establish.	
Tackling fuel poverty.	LAEPs enable understanding of impacts from retrofit for greater outcomes at a neighbourhood level.	
Capacity within LAs to input effectively to LAEPs.	Proposals include resource to match increased responsibility which would directly fund capacity in LAs.	
CLIMATE ADAPTATION		
Governance around the multiple contributory areas.	Specific areas would remain the responsibility of particular depts (eg river basins – Environment Agency): Adaptation planning enables these elements and interdependencies to be better understood across a strategic geography.	
Concerns over hard surfaces, drainage capacity and flooding.	Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) would be a key part of Adaptation plans, and could inform LA policy.	
LAs need national policy to support their planning decisions and policies.	TDD pathfinder intended to inform national policy and ensure Local Natural Recovery Strategies have appropriate recourse and measures.	
Recommendation for simple, practical measures to be developed.	TDD proposals intend to do just that – particularly the support for community group action.	
GENERAL OBSERVATIONS		
Arising in this discussion and other work groups: ensuring that the resource and funding being sought is sufficient to meet the scale of ambition and support practical delivery.		

READ-OUT FROM OSC TDD WORKING GROUP 5 – MONDAY 5TH SEPTEMBER 2022

OSC COMMENT	IN-MEETING RESPONSE	ADDITIONAL COMMENTARY <i>(italics – comment only)</i>
LOCAL BENEFITS		
Clarification on the extent of priorities identified for each LA [eg Dudley].	Summary had been developed from existing strategies from each LA and close engagement, including with CEOs. Further liaison underway to finalise.	Further discussions are planned with senior officers and Leaders – Members could also feedback any concerns within their LAs.
Greater clarity over ‘double devolution’ areas.	These are indicative from engagement sessions between workstream leads and LA officers.	TDD team is exploring how the proposals can be more explicit around the appropriate delivery levels.
Its people are the greatest strengths of the region and the local authority areas and the interdependency of each strand needs to respect that.	The TDD proposals are seeking that more holistic approach that addresses the needs of (and opportunities for) people in their respective places: eg a guiding principle behind Levelling Up Investment Zones.	ACTION [IS]: Local Benefits report to be reviewed to ensure the benefits to ‘people’ is appropriately reflected.
Clarity required around the focus and strategic inter-relationships around issues – eg. E.Birmingham transport network, HS2-driven growth and travel to work challenges.	Acknowledged: TDD focuses on the strategic levers and controls that can be better deployed at the regional level, thus enabling genuinely strategic decisions within and between communities, that both generates opportunities and enhances accesses to those opportunities.	
Travel to work concerns should address ‘time’ component and complexity of multi-modal travel, as well as merely accessibility and affordability.	Certainly an important principle: elements of TDD will help support this (but not a panacea) – eg enhanced information & apps to optimise route choices through WM Smart City Region.	
Strategic issues such as Transport and focus on major site growth needs to take into account issues for wider areas, such as the night-time economies across the region.	TDD process is highlighting the interdependency of many of these issues. ACTION [SB]: To raise with Culture and Transport workstream leads to ensure night-time economies are considered.	
Will asks being put to HMG reflect the LA priorities.	This is a regional approach which has been informed by the priorities of LA areas. Although, bringing greater levers to the region and double devolution should support their delivery, it cannot be expected to fulfil all of each LAs priorities individually.	
Important to understand the wider strategic relationships with Non-Con Authorities: can the paper be shared with Members in Non-Con Authorities.	It must be stressed that this is not a public document – although wider awareness would be helpful in generating support to the TDD proposals, this must be handled extremely sensitively.	

<p>Important to develop the supply chain and skills pathways for retrofit.</p>	<p>CA's 'SMART Hub' and TDD proposals seek to give confidence to market to invest in new product development and training.</p>	
<p>Working Group has previously mentioned lost economic investment to the region: in how many of those were offers made to investors to reconfigure transport systems for their proposed sites?</p>	<p>Usual 'pitches' to investors will involve a range of offers – indications are that the WM has lost owing to incentives from other devolved countries (ref Trade & Investment paper). ACTION [SB]: Confirm if any pitches include transport reconfiguration offers.</p>	

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

Through the Working Group discussions, an emerging set of priorities began to emerge, which had been reinforced by the conversations on Local Benefits: Transport; Housing; Climate Change; Skills.

ACTION LOG FROM OSC TDD WORKING GROUPS

ACTION	OFFICER	STATUS
HOUSING & REGENERATION - 22 AUGUST		
To review definition of 'affordable' stated on CA website.	Rob Lamond	Under review.
WM SMART CITY REGION - 22 AUGUST		
To circulate Energy Report which demonstrates the extent of savings to be achieved through a Smart Energy approach.	Robert Franks	Completed – report circulated.
DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE - 25 AUGUST		
To confirm the powers available to local authorities to require installation of below-ground ducting to future-proof developments at point of new build.	Robert Franks / Steve Bowyer	Completed – see advice from WMCA Legal Team below
<p>LAs can require this through the imposition of conditions or through section 106 requirements provided there is a policy justification. The National Planning Policy Framework section would support the drawing up of SPG (Supplementary Planning Guidance) and use of conditions or the requirement under a S106 Agreement through the following section, should the Local Planning Authority choose to do so:</p> <p><i>114. Advanced, high quality and reliable communications infrastructure is essential for economic growth and social well-being. Planning policies and decisions should support the expansion of electronic communications networks, including next generation mobile technology (such as 5G) and full fibre broadband connections. Policies should set out how high quality digital infrastructure, providing access to services from a range of providers, is expected to be delivered and upgraded over time; and should prioritise full fibre connections to existing and new developments (as these connections will, in almost all cases, provide the optimum solution)</i></p>		
FINANCIAL SIMPLIFICATION – 2 SEPTEMBER		
To provide a breakdown of the sums relating to the '40 different funding streams'.	Carl Pearson	Provided w/e 23/9
SOCIAL ECONOMY		
To share the 'Left Behind Places' report with the Working Group.	Claire Spencer	Completed – report shared.
HEALTH		
To ensure Directors of Public Health are aware of the importance of education in improving health.	Mubasshir Ajaz	Discussed in meetings.
RETROFIT		
Information on Tech Colleges providing retrofit courses to be shared with the Working Group.	Cheryl Hiles / George Simms	Completed – information shared via Teams.

LOCAL BENEFITS		
Review 'Local Benefits' to ensure benefits to people is drawn out appropriately.	Irina Sen/ Steve Bowyer	Reviewed and included. The 'people' perspective has also been strengthened in the 'Levelling Up Growth' prospectus which has been designed to accompany the proposals.
Raise the importance of night-time economies to Transport and Culture Workstream leads.	Steve Bowyer	Point raised.
Perceived population migration from urban centres to rural settings.	Steve Bowyer	Unfortunately, only partial data is available on intra-region migration. An example of in/out flows for Sandwell has been prepared, and this will be expanded and rolled out as more granular Census data becomes available. Sample: Sandwell Migration (arctis.com) .
Investigate whether transport reconfiguration was offered as part of proposals to the recent 'lost' investment opportunities.	Steve Bowyer	Please see response below:
<p>Although good transport connections are one of the attractions for investing companies – eg ease of getting goods and employees around the area – relocating firms seldom raise transport reconfiguration as a requirement to secure their investment. WMGC does not therefore routinely offer such reconfiguration.</p> <p>Other incentives, such as business rates or subsidy, are raised and this is where the West Midlands is at a disadvantage compared to, say, the devolved nations: hence our asks in the TDD proposal.</p>		





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Forewords

At the heart of the country, the West Midlands has long been the nation's economic engine, driving progress and growth. From the birthplace of the industrial revolution to the advances in technology that we see today, our region plays a pivotal role in the economy of the United Kingdom.

Before the pandemic we had the fastest growth outside London. However, with our high concentration of manufacturing and exporting businesses, the West Midlands was badly hit by Covid and will now be adversely impacted by the rising cost-of-living.

This "Levelling Up Growth Prospectus" sets out the tools we need to tackle the challenges of today, while forging a region fit for the future.

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Complementing our Plan for Growth, this document sets out our blueprint for levelling up; we need to level up our region, drive forward the new green industrial revolution and leverage private sector investment to get the economy firing on all cylinders again.

Mayoral Combined Authorities are crucial for delivering short-term solutions to ease the cost-of-living, whilst simultaneously tackling the climate emergency and delivering levelling up. We know that levelling up needs strong local leadership and greater devolution to help address these challenges.

But we aren't alone in this endeavour. The West Midlands Combined Authority, its member local authorities and our partners across the region have shown how effective we can be in shaping the drivers of economic growth, together. Working collaboratively, we have grown an award-winning public transport system, built thousands of homes and unlocked brownfield sites for development, risen to the net zero challenge with pioneering retrofit schemes, and crucially turned around a failing skills system.

But to build on this progress, we need the Government to give us the tools to go further, faster.

The West Midlands has the people, the business, the connections, and the will to supercharge green and inclusive economic growth. With the right tools, we can deliver solutions to some of the region's toughest challenges.

As the Prime Minister said:

“

When the West Midlands succeeds, the country succeeds.

”



Andy Street
Mayor of the West Midlands

This West Midlands Levelling Up Growth Prospectus sets out how we are working as a region to tackle the various challenges the region faces and to secure the autonomy we need from government to drive long term inclusive growth, across the West Midlands.

At the time of writing, the country is facing a cost-of-living crisis, driven by high inflation and soaring energy prices. The direct and indirect consequences of this crisis on the region's residents and businesses could be huge.

For instance, there are an estimated 235,512 fuel poor homes in the West Midlands — the highest rate of fuel poverty in any English region. The people in these homes will be extremely exposed.

But with strong local leadership and a solid track record of delivery, the West Midlands can offer the solution.

Our pioneering retrofit schemes are driving down energy consumption while ensuring our residents and businesses are warm, safe and comfortable. We are currently running two government-funded retrofit projects targeting nearly 1,000 low-income households. With the right funding and resources, we can turbocharge these schemes and bring more people out of fuel poverty.

But this isn't just about tackling the challenges of today - it's also about our shared hopes for the future.

We want the West Midlands to be the home of a new, green industrial revolution – and this document calls upon government to match our ambitions with their support, with proposals around local area energy planning to help reduce energy bills and support for innovation in areas such as battery technology.

We also need more flexible funding to build affordable, zero carbon homes and unlock stalled investment through new Levelling Up Investment Zones.

We need to protect and expand the bus and tram routes residents and businesses rely on, with more control over bus operator funding and investment in the expansion of the Metro network. We need new ways to encourage people onto public transport through mobility credit schemes, new e-mobility powers, and a dynamic role in Great British Railways.

We need further investment to allow us to capitalise on major events such as the Commonwealth Games, to both promote 'pride in place' and attract further foreign direct investment.

The Government must lay solid foundations for real recovery with sustainable and fair funding for local government. Through "double devolution" we can unlock a whole system approach to level up the nation. Herein lies the blueprint for how to do that.



Cllr Brigid Jones
Deputy Leader of Birmingham City Council and WMCA Portfolio Lead for Levelling Up



A Plan To Level Up

The West Midlands has so much to shout about. We have a young, diverse population, dynamic towns and cities, thriving, innovative businesses, and our culture and natural beauty — which are too often just well-kept secrets.

We have a rich industrial history and heritage, and very recently we were the fastest-growing region outside London in the decade to 2019, breaking through the £100 billion economic output mark.

We have captured the eyes of the world with a colourful Commonwealth Games and Coventry as ‘City of Culture’; the future is bright too — new businesses locating in the region and HS2 continues to take shape month by month.

But not everyone is sharing equally in this success. And these successes are hard won in a country where too much is controlled from London.

In the West Midlands, levelling up is about giving everyone in the region the chance to flourish by freeing our regional leaders to be more effective and to be more effective and more responsive to the needs and aspirations of all our communities.

The past two years have been tough — the Covid pandemic, new trade frictions and supply chain challenges and global economic fluctuations have resulted in consequences for every region. The effects of climate change and environmental breakdown are having a growing impact and influence on public policy.

Additionally, global affairs are causing significant economic instability, which is having a profound effect on energy security, inflation, and the wider cost of living. Despite all the progress, some of the inequalities that exist within and between places, communities and regions are now growing ever wider.

Levelling up must start with a thriving economy which creates opportunity for all.

The West Midlands *Plan for Growth* sets a path to returning to that growth trajectory and spreading opportunity and jobs across the region. It will require government to increase our ability to work more effectively with business and unlock private investment as other mayors can across the world.

The West Midlands Combined Authority, and its member authorities across the region, have shown how effective they can be in shaping the drivers of economic growth. We have grown an award-winning public transport system, built thousands of homes and unlocked brownfield sites for development, risen to the net zero challenge with pioneering retrofit schemes, and crucially turned around a failing skills system.

Since the original Devolution Deal with the WMCA in 2015, over £4.7 billion of new funding has been brought into the region as the mayor and member authorities have worked together to unlock growth.

So, to level up we must double-down on our successes. First, we must go further and faster on those drivers of growth that have been devolved to us already. We need greater control over post-16 technical and vocational training and opportunities to co-commission employment support to better address local needs.

We need more flexible funding to build more affordable, zero carbon homes and unlock stalled investment through new Levelling Up Investment Zones.

And we need new ways to encourage people onto public transport through mobility credit schemes, new e-mobility powers, and a dynamic role in Great British Railways.

In all these areas, we need simplified funding streams with fewer strings and competitions. We could really unlock private investment, local supply chains and training programmes in opportunities like domestic retrofit, if government could guarantee a more flexible flow of public funds rather than stop-start competitions for limited pots.

Next, to solve the productivity challenge in the West Midlands and create more, higher-paid local jobs, we need new powers to reboot economic growth. We need a new model of consolidated, co-commissioned business support and, building on our Innovation Accelerator, we need to secure our fair share of public R&D investment, working more closely with UKRI to unlock opportunities in health tech and burgeoning low carbon technologies.

Our Global West Midlands programme requires a new relationship and support from the Office for Investment. Our 16,000 energy intensive businesses and their supply chains require a unique approach to addressing escalating energy costs and making the low carbon transition.

To create more, higher-paid local jobs, we need new powers to reboot economic growth.

To level up we must address our communities' concerns about public services and restore pride in place. Health and wealth are two sides of the same coin — working with our health system partners, we have plans to make much better use of data and digital innovation in tackling the healthcare backlog, and find new ways to tackle health inequalities.

We want to go further on homelessness prevention and addressing our high levels of digital exclusion and, working with the Police and Crime Commissioner, there is more we can do to improve community safety and tackle youth crime.

We have plans to improve access to the arts and culture in places that are underserved, ensuring that we build on the success of the Commonwealth Games and Coventry City of Culture to create a lasting legacy. We hope this will narrow the differences in participation rates in culture, sport and heritage within the region.

As the national leader in 5G mobile coverage, we will also bring forward a West Midlands Smart City Region programme to use our digital infrastructure to improve access to healthcare and unlock smarter transport and energy systems.



They will also allow the public to make a clear judgement on the collective impact of our regional activity against key challenges, hold us to account and make comparisons. Levelling up is a collaborative effort. It rests on the hard work of our businesses, communities, schools, colleges, universities, hospitals and many, many others. And none of this will be possible without strong local leadership and accountability.

As part of our devolution process, we have agreed clear principles with our local authority members. Where possible, new powers and funding will be 'double devolved' — making sure it's truly local, closer to people and places who need it, with no powers sucked upwards.

Our plans for levelling up must be aligned to local plans and strategies. We're working hard to make sure we seize opportunities to make the whole greater than the sum of its parts — making the links between innovation and transport, housing and net zero, digital and energy infrastructure and skills, for example.

We are committed to delivering our proposals in a way that enables all of our communities to unlock their potential - by actively addressing inequality and the barriers to success experienced by young, old, disabled and minority ethnic people.

To monitor our progress on our efforts to level up, we've developed a new West Midlands Outcomes Framework. This has a set of key metrics by which we can measure whether our collective efforts are having impact.

They will also allow the public to make a clear judgement on the performance of our regional leaders and make comparisons from region to region. Our mayor and many of our other local leaders are ultimately judged at the ballot box, but as we take on new powers and responsibilities, we will enhance our accountability too.

The government's Levelling Up White Paper made one thing very clear: this is a broad, deep and long-term programme. The West Midlands Levelling Up Growth Prospectus details proposals for a Trailblazer Devolution Deal that we wish to secure in the coming year. This new devolution deal must come with the appropriate resources. The White Paper recognises the need for simplified funding, monitoring and evaluation across key programmes of work, but the WMCA needs a new long-term fiscal settlement to support its levelling up agenda. As the White Paper says itself:

“

System change is not about a string of shiny, but ultimately short-lived, new policy initiatives. It is about root and branch reform of government and governance of the UK. It is about putting power in local hands, armed with the right information, and embedded in strong civic institutions.

Levelling Up White Paper

”

The West Midlands is stepping up to this challenge and this Levelling Up Growth Prospectus provides a routemap to guide our path. But if we are to turn the tide on regional inequality and unlock unprecedented investment in our region to steer us out of such troubled times, then it will take all of us — not least national government — to forge new relationships that put communities at the centre of the fairer, greener, better-connected region that will benefit us all.

Special Feature: Levelling Up Missions and the West Midlands Outcomes Framework

Levelling Up Missions

The government's Levelling Up White Paper includes 12 'Levelling Up Missions', which are the medium-term ambitions of the government for all parts of the UK. They are designed to focus energy and action across central and local government, as well as in businesses and civil society.

The Government's 12 Missions



The 12 missions provide consistency and clarity about how the levelling up agenda is progressing. The government is taking on a statutory responsibility to provide an annual report on its progress in addressing them, but they're also seeking to develop a 'framework' to hold mayoral combined authorities to account.

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The Importance of Data

To measure progress on levelling up – nationally, regionally, or locally – it's vital that we have the right data. However, there is a lack of quality and accessibility of local data, and there are big gaps in what data is gathered and how it's shared.

The government has committed to a new subnational data strategy, and a special Spatial Data Unit to work with local and regional authorities to improve things through an online platform.

In the West Midlands we're ready to go further and faster. We'll bring together the WMCA, local authorities and other public agencies, universities and our growing tech sector to build a better regional data ecosystem.

Going further and faster with data

- Give WMCA the same status on data access rights as a top tier authority;
- Develop a HM Government – WMCA Data Agreement with commitments to data access and standards for data sharing and its use;
- Build professional development pathways to empower local and regional data users;
- To consider locating the new independent local data body in the West Midlands;
- Greater clarity over national standards on data ethics and information assurance to allow the West Midlands to become a leader in this field.

The West Midlands Outcome Framework (WMOF)

Each year the 'State of The Region' report gives us a snapshot of economic progress in the West Midlands. This includes indicators which act as an evidence base to support programme development. The WMCA has also developed an Inclusive Growth Framework which has a range of quantitative and qualitative metrics which tell us how well the benefits of economic growth are being shared.

We're working with government to combine our existing approaches into a new West Midlands Outcomes Framework (WMOF).

The WMOF contains 24 headline indicators across 8 different themes, and these will provide the basis for regional partners to assess their progress in terms of levelling up. Many of them link to the government's Levelling Up Missions, but taken together they add local colour and precision to the government's approach.

The draft WMOF is set out as an annex at the end of this report.

Accountability

The WMOF will give all regional partners the metrics to judge their efforts by, but it will also provide an important means by which the mayor and local authority leaders can be held to account.

There are already a range of ways in which the mayor and combined authority are held accountable — through performance reporting, especially to funders, through its various thematic boards and scrutiny panels, through Mayor's Question Time and other public forums, and ultimately, by the general public at the ballot box.





Section A: Going Further & Faster

Going Further & Faster

Our first step towards levelling up the West Midlands is to go further and faster on those drivers of growth that have already been devolved to us.

Our first set of Trailblazer Devolution Deal proposals are focused on the themes of:

1. **Housing & Regeneration**
2. **Transport**
3. **Skills**
4. **Retrofit**

These are areas where we've already made good progress in making a positive impact on the residents and businesses of the West Midlands.

To go further, we need greater control over post-16 technical and vocational training, and opportunities to co-commission employment support to better address local needs.

We need more flexible funding to build affordable, zero carbon homes and unlock stalled investment through new Levelling Up Investment Zones.

And we need new ways to encourage people onto public transport through mobility credit schemes, new e-mobility powers, and a dynamic role in the new Great British Railways.

Too many of our communities face unequal access to these fundamental aspects of life owing to a range of circumstances such as racial heritage, economic activity or disabilities. Improving inclusion and equality of access runs as a thread throughout these proposals.

Together, these themes represent the enablers of our local economy and communities. The changes proposed within them are critical to ensuring that all residents and businesses across the West Midlands can prosper and connect.

Housing & Regeneration



The Challenge

The current housing system means we can't invest in homes, commercial property and high streets, heritage assets, parks and public spaces, and vital infrastructure in the way we need to, if we're to make a difference to local standards of living.

One of the main challenges is building more affordable homes, which would help to transform the lives of many of our residents.

We want to continue to be a leading region for net additions to housing stock, alongside wanting residents and businesses to thrive, so our focus must be wider than on housing numbers alone.

We face complex barriers in the current funding system; a more flexible, place-based approach for the West Midlands is key to tackling these.

The Prize

Our vision for change requires capacity and flexibility, underpinned by long-term certainty of funding. This will allow us to invest in a way that that is not only measured by housing targets.

It will improve living standards, transport connectivity, and wellbeing, connecting people to thriving local economies and places that are a pleasure to be in. This will provide further confidence to potential investors and show the West Midlands as an excellent investment prospect.

We want to invest locally in affordable housing, infrastructure and local places that will help the West Midlands communities that need it the most.

Progress So Far...

We already have a pioneering brownfield regeneration programme, including sites that have historically been considered too complex and difficult to deliver. This demonstrates the strength and aptitude for regeneration in the West Midlands, and includes:

- 1 Innovating on key policy areas (e.g. new affordable housing definition)
- 2 Collaborating across 17 Local Council Areas
- 3 Working with business and investors
- 4 Deploying Government funding at serious pace and scale
- 5 Showcasing our potential to go even further

Importantly, it's also demonstrated our credibility and commitment to Whitehall that this a region at the forefront of brownfield regeneration — our proposals only seek to build upon the strong progress we have made so far.

We've supported local areas to drive growth and unlock their wider economic, social and wellbeing potential.



Levelling Up Mission

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Renters will have a secure path to ownership with the number of first-time buyers increasing in all areas; and the government's ambition is for the number of non-decent rented homes to have fallen by 50%, with the biggest improvements in the lowest performing areas.

Our Proposal

A Flexible & Innovative Funding Regime

A pioneering Single Regeneration Fund/ Funding Package to maximise opportunities and investment in supporting brownfield first and town centre regeneration through placemaking, regeneration, housing supply and infrastructure delivery - de-risking stalled and challenging housing, mixed-use and commercial development sites across the region.

Affordable Housing

Building on our landmark affordable housing definition and minimum affordable housing target, our ask is to secure a bold funding package to work in partnership with local and national partners to support affordable housing delivery.

Levelling Up Investment Zones

Government support and endorsement for local designation of dedicated Investment Zones that build on the 2022 Investment Prospectus – to maximise coordinated public and private sector investment, support local accountability, and achieve transformational 'levelling up' by making available a suite of regeneration, fiscal and financial mechanisms and flexibilities.

Land Reform Programme

Government support, backing and endorsement for WMCA delivering the Housing & Land Delivery Board's Public Land Charter, including a bold approach to tackling fragmented land ownership; the region by default having a major say over any HMG land disposals in our region; and a regional testbed for a new approach to best value and more effective regime for disposal of public land sites.

What We Hope to Achieve

These proposals will unlock placemaking, regeneration and investment through high quality commercial, mixed-use and housing schemes.

This will result in more affordable, better designed and more efficient homes, integrated into inclusive and well-connected development and regeneration schemes. This in turn will benefit the region, by:

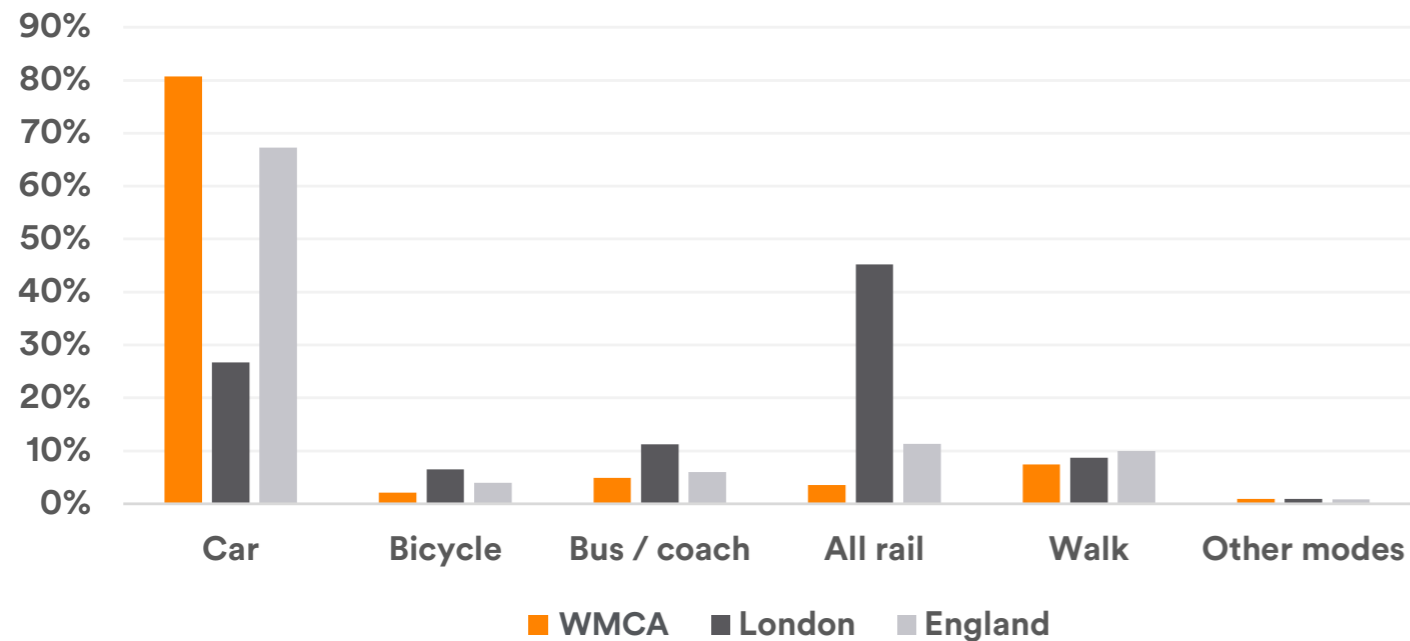
- Boosting productivity and living standards by growing the private sector, especially in those places where they are lagging;
- Spreading opportunities and improving public services, especially in those areas where they are weakest;
- Restoring a sense of community, local pride and belonging, especially in those places where they have been lost;
- Empowering local leaders and communities, especially in those places lacking local agency.



Transport



Method of Travel - 2019



The Challenge

Across the ten combined authority areas, the WMCA had the second highest rates for car or motorbike use, as well as the second lowest public transport use and active travel. Similarly, the percentage of the West Midlands population able to access three strategic centres in 45 minutes, by public transport, during morning peak times, continues to fall.

The West Midlands needs to reverse these trends and create a sustainable urban transport system for the future, with a high quality integrated public transport network and attractive conditions for walking and cycling. Such a system will tackle the challenges of today – including economic growth, public health issues, and climate change.

The Prize

The Levelling Up White Paper pledges to deliver London-style transport across the UK. West Midlands transport links will be “significantly closer to the standards of London”, with improved services, simpler fares, and integrated ticketing by 2030. Other transport measures will also support our wider LTP5 sustainable transport strategy.

Our proposals will ensure the region is better connected in a sustainable, safe, and inclusive way that delivers value for money for the taxpayer – whilst also tackling the climate emergency.

Progress So Far...

The devolution process has improved collaboration over planning and operating an integrated transport system, including the statutory duty to adopt the Local Transport Plan. Achievements to date include delivery of the West Midlands Cycle Hire Scheme, upgraded railways stations, the delivery of the expansion of the West Midlands Metro light rail system and a new cross city Sprint Bus Rapid Transit routes.

The WMCA also secured £1.05 billion in funding as part of the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) programme in 2022. This will build on WMCA’s long track record of partnership working, successful delivery, and innovative solutions for transport investments. There has also been positive progress for active travel with new, high quality segregated cycle routes and delivery of the West Midlands Cycle Hire Scheme.

Levelling Up Mission

3

By 2030, local public transport connectivity across the country will be significantly closer to the standards of London, with improved services, simpler fares and integrated ticketing.



Our Proposal

- We want to accelerate the delivery of transport services and infrastructure to improve accessibility and affordability – we can achieve this by designating the WMCA as the UK’s first Trailblazer Transport Regulatory Sandbox area.
- Working in partnership with government and our local authorities, we would seek to improve traffic flows and access through traffic officers, build on micro-mobility solutions, and establish a bus operating company to reduce costs. This will build on WMCA’s long track record of partnership working, successful delivery, and innovative solutions for transport investments such as Very Light Rail (VLR).
- We’ll decarbonise and electrify our transport infrastructure – this could be supported by devolving the commercial Bus Services Operator Grant (BSOG) funding directly to WMCA and reducing freight vehicle emissions.
- A programme to change behaviours to reduce traffic and create safer streets to walk and wheel – we propose creating mobility credits to incentivise public transport use, sharing revenue of speed camera fines (DD) and powers over pavement parking enforcement (DD).

What We Hope to Achieve

We have the chance to improve both affordability and accessibility of the public transport network for all West Midlands residents, particularly helping those who are struggling with travel costs to access work opportunities. Travel behaviour changes will also support our sustainable development aims.

By decarbonising and electrifying our transport infrastructure, we can deliver a green revolution which helps to tackle the climate emergency and improve air quality.

These outcomes will be measured against the below WM Outcomes Framework indicators:

- Proportion of WM population within 15 minutes of key services/amenities centres accessible without a car;
- Percentage of WM population able to access 3 strategic centres in 45 minutes by public transport in the AM peak;
- Reduction in carbon dioxide emissions (tCO₂e);
- Reduction in overall vehicle km travelled;
- Increase in non-car mode share by km travelled and by trips.

Skills



The Challenge

To realise successful post-pandemic growth the region needs to address key labour market challenges:

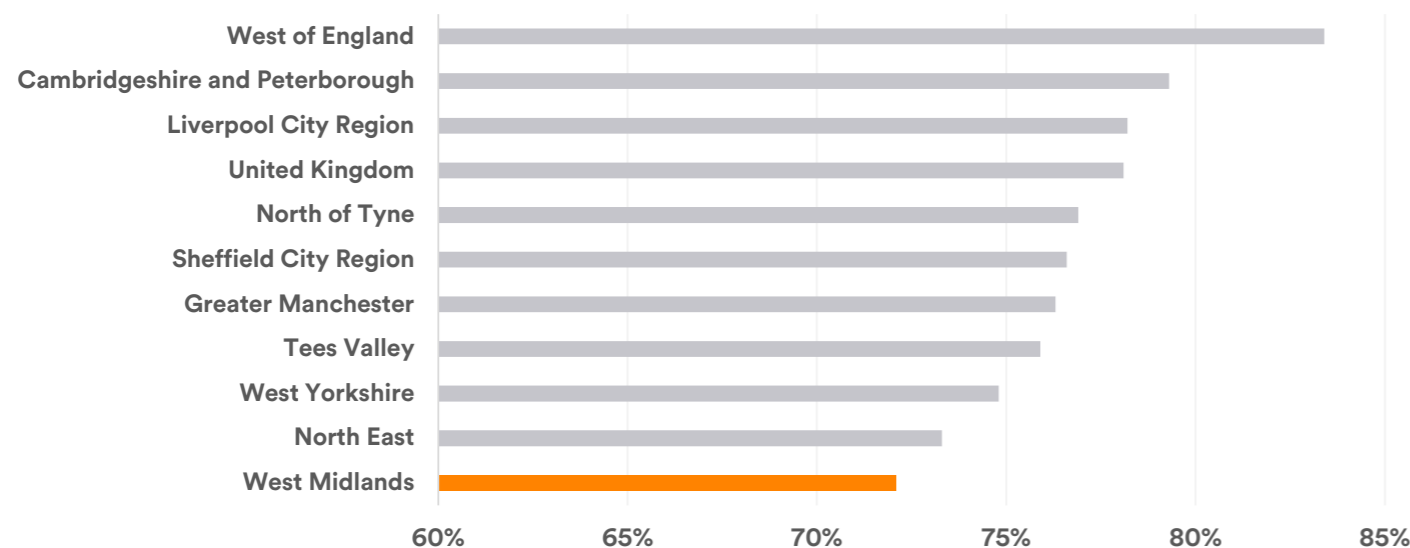
- High unemployment and growing in-work poverty in some parts of the region;
- Low skill levels in the population, with fewer people qualified to Level 4+, and more people with no qualifications, compared to other areas;
- 83% of residents in the combined authority area are qualified to Level 1 (vs 88% UK), 72% to Level 2 (vs 78% UK) and 54% to Level 3 (vs 61% UK);
- Around 1 in 4 vacancies in the region are classed as ‘hard to fill’, particularly in roles that require advanced and/or higher skills;
- Uneven development and attainment by young people through early years, primary, secondary, tertiary education and training; The West Midlands has some significant concentrations of residents who are unemployed, for example in Birmingham the rate is 11.4%, inactive or in low paid work and on benefits (125,505 in-work Universal Credit claimants).

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The Prize

A co-ordinated regional approach to skills and employment will drive up productivity, skills and living standards in the West Midlands. We’ll look to adopt a demand-led strategy with a comprehensive view of what is needed for both high-growth clusters and for the foundational economy.

At a regional level, we can encourage change while minimising the risk of narrowly-focused sector plans. We’ll still enable a place-based approach to deliver a differentiated service that targets those who need support most — integrated data to support this work would be more cost-effective and support better outcomes for young people.



Percentage of Working-Age Residents with NVQ2+ qualifications, UK-wide and Across the Combined Authorities in 2021:

Levelling Up Mission

6

By 2030, the number of people successfully completing high-quality skills training will have significantly increased in every area of the UK. In England, this will lead to 200,000 more people successfully completing high quality-skills training annually, driven by 80,000 more people completing courses in the lowest skilled areas.

Progress So Far...

We’re keen to build on the success of previous devolution and our Skills Deal, to maximise our economic potential through improving productivity and aligning the regional skills offer to regional needs.

Our ability to use devolved funds has helped us focus on tackling key local needs:

- 33% increase in provision aligned to local priorities, including 66% increase in new digital courses;
- Over 2,500 digital skills enrolments at Level 3 through AEB and bootcamps;
- £7.3m spent on construction training, compared with £4.8m pre-devolution;
- 6% increase in those qualified to NVQ Level 3+ since 2018, rising from 49% to 55%;
- 8x increase in business and professional learners at level 3 since devolution, rising from 150 pre-devolution to 1,150 in 2020/21.

Our Proposal

We’ve been hampered by a lack of local engagement from the National Career Service (NCS), meaning, in particular, our young people not in education or work have suffered from a lack of support.

Across the CA area, the proportion of young people who are not in education, employment, or training (NEET) is higher than the UK average, for example, in Wolverhampton the youth claimant count is double the national average. At present, no single organisation is accountable for 16 to 24-year-olds NEET.

Therefore, we propose an integrated skills and employment system composed of:

- 1 Leadership of an enhanced Local Skills Improvement Plan, providing greater responsibility for technical and vocational training in the region to create a clear and integrated offer for employers and learners that will drive up higher-level skills.
- 2 Devolution of careers and establishment of a post-16 data hub to better support those young people and adults who are most vulnerable to labour market change, to navigate a more integrated skills offer, and access high value labour market opportunities.
- 3 Co-commissioning Employment Support, meaning programmes respond quickly and effectively to local labour market challenges and better meet the needs of residents, businesses, and the West Midlands economy.

What We Hope to Achieve

- An increase in the percentage of those aged 16-18 in sustained education, apprenticeships or employment;
- A decrease in the percentage of residents aged 25-39 years old whose highest qualifications are NVQ2 and below;
- Increased number of apprenticeship starts;
- Increased percentage of young people achieving GCSEs in English and Maths by age 19;
- Increased graduate retention;
- Narrowing of the gap between areas of high and low unemployment.

Retrofit



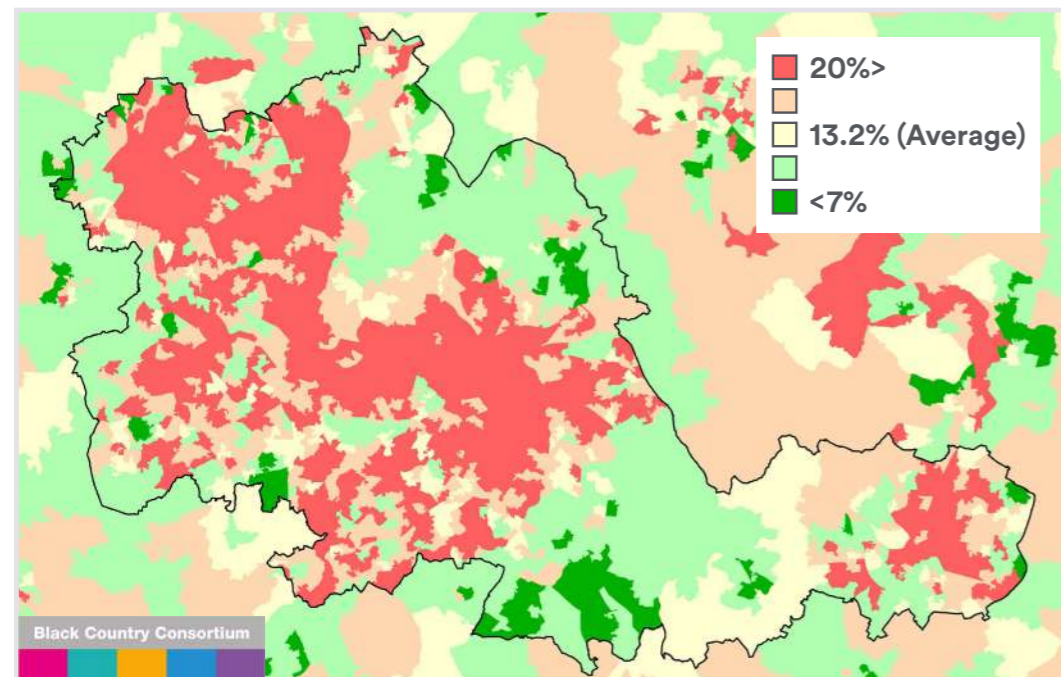
The Challenge

There are an estimated 235,512 fuel poor homes in the West Midlands — the highest rate of fuel poverty in any English region at 17.5%, with some areas experiencing much higher rates of over 40%.

Over half of neighbourhoods in the West Midlands are in the bottom 20% when it comes to fuel poverty, nearly three times the national average in terms of fuel poverty. The recent Energy Price Cap to address current fuel price rises provides some short-term support but means energy efficiency is critical to managing public expenditure.

Cold homes can affect or exacerbate a range of health problems including respiratory and circulatory problems and increase the risk of poor mental health. It's estimated that 10% of excess winter deaths are directly attributable to fuel poverty, and a fifth of excess winter deaths are attributable to the coldest quarter of homes. Cold homes can also affect wider issues, such as educational performance among children and young people, as well as work absences.

Fuel Poverty (2020) by LSOA compared to England average (13.2%)



Beyond this, to hit our targets within the West Midlands Net Zero Five Year Plan, we'll need to retrofit 292,000 homes by 2026 to stay on course for net zero and over one million retrofitted homes by 2041.

The Prize

Retrofitting the region's 1.2 million homes to net zero is estimated to require £24.4bn, but will create huge economic benefits. Improving the energy performance of the region's housing stock through retrofit will reduce carbon emissions by 4,182 ktCO₂, reduce fuel poverty and improve the physical and mental health of those that currently live in cold homes.

Crucially, it will also create skilled jobs and kickstart the investment needed to help the sector grow and innovate, as well as dramatically reduce carbon emissions and increase the UK's energy independence.

Levelling Up Mission

There is no government Levelling Up Mission on Net Zero or Retrofit, but we expect our retrofit programme to contribute indirectly to both the Health and Wellbeing missions, as well as Pride in Place, and assist the government in achieving its legal net zero target.

Progress So Far...

The WMCA and its partner local authorities are already ramping up retrofit activity through government funded programmes including Sustainable Warmth Competition (SWC), Local Authority Delivery (LAD) and the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF). We've also used self-funded initiatives such as WMCA's Net Zero Neighbourhoods programme and Birmingham City Council's whole house retrofit demonstrators. Through our SMART Hub team, we've invested in detailed modelling for every home in the WMCA area, which is available for all partners to use to help prioritise investment and support decision making. Our three biggest cities have also set out their desire to scale up the retrofit of their social housing stock through the Three Cities initiative.

Our Proposal

- Allocate the West Midlands fair share of the remaining to the region from the remaining HUG and SHDF streams (£1.6bn) for on-the-ground retrofit delivery;
- Increase flexibility within the eligibility criteria of these funds and ring-fence proportions for innovation, engagement, and digitisation;
- Provide funding (over 3 years) to build capacity in LAs – retrofit officers, and housing enforcement officers, including support for 3 Cities Initiative;
- Strengthen WMCA's role with ECO suppliers including greater control over the region's fair share of ECO funding (approximately £298.3m over four years);
- Commit to a longer-term collaboration between BEIS and WMCA, including development of long-term block-funding for retrofit to the region;
- Invest funding in a range of retrofit innovation programmes;
- Offer funding in loan guarantees to support the creation of a £15m loan fund to be made available to businesses to develop retrofit services.



What We Hope to Achieve

Based on an assessment of our own housing stock retrofit needs, and an in-depth analysis of the economic benefits of retrofit, we expect our retrofit programmes can deliver:

- Directly funded retrofits in 140,000 homes over a 10-year period;
- Stimulate an additional £1bn investment in retrofit from public and private sector finance;
- Support market activity to partial or whole house retrofit of 240,000 additional homes
- Reduce carbon emissions by 1,338 ktCO₂/year;
- Generate annual fuel bill savings of £91m;
- Support creation of around 6,000 long-term jobs (though the eventual number of regional retrofit jobs created could be as much as five times greater);
- Generate £3.20 per £1 spent on retrofit through increased GDP (£10.8bn in total);
- Generate £1.25 in tax revenue for every £1 of government investment (£1.75bn in total).

Source: Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy – Sub-regional fuel poverty 2020, released April 2022

Special Feature: Levelling Up Investment Zones

What is it?

This new approach aims to transform parts of the West Midlands that urgently need more investment in housing, transport, digital, and energy infrastructure, but they also need improved skills, public services, and cultural activities.

They are defined areas which combine the best of existing national policy on Freeports and Enterprise Zones with local accountability, collaboration, and innovation.

Crucially, they are designed to unlock private investment alongside public funding to bring regeneration to those parts of the region that need levelling up more than others and improve accessibility through better co-ordination of transport and land use. We are already proving our ability to deliver such co-ordinated interventions through the CRSTS programme.

Key Features

- An agreed business plan and masterplan of development and regeneration to deliver significant additional homes, jobs and floorspace and wider levelling up objectives over 25 - 30 years, along a major transport corridor or similar clearly defined area.
- Self-financing and income generation through 100% business rates growth retention, long-term investment in public land as equity, and a Revolving Property Fund model which would capture a share of land value increases and profits.
- A focus on attracting substantial new private sector investment taking advantage of appetite for environmental, social, and governance investments.
- A supportive and business-minded planning environment that accelerates decision making, unlocks barriers, and provides investor certainty.
- Seeking major strategic partners for the whole corridor, rather than site-by-site investments, to provide scale for investors and long-term commitment to delivery of placemaking objectives.
- Providing incentives to accelerate delivery and provide certainty for investors, for example Development Consent Orders, rate reliefs, build out agreements, commitments to future public transport and enabling infrastructure.
- A strong governance model to give private sector partners and Whitehall clarity, certainty and confidence in the vision and decision-making.

Our Proposal

There has already been significant enthusiasm from government for this concept, and we're working closely with them on how it might be implemented. However, there are several commitments we're seeking from government to unlock the full extent of the proposals. These include:

- Committing to Business rates retention for Zones for 25 - 30 years;
- Piloting Stamp Duty Land Tax retention for new homes built in Zones;
- Piloting land investment from HMG agencies and Departments in Zones to demonstrate cross-sector commitment to partnership and innovation;
- Granting additional powers to the WMCA to unlock barriers to delivery, for example on CPO compensation;
- Grant WMCA flexibilities over how to use existing grant funds in zones, maximising investment opportunities and exploring options for new models;
- A whole-place approach to public services, with an initial focus on employment and skills to drive economic growth.

Where would Levelling Up Investment Zones be?

We are seeking to pilot Levelling Up Investment Zones in defined areas which were identified in our 2022 Investment Prospectus. These would include:

- Wednesbury to Brierley Hill: maximising opportunities unlocked by the Metro;
- East Birmingham / North Solihull: focused on improving transport links, driving regeneration, and tackling deprivation;
- UK Central: making the most of the nationally significant opportunities around HS2, the motorway network and Birmingham Airport;
- We are co-developing proposals for a number of other areas: Walsall to Wolverhampton including the Green Innovation Corridor; M54 Corridor (Telford-Shropshire); and the South Coventry / Warwick Innovation Corridor.





The Challenge

Birmingham and Solihull are two of the UK's key growth centres, but are also home to communities experiencing some of the highest levels of deprivation and exclusion. Some of the key challenges residents face are:

- 72% of wards in East Birmingham and North Solihull (EBNS) are in the top 10% in England for deprivation;
- 55% of Birmingham's most deprived wards are in East Birmingham, the highest concentration of deprivation outside London;
- There is a decade of difference between the life expectancy of the poorest areas of East Birmingham and the most affluent areas;
- Average household income is more than 30% lower in North Solihull than the rest of Solihull;
- 35% of East Birmingham residents are economically inactive against 23% nationally;
- East Birmingham has some of the country's highest unemployment – two East Birmingham constituencies comprise nearly 1% of the total UK claimant count;
- Unemployment is consistently high in North Solihull across generations;
- Transport connectivity is poor, with some young people facing a 2-hour journey to college by public transport;
- Much of the existing housing stock is poor quality and have low energy efficiency ratings;
- Fuel poverty in East Birmingham is among the highest in the country;
- Access to high quality green space is limited.

The Prize

If communities have good transport connections, the right skills, and early years and childcare (to reduce maternal unemployment), the major employment sites can offer large numbers of locally accessible jobs.

Transport connections will increase business growth, and at the same time, investing in public services, green spaces, and improving housing quality and sustainability will improve citizen outcomes and increase pride in place.

We also have an opportunity to invest in community infrastructure to improve multi-disciplinary teams working across health and social care.

Progress So Far...

Birmingham City Council and Solihull Council have already made significant strides towards levelling up in EBNS, on which the Trailblazer Devolution Deal would build. This includes:

East Birmingham

- Birmingham has published a leading Levelling Up Strategy and East Birmingham Inclusive Growth Strategy, setting out five 'Levelling Up Accelerators';
- Programmes are supporting the strategies including on health and wellbeing, skills, early intervention, early years, business support, housing, and transport;
- A youth employment support service with training and mentoring for school leavers;
- The Tyseley Energy Park in East Birmingham is delivering solutions for low and zero carbon transport infrastructure and power, heat, waste, and recycling.

North Solihull

- Solihull's 2022 Council Plan refresh prioritised investment to tackle inequalities in North Solihull, along with an inclusive growth outcomes framework to target future interventions;
- All primary schools in North Solihull have been rebuilt or extensively refurbished.;
- There's outline planning application for Kingshurst Village Centre following previous schemes at Chelmond's Cross and Smith's Wood;
- The regeneration focuses on buildings and infrastructure as well as the community hub and services;
- There are also developing plans to regenerate Chelmsley Wood town centre.

Our Proposal

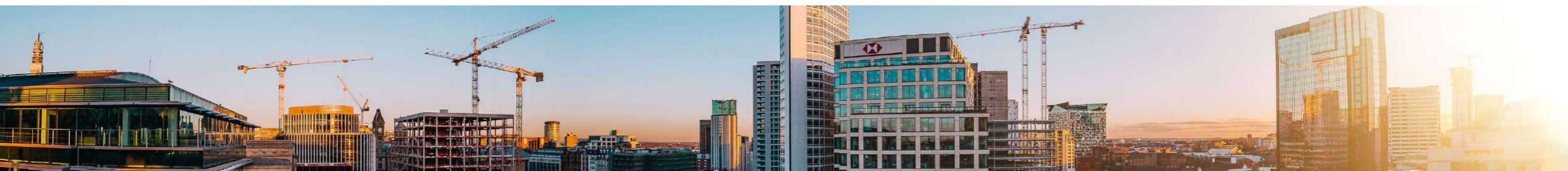
Devolving powers will enable EBNS, an area which faces some of the highest levels of deep-seated inequalities in the country, to benefit at pace and scale from levelling up.

To combat inequalities quickly we must learn from and build on past success, as well as avoid known pitfalls. We need to think about the area in its entirety, joining up services and intervention between providers and effective place-making.

The proposal for EBNS is a Levelling Up Investment Zone that joins up a single pot for delivery of infrastructure and physical development. We'll also adopt a whole place approach to integrated public services through multi-year and devolved funding, and pooled budgets.

Our public services proposal is to develop multi-year whole place funding and integration of service in EBNS as a pilot area. This would bring together multiple existing funding streams and pool them from across the public sector, and services would work to improve early intervention and prevention and reverse long-term trends.

Investment would be centred on Enterprise Zone measures and an innovative tax increment financing (TIF) mechanism that will support the necessary infrastructure investment across the area. We'd address the transport connectivity issues, harnessing the benefit of HS2 stations to make a transformational whole place impact.





Section B: Rebooting the Economy

Rebooting the Economy

Pre-pandemic, the West Midlands was the fastest growing regional economy outside London. However, to return to this position, we must address the underlying productivity challenges we face and create more higher-paid local jobs.

To do this, we need new powers to reboot economic growth.

We need a new model of consolidated, co-commissioned business support and, building on our Innovation Accelerator, we need to secure our fair share of public R&D investment.

We want to work closely with UKRI to unlock opportunities in health tech and growing low carbon technologies, and our Global West Midlands programme requires a new relationship and support from the Office for Investment.

Crucially, our 16,000 energy intensive SMEs require a unique approach to addressing escalating energy costs and making the low carbon transition.

The West Midlands economy has the potential to be the engine room of the UK's green industrial revolution.

“

A strong economic recovery is at the heart of levelling up where everyone contributes to, and benefits from, growth. Increasing jobs growth, investment and productivity will drive the wider social outcomes of the levelling up agenda and the Government's key missions.

West Midlands Regional Business Council

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Business Support & Innovation

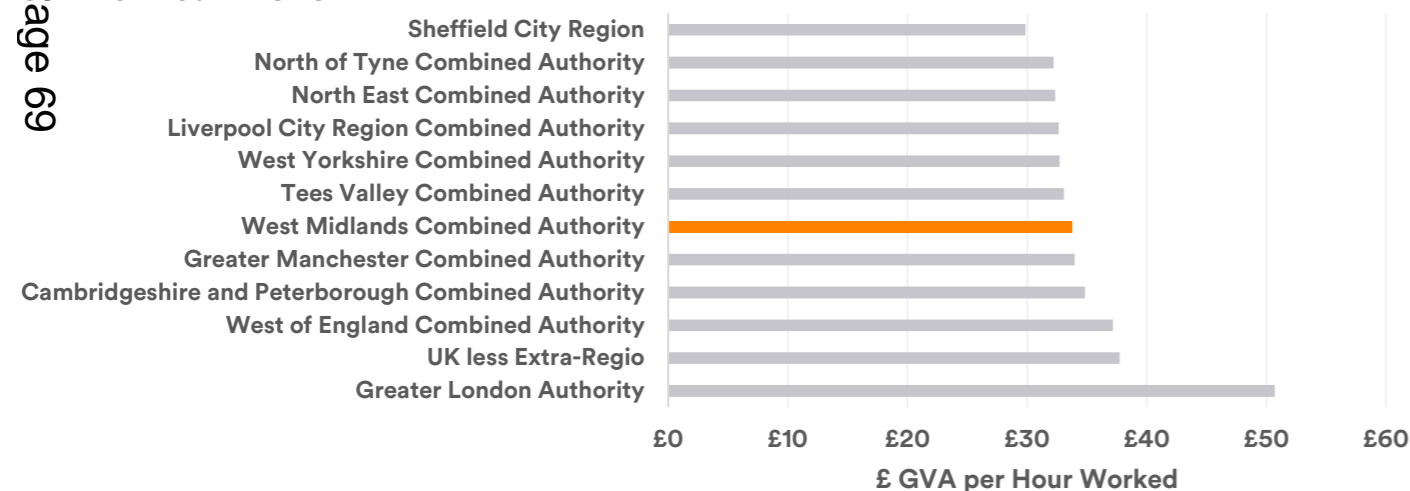


The Challenge

The West Midlands economy is at a critical point — before the Covid pandemic, we had forged a position as the fastest-growing region outside London and broke through the £100 billion economic output mark. The region's industrial mix and demography meant the West Midlands was hit particularly hard by the economic impact of the pandemic and new trade frictions with the EU.

Whilst the region's productivity levels are relatively strong in certain sectors, such as advanced manufacturing and automotive, it performs less well against the national UK average — 11% between authority areas within the region.

Page 69
GVA Per Hour - 2020



Progress So Far...

To ensure a quick return to growth, whilst building resilience, the West Midlands has developed a landmark new strategy — Plan for Growth. It seeks to accelerate and amplify growth to become the fastest growing region outside of London by 2030. This document provides the basis for the Trailblazer Devolution Deal proposals.

Overseen by the Economic Growth and Innovation Boards, the West Midlands is already delivering using existing powers and funding through:

The Prize

A new co-commissioned business support model will harness the region's economic potential, improve productivity and provide flexibility to adapt to an increasingly challenging economic environment by investing in tailored support to tackle barriers to innovation, enable diversification and access to new markets, and promote sustainability. In the Levelling Up White Paper, the Government announced the development of the West Midlands Innovation Accelerator, which will see around £33m invested in the region over the next three years. This initial investment, coupled with our proposals to ensure a proper legacy for the Innovation Accelerator, would give us the opportunity to boost economic growth and target and affect societal challenges in the West Midlands.

- UK Shared Prosperity Fund, using a proportion of the £88m for business support;
- Core Growth Hub offer;
- Regional business support programmes, such as West Midlands Made Smarter;
- Private sector-led cluster leadership, aligning with specialist regional capacity on trade, foreign direct investment, and innovation.

Work has also begun on developing the West Midlands Innovation Accelerator with ideation workshops having taken place and various expressions of interest received.

Levelling Up Mission

1

By 2030, pay, employment and productivity will have risen in every area of the UK, with each containing a globally competitive city, and the gap between the top performing and other areas closing.

Our Proposal

Business Support

We want to agree and co-commission with Government a joined-up approach to business support in the region. We will:

- Resource and align local targeting of key fund streams such as UKSPF, Growth Hubs, and business support resources including British Business Bank funding;
- Establish an integrated key account management service of the region's top 500 strategic businesses – building the work of the Midlands Engine Hub into cohesive regional structures;
- Increased access to, and alignment of, central Government insight and information to inform delivery (e.g. HMRC R&D tax credits).

Innovation

We want to use the capability and capacity from the West Midlands Innovation Accelerator to double the amount of public R&D investment in the West Midlands by 2030. This means:

- West Midlands maintaining a prioritised pipeline of R&D projects which are considered by UKRI, its Research Councils and other public innovation agencies when they develop their business plans;
- UKRI and its agencies like Catapults (including those based outside the region) capturing their place-based impact on the region's business base and communities.



What We Hope to Achieve

A more co-ordinated approach to business support would help increase economic growth and the number of jobs in transformational sectors, as well as productivity. We would also see a reduction in the number of jobs paid below living wage, in line with the metrics detailed in both the Levelling Up White Paper and the WM Outcomes Framework.

Increased public R&D investment would increase the leverage of private sector investment. As a result, we would see additional growth in areas that benefit from R&D, and more broadly, they would have the ability to address societal challenges in the West Midlands - including those relating to the environment, health, and wellbeing.



Global West Midlands (Trade & Investment)



The Challenge

As it stands, 55% of UK Foreign Direct Investment goes to London and the South East, and while FDI into the West Midlands has grown, it is not at the pace of these other areas.

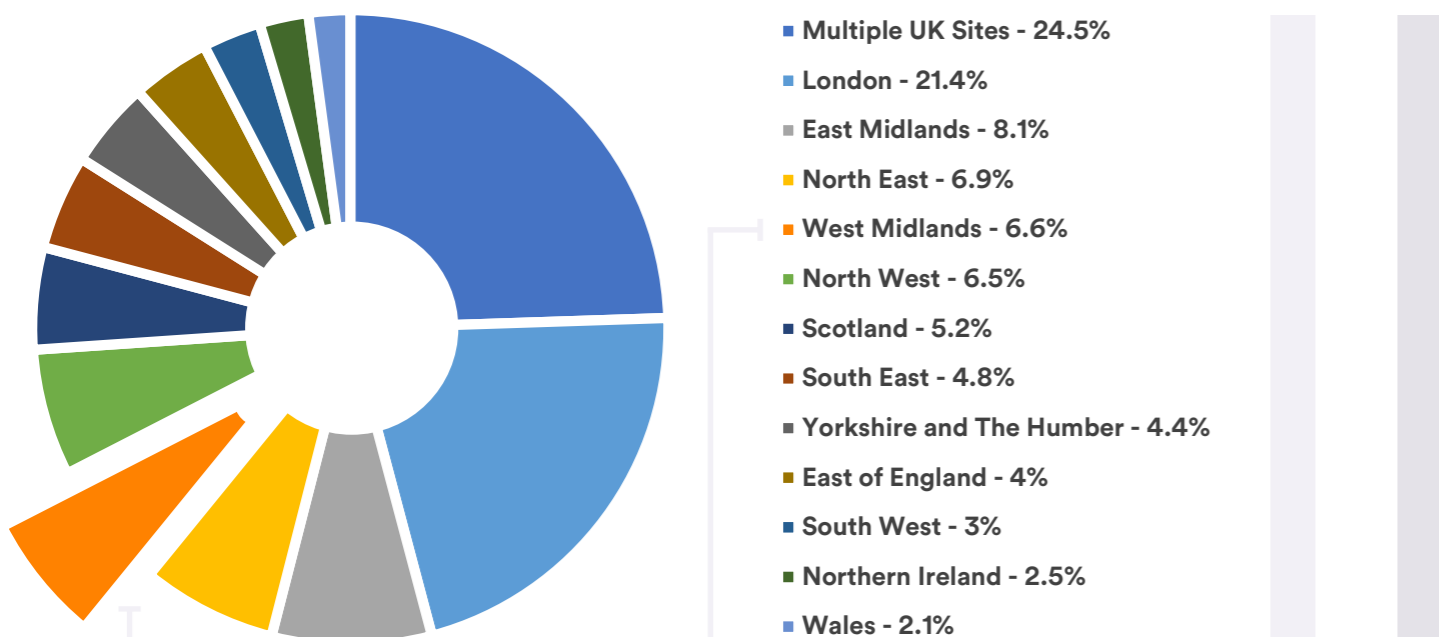
The West Midlands is also seriously compromised by the imbalance in funding between the English regions and the devolved nations – demonstrated by recent evidence that the Welsh Government is targeting WM companies to relocate.

Moreover, less than 30% of international leisure tourists are aware of the WM offer (compared to 75% for London and 50% for Manchester); less than half of investment intermediaries are aware of the WM offer compared to nearly all for London and almost 80% for Manchester.

The Prize

A 'Global West Midlands' programme that builds on the Business and Tourism Programme to give the region the mandate and funding required to punch its weight on the global stage. Communities and supply chains in the West Midlands will also benefit from Foreign Direct Investment into the region, from increased trade opportunities, and businesses in the visitor economy.

Share of UK FDI New Jobs - 2021/22



Progress So Far...

The Business and Tourism Programme (BATP) – designed and delivered in partnership between the West Midlands Combined Authority, the West Midlands Growth Company, the Department for International Trade (DIT), VisitBritain and the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) – is delivering the economic legacy of the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games.

This is an innovative approach to delivering tourism, trade, and investment, which has never been delivered elsewhere in the UK, and has developed the region's institutional capital significantly.

It's expected that the Business and Tourism Programme will have a GVA impact of £53m and have created over 1,000 new jobs.

Levelling Up Mission

1

By 2030, pay, employment and productivity will have risen in every area of the UK, with each containing a globally competitive city, and the gap between the top performing and other areas closing.

Our Proposal

We want to help the West Midlands recover and rebuild after the pandemic, creating more opportunities, better jobs and boosting living standards.

Our proposals will deliver a number of the government's specific objectives – notably, attracting and retaining inward investment, supporting UK businesses to take full advantage of trade opportunities, global marketing of UK regions as tourist destinations, winning more international business events, and extending the season and length of stay for both domestic and international visitors. To achieve this, we propose that:

- We co-design with Government a West Midlands Internationalisation Strategy to deliver regional and national priorities, with the West Midlands Growth Company formally recognised as the de facto lead agency for Trade and Investment across the West Midlands;
- The Department for International Trade to become a shareholder of the West Midlands Growth Company alongside the WMCA, 7 local authorities and 5 universities;
- We implement the recommendations of the De Bois Review into destination management organisations;
- We create a new regionally administered investment incentive fund drawn from the Global Britain Investment Fund;
- We deepen and formalise the relationship between the Office for Investment and West Midlands on capital investment outcomes;
- We secure additional investment for the internationalisation of the Plan for Growth.

What We Hope to Achieve

We want the region to be more competitive, relative to the devolved administrations and international competition. We'll do this through the allocation of incentive funding and the development of regionally targeted policies – such as sector/cluster focus programmes, supply chain growth and spatial regeneration priorities. Our proposals will:

- Increase GVA and jobs in transformational sectors, in line with the West Midlands Outcome Framework;
- Boost regional exports (# firms exporting and volume) and narrow the trade deficit;
- Increase GVA per hour and deliver economic growth across the region, providing financial support and expertise to potential exporters;
- Increase the visitor economy;
- Attract businesses to accelerate the net zero transition, increase innovation and productivity in science and technology, and help make the West Midlands be the best place to start and grow a business;
- Realise increased foreign direct investment in the region and growth in the number of projects and jobs landed.



Local Area Energy Planning



The Challenge

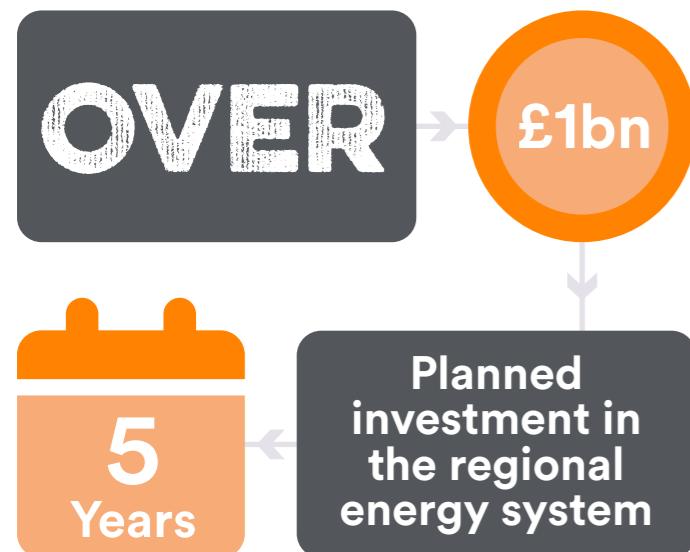
The UK is facing unprecedented energy challenges. The government has sought to address this through various initiatives, however, due to its geography the West Midlands is unlikely to gain substantially from any of these.

In addition, the West Midlands is also at risk of losing its manufacturing and industrial base to areas with direct access to sustainable energy sources – a situation perpetuated through the recent UK Energy Security Strategy where benefits will primarily accrue to coastal regions.

The Prize

The main benefit of enhanced energy security is the ability to build resilience against cost fluctuations, reduce fuel poverty, and reduce business vulnerability.

By having better informed and integrated investment and planning for new energy, we'll realise savings in energy, more efficient infrastructure roll-out, increased economic resilience and business opportunities, and support the net zero and decarbonisation agenda.



The West Midlands is the UK's leading region for comprehensive place-based energy planning and the development of a smarter, more effective and efficient energy market.

Progress So Far...

We've delivered on our commitments from the 2017 devolution deal — to explore and develop regional governance and policy mechanisms which complement national market regulation, while also accelerating local demand-led economic opportunities, supporting the commercialisation of energy systems, and unlocking clean energy investment opportunities.

With initial investment of £150,000 from Government, Energy Capital, a unique public-private partnership, has brought a further £50 million of value to the West Midlands region, and demonstrated the savings and value to be accrued from smart, place-based, energy systems.

One powerful example of the value of this evidence-based research is the PFER design project RESO (Regional Systems Energy Operator). This identified a net present value of approximately £720 million in savings over 30 years from taking a place-based approach to planning and operating the whole energy system. Additionally, there was a further £34 million of savings per year for its host locality, which in this case was the city of Coventry.

We have also established a Net Zero Infrastructure Delivery Panel to give confidence to Ofgem and providers when powers over zone designation, regulation derogation and infrastructure implementation are devolved to the region.

Levelling Up Mission

1

By 2030, pay, employment and productivity will have risen in every area of the UK, with each containing a globally competitive city, and the gap between the top performing and other areas closing.

Our Proposal

Building on our research and delivery experience, these proposals seek the devolution of powers and funds (£9.12 million over 5 years) to conduct Local Area Energy Plans. Through these plans, energy innovation zoning can be effectively trialled and implemented to meet the specific requirements, or levelling up opportunities, of an area.

By exploring a range of potential technologies and scenarios, when combined with powerful stakeholder engagement, a Local Area Energy Plan will identify the most cost-effective pathway and plan for achieving the energy system's net zero transition.

In order to unlock the power of local area energy planning we need:

- A duty on the Combined Authority to coordinate and raise funds to deliver Local Area Energy Plans and integrate their findings into strategic and spatial plans, alongside the opportunity to advise the FSO on its engagement with local partners;
- The ability for the Mayor, with local authority agreement, to designate specific EIZs, including zero carbon industrial zones, housing retrofit and heat zones, with appropriate, relevant and impactful regulatory flexibilities;
- Enhanced involvement in investment decision-making, including:
 - targeting DNO infrastructure investment to greatest need;
 - Triggering net zero re-openers;
 - Supporting place-based representation to Ofgem Code reviews;
 - Empowering public-private investment models for EIZ delivery;
 - Allocation of OZEV funding to enable rapid charging on the key route network.



What We Hope to Achieve

The WM RESO project (West Midlands Regional Energy Systems Operator) has already demonstrated the scale of savings and financial return to be accrued from place-based energy infrastructure planning and more effective energy market. It will also result in key outcomes including:

- Reducing carbon emissions;
- Increasing renewable energy opportunities;
- Increasing economic activity and GVA in key sectors.

Industrial Decarbonisation



The Challenge

The West Midlands is home to more established mid-sized manufacturing businesses than any other UK region. Our 16,000 energy-exposed companies are the bedrock of the regional economy and critical to national supply chains, employing almost 300,000 people and contributing £22bn in GVA a year.

The combination of the global energy crisis and the transition to net zero threatens not only their existence, but that of many strategic national supply chains in which they form critical links. These businesses are the engines of national economic growth, but they are extremely difficult to replace once lost, and are now being driven offshore.

Our challenge is to support these businesses through an industrial transition so they can continue to support economic growth while reconfiguring and relocating within the UK, protecting jobs and GVA not only in the West Midlands, but across the UK.

The Prize

We will transform the traditional manufacturing base of our region into a modern, creative advanced manufacturing economy, retaining skilled jobs in the region and country, and supporting accelerated economic growth, at least 20,000 new jobs, and delivery of an additional £16 billion of GVA.

Established and strategic energy-intensive businesses which are no longer viable in a zero-carbon, energy-constrained region will be retained for the UK through targeted regeneration and relocation initiatives, reducing carbon emissions and avoiding further leakage of jobs and wealth to competing national economies.

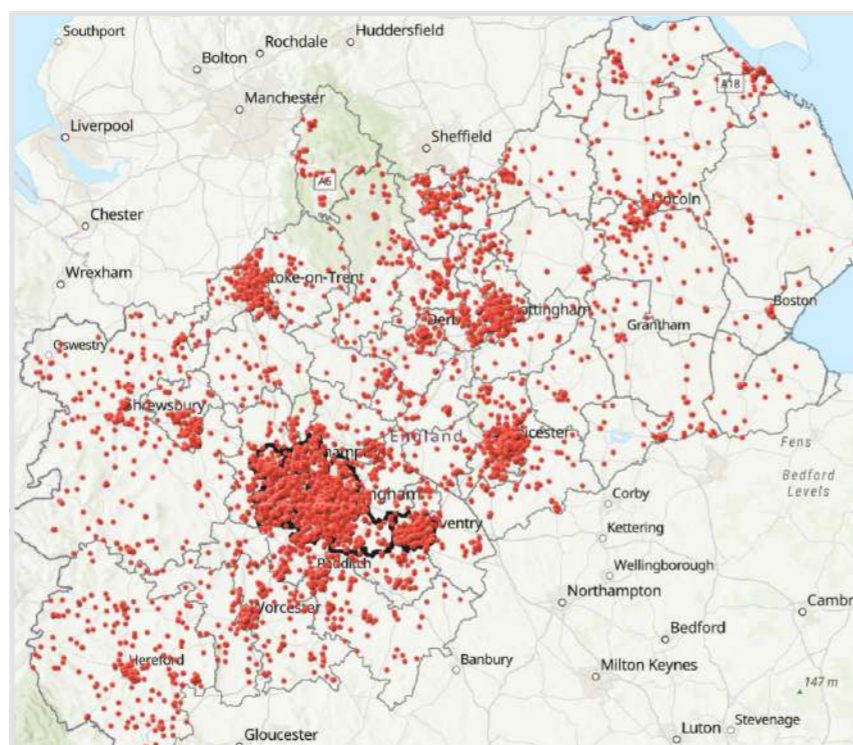
Progress So Far...

The Repowering the Black Country programme brings together representatives from over 3000 energy-exposed companies and is working as part of the national industrial decarbonisation programme, focusing on dispersed sites.

The partnership has identified measures that companies could realistically adopt to reduce their energy reliance and increase their energy resilience. The findings from this have underpinned these proposals – ensuring they are relevant, impactful, and deliverable. They also clearly demonstrated the extensive economic impacts that the region faces if these challenges are not addressed.

The Mayor of the West Midlands has also established an Industrial Energy Taskforce, bringing multiple stakeholders to identify and scope new initiatives that might further contribute to the industrial decarbonisation agenda.

Source: Black Country Consortium



Energy Intensive Companies Across the WMCA

● Energy Intensive Companies

Levelling Up Mission

1

By 2030, pay, employment and productivity will have risen in every area of the UK, with each containing a globally competitive city, and the gap between the top performing and other areas closing.

Our Proposal

- Devolve control over £30m of energy efficiency funding support for industry to the region, to enable more effective and efficient targeting.
- Establish a new West Midlands Industrial Transition Company in partnership with strategic manufacturers to take forward the recommendations of the Mayor's Industrial Energy Taskforce and Repowering the Black Country across the whole region.
- Give the Mayor and WMCA the power to designate and manage Zero Carbon Industrial Hubs to offer attractive environments and infrastructure for modern clean manufacturing and inward investors.

What We Hope to Achieve

Boosting The Economy

As well as reducing energy costs and helping businesses transition, we want to release brownfield land for housing, so a combination of hubs and support programmes for businesses to move to locations is key. Industrial hubs will include business models and special vehicles offering local authorities opportunities to participate and secure revenue streams.

Delivery mechanisms will be local authority led, and only supported by regional capacity or resources where this makes economic sense. At least eight potential hubs across the region are already under development (six in the Black Country). The aim is for this to be a pilot scheme which can be rolled out nationally, creating a model for industrial decarbonisation suitable for inland industrial regions and SMEs.

“

West Midlands' industry is an unique national asset, and spiralling energy costs and the imperative to transition to net zero mean we need to accelerate our drive for economic renaissance across the region.

Matthew Rhodes, Chair, West Midlands Industrial Energy Taskforce

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Digital Infrastructure: Regional Fibre Broadband Backbone



The Challenge

In the modern era, reliable broadband is arguably one of the most important utilities available — without it, growth and productivity across the whole region would suffer. It allows greater access to education and employment opportunities for the public, as well as allowing businesses to connect with the world and increase productivity.

At present, the region's full fibre coverage is inconsistent and sporadic, ranging from 85% coverage in Coventry, well over the average for England of 31%, to 18% in Wolverhampton*.

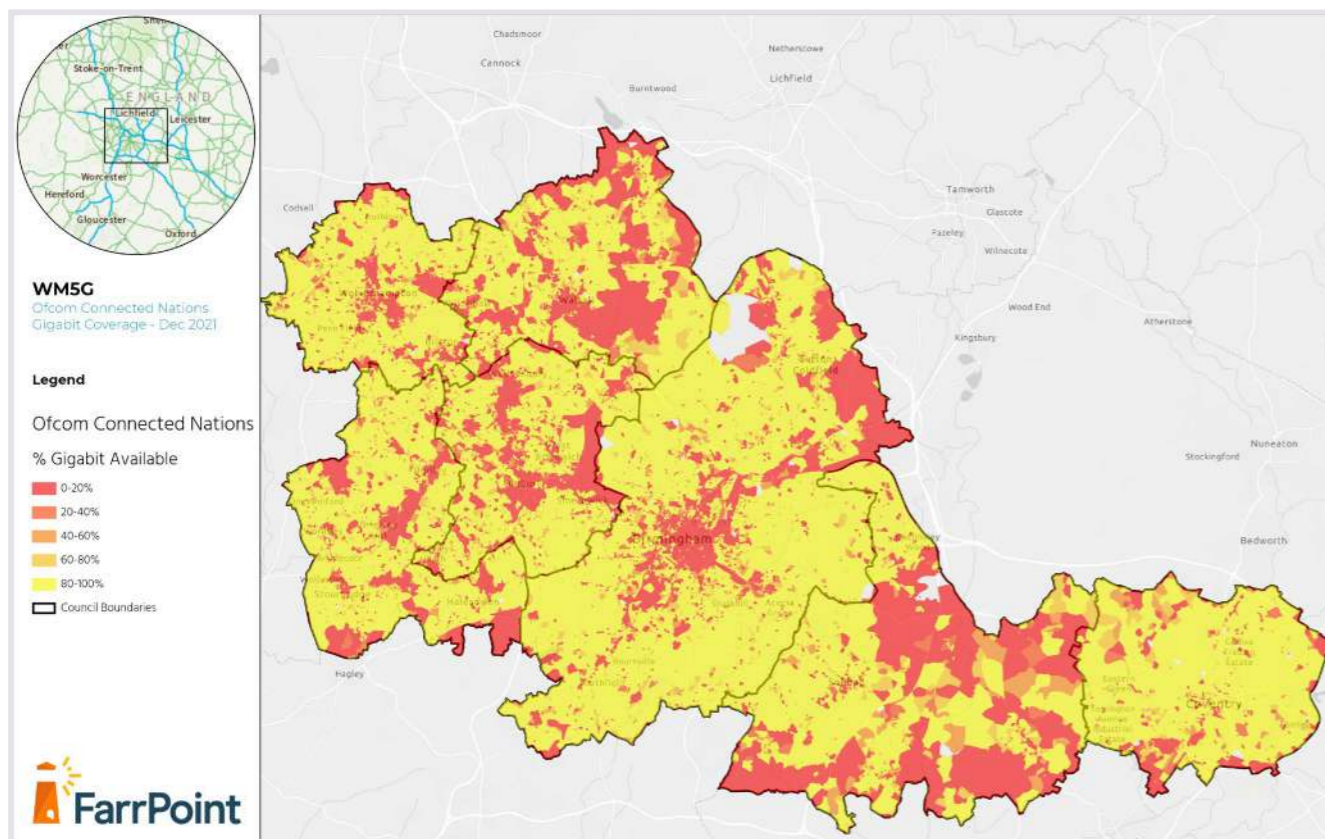
Data from Ofcom (see map below) shows that the majority of key strategic sites are located in areas with little or no Gigabit-capable infrastructure. Market feedback also suggests that the current future deployment plans are unlikely to address these sites, meaning that there is significant untapped potential within the region.

The Prize

A national report by Openreach states that, for fibre, £59 billion of value is estimated to be gained across the UK by 2025, increasing to over £70 billion by 2038.

With most businesses needing access to broadband and an increase in remote working following the Covid-19 pandemic, full fibre coverage needs to be broader and more evenly distributed across the region to allow all to benefit from the higher growth and productivity it brings.

Access to reliable broadband would help bridge the digital divide, enabling those living in deprivation access to online public services including healthcare, DWP services as well as education, skills and employment resources. Our proposals would increase full fibre coverage to a further 30,000 commercial premises and around 65,000 residential homes. This in turn would complement our regional pledge to deliver digital skills and digital adoption business support initiatives.



Levelling Up Mission

4

By 2030, the UK will have nationwide gigabit-capable broadband and 4G coverage, with 5G coverage for the majority of the population.

Progress So Far...

WM5G have proven the ability to accelerate the deployment of 5G across the West Midlands by 6 - 12 months, and with the right level of investment and enablers they can do the same for fibre connectivity. WM5G has delivered 40 trials demonstrating the benefit of 5G in the West Midlands.

Where local authorities invest in Digital Champions, Digital Co-ordinators, and Digital Ambassadors, it's clear that the level of connectivity is improved. This is due to greater engagement with the telecoms industry, and the ability to identify and access public and private funding to support digital infrastructure.

Another area of successful intervention is where 'Barrier Busting' activity is undertaken. Local authorities can directly intervene utilising their Digital Co-ordinator, but where it has been most successful is when industry experts have been utilised to work with both industry and local authorities, acting as a broker to improve relationships, education, to introduce aspects of standardisation, and to intervene when blockages occur.



Our Proposal

- WMCA to address existing gaps directly and quickly in 'Full Fibre to the Premises' connectivity for the key strategic sites across the West Midlands.
- We'll do this by procuring connectivity for these sites as quickly as possible by laying down 128.7 km of new duct / fibre.
- The easiest way for this to happen would be for Project Gigabit to reprioritise its investments at the next Open Market Review.
- The majority of funding would then come from the market as the network will pass within 250 metres of around 30,000 commercial premises and around 65,000 residential homes.
- We need to set up a Central Co-ordination Body to work with the market e.g., operators. It does not involve the Combined Authority directly investing in a fibre network, but assumes a body is set up (and incurs operating costs) to work with the market to identify coverage gaps and opportunities, and provides a "one-stop" shop of advice to help providers.

What We Hope to Achieve

- Ensure that the number of premises in the region that have access to gigabit capable broadband remains above the national average.
- Accelerate the deployment of FFTP building on our track record of accelerating the delivery of 5G in the region by 6 months making the West Midlands the best-connected region for 5G.
- Deliver consistent FFTP coverage across the region distributing the opportunities that reliable broadband offers more evenly.

* Wolverhampton has recently benefited from grant funding of £4.9m from DCMS to raise its coverage from 3% to the current level of 18%, and is on track for further improvement.



Special Feature: WM Smart City Region

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In 2021 DCMS highlighted the West Midlands as having the country's fastest-growing tech sector ... The West Midlands Smart City Region Programme will scale-up digital opportunities across the region in health tech, future mobility and smart energy. It will drive new digital start-ups through practical business support and a supply of patient venture capital to attract global innovators. And it will deliver digital catch-up programmes so that everyone in the region can gain the skills and confidence to access the opportunities this will bring.

**From the Levelling Up White Paper
(Page 237)**

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The Challenge

The Covid pandemic has placed an unprecedented burden on public services widening pre-existing disparities between communities and stifling the West Midlands' economic growth.

Waiting times for life-critical diagnoses have been at an all-time high, with an aging population and growth in chronic illness. The shift to increased public transport has waned through nervousness around exposure to Covid, causing increased congestion and pollution. The energy market has become vulnerable to price fluctuations and supply resilience, at the same time as the region strives to become net zero by 2041.

The Prize

We want to catapult the West Midlands onto the global stage as a demonstrator region for radical 'smart' technology that genuinely meets the needs of its communities – levelling up access to services and life-enhancing opportunities. At the same time, we want to drive efficiencies in service delivery to reduce the burden on the public purse, as well as catalysing new business opportunities and economic growth.

Progress So Far...

The West Midlands is already the UK's largest testing ground for 5G deployment and technological innovation, which has led to huge advances in transport, health, and manufacturing.

Fourteen Transport Innovation Projects are being developed to support the regional transport network:

- On-board sensors will be able to scan for kerbside and built environment challenges for public transport and predict tram-track maintenance issues;
- Personal applications will enhance the passenger experience through enhanced capacity management and improving accessibility for the visually impaired.

The 5G test-bed has also started to provide direct support to regional businesses to ensure they have the capability to maximise the opportunities from 5G. Its Technical Mentoring Programme provides financial support for business development and a Vodafone-powered test-bed to trial new products.

Our Proposal

A 'Smart' approach will thoroughly and effectively connect multiple service delivery channels - using sensors, data, and connectivity to optimise, and then transform, supply and demand. This will be achieved through six approaches:

Smart Road and Rail Services

Installing connected sensors to the road and rail infrastructure to improve performance and flow, reduce congestion and pollution, and enable predictive maintenance programmes.

Passenger-focused, these approaches will enhance the customer experience and improve accessibility, establishing 'data highways' for real-time information and better-informed long-term infrastructure planning.

Smart Health and Social Care

Providing a network of sensors in care homes to enable remote monitoring and the deployment of 5G technology to underpin remote health diagnosis – a pillar of the Government's new approach to accessible health care.

Alongside this, establishing a demonstrator 'Smart Hospital' enabled with 5G digital and data technology, and an in-work employee programme to boost workplace wellbeing and productivity.

Smart Energy Simulator

Creating a digital twin to maximise the outputs of pioneering West Midlands' Energy Capital work in real-time energy planning and predictive planning.

Regional Fibre Backbone

Using existing infrastructure assets and sensor network deployment opportunities to roll-out full fibre broadband to disadvantaged communities.

Data Store and Exchange

Collating and enriching data generated through the sensors and applications for long-term service, place and infrastructure planning, with potential commercialisation opportunities.

Sketch to Scale Programme

Building on WM5G's 5PRING innovation programme, providing comprehensive support to tech companies to maximise the opportunities offered from the Smart City Region initiative.

What We Hope to Achieve

- Reduction in congestion and emissions and increased reliability and use of public transport;
- Reduction in cancer and diabetes deaths; reduce avoidable referrals by 10%; capacity savings estimated at £60 million pa;
- 25% savings through demand optimisation and reduce systems costs by £60 million pa, in turn reducing fuel poverty;
- Provide broadband to 14,000 businesses, reduce digital poverty, and increase GVA by 1%-2%;
- Enriched data for more efficient service and infrastructure planning;
- New business creation, enhanced inward investment attraction, and increased GVA and skills levels;
- Catalyse £66 million of private sector investment (return of 1.5x on an initial public sector investment of £45 million).



The Challenge

The City of Wolverhampton is going through a period of significant transformation with new investment, new opportunities and new challenges.

The industrial heritage of the city is an asset to the local economy, but it has left a legacy of brownfield sites that present redevelopment challenges. Delivering new housing and employment land remains a priority.

Wolverhampton has one of the highest unemployment rates in England, with Universal Credit claimant levels at 7.7%, above the 5% West Midlands average, and youth unemployment is particularly significant.

The local business base is majority SME businesses and micro-enterprises, which are struggling with longstanding productivity issues, limiting the potential for growth and job creation.

Finally, due to a multitude of factors, life expectancy for men and women in Wolverhampton is below the England average.

The Prize

The scale of development, location and investor interest in the city provides real opportunities to create and retain additional wealth and growth. At the same time it will support our net zero transition and maintain competitiveness in the well-established manufacturing and construction supply chain.

New jobs and growing sectors in professional services, creative and digital and low carbon and environmental tech will provide significantly higher levels of overall growth and higher wages.

We will continue to raise skill levels, increase the employment rate with more local people in jobs, and promote the growth and innovation of the business base to drive productivity and deliver improved outcomes for residents.

Wolverhampton has the right local conditions to activate catalytic investment that enhances regional economic activity in the short term and delivers transformational regeneration in the long term.

Progress So Far...

Wolverhampton is now working in partnership with DLUHC to deliver its framework for levelling up — Our City: Our Plan. Wolverhampton was one of two places first identified with strong local leadership and ambition, where investment can be maximised to catalyse economic transformation. Key progress as part of and beyond this includes:

- Improving education, skills and employment including delivering our state of the art City Learning Quarter in the heart of the city centre;
- Addressing health inequalities including a Levelling Up Fund Round 2 bid for the Bilston health and regeneration programme which integrates health, care and wellbeing in the redevelopment of one our most deprived communities;
- Ensuring a thriving economy, through development of a green innovation corridor to build on the city's position as the UK's national centre for sustainable construction (Levelling Up Fund Round 2 bid submitted for phase 1);
- A City Centre Regeneration Programme with 'ambitious Kings Cross-style regeneration projects' including aspirational, mixed-use city centre community living, alongside employment and leisure space;
- Capitalising upon being the proud home of the Department of Levelling Up, Communities and Housing.
- Supporting the University of Wolverhampton's £120 million development at Springfield by securing £14.9 million of funding for the world class National Brownfield Institute;
- Continued investment, including a completed phase 2 of the new train station and metro extension;
- This will support the development of the Wolverhampton to Walsall line, bringing total investment in the interchange area to £150 million;

- £25 million secured from Government's Towns Fund to transform the city centre, Bilston and Wednesfield.

Our Proposal

The proposals for deeper and increased devolution of powers and funding to the West Midlands will build on the work already being done to level up in Wolverhampton.

- Flexible powers and funding to invest in new and existing housing, commercial property, employment, and green space.
- This will enable wider regeneration and infrastructure improvements.
- Furthermore, coordinated retrofit investment and supply chain development will support the Three Cities retrofit programme which Wolverhampton is a part of.
- Regionally coordinated, locally delivered local area energy planning will support Wolverhampton in their data requirements for securing a heat network.
- Co-commissioned, locally tailored business support will focus on the significant productivity challenge facing businesses, further helping them to grow and thrive.
- Increased R&D investment via the Innovation Accelerator will also support Wolverhampton's green-tech innovation ambitions.
- Wolverhampton to Walsall Levelling Up Investment Zone, including the Green Innovation Corridor and linked double devolution of the Wolverhampton industrial decarbonisation hub (in master-planning).

Wolverhampton has been made a 'Levelling Up Place', one of 20 designated by Government to be part of a 'radical regeneration programme'.





Special Feature: The Role of Partnerships

The West Midlands Combined Authority is founded on 'partnership' — the seven metropolitan districts of the West Midlands collaborating to attract enhanced powers from central government to achieve better outcomes for the region.

In turn, the Combined Authority bridges between its partners in central government and its local authority colleagues, to ensure those powers are most effectively deployed.

It's also the foundation of government's proposed Trailblazer Devolution Deal approach — deepening devolution to maximise the collaborative partnerships at all levels of government and across an even wider set of actors.

Government

Through our Combined Authority Board, we're able to tackle the challenges and opportunities facing our diverse communities in the West Midlands. And our non-Constituent Authority partners provide invaluable input on cross-boundary issues, generating benefit across the wider region. This has underpinned rapid economic growth, an expanding transport network, and pioneering work to address social and cultural inequalities.

The way we've managed the development of our proposals has maximised those relationships. It's ensured that further devolution meets both government's levelling up missions, as well as the region's own strategic aims which have always sought to 'Level Up' — ensuring equality of opportunity, prosperity and wellbeing. By engaging with local government partners, both constituent and non-constituent authorities, our local MPs, and other government agencies, we have demonstrated to Whitehall officials and ministers that our proposals are relevant, deliverable, and supported.

Business

Our local businesses are crucial to the success of the region — economically, socially, and environmentally — and equally so to the success of our levelling up agenda. Whether it's through intermediaries, such as chambers of commerce and other membership organisations, or through structures established by the Mayor and Combined Authority, such as the Regional Business Council and Economic Impact Group, our business community has supported the development of our proposals.

This is not only important in ensuring the detail of the deal is informed by real-world economic pressures and opportunities, but it also establishes powerful routes for the delivery of projects and outcomes generated by the deal itself.

We'll struggle to deliver levelling up effectively if the region's economy is struggling, and employers can play such a big role in achieving the levelling up missions themselves — from workplace wellbeing to creating pride in place. This means our business community will continue to provide a powerful and crucial voice in our trailblazing deal.

“

As the Regional Business Council in the West Midlands, we are strongly supportive of the Government's levelling up agenda and trailblazing devolution deal approach — these will create tremendous opportunities it offers for our economy, businesses, and communities.

Liv Garfield, Chair of the WM Regional Business Council

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Innovation, Skills & Universities

Trailblazing should be lighting a path for others to follow — finding new ways to deliver against existing challenges and building a more positive future for the region. Our local schools and colleges have been vital partners of the region's success, consistently preparing our young people for the world and helping our adult learning community.

This has drawn attention of national government, with the West Midlands recognised for its ability to meet the targets of its wide-ranging skills programmes.

Although the West Midlands region has, effectively, already embarked on an agenda of levelling up for many years now — tackling disparities within the region and between the West Midlands and other regions — innovation will be a vital catalyst to the levelling up missions of government.

Our university partners have already been a key part of the region's success and will be integral to ensuring our devolution proposals can be delivered. Whether that's through the development of new technologies, the research to underpin the region's strategic thinking, or through inspiring the next generation of innovators to develop the solutions to regional, and indeed, global, challenges.

Conclusion

Levelling up can only be achieved through all our communities realising their potential and through genuine partnership: enabling every partner to bring their own influence, voice, powers and resources to bear in a shared endeavour.

Our devolution proposals seek to enhance those local and regional powers to ensure that each partner in that joint venture realises the benefits and outcomes for their respective communities.



The Challenge

Despite several key strengths in the Black Country, including a robust industrial base and emerging clean and green tech sector, there are longstanding challenges in the region. We have made good progress, however, the Black Country still features pockets of the highest deprivation in the UK.

There is a need for increased housing provision, which must reflect the area's need in terms of the right tenure mix and a range of housing type of all residents. Levelling up for the Black Country means tackling these issues with a holistic set of strategic interventions and investments that delivers for people, places, and businesses.

Key challenges include:

- Dudley has below average qualification levels, with particular issues at level 4;
- Sandwell's proportion of residents with no qualifications is double the national average, with deprivation found across the borough;
- Walsall has below average levels of employment, higher levels of unemployment and inactivity than the UK average, and one of the highest proportions of youth claimants;
- A large proportion of the workforce is employed by SMEs, many of which struggle with historical productivity issues, reducing the potential for growth and local job creation.



The Prize

Levelling up the Black Country has the potential to have an unprecedented impact at a local, regional, and national level. Armed with the right skills and qualifications, and with better transport and digital connectivity, local people can access new and existing higher paid jobs in the area. This would ensure a lasting local benefit to inward investment and business growth.

Configuring the Black Country's current industrial base to be lower carbon, more sustainable, and more inclusive will enable the local economy to compete globally and make an increasing contribution to the GVA of the West Midlands, and the wider UK.



Progress So Far...

The four local authorities in the Black Country and the Black Country LEP, health and education partners have already made significant progress towards levelling up, including:

- Dudley is undergoing huge regeneration activity both within the Town Centre and across the wider borough, building on the investment opportunities brought about by the Wednesbury to Brierley Hill Metro extension;
- Projects include the Black Country and Marches IOT, Very Light Rail Innovation Centre and the emerging University Campus at Castlehill;
- A new sixth-form college run by Eton College is also due to open in Dudley Town Centre in the next few years;
- Recently submitted Levelling Up Fund bids focus on further investment in education facilities across the borough as well as plans to provide much needed new residential accommodation;
- Sandwell are progressing several holistic schemes in the areas experiencing deprivation across the borough, including plans to provide new affordable housing in Tipton, new leisure facilities in Rowley Regis, land for new homes and schools in Smethwick and a new youth hub in West Bromwich East;
- Key focus in Walsall is town centre regeneration, breathing life into the economy through an ambitious programme for repurposing the high street, with step changes in the built environment, quality housing and cultural provision;
- There is also work to remediate significant employment sites to promote high value, well connected employment sites in the town;
- Walsall is also focusing on boosting educational attainment and qualification levels, having been named as one of the 55 Education Investment Areas across England.

Our Proposal

The series of devolution proposals that focus on the Black Country aim to bring investment in new resources, powers, and responsibilities to address the specific levelling up challenges of the Black Country.

- Going further and faster on housing, transport and skills will bring forward challenging sites for development, deliver key transport links such as the Wednesbury to Brierley Hill metro, and co-commission skills support to meet local needs;
- Providing funding to businesses will improve productivity and deliver new Industrial Decarbonisation Zones across the Black Country;
- These will be reinforced by the Net Zero proposals, which will provide funding and flexibility to retrofit homes and make the right changes in the energy system in the future;
- Productivity will also need to be boosted by development and provision of quality employment land;
- Following the Commonwealth Games, a cultural legacy fund and other cultural support will amplify the heritage assets, creative industries and grassroots cultural activities that exist in Black Country towns and cities, to create new jobs, attract tourism and increase pride in place.





Section C: Public Services & Pride In Place

Public Services & Pride In Place

We want our residents to feel proud of where they live and for them to be happy, healthy, well connected, and safe. We need to ensure that levelling up the West Midlands works towards this by going beyond those policy areas where we have seen devolution before, in our capacity as a trailblazer region. To drive change and create a more inclusive West Midlands we need new powers and funding to ensure that opportunities are available to all our residents. Our third set of Trailblazer Devolution Deal proposals are focused on the themes of:

- 1. Digital Inclusion**
- 2. Homelessness Prevention**
- 3. West Midlands Social Capital Resilience Fund**
- 4. Health**
- 5. Culture**
- 6. Crime, Community Safety and Resilience**
- 7. Climate Adaptation and the Natural Environment**

We want to reduce inequalities by helping residents get online through the provision of devices, data and digital skills so that they can access the opportunities that being digitally literate can unlock.

Building social capital and increasing opportunities for residents to engage in cultural activities locally will strengthen our local communities and build pride in place.

Our residents should feel safe and secure in their homes which is why we have proposals for new powers to help us prevent homelessness and enhance community safety as well as taking care of our natural environment.

Digital Inclusion



The Challenge

The West Midlands faces a huge challenge in providing as many residents and businesses as possible with access to reliable, quick broadband.

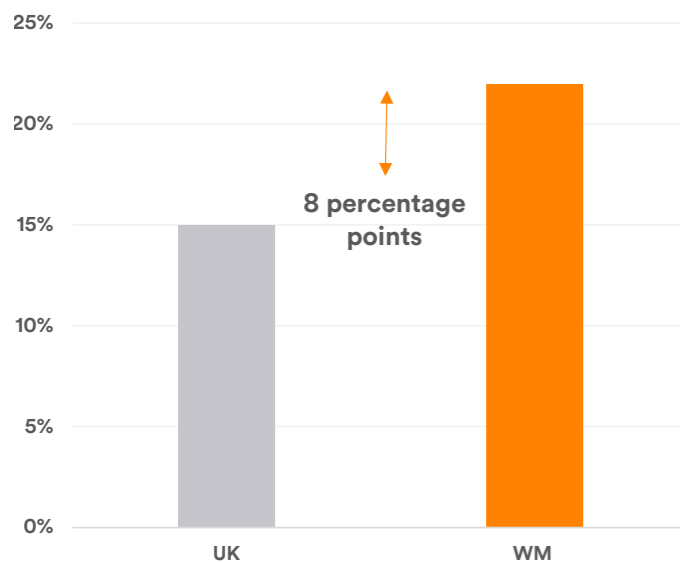
Nearly a quarter (22%) of West Midlands residents are 'non-users' who either do not use, or do not have access to the internet.

Another 23.3% are 'limited internet users', meaning nearly half of the West Midlands population have poor access to the internet.

The chart below shows that the proportion of non-users in the West Midlands (22%) is well above the UK average of 15%.

Over 526,000 people across WMCA 7 Met area have said that a lack of access to the internet limits their day-to-day activities — 158,000 of these live in one of the top 10% most deprived Lower-layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs).

Proportion of the population that are internet "non-users"



Internet access is not the only challenge facing the region — there is a digital skills shortage, with 56% of people saying they don't have the essential skills needed for work. That means that amongst UK regions, the West Midlands has the highest proportion of employers who say they find applicants with digital skills difficult to find (38%).

With 92% of employers saying they need their employees to have these essential digital skills, many people are shut out of employment opportunities.

The Prize

Levelling up digital inclusion will result in stronger employment and earnings progression for residents. Manual workers with essential digital skills can earn £2,160 more per year compared to those without these skills (Lloyds Bank UK Consumer Digital Index 2020).

This ability to earn more will result in greater resilience to cost of living pressures, along with having the skills to shop and pay bills on-line, which can result in substantial cost savings.

Improved access to public services such as welfare, transport, health, and council services will benefit residents, alongside potential reductions in the cost of providing these services.

Furthermore, reduction in isolation of older and other vulnerable people through greater connection with family and friends, and with essential services, will result in improved mental health.

Improved access to employment for residents through increased confidence to gain skills, look for work online, and secure employment will also benefit productivity among businesses through effective utilisation of these employees' newfound digital skills.

Levelling Up Mission

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By 2030, the UK will have nationwide gigabit-capable broadband and 4G coverage, with 5G coverage for the majority of the population.

Progress So Far...

Digital Inclusion is a priority within the West Midlands Digital Road Map; the first of five missions is aimed at securing access for everyone, particularly those in poverty, to digital opportunities.

- The Digital Catch Up proposal was developed to address some of the challenges that have been exacerbated by COVID-19 and to support communities that are most likely to be digitally excluded, including the unemployed and those furthest away from the labour market, people with disabilities and ethnic minorities;
- Currently the WMCA is working with government to deliver Digital Skills Bootcamps, a project which was launched in the region and was rolled out more widely following its success;
- The WMCA also established the West Midlands Coalition for Digital Inclusion and Digital Skills Partnership for stakeholders across the region.

Our Proposal

- £4m Connected Services Fund to improve IT accessibility to help disadvantaged communities get online.
- A place-based targeted approach with a focus on 115 LSOAs across 61 wards that are in the lowest 10% (across the deprivation index for Income, Employment, Health, and Education) accounting for 23,063 residents.
- £3m Development Fund to manage monitor and evaluate seven pilots (1 per LA area) across the region focused on social housing /community hubs.
- Trialling and expanding the use of social tariffs to increase access to broadband.
- Developing a network of organisations (public, private and VCSE sector) across the region.
- WMCA would be accountable for commissioning, monitoring, and evaluating the approach to look to build a sustainable model.

What We Hope to Achieve

The £4 million Connected Services Fund would provide more than 23,000 people with data-enabled devices and help to start budgeting for data over the longer term by 2025.

This would allow residents to access essential online services such as benefits and healthcare, allowing them to shop online and connect with loved ones, and improve prospects by allowing them to access education and the online job market.

The digital champion model would provide peer-to-peer digital support, developing 150 digital champions contributing 70,000 hours of support over a 12-month period, bridging the gap between informal and formal training.



Homelessness Prevention



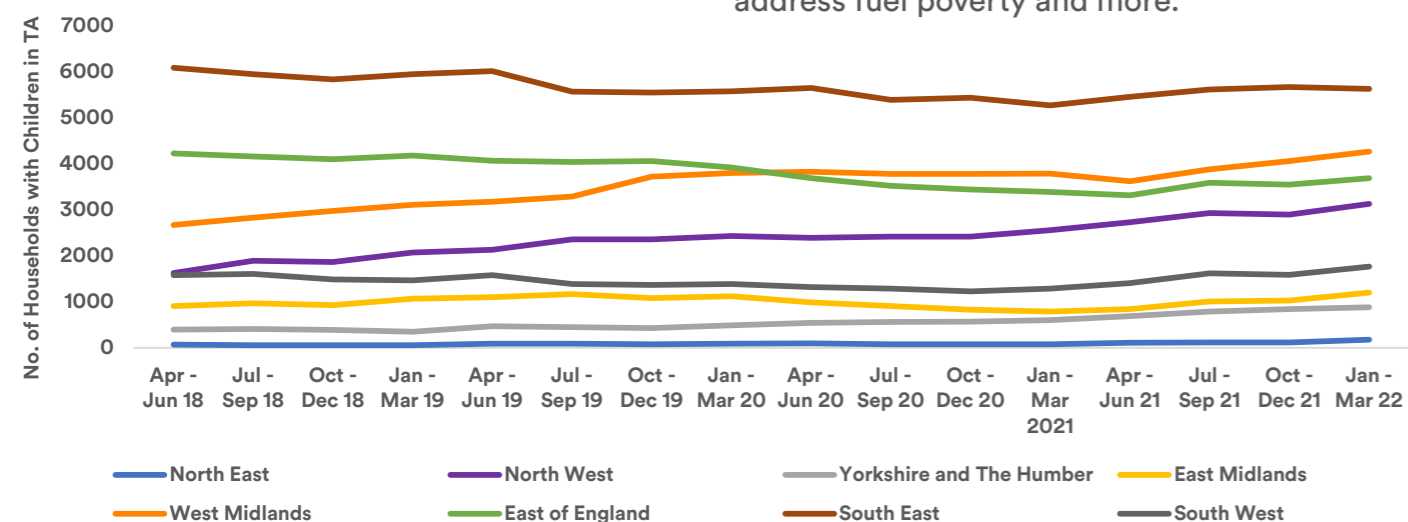
The Challenge

The rapid rise in exempt accommodation is of great concern in the West Midlands — with a lack of supply and no explicit funding for housing related support compounding the problem. There are an increasing number of providers who exploit the model to generate significant income, constituting low value-for-money for the taxpayer. The quality of many of these properties falls far below decent standards, putting tenants at risk and trapping some of our most vulnerable citizens in poor quality housing.

Young people without family support must grapple with the complexity of the welfare benefits system whilst struggling to ‘get on’ at work. Universal Credit for young people is currently below the official destitution level¹, while housing support entitlement in the private rented sector is at the shared accommodation rate. This complexity means that work often loses out to the greater fear of losing critical benefits.

Research by The Homelessness Taskforce in 2021 showed a total of 3,518 families with dependent children were living in temporary accommodation across the WMCA area.

Number of households with children in temporary accommodation across the England regions (excluding London):



The Prize

By designing out homelessness, we won't only transform the lives of those residents who our interventions will support, but also reduce the burden on the public purse, help to restore pride in place, and contribute to the local economy and community cohesion.

By working with local authorities and Government to develop, test, and iterate the proposed new regulatory environment, we can address unscrupulous providers and improve the quality of exempt supported accommodation.

In a Live and Work scheme, the rents are deflated below benefit levels so that tenants can pay their rent entirely from their earned income and be benefit free. We want them to be able to live, work, earn, and learn, as well as have a safe, affordable housing offer which enables that.

The Flexible Support Fund has tremendous potential to add value to other support measures. With greater flexibility it could provide the complementary ingredient to enable people to sustain their homes and make the changes necessary to find and keep employment, recognising that some have further to progress than others. This could include using the fund for our proposed Recovery Tenancy model, LHA plus model, address fuel poverty and more.

¹ <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/destitution-uk-2020>

Levelling Up Mission

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By 2030, renters will have a secure path to ownership with the number of first-time buyers increasing in all areas; and the government's ambition is for the number of non-decent rented homes to have fallen by 50%, with the biggest improvements in the lowest performing areas.

Progress So Far...

- The WMCA Homelessness Taskforce was set up by the Mayor of the West Midlands and brings together all seven constituent local authorities, key public sector agencies, voluntary and community sector organisations and representation from the business community to tackle homelessness.
- The Homelessness Taskforce's central aim is to design out homelessness by identifying gaps in strategies, policies, procedures, laws, structures, systems and relationships that either cause or fail to prevent homelessness.
- It adds value to the work of our local It adds value to the work of our local authorities and wider partners, for example, it has accommodated over 500 people through its Housing First programme and over 1200 individuals have been supported through the WMCA Rough Sleeping Initiative.
- Birmingham was one of five Supported Housing Oversight Pilots which address the concentration of poor-quality accommodation in particular areas.
- The St Basils Live and Work scheme in Sandwell provides accommodation for young workers aged 16-24, for under £43 per week, without having to rely on welfare.

Our Proposal

- Improve non-commissioned exempt supported accommodation through a 'test' area, in which local authorities have more powers around enforcement and licensing to resolve issues. Requires redirecting current levels of spend on DWP housing benefit subsidy to a regional level;
- Replicate the Live and Work scheme trialled at St. Basil's in Sandwell in other areas through allowing the WMCA the powers and flexibility – notably on grant levels - to use the region's affordable housing programme to deliver more live and work housing;
- Optimise the DWP Flexible Support Fund by allowing WMCA to influence how it is prioritised and spent at the local level.

What We Hope to Achieve

- No families with children in temporary accommodation
- Increase in total affordable housing supply
- Reduced house price to income ratio
- Fewer people homeless or in low quality exempt accommodation



Social Capital

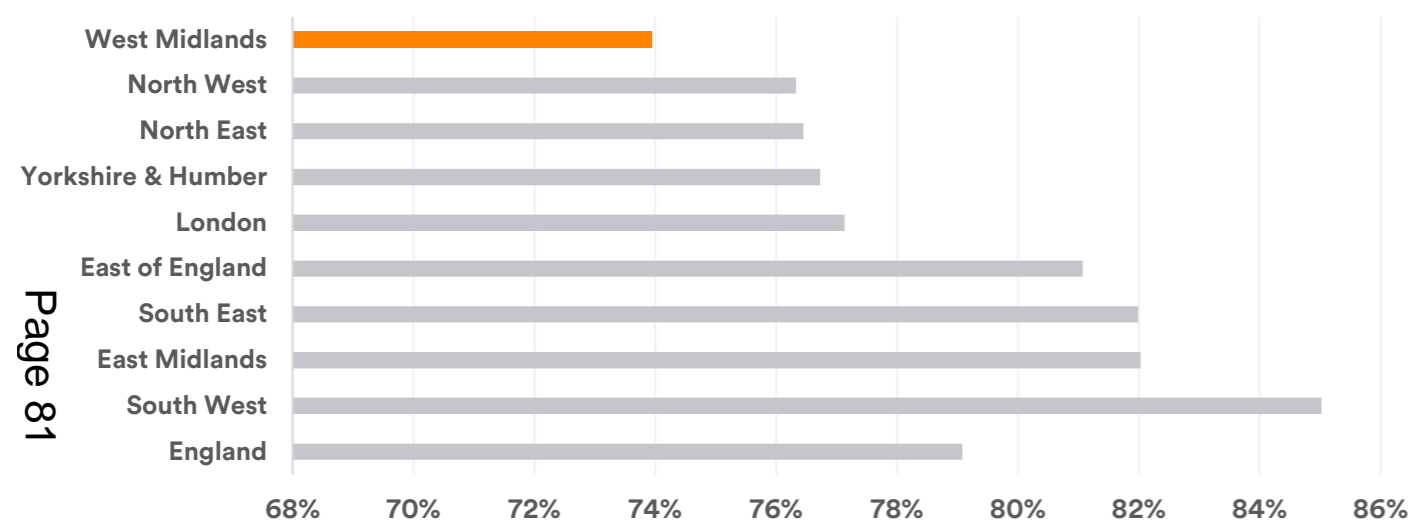


The Challenge

The pandemic has profoundly impacted our social capital, and in turn our social economy, leading to significant disparities within the region. This is particularly prevalent in the most economically excluded groups, such as ethnic minorities and those with low-paid jobs.

For example, one of the regional challenges is lower levels of satisfaction in their local area compared to other regions such as the South West. Across England, the West Midlands population was the least satisfied with their region, at 73.9%.

The 'social economy' draws on this supply of social capital to create businesses that provide economic fuel for these mutual benefits, which can be both social and environmental in nature.



Percentage of Adults Who Are Satisfied with their Local Area

Source: DCMS, Community Life Survey 2020/21

The Prize

The WMCA has an opportunity to use a fair share of the national Dormant Assets Fund to boost social capital. By investing into 'left behind' population groups and places, we can in turn boost pride in place and in doing so, grow the social economy across the region.

By adopting a 'no one left behind' philosophy, we can create greater inclusion within social capital and the social economy – the WMCA's aim is to double the social economy within 10 years.

Progress So Far...

In 2021, WMCA developed a strategy to invest in the region's social economy, entitled "Growing the social economy in the West Midlands".

- These plans were developed in response to recommendations made by the Social Economy Taskforce, a group convened by the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA), to double the size of the social economy in ten years.
- It is estimated that HM Treasury will see between approximately £3.7 million and up to a maximum of £11.4 million over five years from our programme of tailored support.
- This will boost business skills and confidence to enable growth, representing significant fiscal value and value for money, whilst achieving a positive community and environmental impact.

Levelling Up Mission

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By 2030, pride in place, such as people's satisfaction with their town centres and engagement in local culture and community, will have risen in every area of the UK, with the gap between top performing and other areas closing.

Our Proposal

WMCA and partners will create the Social Capital Resilience Fund and focus on the following three areas:

Establishing a Community Wealth Fund for 'left behind places'

- The Community Wealth Fund, led by Local Trust is a national proposal, supported at the regional level the Mayor of the WMCA and GMCA as well as our West Midlands local authorities;
- Its aim is to unlock 'unclaimed assets' for the creation of the Community Wealth Fund, enabling long-term investment and control of local investment to communities.

Powering the inclusion engine: ensuring that excluded population groups can benefit from, and contribute to, social capital

- This ask's main priority is ensuring excluded groups can thrive and benefit and contribute to social capital using dormant assets. Priorities could be on distinct excluded groups;
- Universal Family Fund, investing in young people to enable the rights for all to live, work, learn and earn;
- Homelessness prevention through a devolved regional fund.

Gainshare for social economy growth

- WMCA's first devolution deal grew a substantial capital programme from a gainshare arrangement with HM Treasury;
- This proposal suggests an amended version of that, either as a standalone or broader proposal, focused on delivering the growth ambitions and associated plans articulated in Growing the social economy in the WMCA area, and piloting the Power to Change-designed High Street Buyout Fund.

What We Hope to Achieve

- Boosting social capital whilst growing social economy by investment in 'left behind' groups.
- Delivery of wider positive social, economic, and environmental outcomes in line with the West Midlands Outcomes Framework, such as leading to increased revenue to treasury.
- Potential for local administration, grounded in the clusters where needed the most ensuring local solutions match priorities.
- Unlocking further the skills and confidence for social enterprise, cooperatives, and community businesses to grow.
- Providing a catalyst for reinvestment into specific programmes supporting the pathway to Net Zero.
- Enabling local and transformative investment in our High Streets, strengthening local economies, and enabling citizens the power and resources to create and grow high streets in their own vision.



Health Inequalities

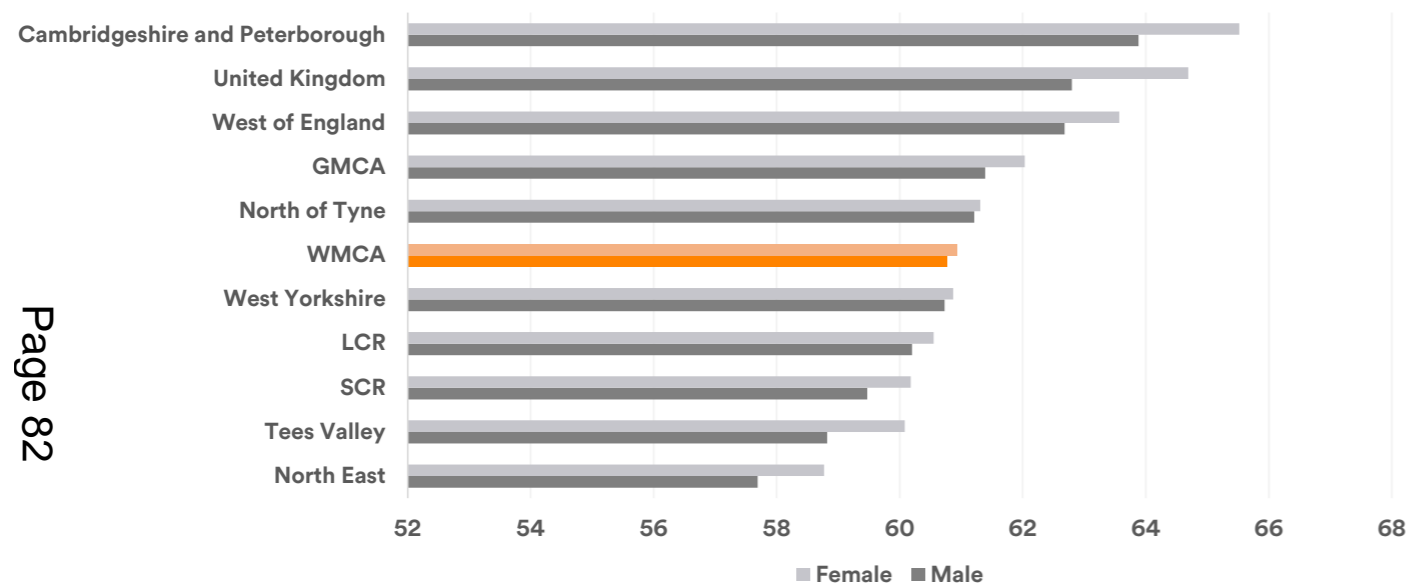


The Challenge

Health and wealth are two sides of the same coin. A weak economy, low wages, and poor educational outcomes are a recipe for poor health. Equally, an unhealthy, unhappy population is unlikely to drive economic productivity. So, tackling health inequalities in the region is fundamental to levelling up.

Across the West Midlands, both life expectancy and healthy life expectancy remain lower than the national average. The West Midlands Health of the Region report, published in response to the pandemic, showed this has been further exposed and exacerbated by Covid.

Years of Healthy Life Expectancy:



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The Prize

A happier and healthier population which is more resilient to future pandemics, through adoption of a 'radical prevention' approach.

Radical prevention means acting as a whole system to tackle the underlying causes of poor health and health inequalities (the 'causes of the causes'). It moves us to a more person- and community-centred approach to health and wellbeing.

Radical prevention also involves demanding more inclusive economic growth which can reduce health inequalities. This can be done through:

- Improving access to employment
- Raising incomes
- Increasing community safety
- Improving housing quality and affordability
- Raising aspirations and improving educational outcomes
- Providing a high-quality local environment and green space
- Enhancing social relationships and connectedness
- Increasing opportunities for participation.

Levelling Up Mission

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By 2030, the gap in Healthy Life Expectancy (HLE) between local areas where it is highest and lowest will have narrowed, and by 2035 HLE will rise by five years.

By 2030, wellbeing will have improved in every area of the UK, with the gap between top performing and other areas closing.

Progress So Far...

While the WMCA doesn't have any devolved or statutory responsibilities for health, our Health and Wellbeing Board has overseen a range of programmes that have aimed to tackle regional health inequalities.

The Health of the Region report brought partners together from across the health system to make over 50 commitments aimed at improving health outcomes for ethnic minorities, tackling the wider determinants of health, and widening access to health and care services.

We have supported community-centred approaches to promoting physical activity, working closely with Sport England and with Transport for West Midlands (TfWM) on walking, cycling and other active community projects.

We have also developed the 'Include Me WM' programme to support disabled people to be more active. And through the 'Thrive Into Work' programme we have supported over 3,700 people with mental health challenges and disabilities into sustainable employment through Individual Placement Support (IPS).



Our Proposal

To continue to explore new ways for the WMCA to maximise its regional action to tackle health inequality and use its existing functions more effectively in improving poor health in areas such as planning consent for fast-food takeaways, tobacco prevention and engaging disabled people in physical activity;

To create a Radical Health Prevention Fund to unlock innovative, digital approaches to health prevention and become a national pathfinder for an electronic shared patient care record by integrating different types of data to enable more person-centred, holistic care;

To extend the devolution of the Work and Health IPS programme to new places and other cohorts of unemployed people, to develop an IPS Academy to train IPS advisers, and pilot new support for the voluntary sector workforce for prevention.

What We Hope to Achieve

- Reduce the size of the gap in healthy life expectancy between the West Midlands and the national average by 1.2 years by 2030.
- Reverse the downward trend in life satisfaction.
- Reduce the percentage of local wards where the exposure to PM 2.5 air pollution is above safe levels.



The Challenge

The West Midlands holds some of the most deprived neighbourhoods in the country — 49% of neighbourhoods are in the 20% most deprived neighbourhoods of the Index of Multiple Deprivation. This correlates with low levels of participation in publicly funded arts and culture, due to lack of choice and opportunity.

Our West Midlands Cultural Sector Research project found that over 50% (1.2 million) of people in the region have very limited access to publicly funded cultural facilities, and therefore have a very limited choice in terms of taking part in cultural activities — in some areas this was as high as 71%.

These areas often have low levels of existing cultural infrastructure and have not benefited from public support for arts and culture in the past, meaning that nearly 2 million people are missing out on the positive benefits of culture.

The Prize

We've recently hosted several major cultural events including the 2022 Commonwealth Games and Coventry UK City of Culture. Investment into these activities has given us the platform to create a legacy and restore a sense of community, local pride and belonging — as well as boost the attractiveness of the region for private investment and growth.



Progress So Far...

The Birmingham 2022 Festival, one of the largest ever cultural programmes to surround the Commonwealth Games, saw the region's creativity and diversity celebrated across nine incredible festival sites and over 200 events, showcasing dance, music, workshops, parties and more.

Likewise, Coventry's year as UK City of Culture will leave a lasting impact on both the city and the region, with figures showing that live and online audiences of just over one million experienced more than 700 events.

Furthermore, the WMCA already has a demonstrable track record in supporting cultural sector-specific initiatives, as well as creative industries through the work with Create Central and the successful delivery of the Government's Creative Scale Up Programme pilot.



It is essential that we build on the investment already made to the major cultural events in the West Midlands to ensure the learning & opportunities can be shared across the region. Whilst our region has a rich and diverse cultural heritage, opportunities to engage are currently not equitable which means people are missing out on the benefits that arts & culture can provide including wellbeing, volunteering, skills development and pride of place. Arts, culture and heritage must play a key role in how we level up our places
Martin Sutherland OBE, Chair of the WMCA Cultural Leadership Board



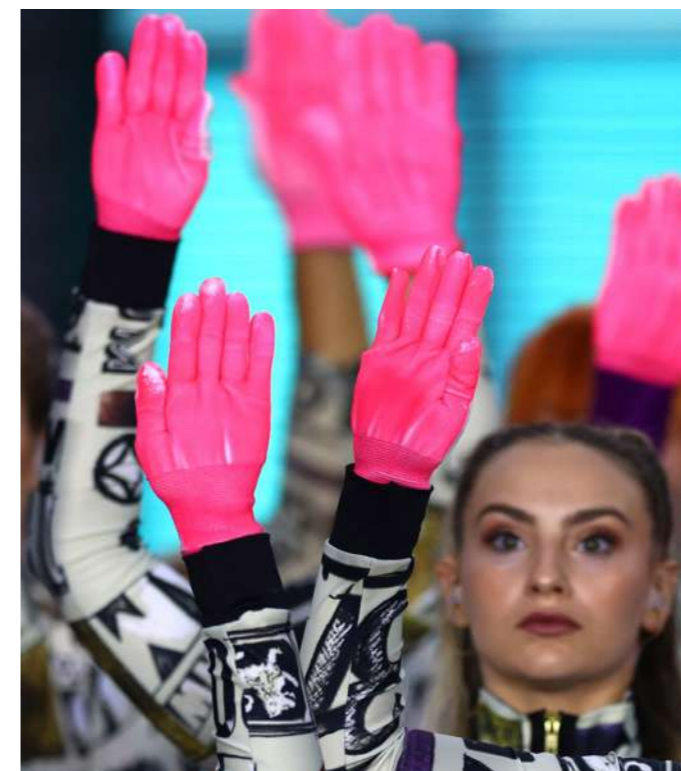
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By 2030, pride in place, such as people's satisfaction with their town centres and engagement in local culture and community, will have risen in every area of the UK, with the gap between top performing and other areas closing.

Our Proposal

The creation of a £15 million WM Levelling Up Culture Legacy Fund — giving us the best possible opportunity to deliver the 'Pride of Place' levelling up mission. The key parts of this fund are:

- The West Midlands Culture and Place Programme — working together with regional and national stakeholders to create a clear regional vision, and a delivery plan to ensure we achieve a lasting legacy from major cultural events;
- The Cultural Infrastructure Development Programme — developing a strategic pipeline of key cultural and heritage projects, as well as helping projects with pre-planning and feasibility, so they can then be put forward for larger investment opportunities;
- Cultural corridors/action zones as geographically defined areas in which investment is aimed to deliver culture/heritage-led regeneration and social value outcomes.



Photos supplied by Getty Images for Birmingham 2022

What We Hope to Achieve

If there is investment to cement their legacy, major cultural events have the potential to be transformational projects.

The West Midlands Levelling Up Culture Legacy Fund is therefore key to unlocking the wider regional benefits and ensuring that our residents can feel proud of where they live and have opportunities to engage with culture and lead fulfilling lives. Outcomes include:

- Increased social capital;
- Improved social cohesion, measured by the percentage of adults who agree that their local area (regional) is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together, in line with the WM Outcomes Framework;
- Improved personal wellbeing in life satisfaction, in line with the WM Outcomes Framework;
- Increased pride in place and civic participation, in line with the WM Outcomes Framework;
- Increased and better measured cultural engagement;
- Bringing underused spaces and buildings back to life;
- Increased footfall in town centres;
- Enhanced local place economies, including growth of creative and cultural businesses associated with good quality training and employment opportunities;
- More resilient and connected local cultural ecologies.



Crime, Community Safety and Resilience



The Challenge

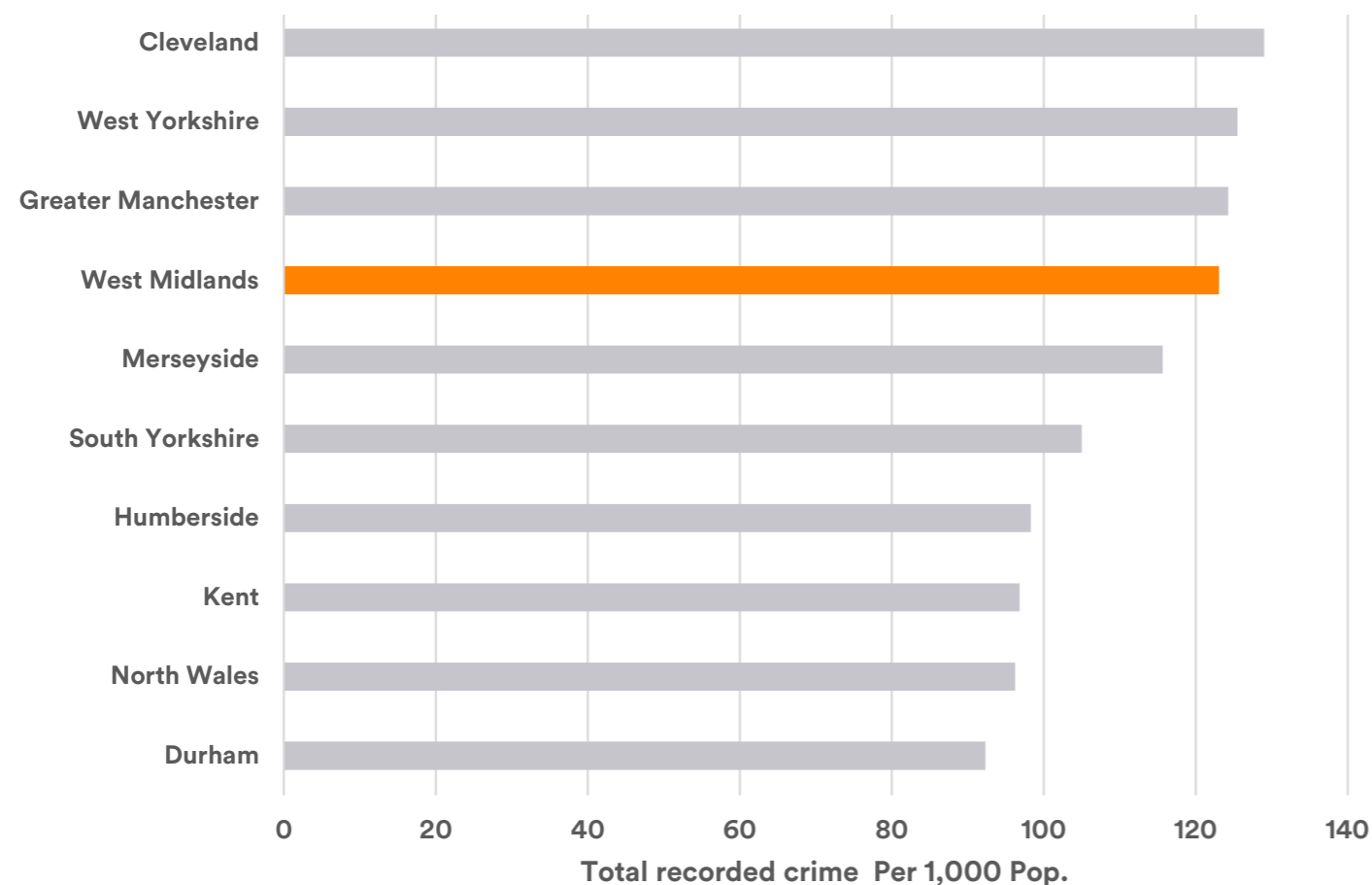
High deprivation levels in the region are a key cause of offending, with the West Midlands Police having the highest crime severity score of all forces in England and Wales. The West Midlands also has a much higher rate of domestic abuse-related incidents, with 26 incidences per 1,000 of the population.

The Prize

We're aiming to create a better connected and collaborative criminal justice and rehabilitation system, geared towards the needs of regional communities, and one which tackles immediate and long-term criminality issues.

Alongside this, we will address the disparities in opportunity and fairness that are faced by some of our deprived communities, increasing positive economic activity and life chances.

Total Recorded Crime per 1,000 Population - Top 10 Places:



Levelling Up Mission

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Focused on reducing homicide, serious violence and neighbourhood crime. Our proposals will also act as a key enabler in fulfilling the broader set of community and economic missions through, for example, enabling more young people to engage in education, training or employment rather than offending.

Our Proposal

Our proposals will deliver both immediate and generational levelling up of the West Midlands – targeting historical inequalities, in a region with an ambition to ensure that a person's ethnic background is never an obstacle.

Through targeting these two key areas we are confident that we can work towards both addressing the immediate issues of criminality in the West Midlands, and address future criminality by better supporting young people.

Leadership within the criminal justice system.

- Create a local system of mutual accountability through priority and target setting and improved evidence-based decision-making.
- This will include a 'duty' on Criminal Justice partners to collaborate on strategic and delivery plan development and sign-off and share data.
- Alongside this, the Police and Crime Commissioner would hold a stronger role in the criminal justice system with involvement in senior level appointments.
- They would also have the power to 'call-in' decisions by Criminal Justice partners, have control over devolved funding for rape victims and violence against women programmes, and retention of fixed penalty fines and profits from crime;
- Enhanced regional powers would be devolved for health partners to have responsibility over secure facilities, offender skills, health and resettlement and drug safety testing.

Supporting young people and breaking the cycle of criminality.

- We want to meet the needs of children and young people as early as we can through ensuring robust early help support;
- Divert young people away from the criminal justice system and allowing them to flourish in their future lives. We would achieve this through:
- A new Local Authority 18-25 offending prevention programme based on the success of the Youth Offending Service model;
- Enhanced powers for the Youth Justice Board;
- Regional pathfinders on referral mechanisms and alternatives to custodial sentences.

What We Hope to Achieve

Through redesigning and redrawing the regional relationships which currently lead to dispersed, complex and disconnected outcomes, we will be able to:

- Increase accountability for outcomes which is comprehensive, complementary, and rooted in the needs of the region's diverse local communities;
- Reduce in the flow of people entering the criminal justice system, particularly among children and young people;
- Reduce the time victims have to wait to see offenders brought to justice;
- Enhance rehabilitation of offenders, particularly those starting out in life, thus avoiding constant 'recycling' through the criminal justice system.

Climate Adaptation and the Natural Environment



The Challenge

The UK heatwave of July 2022 was a stark reminder of the need for us to ensure we are better prepared for climate change. It highlighted the importance of the natural environment and nature recovery in addressing this challenge.

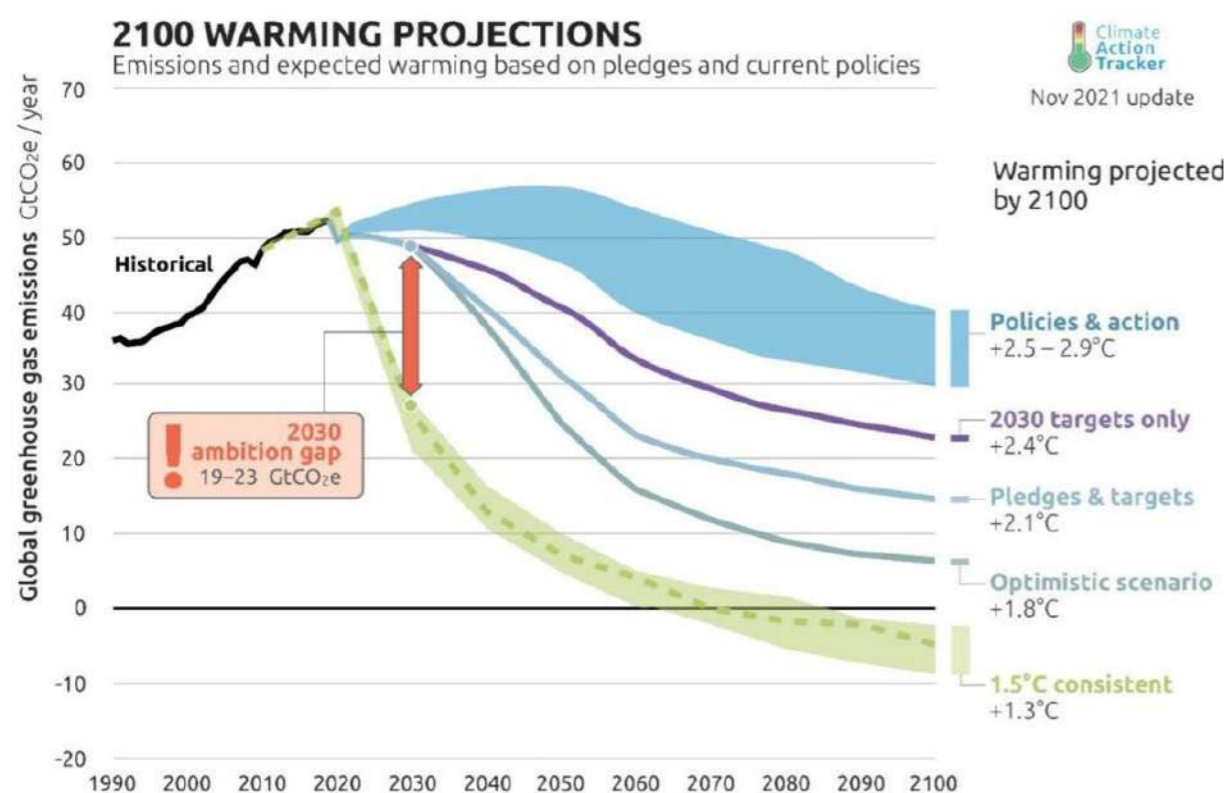
Annual temperatures are on the rise — in the West Midlands alone, we're forecasted to experience a rise of 1.2°C by the 2050s, and between 1.3 and 2.4°C by the 2080s. Of course, this is dependent on global efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions between now and then, but it's a worrying picture nonetheless.

Risks associated with rising temperatures, such as more extreme heatwave events causing impacts on people's health and wellbeing, are likely become more prevalent. Winter rainfall is expected to increase by approximately 6% by the 2050s and by between 9% to 14% by the 2080s. Conversely, summer rainfall is expected to decrease by approximately 15% by the 2050s and by between 19% to 26% by the 2080s.

The Prize

Many investments do not generate a traditional financial return, but indirectly they deliver a range of benefits which address the levelling up challenge. This includes:

- Saved lives and damage costs avoided;
- Significant economic benefits through new jobs, skills, innovation, and infrastructure;
- Broader social, environmental, and governance benefits;
- In adaptation terms, these are together referred to as the 'triple dividend of resilience' and underpin the 2019 report of the Global Commission on Adaptation which stated that globally, the rate of return on adaptation ranges from \$2-10 for every \$1 investment.



Progress So Far...

In 2021, the WMCA launched its first Natural Environment Plan with four priorities:

- Widening access to green and blue spaces for all communities across the West Midlands, initially focusing on places where there is a deficit of access;
- Increasing tree and hedgerow planting, but with an emphasis on 'right tree, right place', to support climate mitigation and adaptation;
- Promoting wildlife corridors and working with natural corridors (both green and blue) as well as those linked to infrastructure projects, e.g. along cycle ways;
- Recognising the importance of the enablers of change and supporting activity around financing and behaviour change that will enable the roll out, impact and scalability of the initiatives identified in the plan.

Since its launch, we have developed an online platform to encourage and support tree planting across the region. The WM Virtual Forest has now registered over 250,000 trees, and the WMCA has worked with partners, including Severn Trent Water as part of their Commonwealth Forest initiative.

We have also developed a £750,000 Community Green Grants programme to distribute small grants to community organisations to provide better access to green spaces.

The WMCA is currently producing its own adaptation plan, working alongside other relevant regional stakeholders, to begin to understand more about regional coordination and work required to ensure adaptation is embedded within decision making.

Our Proposal

- Establish the West Midlands as a 'Pathfinder' for Regional Adaptation Plans. WMCA would be able to support government in the development and delivery of its National Adaptation Plan by bridging between government departments, and local authorities, resilience forums, universities and communities.
- The pathfinder would provide first-hand insights into the challenges of adaptation and the increasing knowledge in tackling those.
- Support community groups in areas of high vulnerability to adapt to extreme weather events – working with Local Resilience Forums (LRFs) to develop practical solutions at a neighbourhood scale.
- Establish a WM Natural Environment Investment Fund – providing pathfinder funding as a catalyst to private sector investment to examine in detail the potential range of funding mechanisms that could be used to protect, restore, and enhance natural capital at a regional scale.

What We Hope to Achieve

- An evidence base on the likely impacts from various adaptation approaches, including community engagement responses.
- Increased awareness of climate change and the capacity to respond accordingly.
- Practical measures to build community resilience to extreme weather events.
- Credible standards for private sector investment into natural environment projects.
- Delivery of Biodiversity Net Gain targets and Nature Based Services.

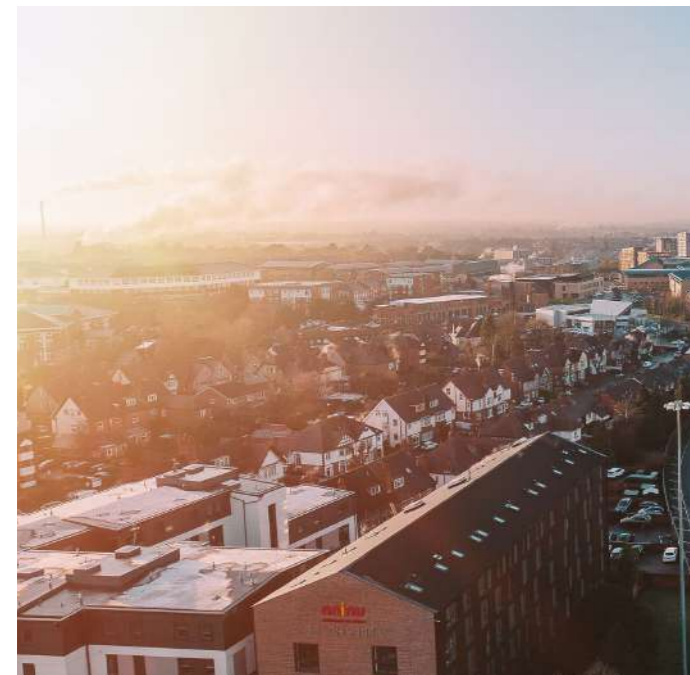


The Challenge

Coventry and the neighbouring county of Warwickshire form a single functional economic geography which was the fastest growing local economy in England between 2008 and 2017. Coventry and Warwickshire also share a single Integrated Health and Care System. Since 2017, there has been slowing economic growth, exacerbated by the pandemic and subsequent global supply chain disruption, along with challenges associated with inflation and price increases.

Despite these challenges, Coventry and Warwickshire has been the focus of national attention — not only has it held numerous international sports events, but Coventry's status as the UK City of Culture has catapulted the area into the national conversation.

Levelling up across Coventry and Warwickshire is about seizing the moment and capitalising on these opportunities, reducing inequalities and ensuring all residents across the patch can benefit from exciting new growth and investment. Whilst this plan focuses on the Metropolitan Areas, we will seek to work with other devolution deals which will enhance this economic area.



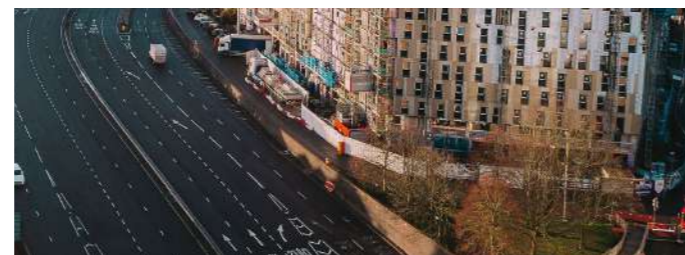
The Prize

Levelling up Coventry and Warwickshire will mean that we can create good quality jobs for local people, as well as giving them pride in place. By upskilling local people, Coventry has the potential to be at the forefront of the UK's sustained economic recovery from the combined impact of events in the last few years, notably through building on the city's longstanding legacy of innovation through smart mobility, culture and creativity, and modern services. We're proposing a significant programme of activity over the coming years to ensure these outcomes are achieved.

Coventry City Council's One Coventry Plan 2022 - 2030 sets out an ambitious approach to public service delivery and reform. The lives of all those who live, work or study in the city will be improved by continuing to work with residents, communities, and partners to understand where the biggest positive difference can be made, and how this can be achieved together.

In Warwickshire, the six Councils each have ambitious plans for growth, underpinned by a countywide approach to levelling up in Warwickshire, which focuses on social mobility, inequality, sustainable futures and community power.

The One Coventry vision aims to deliver services from and with communities, empowering residents to shape local public services. Economic and skills growth coupled with community engagement will create a civic society environment focussed on delivering the needs of residents, students, and the local workforce.



Progress So Far...

Coventry has already made significant strides towards addressing local levelling up challenges. It works in partnership with Warwickshire and other partners to ensure aligned benefits for those that move in and out of the City to neighbouring areas for work, and joined-up approaches to issues including economic growth and health and social care. Key examples in Coventry include:

- The Coventry Job Shop and partners across the City successfully connects communities to local businesses — employers get the right people to be successful and grow, and residents are supported into the best opportunities;
- This includes residents furthest from the labour market and the most vulnerable;
- Coventry's Education Partnership has contributed towards transforming outcomes for children and young people, with 93% of primary children attending good or outstanding schools;
- The city has also been selected as an Education Investment Area;
- Developments at Friargate and City Centre South have been agreed and will create new job opportunities and new homes, as well as new hotel and retail and leisure space;
- Coventry is at forefront of pioneering new green transport concepts such as being the UK's first All Electric Bus city, the development of a new Very Light Rail system and hosting the world's first Urban Airport trial;
- Coventry's Children's Service have recently received recognition for the transformation following an Ofsted inspection, achieving a rating of Good;
- The introduction of joint health and social care provision is leading to improved operating practices for staff;
- These include the introduction of the Integrated Care Record and the development of Population Health Management (PHM);

- We've developed two bids to the Levelling Up Fund to regenerate two of the city's most deprived areas, Foleshill and Hillfields. The City Centre Cultural Gateway Levelling Up Fund bid will be the next step for enhancing the city's cultural assets, as well as supporting the growth of the creative economy to realise the City of Culture Legacy.

Our Proposal

The Trailblazer Devolution Deal proposals will be delivered in alignment and close collaboration with partners in Warwickshire and beyond, in recognition of the interconnected nature of our economies and health and social care systems:

- Going further and faster on housing will support Coventry to unlock brownfield sites for development and regenerate key sites such as Spon End.
- This will be reinforced by the Net Zero proposals, which will provide funding and flexibility to retrofit homes, with locally tailored skills support further strengthening the local market.
- The proposed transport sandbox will see us take a leading role in bringing forward and rolling out homegrown transport technology.
- This will be bolstered by new approaches to increase R&D funding, focusing on key sites such as Silicon Spa, WMG along with the universities of Coventry and Warwick.
- It's also crucial to sustain and enhance the area's first-class business support ecosystem to help businesses grow across a number of sectors.
- Progressing the Gigafactory within the South Coventry - Warwick Innovation Corridor would be one of the most important catalysts for modernising and growing the UK automotive supply chain.



Fundamental	Climate Resilience	Affordable and Safe Places	Connected Communities	Education and Learning
Indicators	Reduce Carbon Dioxide Emissions (ktCO ₂)	No Families with Children in Temporary Accommodation	Percentage of WM population able to access 3 strategic centres in 45 minutes by public transport in the AM peak	Increase Funded Early Education for 2 Year Olds
	Reduce the Number of Households in Fuel Poverty	Increase the Total affordable housing supply - Completions	Proportion of WM population within 15 minutes of key services/amenities centres accessible without a car	Increase % of those aged 16-18 in Sustained Education, Apprenticeship or Employment
	Increase Renewable Energy Generation (after consumption)	Decrease the Number of Crimes Recorded per 1,000 of the Population	Car versus non-car mode share by vkm and trips	Decrease Residents aged 25-39 years old with NVQ2 Quals and Below

Fundamental	Health and Wellbeing	Equality	Inclusive Economy	Power, Influence and Participation
Indicators	Reduce Size of Gap in Healthy Life Expectancy to National – Females & Males (years)	Reduce Percentage of population living under Living Wage Foundation rates (Full-Time)	Increase GVA in Transformational Sectors	Increase Turnout in Local and Regional Elections
	Percentage of Wards where Population Weighted Exposure to PM2.5 is greater than 10µg/m ³	Economic inactivity	Increase Enterprise Births to Deaths Ratio	Increase Civic Participation
	Improve Personal Wellbeing - Life Satisfaction	Women in leadership/ethnic owned businesses	Increase Jobs in Transformational Sectors	Increase the Percentage of Adults who Agree it is Important to be able to Influence Decisions in their Area



West Midlands Combined Authority



Transport Scrutiny Sub-Committee

Thursday 8 September 2022 at 10.00 am

Minutes

Present

Councillor Cathy Bayton (Chair)	Association of Black Country Authorities
Councillor Chaman Lal	Birmingham City Council
Councillor Martin McCarthy	Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor Barbara McGarrity	City of Wolverhampton Council
Councillor Karen Simms	Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor Rupinder Singh	Coventry City Council
Councillor Vera Waters	Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council

In Attendance

Carl Beet	Head of Strategy and Intelligence
Dan Essex	Governance Services Manager
Chris Lane	Head of Transport Innovation
Lyndsey Roberts	Scrutiny Officer
Anne Shaw	Executive Director of Transport for West Midlands
Colin Whitehouse	Programme Mitigation Manager

Item No.

65. Apologies for Absence

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Mark Westwood (Dudley).

66. Chair's Remarks

(a) Attendance at Meetings

The Chair highlighted the importance of member attendance at meetings and agreed to write to those members that had not attended a meeting so far this year.

67. Appointment of Vice-Chair

The appointment of the Vice-Chair was the responsibility of the Transport Scrutiny Sub-Committee and had to be a member from a different political group to the Mayor. The Chair proposed that Councillor Chaman Lal be appointed as Vice-Chair of this sub-committee.

Resolved:

Councillor Chaman Lal be appointed as Vice-Chair of the Transport Scrutiny Sub-Committee for 2022/23.

68. Minutes - 14 July 2022

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 July 2022 were agreed as a correct record.

69. Matters Arising

(a) Progress Report on Transport Governance Review

The Chair reported that work on the Transport Governance Review continued, and that she had been asked for her views on the transport governance arrangements, which would be fed into the ongoing review.

70. Dudley - Brierley Hill Transport Scrutiny Sub-Committee Metro Briefing Note

The sub-committee considered a report of the Executive Director of Transport for West Midlands that addressed the concerns raised at the last meeting by a member of the public regarding the Wednesbury - Brierley Hill metro extension.

It was recognised that whilst the revised route, as proposed, could lower costs for the Wednesbury - Brierley Hill extension, it would not directly stop at Merry Hill and The Waterfront, which would have an impact on patronage and the overall viability of the scheme.

Members discussed and shared comments on the current works being undertaken along the Wednesbury - Dudley route, observations of Metro Line 1 and future extensions, compulsory and voluntary purchase orders of residential properties, funding options and the implication of inflationary rises.

In addition to the delivery of the metro extension, members stressed the importance for the provision of parking facilities to discourage indiscriminate parking. In relation to Dudley Port, the Executive Director of Transport for West Midlands agreed to liaise with Councillor Karen Simms directly with regards to the proposals to improve the facilities in this area.

Resolved:

(1) That officers be thanked for the comprehensive report; and

(2) The report be noted.

71. Walking and Cycling Index Report

The sub-committee considered a report of Ridhi Kalaria, Sustrans on the Walking and Cycling Index

The Walking and Cycling Index supported leaders of cities and towns to understand and improve walking, wheeling and cycling across the UK and Ireland. It was the biggest ever survey of walking, wheeling and cycling in 18 urban areas across these countries. Since their first report in 2015, the data had informed policy decisions, justified investment and enabled cities to develop more ambitious action plans for walking, wheeling and cycling.

Members noted the key messages that had arisen from the report, which had indicated a desire for a cleaner, safer, better connected, sustainable and a cheaper way to travel. Members shared comments with regards to the physical and mental benefits of walking, wheeling and cycling, the operation of school streets schemes, pavement parking and the issues associated to this, Local Traffic Note 120, the Local Transport Plan, cycle lanes and funding for active travel schemes.

Resolved:

The report be noted.

72. Connected and Automated Mobility in the West Midlands

The sub-committee considered a report of the Director for Policy, Strategy & Innovation that provided an overview of the connected and automated mobility (or self-driving) eco-system in the West Midlands, including what was happening now and potential for the future.

The West Midlands had become a springboard for real-world future mobility technologies and services provided either directly through Transport for West Midlands or through partners in the region.

The sub-committee welcomed the report and the collaborations with WMG at the University of Warwick and local authorities within the region, which had generated public and private investment in autonomous vehicles and associated services in the West Midlands.

The Head of Transport Innovation provided an overview of the work being undertaken to manage the relationship between other road users and autonomous vehicles, public perception, public safety, innovational testbed projects, sustainability of funding and the digitalisation of the road network.

Resolved:

That the progress being made be noted.

73. Travel Demand Management Programme Update

The committee considered a presentation from the Programme Mitigation Manager that provided an overview of the Travel Demand Management programme.

Transport for West Midlands demand management approach recognised that customers could make intelligent decisions given the right information. A key focus of the approach was targeting business sites around prime areas of disruption, providing advice and support to enable them to mitigate impacts of congestion and disruption.

Resolved:

The presentation be noted.

74. Work Programme

The sub-committee discussed its work programme of business for consideration at its future meetings and at the WMCA Board.

The committee proposed a number of items of business to be considered at future meetings, including the bus service improvement plan, mobility hubs, progress on the delivery of new railway stations, transport going forward and the city regions sustainable transport settlement line one business case. The Chair agreed to discuss these items further with the Executive Director of Transport for West Midlands.

Resolved:

The work programme be noted.

75. Date of Next Meeting

Thursday 13 October at 10:00am (Q&A Transport Policy matters)

The meeting ended at 12:00pm.



WMCA Overview & Scrutiny Committee – Work Programme 2022/2023

Title of Report	Description of Purpose	Date of Meeting	Lead Officer/Member
Mayor’s Question Time: Policy - 20 October 2022			
WMCA Aims & Objectives Annual Review	To review the WMCA’s Aims & Objectives previously agreed in November 2021	7 November 2022	Linda Horne
Housing: Modular Builds and Zero Carbon	To receive an update on the progress with the delivery of modular builds throughout the West Midlands area.	7 November 2022	Rob Lamond
Grant Register	To receive and review the Grant Register	7 November 2022	Kate Taylor
Mayor’s Question Time: Proposed Draft Budget 2023/24 - 15 December 2022			
Future Homes Building Strategy	To review and discuss the draft strategy.	12 January 2023	Rob Lamond
Affordable Housing Strategy	To receive a draft of the revised affordable housing strategy.	12 January 2023	Rob Lamond

Title of Report	Description of Purpose	Date of Meeting	Lead Officer/Member
Affordable Housing Pilot Project	To review and discuss the draft project.	12 January 2023	Rob Lamond
Mayoral Q&A (Policy): Mayor's response to the recommendations presented to the WMCA Board	To receive a formal response to the recommendations and/or considerations presented to the WMCA Board on 18 November 2022	12 January 2023	Lyndsey Roberts
LEP Integration Plan	To receive an overview of the proposed integration plan for the LEPs	12 January 2023	Julie Nugent
Grant Register	To receive and review the Grant Register	12 January 2023	Kate Taylor
Mayoral Q&A (Proposed Budget): Mayor's response to the recommendations presented to the WMCA Board	To receive a formal response to the recommendations and/or considerations presented to the WMCA Board on 13 January 2023	13 March 2023	Lyndsey Roberts
Grant Register	To receive and review the Grant Register	13 March 2023	Kate Taylor
Future Meetings			
#WM2041 'Our Action to Meet the Climate Challenge	To receive an overview of the progress being made with the delivery of #WM2041	To be confirmed	Jackie Homan

WEST MIDLANDS COMBINED AUTHORITY FORWARD PLAN: OCTOBER 2022 - JULY 2023

Title of Report	Summary of purpose and recommendations	Lead Portfolio Holder	Lead Officer	Confidential	Category
Meeting 28 October 2022					
Regional Activity & Delivery Update	<p>Purpose: To provide an update on the activity and delivery of across the region since the last meeting.</p> <p>Recommendation(s): To note the report.</p>	n/a	Laura Shoaf	No	n/a
Appointment of Director of Law & Governance	<p>Purpose: To appoint the new Director of Law & Governance.</p> <p>Recommendation(s): To make the appointment.</p>	n/a	Laura Shoaf	No	Governance
Independent Remuneration Panel	<p>Purpose: To consider the recommendations arising out of the independent review of members allowances.</p> <p>Recommendation(s): To consider the recommendations.</p>	n/a	Satish Mistry	No	Governance
Financial Monitoring 2022/23	<p>Purpose: To outline the latest financial position of WMCA and provide an update on any current financial matters affecting WMCA.</p> <p>Recommendation(s):</p>	Cllr Bob Sleigh	Linda Horne	No	Finance



Title of Report	Summary of purpose and recommendations	Lead Portfolio Holder	Lead Officer	Confidential	Category
Appointment of Independent Directors to the Board of Midland Metro Ltd.	Purpose: To appoint directors to sit on the board of MML. Recommendation(s):	Cllr Ian Ward	Anne Shaw / Satish Mistry	No	Transport
Trailblazer Devolution Deal	Purpose: To receive the latest version of the Trailblazer Devolution Deal. Recommendation(s): To approve the submission of the trailblazer devolution deal to Government.	Cllr Brigid Jones	Ed Cox	No	Levelling Up
UK Shared Prosperity Fund Investment Plan	Purpose: To submit a more detailed investment plan for approval. Recommendations(s):	Cllr Ian Brookfield	Julie Nugent	No	Economy & Innovation
Meeting 18 November 2022					
Regional Activity & Delivery Update	Purpose: To provide an update on the activity and delivery across the region since the last meeting. Recommendation(s): To note the report.	n/a	Laura Shoaf	No	n/a
Transport Governance Review	Purpose: To consider the recommendations arising from a review into the WMCA's transport governance arrangements.	Cllr Ian Ward	Satish Mistry / Anne Shaw	No	Governance



Title of Report	Summary of purpose and recommendations	Lead Portfolio Holder	Lead Officer	Confidential	Category
	Recommendations(s): To approve the recommendations proposed to improve the WMCA's transport governance.				
Trailblazer Devolution Deal Update	Purpose: To provide an update on the latest work being undertaken in support of the WMCA's Trailblazer Devolution Deal. Recommendation(s):	Cllr Brigid Jones	Ed Cox	No	Levelling Up
Single Assurance Framework	Purpose: The National Local Growth Assurance Framework Guidance has a mandated requirement for each combined authority to review their assurance framework annually. There is also a further requirement for separate annexes for the assurance approaches for housing, transport and skills. Recommendation(s): To approve the assurance framework.	Cllr Bob Sleigh	Linda Horne	No	Finance
City Regions Sustainable Transport Settlement Line One Business Case	Purpose: Recommendations:	Cllr Ian Ward	Anne Shaw	No	Transport
Rail Programme Update	Purpose: To provide an update on the current Rail Programme activity. Recommendations:	Cllr Ian Ward	Anne Shaw	No	Transport

Title of Report	Summary of purpose and recommendations	Lead Portfolio Holder	Lead Officer	Confidential	Category
Meeting 13 January 2023					
Regional Activity & Delivery Update	<p>Purpose: To provide an update on the activity and delivery across the region since the last meeting.</p> <p>Recommendation(s): To note the report.</p>	n/a	Laura Shoaf	No	n/a
Draft WMCA Budget 2023/234	<p>Purpose: To approve the WMCA's draft 2023/24 budget for consultation.</p> <p>Recommendation(s):</p>	Cllr Bob Sleigh	Linda Horne	No	Finance
Financial Monitoring 2022/23	<p>Purpose: To outline the latest financial position of WMCA and provide an update on any current financial matters affecting WMCA.</p> <p>Recommendation(s):</p>	Cllr Bob Sleigh	Linda Horne	No	Finance
LEP Integration Plan	<p>Purpose: To approve the proposed integration plan for LEPs.</p> <p>Recommendation(s):</p>	Cllr Ian Brookfield	Julie Nugent	No	Economy & Innovation
Race Equalities Taskforce	<p>Purpose:</p> <p>Recommendation(s):</p>	Cllr Kerrie Carmichael	Ed Cox	No	Strategy, Integration & Net Zero
Wednesbury - Brierley Hill Metro	<p>Purpose: To consider the latest progress in securing the mitigation measures for addressing the funding gap identified for</p>	Cllr Ian Ward	Linda Horne	Yes	Transport



Title of Report	Summary of purpose and recommendations	Lead Portfolio Holder	Lead Officer	Confidential	Category
Extension Funding Mitigation Measures	phase 1 of the project and to close the funding gap for the full scheme. Recommendation(s):				
City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement - Metro Line 1 Business Case	Purpose: To consider the business case for essential renewal work to core elements of the existing line, including sections of key systems to ensure they continued to function correctly and avoided interruption to the service on the current routes. Recommendation(s): To approve the business case.	Cllr Ian Ward	Anne Shaw	No	Transport
Meeting 10 February 2023					
Regional Activity & Delivery Update	Purpose: To provide an update on the activity and delivery across the region since the last meeting. Recommendation(s): To note the report.	n/a	Laura Shoaf	No	n/a
WMCA Budget 2023/234	Purpose: To approve the WMCA's 2023/24 budget. Recommendation(s):	Cllr Bob Sleigh	Linda Horne	No	Finance
Meeting 24 March 2023					
Regional Activity & Delivery Update	Purpose: To provide an update on the activity and delivery across the region since the last meeting.	n/a	Laura Shoaf	No	n/a



Title of Report	Summary of purpose and recommendations	Lead Portfolio Holder	Lead Officer	Confidential	Category
	Recommendation(s): To note the report.				
Financial Monitoring 2022/23	Purpose: To outline the latest financial position of WMCA and provide an update on any current financial matters affecting WMCA. Recommendation(s):	Cllr Bob Sleigh	Linda Horne	No	Finance
Meeting 9 June 2023					
Regional Activity & Delivery Update	Purpose: To provide an update on the activity and delivery across the region since the last meeting. Recommendation(s): To note the report.	n/a	Laura Shoaf	No	n/a
Appointment of WMCA Boards and Committees 2023/24	Purpose: To approve consider the appointments to boards, chairs and meetings dates for 2023/24. Recommendation(s): That the report be approved.	n/a	Satish Mistry	No	Governance
Overview & Scrutiny Committee Annual Report	Purpose: To consider a report setting out the activity of overview & scrutiny during 2022/23. Recommendation(s): That the report be noted.	n/a	Satish Mistry	No	Governance



Title of Report	Summary of purpose and recommendations	Lead Portfolio Holder	Lead Officer	Confidential	Category
Financial Monitoring 2022/23	Purpose: To outline the latest financial position of WMCA and provide an update on any current financial matters affecting WMCA. Recommendation(s):	Cllr Bob Sleigh	Linda Horne	No	Finance
Meeting July 2023					
Regional Activity & Delivery Update	Purpose: To provide an update on the activity and delivery across the region since the last meeting. Recommendation(s): To note the report.	n/a	Laura Shoaf	No	n/a
Financial Monitoring 2022/23	Purpose: To outline the latest financial position of WMCA and provide an update on any current financial matters affecting WMCA. Recommendation(s):	Cllr Bob Sleigh	Linda Horne	No	Finance

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