



Economic Growth Board

Date: Wednesday 12 July 2023

Time: 2.00 pm **Public meeting** Yes

Venue: Executive Board Room 2, Wolverhampton Civic Centre, St. Peter's Square, Wolverhampton WV1 1RL

Membership

Tom Westley (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Adrian Andrew
Councillor Paul Bradley
Councillor John Cotton
Councillor Matthew Dormer
Councillor Ian Courts
Councillor George Duggins
Councillor Bob Piper
Councillor Stephen Simkins
Councillor Bob Sleigh
Andy Street
Lee Barron
Anita Bhalla

Sarah Windrum
Corin Crane
Matthew Hammond
Professor Aleks Subic
Mike Wright

Business Representative
Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council
Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council
Birmingham City Council
Non-Constituent Authorities
Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council
Coventry City Council
Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council
City of Wolverhampton Council
Portfolio Lead for Finance & Investments
Mayor of the West Midlands
Midlands Trades Union Congress
Greater Birmingham & Solihull Local Enterprise
Partnership
Business Representative
West Midlands Chambers of Commerce
West Midlands Growth Company
Higher Education Sector
West Midlands Innovation Board

Quorum for this meeting shall be at least one member from five separate constituent councils

If you have any queries about this meeting, please contact:

Contact Wendy Slater, Senior Governance Services Officer
Telephone 07557 831344
Email wendy.slater@wmca.org.uk

AGENDA

| No. | Item | Presenting | Pages |
|---------------------------------|--|---|-----------|
| Items of Public Business | | | |
| 1. | Appointment of Chair To appoint a Chair for the board for this specific meeting. | | None |
| 2. | Welcome & Introductions | Chair | None |
| 3. | Apologies for absence (if any) | Chair | None |
| 4. | Notification of Substitutes (if any) | Chair | None |
| 5. | Declarations of Interests (if any) Members are reminded of the need to declare any disclosable prejudicial interests that have in an 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 |
| 6. | Chair's Remarks (if any) | Chair | None |
| 7. | Minutes - 15 February 2023 | Chair | 1 - 12 |
| 8. | Revised Terms of Reference | Julia Cleary | 13 - 20 |
| 9. | Economic Conditions in the West Midlands | Delma Dwight | 21 - 36 |
| 10. | West Midlands Growth Company - Global West Midlands a) WMG Business Plan b) Major Events Fund and West Midlands International Strategy Update | Matthew Hammond/ Katie Trout | 37 - 98 |
| 11. | Business Growth West Midlands | Paul Edwards | 99 - 106 |
| 12. | West Midlands Plan for Growth : Mobilisation & Delivery Cluster lead organisations update | Paul Edwards/Iain Mansell/ Yiannis Maos | 107 - 114 |
| 13. | Skills Initiatives and Delivery a) Local Skills Improvement Plan b) Understanding and address labour market challenges: jobs workstream update c) Skills Investment | David Gaughan/ Dr Fiona Aldridge/ Clare Hatton | 115 - 158 |

| | | | |
|--|---|------------------|-----------|
| 14. | Economic Growth Board Work Programme | Jonathan Skinner | 159 - 164 |
| Items of Private Business | | | |
| 15. | Exclusion of the Public and Press [in accordance with s100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business as they are likely to involve the disclosure of exempt information as specified in the paragraphs of the Act.] | Chair | None |
| 16. | Innovation Board Priorities | Mike Wright | 165 - 196 |
| Date of Next Meeting -22 September 2023 | | | |

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Economic Growth Board

Wednesday 15 February 2023 at 2.00 pm

Minutes

Present

| | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Tom Westley (Vice-Chair) | Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership |
| Councillor Peter Hughes | Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council |
| Councillor David Stanley | Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council |
| Councillor Ian Ward | Birmingham City Council |
| Councillor Bob Sleigh (Chair) | Portfolio Lead for Finance & Investments |

In Attendance via MS Teams

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Councillor Adrian Andrew | Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council |
| Councillor Ian Courts | Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council |
| Councillor George Duggins | Coventry City Council |
| Councillor Matthew Dormer | Non-Constituent Authorities |
| Rob Johnston | Midlands Trade Union Congress |
| Corin Crane | Coventry & Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce |
| Matthew Hammond | West Midlands Growth Company |
| Rob Johnston | Midlands Trades Union Congress |
| Mike Wright | West Midlands Innovation Board |

Item Title No.

35. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absent were received from Councillor Brookfield, Andy Street, Lee Barron, Stuart Croft and Anita Bhalla.

36. Nomination of Substitutes

Rob Johnston (Midlands Trades Union Congress) was nominated as a substitute for Lee Barron.

37. Appointment of Chair

In the absence of the Chair, the board agreed that Councillor Bob Sleigh be appointed to chair this specific meeting.

38. Inquorate meeting

The Chair reported as this was an inquorate meeting, the recommendations contained within the minutes would be submitted to the WMCA Board on 17 March 2023 for formal approval and adoption.

39. Chair's Remarks

The Chair welcomed Councillor David Stanley, the new board representative for Dudley as a result of Councillor Simon Phipps standing down from his Cabinet role due to work commitments.

The Chair also acknowledged that whilst LEP integration was on the agenda, this was the last meeting of the board before the LEP functions are integrated into the WMCA and therefore wanted to formally thank the three LEPs, their Chairs (past and present) and staff for all they have done to champion the West Midlands economy over the last ten years; the Economic Growth Board would continue to build on those foundations.

40. Minutes - 2 December 2022

The board considered the minutes of the meeting held on 2 December 2022.

In relation to minute no. 26 West Midlands Growth Company, Councillor Hughes noted that he had reported on the need for an independent review of the Growth Company to be carried out and others had also shared this view. He asked that this comment be included in the minutes.

It be recommended to the WMCA Board that:

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 December be agreed as a true record subject to the inclusion of Councillor Hughes's comment referred to above.

41. Matters Arising

Minute no. 25, Economic Growth Conditions in the West Midlands

In relation to economic data, Councillor Ward asked whether the lower-level data (for local areas) he had referred to could be provided.

The Executive Director for Economic Delivery, Skills & Communities advised that the economic data Councillor Ward referred to was not available on a regular basis but would commit to providing the information for a future meeting.

Minute no.26, West Midlands Growth Company Review

Councillor Hughes commented that further to consideration of the above report at the last meeting, he could not find any reference in the Growth Company report on today's agenda as to whether a benchmarking exercise had been carried out and enquired whether this had happened.

Katie Trout, Director of Policy & Partnerships, WMGC reported that some international benchmarking work has been undertaken but it had not been included in the report being considered today. Katie advised that she was happy to talk through the detail of the benchmarking work with Councillor Hughes.

42. West Midlands Plan for Growth

The Head of Economic Development and Delivery, Paul Edwards introduced the report that provided an update on the most recent economic conditions and interventions that the WMCA and partners are making to address those

conditions to increase business resilience and growth across the region.

Delma Dwight (Black Country Consortium) updated the board on the economic conditions and highlighted key insights from the dashboard that provided the latest GDP and ONS figures.

Matthew Rhodes, Chair of the Industrial Energy Taskforce, provided an update on the work of the taskforce and how it is tackling the challenges faced by energy intensive industries across the West Midlands, especially the Black Country. Matthew outlined how lobbying by the taskforce had successfully secured enhanced EBDS support for energy and trade intensive firms and reported that lobbying was linked to the Devolution Ask for energy in supporting manufacturers. He added that the energy sector was biased against the manufacturing sector and a summit was proposed at the end of March ahead of the publication of a final report in June for consideration by the Economic Growth Board.

Councillor Hughes reported that with regards to energy costs, Sandwell suffers the most due and he would like Sandwell to host the summit if possible.

In relation to hospitality and tourism, and the recently established West Midlands Tourism and Hospitality Advisory Board, the Chair, Andrew Lovett of the Black Country Living Museum reported on the challenges and opportunities for the sector and how the board would represent and speak on behalf of the tourism and hospitality sector in the West Midlands.

In relation to the membership of the board, listed in appendix 1 of the report, Councillor Ward noted that members of the board included the Birmingham Hilton Metropole but did not include Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery. He reported that the latter was rated as outstanding by Government as well as being recognised nationally and internally and enquired as to the process of selection to the board.

Andrew Lovett advised there was an open recruitment process for partners to join the Tourism and Advisory Board and that he would welcome a representative from Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery on board. In relation to the Birmingham Hilton Metropole, the hotel had put themselves forward for membership.

Councillor Ward indicated that he would look to encourage Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery to join the Tourism and Advisory Board.

Councillor Hughes commented that the membership of the board was not geographically well-spread out and he would like more Black Country firms to be members of the Tourism and Advisory Board.

Andrew Lovett reported that he would welcome more businesses from the Black Country joining the Tourism and Advisory Board.

It be recommended to the WMCA Board that:

1. The latest update on economic conditions in the West Midlands and the most recent regional GDP figures published on 9 February be noted;
2. The wider mobilisation of Plan for Growth to support the medium-term growth strategy of the region be noted and agreed;
3. The most recent position on industrial energy and proposed interventions to support energy intensive businesses be noted and
4. The update from the Hospitality and Tourism Advisory Board on the current state of the sector and planned activities to support the resilience of the sector be noted.

43. Understanding and Addressing Labour Market Challenges

The board considered a report of the Executive Director, Economic Delivery, Skills and Communities that provided an overview of the labour market challenges facing the 7 Met area and outlined a proposed approach on how value can be added to existing local activity and how joint working might address the challenges.

Dr Fiona Aldridge, Head of Intelligence and Insight, outlined the report and reported on the proposed establishment of a Jobs Taskforce that would be comprised of key regional stakeholders working collaboratively to develop and implement an actionable roadmap to address both immediate and long-term market challenges. It was noted that the Jobs Taskforce would be time limited for a period of 9 months and it is anticipated this would facilitate more effective partnership working beyond this.

The Chair confirmed that the Economic Growth Board would become the Jobs Taskforce and set up the work plan.

Councillor Courts enquired why the taskforce was being established for 9 months as he considered this to be a long period of time given the challenges impacting upon the labour market were known and the need to address these as soon as possible. He also reported of the need to address youth unemployment as a priority in all areas and not just Wolverhampton.

The Head of Intelligence and Insight advised there was a need to understand the detail behind the data and the taskforce would bring in experts to provide fresh insight into the issues.

The Executive Director, Economic Delivery, Skills and Communities, Dr Julie Nugent added that there was a need to understand what was working/not working and why people were not taking up training opportunities so action-based research could be undertaken to better connect people with jobs.

Corin Crane (Coventry & Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce) reported on the need to focus on identifying an innovative solution for getting the over fifties back into employment and to also look at excessive childcare costs.

Councillor Ward noted that more money was being spent in this area, but he could not see how it was demonstrating an impact. He added that many working people were in low paid jobs and were reliant on benefits and food banks to supplement their income.

Councillor Andrew reported that Walsall's work programme has been effective in tackling youth unemployment and reported on the need to look at how different organisations are utilising the apprenticeship levy.

The Chair acknowledged there was a need to look at best practice.

Councillor Stanley reported that he would be interesting in obtaining a breakdown of figures from colleges on where people had found work.

The Director of Employment and Skills, Clare Hatton reported that the WMCA was working with colleges to monitor young people into employment and training and advised of the good outcomes that have been seen in Dudley and Wolverhampton.

It be recommended to the WMCA Board that:

1. The labour market challenges facing the West Midlands 7 Met area be noted and
2. The proposed approach in developing a deeper understanding of these challenges including for particular places and group of residents and identifying effective approaches to tackling them be agreed.

44. Presentation: LEP Integration

The board received a presentation from the Executive Director, Economic Delivery, Skills and Communities, Dr Julie Nugent that provided an update on LEP integration.

The presentation provided an update on the status, the processes underway, work being undertaken to strengthen the private sector voice across the WMCA's boards/committees, work on business input into the Economic Growth Board's activities and the transition of the Economic Impact Group into the new Business Insights Forum.

Dr Julie Nugent conveyed her thanks and appreciation to colleagues in the LEPs and undertook to share the draft letter being sent to LEP staff prior to the start of the consultation process.

The presentation was noted.

45. West Midlands Growth Company Review

The board considered a report of the Director of Policy & Partnerships, West Midlands Growth Company that provided an update on progress of the review of the West Midlands Growth Company (WMGC) that set out emerging feedback from the consultation process into the future model of the Company, highlighting areas where there is consensus and recommendations can be made and where further discussion and/or work is required.

The Chief Executive, City of Wolverhampton Council, Tim Johnson, presented the report, highlighting key aspects including the outcomes of the

review to date, the next phase of the review, the preferred scenario for WMGC's future model, local and regional priorities, funding and proposed governance changes.

He advised that the review had been undertaken in consultation with local authorities to understand their priorities from a place perspective and that consultation would continue to be embedded into the work of WMGC. The governance changes would also allow each local authority to be represented on WMGC's board with structured engagement undertaken on a quarterly basis that would be aligned with the Economic Growth Board. Additionally, private sector membership would also be reviewed.

Councillor Hughes expressed concern that the review had not been done independently and sought clarification as to the financial asks for WMGC, noting that he not received an evaluation of the Business and Tourism Programme.

The Director of Policy & Partnerships, WMGC, Katie Trout advised that in relation to funding, an additional £4.6m of Legacy Funding was being sought for 2023/24 and £6.1m in 2024/25 giving a total ask of £10.7m over the 2 years. With regards to the Business and Tourism Programme, she advised that a full evaluation of the programme had not yet been carried out, however, reporting was undertaken on quarterly basis and could confirm targets were being met and was happy to share the latest quarterly report.

The Vice-Chair, Councillor Courts and Councillor Ward considered the Growth Company was of crucial importance to the region which needed some form of marketing organisation and for all local authorities to have a relationship with WMGC.

Councillor Andrew welcomed the opportunity for the relationship to be re-set with WMGC as a result of Sandwell and Walsall becoming members of the WMGC Board.

Matthew Hammond (WMGC) expressed his thanks and best wishes to the Chair, Councillor Brookfield, and reminded the board that the interim funding arrangements utilising Legacy Funding, was a short-term fix and there was a need to reflect on the medium-term for a properly funded Growth Company.

It be recommended to the WMCA Board that:

1. Progress on the Review to date be noted;
2. The preferred scenario as identified by the Sponsors Group which would see the current funding envelope for WMGC consolidated as £12m with activity refocused to meet regional and local priorities be endorsed and further consultation be undertaken with the aim of bringing a recommendation to the Mayor and Met Leaders meeting on 3 March 2023 for discussion ahead of the WMCA Board on 17 March 2023 be noted;
3. WMGC should continue to undertake the functions as set out in paragraph 6.8 of the report and the balance of activity across them

- should be determined by regional and local priorities be agreed;
4. WMGC should undertake the additional role of Strategic Relationship Management if budget levels are broadly maintained at their current level and WMDC should work closely with local authorities to deliver this function be agreed;
 5. The geographical footprint of WMGC post LEP integration needs to be resolved and that recommendations be brought as soon as possible to include clarifying the future relationship with Warwickshire be noted;
 6. The detailed work being undertaken with Local Authorities with the WMCA to determine local and regional priorities and these are being used to inform the proposal for additional Legacy Funding and this ultimately informs the WMGC's Business Plan be noted;
 7. The progress in developing a framework of objectives and key results and further work is being undertaken to determine thematic objectives, deliverables and specific leading and lagging indicators be noted;
 8. WMGC has submitted a proposal for an additional £10.7m from the Legacy Fund to fund the Global West Midlands Investment and Tourism Programme over the next two years and this be considered as a separate item on the agenda be noted;
 9. WMGC would achieve efficiency savings amounting to 10%-15% reduction in the regional workforce/3rd party costs over the course of the year on the core activities be noted;
 10. The identification of long-term sustainable funding for WMGC, to support the scenario agreed by WMCA Board in March, is returned to in early 2023/24 and recommendations be brought forward to the Economic Growth Board for consideration in due course be agreed;
 11. The proposed changes to membership of the WMGC Board, specifically; that the board should be expanded so that every local authority is represented on it and that private sector membership should be reviewed when terms of office come to an end to ensure Directors have the right suite of skills and experiences aligned to WMGC's future focus, noting these changes would be for WMGC Ltd to enact be endorsed; 12. From 2023/24 Economic Growth Board should agree WMGC's annual business plan including its objectives and key results and that it should receive quarterly performance reports on it from WMGC be agreed;
 12. Proposals to strengthen engagement with the Local Authorities and WMCA at political and officer levels and that partners identify named senior officers and councillors by correspondence with WMGC be approved and
 13. The ongoing work to clarify roles and responsibilities and handovers across programmes of activity, across WMGC, WMCA and Local Authorities be noted.

[NB. Tom Westley, Councillor Ian Ward and Matthew Hammond declared a non-pecuniary interest in this item due to them being board members of the

46. Commonwealth Games Legacy Fund: Economy, Trade & Tourism Pillar

The board considered a report of the Executive Director, Economic Delivery Skills and Communities that set out the approach to the Commonwealth Games Legacy Fund including the development of the five strands of the Economy, Trade and Tourism Pillar, the approach to the funding asks and the next steps regarding the decision-making process.

The Executive Director, Economic Delivery Skills and Communities, Dr Julie Nugent informed the board that the report follows on from the decision taken by the WMCA Board on 16 December 2022 for the Economic Growth Board to shape the detail and oversee the delivery of the Economy, Trade and Tourism pillar and its programmes over the duration of the Legacy Fund.

It was noted that the programme costs exceed £38.9m allocated for the economy, trade and tourism pillar by £9.65m and a number of options are proposed to reduce the programme costs to within the funding envelope of £38.9m or alternatively, there is the option to allow for the deliberate over-programming at this stage before reviewing business cases as they are developed.

Councillor Ward reported that it was not clear how the numbers have been derived for each of the pillars and Met Leaders and the Mayor should be allowed to vire funds between the pillars. He added that the underspend on the Commonwealth Games should be linked to the legacy ambitions for the region and considered that whilst delivery programme 2, (Delivering on Plan for Growth and support for high-growth regional business) and delivery programme 5, (Wider jobs and skills legacy -helping people in the West Midlands benefit from the legacy and attendant economic growth) were good programmes, they should be funded from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and skills and education monies as appropriate.

Councillor Ward considered the removal of delivery programmes 2 and 5 would enable funding to be allocated to support the legacy of Sandwell's Aquatic Centre which requires £2m to operate the facility. Additionally, he stated funding was needed to support the European Athletics Championships in 2026 that have never been hosted in the UK before and would provide the opportunity for the region to stage the best ever event.

The Executive Director, Economic Delivery Skills and Communities advised that the pillars had been determined by the WMCA Board and programmes 2 and 5 could not be funded elsewhere.

Councillor Courts reported he thought the pillars had been agreed and he supported the inclusion of programmes 2 and 5; for programme 5, he would like local authorities to be able to apply for funding to 'passported' to them.

Councillor Hughes reported that Sandwell's Aquatic Centre was a major feature of the Commonwealth Games and thanked Councillor Ward for his support.

The Chair re-affirmed that the pillars had been decided by the WMCA Board and the Aquatic Centre was not included in any indicative programme. He reminded the board that they were not required to take any decisions today on funding and that the debate on overprogramming was ongoing. The matter would be discussed further at the Mayor and Met Leaders meeting on 3 March.

Councillor Ward re-iterated that money should be spent in line with the legacy of the Commonwealth Games.

Councillor Courts reported of the need to receive further advice on what programmes relate to legacy.

The Executive Director, Economic Delivery and Skills reported that the WMCA has not received clarity from DCMS on the five strands of the pillar at this stage, as detailed programmes are required. She added that it is up to the region to determine its programmes and reported on the need to look at the four thematic pillars rather than focusing on the economy, trade and tourism pillar.

It be recommended to the WMCA Board:

1. The role of the Economic Growth Board in advising on the content of the £38.9m Commonwealth Games Legacy Fund, 'Economy, Trade & Tourism pillar' and its ongoing role in monitoring the impact of activity be noted;
2. The work undertaken with Directors of Economic Development and the West Midlands Growth Company to develop details of the indicative delivery programmes set out in the WMCA Board paper on 16 December 2022 be noted;
3. The approach to addressing the current overprogramming across the pillar as set out in paragraph 2.12 of the report be discussed further at the Mayor and Met Leaders meeting on 3 March and
4. The next steps ahead of the WMCA Board in making a final decision on the pillar in March 2023 on the allocation of funds in the pillar be noted.

[Councillor Ward declared a non-pecuniary interest in this item as Birmingham City Council was requesting funding for hosting the European Athletics Championships]

47. UK Shared Prosperity Fund Year 1 Spends - Local Allocations (Community & Place) and Business Support Update

The Director of Employment and Skills presented a report that set out the latest forecast of projected spend against the year 1 allocation from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) against local authorities Communities and Place allocations as compiled from the latest returns. It also provided a potential approach in the event of the underspends in this area and an update on the current position with regards to getting legal agreements in place between the WMCA and Local Authorities.

The Director of Employment and Skills, Clare Hatton reported that she was confident the money should be spent with regards to Communities and Place allocations, but all of the money would not be spent for Business Support.

Councillor Hughes reported that he felt the WMCA should be supporting local authorities more as they were being asked to deliver more for less. He also expressed concerns regarding how productivity is evidenced and the methodology that would be applied.

Clare Hatton advised that the methodology was not yet determined but she could discuss the matter with local authority officers outside of the meeting. Dr Julie Nugent reported that in relation to administrative support, this would be transferred from Growth Hubs to local authorities and was happy to pick this up outside of the meeting.

It be recommended to the WMCA Board that:

1. The latest forecast position on the projected spend against year 1 allocations to local authorities for the Communities and Place pillar be noted;
2. Work continue on the current flight path with plans in place to utilise all year 1 funds for this pillar be agreed;
3. The options set out in the event of underspends in year 1 for the communities and place pillar in section 2.5 of the report be noted;
4. The latest forecast position of projected spend against year 1 for the Business Support pillar be noted;
5. A credible plan be submitted to carry forward funds from year 1 for this pillar be agreed and
6. Delegated Authority for the approach/decisions on year 1 underspends be given to the Executive Director of Economic Delivery, Skills and Communities and Executive Director of Finance and Business Hub, in consultation with West Midlands Finance Directors be agreed.

48. UK Shared Prosperity Fund - Business Support in the West Midlands

The board considered a report of the Executive Director, Economic Delivery, Skills and Communities that provided an update on progress in delivery of business support locally, utilising UK Shared Prosperity Fund and West Midlands-wide commissioned activity.

The Head of Economic Development and Delivery, Paul Edwards conveyed his thanks and appreciation to officers from the Growth Hubs and local authority officers on the task and finish group for their hard work in developing a coherent West Midlands approach to business support.

It be recommended to the WMCA Board that:

1. Progress of the task and finish working group since the December Economic Growth Board in mobilising UKSPF funded business support

activity from April 2023 be noted and

2. The agreed regional framework, ways of working between locally embedded and regional activity and commissioning of region-wide programmes for activity to commence in April 2023 be noted.

49. Economic Growth Board Work Programme

The board received a report from the Executive Director, Economic Delivery, Skills and Communities that provided an update on the work programme for the Economic Growth Board.

It be recommended to the WMCA Board that:

The work programme attached as appendix 1 to the report be noted.

The meeting ended at 4.12 pm.

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Economic Growth Board

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Date | Wednesday 12 th July 2023 |
| Report Title | Economic Growth Board – Updated Terms of Reference |
| Portfolio lead | WMCA portfolio lead for Economy and Innovation |
| Accountable Chief Executive | Laura Shoaf, West Midlands Combined Authority email: laura.shoaf@wmca.org.uk |
| Accountable Employee | Ed Cox, Executive Director, Strategy, Integration and Net Zero Email: ed.cox@wmca.org.uk |
| Report has been considered by | |

Recommendations for action or decision:

The Economic Growth Board is asked to:

- a) Note the reasons for the proposed changes to the Terms of Reference, membership and scope of EGB;
- b) Adopt revised Terms of Reference at Appendix 1;
- c) Ask WMCA Board to ratify these changes specifically the change in quorum levels;
- d) Note the structures supporting the work of EGB;

1 Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is for Economic Growth Board to adopt revised Terms of Reference and confirm membership of the Board following LEP Integration and other changes to meeting structures.

2 Background

- 2.1 Economic Growth Board (EGB) was created in 2021 ([November 2021 WMCA Board](#)) following a comprehensive review of the region's governance. This included a focus on streamlining economic governance and policymaking and establishing a more democratically accountable decision-making body.

Reasons for Change

- 2.2 During 2022/23, there have been a number of changes that affect business representation within the region and within the Combined Authority's decision-making structures. These are:
 - Integration of some LEP functions;

- The creation of the Business Insights Forum;
- The creation of the Regional Business Council;
- The integration of business support into the WMCA and LA structures (from the Growth Hubs)
- The agreeing of the Deeper Devolution Deal.

2.3 The most significant change is the integration of Local Enterprise Partnership functions into the Combined Authority. This change took place on 1st April 2023 and the WM's LEP Integration Plan was submitted to Government in January 2023. This laid out the CA's plan for embedding a strong, independent, and diverse local business voice within decision making. As part of this, it was agreed that the LEP Board nominees would be asked whether they were willing to remain as business representatives. Both of the former Chairs of the Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership (BCLEP) and Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership (C&WLEP) have agreed and return to EGB. The terms of reference have been amended to '*Business Representatives from across the region*'

Membership and voting

- 2.4 The revised Membership is as set out within the Terms of Reference at Appendix 1
- 2.5 EGB had previously agreed to widen the business membership of the Board to include a Small Business Representative. As one of our current Board members represents an SME, it is considered that a further SME rep is not required.

Quorum

2.7 EGB is one of just three decision making Boards at the WMCA. For most of 2022, it has met and not been quorate. This has meant that decisions that could have been made at EGB have to go to WMCA Board. In order to address this, it is recommended that the Quorum level is reduced from *five Constituent members* to *four voting members*. This would mean that the Mayor's presence counts towards Quorum numbers. The existing ToR was already explicit who the Voting Members are:-

"Voting Members:
Mayor (x1)
Portfolio Lead for Economy & Innovation (x1)
Nominees of the other Constituent Authorities (x6) "

2.6 In setting up EGB in November 2021, the WMCA Board was explicit that EGB could only vary its membership. It did not give permission to alter matters like quorum. WMCA Board will need to ratify any changes that fall outside of EGB's agreed powers.

Supporting Structures

- 2.9 LEP integration, the Deeper Devolution Deal and the mobilisation of the Plan for Growth has meant that there are new structures that will support the work of Economic Growth Board. These include:
- Business Insights Forum: this replaces the Covid & Brexit driven Economic Impact Group (EIG). The membership and feel of EIG is retained, but it is now a tool for planned work, rather than being dominated by emerging problems, issues and emergencies.
 - Plan for Growth (PfG) Cluster Groups: these are responsible for being the industry led cluster groups that will shape and drive progress and work .
 - Regional Business Council (RBC) – RBC remains the forum for the top locally headquartered businesses to share information and discuss issues. It is informal, but it's considerations and feedback is used to assist EGB.
 - Business Growth West Midlands Regional Operations Group: This is responsible for advising on the development of the business advice offer in the region following the integration of (2) Growth Hubs into the WMCA and local authorities.
 - Directors of Economic Development (DoED): This provides senior local authority direction to the region's strategic economic agenda, shapes EGB's work programme, supports how economic functions are discharged across the region and helps align the work of organisations.

Oversight of private sector-led advisory groups

2. 10 EGB will continue to have a role in overseeing and receiving reports from a range of private sector led regional advisory boards and will retain an interest in & support those other groups that impact upon the region's economy. These include:
- i) Innovation Board,
 - ii) Energy Capital Board
 - iii) Create Central,
 - iv) Plan for Growth Cluster leadership Groups;
 - v) Social Economy Advisory Board
 - vi) Tourism and Visitor Economy Advisory Board; and
 - vii) West Midlands Growth Company.

3 Financial Implications

- 3.1 Whilst the EGB has decision making powers (when quorate), it will not have any authority to approve WMCA incurring financial liabilities. To clarify, such decisions to incur cost will remain with the Combined Authority Board and Investment Board only.

4. Legal Implications

- 4.1 Economic Growth Board is established as a decision-making Board under the WMCA's constitution with newly adopted terms of reference.

5. Equalities Implications

- 5.1 There are no immediate negative equalities implications arising from this report.



6. Inclusive Growth Implications

- 6.1 The changes to EGB will continue to enable Inclusive Economic Growth to be at the heart of CA decision making.

7. Geographical Area of Report's Implications

- 7.1 The report refers to the former three LEP area which incorporate links with all constituent and non-constituent authorities.

8. Other implications

- 8.1 None.

APPENDIX 1

| Economic Growth Board - Terms of Reference Revised July 2023 | |
|---|---|
| Purpose | <p>To provide strong, democratically accountable leadership to the strategic oversight of the region's approach to driving green and inclusive economic growth.</p> <p>To exercise the delegated authority provided to it by the Combined Authority Board on matters of inclusive economic growth.</p> <p>The Board will have responsibility for overseeing the performance and evaluation of the region's economic strategy, monitoring and managing processes as required.</p> |
| Accountable to | WMCA Board |
| Accountable for & Receiving Reports from: | <p>Energy Capital Board Create Central, Plan for Growth Cluster leadership Groups; Social Economy Advisory Board Tourism and Visitor Economy Advisory Board; and West Midlands Growth Company</p> |
| Membership | <p>There are currently 19 members of the board:</p> <p>Voting Members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mayor (x1) • Portfolio Lead for Economy & Innovation (x1) • Nominees of the other Constituent Authorities (x6) <p>Non-Voting Members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representation of Non-Constituent Authorities (x1) • Portfolio Holder for Finance (x1) • Business Representatives from across the region x3 • Representative of Midlands TUC (x1) • Representative of West Midlands Chambers of Commerce (x1) • Chair of West Midlands Growth Company (x1) • Chair of West Midlands Innovation Board (x1) • Representative of Higher Education sector (x1) <p>Each representative will be able to send a substitute to the meeting if required.</p> |



| | |
|---------------------|---|
| | <p>EGB may recommend adding to (or varying) the membership of the Board in order to better fulfil its functions in driving green and inclusive economic growth or to reflect organisational changes in the region or nationally. Voting rights would remain unaffected, unless the EGB made a separate recommendation to change these.</p> |
| Chair | <p>Portfolio Lead for Economy & Innovation</p> <p>In the absence of the Chair, the board shall elect from amongst its voting members an Acting Chair until such time as the Chair becomes available again.</p> |
| Vice Chair | <p>Deputy Mayor</p> |
| Voting - tbc | <p>Only the voting members of the board will be entitled to vote at meetings. The Chair does not exercise a casting vote.</p> <p>Any matters that are to be decided by the Board are to be decided by consensus of the Board where possible.</p> <p>Where consensus is not possible the provisions of this section in the Constitution shall apply as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Each Member of the Combined Authority Board is to have one vote and no Member including the Chair is to have a casting vote.- Any matter put to a vote will be decided on a show of hands. A decision will require a two thirds majority of voting members present and voting |
| Quorum | <p>No business shall be transacted unless representatives of four voting members are present at a meeting.</p> |
| Frequency | <p>The board shall meet a minimum of four times a year, or more frequently as required.</p> |
| Servicing | <p>The board will be serviced by the WMCA's Governance Services team.</p> |
| Functions | <p>To exercise decision-making powers on behalf of the WMCA in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• well-being powers as set out in sections 99 and 102A of the Local Transport Act 2008 in order to promote economic growth and such powers can be exercised in conjunction with general powers granted to the Combined Authority by virtue of Section 113A of the Local Democracy Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011).• Development of a regional approach to inclusive and green economic growth policies and plans, including the development |



| | |
|---------------|---|
| | <p>and delivery of regional economic strategies, policies and plans, to be agreed with CA Board where appropriate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Delivery of a West Midlands Jobs Plan, ensuring local communities are linked to new jobs and opportunities.• Regional support to businesses, including the implementation of a new business support programme.• Regional innovation strategy and supporting programmes.• Ensure that economic strategy, and interventions flowing from it, are underpinned by a robust evidence base (including that derived from key sectors and places) which is reviewed and updated on a regular basis.• Ensure that businesses are encouraged & supported to transition to net zero• To consider and advise upon major policy change within the portfolio.• Provide leadership in developing an approach to future devolution of powers from Government to the region on matters of economic growth• Receive updates on the investment programme as it relates to the economic portfolio and also from other Boards which support the economic agenda, for example Employment and Skills, Environment, Inclusion, as appropriate.• To have oversight of the impact made by the West Midlands Growth Company (WMGC).• Report progress to the WMCA Board. <p>Support the Economy & Innovation Portfolio Holder by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Providing advice and support to WMCA activity• Helping engage with wider stakeholder networks and activity.• Identify and scale up existing good practice within the WMCA area.• Identify and secure resources to deliver new opportunities. |
| Review | Annually in June. |

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Economic Growth Board

| | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Date | Wednesday 12 th July 2023 |
| Report Title | Economic Conditions in the West Midlands |
| Portfolio lead | Portfolio Holder for Economy and Innovation |
| Accountable Chief Executive | Laura Shoaf, West Midlands Combined Authority |
| Accountable Employee | Ed Cox, Executive Director for Strategy, Integration & Net Zero. |
| Report has been considered by | |

Recommendations for action or decision:

- a) To note current economic conditions for the West Midlands, including the monthly dashboard (Appendix 1) and insight from the region’s businesses via the Business Insights Forum.

1 Purpose

- 1.1 To support the Economic Growth Board’s decision-making by providing a summary of latest quantitative economic and regional labour market intelligence and qualitative insight from West Midlands businesses via the Regional Business Council and the WM Business Insight Forum.

2 Current regional economic conditions

Economic Intelligence Unit – West Midlands Economic Dashboard June 2023.

- 2.1 The West Midlands’ Economic Dashboard is attached as Appendix 1. Compiled by the Economic Intelligence Unit, it summarises headline data covering business, place, the economy, and people in the West Midlands. Some highlights of the latest edition include:
- The **West Midlands Business Activity Index** increased from 52.8 in April 2023 to 54.2 in May 2023, the strongest increase seen since April 2022. Business activity growth was linked to better sales, capacity growth, favourable demand conditions and publicity.
 - The **West Midlands Future Business Activity Index** increased from 76.5 in April 2023 to 78.5 in May 2023. The latest reading is at a 16-month high. Optimism in West Midlands firms for the upcoming 12 months was linked to poor competitor performance, new clients, advertising, expanded capacities and investment in technology.
 - On latest **labour market numbers**, the move out of inactivity is leading to both higher employment and unemployment, though there are different methods and different timescales for the two sets of data. There were 126,240 claimants in the WMCA area in

May 2023. Since April 2023, there has been a decrease of 0.9% (-1,085) claimants in the WMCA area, while the UK decreased by 2.2%. When compared to March 2020 (pre-Coronavirus pandemic), claimants have increased by 27.1% (+26,940) in the WMCA area, with the UK increasing by 22.1%.

- There were 22,950 **youth claimants in the WMCA** (7 Met.) area in May 2023. Since April 2023, there was an increase of 0.02% (+5) youth claimants in the WMCA area, while the UK decreased by 1.7%. When compared to March 2020 (pre-Coronavirus pandemic), youth claimants have increased by 19.8% (+3,795) in the WMCA area, with the UK increasing by 11.3%.
- The latest revised figures show that **payrolled employees in the WM 7 Met.** area shows four consecutive months of growth. There were 1.23m payrolled employees in the WM 7 Met. area in May 2023. When compared to March 2020 payrolled employees were 5.1% higher (+59,199) in the WM 7 Met. area – above the UK growth of 3.8%.
- On exports – the latest export levels (£31.6bn in the year to Q1-2023) is very similar to the record level pre-pandemic (to year to Q1-2020). Within that, Europe remains the most significant market (45%, down 1 percentage point from 2020), with marginal increases in exports to the US (now 23%) and Asia (now 19%).

2.2 Economic data continues to be extremely volatile. The UK is seeing significant expansionary pressures from workers, businesses, consumers and government. While the Bank of England has increased interest rates sharply to temper demand, it isn't yet clear how that will reshape the real economy. In terms of policy implications for the Economic Growth Board, the opportunity is to use changes in the behaviour and incentives to businesses and workers to improve productivity, where persistently low levels of investment mean UK/West Midlands productivity has grown slower than peers in competitor international economies.

West Midlands Regional Economic Development Institute Monitor

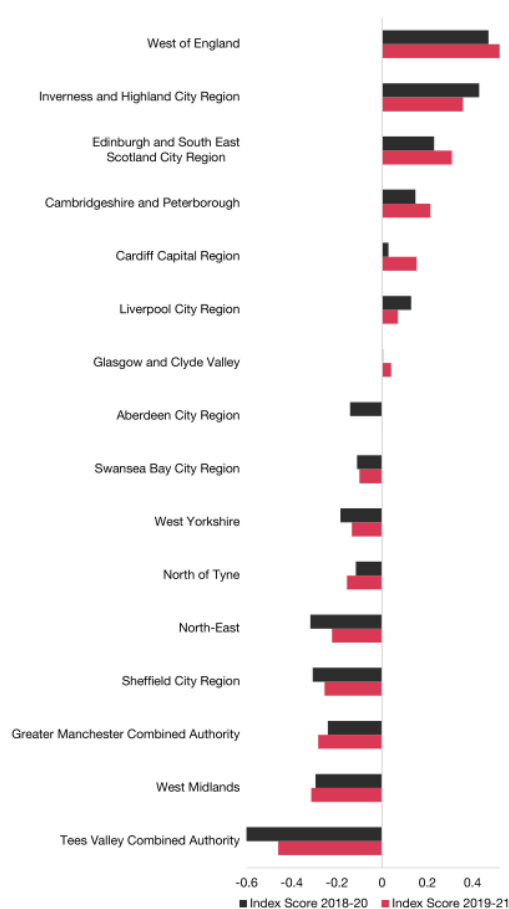
2.3 The West Midlands Regional Economic Development Institute (WM REDI) produces a monthly Monitor¹ which pulls together information across regional partners and beyond. The Monitor now includes a deep dive into data relating to a cluster from the West Midlands Plan for Growth. At the time of writing, the latest edition was published on the 9th June 2023.

- **MedTech and HealthTech in the West Midlands:** The West Midlands life sciences economy contributes £10.3 billion to the region's economy, employing around 17,000 healthcare professionals, 9,600 MedTech specialists, 4,000 bio-pharma workers and 3,000 medical device experts. With four university-based medical schools at Warwick, Aston, Birmingham and Wolverhampton, the region produces 11,000 medical science graduates every year. This is boosted by 87,000 STEM students, 22,000 of which have skills specifically aligned to healthcare and data-driven research. With residents from 190 countries, the region's talent pool is also highly diverse, multicultural, and multilingual. There are over 600 healthcare and life sciences businesses in the West Midlands area. The West Midlands has key strengths in Diagnostics, Digital Health and Medical Devices – all driven by access to digitised patient data and highly advanced technologies – the region has additional expertise in specialist health disciplines including cell & gene therapy, genomics and clinical trials.

¹ <https://blog.bham.ac.uk/cityredi/west-midlands-economic-impact-monitor-9th-june-2023/>

- Demos-PwC Good Growth Cities:** This report looks at what matters to people across a range of measures (including jobs, income, health, skills, work-life balance, housing, transport and the environment). It found that people in the West Midlands place the highest weighting on health and the second highest weighting on employment rates, with the second lowest weighting placed on income distribution. Aside from these three variables, the West Midlands aligns fairly closely with national average weightings. The West Midlands exposure to economic headwinds during the pandemic, EU exit and energy shocks have been captured in the 2022 index analysis:

2022 Good Growth index score by Combined Authority area



- Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) West Midlands Quarterly Small Businesses Index Q1 2023:** Research by the FSB shows that confidence levels amongst West Midlands Small Business owners is at its highest level for a year and ahead of the UK average. Key findings include:
 - On revenue generation, the position has moved from negative to neutral, with 34% of firms now reporting an increase, the same number as reporting a decrease. Meanwhile the outlook for future profits is really positive, with almost twice the number of respondents expecting an increase (41%) than expect a decline (22%).
 - Half (50%) of SMEs expect to grow in the next 12 months, compared to just 1 in 20 (5%) who expect to downsize, sell or close their business. Plus, marginally more expect to increase capital investment in their business (21%) than expect to decrease it (17%) during the coming quarter.

- It's a slightly more mixed picture for employment and wage growth. For while the overwhelming majority of firms (81%) reported that staff levels had remained unchanged, more than 1 in 10 (12%) had reduced employee numbers and only 1 in 20 (5%) had increased them.
- The greatest perceived barriers to growth over the next year remain the general economic conditions in the UK (73%), followed by rising utility costs (38%) and increasing labour costs (27%).

Direct insight from businesses and business groups

WM Business Insight Forum

2.4 In April the Economic Impact Group evolved to the WM Business Insight Forum. Meeting monthly, the group includes a broad base of business representative groups and partners, focused on the WM Plan for Growth and providing real-time feedback about key barriers faced by businesses in the region. Recent highlights include:

Updates on the clusters from the WM Plan for Growth: Each meeting has included an update on activity within a single cluster, with “Manufacturing of Electric Light Vehicles”, “Creative Content Production and Gaming” and “Healthtech and Medtech” covered in the last three months. These have shared information about cluster priorities, work undertaken/underway to support the development of the cluster and connections with supply-side interventions such as upskilling the workforce and innovation. Perhaps most importantly, these updates have also helped clusters highlight ongoing pressures, such as supply chain issues, wages, and skills shortages.

WM5G: deliveries in 2022-2023 and priorities for 2023: The WM BIF received an overview of how 5G coverage and connectivity had improved over the course of the year and the number of SME’s adopting digital technology into their businesses in the West Midlands. The update concluded on the priorities for the following year which were supporting the creation and delivery of the WMCA digital roadmap, continuing to increase the 5G coverage in the West Midlands, and supporting the development of medical and health technology.

WM Tech Commissioner: Members were introduced to the newly appointed WM Tech Commissioner. The Tech Commissioner advised that their priorities for the role related to supporting tech-centric businesses and their associated ecosystem, increasing productivity for non-tech-centric businesses and finally the digital transformation of the public sector.

Regional Business Council

2.5 The Regional Business Council on 9th March 2023 covered:

- Progress against the West Midlands Devolution Deal, its implications for the West Midlands Combined Authority, and benefits for the region.
- Investment readiness of SMEs in the West Midlands and what sort of products could be produced to help boost scaling up SMEs in the region.
- Insights about consumer activity across the various sectors covered by business council members. The general consensus was that consumers were cutting back on non-essentials rather than dip into savings.
- Impact of major events on West Midlands economy, including the Montreal COP15 and MIPIM 2023.

2.6 The Regional Business Council on the 11th May 2023 covered:

- The final position on the West Midlands Devolution Deal, worth around £1.5bn to the region through a mix of short- and longer-term funding.
- The region's Investment Prospectus 2023 was launched at UKREIIF 2023 for investible opportunities with a gross development value of £20bn.
- A roundtable about private sector investment appetite in the West Midlands in the aftermath of the collapse of Silicon Valley Bank and Credit Suisse in March 2023. It was concluded that appetite largely depended on the sector but in general investors were still open for the right asset class and credit.
- The meeting concluded with a presentation on workstream related to bringing major events to the West Midlands, led by the West Midlands Growth Company. Members were keen to support this programme in whatever way they could.

4 Financial Implications

- 4.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

6. Equalities Implications

- 6.1 There are no immediate equalities implications arising from this report.

7. Inclusive Growth Implications

- 7.1 Presentation of up to date and current data on the state of the West Midlands economy, workforce and population will allow EGB to recommend and agree actions to address inclusive growth needs.

8. Geographical Area of Report's Implications

- 8.1 The report refers to data across different economic geographies, as described in the report.

8. Other implications

- 8.1 None.

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Monthly/Quarterly Business Dashboard

| Themes | Indicator | May 2022 | June 2022 | July 2022 | August 2022 | September 2022 | October 2022 | November 2022 | December 2022 | January 2023 | February 2023 | March 2023 | April 2023 | May 2023 | Trend | Relative to Peer Group ¹ | Commentary | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|--------------|------------|------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|------------|--|---|-------------------------------------|------------|----------|----------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|--|---|--|------------|--|------------|------------|------------|------------|--|------------|------------|------------|------------|--|-----|---|
| Business | Regional Business Activity Index ² (monthly update) | 49.7 | 51.1 | 50.3 | 49.3 | 47.8 | 49.6 | 48.8 | 48.9 | 49.0 | 53.0 | 52.7 | 52.8 | 54.2 | <table border="1"> <tr><th>May 2019</th><th>May 2020</th><th>May 2021</th><th>May 2022</th><th>May 2023</th></tr> <tr><td>50.7</td><td>27.9</td><td>65.5</td><td>49.7</td><td>54.2</td></tr> </table> | May 2019 | May 2020 | May 2021 | May 2022 | May 2023 | 50.7 | 27.9 | 65.5 | 49.7 | 54.2 | WM: 3 rd Highest Region UK: 54.0 London: 58.5 (1 st) Wales: 49.4 (12 th) | The West Midlands Business Activity Index increased from 52.8 in April 2023 to 54.2 in May 2023, the strongest increase seen since April 2022. Business activity growth was linked to better sales, capacity growth, favourable demand conditions and publicity. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | May 2019 | May 2020 | May 2021 | May 2022 | May 2023 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 50.7 | 27.9 | 65.5 | 49.7 | 54.2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Regional Future Business Activity Index ³ (monthly update) | 66.1 | 70.3 | 68.3 | 67.8 | 64.4 | 60.7 | 64.7 | 65.3 | 76.5 | 78.4 | 78.0 | 76.5 | 78.5 | <table border="1"> <tr><th>May 2019</th><th>May 2020</th><th>May 2021</th><th>May 2022</th><th>May 2023</th></tr> <tr><td>69.5</td><td>61.1</td><td>83.6</td><td>66.1</td><td>78.5</td></tr> </table> | May 2019 | May 2020 | May 2021 | May 2022 | May 2023 | 69.5 | 61.1 | 83.6 | 66.1 | 78.5 | WM: Highest Region East of England: 74.8 (2 nd) Northern Ireland: 59.4 (12 th) | The West Midlands Future Business Activity Index increased from 76.5 in April 2023 to 78.5 in May 2023. The latest reading is at a 16-month high. Optimism in West Midlands firms for the upcoming 12 months was linked to poor competitor performance, new clients, advertising, expanded capacities and investment in technology. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| May 2019 | May 2020 | May 2021 | May 2022 | May 2023 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 69.5 | 61.1 | 83.6 | 66.1 | 78.5 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| National Business Investment ⁴ (monthly – update due 30 th June 2023, revised) | | £55.8bn (Q2) | | | £55.9bn (Q3) | | | | £55.8bn (Q4) | | | £56.2bn (Q1) | | <table border="1"> <tr><th>2019</th><th>2020</th><th>2021</th><th>2022</th><th>2023</th></tr> <tr><td>£55.8bn Q1</td><td>£55.5bn Q1</td><td>£47.6bn Q1</td><td>£54.5bn Q1</td><td>£56.2bn Q1</td></tr> <tr><td>£55.9bn Q2</td><td>£44.0bn Q2</td><td>£50.6bn Q2</td><td>£55.8bn Q2</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>£56.6bn Q3</td><td>£48.8bn Q3</td><td>£51.7bn Q3</td><td>£55.9bn Q3</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>£57.0bn Q4</td><td>£50.2bn Q4</td><td>£50.3bn Q4</td><td>£55.8bn Q4</td><td></td></tr> </table> | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | £55.8bn Q1 | £55.5bn Q1 | £47.6bn Q1 | £54.5bn Q1 | £56.2bn Q1 | £55.9bn Q2 | £44.0bn Q2 | £50.6bn Q2 | £55.8bn Q2 | | £56.6bn Q3 | £48.8bn Q3 | £51.7bn Q3 | £55.9bn Q3 | | £57.0bn Q4 | £50.2bn Q4 | £50.3bn Q4 | £55.8bn Q4 | | N/A | Provisional figures show that UK business investment increased on the quarter by 0.7% in Quarter 1 2023 to £56.2bn and is 3.2% higher when compared to Quarter 1 2022. The level of business investment in Quarter 1 2023 was 1.4% below where it was in Quarter 4 2019 (the quarter before the coronavirus pandemic). |
| 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| £55.8bn Q1 | £55.5bn Q1 | £47.6bn Q1 | £54.5bn Q1 | £56.2bn Q1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| £55.9bn Q2 | £44.0bn Q2 | £50.6bn Q2 | £55.8bn Q2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| £56.6bn Q3 | £48.8bn Q3 | £51.7bn Q3 | £55.9bn Q3 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| £57.0bn Q4 | £50.2bn Q4 | £50.3bn Q4 | £55.8bn Q4 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

The Dashboard has been updated to reflect the WMCA 7 Met. geography where available (due to data availability, FDI jobs and projects indicators have remained as WMCA 3 LEP geography). The dashboard has been RAG rated based on; Red indicating a decline in performance, Amber where they have been an improvement in performance and Green indicators an improvement above UK-wide (excluding the UK-wide indicator where they are either green or red depending on change each quarter and business activity and future business activity where amber shows a decline in performance but above the 50-growth mark and green indicators continually increases).

¹ Comparisons vary depending on geography; Birmingham has been compared to Bristol, Cardiff, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester and Newcastle. Due to data availability, the WM 7 Met. has been either compared to other combined authorities (following what is available Greater London Authority is not always included), (combined authorities are Greater Manchester CA (GMCA), Sheffield City Region, West Yorkshire CA, Liverpool City Region CA, Tees Valley CA, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough CA, West of England CA, North East CA and North of Tyne CA) or NUTS 2 geography. The West Midlands region has been compared to other regions in the UK. No comparators have been included for UK-wide.

² NatWest, UK regional PMI report for May 2023 (UK version) – released June 2023.

³ NatWest, UK regional PMI report for May 2023 (UK version) – released June 2023.

⁴ Office for National Statistics (ONS), Business investment in the UK: January to March 2023 provisional results – released May 2023

WMCA ECONOMIC DASHBOARD – JUNE 2023

| Themes | Indicator | May 2022 | June 2022 | July 2022 | August 2022 | September 2022 | October 2022 | November 2022 | December 2022 | January 2023 | February 2023 | March 2023 | April 2023 | May 2023 | Trend | Relative to Peer Group ¹ | Commentary | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------|---|----------|------------|-----------|-------------|----------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|------------|------------|----------|---|-------------------------------------|------------|---------|---------|---------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--|--|
| | WMCA (7 Met.) Enterprise Deaths ⁵ (quarterly – update due Aug 2023 TBC) | | 3,975 (Q2) | | | 3,275 (Q3) | | | 3,520 (Q4) | | | 5,425 (Q1) | | | <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Q1 2019</th> <th>Q1 2020</th> <th>Q1 2021</th> <th>Q1 2022</th> <th>Q1 2023</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>3,460</td> <td>3,660</td> <td>3,120</td> <td>4,725</td> <td>5,425</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | Q1 2019 | Q1 2020 | Q1 2021 | Q1 2022 | Q1 2023 | 3,460 | 3,660 | 3,120 | 4,725 | 5,425 | WMCA: Highest CA GMCA: 4,930 (2 nd) Tees Valley: 790 (10 th) | The number of business deaths in the WMCA area in Q1 2023 was 5,425. This figure is 15% higher than the number of business deaths in Q1 2022 and is the highest number of business deaths in any quarter since the start of this data series in 2017. It is the first time business deaths have surpassed 5,000 in one single quarter. Quarter on quarter analysis (between Q4 2022 and Q1 2023) showed a 54% increase in business deaths across the WMCA area. |
| Q1 2019 | Q1 2020 | Q1 2021 | Q1 2022 | Q1 2023 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3,460 | 3,660 | 3,120 | 4,725 | 5,425 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Business | WMCA (7 Met.) Enterprise Births ⁶ (quarterly – update due Aug 2023 TBC) | | 3,970 (Q2) | | | 3,190 (Q3) | | | 3,115 (Q4) | | | 3,305 (Q1) | | | <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Q1 2019</th> <th>Q1 2020</th> <th>Q1 2021</th> <th>Q1 2022</th> <th>Q1 2023</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>3,875</td> <td>3,350</td> <td>4,335</td> <td>4,850</td> <td>3,305</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | Q1 2019 | Q1 2020 | Q1 2021 | Q1 2022 | Q1 2023 | 3,875 | 3,350 | 4,335 | 4,850 | 3,305 | WMCA: 2 nd Highest CA GMCA: 3,615 (1 st) Tees Valley: 630 (10 th) | The number of business births in the WMCA area in Q1 2023 was 3,305. This figure is 32% lower than the number of business births in Q1 2022 and is the lowest number of business births in a first quarter since the start of this data series in 2017. More positively, quarter on quarter analysis (between Q4 2022 and Q1 2023) showed a 6.1% increase in business births across the WMCA area. |
| Q1 2019 | Q1 2020 | Q1 2021 | Q1 2022 | Q1 2023 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3,875 | 3,350 | 4,335 | 4,850 | 3,305 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

⁵ ONS, Business demography, quarterly experimental statistics, low-level geographic breakdown, UK – released May 2023 (RAG rating based on quarterly change)

⁶ ONS, Business demography, quarterly experimental statistics, low-level geographic breakdown, UK – released May 2023 (RAG rating based on quarterly change)

Annual Business Dashboard

| Themes | Indicator | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | Trend | Relative to Peer Group | Commentary |
|----------|--|--------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------|---|---|
| Business | WMCA (7 Met.) High Growth Enterprises ⁷ (annual – update due Nov 2023) | 430 | 455 | 415 | 380 | 340 | | WMCA: 2 nd Highest CA GMCA: 460 (1 st) Tees Valley: 80 (10 th) | The latest available data for the WMCA area shows that the number of high growth enterprises has decreased further, from 380 in 2020 to 340 in 2021. This equates to a decrease of 10.5% (-60 enterprises), which was below the UK decrease of 11.2%. The number of high growth enterprises has now decreased in each of the last 3 years, perhaps somewhat unexpected given major economic shocks. |
| | WMCA (7 Met.) Enterprise Births ⁸ (annual – update due Nov 2023) | 13,795 | 15,785 | 15,310 | 14,125 | 16,550 | | WMCA: 2 nd Highest CA GMCA: 17,510 (1 st) Tees Valley: 2,620 (10 th) | In the WMCA area, there were 16,550 enterprise births in 2021. This represents an increase compared to 2020 above the national average (+17.2% compared to +9.3% across the UK) and are above pre-Covid-19 levels (15,310 births in 2019). |
| | WMCA (7 Met.) Enterprise Deaths ⁹ (annual – update due Nov 2023) | 13,735 | 13,670 | 12,080 | 13,745 | 13,220 | | WMCA: 2 nd Highest CA GMCA: 14,410 (1 st) Tees Valley: 2,250 (10 th) | Enterprise deaths in the WMCA area decreased by 3.8% (-525 deaths) since 2020 to 13,220 in 2021. While in contrast, the UK increased by 9.4%. |
| | WMCA (7 Met.) 3 Year Enterprise Survival Rates ¹⁰ (annual – update due Nov 2023) | | 52.8% (2015 birth) | 43.4% (2016 birth) | 47.7% (2017 birth) | 46.9% (2018 birth) | | WMCA: Lowest CA UK: 57.6% West of England: 63.3% (1 st) GMCA: 51.9% (9 th) | The WMCA area performs better on short-term survival (1 year enterprise survival rates are higher than the UK average), but lags behind when it comes to longer-term survival (2-5 years enterprise survival rates in the UK are higher than in the West Midlands). Of the 15,785 enterprise births in 2018 in the WMCA area, 46.9% (7,405) were still active after 3 years compared to 57.6% for the UK. |
| | WM 7 Met. Innovation Active Businesses ¹¹ (Biennial – update due May 2024) | | 36.8% (2016-18) | | 45.0% (2018-20) | | | WM 7 Met.: Joint 17 th (with Kent and Northumberland & Tyne & Wear) / 40 UK: 44.9% Inner London-East: 58.9% (1 st) Highlands and Islands: 38.9% (40 th) | Prior to 2016-18, the WM 7 Met. area had more “innovation active” businesses than UK-wide proportions. There was a notable drop in 2016-18 which reflected national trends and the WM 7 Met. figure dropped below the UK (36.8% vs 37.6%). The latest available data shows the WM 7 Met. area has rebounded and was narrowly back above the UK-wide figure (45.0% vs 44.9%). |

⁷ ONS, Business Demography, UK 2021 – released November 2022

⁸ ONS, Business Demography, UK 2021 – released November 2022

⁹ ONS, Business Demography, UK 2021 – released November 2022

¹⁰ ONS, Business Demography, UK 2021 – released November 2022

¹¹ Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, UK Innovation Survey 2021 – released May 2022

Quarterly Place Dashboard

| Themes | Indicator | March 2022 | April 2022 | May 2022 | June 2022 | July 2022 | August 2022 | September 2022 | October 2022 | November 2022 | December 2022 | January 2023 | February 2023 | March 2023 | Trend | Relative to Peer Group | Commentary | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------|---|-----------------------|------------|------------------------|-----------------------|-----------|-------------|------------------------|--------------|---------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------|---------------|-----------------------|---|---|--|------|------|------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|--|---|---|
| Place | Birmingham City Centre Rent ¹² (Quarterly – update due Sep 2023) | £39.00 Per Sq ft (Q1) | | | £39.00 Per Sq ft (Q2) | | | £40.00 Per Sq ft (Q3) | | | £40.00 Per Sq ft (Q4) | | | £40.00 Per Sq ft (Q1) | <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>2019</th> <th>2020</th> <th>2021</th> <th>2022</th> <th>2023</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>£33.00 Q1</td> <td>£34.50 Q1</td> <td>£37.00 Q1</td> <td>£39.00 Q1</td> <td>£40.00 Q1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>£34.00 Q2</td> <td>£37.00 Q2</td> <td>£37.00 Q2</td> <td>£39.00 Q2</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>£34.00 Q3</td> <td>£37.00 Q3</td> <td>£37.50 Q3</td> <td>£40.00 Q3</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>£34.50 Q4</td> <td>£37.00 Q4</td> <td>£37.50 Q4</td> <td>£40.00 Q4</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | £33.00 Q1 | £34.50 Q1 | £37.00 Q1 | £39.00 Q1 | £40.00 Q1 | £34.00 Q2 | £37.00 Q2 | £37.00 Q2 | £39.00 Q2 | | £34.00 Q3 | £37.00 Q3 | £37.50 Q3 | £40.00 Q3 | | £34.50 Q4 | £37.00 Q4 | £37.50 Q4 | £40.00 Q4 | | Birmingham: Joint 2 nd / 9 Bristol: £42.50 (1 st) Cardiff: £25.00 (9 th) | The city's prime rent remains at £40.00 per Sq ft, up just 2.6% on last year. |
| | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| £33.00 Q1 | £34.50 Q1 | £37.00 Q1 | £39.00 Q1 | £40.00 Q1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| £34.00 Q2 | £37.00 Q2 | £37.00 Q2 | £39.00 Q2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| £34.00 Q3 | £37.00 Q3 | £37.50 Q3 | £40.00 Q3 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| £34.50 Q4 | £37.00 Q4 | £37.50 Q4 | £40.00 Q4 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | WMCA (7 Met.) Gigabit broadband Connectivity ¹³ (tri-annual – update due Autumn 2023) | | | 84.0% (As of May 2022) | | | | 88.7% (As of Sep 2022) | | | | 90.1% premises (As of Jan 2023) | | | | WMCA: 2 nd Highest CA UK: 71.9% Tees Valley: 90.4% (1 st) North East: 67.5% (10 th) | As of January 2023, 90.1% of premises in the WMCA area had gigabit broadband availability - significantly above the UK-wide figure of 71.9%. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

¹² Avison Young, The Big Nine – created June 2023
¹³ Ofcom, connected nations – released May 2023 (RAG rating based on quarterly change)

Quarterly Economy Dashboard

| Themes | Indicator | March 2022 | April 2022 | May 2022 | June 2022 | July 2022 | August 2022 | September 2022 | October 2022 | November 2022 | December 2022 | January 2023 | February 2023 | March 2023 | Trend | Relative to Peer Group | Commentary |
|---------|--|------------------------------|------------|----------|------------------------------|-----------|-------------|------------------------------|--------------|---------------|-----------------------------|--------------|---------------|------------------------------|-------|---|---|
| Economy | Regional GDP ¹⁴ (quarterly – update due TBC) | 97.4 (2019=100) (Q1) | | | 97.9 (2019=100) (Q2) | | | 97.2 (2019=100) (Q2) | | | | | | | | WM – Lowest Region England: 100.7 London: 104.2 (1 st) East Midlands: 98.0 (9 th) (Indexed to 2019 = 100) | Utilising a base year of 2019, in Q2 2022, the quarterly GDP indices for the West Midlands was 97.2, a decrease from 97.9 in the previous quarter. Quarter on Quarter analysis shows for the West Midlands region, GDP contracted by 0.6% in Quarter 3 2022, while England-wide was flat of 0.0%. |
| | Regional Exports in Goods ¹⁵ (quarterly – update due Sep 2023) | £25.8bn (Year to Q1 2022) | | | £26.5bn (Year to Q2 2022) | | | £28.0bn (Year to Q3 2022) | | | £29.9bn (Full Year 2022) | | | £31.6bn (Year to Q1 2023) | | WM – 6 th Highest Region London: 12.2% (1 st) Northern Ireland: 2.6% (12 th) | In the year ending Q1 2023, the West Midlands region's export in goods value was worth £31.6bn, an increase of £5.7bn (+22.2%) since the year ending Q1 2022. The UK increased by 17.2% to £380.6bn worth of exports. The West Midlands had a trade deficit of £11.1bn in the year ending Q1 2023. |

¹⁴ ONS, GDP, UK regions and countries: July to September 2022 – released May 2023

¹⁵ HMRC, UK regional trade in goods statistics – released June 2023

Annual Economy Dashboard

| Themes | Indicator | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | Trend | Relative to Peer Group | Commentary | |
|---------|---|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------|--|--|---|
| Economy | Regional Gross Domestic Expenditure on R&D ¹⁶ (update tbc) | £3bn | £3.3bn | £2.9bn | | | | WM Region: 7.6% of UK total - 5 th Highest South East: 19.5% (1 st) North East: 1.9% (12 th) | The latest available data shows that there was a decline in expenditure for R&D in the West Midlands region (-11.2%, UK-wide +3.4%) to £2.9bn. Of the 2.9bn West Midlands expenditure on R&D in 2019, £76m was for Government & UKRI, £470m for higher education, nearly £2.4bn for business and £14m for private non-profit. | |
| | Regional Business Enterprise on R&D ¹⁷ (update tbc) | £2.5bn | £2.7bn | £2.4bn | £2.3bn | | | WM Region: 8.4% of UK total - 4 th Highest East of England: 21.7% (1 st) North East: 1.6% (12 th) | Prior to 2018, business R&D was steadily increasing in the West Midlands region. The latest data shows that between 2018 and 2019 the West Midlands there was a decline of 13.7% in business R&D (UK-wide +3.4%) and between 2019 and 2020 there was a decline of 4.6% (UK-wide +3.5%). | |
| | WMCA (3 LEP) FDI Projects ¹⁸ (annual – update due Jun/Jul 2023) | 140 (2017/18) | 131 (2018/19) | 130 (2019/20) | 118 (2020/21) | 132 (2021/22) | | | | In total there has been 1,286 FDI projects from 2011/12 to 2021/22 in the WMCA (3 LEP) area. Data shows for 2021/22 there were 132 FDI projects to the WMCA (3 LEP) area, an increase of 11.9% (+14) compared to an increase of 3.3% for the UK since 2020/21. |
| | WMCA (3 LEP) FDI New Jobs ¹⁹ (annual – update due Jun/Jul 2023) | 7,933 (2017/18) | 4,666 (2018/19) | 3,558 (2019/20) | 4,183 (2020/21) | 4,176 (2021/22) | | | | In total there has been 62,467 new jobs created from FDI projects from 2011/12 to 2021/22 in the WMCA (3 LEP) area. Data shows for 2021/22 there were 4,176 new jobs in the WMCA (3 LEP) area, a decrease of 0.2% (-7) compared to an increase of 53.2% for the UK since 2020/21. |

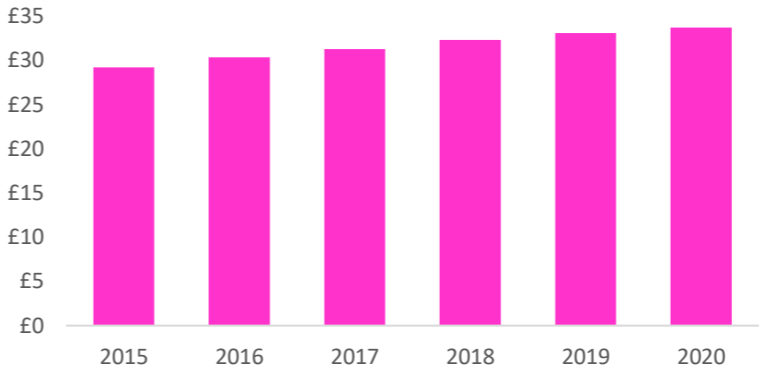
¹⁶ ONS, Gross domestic expenditure on research and development – released August 2021 (new data includes the South West and the East Midlands with the West Midlands – further work is being undertaken)

¹⁷ ONS, Business enterprise research and development – released November 2021 (new data includes the South West and the East Midlands with the West Midlands – further work is being undertaken)

¹⁸ Department for International Trade, inward investment - released July 2022

¹⁹ Department for International Trade, inward investment – released July 2022

WMCA ECONOMIC DASHBOARD – JUNE 2023

| Themes | Indicator | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | Trend | Relative to Peer Group | Commentary |
|---------|---|--------|--------|--------|--------|------|---|--|--|
| Economy | WM 7 Met. GVA per Hour ²⁰ (Annual – TBC update due June 2023) | £31.28 | £32.31 | £33.11 | £33.70 | |  <p>£35 £30 £25 £20 £15 £10 £5 £0</p> <p>2015 2016 2017 2018 2019 2020</p> | <p>WM 7 Met.: 5th Highest CA / 11 Greater London Authority: £50.70 (1st) Sheffield City Region: £28.84 (11th)</p> | <p>Smoothed GVA per hour worked for the WM 7 Met. area increased by 1.8% (+£0.59) since 2019 to reach £33.70 in 2020, the UK increased by 2.1% (+£0.78 to £37.73). The WM 7 Met. area had a shortfall of £4.03 to the UK-wide rate in 2020, reflecting regional disparities in productivity.</p> |

²⁰ ONS, subregional productivity in the UK – released July 2022

WMCA ECONOMIC DASHBOARD – JUNE 2023

Monthly People Dashboard

| Themes | Indicator | May 2022 | June 2022 | July 2022 | August 2022 | September 2022 | October 2022 | November 2022 | December 2022 | January 2023 | February 2023 | March 2023 | April 2023 | May 2023 | Trend | Relative to Peer Group | Commentary | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|---|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|--|------------------------|------------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|--|---|--|---|--|
| People | WMCA (7 Met.) Claimants (16+) ²¹ (monthly update) | 124,860 (6.8% of Pop. aged 16-64) | 123,120 (6.7% of Pop. aged 16-64) | 121,290 (6.6% of Pop. aged 16-64) | 120,850 (6.6% of Pop. aged 16-64) | 120,045 (6.5% of Pop. aged 16-64) | 118,890 (6.5% of Pop. aged 16-64) | 120,155 (6.5% of Pop. aged 16-64) | 120,795 (6.6% of Pop. aged 16-64) | 119,470 (6.5% of Pop. aged 16-64) | 120,960 (6.6% of Pop. aged 16-64) | 123,900 (6.7% of Pop. aged 16-64) | 127,325 (6.9% of Pop. aged 16-64) | 126,240 (6.9% of Pop. aged 16-64) | <table border="1"> <tr> <th>May 2019</th> <th>May 2020</th> <th>May 2021</th> <th>May 2022</th> <th>May 2023</th> </tr> <tr> <td>86,825</td> <td>165,605</td> <td>166,360</td> <td>124,860</td> <td>126,240</td> </tr> </table> | May 2019 | May 2020 | May 2021 | May 2022 | May 2023 | 86,825 | 165,605 | 166,360 | 124,860 | 126,240 | WMCA: Highest CA UK: 3.7% GMCA: 5.0% (2 nd) West of England: 2.6% (10 th) | There were 126,240 claimants in the WMCA area in May 2023. Since April 2023, there has been a decrease of 0.9% (-1,085) claimants in the WMCA area, while the UK decreased by 2.2%. When compared to March 2020 (pre-Coronavirus pandemic), claimants have increased by 27.1% (+26,940) in the WMCA area, with the UK increasing by 22.1%. | | |
| | May 2019 | May 2020 | May 2021 | May 2022 | May 2023 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 86,825 | 165,605 | 166,360 | 124,860 | 126,240 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | WMCA (7 Met.) Youth Claimants (18-24) ²² (monthly update) | 20,960 (7.4% of Pop. aged 18-24) | 20,675 (7.3% of Pop. aged 18-24) | 20,775 (7.3% of Pop. aged 18-24) | 21,080 (7.4% of Pop. aged 18-24) | 21,105 (7.4% of Pop. aged 18-24) | 21,270 (7.5% of Pop. aged 18-24) | 21,615 (7.6% of Pop. aged 18-24) | 21,770 (7.7% of Pop. aged 18-24) | 21,490 (7.6% of Pop. aged 18-24) | 22,150 (7.8% of Pop. aged 18-24) | 22,725 (8.0% of Pop. aged 18-24) | 22,945 (8.1% of Pop. aged 18-24) | 22,950 (8.1% of Pop. aged 18-24) | <table border="1"> <tr> <th>May 2019</th> <th>May 2020</th> <th>May 2021</th> <th>May 2022</th> <th>May 2023</th> </tr> <tr> <td>16,355</td> <td>32,735</td> <td>32,675</td> <td>20,960</td> <td>22,950</td> </tr> </table> | May 2019 | May 2020 | May 2021 | May 2022 | May 2023 | 16,355 | 32,735 | 32,675 | 20,960 | 22,950 | WMCA: Highest CA UK: 4.8% Tees Valley: 8.0% (2 nd) West of England: 2.3% (10 th) | There were 22,950 youth claimants in the WMCA (7 Met.) area in May 2023. Since April 2023, there was an increase of 0.02% (+5) youth claimants in the WMCA area, while the UK decreased by 1.7%. When compared to March 2020 (pre-Coronavirus pandemic), youth claimants have increased by 19.8% (+3,795) in the WMCA area, with the UK increasing by 11.3%. | | |
| May 2019 | May 2020 | May 2021 | May 2022 | May 2023 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 16,355 | 32,735 | 32,675 | 20,960 | 22,950 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| WM 7 Met. Payrolled Employees ²³ (monthly update) | 1,204,713 | 1,210,474 | 1,215,812 | 1,212,500 | 1,217,140 | 1,223,842 | 1,234,940 | 1,232,403 | 1,220,178 | 1,219,815 | 1,221,093 | 1,221,883 | 1,228,374 | <table border="1"> <tr> <th>May 2019</th> <th>May 2020</th> <th>May 2021</th> <th>May 2022</th> <th>May 2023</th> </tr> <tr> <td>1,161,605</td> <td>1,147,331</td> <td>1,154,408</td> <td>1,204,713</td> <td>1,228,374</td> </tr> </table> | May 2019 | May 2020 | May 2021 | May 2022 | May 2023 | 1,161,605 | 1,147,331 | 1,154,408 | 1,204,713 | 1,228,374 | WM 7 Met.: 3 rd Highest NUTS 2 / 41 Surrey, East & West Sussex: 1,297,099 (1 st) Highlands & Islands: 207,090 (41 st) | The latest revised figures show that payrolled employees in the WM 7 Met. area shows four consecutive months of growth. There were 1.23m payrolled employees in the WM 7 Met. area in May 2023. When compared to March 2020 payrolled employees were 5.1% higher (+59,199) in the WM 7 Met. area – above the UK growth of 3.8%. | | | |
| May 2019 | May 2020 | May 2021 | May 2022 | May 2023 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1,161,605 | 1,147,331 | 1,154,408 | 1,204,713 | 1,228,374 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| WMCA (7 Met.) Employment Rate ²⁴ (quarterly – update due Jul 2023) | | 69.3% (Year Ending Jun 2022) | | | 68.9% (Year Ending Sep 2022) | | | | 69.2% (Full Year 2022) | | | | | | <table border="1"> <tr> <th>2017</th> <th>2018</th> <th>2019</th> <th>2020</th> <th>2021</th> <th>2022</th> </tr> <tr> <td>~67.5%</td> <td>~68.5%</td> <td>~69.5%</td> <td>~70.5%</td> <td>~70.5%</td> <td>69.2%</td> </tr> </table> | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | ~67.5% | ~68.5% | ~69.5% | ~70.5% | ~70.5% | 69.2% | WMCA: Lowest CA UK: 75.5% Cambridgeshire & Peterborough: 80.1% (1 st) North East: 69.2% (9 th) | In 2022, the employment rate in the WMCA area was 69.2%, compared to 75.5% for UK-wide. The employment rate for the WMCA area decreased by 0.6pp when compared to 2021. The UK employment rate increased by 0.8pp over the same time period. For the WMCA area to reach the UK rate of 75.5%, an additional 116,182 people are required. |
| 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| ~67.5% | ~68.5% | ~69.5% | ~70.5% | ~70.5% | 69.2% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

²¹ ONS/DWP, claimant count – released June 2023
²² ONS/DWP, claimant count – released June 2023
²³ ONS, labour market in the regions of the UK – released June 2023
²⁴ ONS, Annual Population Survey – released April 2023

WMCA ECONOMIC DASHBOARD – JUNE 2023

| Themes | Indicator | May 2022 | June 2022 | July 2022 | August 2022 | September 2022 | October 2022 | November 2022 | December 2022 | January 2023 | February 2023 | March 2023 | April 2023 | May 2023 | Trend | Relative to Peer Group | Commentary |
|--------|---|----------|------------------------------|-----------|-------------|------------------------------|--------------|---------------|------------------------|--------------|---------------|------------|------------|----------|-------|--|---|
| People | WMCA (7 Met.) Economic Inactivity Rate ²⁵ (quarterly – update due Jul 2023) | | 25.9% (Year Ending Jun 2022) | | | 26.1% (Year Ending Sep 2022) | | | 23.3% (Full Year 2022) | | | | | | | WMCA: Joint Highest CA (with North of Tyne) UK: 21.7% North East: 26.0% (3 rd) Cambridgeshire & Peterborough: 17.5% (10 th) | The economic inactivity rate for the WMCA area was 23.3% compared to 21.7% UK-wide in 2022. This has increased by 1.2pp for the WMCA area while the UK remained the same level since 2021. In 2022, the WMCA had a higher percentage of people that were inactive when compared to the UK in four categories; students (29.3% vs 26.3%), looking after the family/home (26.4% vs 19.7%), temporary sick (2.4% vs 2.3%) and discouraged (0.9% vs 0.3%). |
| | WMCA (7 Met.) Modelled Unemployment ²⁶ (quarterly – update due Jul 2023) | | 6.4% (Year Ending Jun 2022) | | | 6.7% (Year Ending Sep 2022) | | | 6.2% (Full Year 2022) | | | | | | | WMCA: Highest CA England: 3.6% Greater Manchester: 5.0% (2 nd) West of England: 2.6% (10 th) | The modelled figures show for the WMCA area that unemployment rate was 6.2% compared to 3.6% for England in 2022. This equated to a decrease of 0.8pp for the WMCA and for England-wide there was a decrease of 0.9pp when compared to 2021. |
| | WMCA (7 Met.) Economic Activity Rate ²⁷ (quarterly – update due Jul 2023) | | 74.1% (Year Ending Jun 2022) | | | 73.9% (Year Ending Sep 2022) | | | 73.9% (Full Year 2022) | | | | | | | WMCA: Joint Lowest CA (with North of Tyne) UK: 78.3% Cambridgeshire & Peterborough: 83.5% (1 st) North East: 74% (8 th) | In 2022, the economic activity rate in the WMCA area was 73.9%, compared to 78.3% for UK-wide. This was a 1.2pp decrease in the economic activity rate for the WMCA area, the UK increased remained the same level since 2021. For the WMCA area to reach the UK rate of 78.4%, an additional 81,782 economically active people are required. |
| | WMCA (7 Met.) Unique Job Postings ²⁸ (monthly update) | 95,827 | 96,716 | 101,1226 | 91,669 | 93,511 | 96,329 | 98,531 | 95,056 | 118,712 | 112,264 | 115,541 | 112,533 | 140,076 | | WMCA: 2 nd Highest CA GMCA: 152,338 (1 st) Tees Valley: 18,619 (10 th) | There were 140,076 unique active jobs postings in May 2023. This has increased by 27,543 since April 2023. When compared to May 2022, unique job postings increased by 44,249. |

²⁵ ONS, Annual Population Survey – released April 2023

²⁶ ONS, modelled based estimates of unemployment – released April 2023

²⁷ ONS, Annual Population Survey – released April 2023

²⁸ Lightcast – accessed June 2023

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| | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Date | Wednesday 12 th July 2023 |
| Report title | West Midlands Growth Company Business Plan |
| Portfolio Lead | Portfolio Holder for Economy and Innovation |
| Accountable Chief Executive | Neil Rami, Chief Executive, WMGC |
| Accountable Employee | Katie Trout, Director of Policy & Partnerships, WMGC |
| Report has been considered by | WMGC Board Directors of Economic Development WMCA Executive Board |

1. Purpose

- 1.1. This report proposes the draft West Midlands Growth Company's (WMGC) Business Plan – “Global West Midlands” – for discussion and approval by the Economic Growth Board.

2. Recommendations

Economic Growth Board is recommended to:

- Approve “Global West Midlands” - WMGC’s draft Business Plan for July 2023 to March 2025.
- Note that the Economic Growth Board will receive quarterly reports on progress against the delivery of the Business Plan.
- Note that delivery of the Plan is predicated on a Full Business Case for the remaining unsecured regional funding being approved by the Investment Board in October 2023.

3. Background

- 3.1 WMGC’s current business plan is focused on delivering the Business & Tourism Programme (BATP), which reaches practical completion in September 2023.
- 3.2 Over the past 12 months, WMGC has been in discussions with West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) and Local Authorities about how to realise the

benefits of BATH ahead of the longstop date of 2027, in order to convert as much of the pipeline as possible and to maximise the return on investment.

- 3.3 The draft Business Plan attached at Appendix 1 has been developed to deliver against the outcomes of the WMGC Review which were approved by the WMCA Board in March 2023, specifically that WMGC should:
- Continue to deliver inward investment, capital attraction and support for visitor economy (including business conferences and major sporting events), underpinned by marketing & communications, policy & partnerships, research & insights and back-office functions;
 - Undertake an additional function of Strategic Relationship Management of the region's top 500 strategic businesses, working closely with WMCA, the Local Authorities, Government and universities;
 - Focus future activity on the delivery of local and regional priorities; and
 - Develop a suite of leading and lagging indicators to enable effective management of performance and to demonstrate the added value that WMGC brings.
- 3.4 As part of the Review, the WMCA Board agreed that from 2023/24, the Economic Growth Board should be asked to approve WMGC's annual business plan including its objectives and key results. The WMGC Board will continue to be responsible for overseeing the delivery of the plan but performance against it will be reported on a quarterly basis to the Economic Growth Board, via the Directors of Economic Development.
- 3.5 To enable WMGC to maintain a budget similar to that achieved through the BATH, as endorsed through the Review, the WMCA agreed to provide £18m of funding to the Growth Company over 2023-25 of which £13.4m is from the Commonwealth Games Legacy Enhancement Fund (CWGLEF). In addition to commercial income, this will realise a budget of £21.8m over two years. The draft Business Plan is predicated on the effective use of this level of funding.
- 3.6 The Business Plan has also been designed to support key expectations of the CWGLEF, specifically to enable WMGC, in partnership with the WMCA, Local Authorities and other partners to:
- Maximise the conversion of the pipeline of investment and events leads generated from the Commonwealth Games Business and Tourism Programme, thereby fully exploiting the economic legacy of the Games; and
 - Run a full programme of international promotion in key markets identified in the West Midlands' forthcoming International Strategy to increase the region's profile and reputation, resulting in the further growth of the current pipeline.

4. Global West Midlands

- 4.1. The draft Business Plan sets out WMGC's purpose as:
- “Through partnership working, we enable sustainable economic growth upon which the West Midlands residents and businesses can thrive”*
- and its mission as being:
- “to develop and promote an ambitious and aspirational West Midlands brand that drives investment, events and visitors to enable a thriving, sustainable regional economy”.*
- 4.2. Four strategic objectives, which have been developed with partners, are proposed to deliver this mission and to enable WMGC to support the delivery of the Plan for Growth and other regional and local plans and strategies. These are to:
- **Enhance the profile & reputation of the region**
Improving perceptions of the region as a place to invest, visit and host events
 - **Create & sustain good jobs for local people**
Growing and increasing the productivity of the regional economy by attracting inward investment to the West Midlands
 - **Facilitate the regeneration of the built environment**
Securing transformational capital from global and domestic investors in brownfield real estate and regeneration projects
 - **Create & sustain vibrant destinations**
Harness sustainable domestic tourism and growing demand for inbound international tourism to enhance the region's quality of life by growing and strengthening the visitor economy.
- 4.3. The draft Business Plan sets out how these objectives will be delivered by a series of:
- **campaigns** - a strategic series of steps and activities, with specific messages designed to promote the WM's offer to specific target audience groups
 - **core services** - functions agreed as part of the WMGC Review and are defined as “ongoing” services that broadly benefit the whole region; and
 - **projects & programmes** - initiatives that we plan to deliver outside of our “core services” – they may be place-specific and/or time-bound
- 4.4. These activities will enable the delivery of identified local and regional priorities.
- 4.5. The Plan proposes a series of outputs, leading and lagging indicators for each strategic objective that will form the basis of WMGC's reporting framework. These metrics will be augmented with qualitative information, such as case studies, where relevant. These will also help to demonstrate the contribution

the Global West Midlands programme makes to the delivery of the Plan for Growth and Inclusive Growth Framework.

- 4.6. This framework is designed to enable performance to be managed successfully in an uncertain environment, to demonstrate WMGC's added value and to provide accountability and transparency to stakeholders.
- 4.7. The full framework is set out in the Business Plan, with key indicators for each Strategic Objective shown below:

| Measure | Minimum requirement | Stretch target |
|--|---------------------|----------------|
| Enhance the profile and reputation of the region | | |
| Outcome/leading indicators | | |
| % of investment intermediaries with recall of marcomms collateral | 11% | 16% |
| Of these - % more aware of the region's offer | 22% | 32% |
| Of these - % positive about region's offer | 25% | 35% |
| Of these - % considering recommending the region to clients | 20% | 28% |
| Leisure travellers in key target markets with recall of marcomms collateral | 11% | 16% |
| Of these - % more aware of the region's offer | 23% | 33% |
| Of these - % positive about region's offer | 23% | 33% |
| Of these - % considering visiting the region | 20% | 28% |
| % of conference organisers with recall of marcomms collateral | 11% | 16% |
| Of these - % more aware of the region's offer | 20% | 28% |
| Of these - % positive about region's offer | 12% | 17% |
| Of these - % considering organising an event in the region | 15% | 22% |
| % of sporting federations with recall of marcomms collateral | 11% | 16% |
| Of these - % more aware of the region's offer | 8% | 12% |
| Of these - % positive about region's offer | 5% | 8% |
| Of these - % considering organising an event in the region | 3% | 4% |
| Create good jobs for local people | | |
| Impact metrics/lagging indicators | | |
| Opportunities won/projects landed | 82 | 117 |
| Jobs created or safeguarded | 3,604 | 5,148 |
| GVA generated | £46,462,976 | £66,375,680 |
| Facilitate the regeneration of the built environment | | |
| Impact metrics/lagging indicators | | |
| Opportunities won/projects landed | 1 | 2 |
| GVA generated | £6,353,911 | £9,077,016 |
| Create and sustain vibrant destinations | | |
| Impact metrics/lagging indicators | | |

| Measure | Minimum requirement | Stretch target |
|--|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| Sporting events landed | 8 | 12 |
| Business conferences landed | 8 | 11 |
| Additional visitors attracted | 164,663 | 235,233 |
| Additional economic impact generated by visitors attracted | 16,420,236 | 23,457,480 |

4.8. The Plan also sets out how the Growth Company will spend its allocation of regional funding and its commercial income (including BATP sponsorship), delivering a balanced budget in each year.

5. Ways of Working

- 5.1. As a partnership of the public, private and academic sectors established to deliver inclusive economic growth, the Growth Company will seek to leverage the collective talent, opportunities, and assets of these sectors to realise the greatest impact for communities and businesses across the West Midlands.
- 5.2. Local and regional priorities sit at the heart of the Global West Midlands Programme. WMGC will work closely with Local Authorities, the WMCA and universities to realise the ambition set out in this plan. Partners will benefit from all of the Company's work, but certain activity will support the delivery of specific, identified local priorities. Deliverables, key milestones and requirements will be agreed for these priorities to enable performance to be managed.
- 5.3. Alongside formal quarterly reporting at a political and officer level as agreed through the WMGC Review both with Local Authorities and the WMCA, the Growth Company will engage regularly with partners across these organisations to enable the effective delivery of, and maximum impact from, the campaigns, core services and projects & programmes. This will include aligning resources where appropriate and each partner delivering what is expected of them in a timely way.
- 5.4. The WMGC is committed to demonstrating how it adds value to the work already being undertaken by partners and to achieving good value for money. It will therefore continue to look for synergies with its stakeholders' activity that can be exploited and ensuring there is no duplication of work. It will also keep seeking efficiencies across the business.
- 5.5. Close working with Government will also be critical to supporting the realisation of the priorities set out in this Plan. The Deeper Devolution Deal, agreed by the WMCA in March 2023, saw Government commit to co-developing the West Midlands International Strategy and its subsequent delivery plan with the region and to strengthening connections between WMGC and the Department of

Business & Trade, in particular. The Devolution Deal offers further opportunities, including the potential for WMGC to become a Government-recognised pilot Destination Development Partnership. These agreements build on one of the key lessons of the BATP – that deeper, stronger and more strategic relationships between regional and national governments can help to significantly improve the visibility of regional economies in international markets, delivering a larger, faster return on investment.

- 5.6. Whilst a clear Plan is being presented to the Economic Growth Board, WMGC recognises the need to be flexible and adaptive to changing priorities and economic circumstances. This Plan therefore provides the baseline against which performance will be measured and reported to – and change managed with – partners, to ensure we deliver the best possible return on investment. Accountability for this will be achieved by increased engagement and reporting to Company members as set out above; all Local Authorities attending the WMGC Board; and formal reporting to the Economic Growth Board.
- 5.7. In addition, further review of the full Business Plan will be required to take account of the West Midlands International Strategy when it is published in the autumn 2023. The Plan will therefore remain a ‘live’ document; with any proposed substantive changes brought to the Economic Growth Board for agreement.
- 5.8. Looking ahead, there is a significant pipeline of opportunities for the region on the horizon – but many of them will not come to fruition during this programme. WMGC will work closely with stakeholders to support the development of projects and programmes that leverage such opportunities, with a view to activating during the next business planning period subject to sustainable funding being secured. The WMGC Board is establishing a Task and Finish Group to start to explore funding sources for the Growth Company from April 2025 onwards.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 The Business Plan is predicated on WMGC realising a total budget of £21.8m over two years. This includes total funding from regional sources including WMCA Core Budget, UK Shared Prosperity Funding and Commonwealth Games Legacy Enhancement Funding of £18m. This leverages £3.8m of commercial and other funding over the two-year period.
- 6.2 Of the regional contribution, the following has been secured:
 - £4m for 2023/24 through a Business Justification Case that was agreed by investment Board and the WMCA Board in December 2022; and

- £1.8m through a Strategic Outline Case which was agreed by Investment Board in June 2023. This funding is to develop the Full Business Case (FBC) and begin delivery of the local and regional priorities in the Programme ahead of FBC approval (i.e. to support activity to end September 2023).
- 6.3 In addition, the Investment Board in June also approved £0.7m to be allocated directly to the seven Metropolitan Local Authorities (£100k per organisation) to increase capacity to respond to and support Global West Midlands Activity.
- 6.4 The remaining unsecured regional funding will be considered for approval as part of the FBC which brought to the Investment Board in October 2023.

7. Legal Implications

- 7.1. WMGC is wholly owned by WMCA and its constituent authorities. As such, it benefits from the “Teckal exemption” and its services can be procured directly by its company members.
- 7.2. WMGC is required by law to submit statutory accounts and financial statements no later than 31 December every calendar year. As part of the preparation of statutory accounts and financial statements, WMCA secures the services of third-party auditors (currently Dains LLP) who consider whether the control and functional tests have been met.
- 7.3. There are no new legal implications for WMCA resulting from this report. WMCA has a general power of competence in relation to economic development and has the necessary legal powers to invest in WMGC.

8. Equalities Implications

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

9. Inclusive Growth Implications

- 9.1. The focus of WMGC’s future activity will support the delivery of the region’s inclusive growth ambitions. For example, WMGC’s inward investment activity will create new employment opportunities for local people across the region – both directly and indirectly through supply chains; capital investment activity will focus will be on new, brownfield development and the refurbishment and repurposing of existing assets in line with local priorities. Ultimately, this work will improve the living conditions of local residents, drive economic uplift through new investment and champion a more sustainable future landscape for the region; and activity to promote the West Midlands visitor economy domestically and globally, drive visitor footfall across local authority areas, sustaining local businesses, materially improving perceptions of these destinations, promoting

cultural and social wellbeing and fostering the civic pride of citizens. It will target major events, conferences and sporting federations which will deliver social and economic benefits to businesses and residents and support the region's sporting, cultural, events and hospitality supply chain.

10. Geographical Area of Report's Implications

10.1. WMGC has historically served the three-Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) area, albeit with a focus on the seven Mets. Following the integration of specific LEP functions into the WMCA, and as agreed as part of the Review of WMGC, the future geographical focus of activity will be subject to further discussions with the WMCA and local authorities.

11. Other implications

11.1. None.



**West Midlands
Growth Company**

**GLOBAL WEST MIDLANDS
WMGC Business Plan
July 2023 - March 2025**

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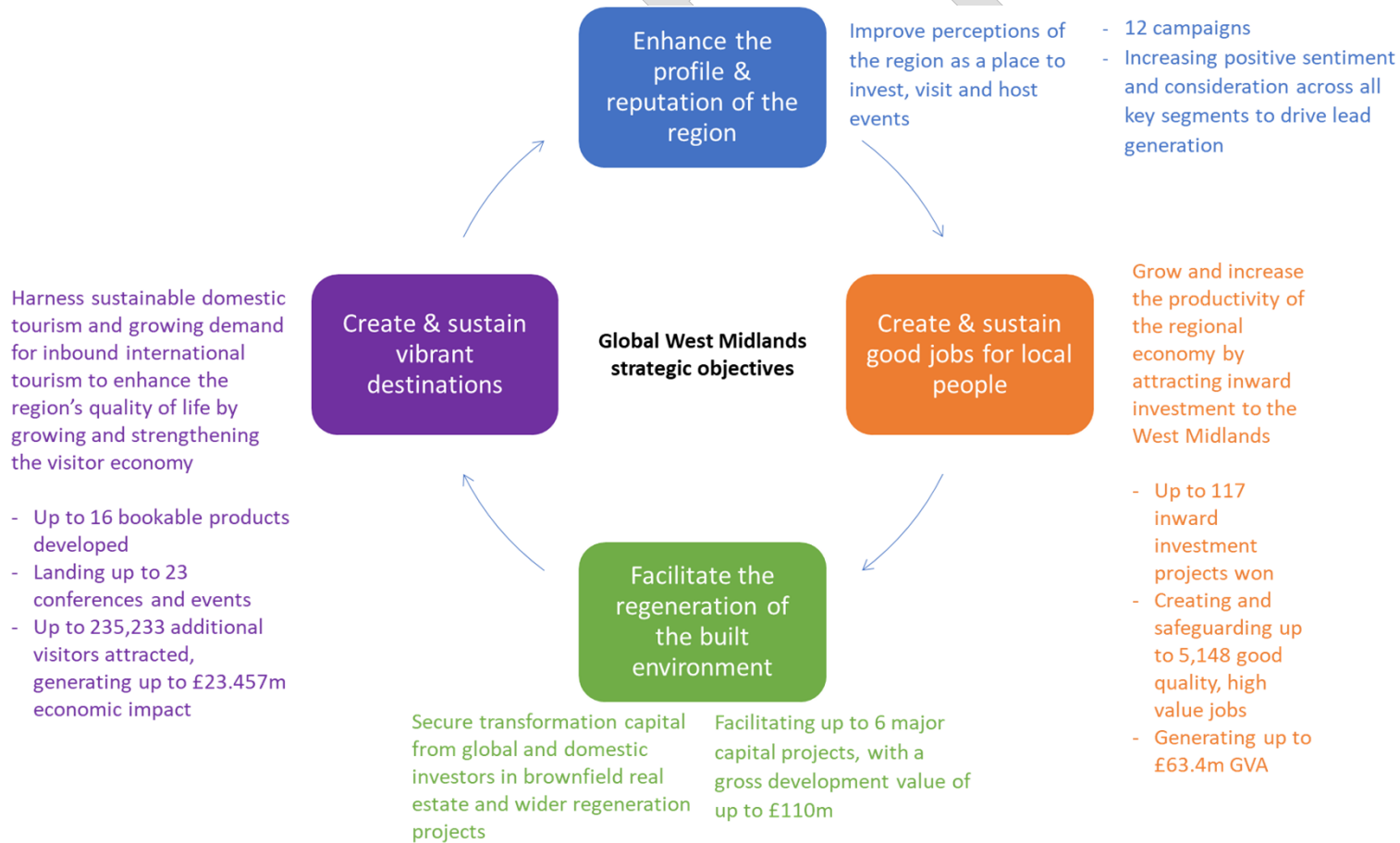
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Executive Summary

On the back of the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games and the Business & Tourism Programme, with strong economic fundamentals in place, the West Midlands has a unique opportunity to establish itself as truly globally competitive in the coming years. *Global West Midlands* – the West Midlands Growth Company’s business plan for July 2023 – March 25 – sets out how we propose to utilise our key functional areas of inward investment, capital attraction, the visitor economy and strategic relationship management to address regional challenges and capitalise on our opportunities, delivering the *Plan for Growth* and levelling up the region:

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We will deliver those strategic objectives and key results through a series of campaigns, "always on" core services, and projects and programmes:

| Strategic objective | Lead business area | Campaigns | Core Services | Projects & Programmes |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---|---|
| Enhance the profile & reputation of the region <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve perceptions of the region as a place to invest, visit and host an event Measured by shifts in awareness, sentiment and consideration of key segments | Marketing & communications | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Tech That Makes Tomorrow Work Mobilising Multipliers Scale Up in the West Midlands Catalytic Place Making The UK's Largest Treasure Hunt The West Midlands: My Kind of Region West Midlands Takeover Travel Trade: Developing the West Midlands Product Home of Sport Where the World Meets Internationalisation Meet the West Midlands' Creative Class | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Narrative development Audience acquisition Campaign activation Success storytelling | |
| Create & sustain good jobs for local people <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grow and increase the productivity of the regional economy by attracting inward investment to the West Midlands Measured by pipeline size and strength; investment project landings; jobs created/safeguarded; GVA and business rates uplift | Inward Investment | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investment Promotion Business Development Strategic Relationship Management Business Intelligence, inc. strategic advice for Company members | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Global Growth Programme 2 Strategic Site Promotion Innovation Accelerators Public Sector Relocations |
| Facilitate the regeneration of the built environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attract capital investment to regenerate communities and fuel growth Measured by pipeline size and strength; capital projects landed; GVA and business rates uplift | Capital Attraction | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investment Promotion Business Development Business Intelligence, inc. strategic advice for Company members | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Catalytic Place Making Leisure/Hotel Marketing Engagement Strategic Site Promotion |
| Create & sustain vibrant destinations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Harnessing within region and inbound domestic tourism and growing demand for inbound international leisure tourism to enhance the region's quality of life by growing and strengthening the visitor economy Measured by travel trade-ready bookable product; visitor numbers; hotel occupancy; economic impact; jobs supported; event landings | Visitor Economy | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visitor Economy Policy & Strategy Travel Trade development & relationship management International direct route development Major Events Fund secretariat Business Intelligence, inc. strategic advice for Company members Business visits and events Major sporting events | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Destination Management Plan GDS sustainability benchmarking Sustainability hub business support Accessible & inclusive tourism business support Skills audit & implementation plan Culture & Tourism Connected City Card feasibility & set-up |

Campaigns are defined as a strategic series of steps and activities, with specific messages designed to promote the West Midlands offer to specific target audience groups. All campaigns are designed primarily to raise the profile & reputation of the region, with various secondary objectives as shown below.

| Create & sustain good jobs for local people | Facilitate the regeneration of the built environment | Create & sustain vibrant destinations |
|--|--|---|
| Investment Promotion: The Tech That Makes Tomorrow Work | | |
| Investment Promotion: Mobilising Multipliers | | |
| Investment Promotion: Scale Up in the West Midlands | | |
| | Investment Promotion: Catalytic Place Making | |
| | | Culture and Tourism Promotion: The UK's Largest Treasure Hunt |
| | | Culture and Tourism Promotion: The West Midlands: My Kind of Place |
| | | Culture and Tourism Promotion: West Midlands Takeover |
| | | Travel Trade Development: West Midlands Product |
| | | Major event attraction: Home of Sport |
| | | Major event attraction: Where the World Meets |
| Internationalisation | | |
| Meet the West Midlands' Creative Class | | |

Campaigns are underpinned by our **core services** – the functions agreed as part of the West Midlands Growth Company Review, which are “always on” and broadly benefit the whole region:

| Function | Marketing & communications | Inward investment | Capital investment | Visitor economy |
|-------------------|--|---|--|---|
| Primary objective | Enhance the profile & reputation of the region | Create good jobs for local people | Facilitate the regeneration of the built environment | Create & sustain vibrant destinations |
| Core services | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narrative development • Audience acquisition • Campaign activation • Success storytelling | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investment Promotion • Business Development • Strategic Relationship Management • Business Intelligence, inc. strategic advice for Company members | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investment Promotion • Business Development • Business Intelligence, inc. strategic advice for Company members | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visitor Economy Policy & Strategy • Travel Trade development & relationship management • International direct route development • Major Events Fund secretariat • Business Intelligence, inc. strategic advice for Company members • Business visits and events • Major sporting events |

Outside of campaigns and core services, the West Midlands Growth Company will deliver a series of **projects and programmes** that are place-specific and/or time-bound:

| Objective | Create & sustain good jobs for local people | Facilitate the regeneration of the built environment | Create & sustain vibrant destinations |
|-----------|---|---|---|
| Function | Inward investment | Capital attraction | Visitor Economy |
| Projects | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global Growth Programme 2 • Strategic Site Promotion • Innovation Accelerators • Public Sector Relocations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catalytic Place-Making • Leisure/Hotel Market Engagement • Strategic Site Promotion | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Destination Management Plan • GDS sustainability benchmarking • Sustainability hub business support • Accessible & inclusive tourism business support • Skills audit & implementation plan • Culture & Tourism Connected • City Card feasibility & set-up |

In addition, we will develop the first ever West Midlands International Strategy, which will internationalise the West Midlands Combined Authority’s *Plan for Growth* and shape the region’s collective international effort and resources to elevate the West Midlands’ presence and impact on the global stage.

In delivering this activity, the West Midlands Growth Company will seek to act as an extension of the West Midlands Combined Authority, the seven Metropolitan Local Authorities and the region’s universities – its Company members – bringing the capacity, capability, insight and networks that will help to develop and deliver the region’s economic growth ambitions. We will work closely with partners across the public, private and academic sectors to achieve the greatest impact for the communities, businesses and anchor institutions across the West Midlands.

We recognise the need to be flexible and adaptive to changing priorities and economic circumstances. This Plan provides the baseline against which performance will be measured and reported to – and change managed with – our partners, to ensure we deliver the best possible return on investment. To ensure accountability, we commit to increasing engagement and reporting to Company members; inviting all Company members to attend our Board; and will report formally to the Economic Growth Board.

Finally, the Plan demonstrates how the Company will deliver a balanced budget each year, with a spending profile of £9.378m in 2023/24 and £12.428m in 2024/25.

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Introduction

The West Midlands Growth Company (WMGC) is pleased to present *Global West Midlands* – our business plan for July 2023 to March 2025. It sets out the strategic objectives for WMGC over the period; the campaigns, core services and projects we will deliver to achieve them; and the key results through which our stakeholders will hold us to account for performance.

As we close down the Business & Tourism Programme – which has to date leveraged the “halo effect” of the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games to deliver 58 investment projects and 2,600 jobs; 19 conferences and events; and £17.2m of visitor spend – we are moving into a new phase. One in which WMGC will utilise its public, private and academic partnership to deliver agreed regional and local priorities. We will work closely with our partners to unlock inclusive economic growth across the West Midlands; adding value to their activity by bringing capacity, capability, insight and networks to bear.

Fundamentally, we believe that the West Midlands’ future success will be underpinned by internationalisation, and our ambition is that the region will be globally competitive by 2030. In December 2022, the Economic Growth Board commissioned WMGC to develop a regional International Strategy, which will internationalise the West Midlands Combined Authority’s *Plan for Growth* and shape the region’s collective international effort and resources to elevate the West Midlands’ presence and impact on the global stage. The International Strategy will be multilateral in that it will cover trade, investment, tourism, research & development, and talent – as well as “soft power” considerations such as culture and international diasporas. By combining all these elements, we aim to be able increase our international effectiveness and profile. The Strategy will lead to a shared delivery plan that will align resources from across the public, private and academic sectors of the West Midlands with those of Government, as set out in the Deeper Devolution Deal.

Given the future publication of the Strategy, and the nature of the West Midlands Growth Company’s work in an environment which is fundamentally uncertain, complex and ambiguous, a key priority for this planning period is to improve our ability to flex our plans and adapt to changing conditions and new priorities. This Plan is therefore created as a “live” document against which we will report progress to – and manage change with – our stakeholders.

About us

The WMGC is the region's investment promotion agency and destination management organisation. Created in 2017 and owned by the West Midlands Combined Authority, its seven constituent Metropolitan authorities and five of the region's universities, we attract businesses, capital, visitors and events to the region to deliver economic growth, increased productivity, employment opportunities and a better quality of life for those that live and work here.

Our purpose

Through partnership working, we enable sustainable economic growth upon which West Midlands residents and businesses can thrive and prosper.

Our mission

To develop and promote an ambitious and aspirational West Midlands brand that drives investment, events and visitors to enable a thriving, sustainable regional economy.

Our values

As an organisation, the WMGC seeks to treat its employees, the people we work with, and the people of the West Midlands and the wider world with respect. As such, we have developed a series of values that shape our every interaction.

Trust – We do what we say we are going to do, collaborating with our stakeholders to deliver and achieve regional outcomes, leading the way for economic development using our knowledge and expertise.

Respect – We believe everyone has the right to be listened to and be heard. We appreciate the impact of our actions and behave accordingly.

Leadership – We lead by example, which means as an external ambassador to the business, and internally to our workforce. We embrace innovation and creativity, empowering our teams to deliver quality transformative outcomes.

Wellbeing – We support and promote the wellbeing of everyone. We want to be an inclusive and engaged workforce, where everyone has a clear sense of purpose and courage. We encourage everyone to thrive in a way that makes them successful, resilient, healthy and happy, developing a growth mindset.

How we work with our partners

As the region's investment promotion and destination management agency, we exist as an extension of our partners. We add value to the capacity and capability embedded in our anchor institutions with market expertise and insight, and our ability to bring together a regional narrative that reflects a functional economic geography at scale that offers strong positioning in an increasingly competitive global market.

Throughout this planning period, the West Midlands Growth Company will implement quarterly reporting to both senior officers and elected members at each local authority, the West Midlands

Combined Authority (WMCA) and our university members to report performance against agreed priorities and to look ahead to forthcoming deliverables across all workstreams.

In addition, we will offer bi-annual strategy and planning sessions and a year-end review to assess performance, review priorities and ensure delivery plans are aligned, and explore opportunities for efficiencies, synergies and added value.

Our key markets

For the past three years, WMGC has been delivering the Business & Tourism Programme (BATP). As BATP was designed to leverage the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games, our focus was on further penetrating Commonwealth markets with which the region already had established links across tourism, trade and investment:

- India
- Australia
- North America & Canada
- Malaysia & Singapore

Prior to BATP, WMGC focused on a number European markets, North America, China and the Middle East. We are exploring our future primary markets through the development of the West Midlands International Strategy and will update our Business Plan to reflect any changes.

Our key sectors

In 2022, the WMCA published the *Plan for Growth* which set out how the region could regain its status as the fastest growing regional economy outside of London and bridge a £3.9bn productivity gap with a focus on clusters in which the region has a comparative advantage, and which therefore have significant growth potential. In this context, clusters are defined as “geographic concentrations of interconnected companies and institutions in a particular field.” *Plan for Growth* identifies the following established clusters:

- Professions & financial services and supply chain
- Health-tech and med-tech
- Creative content production and gaming
- Manufacturing of electrical light vehicles and associated battery storage devices
- Aerospace (including manufacturing of alternative fuels)
- Modern and low carbon utilities
- Logistics and distribution
- Manufacturing of future housing

WMGC plays its part in enabling the growth of these clusters by proactively promoting the region’s strengths in – and targeting investment from – the following key sectors:

- Business, Professional & Financial Services
- Data-driven Healthcare
- Creative & Digital Technologies
- Advanced Manufacturing
- Future Mobility

- Low Carbon

A key reason for this differentiation is that WMGC is primarily market-facing and therefore engages with firms in, and intermediaries representing, specific sectors. The priority sectors will be considered as part of the West Midlands International Strategy.

In addition, WMGC also promotes and facilitates the growth of the visitor economy – the tourism, leisure and hospitality sectors, as well as conferences and sporting events – which are significant contributors to the regional economy in terms of employment and GVA, but also crucial to the region’s quality of life offer.

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Strategic context

This section sets out the economic challenges and opportunities affecting investment and tourism, which are the key areas of WMGC's business. It also sets out some of the factors affecting trade and exports, in which WMGC has an interest through the development of the West Midlands International Strategy.

Challenges

Between 2013 and 2019, the West Midlands was the fastest growing regional economy outside of London.

Growth was driven by the strength of our key sectors, our world class research and training institutions, and our compelling and competitive quality of life offer, with more than double the number of people relocating to the West Midlands from London than any other city region.

But the region has been hit hard in the past few years. Geopolitical turbulence means the threat of increased competition for inward investment, aggressive protectionism and repatriation looms large. And while FDI has been a national success story for decades, the volume has become increasingly concentrated in geography – between 1997 and 2016, FDI in London tripled while the number of projects in the rest of the UK fell by 15%. The West Midlands has punched above its weight, but it is increasingly at risk of losing out because we lack the means to compete with packages offered in mainland Europe and the USA, and because our national approach is geared towards the capital.

In addition, research undertaken by WMGC has indicated the following key challenges:

- The IMF predicts that 20 countries will have real GDP growth of less than 1% in 2023
- With global economic growth struggling, many businesses are leaning towards consolidation rather than expansion, at least in the first half of 2023. This will likely negatively impact FDI levels.
- As geopolitical tensions rise, companies and policymakers are increasingly looking at strategies to make supply chains more resilient by moving production home or to trusted countries.
- The rise of protectionism through measures such as the Inflation Reduction Act are further disrupting global supply chains
- Globally, there are circa 7,000 investment promotion agencies competing for share of voice
- The UK is a global top 5 economy for FDI outflow (\$108bn in 2021), but not as significant for inbound FDI (\$28bn) – and it is becoming less attractive for investment as a result of soaring energy costs and recent political turmoil

Prior to the pandemic, the West Midlands' tourism economy performed well - more than in line with similar regions - achieving a higher spend per capita. The region's visitor economy made up around 7% of the region's total enterprises, contributing 4.1% to regional GVA – larger than other key sectors such as low carbon, life sciences and aerospace. It accounted for 7% of regional employment, with an average GVA per worker of £31,735, and had been growing strongly for a number of years. The pandemic reduced the size of the visitor economy in the region by £8.2bn and nationally the sector was not forecast to recover to pre-pandemic levels until 2024. The West Midlands, through its coordinated delivery of the BATH in support of Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games, preceded by Coventry City of Culture, has delivered an exemplary performance, surpassing 2019 records for visitor volume and value by the end of 2022 - over a year ahead of national forecasts. However, while we saw a record volume and value of visitors, our tourism and hospitality industry members are seeing

a softening of demand from consumers, owing to inflation, strikes and a reduction of disposable income, with difficulties on the supply side from labour shortages, energy costs and supply chain interruptions.

All major advanced economies experienced a collapse in trade during the pandemic, but the latest data suggest that UK trade volumes remain 3% below their 2019 level, versus an average increase across other G7 countries of 5.5%. A recent study suggests that UK goods trade was 7% lower in June 2022 than it would have been had we remained in the EU. Coupled with the energy price crisis, our manufacturing base – which at its 2017 peak accounted for 8% of the UK’s total export value, 17% of the region’s GVA and over 10% of our jobs – has been disproportionately impacted.

Underpinning all of the above is the region’s visibility challenge. Perceptions studies undertaken by the WMGC reveal that despite improvements due to the BATP, awareness of the West Midlands as a place lags significantly behind competitor locations like London and Manchester:

- Only 30% of domestic and 26% of international leisure tourists are aware of the West Midlands offer – while 72% are aware of the London offer and 51% are aware of the Manchester offer.
- 58% of investment intermediaries are aware of the West Midlands offer – while all are aware of the London offer and 75% are aware of the Manchester offer.
- Only 35% of business conference organisers are aware of the West Midlands offer – which compares to 85% for London and 70% for Manchester.
- Only 55% of sporting event organisers are aware of the West Midlands offer – which compares to 95% for London and 70% for Manchester.
- Only 20% of travel trade professionals are aware of the West Midlands offer – which compares to 90% for London and 65% for Manchester.

While the BATP has begun to move the dial, it is clear there is much more to do. Put simply, without addressing this challenge, the region will not win its share of tourism, trade and investment.

As a result, the West Midlands – once the fastest growing regional economy – now lags behind. The WMCA’s *Plan for Growth* has identified a £3.9bn productivity gap to be addressed if the region is to regain its position by 2030, while the *Levelling Up Growth Prospectus* identifies challenges with high unemployment and growing in-work poverty in parts of the region.

Opportunities

While there are challenges, there are also significant opportunities. The economic fundamentals in the West Midlands remain strong and our region has much to offer to prospective investors, tourists and importers. We are already benefiting from the national investment in HS2 well ahead of the first train’s maiden voyage, and the region’s ambition shows in the game-changing “gearshift” interventions that have been developed and are being delivered by our anchor institutions and strategic innovation assets:

| | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Established opportunities | Nascent opportunities |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------|

| | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UK Battery Industrialisation Centre (Coventry) • Warwick Manufacturing Group & Manufacturing Technology Centre (Coventry) • The National Brownfield Institute (Wolverhampton) • Birmingham Health Innovation Campus (Birmingham) • Energy & Bioproducts Research Institute (Birmingham) • STEAMhouse (Birmingham) • Digbeth Loc. (Birmingham) • WM5G (region-wide) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our Future City Plan, including Birmingham Knowledge Quarter, STEAMHouse and Birmingham Innovation Quarter (Birmingham) • Gigafactory and wider vehicle electrification/smart mobility (Coventry) • Cultural Gateway (Coventry) • BCIMO (Dudley) • Regeneration Pipeline Prospectus (Sandwell) • Arden Cross (Solihull) • Growth Corridor (Walsall) • Green Innovation Corridor (Wolverhampton) • Investment and Levelling Up Zones (region-wide) • Mindforge (region-wide) |
|---|--|

Investors are increasingly favouring locations which offer key fundamentals such as good connectivity; a strong talent pool and competitive labour costs; proximity to innovation assets; a strong support package from local investment agencies including access to public sector financial and other assistance; help with land and property, recruitment and legal issues; and links to local supplier and wider business networks. The West Midlands is well positioned here, with its central location and transport network connecting 90% of the UK population within four hours; its eight universities (of which six are in the WMCA boundary) producing 60,000 graduates a year (55% of which remain in the region); its tight-knit and welcoming business community, including Chambers of Commerce and other business representative organisations; and of course the West Midlands Growth Company itself, which provides soft landing support to help new entrants establish themselves in the region.

Meanwhile, new market opportunities are emerging – for example:

- Sectors such as digital and creative and financial and professional services continue to deliver the highest absolute numbers of projects. Locations offering high specification, flexible space with good low carbon and EDI credentials are in a strong position to attract investors looking for hybrid working solutions.
- In the wake of supply chain disruptions, manufacturers are increasingly opting for local and near-shore supply chain footprints. This has led to a 11% increase in foreign owned first tier suppliers and others lower down the supply chain establishing operations in the UK's manufacturing heartlands in the Midlands and the North.
- Growth in investment is being led by emerging technologies in net zero and 'clean tech' segments such as electric vehicles, battery technologies and advanced methods of construction.
- Project volumes in markets which have traditionally dominated such as the EU, US and China are significantly down on their pre-pandemic peaks. They are rising strongly, however in new emerging ones where companies are seeking to strengthen their UK presence post-Brexit.

These include Turkey and especially India which leap-frogged Germany and France to become the second largest source market for UK inward investment.

The West Midlands has been propelled into the international spotlight and captured the imagination of millions worldwide through the hit BBC series *Peaky Blinders*, created by the region's own Steven Knight. The region offers an enviable choice of visitor attractions making it a destination for a weekend break or family outing, while our dynamic culture and arts scene is home to some of the world's most renowned performing arts companies and state of the art performance spaces, as showcased through Coventry City of Culture. And building on the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games, we have an exciting pipeline that is set to further cement our status as a leading international host of major sporting events. Visitors can enjoy Michelin-star food, classical concerts and ballet world premieres, contemporary exhibitions, home grown productions, alternative shopping, drinking and dining experiences, large-scale commercial shopping outlets and major attractions. This quality of life offer, coupled with a cost-of-living ratio that exceeds the national average, means the West Midlands is a compelling destination for talent.

The region's firms are continuing to adapt to the UK's new role in the global market, with a 25% upturn in exports in the year to February 2023. While export levels are yet to return to their pre-pandemic highs, the confidence of West Midlands firms is rising and being driven by client demand, new product development and diversification. Following the establishment of the UK-EU Trade & Cooperation Agreement, the Government has established trade agreements with Australia, New Zealand, Singapore and Japan amongst others, with more – such as India and China – in the pipeline.

In addition to the *Plan for Growth* and *West Midlands Local Industrial Strategy*, the region has a range of strategies that include the *Levelling Up Growth Prospectus*, *#WM2041: A Programme for Implementing an Environmental Recovery*, the *Regional Tourism Strategy*, *Transport Plan* and others. While they each provide a strong evidence base in their own right, there is a real opportunity to develop a wider, more holistic economic vision for the region that sets out a clear, long-term path for the West Midlands.

Finally, the *Deeper Devolution Deal* – agreed between Government and the WMCA in March 2023 – is a major opportunity for the region. Estimated to be worth £1.5bn, it will better enable the region to boost the economy through additional housing, bolstering transport and smart city region innovation, driving faster towards net zero, and upskilling and creating jobs for local people. Of particular relevance to WMGC is the commitment from the Department for Business & Trade to develop a deeper, more strategic partnership with the region, including the co-development of the West Midlands International Strategy and subsequent delivery plan; enhanced data sharing; and reviewing key account management. In addition, the Deal sets out DCMS and Visit England will work with WMCA and WMGC to create England's second Destination Development Partnership pilot and the associated merits of establishing WMGC as a Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP).

Our track record

Inward Investment

WMGC has led the charge on attracting and retaining inward investment across the breadth of the WMCA area. Since its inception, the company has directly supported 282 inward investment projects, from which 20,000 new jobs have been generated across the West Midlands. For context, since 2011, WMGC's portfolio of investment successes has increased fivefold, with the number of new jobs generated by inward investors more than doubling each year.

Examples of key investment projects supported by WMGC, include:

- **HSBC UK**
The relocation of the Head Office for one of the world's largest banking institutions, HSBC UK, from Canary Wharf, to Birmingham
- **TVS**
Indian-owned TVS Motor Company agreeing a multi-million-pound investment to relocate the UK headquarters of prestigious marque Norton Motorcycles to Solihull.
- **Goldman Sachs**
A transformational commitment from investment banking heavyweight Goldman Sachs; with the firm's West Midlands based Engineering Hub creating 300 multidisciplinary roles so far.
- **Homes England**
Homes England's investment in Coventry, in the first stage of a potential relocation for its 400-employee national centre.
- **Accenture**
A significant regional investment from professional services heavyweight Accenture, creating 800 new, high-value jobs in the region.
- **DLUHC (formerly MHCLG)**
A landmark investment from The Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to create a second HQ in Wolverhampton and at least 150 roles.
- **BBC**
Hailed a gear-shift investment for its potential economic and cultural value, the BBC's new regional headquarters is set to open in Birmingham in 2026.

Focused on high-impact, diversified projects that complement the West Midlands economic growth clusters, WMGC's Inward Investment Strategy was this year recognised by FDI Intelligence as Europe-leading; effectively leveraging novel, AI-led competitor analysis, in addition to Key Account Management (KAM). This activity was supplemented by the Global Growth Programme - an ambitious WMGC-curated investor support package - which together, made headway for a record performance:

- **WMGC data for the 22/23 financial year shows the company was directly involved in landing 57 inward investment projects and generating 3,655 jobs, in addition to other UK investments.**
 - **The figures represent the strongest performance for WMGC on record and an unprecedented 171% increase on last year.**
 - The final, exhaustive figures will be published in July by the Department for Business and Trade.

Visitor Economy

Since its inception, WMGC has worked collaboratively with more than 200 stakeholders to develop and deliver the West Midlands Tourism Strategy, focusing on driving the volume and value of both leisure and business tourism across the WMCA. Through this strategic framework, WMGC has facilitated a number of initiatives and structures designed to mobilise, champion and advocate on behalf of the region's visitor economy. This has included the establishment of the regional **Tourism and Hospitality Advisory Board** in 2020 (previously Regional Board for Tourism), the **West Midlands Tourism Awards** in 2021, as well as the **Birmingham, Solihull and Black Country Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP)** in April 2023, in line with VisitEngland's national programme.

In June, WMGC announced record-high visitor economy figures, 12 months ahead of the UK government's aim to recover both domestic and inbound visitor numbers to pre-pandemic levels by the end of 2023:

- **The West Midlands welcomed an unprecedented 141.2 million visitors in 2022, surpassing the previous record set before the COVID-19 pandemic.**
- **The figures represent a 38% increase on tourist numbers in 2021, and a 5% rise compared to 2019 data.**
- **Spending by visitors to the West Midlands in 2022 rose to £14.1 billion, up by £4 billion (39%) from 2021 and £1 billion (7%) more than 2019 figures.**

Major Sporting Events and MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferencing and Exhibitions)

Through the establishment of the Birmingham and West Midlands Convention Bureau (formerly Birmingham Convention Bureau), WMGC has ensured a sustained pipeline of business and sporting events in the region. The proactive promotion of the region's wealth of venues and successfully delivered events has afforded the West Midlands top positions within the industry's leading international rankings and reports; including ICCA, BMEIS and CVENT.

In 2022, WMGC launched the **Major Events Delivery Plan** to capitalise on the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games as a beacon of the region's event hosting capabilities. Major events secured in the region include the Conservative Party Conference (spanning seven conferences), CHS Birmingham and sector trade conventions such as the World Congress on Railway Research. More recently, WMGC has secured the Commonwealth Esports Championships 2022, the Kabaddi World Cup 2025, the British Open Squash Championships and the International Working Group World Conference on Women & Sport 2026.

The Business and Tourism Programme

The BATP launched in July 2021 and was the first accredited Commonwealth Games programme of its kind. Under the stewardship of WMGC, alongside regional and national partners, BATP aimed to maximise the economic legacy of the Games through an intensive, two-year Programme of profile-enhancing activity.

BATP exemplified the mileage and impact of WMGC's combined expertise on the world stage. Well ahead of the Programme's 2027 official conclusion, we have:

- Actively showcased the West Midlands' strengths through **453 events across 13 global markets**
- Secured a further **19 major events** for the region, meeting our target four years ahead of schedule
- Generated **2,600 new jobs** in the West Midlands through **58 inward investment wins** – taking inward investment levels to an all-time high and exceeding our 2027 job creation target by **178%**
- Driven an upsurge in the region's pipeline of investment leads by an unprecedented **1100%**

- Supported the attraction of a record-breaking **141.2million** visitors to the region in 2022, with **£17.2m of visitor spend** directly attributable to BATP activity (achieving 96% of our 2027 target)
- Curated **32 new, travel-trade-ready bookable products**, tangibly strengthening the region's tourism offer.
- Generated **1,669 influential media articles** worldwide, with an audience reach of **5billion**.
- Bolstered market-facing website traffic from Commonwealth target countries by an average of **121%**.
- Positively shifted perceptions of the West Midlands in target markets, with a third of surveyed leisure travellers recalling BATP marketing campaigns and **85% of those felt more positive about the region** .

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What we do

WMGC Review

In 2022/23, the region conducted a review of the West Midlands Growth Company to ensure that our functions, funding and governance were fit for the scale of the task ahead. The Review concluded that the Company should focus on the delivering following:

| Function | Description |
|---|--|
| Inward Investment | Investment promotion and investment facilitation – building the region’s investment propositions, actively selling them in key markets, and managing the pipeline of enquiries to turn leads into landings. |
| Capital Attraction | Working with WMCA and local authorities to help shape and take investable opportunities to the right markets at the right times , in order to secure significant capital investment in infrastructure and regenerate communities. |
| Visitor Economy (including leisure, travel trade, meetings, incentives, conferences & events; and major sporting events) | Working with travel trade to create bookable products , developing and delivering domestic and international marketing campaigns to promote the region as a visitor destination, and route development . Raising the profile of the region as a destination to host world-class sporting, cultural and business events, and bidding to win high-priority events . |
| Strategic Relationship Management | Strengthening the region’s relationship with its strategic employers to support them to remain and grow within the West Midlands |

Underpinning these functions, WMGC will continue identifying opportunities to **establish partnerships of public, private and academic institutions to support delivery and realise major, gearshift opportunities**; providing **research and insight**; and **marketing and communications** support.

In addition, WMGC been asked to lead and has commissioned work on the first West Midlands International Strategy, which will be developed in partnership with key stakeholders across the public, private and academic sectors – including the Department for Business & Trade (DBT).

In agreeing these functions, the region has allocated £18m to WMGC to support the delivery of its programme over 2023 – 2025. In turn, WMGC has committed to developing its programme around regional and local economic development priorities; to increasing Company member representation on its Board; and to formally reporting to the region’s Economic Growth Board.

Global West Midlands

The region's past, present and future is international. The West Midlands Growth Company will deliver its key functions with the aim of ensuring the region is globally competitive by 2030.

During the process of the WMGC Review and development of this Business Plan, WMGC has gathered economic development priorities from WMCA and local authorities and used them to build a series of strategic objectives, aligned to the functions agreed as part of the WMGC Review. Each of our places has its own opportunities and challenges – while some are prime locations for significant new inward investment, others are better suited to expansions or to attracting visitors. Recognising this, WMGC has developed campaigns, core services, and projects & programmes that aim to deliver for and level up all parts of the region, using our opportunities to overcome our challenges.

Underpinning all of our work across each objective is the importance of partnership working and leveraging our anchor institutions and strategic innovation assets – such as our local authorities, universities, and flagship regional initiatives such as WM5G – to increase the international profile of the region, drive businesses and capital here, as well as supporting the development of partnerships that will deliver the “gearshift” assets of the future. While the benefits of our work here are not necessarily quantifiable and may not come to fruition during this planning period, we nonetheless believe that are a significant part of the value that WMGC can add by bringing its capacity, capability, insights and networks to bear.

Strategic objectives

The strategic objectives for the *Global West Midlands* programme are to:

Enhance the profile & reputation of the region

WMGC will deliver 12 campaigns to improve awareness, sentiment and consideration of the region as a place to invest, visit and host events with intermediaries in our primary markets.

Key outcomes:

- A rise in the proportion of **Investment Intermediaries** considering recommending the West Midlands as an investment destination to clients from **20% to 28%**
- An increase in the proportion of **conference organisers** considering hosting a business event in the region from **15% to 22%**
- An increase in the proportion of **sporting federations** considering hosting a sports event in the region from **3% to 4%**
- An increase in the proportion of **leisure travellers** considering visiting the region from **20% to 28%**

Create & sustain good jobs for local people

WMGC will support the delivery of the *Plan for Growth*, growing and increasing the productivity of the regional economy by attracting investment to the West Midlands, in turn creating high-value jobs for our people.

- Campaign activity will generate up to **2,000 new investment leads** – of which, up to 150 will be converted to opportunities
- WMGC will **land up to 117** of those opportunities, creating and safeguarding up to **5,148 jobs** and generating up to **£66.376m GVA**

Facilitate the regeneration of the built environment

Working with in partnership WMCA and local authorities, WMGC will deliver campaigns and projects to attract the capital investment that the region needs to deliver strategic sites and regenerate brownfield land, town centres and communities.

- Our activity will generate up to **eight transformational opportunities** – of which, WMGC will facilitate the landings of up to **six**, generating a **gross development value of £110m**

Create & sustain vibrant destinations

WMGC will harness sustainable domestic tourism and grow demand for inbound international tourism to enhance the region's quality of life by growing and strengthening the visitor economy.

WMGC will deliver up to **11 additional business conferences** and **12 additional sporting events** taking place in the region, and **16 travel trade bookable products** which, combined with campaign activity, will attract up to **235,233 additional visitors** to the region and **generate up to £23.457m** of economic activity.

Further detail on the campaigns, core services and projects for each objective is set out below.

Enhance the profile & reputation of the region

Lead business area

Marketing & Communications

Rationale

The strength of the West Midlands' brand will heavily impact the extent of investment and tourism it receives. International perception analysis shows that, in contrast with its peers, the region is still hampered by outdated and negative perceptions that are inconsistent with the West Midlands' contemporary image and performance. WMGC will therefore work to increase the visibility of the West Midlands, curating a persuasive and informative story to positively influence decision making surrounding each of the region's boroughs.

Comprising insight, design, events, digital and public relations capability, WMGC works with local authorities to translate their opportunities into a scaled and cohesive West Midlands proposition that is market competitive. By maintaining relationships with international intermediaries and target audiences, WMGC offers local authorities extended capacity for international strategy development, soft market testing and creative campaigns/outreach.

What we will deliver

Marketing and Communications-led activity will support all four of WMGC's strategic objectives and integrate with all wider workstream functions. Its activity will be grouped into four key strands:

Narrative development

Articulating the West Midlands' most competitive and compelling offer through messaging, proposition and collateral creation, rooted in a strong evidence base. Activity will build on the narrative work developed for BAMP, and will be developed in consultation with our partners to ensure alignment with key assets and opportunities.

Audience acquisition

Identifying and targeting key audiences across key markets using media, stakeholder engagement, events, social media and wider digital channels. Activity will exploit the warm audience developed through BAMP across investor prospects, consumers, media, investment intermediaries and travel trade.

Campaign delivery

Executing 12 strategic, proactive campaigns that directly respond to the priorities of the WMCA and local authorities through digital, media, and event led content. A number of dependencies will impact campaign theme and scope, including requisite Programmes and Core Services, and the outcomes of the Internationalisation Strategy. However broad, preliminary themes and target audiences are outlined below.

Success-story-telling

Highlighting success stories linked to the West Midlands’ investment landscape and visitor economy, reinforcing regional credentials, as well as local leadership.

CAMPAIGNS

| CAMPAIGN | OVERVIEW |
|---|--|
| Secondary objective(s): Create good jobs for local people Facilitate the regeneration of the built environment | |
| Investment Promotion: <i>The Tech That Makes Tomorrow Work</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A newly curated analysis of the region’s cross-cutting innovation-based industries will form the common thread across all Inward Investment and Capital Investment market-facing campaigns. • Hinged around the region’s competitive growth clusters of high-value ‘emerging technologies’, this large-scale campaign will target prospects (across key sub-sectoral and capital investor profiles) to promote the West Midlands’ R&D hubs, strategic assets, business exemplars and growing portfolio of incubator and accelerator spaces. • See Key Sectors and Opportunities above. |
| Investment Promotion: <i>Mobilising Multipliers</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intermediaries are important influencers of prospective investors. This two-pronged campaign will focus on knowledge transfer amongst target individuals and organisations to ensure an up-to-date and ‘single version of the truth’ surrounding the West Midlands’ credentials. • Capital Investment led targets include sovereign funds, private equity, location advisory and real estate supply chain. Inward Investment targets include DBT posts, site selection advisors and embassies. |
| Secondary objective(s): Create good jobs for local people | |
| Investment Promotion: <i>Scale Up in the West Midlands</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A cross-market campaign will support the ambitions of the West Midlands Innovation Accelerator by launching and promoting the roll out of the Global Growth Programme 2 and 6D Medtech Innovation Accelerator,. • Targets include international high-growth, high-productivity firms predominantly within cross-cutting tech sectors. • The campaign will build on the market traction gained through Global Growth Programme 1. • See Key Sectors and Opportunities above. |
| Secondary objective(s): Facilitate the regeneration of the built environment | |
| Investment Promotion: <i>Catalytic Place Making</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The campaign will promote the West Midlands’ strategic sites and macro advantages. This will include tranches dedicated to retrofit, affordable housing and inclusive infrastructure; and in doing so, encompass key programmes Strategic Site Promotion, Catalytic Place Making, as well as multiple, strategic real estate events. • Targets include developer and investor audiences in UK and as identified in the Internationalisation Strategy. • See Key Sectors and Opportunities above. |
| Secondary objective(s): Create & sustain vibrant destinations | |
| Culture and tourism promotion: <i>City Pass (UK’s largest treasure hunt)</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linked to the creation and delivery of a region-wide ‘city pass’, this campaign will launch and promote the initiative and its component tourist attractions. Large-scale and multichannel, the campaign will pitch the offer creatively, encouraging visitors to explore the breadth of the West Midlands and increase dwell-time. |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key audiences include domestic overnight, city-break and short-break leisure segments within a two to three hours drivetime catchment area. |
| Culture and tourism promotion: <i>The West Midlands: My kind of region.</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West Midlands universities educate 185,000 students and produce more than 60,000 graduates each year. This campaign will create a warm welcome to those students, and more broadly, drive national and international student interest by promoting the region’s dynamic culture and Quality of Life, in such a way that influences perceptions. • The campaign could take the form of an attention-grabbing, sharable social media focused video – for example, a reimagining of the infamous ‘kitsch triumph’ “Telly Savalas Looks At Birmingham”. The campaign will build on the previous ‘Live, Learn, Earn’ narrative. |
| Culture and tourism promotion: <i>West Midlands takeover</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This campaign will raise the visibility and awareness of the region's destinations to international markets through major, strategic partnerships with influential platforms, for example; the BBC, Expedia, Booking.com, Trip Advisor, Airbnb etc. • Based on BATP delivery and learnings, partnerships could include widespread broadcast and online media channels and would incorporate detailed customer feedback. |
| Travel Trade: Development: <i>West Midlands product</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This campaign will educate and inspire travel trade buyers across domestic and international markets, helping to maintain strategic relationships and encourage contracting with preferred suppliers. • It will comprise destination workshops, training modules, travel guide development, and creative collateral development. |
| Major event attraction: <i>Home of Sport</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The two-pronged campaign will position the West Midlands as the optimum location for hosting major sporting events by showcasing its portfolio of venues and wider macro-advantages, including connectivity and culture. • Targets include Sporting Federations and Associations – including specific conventions and bids, building on the pipeline built through BATP. • Additionally, a consumer campaign will raise awareness surrounding the region’s sporting events, encouraging extended dwell-time and spend across the West Midlands. |
| Major event attraction: <i>Where the World Meets</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This two-pronged campaign will help to convert the regional pipeline of business tourism, highlighting the West Midlands Convention Bureau’s core services of venue finding, accommodation booking, and commercial sponsorships. • Additionally, a consumer campaign will link to the creation and delivery of a region-wide ‘Delegate Card’, which aims to encourage conference delegates to explore as much of the region as possible with a series of offers, discounts and privileges. |
| Secondary objective(s): Create good jobs for local people Facilitate the regeneration of the built environment Create & sustain vibrant destinations | |
| Internationalisation - in-market campaign | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WMGC will respond to the outcomes of the West Midlands International Strategy with a range of targeted, multi-lateral campaigns, including in-market activations / sales missions. • These activations will support all strategic objectives. |
| Meet the West Midlands’ Creative Class | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This cross-programme campaign will capitalise on milestones associated with hit TV series Peaky Blinders to improve the West Midlands international reputation. These include the potential announcement of the official |

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| | <p>blockbuster film being produced in Birmingham, and the outcome of a WMGC-led, new attraction feasibility study.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The campaign will also target production and creative supply chains to promote the region's 'creative campus' of assets and investment potential, in addition to promoting the region's Peaky inspired cultural offer and the emergence of local screen industries. |
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Create & sustain good jobs for local people

Lead business area

Inward Investment

Rationale

WMGC aims to grow the region's economy, increase its productivity and enable the development of its clusters by attracting firms who are looking to relocate or expand. This in turn will create good quality, high value jobs for those that live here.

WMCA and local authorities have a key role to play in attracting inward investment by helping to create the conditions for growth, supporting cluster development and through their in-house teams. WMGC works closely with them, and adds value through the aggregation of a regional narrative to a level that reflects an internationally competitive functional economic geography, which offers strong positioning in an increasingly competitive global investment attraction market – one in which investors and intermediaries respond best to destinations that present a coherent proposition at scale. Economies of scale enable WMGC to recruit the genuine specialists and expertise across sectors and functions necessary to influence global investment decisions.

What we will deliver

CORE SERVICES

Investment promotion

We promote the West Midlands as a world class business destination and hub of innovation to key audiences in target markets.

We use our understanding of audience drivers and West Midlands sectoral differentiators (such as those indicated within Plan for Growth) to develop and curate investment and innovation propositions. From these we deliver sustained multi-channel campaigns, generating content to showcase West Midlands assets and surface key local authority priorities.

Business development

We generate, progress and convert the pipeline of inward investment opportunities to enable the creation and safeguarding of high value jobs in the region. WMGC will appoint lead generation agencies in key priority markets, focus on building and improving relationships with intermediaries and multipliers, and continue on direct business development work listed below.

- **Intermediary and multiplier management**

Maintain, and grow relationships with key external intermediaries (including DBT, UK & international sector-focused trade associations, embassies, high commissions, DBT's international peers) on behalf of the region, to drive awareness and as a pre-cursor to opportunity generation. Activity includes proactive outbound contacts, attendance at third party events, and coordinated hosting of in-bound delegations.

- Qualified opportunity generation**
 Direct Business Development, activation & attendance at key sector-focused third party events, multi-channel marketing, planning and delivery of regional sales missions. Coordinating the qualification and dissemination of opportunities via our customer relationship management system. Targeting and engagement focused on promotion of qualified sectoral investment opportunities.
- Investor engagement, pipeline management and conversion**
 Long-lifecycle engagement to convert investor interest. Work can include: tailored data & insights provision, leveraging of regional networks and advocacy, coordination of tailored familiarisation visit, competitive bid/RFI-response writing, site/premises search, coordinating public sector engagement re: planning, funding etc.
- Business intelligence**
 Provision of data, insights, strategic advice or facilitated market engagement to help company members develop local strategies and shape development/commercial plans. Insight analysis work in combination with the market and intermediary engagement undertaken during delivery for all core service elements creates knowledge, assets and capability that will be deployed as strategic advice.

Strategic Relationship Management

A new function agreed as part of the WMGC Review, WMGC intends to work with local authorities, the WMCA, universities and Department for Business & Trade to coordinate a Strategic Relationship Management programme on behalf of the region, working with established account management teams and structures. This is expected to eventually comprise up to 500 key firms, and will capture and disseminate key insights to relevant stakeholders. It is anticipated that providing timely access to insights will enable the application of appropriate interventions to support the growth and retention of these firms within the West Midlands.

Strategic inward investment advice

We will deliver focused interventions through a combination of insights, advisory support, and structured market engagement, to support local authority partners with overcoming localised, but strategically important, economic development challenges.

WMGC will deploy a more structured project management approach to scoping and delivering interventions (in line with its core capabilities) to address localised, inward investment-focused economic development challenges faced by its shareholder local authorities. Where scoping confirms a need for intervention in line with our capabilities, WMGC will leverage its internal expertise (e.g. market-generated, sector-specific intelligence; primary/secondary research and insights; facilitated market engagement to key companies/intermediaries) and where necessary will support local authorities in the procurement of appropriate external suppliers to address their challenges.

PROJECTS & PROGRAMMES

| Projects & Programmes | Overview |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Global Growth Programme 2 | <p>WMGC will build on the initial Global Growth Programme (GGP) pilot to extend support for innovation-led inward investment landings into key locations across the region. GGP2 will incorporate sector-specific acceleration strands, aligned with local industry cluster strengths, accompanied by physical space provision and market-entry support, to enhance the region’s ability to attract high-growth innovative companies that would otherwise default to investment in London & the South East.</p> |
| Strategic Site Promotion | <p>A joint undertaking between Capital Investment, Inward Investment and Sector Marketing, and with WMCA, WMGC will adopt more rigour about how agreed strategically important sites are positioned in the work and campaigns that it delivers. In addition, WMGC will formalise engagement processes with LAs and private agents to collate and manage information about key sites. This information will also be translated into a digital, market-facing interactive map of the key current and future investment sites for both brownfield, asset repurposing and occupier opportunities, with prominence given the LA priorities and ‘gearshift’ sites for each LA and Investment Prospectus content. It is anticipated that additional layers of data/information will be added over time to augment user experience.</p> |
| Innovation Accelerators | <p>As part of the Innovate UK-funded consortium, WMGC will support the development of a compelling accelerator programme, which will act as an asset to enhance the region’s life sciences investment proposition for high-potential medtech companies. WMGC will subsequently work to recruit inward investors on to the programme and deliver its core suite of investor support services to companies participating in the programme, to facilitate their growth and associated job creation within the West Midlands.</p> <p>WMGC is actively exploring other opportunities to add value to the region’s Innovation Accelerators, working closely with the WMCA.</p> |
| Public Sector Relocations | <p>WMGC will deliver a structured programme of engagement, which build on previous ad hoc engagement with key UK Government teams, and which leverages the Deeper Devolution Deal text, with the aim of</p> |

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| | <p>expanding/accelerating public sector relocation into the region. This structured approach will highlight place-based offers and investment opportunities in locations across the WMCA geography and will seek to work with the Places for Growth team to proactively engage government departments and agencies that are aligned to the 'transport and infrastructure' cluster concept and/or require professions and skill sets that are well aligned with the talent pool of the region. By March 2025, this initiative aims to secure commitments to relocate additional agencies/departments to the West Midlands and have GPA-acquired, or publicly-owned sites across multiple local authorities recognised as within scope for future relocations.</p> |
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Facilitate the regeneration of the built environment

Lead business area

Capital Attraction

Rationale

Our region has huge aspirations for growth, but we need to secure transformational capital to achieve it. Capital attraction is therefore a major area of focus for this plan. WMGC will expand this function to target global and domestic capital investors, building engagement with and confidence in the region. The intent being, to work more closely with regional partners to drive greater investment by marketing more compelling opportunities to a greater range of UK and international investors.

As with inward investment, WMCA and local authorities have a key role to play in attracting capital. WMGC works closely with both, and adds value through the aggregation of a regional narrative to a level that reflects an internationally competitive functional economic geography, which offers strong positioning in an increasingly competitive global investment attraction market – one in which investors and intermediaries respond best to destinations that present a coherent proposition at scale. WMGC

What we will deliver

CORE SERVICES

Investment Promotion

WMGC will build a highly attractive, market facing, regional investment narrative to reach an audience of global and domestic investors, developers and real estate intermediaries that lead to additional inbound capital into the West Midlands.

We will deliver investable proposition development to prioritise local authority, WMCA and private sector partners' investable propositions, with a focus on accelerating opportunities in the West Midlands Investment Prospectus and other local priorities, and demonstrate clear pathways for investors.

Business Development

Focusing on regional investment and development priorities to build new vibrant places and regenerate the built environment, we will deliver continuous engagement and relationship management with game changing investors.

In addition, we will deliver investment promotion and direct market engagement at global flagship sector events, reaching new sources of capital and delivery capability, and market both our region and specific investment opportunities.

Business Intelligence

We will provide insights, consultancy & strategic advice, including access to market data, analysis and investor insight to support our shareholders through a wide range of consultancy-style support from soft market testing to developer workshop and collateral production.

Active pipeline and investor management and market feedback gathered in our systems will lead to better proposition development, greater and accelerated market engagement and capital deployment.

PROJECTS & PROGRAMMES

| Projects & Programmes | Overview |
|--|---|
| Catalytic Place-Making | <p>WMGC will drive investors and developer interest to the non-primary investment locations in the West Midlands where current market engagement and understanding is limited. This serves a need to 'level up' the towns and non-city centre locations that are not yet attracting sufficient investment to thrive.</p> <p>Focussing mainly on regen opportunities in our town centres and aligned to Local Authorities priorities, but adding value through simultaneous proposition development alongside investor dialogue. This might take a 'whole place' approach to educate the market on the strengths (connectivity, assets, major employers etc) of the locality, or a more specific investable proposition.</p> |
| Strategic Site Promotion | <p>A joint undertaking between Capital Investment, Inward Investment and Sector Marketing, and with WMCA, WMGC will adopt more rigour about how agreed strategically important sites are positioned in the work and campaigns that it delivers. In addition, WMGC will formalise engagement processes with LAs and private agents to collate and manage information about key sites. This information will also be translated into a digital, market-facing interactive map of the key current and future investment sites for both brownfield, asset repurposing and occupier opportunities, with prominence given the LA priorities and 'gearshift' sites for each LA and Investment Prospectus content. It is anticipated that additional layers of data/information will be added over time to augment user experience.</p> |
| Leisure/Hotel Market Engagement | <p>Regional partners are keen to see a wider geographical spread of hotel options, more and varied entrants into the market and possibly a 5* star offer to be established in Birmingham. Hotel provision leads to increased leisure and business tourism and associated stay expenditure into the regional economy.</p> <p>Activity will focus on understanding the complex investor/developer market for hotel delivery, feasibility study commissioning and asset/site reviews with LAs and third party advisors.</p> |

Create & sustain vibrant destinations

Lead business area

Visitor Economy, including Business visits & events and Major Sporting Events

Rationale

The visitor economy has a strong positive impact on the regional economy through employment, visitor spend, indirect supply chain benefits, capital investment and induced impacts. It is also part of the region's export market through attracting inbound visitors. It supports inclusive growth, offering entry to the job market from manual to professional roles. But it is subject to high levels of competition from other destinations, both domestically and internationally.

WMGC has strong relationships with VisitEngland/VisitBritain, has a track record in winning national investment to deliver successful international and national campaigns, develops international product for the travel trade, leads international missions representing all LA destinations, leads collective policy responses, and coordinated research and insights for the LA partners, offering effective and efficient use of resources and a strong voice for tourism in government. WMGC's role as regional lead for the visitor economy has been endorsed through our accreditation, with LA partners, as one of the first 15 Local Visitor Economy Partnerships, which were approved by a VisitEngland industry panel based on evidence of effective destination management.

What we will deliver

WMGC activity will support the strategic goals in the West Midlands Tourism Strategy and Recovery Plan which are to:

1. Increase the number of visitors from the UK staying in the West Midlands
2. Encourage greater numbers of international visitors to visit the West Midlands

This activity forms part of the wider regional approach to culture, digital and creative industries agenda led by the WMCA. Culture is a primary motivator for visits and continues to be a key element of visitor economy development and campaigns. WMGC works actively with WMCA across the culture, digital and creative industries agenda, with tourism colleagues attending the WMCA's Cultural Officers Group (COG) and collaborative briefing meetings with the portfolio lead. WMGC also sits on the cultural research working group and shares data for audiences and feedback on the cultural prospectus.

In addition, by working closely with the WMCA Nighttime Economy Policy Officer, WMGC has identified key areas of work for collaboration including safe public transport back home or to accommodation for visitors and staff after evening events. The Nighttime Advisor is coopted onto the West Midlands Tourism and Hospitality Advisory Board to ensure seamless cross-sector working.

CORE SERVICES

Visitor Economy Policy & Strategy

WMGC delivers projects to bring success to the region's travel trade, leisure tourism, business visits and events, and sporting events programmes. Subject to the findings of the West Midlands

International Strategy, and Sustainability benchmarking report, we will update the Regional Tourism Strategy at the end of 2023. We also provide secretariat, policy and communications support for the West Midlands Tourism & Hospitality Advisory Board. WMGC curates event listings, blogs and bookings for visitors and industry partners to highlight the best of the region's offer through visitbirmingham.com, social media channels and e-newsletters, which promote visitor engagement and signpost them to vibrant experiences across the region.

Travel Trade development & relationship management

Supporting the growth of inbound tourism from domestic & international audiences through new products and distribution channels for the travel trade. Tour operators, travel agents and destination management companies have a direct route to international market audience segments who have an interest in our West Midlands product. They are an effective way to raise awareness with the inbound leisure travellers in our target markets.

International direct route development

Route development is an essential function for airports planning to attract new services and it is a key element of the strategy to increase international visitors to the West Midlands. Working in partnership with Birmingham Airport enables us to demonstrate wider support to a carrier, in the face of a high level of global competition for carrier routes. We will aim to coinvest in demand generation through VisitBritain, Birmingham Airport, WMGC and destination-funded marketing campaigns.

Business Intelligence, including strategic advice for Company members

Our activity is based on insight derived from robust research and surveys, from the West Midlands Tourism Strategy to destination management plans, to sector reports for building the major sporting events and business tourism offer. Sources will include STEAM, visitor surveys, and wider sector research. We will support our Company members by providing these insights and analysis to inform the development of local destination management plans.

Business visits and events

Birmingham currently attracts the highest proportion of inbound business visitors of any UK city and working with city destinations the region needs to ensure a clear focus on maintaining its status and increasing the number of international congresses. Birmingham and the West Midlands Convention Bureau is the city and region's official convention bureau and works in partnership with stakeholders to provide services that attract international meetings, conferences, incentives and events that can help grow our economic development and knowledge creation.

- **Business Development** – business development activity to promote the region as an events destination and proactively research, identify and target new international conference business leads that build our pipeline and ensure future opportunities. Business event opportunities are aligned with the West Midlands region's sector strengths to amplify inward investment opportunities and showcase our supply chains.

- **Conference Ambassador Network** – Working closely with leading university academics, this network is dedicated to maintaining Birmingham and the West Midlands as a top business event destination. It provides a link between the academics and their industry bodies to give leaders a platform to promote their advances internationally and to bring major conferences and events to the region.
- **Bid Support** – collaborative work with stakeholders and conference organisers/ambassadors to develop engaging bids and convert more business, accessing ministerial letters or videos of support, transport for VIPs, itineraries for pre- / post-conference, and signposting opportunities for subvention through the regional or national fund.
- **Venue Finding** - A free to use venue finding service for meeting and event organisers looking to place business in the city and region. The service is online and has a dedicated team to manage enquiries which are distributed to relevant venues. PartnersWM partners benefit from a reduced commission fee of 8% + VAT on any business secured. In 2022 the Convention Bureau shared enquiries worth more than £1 million with partners across the region.
- **Accommodation Booking Service** – event organisers are offered a free microsite and accommodation booking service where their delegates can make their individual accommodation reservations. Full accommodation services were provided to 30 event organisers in 2022 along with a number of bespoke services confirming in excess of 20,000 room nights, generating a gross revenue for these venues in excess of £2million.

Major Sporting Events

WMGC aims to raise the profile nationally and internationally and become recognised as a world class host city region of major sporting events with a target of eight major events by 2027. Key activity includes:

- managing relationships with event and sports federations to drive the pipeline of opportunities;
- bidding for (and winning) events that utilise the region’s world class venues and infrastructure; and
- focusing on the sports which are important to partners and deliver against key social, economic and environmental outcomes and improve the image and perceptions of destinations.

Major Events Fund secretariat

- WMGC will deliver the secretariat for the Major Events Fund, agreed by the WMCA Board in March 2023, which will enable the region to attract, host and stage major events.

PROJECTS & PROGRAMMES

| Projects & Programmes | Overview |
|---|---|
| Destination Management Plan – LA support | Lead or support every Local Authority Company member to have a current Destination Management Plan co-developed with industry and LA engagement and aligned with Regional Tourism strategic objectives. |
| GDS sustainability benchmarking | Alongside regional destinations, WMGC has commissioned the Global Destination |

| | |
|---|---|
| | <p>Sustainability Index to assess our Environmental, Social, Supplier and Destination Management performance, and will work with them to create a pathway for improvement with our local authority destination partners and industry members. Benchmarking our activity through the index leads to a performance improvement report to shape future activity plans guided by our sustainability strategy. Our performance can be expected to improve by over 20% in the next 5 years using the GDS framework.</p> |
| Sustainability hub business support | <p>A sustainability hub on visitbirmingham.com, procured by Birmingham City Council (BCC), with content creation by Sustainability West Midlands will be actively pushed out to regional tourism and hospitality businesses to improve their own environmental practice over the business plan timeframe.</p> |
| Accessible & inclusive tourism business support | <p>An accessibility hub on visitbirmingham.com, procured by BCC, with content creation from Mima (human behaviour and design consultants) with a specialism in accessibility and inclusive design, will be actively promoted to regional tourism and hospitality businesses to improve their access for disabled visitors over the business plan timeframe, and supported by marketing to disabled visitors through content created by disabled bloggers and vloggers</p> |
| Skills audit, volunteering & implementation plan | <p>Local Skills Improvement Plan sector audit, conducted with the Coventry & Warwickshire Chambers of Commerce and the Coventry & Warwickshire Local Visitor Economy Partnership.</p> |
| Culture & Tourism Connected | <p>The Culture and Tourism Connected is a digital visitor engagement project which aligns destinations and industry partners across the West Midlands to help visitors discover, enjoy, and share experiences whilst giving attractions and destinations insight into digital engagement, visitor flow and marketing success. WMGC has developed a platform that allows destinations, partners and other approved publishers to draw on listings from a centralised database which they can freely use on their own websites or apps.</p> |
| City Card feasibility & set-up | <p>A 'city pass' offers visitors to a destination a bundled package of discounts to popular attractions, activities, experiences, and transportation options. City passes are available in destinations around the world, including</p> |

| | |
|--|---|
| | <p>London, Manchester, York, Shakespeare's England, Amsterdam, Paris, and New York City. It is a digital, mobile-friendly solution that gives visitors admission to visitors to multiple attractions with a single ticket, with live data feeds directly into attractions. The pass is available for a fixed period (e.g. 1 day, 3-day, 5-day).</p> |
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Objectives & key results

Key to managing successfully in an uncertain environment, demonstrating the WMGC's added value, and to providing accountability and transparency to our stakeholders, is our approach to Objectives and Key Results.

Below we set out the outputs, leading and lagging indicators for each strategic objective that will form the basis of our reporting framework. We will augment this with qualitative information, such as case studies, where relevant. These will also help to demonstrate the contribution the Global West Midlands programme makes to the delivery of the *Plan for Growth* and *West Midlands Outcomes Framework*, which is based on WMCA's *Inclusive Growth Framework*.

This framework will also enable the Leadership Team to adapt the programme according to external factors and risks, in consultation with the WMGC Board, Economic Growth Board and Company members and through formal change control where necessary.

Our Key Results include both a stretch target and a minimum requirement (which is 30% lower) for each metric. These provide headroom in the context of (i) the challenging macro-economic environment we face, which may constrain performance in some areas and (ii) the need for flexibility if we need to respond to new regional or local priorities which may require a re-balancing of resources, for example, between different priorities and workstreams, which may impact on

| Measure | Minimum requirement | Stretch target |
|--|---------------------|----------------|
| Enhance the profile and reputation of the region | | |
| Output metrics | | |
| Media articles | 650 | 800 |
| Media audience reach | 550,000,000 | 700,000,000 |
| Unique visitors to websites | 826,000 | 1,180,000 |
| Web visitors % from key markets | 14% | 20% |
| Campaigns | 8 | 12 |
| Outcome/leading indicators | | |
| % of investment intermediaries with recall of marcomms collateral | 11% | 16% |
| Of these - % more aware of the region's offer | 22% | 32% |
| Of these - % positive about region's offer | 25% | 35% |
| Of these - % considering recommending the region to clients | 20% | 28% |
| Leisure travellers in key target markets with recall of marcomms collateral | 11% | 16% |
| Of these - % more aware of the region's offer | 23% | 33% |
| Of these - % positive about region's offer | 23% | 33% |
| Of these - % considering visiting the region | 20% | 28% |
| % of conference organisers with recall of marcomms collateral | 11% | 16% |
| Of these - % more aware of the region's offer | 20% | 28% |
| Of these - % positive about region's offer | 12% | 17% |
| Of these - % considering organising an event in the region | 15% | 22% |

outputs, outcomes and impacts.

| | | |
|---|-------------|--------------|
| % of sporting federations with recall of marcomms collateral | 11% | 16% |
| Of these - % more aware of the region's offer | 8% | 12% |
| Of these - % positive about region's offer | 5% | 8% |
| Of these - % considering organising an event in the region | 3% | 4% |
| Create good jobs for local people | | |
| Outcome/leading indicators | | |
| Inward investment leads generated | 1,400 | 2,000 |
| Leads converted to opportunities | 105 | 150 |
| Impact metrics/lagging indicators | | |
| Opportunities won/projects landed | 82 | 117 |
| Jobs created or safeguarded | 3,604 | 5,148 |
| GVA generated | £46,462,976 | £66,375,680 |
| Facilitate the regeneration of the built environment | | |
| Outcome/leading indicators | | |
| Capital investment opportunities generated | 6 | 8 |
| Impact metrics/lagging indicators | | |
| Opportunities won/projects landed by WMGC | 2 | 3 |
| Value of capital investment (Gross Development Value) | £25,000,000 | £55,000,000 |
| Opportunities generated by WMGC, landed by other regional partners | 2 | 3 |
| Value of capital investment (Gross Development Value) | £25,000,000 | £55,000,000 |
| Total projects landed | 4 | 6 |
| Value of capital investment (Gross Development Value) | £50,000,000 | £110,000,000 |
| Create and sustain vibrant destinations | | |
| Travel trade bookable products developed | 11 | 16 |
| Impact metrics/lagging indicators | | |
| Sporting events landed | 8 | 12 |
| Business conferences landed | 8 | 11 |
| Additional visitors attracted | 164,663 | 235,233 |
| Additional economic impact generated by visitors attracted | £16,420,236 | £23,457,480 |

Key results are subject to final agreement with the WMCA through the Global West Midlands full business case.

Ways of working

WMGC is a partnership of the public, private and academic sectors established to deliver inclusive economic growth across the region through its key functions. Leveraging the collective talent, opportunities and assets of these sectors to realise the greatest impact for the West Midlands and its communities & businesses underpins everything that we do.

Local and regional priorities sit at the heart of the Global West Midlands Programme. WMGC will work closely with Local Authorities, the WMCA and universities to realise the ambition set out in this plan. This will include formal quarterly reporting at a political and officer level with each Local Authority, the Economic Growth Board and the WMCA Executive Board. Alongside these meetings, the West Midlands Growth Company will engage regularly with partners across these organisations to enable the effective delivery of, and maximum impact from, our campaigns, core services and projects & programmes. This will include aligning resources where appropriate and each partner delivering what is expected of them in a timely way. This will include trilaterals with the WMCA and Local Authorities to enable a more place-based approach, and sharing data and analysis for joint understanding and the development of plans and narratives.

The WMGC is committed to demonstrating how it adds value to the work already being undertaken by partners and to achieving good value for money. We will therefore continue to look for synergies with our stakeholders activity that can be exploited and ensuring there is no duplication of work. We will also keep seeking efficiencies across the business.

As a purpose-driven organisation, WMGC will continue to work very closely with those in the private sector that share our vision and ambition for the region; utilising their skills, expertise and networks to support the delivery of our shared priorities. We will continue to develop and deliver Partners West Midlands, our commercial partnership programme, to grow our income and reinvest it in Global West Midlands.

Close working with Government will also be critical to support the realisation of the priorities set out in this Plan. The Deeper Devolution Deal, agreed by the WMCA in March 2023, saw Government commit to co-developing the West Midlands International Strategy and its subsequent delivery plan with the region; to strengthening connections between WMGC and the Department of Business & Trade, in particular; and to reviewing how government supports the development of relationships with strategic firms. The Devolution Deal offers further opportunities, including the potential for WMGC to become a Government-recognised Destination Development Partnership – a status which is granted to the highest functioning regions with established governance and financial arrangements, and excellent track record of delivery in partnership. These opportunities combined build on one of the key lessons of the BATP – that deeper, stronger and more strategic relationships between regional and national governments can help to significantly improve the visibility of regional economies in international markets, delivering a larger, faster return on investment.

WMGC is very aware that our work adds the most value as part of a coherent economic development system and that the best strategy to enhance perceptions, create jobs and attract tourists is to improve the material conditions of the region. By working in close partnership with our key stakeholders on the development and delivery of interventions, WMGC will help to ensure, for example, that there is a close link between what we do and business support (including Business Growth West Midlands), skills provision, the unlocking of sites for employment & housing use and improved connectivity to enable the attraction of greater investment in future.

Whilst this Business Plan sets out a clear agenda to March 2025, WMGC will remain agile in its focus so that it can respond to varying economic conditions, progress with delivery of local priorities and new opportunities. This will be managed through close working with the WMCA, local authorities, universities and the wider private sector over the plan period to monitor performance and adapt the programme where mutually agreed. WMGC will develop a clear operational plan for each campaign and project, setting out milestones, a RACI, resource base, risk register, and linkages and dependencies.

In addition, we anticipate further review of the full Business Plan will be required to take account of the West Midlands International Strategy when it is published in the autumn 2023. The Plan therefore remains very much a 'live' document.

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Governance

WMGC Leadership Team

WMGC operates across the world, at a time of significant geopolitical and economic instability. A key priority for the West Midlands Growth Company during this business planning period is to ensure that it has the systems and processes in place to enable effective, agile delivery. WMGC's Leadership Team is therefore responsible for:

- Assessing the external environment and actively managing risk, following the 4T approach
- Balancing our ambition to deliver campaigns and programmes with risks
- Maintaining a focus on the best, longer-term outcomes for the region over the short-term benefits for the Company
- Monitoring performance against delivery, and implementing change control where necessary

The Leadership Team will also ensure accurate and transparent reporting to the WMGC Board, Economic Growth Board, and Company members.

WMGC Board

The WMGC Board is responsible for setting the direction of the business and for holding the Leadership Team to account for performance. The Board is supported by the Strategy & Planning Committee; Audit & Risk Committee; and Nominations & Remuneration Committee (and other task & finish groups as required).

As noted above, as part of the WMGC Review and to increase transparency and accountability to Company members, it was agreed that each of the WMCA and its seven constituent authorities would be entitled to make appointments to the WMGC Board.

Company Members

The West Midlands Growth Company is constituted as a company limited by guarantee, wholly owned by the WMCA and its seven constituent members. As per its Articles of Association, Company members retain overall control of the Company through "member reserved" matters:

- changes to the Company's core business;
- approval of the Company's annual business plan;
- any decision which deviates from the agreed annual business plan;
- the admission of new Members;
- any variation to the Articles of Association;
- any acquisitions, assimilations or asset transfers by or to the Company;
- the appointment and removal of Directors and their terms;
- any decisions relating to the strategic objectives of the Company (to the extent that these are not in any case reflected by the Company's annual business plan); and
- any other significant decisions of the Company

Tourism and Hospitality Board

The West Midlands Tourism and Hospitality Advisory Board (THAB) represents, and speaks on behalf of, the tourism and hospitality sector in the West Midlands, responding to national and regional

consultations and policy documents. In doing so, it advises the WMCA and WMGC, reporting through the WMGC Board and Economic Growth Board. Once Destination Development Partnership (DDP) status is confirmed, WMGC as the lead accountable body will invite a VisitBritain representative to attend both the THAB and WMGC Board meetings for DDP agenda items.

Economic Growth Board

The Economic Growth Board exists to provide strong, democratically accountable leadership to the strategic oversight of the region's approach to driving green and inclusive economic growth.

The WMGC Review recognised the importance of the West Midlands Growth Company remaining operationally independent of the WMCA, but also concluded that more formal strategic alignment would be beneficial. The Economic Growth Board is therefore now accountable for WMGC and will help to ensure that, along with the Innovation Board, Create Central, Cultural Leadership Board and Energy Capital Board, we are united in delivering the region's economic and levelling up ambitions.

As part of reporting to the Economic Growth Board, WMGC will also report to the Directors of Economic Development.

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Finances

The table below sets out how WMGC will deliver a balanced budget in both years of this Planning period.

| | Total Budget | Total Budget | Total Budget |
|----------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| | 23/24 | 24/25 | TOTAL |
| Regional Contribution | | | |
| West Midlands Combined Authority | 8,250,000 | 9,750,000 | 18,000,000 |
| Other | | | |
| University Contributions | 140,000 | 140,000 | 280,000 |
| DBT Key Account Management | 171,000 | 171,000 | 342,000 |
| GBSLEP Proftech | 9,296 | 0 | 9,296 |
| | 320,296 | 311,000 | 631,296 |
| Commercial | 807,510 | 2,367,332 | 3,174,842 |
| Corporate Partners | 375,000 | 450,000 | 825,000 |
| Tourism Partners | 90,000 | 100,000 | 190,000 |
| Convention Bureau | 80,000 | 120,000 | 200,000 |
| BATP Sponsorship | 262,510 | 1,697,332 | 1,959,842 |
| Other - Research, WMT, BCC Grant | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | 807,510 | 2,367,332 | 3,174,842 |
| Total Revenue | 9,377,806 | 12,428,332 | 21,806,138 |
| Staff Costs | | | |
| Direct Staff | 4,302,313 | 6,135,097 | 10,437,410 |
| Indirect Staff | 602,498 | 650,806 | 1,253,303 |
| Overheads | 1,319,648 | 1,319,648 | 2,639,295 |
| Third Party Costs | | | |
| Regional Contribution | | | |
| West Midlands Combined Authority | 3,080,432 | 4,249,882 | 7,330,314 |
| Other | | | |
| DBT Key Account Management | 15 | 0 | 15 |
| GBSLEP Proftech | 2,100 | 2,100 | 4,200 |
| | 2,115 | 2,100 | 4,215 |
| Commercial | 70,800 | 70,800 | 141,600 |
| Corporate Partners | 24,900 | 24,900 | 49,800 |
| Tourism Partners | 24,900 | 24,900 | 49,800 |
| Convention Bureau | 21,000 | 21,000 | 42,000 |
| West Midlands India Partnership | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Meeting Show | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| BATP Sponsorship | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Other | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | 70,800 | 70,800 | 141,600 |
| Total Expenditure | 9,377,806 | 12,428,332 | 21,806,138 |
| Surplus/(Deficit) | (0) | (0) | (0) |

Finances are subject to final agreement with the WMCA through the Global West Midlands full business case. In addition, WMGC has commenced work with regional stakeholders on sustainable funding beyond this business planning period.

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| | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Date | Wednesday 12 th July 2023 |
| Report title | Major Events Fund and West Midlands International Strategy Update |
| Portfolio Lead | WMCA Portfolio Lead for Economy and Innovation |
| Accountable Chief Executive | Laura Shoaf, Chief Executive, WMCA Neil Rami, Chief Executive, WMGC |
| Accountable Employee | Ed Cox, Executive Director – Strategy, Integration and Net Zero, WMCA Katie Trout, Director of Policy & Partnerships, WMGC |
| Report has been considered by | Directors of Economic Development |

1. Purpose

- 1.1. This paper provides an update on the development of both the West Midlands International Strategy and Major Events Fund.

2. Recommendations

Economic Growth Board is recommended to:

- 2.1.1. Note and discuss progress with the West Midlands International Strategy;
- 2.1.2. Note and discuss progress with the Major Events Fund;
- 2.1.3. Agree the establishment of the Regional Advisory Group for the Major Events Fund, which will report to the Economic Growth Board; and
- 2.1.4. Note that both the International Strategy and the Major Events Fund will be substantive items at the Economic Growth Board's September meeting.

3. Background

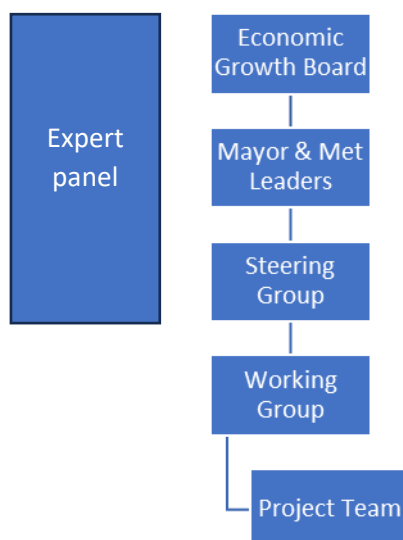
- 3.1. At its meeting in December 2022, the Economic Growth Board (EGB) agreed to development of a West Midlands International Strategy (WMIS), with the West Midlands Growth Company (WMGC) to develop the strategy in partnership with local and national stakeholders.

- 3.2. Subsequently, in the Deeper Devolution Deal, the Department for Business & Trade committed to co-developing the WMIS (and its subsequent deliver plan) with the region.
- 3.3. At its Board meeting in March 2023, the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) committed £6m to secure internationally significant business, sporting and cultural events in the West Midlands. It was also agreed that WMGC will act as secretariat to the fund, and as a strategic advisor for Local Authority applicants – supporting them in preparing Project Business Cases to the WMCA to go through the Single Assurance Framework. WMCA will remain the accountable body for the fund and have final approval of all funding applications.

4. West Midlands International Strategy

- 4.1. It has been agreed by the EGB that the WMIS will internationalise the WMCA's 2030 Plan for Growth and will be aligned with and support the delivery of other regional and local strategies and plans. Its purpose is to shape the region's collective international effort and resources to elevate the region's presence and impact on the global stage in line with "Global West Midlands".
- 4.2. The WMIS will be multilateral in that it will cover Trade, Investment, R&D, Students, Tourism as well as 'soft power' considerations such as culture and international diasporas. By combining all these elements, the region will be able to increase its international effectiveness and profile. The Strategy, which will run to 2030, will lead to a shared delivery plan which will align resources from across the public, private and academic sectors of the West Midlands with those of Government.
- 4.3. The region has demonstrated the impact it can make internationally, for example through the Business & Tourism Programme around the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games. Given current economic challenges, the time is now right for the region to coalesce behind a cohesive international strategy which will help address:
 - the highly competitive market for inward investment and tourism;
 - the region's relatively weak performance in international trade; and
 - the need for the region to compete for international talent and promote itself as an attractive location for capital investment and R&D.
- 4.4. This Strategy aims to prioritise global key markets, where together the region can generate the strongest return on future activity. As a result, WMIS seeks to expand economic and social growth and in turn help create employment, bring additional investment, support collective regional ambitions.
- 4.5. The West Midlands' international reputation and performance needs to out-compete global regions and nations if the Plan for Growth and the region's ambitions are to be realised. According to research by WMGC, whilst the region's brand is achieving some degree of cut-through, there is significant potential for improvement:

- The West Midlands is currently rated as a ‘third tier’ location.
 - Whereas Manchester is seen as a key European centre alongside a range of other ‘second tier’ locations such as Copenhagen.
- 4.6. This urgently needs to be addressed if the region is to be globally competitive. It is therefore important that WMIS is ambitious and innovative in equal measure to ensure stretching and meaningful outcomes are delivered for the region.
- 4.7. Following an open tender, WMGC has procured the services of OCO Global and MetroDynamics. They will provide:
- Experience of developing similar strategies for cities and regions around the world;
 - Experience of developing broad and inclusive stakeholder engagement plans;
 - Benchmarking and further data, thought leadership, ideas and innovative practice; and
 - Rapid development of a highly credible strategy.
- 4.8. The following governance structure has been agreed:



- 4.9. The **Economic Growth Board** will ultimately be responsible for approving the WMIS. The **Mayor & Met Leaders** will be kept abreast of progress, and asked to consider findings, priorities at key points in the strategy’s development, and the draft strategy before recommendation to EGB.
- 4.10. The **Steering Group** will be responsible for overseeing the development of the WMIS. Steering Group members will provide knowledge, experience and expertise to consider the issues raised by the Working Group and make recommendations to the Economy Growth Board, including the draft WMIS, and consider the delivery implications for their own organisations. The Group will meet monthly and will comprise of senior leaders from the WMGC, WMCA,

Local Authorities, Government, universities, Chambers of Commerce, cultural institutions and anchor institutions like Birmingham Airport.

- 4.11. The **Working Group** will oversee the work of the consultants including the project plan, debating and escalating issues to the Steering Group. It will “hold the pen” on the production of the WMIS. Working group members will provide knowledge, experience and expertise to inform the development of the WMIS and, in turn, input into their own organisations’ delivery plans. It will meet fortnightly and will consist of the representatives from WMGC, WMCA, Local Authorities and Department for Business and Trade.
- 4.12. The **Project Team** will consist of officers and consultants.
- 4.13. In addition, WMGC will seek to establish a **panel of third-party experts** to provide informal advice, feedback and challenge on the development of the evidence base, strategy and delivery plans. It will consist of academics from the region's universities and external thought leaders who can bring international expertise to the process.
- 4.14. As the proposed governance arrangements are relatively tight knit, it is particularly important that a wide range of stakeholders across the public, private and academic sectors are kept abreast of progress and consulted throughout the development of the strategy.
- 4.15. Directors of Economic Development will provide a regular forum for WMGC to engage with WMCA and local authorities; WMGC will also ensure that Local Authorities are engaged individually to enable full input into the strategy’s development.
- 4.16. WMGC will also actively engage with universities throughout the process. This will include deep dives into each university’s international activity and plans, global alumni networks and in-market bases and representatives. It will also include engaging with them as a collective as priorities emerge.
- 4.17. WMGC will also engage with government departments – including Department for Business and Trade, the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, and Department for Culture Media and Sport – at senior levels, at key points in the development of the strategy.
- 4.18. As part of the process, targeted firms from the following key sectors / clusters will also be consulted, working with established cluster leadership groups where appropriate:
 - Advanced Manufacturing, including Aerospace
 - Future of Mobility
 - Business, Professional and Financial Services
 - Life Sciences, HealthTech and MedTech
 - Real Estate and the Manufacturing of Future Housing
 - Retail
 - Sporting

- Cultural
 - Hospitality
- 4.19. Other regional fora – such as the Tourism & Hospitality Advisory Board and the Regional Business Council – will also be engaged, as will Business Representative Organisations such as the Chambers of Commerce, MAKE UK, CBI. It will be important that the views of SMEs are clearly heard through the strategy’s development, as well as those of larger businesses. WMGC will also engage Birmingham Airport and other key anchor institutions.
- 4.20. The intention is for a draft Strategy to be available for consideration by the WMGC Board and EGB for their meetings in September. Ahead of that, WMGC is keen to discuss progress with the Mayor and Met Leaders at one of their meetings (date to be arranged).

5. Major Events Fund

- 5.1. WMGC prepared and submitted a Major Event Fund Programme Business Case in May to be approved through the WMCA Single Assurance Framework process and be reviewed by the Investment Board at its meeting on 24th July 2023 for approval. If approved, the £6m Major Events Fund will need to be allocated and spent by March 2025.
- 5.2. SportAccord is one of the events that is being proposed to benefit from the fund. SportAccord is a globally significant business event hosting world leaders in sport in the region and will provide an unrivalled opportunity to promote the region’s assets and lay the foundation for the next 10 years and beyond of attracting major sporting and business events.
- 5.3. The Programme Business Case sets out that WMGC will undertake the following headline activities:
- establish a regional Advisory Group, reporting to the Economic Growth Board, whose membership will largely be drawn from the public sector, with some expert input from the private sector and aligned with other bodies (inc. the Tourism Board and Well-being Board re: the £2m local events fund);
 - act as the secretariat to the Advisory Group;
 - identify a pipeline of major event prospects working with Local Authority hosts, including those events proposed by key stakeholders and host venues across the region - this will build on the BATH pipeline which has been developed over the last 18 months through discussions with Rights Holders and Event Owners who have already expressed an interest in hosting Major Events in the West Midlands; and
 - prioritise the pipeline based on an agreed West Midlands Major Event Evaluation Framework (WM MEEF) which helps assess alignment

with regional priorities, outcomes and the economic, social and sustainable impact of each event.

- 5.4. Economic Growth Board is recommended to agree the establishment of the Regional Advisory Group mentioned above. The Advisory Group will report to the Economic Growth Board. This will enable work to be undertaken over the summer on the WM MEEF and the prioritisation of the pipeline, ahead of the Economic Growth Board meeting in September.
- 5.5. The WM MEEF has been procured and developed through the WMGC Business and Tourism Programme with leading consultants in this field. The guiding principles for assessing event potential/suitability are included at the end of this report. The draft WM MEEF will be reviewed by the Advisory Group and will be proposed to September's Economic Growth Board for approval.
- 5.6. As Local Authorities are ultimately the hosts, it is envisaged that they will be lead agencies on bids and funding requests. As this is a Major Events fund, WMGC anticipates each bid will require in the region of £250,000 financial support to meet hosting costs. Request for smaller amounts of funding will be referred to the Community Grants Programme.
- 5.7. To make the most of the fund, financial and operational commitments (of up to 30% cash or value in kind) will be required from Local Authority host partners.
- 5.8. Local Authority hosts will be required to submit a Project Business Case for every event that is successful through the WM MEEF which is likely to be approved via the WMCA Exec Board rather than through the Investment Board due to the level of funding asks and in line with delegations for projects of £1m to £5m.
- 5.9. An outline timetable for the process is proposed below:

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| End July | Establish a Regional Advisory Group to review MEEF Evaluation Framework, proposed process and Governance. WMCA and LAs to be asked to nominate members shortly. |
| End August | <p>Call out to Local Authorities to identify potential bids for major sport, business and cultural events. Form being developed for ease and consistent input of information necessary to assess</p> <p>All events submitted via the Bid Template to be evaluated and scored through the MEEF</p> <p>Regional Advisory Group to consider all events that achieve necessary score through the MEEF</p> <p>Regional Advisory Group to agree the 'shortlisted' Major Event opportunities to have Project Business Cases developed</p> |
| End September | Economic Growth Board to consider and approve the governance process and MEEF and the prioritised list of events |

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| | Approved list of Major Events to have Project Business Case (PBC) developed by Local Authorities hosts |
| End October | Project Business Cases to go through WMCA Single Assurance Framework – or simpler route – Still TBC |

6. Legal Implications

6.1. There are no immediate legal implications as a direct result of this report.

7. Equalities Implications

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

8. Inclusive Growth Implications

8.1. There are no direct Inclusive Growth implications arising from this report; however, the focus the activity set out will support the delivery of the region's inclusive growth ambitions. For example, increased inward investment will create new employment opportunities for local people across the region – both directly and indirectly through supply chains; capital investment activity will focus will be on new, brownfield development and the refurbishment and repurposing of existing assets in line with local priorities. Ultimately, this work will improve the living conditions of local residents, drive economic uplift through new investment and champion a more sustainable future landscape for the region. Similarly, securing internationally significant events for the region will promote the West Midlands' visitor economy domestically and globally, drive visitor footfall across local authority areas, sustaining local businesses in the hospitality supply chain, materially improving perceptions of these destinations, promoting cultural and social wellbeing and fostering the civic pride of citizens.

9. Geographical Area of Report's Implications

9.1. The report primarily covers the seven West Midlands Combined Authority metropolitan areas and, while non-constituent authorities will be eligible to bid into the Major Events Fund, further discussions are required to clarify the geographic scope of the WMIS and subsequent delivery plan.

10. Other implications

10.1. None.

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Economic Growth Board

| | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Date | Wednesday 12 th July 2023 |
| Report Title | Business Growth West Midlands |
| Portfolio lead | Portfolio lead for Economy and Innovation |
| Accountable Chief Executive | Laura Shoaf - Chief Executive, WMCA Email: laura.shoaf@wmca.org.uk |
| Accountable Employee | Ed Cox, Executive Director – Strategy, Integration and Net Zero Email: ed.cox@wmca.org.uk |
| Report has been considered by | Earlier version by Business Support Regional Operations Groups and Local Authority Directors of Economic Development |

Recommendations

Economic Growth Board is recommended to note progress in delivery of the pan-region Business Growth West Midlands service, with day-to-day delivery led by local authority partners and agree to the creation of a Regional Operations Group to oversee day-to-day delivery of the service.

1 Purpose of Report

1.1 To update the Economic Growth Board's (EGB) on progress and delivery of the Business Growth West Midlands service, in operation from 1 April 2023 to include:

- Business Growth West Midlands (BGWM) progress since the end of March 2023.
- Department for Business and Trade Growth Hub funding.
- Commissioning of regional programmes to support West Midlands businesses.
- Future operational governance.
- Operational issues and proposed next steps.

2 Background

Business Growth West Midlands Update

2 Task & Finish Group



- 2.1 The regional Business Support Task and Finish Group, driven by Local Authority officers and supported by the WMCA team and representatives from Greater Birmingham and Solihull and Coventry and Warwickshire Growth Hubs has driven significant progress in recent months with the “soft launch” of the Business Growth West Midlands service on 1 April 2023.
- 2.2 As Economic Growth Board members will recall, this is a substantial change to the delivery of business support services in the West Midlands and Local Authority officers are to be commended on their excellent, collaborative working in launching a cohesive and coherent service with no observable difference in the consistency of service following the closure of the Black Country LEP Growth Hub and closure of the Coventry and Warwickshire LEP (noting that the Growth Hub still operates in Coventry and Warwickshire as a deliverer of certain business support services).
- 2.3 Despite this, there does remain some variability of service with the areas where Growth Hubs remain (Greater Birmingham & Solihull and Coventry) able to maintain delivery relatively unchanged. Black Country local authorities have mobilised and are pursuing different models for their “spokes” ranging from fully in-house to fully procured (with processes underway to establish provision where that is the case). However, in the Black Country there has already been an upward trend of businesses supported in April and May compared with comparable figures for the final quarter of delivery by the Black Country LEP Growth Hub, with an additional 10% for April and 50% in May.
- 2.4 The first quarter of the financial year has necessarily been a transition period given how many partners have been involved in completing residual ERDF programmes and pivoting into a new service. During the first two months, referrals to specialist programmes (many of which have been supported by ERDF) dropped by 20%. As new specialist programmes come on stream over the summer and autumn, we should see this number begin to grow again.
- 2.5 It is proposed that the Task & Finish Group is now disbanded and becomes a Regional Operations Group to meet monthly. Terms of Reference have been discussed and agreed with the Task and Finish Group and Local Authority Directors of Economic Development. The Terms of Reference are appended to this report.

3 Department for Business and Trade Funding

- 3.1 In addition to the already allocated UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) for regional programmes and the local authority led SME advisory service, core “Growth Hub” funding has also been offered by the Department for Business and Trade (DBT). This is of a total value of £420,000. However, this includes a



£40,000 allocation for cluster lead duties in the NUTS 1 West Midlands which has been undertaken by Coventry and Warwickshire Growth Hub in recent years. Given the transition state of Business Growth West Midlands, it is proposed that C&W Growth Hub continue to carry out this function for this financial year.

- 3.2 As previously raised with Economic Growth Board, it is proposed the remainder of the money will be used for the WMCA Core staff team on BGWM. This will allow the current UKSPF allocation to support Core Hub staff to be recycled back into regional business growth priorities.
- 3.3 It is proposed that the Regional Operations Group recommend options (via Local Authority Directors of Economic Development) to Economic Growth Board for best use of this funding, following the established principles of the Business Support Review. A short paper to this effect will come to Economic Growth Board in September.

4 Branding, Marketing and Communication

- 4.1 The Business Growth West Midlands service “soft launch” in April established some relevant branding and a web landing page directing enquiries to the relevant Local Authority delivery “spoke”. Work is now underway to expand this service with a first phase due for completion in July and a further phase in September.
- 4.2 This expansion of the promotion of the service will complement the increase in delivery capacity amongst Local Authorities, formal launch of two of the regionally commissioned programmes (see 5.1 to 5.3 below) and a high-profile event for Business Growth West Midlands with the portfolio holder and Mayor, including a full programme of events for businesses and partners. These are all scheduled for September.
- 4.3 The launch event will be followed by a series of roadshows in localities, working closely with local authority teams and a programme of events based on business needs and issues as well as partner campaigns and activities.

5 Regionally Commissioned Programmes

- 5.1 The tender process for Investor Readiness and Regional Decarbonisation Programmes has been completed and suppliers identified and informed.
- 5.2 No contracts will be issued until UKSPF funding for the financial year has been confirmed, although the successful organisations have begun some mobilisation activities at their own risk.



- 5.3 In addition, the business plans for both the High-Growth Accelerator Programme and the Supply Chain Transition Programme (funded through the Commonwealth Games Legacy Fund) were agreed by the Investment Board on the 19 June 2023, allowing funding to be released once the grant agreement from DCMS is reviewed and signed by WMCA. The tender specifications for both programmes are currently being written with the expectation that the tender is released in July leading to an October start date.

6 UK Shared Prosperity Fund

- 6.1 WMCA have still not received Grant Award letters or funds for 23/24. DLUHC have indicated that they need to carry out a full reconciliation of Year 1 spending and our credible plan submission for carry forward of year 1 underspends into year 2 before issuing this. The WMCA SPF year 1 return was completed and submitted to DLUHC early May, and following some recent clarifications from government was resubmitted on Monday 19th June. We are now waiting for government to confirm approval of the return and carry forward request and issue our year 2 award.
- 6.2 West Midlands Finance Directors have been updated and consulted in relation to managing programme level delivery risk, following this funding award change by DLUHC. At meetings in March and April the WMFD's agreed to progress some SPF activity locally, at risk, on a case-by-case basis.
- 6.3 The WMCA agreed the same position with payments for core staffing and small contracts honoured at risk, with the majority of discretionary spend paused, until funding is secured.
- 6.4 Given this current position, it is likely that the WMCA will not be in receipt of the Grant Award letter or funding until later this month. As we are now moving into quarter 2 of year 2 this delay is effectively putting a number of UKSPF projects for year 2 at risk.
- 6.5 The WMCA are continuing to escalate concerns to central government, and through wider forums including the National SPF Accountable Bodies Forum and other M10 Forums.

7 Priorities and Next Steps

- 7.1 Although the Business Growth West Midlands service has made a good start there are a number of priorities over the next two months to ensure that West Midlands businesses secure the best possible service from September as transition away from LEPs continues.
- 7.2 Priorities include:



- ensuring a coherent and cohesive reporting methodology across the seven local authorities and regionally commissioned programmes
- securing UKSPF funding for year 2 to enable formal commissioning of regional programmes,
- launch regional programmes that are inherently tied to local delivery with referrals into and out of localities and commissioned programmes.
- commencing the tendering process for the Commonwealth Games Legacy Fund regional programmes, once the grant agreement is in place
- tying the Innovation Accelerator and future regionally funded projects more closely into the wider ecosystem.

8 Financial Implications

- 8.1 Business Growth West Midlands is supported, in full, by grant funding through a mix of, primarily, UK Shared Prosperity Fund with some additional funding through the Commonwealth Games Legacy Fund and Department for Business and Trade “core” funding.
- 8.2 The current financial risk is that the UK Shared Prosperity fund is not expected to be in place until July and Commonwealth Games Legacy Fund will be approved in two weeks. This means that there is a direct risk to services should this funding be delayed or not be forthcoming in the future. Only existing posts and small existing contracts are currently being funded at risk, with all new commissions and recruitment on hold until funding is secured.

9 Legal Implications

- 9.1 There are no new legal implications for WMCA resulting from this report.

10 Equalities Implications

- 10.1 There are no direct equalities implications.

11 Inclusive Growth Implications

- 11.1 There are no direct inclusive growth implications. However, the overarching aim of Business Growth West Midlands is to ensure that all businesses, regardless of geography, benefit from expert support that enables growth across the region and in all communities. In addition, commissioning of regional programmes is based on ensuring that businesses and communities across the geography benefit from those programmes and that is a key outcome of the tendering process.

12 Geographical Area of Report’s Implications

- 12.1 The report relates to the 7 Met area.

13 Schedule of Background reports



Business Support Regional Operational Group (BSROG) **Terms of Reference**

Purpose

Paragraph 182 of the Deeper Devolution Deal states: “The government recognises the WMCA as the lead institution for integrating business productivity interventions at the city region level” with a “new, empowered role in integrating, promoting and overseeing access to business support and advisory services, small and medium-sized enterprise finance and the broader commitments agreed as part of the deal. This will strip inefficiencies out of the system and increase small and medium-sized enterprise access to support.”

In practice, working closely with a range of partners, and with the seven metropolitan local authorities at its heart, this activity has been ongoing for some time with two reviews of business support in the West Midlands and the subsequent bringing together of a business support task and finish group in October 2022 to agree priorities, responsibilities and accountabilities surrounding the delivery of business support in the West Midlands. This Terms of Reference formalises that task finish group into an ongoing operational body that ensures the quality of delivery of business support across the West Midlands.

In terms of governance, the Business Support Regional Operational Group (BSROG) will be an advisory body to the WMCA to enable the above and ensure that the delivery of business support across the West Midlands is equitable, consistent, high quality and meets the needs of the region’s business base. It will feed into reporting into the Economic Growth Board under the oversight of the Executive Director for Economy, Skills and Communities (or replacement role).

Role of BSROG

The role of BSROG will therefore be:

- To ensure the effective day to day delivery of the Business Growth West Midlands service, as the brand for the business support ecosystem in the West Midlands
- Align and champion the needs and demands of Business Support in the West Midlands and how that drives economic growth and social change. This means ensuring regional plans and strategies for business support drive the conditions which result in business, productivity and jobs growth. This includes taking an evidence-based approach and providing on-the-ground data and insight from West Midlands-based businesses
- Identify business support priorities to support the region’s Plan for Growth, building established and nascent cluster strengths that support the case for inward investment, jobs growth and upskilling.
- Constructively challenge the WMCA and partners to prioritise business support in areas of specific need for the West Midlands and/or local economies



- Enable coordination between national, regional and local business support activities, specifically with reference to paragraph 181 of the Deeper Devolution Deal says "The government welcomes and will support WMCA's desire to bring greater coherence to the business support and finance landscape. This will be a key part of our joint efforts to boost local growth, and to raising living standards across the city region."
- To ensure accountability for and high-quality delivery of the regional business support offer and to link in and develop the wider ecosystem to the same principles
- To support the delivery of wider strategic objectives for the region through the business support offer (e.g. net zero, regulation, statutory functions, social economy and skills agenda)

Measures of Success

Specific success measures, under the remit of the Group include that:

- The region can demonstrate a connected, coordinated business support provision for business which supports and increases productivity, start-up and scale-up levels, job creation and growth
- A publicly-funded business support ecosystem with high levels of client satisfaction and measurable impact.

There will also be a suite of KPIs to be measured and monitored regularly, as agreed by the group. KPIs will not be contractual and indicative; some will be outcome focused and others will be a reflection of the service itself e.g. customer satisfaction. They will be added to the terms of reference of this document once agreed.

Accountability

The Group is accountable to WMCA Economic Growth Board under the oversight of the Executive Director for Economy, Skills and Communities (or replacement role).

It is also supported through the WM Directors of Economic Development Group

Actions (not minutes) will be recorded by WMCA, who will provide the secretariat and circulated; owners should resolve actions as soon as practicable. Papers will be circulated in advance as far as possible.

The group will review its activities and Terms of Reference on an annual basis and will conduct an annual review (in line with Department for Business & Trade expectations and deadlines).

Changes to the TOR can be made as part of that cycle or by agreement of members, this may include the termination of the group, which would need to be approved by Economic Growth Board.

Group Members

Members of the Group will be drawn from the WMCA, each of the seven Local Authorities and from the West Midlands Growth Company as the main publicly funded business support delivery organisations in the region.



One regular and one alternate member to be nominated by each Local Authority
One regular and one alternate member to be nominated by WM Growth Company
Chair and alternate to be provided by WMCA
Other members to be included by invitation and agreement

The Group will adhere to Nolan Principles and manage any potential conflicts of interest in accordance with the legal requirements of the WMCA

The group will generally proceed by consensus, voting would only take place if necessary at the discretion of the Chair

Frequency

Members will meet monthly in person (wherever possible) where duration will match the business to be transacted. It will be an aim to meet periodically at each local authority premises, as well as at WMCA.

BSROG Executive Support

The Secretariat for the BS Regional Operations Group will be provided by the WMCA Economy, Skills and Community Directorate.



Economic Growth Board

| | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Date | Wednesday 12 th July 2023 |
| Report Title | West Midlands Plan for Growth: mobilisation and delivery |
| Portfolio lead | Portfolio lead for Economy and Innovation |
| Accountable Chief Executive | Laura Shoaf - Chief Executive, WMCA Email: laura.shoaf@wmca.org.uk |
| Accountable Employee | Ed Cox, Executive Director – Strategy, Integration and Net Zero Email: ed.cox@wmca.org.uk |
| Report has been considered by | |

Recommendations

Economic Growth Board is recommended to note progress against a broad range of activity in mobilising Plan for Growth activity.

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To update Economic Growth Board (EGB) on delivery progress against Plan for Growth.

2 Background

- 2.1 As EGB members will recall, The West Midlands Plan for Growth takes a twin-track approach to securing new economic growth in the West Midlands economy by:

- Capitalising on **existing clusters of scale and strength** where the West Midlands has UK and global competitive advantage, clear market confidence, and credible opportunity for additional growth in high-value employment over the next 2-5 years. This is forecast to generate approximately £2.9 - £3.2bn additional output by 2030 and up to 44,800 additional jobs.
- **Supporting nascent clusters and emerging technologies** that might spur additional growth of around £900m over the next 5-10 years and up to 15,000 additional jobs.

- 2.2 As EGB members are aware, the Plan will be used to:



- Inform and challenge where we prioritise resources already devolved to the region and, when necessary, seek further resources. This does not just relate to WMCA programmes, but those in local authorities, the West Midlands Growth Company (WMGC), and universities.
- Inform the region's economic narrative about the next decade focused on a proactive medium-term plan to support market-led growth.

2.3 In practical terms, this means taking a cross-cutting, or horizontal, approach to initiatives that have the potential to mobilise growth and high value jobs right across the economy. By way of example, these might be in areas of skills, access to finance or employment land.

2.4 In addition, there will be a number of specific and targeted interventions that will unlock growth opportunities in specific clusters.

3. Cross-Cutting Activity

3.1 Since the last Economic Growth Board, several regional programmes have either launched, or will shortly launch, aimed at growing the highest potential businesses in key parts of the West Midlands economy. These major regional programmes aim to turbo-charge growth and deliver for our key clusters. An update on each of these programmes is provided below:

4. West Midlands Co-Investment Fund

4.1 The West Midlands Co-Investment Fund is a £25 million fund created with investment from West Midlands Combined Authority and the West Midlands Local Government Pension Fund. It will invest equity finance, up to £1 million, in at least 46 high-growth small or medium-sized enterprises based in the West Midlands. It is designed to attract additional private sector funding from outside the region alongside each individual investment, at least equal to the amount invested by the fund.

4.2 The venture capital firm Midven was selected in March 2023 to manage the fund over its ten-year lifetime and a launch event took place on 27 June 2023. The Fund is available for post-revenue businesses turning over at least £100,000 and is expected to generate an extra £49 million for the regional economy and create or secure at least 800 jobs.

5. Innovation Accelerator

5.1 As EGB members will recall, in a co-creation process the Innovation Board has worked with Innovate UK (IUK) to develop the £33m West Midlands Innovation Accelerator (IA) and ultimately selected five of the 14 projects to pass IUK threshold to be funded.



5.2 The supported projects will focus on clean-tech, med-tech and health-tech priorities, alongside initiatives aimed at boosting the overall level(s) of innovation in the West Midlands economy:

Projects

- **West Midlands HealthTech Accelerator (£14,513,471):** the project will provide a national focus for the development and deployment of new healthcare technologies, growing a vibrant and self-sustaining cluster of activity centred in the new Precision Healthcare Technology Accelerator facility, leveraging major recent private investment alongside significant regional assets to attract and support medical innovators.
- **DIATOMIC (£6,042,616):** the project will broaden and accelerate the West Midlands innovation ecosystem by enabling more people and places to be involved in the design and delivery of innovation, and the diffusion of the benefits into the community. The project will establish the first regional hub of the national Inclusive Innovation Network.
- **West Midlands Innovation Programme 2.0 (£2,888,317):** the project will address the "Capability and Capacity" strand of the West Midlands Innovation Accelerator, supporting cross-sector, demand-led innovation and enhancing the connectedness and operation of the region's innovation ecosystem, building on the outcomes of the first Innovation Programme, which was supported by WMCA.
- **Clean Futures (£8,034,908):** the project will support the transition of manufacturing capability and associated supply chains from fossil-fuelled transport products to clean-tech transport.
- **Biochar Innovation Accelerator (£1,822,376):** the project will strengthen the supply chains and expand participation in the cluster of companies investigating market opportunities for applications of Biochar technology. These include productive use of waste and residues to replace the need for fossil fuel-based resources in applications such as renewable heat and power, planting materials for green roofs, green walls, urban trees and plant growth enhancers.

5.3 As part of our ongoing engagement with the IA, the WMCA will be supporting the projects in three ways:

- Providing a 'Critical Friend' to the projects, observing their development, ensuring connectivity with other regional business support activity with a focus on ensuring that IA projects deliver fully on Plan for Growth and Business Growth West Midlands priorities and reporting to the Innovation Board
- Supporting regional communications and marketing of the programme and the projects
- Liaising with IUK and acting as an advocate for the projects



5.4 Activity to Date

- Innovate UK has been undertaking their due diligence of each of the project partners. At the time of writing three projects have passed the due diligence and have received their grant offer letters.
- All projects have shown high commitment levels and engagement. There is a strong commitment to sustainability of all the projects and to ensure their impact in creating UK and in some cases global centres of excellence.
- While most of the projects are in the process of identifying clear milestones in their delivery plans, activity has begun at risk in all projects in developing governance structures and engaging sub-contractors and partners.
- There are also links to be made to Business Growth West Midlands advisors based in each of the seven LAs to ensure they are fully briefed on all IA projects as part of the business support ecosystem.
- Multiple projects are cognisant about the follow-on investment needed. WMCA will ensure IA projects are aware of the new Investor Readiness programme offer when this is awarded. WMCA will also look to hold an investor pitch event for all projects early in 2024.

6. Made Smarter

- 6.1 The Made Smarter Adoption programme aims to boost manufacturing SME productivity, growth and efficiency. The programme supports businesses with Industrial Digital Technology (IDT): Robotics and autonomous systems; additive manufacturing; data analytics; AI & data; Virtual modelling/ VR.
- 6.2 The objectives of the programme are focused on addressing the barriers to IDT adoption set out in the Made Smarter Review – including overcoming key barriers: low level awareness of IDTs; accessing funding to invest in IDT solutions; and know-how and skills including weak leadership and management.
- 6.3 The WMCA is the Accountable Body for delivering Made Smarter in the West Midlands (MSWM) in the NUTS1 region.
- 6.4 MSWM is now entering its third year of delivering business support for the digitisation of manufacturing. Government has confirmed a further £2.3m for this financial year and there is a strong pipeline for further engagements, roadmaps and grants.

6.5 MSWM outputs to date are shown in the following table.

| Service Line | 21-'22 | 22-'23 | 23-'24 | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| | | | Target | Actual to date |
| Registration and Initial Assessment | 207 | 322 | 390 | 48 |
| Further Assessment and Support | 132 | 110 | 110 | 18 |
| Roadmapping Workshops | 100 | 110 | 110 | 21 |
| Grant funded Project | 36 | 47 | 44 | 7 |
| Internships | 2 | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| Leadership Training | 0 | 20 | 20 | 0 |
| Grants Awarded | £593,519 | £840,597 | £880,000 | £121,927 |
| Total Project Size | £1,598,353 | £2,283,753 | £2,300,000 | £330,396 |

Projects to be Commissioned: subject to confirmation of funding from UK Shared Prosperity Fund

7. Investor Readiness Training Programme

- 7.1 Aimed at addressing challenges on the demand-side of finance, with the supply-side addressed, in part, through the West Midlands Co-Invest Fund. This programme will work closely with the Co-Invest Fund and other external funds to maximise the growth potential of firms going through the programme.
- 7.2 Demand-side barriers to SME investment include:
- Unwillingness to seek external finance (e.g. because of reluctance to cede ownership and control)
 - Shortage of investible propositions from the investor perspective ('investibility')
 - Weaknesses / credibility issues within business leaderships
 - Lack of understanding about how to 'sell' their business to equity investors / banks, identify and locate suitable partners
 - Lack of understanding about the non-monetary value that external financiers can bring to a business (contacts, advice, discipline, growth strategy etc)
- 7.3 These barriers can undermine the effectiveness of publicly funded programmes designed to increase the supply of finance (e.g., rolling investment funds, facilitating angel networks, loan guarantees and subsidies).
- 7.4 The programme will work with up to 600 West Midlands firms with an aim to increase the external investment they are able to leverage be that through loans, equity, or other sources.

8. Regional Decarbonisation Programme



- 8.1 Working closely with local authority partners, this project will assist up to 1400 firms on a one-to-one “audit” basis to decarbonise, focusing on the most energy intensive business be they in industrial energy processes or in commercial businesses with high intensity energy usage, particularly in the hospitality industry.
- 8.2 This programme will address some of the emerging recommendations of the forthcoming Industrial Energy Taskforce report, which will come to a future Economic Growth Board in September 2023.
- 8.3 In addition, WMCA officers are working closely with the Department of Energy Security and Net Zero in the design of a complementary pilot project that will focus on reducing the energy demand of businesses across the West Midlands.

9. Cluster Growth Activity

- 9.1 In addition to these programmes, focused on unlocking high growth opportunity right across the economy, WMCA have been working with cluster organisation bodies to identify specific opportunities to unlock growth for that cluster.
- 9.2 Specific activity and deliverables, led by the clusters themselves, in Q1 23/24 include:

Aerospace:

- increasing the depth of understanding of the supply chain opportunities in the West Midlands with a focus on unlocking pilot project activity to diversify the supply chain. In addition, there is work going on to better understand funding into the region through the Aerospace Technology Institute (as the primary funder of innovation activity in the aerospace industry)

Creative Content Gaming and Production:

- strategy launch in May 2023 with a clear focus on deliverables with priority missions of IP Content Fund; Monetising Creative Content; Future Media; Games Sector; Sustainability

Med-tech and Health-Tech: -

- workshop held with key landowners and developers to address key barriers to cluster growth from a land perspective with emerging conclusions having a particular focus on unlocking specialist grow-on space.

Logistics and Distribution:

- development of a logistics accelerator programme focused on driving innovation in the supply chain, working closely with Logistics UK and several major industry firms

Manufacture of ELVs and Batteries:

- strategy development focused on skills development (building on existing programmes in several of West Midlands universities and further education colleges); R&D&I (building on some of the excellence that exists in the region's universities) and supply chain development and diversification – with a supply chain diversification programme in development utilising the Commonwealth Games Legacy Fund.

Manufacture of Future Housing:

- emerging Future Housebuilding Strategy due for publication in the autumn with work underway to enable West Midlands suppliers to benefit from the Strategy with a focus on skills priorities and supply chain development

Modern and Low Carbon Utilities:

- focusing on next generation of industry through R&D Innovation Accelerator projects as highlighted in 5 above and focused on clean technologies, gas and electricity energy system development, and deep-dives into the supply chain potential as it relates to hydrogen

Future Professional and Financial Services and supply chain:

- publication of FinTech Skills Framework, with launch of first fintech skills course by BMet College, supported by WMCA. Announcement of BNP Paribas Personal Finance for second FinTech demand led incubator. Representation of WM sector capabilities at national flagship events including, for example, UK FinTech Week; national LawTech conference.

Digital and Tech as an underpinning “ninth cluster”:

- Tech Commissioner, Martin Ward, now in post and beginning to establish key priorities and deliverables, working closely with Tech West Midlands as the rebranded and refocused Birmingham Tech with early priorities including a clear, shared purpose of the sector regionally, maximising external visibility of the sector from outside the region, increasing internal collaboration between tech organisations and a focus on support for future high growth tech businesses.

9.3 In addition, the Head of Economic Development and Delivery has had initial conversations with three local authorities on their local cluster priorities and would welcome further conversations with all seven authorities.

10. Financial Implications

10.1 This paper is a position statement on the programmes within Plan for Growth, therefore is not requesting any financial approval for funding.



- 10.2 There will be significant financial implications in the delivery of Plan for Growth, with programmes funded either from existing budgets or from funding requests that must follow the agreed WMCA governance policies and procedures.

11 Legal Implications

- 11.1 There are no new legal implications for WMCA resulting from this report.

12 Equalities Implications

- 12.1 There are no direct equalities implications.

13 Inclusive Growth Implications

- 13.1 There are no direct inclusive growth implications. However, the overarching aim of Plan for Growth is to ensure an increase in 44,800 high value jobs to the region by 2030, which will increase the overall well-being of West Midlands residents. In addition, commissioning of regional programmes is based on ensuring that businesses and communities across the geography benefit from those programmes and that is a key outcome of the tendering process.

14 Geographical Area of Report's Implications

- 14.1 The report relates to the 7 Met area.

15 Schedule of Background reports



Economic Growth Board

| | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Date | Wednesday 12 th July 2023 |
| Report Title | Local Skills Improvement Plan Update |
| Portfolio lead | Skills and Productivity – Councillor George Duggins |
| Accountable Chief Executive | Laura Shoaf, West Midlands Combined Authority email: laura.shoaf@wmca.org.uk |
| Accountable Employee | Clare Hatton, Interim Director for Employment, Skills, and Health and Communities Email: clare.hatton@wmca.org.uk |
| Report has been considered by | Councillor George Duggins |

Recommendations for action or decision:

The Economic Growth Board is asked to:

- a) To approve the findings of Employer Representative Body to support the Local Skills Improvement plan, and supporting statement made by the WMCA to DFE in consultation with the portfolio lead on how its views were considered in the process.
- b) To approve the WMCA's support of the implementation of the Local Skills Improvement Plan as part of our new deeper devolution powers, including the endorsement of an expression of interest from Solihull College & University Centre to be the lead Local Skills Improvement Fund holder for WMCA areas in consultation with the portfolio lead.

1 Purpose

- 1.1 For the Economic Growth Board to note the findings of the employer representative bodies (ERB) research to inform the local skills improvement plan (LSIP).

2 Background

- 2.1 The Skills for Jobs White Paper set out a plan to put employers more firmly at the heart of the post 16 technical and education skills system to help ensure businesses and people have the skills they need to thrive and progress. The Skills and Post 16 Education Act 2022 see's LSIPs as a key part of achieving this aim with a focus on the four key objectives:

- 2.1.1 Set out a clear articulation of local employer skills needs.
 - 2.1.2 Highlight the local changes needed to make post-16 technical education and skills provision is more responsive and flexible in meeting local labour market skills needs.
 - 2.1.3 Drive a better match between the supply of and demand for the skills employers most need to boost productivity.
 - 2.1.4 Help drive greater collaboration between providers to realise the benefits of economies of scale and specialisation.
- 2.2 The Department for Education (DfE) designated the Coventry & Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce, leading a partnership including Greater Birmingham and Black Country Chamber of Commerce, to be the lead Employer Representative Group to develop a Local Skills Improvement Plan for the West Midlands and Warwickshire.
- 2.3 LSIP's will take place on an annual basis with the final report approved by the Secretary of State, for 2023 approval will take place in July. To support the response to the LSIP across colleges and providers DfE are making £10.4m available through Local Skills Improvement Funding (LSIF). A lead college in the region will hold the LSIF and deploy the funding across colleges and providers to support a series of capital and revenue projects to respond to the report.
- 2.4 At the 9th January West Midlands Skills Advisory Board (SAB) meeting, an overview of LSIP was provided along with a summary of the sectoral focus and the role of the WMCA in the LSIP process. As part of the Act, a duty is placed on the Secretary of State to be satisfied, when approving the LSIP, that in the development of the plan due consideration was given to the views of the MCA/GLA.

3. Findings of the ERB Report

- 3.1 The ERB has now completed its research and reported to DfE and is now under review. The key findings in the report set out the following needs from employers:

| Theme | Cross Cutting |
|---|---|
| <p>1. Sector skills demand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engineering and manufacturing • Construction • Digital ICT • Logistics & Distribution | <p>2. Leadership & Management (L&M)</p> <p>General</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategy development • Performance management • Project management • Change management <p>Specialist</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digitisation • Advancement of new technology • Transition to net zero |
| <p>3. Essential Skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication • Collaboration / team working • Numerical skills | <p>4. Wider Considerations:</p> <p>Employer engagement in the skills system:</p> |



| | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Organisation• Accountability• Innovation and problem solving• Office skills: letter writing, office etiquette, answering the phone• Skills for resilience: dealing with uncertainty and ambiguity, working through uncertainty | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Challenge in understanding what they 'need' to address workforce challenges• Limited understanding in the skills offer currently available and which training provider to engage <p>Talent attraction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 16-19 age group present recruitment challenges as part of early years approach• More extensive careers education would support the attraction of 16-24 years olds• Employers interested in job fair locally to support engagement <p>Education system:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Education providers experiencing difficulty in recruiting and retaining staff with the skills to bridge skills gaps e.g. engineering, digital• Challenge to compete with salaries and benefits from industry where the educator has the occupational experience• Employers want to work with education establishments but barriers are time, cost and knowledge to achieve this on both sides |
|--|--|

4. Local Skills Improvement Fund

4.1 To respond to the LSIP, a lead college in the region will hold the local skills improvement funding to develop up to 6 projects to respond to its findings. The total amount of LSIF funding for the WMCA & Warwickshire area is £10.4. Solihull College & University Centre will submit an expression of interest (EOI) to be the lead provider in this LSIP region, as lead provider they will be supported by the other colleges across the region and independent training providers. The projects will focus on:

- 4.1.1 Electrification and battery storage (*link to Plan for Growth*)
- 4.1.2 Green skills for SME's (*link to Plan for Growth*)
- 4.1.3 Construction for manufacturing of future housing (*link to Plan for Growth*)
- 4.1.4 Essential digital skills (*supports digital inclusion*)
- 4.1.5 Technology adoption, machine learning, AI and automation (*link to Plan for Growth*)

4.1.6 Supporting employer engagement (*supports understanding skills needs and navigation of skills system*)

4.2 As part of the deeper devolution, the WMCA was requested to approve the LSIF EOI application by DFE.

5. WMCA response to ERB LSIP report

5.1 The WMCA has been engaged in both research and reporting phase of the LSIP as a member of operational board and as a commissioner. The ERB have taken on our views consistently throughout the process, this was demonstrated in the ERB's focus on plan for growth clusters in the research phase and taking on board our comments on the report before submission to DFE. Our supporting statement submitted to DFE along with the ERB report can be found in **annex a** of this paper.

5.2 There are elements of the report that are particularly helpful such as leadership and management and engineering that contribute to the WMCA focus on improved productivity and business growth and Plan for Growth. We will work with DFE, the ERB and the LSIF lead provider in working through the response to the LSIP implementation across the WMCA area, and this will form part of deeper devolution deal for skills related to the new joint governance board with DFE to provide oversight of post-16 technical education.

6. Next steps

6.1 The below sets out the next steps both for LSIP and LSIF:

| Month | Activity |
|----------------|---|
| June 2023 | EOI process to secure LSIF provider open |
| July 2023 | Secretary of State approves LSIP and publishes report |
| September 2023 | LSIF plan submitted to DFE to respond to LSIP |
| October 2023 | Lead provider notified of LSIF plan application |
| November 2023 | LSIP research for year 2 commences |

7 Financial Implications

7.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. WMCA are not the account body for the £10.4m of funding should this be successful, this will be Solihull College & University Centre.

7.2 Any future requirement for WMCA funding will need to be either from existing budgets or be requested through the internal governance routes.

8. Legal Implications

8.1 There are no immediate legal implications arising from this report

9. Equalities Implications

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

10. Inclusive Growth Implications

10.1 There are no immediate inclusive growth implications arising from this report.

11. Geographical Area of Report's Implications

11.1 The LSIP and LSIF covers the 7-met WMCA area and Warwickshire. The WMCA's devolved skills powers related to 7-met WMCA, the ERB and lead college will work with Warwickshire County Council from a key stakeholder perspective.

12. Other implications

12.1 None

Annex A – LSIP WMCA statement

Local Skills Improvement Plan: West Midlands Combined Authority statement.

The Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022, places a duty on Secretary of State to be satisfied, when approving an LSIP, that in the development of the plan due consideration was given to the views of the mayoral combined authority (MCA) in this instance the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA).

The designated Employer Representative Body (ERB) for West Midlands area is Coventry and Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce (CWCC) supported by Greater Birmingham Chamber of Commerce and Black Country Chamber of Commerce.

The LSIP region for West Midlands includes both the devolved areas of Birmingham, Coventry, Dudley, Sandwell, Solihull, Walsall and Wolverhampton, and also includes the non-devolved area of Warwickshire which is non-constituent member of the West Midlands Combined Authority. Therefore, this statement can only be made for areas that are devolved to the WMCA.

Whilst the WMCA holds the view that LSIP's are likely to duplicate work already undertaken in an MCA area, especially those that have had devolved adult skills powers with governance structures well developed such as Skills Advisory Panel's, we have worked collaboratively with the ERB throughout the LSIP process which has included:

- Supporting the research methodology in terms of focus on high growth clusters and research questions
- Members of the ERB operational board including David Gaughan, Head of Employer Services and Fiona Aldridge, Head of Insight
- ERB attendance at our Skills Advisory Panel chaired by WMCA portfolio lead, Councillor George Duggins, Leader of Coventry City Council
- ERB attendance at the Business Insight Forum chaired by Andy Street, Mayor of WMCA
- Introductions to a range of stakeholders
- Review of draft documents and shared views
- WMCA attendance at stakeholder session to identify areas that can be developed.

The ERB also took onboard our request as part of the research methodology to look at our Plan for Growth clusters, that are set to see accelerated growth over the next 7 years that will bring high skilled well-paid jobs to the region. Ensuring that we have the availability of good quality skills provision is paramount to support the growth of sectors particularly in advanced manufacturing, electrification and battery storage, creative and gaming, business professional services, net zero and logistics.

There are areas of the report that we support and indeed there are areas where work is already happening in terms of short/modular learning through the devolved Adult Education Budget (AEB) and devolved skills bootcamps, development of a leadership and management offer and addressing essential skills such as teamwork, communication skills and problem solving.

Where the report is less detailed on the prioritisation of skills needs, and taking on our feedback the ERB has worked hard to address these gaps. However, retrospectively addressing gaps when the research methodology has been set and work undertaken isn't feasibly possible.

Moving forward, through our deeper devolution deal that includes Post 16 Technical Education and joint governance board we look forward to working through how LSIPs are developed, shaped and implemented including the local skills investment fund to support our residents and economy.

Economic Growth Board

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Date | Wednesday 12 th July 2023 |
| Report title | Understanding and addressing labour market challenges: jobs workstream update |
| Portfolio Lead | Portfolio Holder for Economy and Innovation |
| Accountable Chief Executive | Laura Shoaf, Chief Executive, WMCA |
| Accountable Employee | Dr Fiona Aldridge, Head of Insight and Intelligence, WMCA |
| Report has been considered by | Directors of Economic Development (23 June 2023) |

The Economic Growth Board is asked to:

- i. Note this progress report on the jobs workstream, including its overview of regional and local labour market challenges emerging from the data, and our plans for further work as part of deep dive activities.

1. Purpose

- 1.1 Understanding and tackling labour market challenges is a priority for the WMCA and its LA partners. The Jobs workstream has been established to enable a deeper understanding of the labour market challenges by people and place, and to explore together how we might effectively address these issues using a “what works” solutions-led approach.
- 1.2 The objectives of the workstream are to:
 - a. provide Economic Growth Board with greater insights into labour market challenges and opportunities, both across the CA and at local level;
 - b. draw on findings from a range of experts regarding potential insights and policy solutions to help tackle specific labour market challenges; and
 - c. propose and develop deeper dives into 2 or 3 totemic geographies and/or labour market issues.
- 1.3 This paper provides an update on the workstream’s progress and emerging topics.

2. Wider context

- 2.1 Despite challenging economic circumstances, the UK labour market remains tight. Nationally employment is back to pre-pandemic levels while unemployment remains low.

Vacancies have been falling month-on-month for around a year but remain above 1 million – likely reflecting employers’ ability to recruit more quickly rather than a weakening of demand. Regular pay has increased +7.5% over the year, though stubborn levels of inflation mean that real pay continues to fall.

- 2.2 Levels of economic inactivity are now beginning to fall, particularly among older adults, However, the number of people who are inactive because of long-term sickness have reached a record high of 2.55m, up by 440k since before the pandemic. We are also seeing an increase in young people who are NEET – now at just over 1 million (15%).
- 2.3 At a regional level, the latest monthly data for Feb-April 2023 show that the West Midlands also has rising employment, alongside falling unemployment and economic inactivity, as more people return to the labour market. The region still has the highest unemployment in the UK, though the rate remains historically low and no higher than pre-pandemic. The inactivity rate now has fallen below the UK average, as those closest to the labour market look for and find work. The picture continues to vary by gender. Over the last year, both unemployment and economic inactivity have increased among men but fallen among women.

3. A partnered approach

- 3.1 It is important that this workstream adds value and contributes insights at a local level, as well as CA wide. Through partnering with LA partners, we are developing a shared narrative of the precise labour market challenges. We are discussing with partners how the analysis arising from this workstream can complement local insights. We previously asked EGB for volunteers to work with us on a sub-group, which includes nominees from Coventry, Birmingham and Wolverhampton, to ensure the workstream developments are both reflective of local intelligence but also draw on the evidence that partners will have which will enhance our understanding of the labour market challenges, particularly at a local level.

4. Workstream update and emerging themes

- 4.1 We know that regional-level data can mask particular issues at a local level. We are therefore working with the EIU, and LA partners, to **get underneath the CA/region-level data to gain a better understanding of the local labour markets**. We have shared the working document from the EIU which sets out the analysis to date (**Annex A**). The accompanying data, which is presented in an excel file format, is available on request. Detailed summaries for each LA partner are included in the EIU document which we are exploring with partners to reflect on its analysis. EIU have also produced a Story Board for the region and incorporates LSOA level data where available for employment, unemployment and economic inactivity. This is available at: [Jobs and Labour Market in the WMCA \(arcgis.com\)](https://www.arcgis.com).
- 4.2 From the data there are a small number of themes emerging. For example, despite a fall in overall economic inactivity at the CA level, there has been a **marked increase in inactivity due to long term ill health**, up 14.8pp across the CA area in the last year, and by 29.3pp since 2019 (or +31,400 more people). At a local level, we can see this issue is particularly pronounced in Sandwell, Wolverhampton, and Coventry. Where adults have said they are inactive due to long term ill health, one in three has reported ‘Depression, Learning Problems, Mental Problems and Nervous Disorders’ as a barrier to work, a shared concern

for young people too, and which may be the effects of the pandemic on general health and wellbeing.

- 4.3 The number of residents who have **work limiting disability is also high**. At CA level it is 5.7pp above the UK average (and rising, up by 21.8pp (or +59,700 people) since 2020). At a local level, we can see it in almost every LA, with the highest proportions in Sandwell, Birmingham, and Walsall, and hot spots in Solihull and Coventry. We are looking to understand the differences by demographic groups further but see that for people with a disability, they are 2.5 times more likely to be out of work than a person without a disability. Indicators suggest this inequality is widening, with people with a disability accounting for nearly half of all of those who are economically inactive.
- 4.4 Although unemployment is historically low, the West Midlands **continue to have the highest unemployment rate in the UK** (4.8%). All seven LAs sit above the UK average for unemployment, with the highest proportions reported in Walsall, Wolverhampton, Birmingham and Sandwell. Unemployment in both Walsall and Wolverhampton is over twice the national average. Analysis shows that for the CA area **to match the national average, we would need an additional 116,182 more people to move into employment**.
- 4.5 Within the CA area, are high proportions of residents who have never worked – from the recent census, of the 1,095,001 usual residents aged 16 years and over in the region, **35.5% (388,909 residents) have never worked**, much higher than the national average (up 10.0pp). This issue is presented in almost all our LAs, with the exception of Dudley and Solihull who have the lowest reported proportions (25.6% and 22.6% respectively). The highest proportions were in Birmingham (at 41.6% or 186,119), followed closely by Sandwell and Wolverhampton.
- 4.6 We have a **growing youth employment problem**, with high numbers of claimants for 18-24, nearly double the UK rate at 8.1% in the CA. Compared to March 2020, almost every LA area has had an increase, except Solihull where it fell. Across the CA area Birmingham, Walsall, and Dudley have each recorded above national rate trends, but it is particularly pronounced in Wolverhampton with the second highest rates of youth claimants nationally for the last year (behind Blackpool), and the highest in the CA area. Economic inactivity for young people is similarly high, with hot spots in Coventry, Dudley, and Sandwell, where there is also a high number of youth claimants looking for work. Again, the issue is particularly heightened in Wolverhampton with inactivity amongst its 50-64 and 16-24 age groups accounting for half of all those inactive. And we have high NEET levels within the CA region (0.8pp above the national average). We know that the City of Wolverhampton Council has undertaken detailed analysis effecting its young residents and we will work with them to explore an offer that will support youth transition to the labour market, which can be used to support LAs within the CA area.
- 4.7 To better understand how our employment and skills investment is helping tackle labour market challenges at a local level, we have worked with Birmingham City Council to commission a review of adult skills provision and employment services across Birmingham, and are now exploring how the methodology used could be applied across **each LA** to extend our analysis of local summaries and understanding of different labour market challenges.

5. Next Steps

5.1 Building on the data analysis undertaken by EIU and the research being undertaken with BCC, we will now seek to focus on 2-3 key challenges facing the region and local areas – drawing on evidence of what works in tackling these labour market challenges – in order to inform subsequent deep dive activity. At this point, we anticipate a focus on youth unemployment and on tackling economic inactivity/worklessness.

6. Financial Implications

6.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

6.2 Any future requirement for WMCA funding in this area, like the deep dive work, will need to be either from existing budgets or be requested through internal governance routes.

7. Legal Implications

7.1 There are no immediate legal implications arising from this report.

8. Equalities Implications

8.1 There are no immediate equalities implications arising from this report however the workstream findings and data has started to identify groups (by sex, by ethnicity and by disability) who experience labour market inequality.

9. Inclusive Growth Implications

9.1 There are no immediate inclusive growth implications arising from this report. However inclusive economic growth is an intended focus of the workstream, ensuring that evidence-based action is taken to improve employment opportunities within the region, and to ensure that residents are well placed to take up these opportunities. Accordingly, the workstream should identify where there are barriers by people and place within the region to help inform the CA's strategic activity.

10. Geographical Area of Report's Implications

10.1 The focus of the workstream is on the 7Met area. Some labour market data relates to the wider geography.

11. Other implications

11.1 None.

Analysis of regional and sub-regional trends in the WMCA area

This report has been produced with the WMCA to support the identification of different groups and places which may be influencing regional growth for good or for bad, and which may merit more detailed consideration through potential deeper dive discussions.

The report draws on ad-hoc analyses and interactive insights from the [Jobs and Labour Market in the WMCA \(arcgis.com\)](https://arcgis.com) tool.

WMCA 7 Met. Worklessness

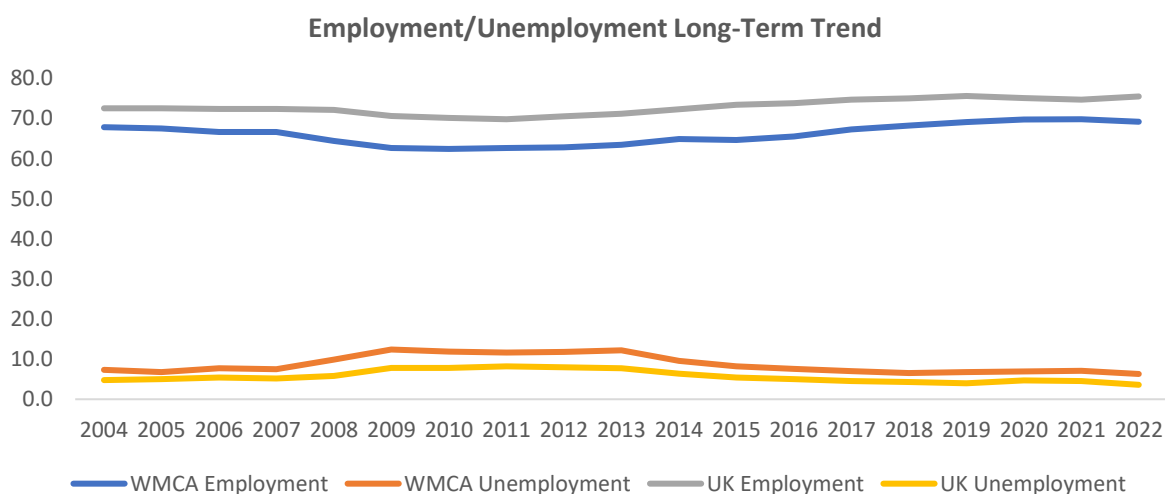
Current National and Regional Context

Nationally, the latest Labour Force Survey for May 2023 shows a labour market that continues to soften. The employment rate is up by 0.3 percentage points (pp) on the quarter to 75.9% – almost back to where it was in mid-2020 – while unemployment is still just below 4% (at 3.9%), although there are signs that it is beginning to tick up. More troubling, the number of people out of work due to long-term health conditions has risen by 440,000 since the start of the pandemic to over 2.5 million people, whilst at the same time, economic inactivity for every other reason is falling – with particularly large falls in student numbers and those reporting ‘other’ reasons.

At the regional level, the current employment rate is equal to what it was in mid-2020 but remains 1.7pp below the national average at 74.2%. However, the West Midlands, was one of only four regions nationally where employment narrowed in the last quarter (-0.4%). This is reflected to a degree in the unemployment rate, which is 1.2pp higher than the national average, and the highest across all the other regions at 5.1%. Additionally, inactivity across the region has increased by 28,000 since March 2020.

WMCA 7 Met. Employment and Unemployment

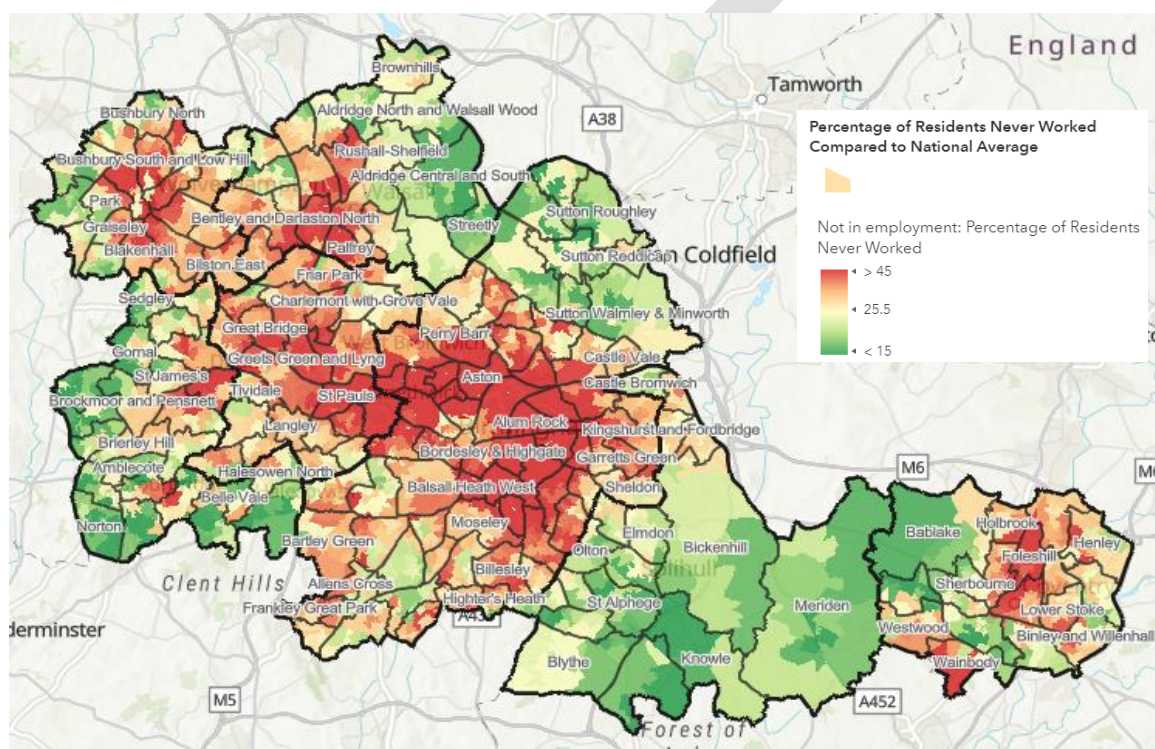
Mirroring the latest trends across the West Midlands as a whole, the employment rate in the WMCA 7 Met. area dropped -0.6pp in the last year to 69.2% and is 1.3pp below the comparable period in mid-2020. *This now means that for the WMCA 7 Met. area to match the national average of 75.9%, an additional 116,182 more people are needed to be moved into employment.*



Conversely, over the same period, the unemployment rate fell across the WMCA 7 Met. area by 0.5pp to 6.2% and remains 0.6pp below the level recorded in mid-2020. *This coupled with the fall in employment would suggest decreasing participation with a lot of people who have left the workforce not returning.*

Furthermore, the latest Census shows that of the 1,095,001 usual residents aged 16 years and over 35.5% (388,909) had never worked, 10pp above the England-wide proportion of 25.6%.

Within the WMCA 7 Met. area, proportions vary from 41.6% (186,119) in Birmingham, 38.2% (47,741) in Sandwell, 33.3% (32,297) in Wolverhampton, 32.6% (34,087) in Walsall, 32.5% (41,191) in Coventry, 25.6% (30,193) in Dudley to 22.6% (17,281) in Solihull.



Universal Credit Claimants (UC)¹

There are now 366,814 people claiming UC across the WMCA 7 Met. area. This has increased by 6.2% or 21,302 people over the last year and by 169,807 people (86.2%) since March 2020. This trend is replicated in each of the seven local authority areas, with both Coventry and Sandwell particularly impacted with those claiming UC having more than doubled.

The most prevalent changes by age groups (percentage wise), excluding those aged 65+, occurred for those aged 40-44 and 60-65; whereas in absolute numbers the biggest change was recorded in the 35-39 cohort. The data also now identifies higher numbers of females claiming than before the pandemic, particularly those aged 30-49.

¹ Universal Credit is a monthly payment designed to help people who are unemployed, off work due to sickness, or on a low income to meet their basic living costs.

In terms of duration:

- Those claiming for 0 to 6 months increased by 9.1%
- Those claiming for 6 months to 2 years decreased by -31.2%, mainly due to those claiming for 1 to 2 years decreasing by -44.5%
- Those claiming for 2-5 years increased by 33.6%
- Those claiming for over 5 years increased by 224.3%

Using the UC data as a proxy for unemployment, higher short-term unemployment (0-6 months) could indicate people who were previously economically inactive (re)entering the labour market, particularly students, (as we see later in this report). However, if employment demand begins to weaken, or if there are mismatches between the people who want jobs and the jobs that are being advertised, then this may lead to higher unemployment in the 6 months to 2-year group. Of more concern is the notable increase in longer-term unemployment, which could be a consequence of the pandemic, or that again there is a mismatch in skills or locations.

Claimants Count (16+ looking for work)

Total claimant numbers remain heightened across the WMCA 7 Met. area. The latest data (May 2023) shows that there were 128,820 people *claiming benefits looking for work*. This equates to 7.0% of the population aged 16+, nudging double the rate nationally at 3.8%.

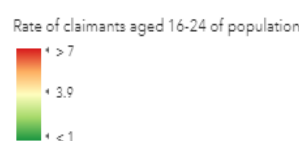
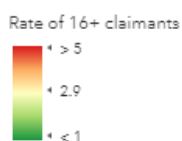
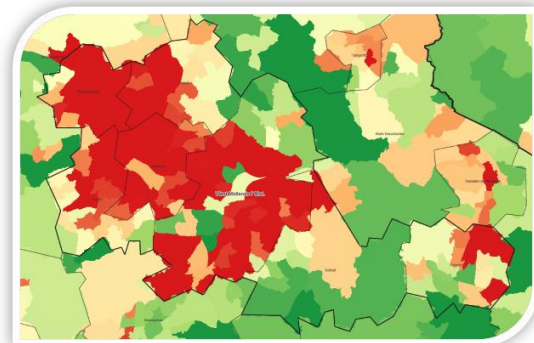
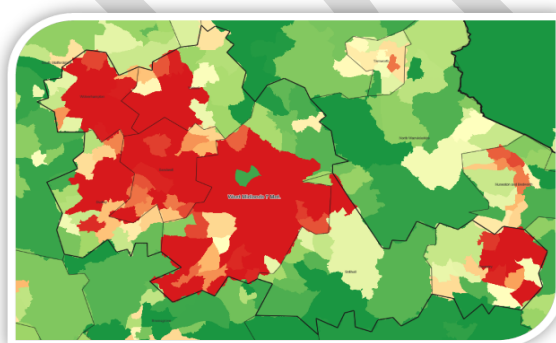
In the last year, the number of claimants has increased by 1,035 or 0.8% compared to -2.0% reduction across the UK over the same period. When compared to March 2020 and the onset of the pandemic, there are 29,520 more claimants, an increase of 29.7% compared to 26.1% nationally.

Youth Claimants (Aged 18-24)

Echoing the trends for all claimants, youth claimants totalled 23,130 in May 2023; an increase of 1,600 or 7.4% over the last year compared to 6.4% for the UK. Additionally, when compared to March 2020, youth claimants have increased by 20.8% (+3,975) in the WMCA 7 Met. area, with the UK increasing by 14.0%.

Total Claimants

Youth Claimants



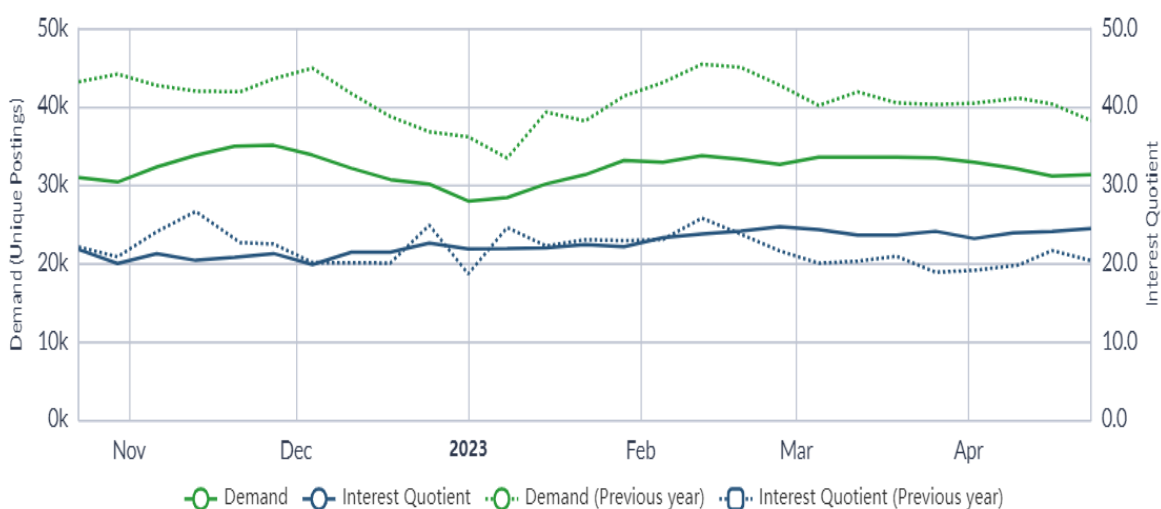
This data can be interrogated further by accessing the interactive storyboard:

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/collections/3d6c9724413d4d199791d476bf08376e?item=6>

WMCA 7 Met. Demand and Interest Trend

Over the course of 2022, job postings and vacancies rose to record levels. However, the latest indicators suggest that the demand for labour has begun to cool off. This could signal a potential inflection point in the labour market; with expectations of lower turnover putting less pressure on employers to recruit new staff, while employees exert greater caution before moving jobs reflecting the softening labour market.

This is indicated in the latest job postings data, which shows that the number of job postings across the WMCA 7 Met. area has decreased by -28.7% year-on-year and in real-terms by almost 8,000 in the last six months.



Conversely, despite employer demand narrowing, those seeking work - wanting a job², remains heightened at 5.4pp above the same comparable period last year.

This would imply that those wanting a job are increasing their efforts but are unable to find suitable work in a narrowing jobs market.

Inactivity

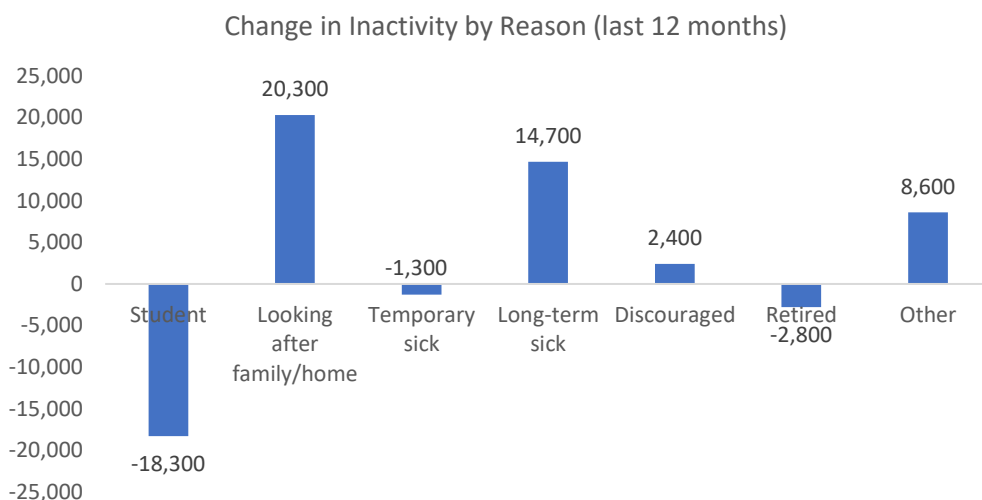
Reflecting trends nationally, increases in economic inactivity have been heavily influenced by the numbers of individuals inactive due to long-term health problems, which have increased by 14.8% across the WMCA 7 Met. area in the last year.

Other important contributors to economic inactivity include the number of people inactive due to family / home responsibilities which has increased by 18.9% and those that are inactive 'Other' which has increased by 19.1%. The increase of 8,600 individuals inactive due to other reasons is also worthy of further attention, as this contrasts to the trends reported nationally (UK – down 75,000 on the previous quarter, May 2023).

Conversely, the number of individuals economically inactive 'student' has decreased by -11.4% again mirroring national trends with additional reductions in the number inactive due to retirement, which fell by -8.2% along with a -10% decrease in those that are temporary sick.

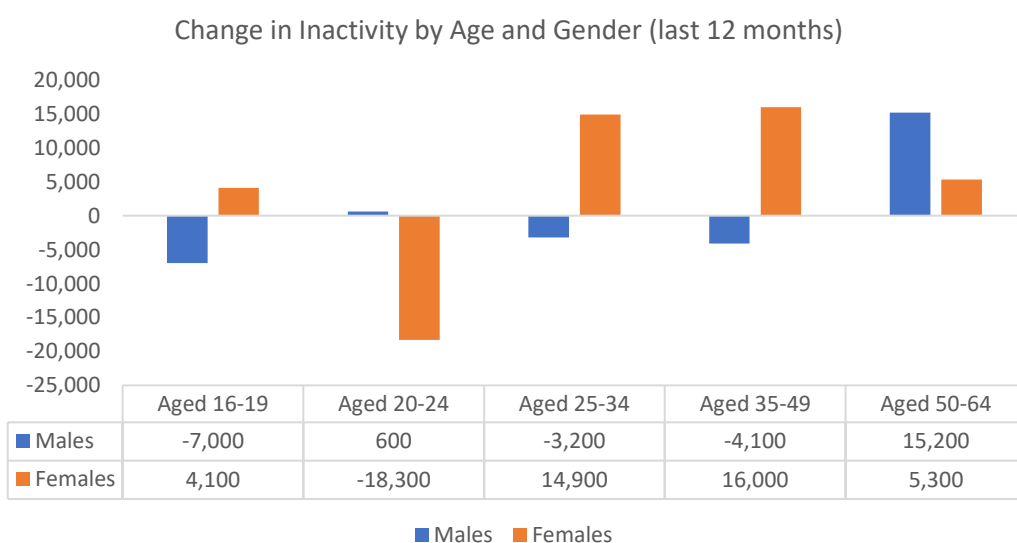
² The Interest Quotient uses jobseeker data to quantify the level of interest in particular roles.

Scale of challenge: to meet the national average on inactivity an additional 81,782 people across the WMCA 7 Met. area need to be either in employment or looking for work.



In terms of age and gender, the rise in inactivity is mainly concentrated among females, particularly mid-aged ones from 25-49 years old and older people aged 50+, both males and females. The increase in those females aged 25-49 would appear to reflect some of the sizeable surge in those looking after the family/home; whilst the increase in the older age cohort could mean more older people leaving work and not returning. This could in-part be due to ill-health because older people are more likely to have long-term health conditions than younger people, particularly when the number inactive due to retirement has decreased over the last 12 months.

It is also important to note the deviating trend for males and females aged 16-19. NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) levels across the WMCA 7 Met. area is 0.8pp higher than the England average at 5.5%. As the area is disproportionately young compared to other places, it is crucial that there are clear pathways for young people in transition points between school and FE, and FE and University.



Work Limiting Disability

Data on employment for people with work limiting disabilities can also help to shed some light on what is driving higher economic inactivity. This shows that there has been a significant growth in the number of people reporting having long-term conditions that limit their day-to-day activities, particularly since 2020.

In the UK there are 7.5 million people aged 16-64 who are work-limited core disabled (around 18% of the population), with this figure rising by around 744,500 or 18.0% over the last three years, compared with a rise of 262,400 over the previous three years. Over the same period across the WMCA 7 Met. area, the number of people reporting as such has increased by 21.8% (59,700 people) since 2020 compared to just 14,600 over the previous three years.

Nationally, the employment rate for disabled people is unchanged at 53.7% while for non-disabled people it has risen from 81.9% to 82.7%. This means that disabled people are more than two-and-a-half times more likely to be out of work than non-disabled people, and the employment rate 'gap' has widened to 29pp. Disabled people now make up nearly half (47%) of all of those who are economically inactive.

This potentially suggests that people acquiring health conditions in work are no more or less likely to be able to stay in work, but that those out of work are finding it harder to get into work (and/or may be seeing their health deteriorate further).

This is reflected to a degree in the number of people reporting a long-term illness, which has increased by 29.3% since 2019 (i.e., before covid) from 107,200 to 138,600. Of those with a long-term illness 46.7% are in employment, 3.6% unemployed and 49.7% are inactive compared to 49.3%, 2.4% and 48.3% respectively nationally.

Almost one-in-three (30.6%) of those with a long-term illness report 'Depression, Learning Problems, Mental Problems and Nervous Disorders' as a barrier to work, with 13,000 unemployed and 138,600 economically inactive.

Ethnicity and Employment

Nationally research by the Institute for Fiscal Studies found that employment for ethnic minority groups has continued to rise (up by 1.1pp on a year ago), while employment for white people has risen by 0.2pp. Overall however, people from ethnic minority groups are nearly 8pp less likely to be in work than white people.

Across the WMCA 7 Met. area employment for white people has decreased by -0.4pp in the last year and -1.2pp since 2020. Conversely, employment for ethnic minority groups has increased by 0.1pp in the last year and 1.1pp since 2020; but remains 9.2pp below the overall employment rate for whites.

The reduction in white employment is contributable to white males, whose employment rate has decreased by -1.3pp or by 23,300 people; whereas white female employment has increased by 27,000 or 0.5pp.

The employment rate for ethnic minority groups increased for both males and females. Males up 4.3pp or 28,900 people and females up 13,400 people to 54.2%. Despite this increase, the employment rate for ethnic minority females is 15pp below the overall employment rate for the WMCA 7 Met. area.

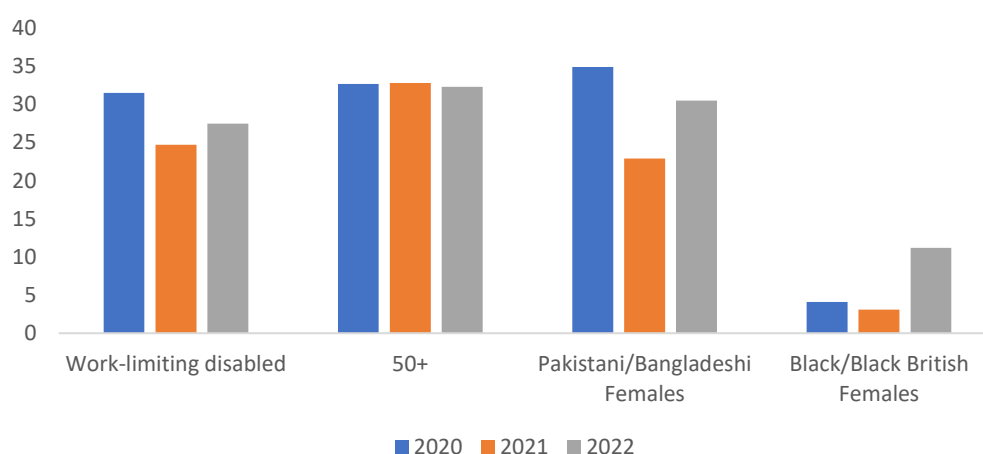
Ethnicity and Inactivity

There is significant variation between ethnic groups, though all groups recorded increases in inactivity over the last year.

Although inactivity levels increased for both whites and Indians, 0.3pp and 0.4pp respectively, both groups remained below the overall inactivity rate for the WMCA 7 Met. area. In contrast, the inactivity rates for Pakistani/Bangladeshi increased by 5.7pp and those Black or Black British by 8.0pp. This means that the inactivity rates for Pakistani/Bangladeshi is now 12.2pp higher than the overall activity rate at 38.3% and for Black and Black British it is 5.6pp higher at 31.7%.

Of note within these two ethnic groups are significant differences in gender. Over half (56.6%) of all Pakistani/Bangladeshi females are described as inactive. This is an increase of 11.2pp or 11,500 people in the last year compared to just 20.8% of Pakistani/Bangladeshi men. Likewise, 37.3% of Black and Black British females are inactive compared to 23.1% of all Black and Black British men.

Inactivity 'gaps'³ for older people, work-limiting disabled and selected ethnic groups:



WMCA 7 Met. Local Authority Areas

The table below contains the latest labour market data and recent trends⁴ across each of the WMCA 7 Met. local authority areas:

| | Economic Activity 2022 (%) | Total Economic Inactive (16-64) | Economic Inactivity 2022 (%) | % Change 2019 | Unemploy' rate 2022 (%) | Unemploy' change 2021 | Total Claimants June 2023 | Total Rate June 2023 | % change March 2020 | Youth Claimant Rate June 2023 | % change March 2020 |
|----------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------|
| Birmingham | 71.4 | 213,200 | 28.6 | 0.2 | 7.1 | -2.5 | 63,440 | 8.6 | 28.5 | 8.9 | 25.0 |
| Coventry | 75.7 | 61,100 | 24.3 | 1.5 | 4.8 | -1.1 | 13,115 | 5.8 | 63.9 | 5.2 | 45.0 |
| Dudley | 81.3 | 35,400 | 18.7 | -5.1 | 4.2 | -0.2 | 9,205 | 4.7 | 8.1 | 7.4 | 0.6 |
| Sandwell | 68.0 | 66,900 | 32.0 | 6.7 | 6.0 | 0.7 | 13,640 | 6.3 | 26.5 | 8.9 | 20.1 |
| Solihull | 81.7 | 23,200 | 18.3 | -2.0 | 4.6 | 0.7 | 4,180 | 3.2 | 14.5 | 5.2 | -6.1 |
| Walsall | 78.2 | 37,600 | 21.8 | -2.5 | 8.4 | 1.1 | 9,925 | 5.7 | 15.3 | 8.8 | 3.9 |
| Wolverhampton | 71.3 | 47,000 | 28.7 | 0.9 | 7.5 | 0.9 | 12,735 | 7.7 | 22.7 | 10.6 | 18.8 |
| UK | 78.3 | 9,001,600 | 21.7 | 0.0 | 3.6 | -0.2 | 1,549,600 | 3.7 | 22.1 | 4.8 | 11.3 |

³ Gaps are calculated as the percentage point difference in activity rates between the 'disadvantaged' group and overall, 16-64 inactivity.

⁴ Colour coding: Light red fill with red text signifies above the national average. The graduated colour scales show change over a given period. Red denotes that the indicator is getting worse.

The economic activity rate has decreased by 0.9pp across the WMCA 7 Met. area since 2019 to 73.9%, with the gap to the national average widening by 0.2pp over the same period. Only Solihull and Dudley record rates higher than the UK average.

In terms of inactivity, there are mixed local authority trends. Solihull and Dudley log an economic inactivity rate below the UK average, with notable positive change in Dudley of -5.1pp since 2019. Walsall also recorded a positive change over this period (-2.5pp) which now means it is broadly in-line with the UK average. Conversely, Sandwell's inactivity rate is over 10pp higher than that of the UK, increasing by 6.7pp since 2019. This now means that almost one-in-three people are inactive. Inactivity levels in Birmingham, Coventry and Wolverhampton also continue to increase.

Each of the WMCA 7 Met. local authority areas report an unemployment rate higher than the UK average. Unemployment is highest in Walsall (8.4%), Wolverhampton (7.5%) and Birmingham (7.1%), with unemployment in both Walsall and Wolverhampton over twice the national average.

Mirroring the unemployment rate, the number of claimants seeking work remains heightened in each of the WMCA 7 Met. areas, with Birmingham and Wolverhampton logging both the highest rates for total claimants and youth claimants, again at twice the national average. Indeed, Wolverhampton has consistently recorded the second highest rates of youth claimants nationally for the past year (behind Blackpool).

Birmingham

Birmingham is characterised by high unemployment and low economic activity.

Economic inactivity is particularly prevalent at both ends of the age spectrum (16-24 and 50-64). These two age cohorts account for just over half of all those economically inactive (50.3%).

More women than men are inactive (57.7% vs 42.3%), likewise more people from ethnic minorities compared to those who are white (56.8% vs 43.2%).

One-in-three (33%) of those economically inactive are described as work-limiting disabled.

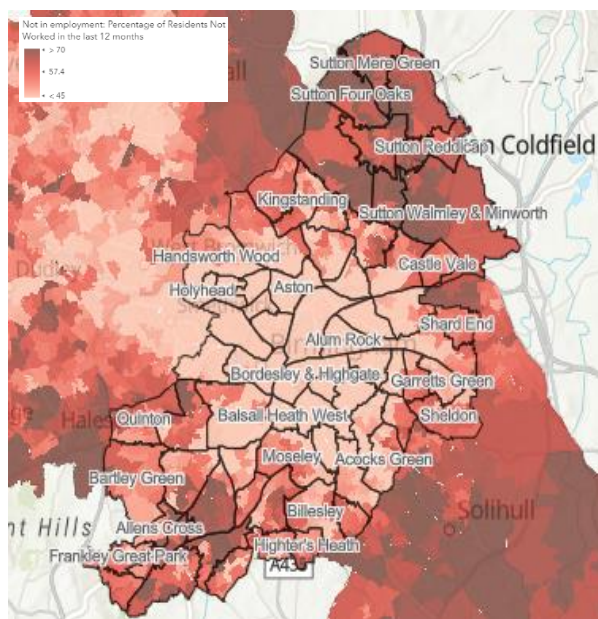
In addition to those who are work limited disabled, a further 312,500 people report a long-term illness, of which 44.7% are in employment, 4.8% unemployed and 50.5% are inactive.

Just over a third (35.5%) of those with a long-term illness report 'Depression, Learning Problems, Mental Problems and Nervous Disorders' as a barrier to work with 8,200 unemployed and 63,100 economically inactive.

Of all those with a long-term illness, 'Depression, Learning Problems, Mental Problems and Nervous Disorders' is the most prevalent reason for unemployment.

There is a correlation between the areas of high female inactivity and those inactive due to looking after the family/home.

Residents Not Worked in the last 12 months:



Of the 447,205 usual residents aged 16+ in Birmingham who were not in employment the week before the Census 2021, 44.8% (200,437) had not worked in the last 12 months. **Furthermore, 41.6% (the highest across the WMCA 7 Met. area) or 186,119 people have never worked.**

The wards with the highest proportions who had not worked in the last 12 months were Sutton Four Oaks (71.5%), Sutton Mere Green (70.6%) and Sutton Walmley & Minworth (69.3%).

In contrast, the wards with the lowest proportions were Alum Rock (23.8%), Small Heath (24.6%), Lozells and Sparkbrook & Balsall Heath East (both 25.5%).

Universal Credit

There are now 164,329 people claiming Universal Credit in Birmingham. This has increased by 5.7% (8,798 people) over the last year and by 80.6% (73,314 people) since March 2020. Females account for 53.4% (87,763) and males 46.6% (76,567) of claims.

Since March 2020, and excluding those aged 65+, the largest change percentage wise was recorded for those aged 40-44 at 120.2% (11,238 people); whereas in absolute numbers the biggest change was recorded in the 35-39 cohort which increased by 12,425 people (102.4%).

In terms of duration:

- Those claiming for 0 to 6 months increased by 9.7% (+2,082)
- Those claiming for 6 months to 2 years decreased by -31.4% (-19,623), mainly due to those claiming for 1 to 2 years decreasing by -44% (-20,453)
- Those claiming for 2-5 years increased by 30.9% (+21,367)
- Those claiming for over 5 years increased by 213.4% (+4,974)

Coventry

Unemployment is relatively low in Coventry.

However, Coventry has a comparatively high number of youth claimants looking for work.

Economic inactivity is high at both ends of the age spectrum (16-24 and 50-64). These two age cohorts account for 56.2% of all those economically inactive.

Almost two-thirds (63.9%) of those inactive are women. There are over twice as many young females (16-19) inactive than males. Furthermore, almost one-in-three of all those inactive are female aged between 35-64.

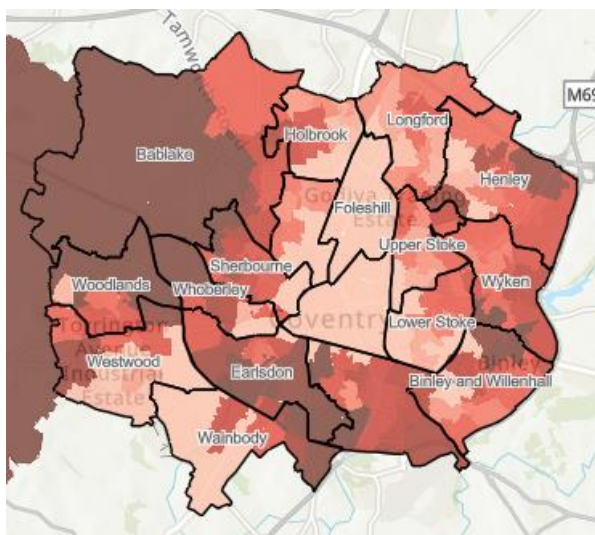
There are 25,600 people described as work-limiting disabled (42%).

In addition to those who are work limited disabled, a further 105,800 report a long-term illness, of which 50.4% are in employment, 3.3% unemployed and 46.3% are inactive.

One-in-three (33.3%) of those with a long-term illness report 'Depression, Learning Problems, Mental Problems and Nervous Disorders' as a barrier to work with 1,500 unemployed and 18,000 economically inactive.

The number of people reporting 'Depression, Learning Problems, Mental Problems and Nervous Disorders' has increased by 2,800 to 35,200 in the last year or 1.9pp.

Residents Not Worked in the last 12 months:



Of the 126,730 usual residents aged 16+ in Coventry who were not in employment the week before the Census 2021, 51.0% (64,571) had not worked in the last 12 months. **Furthermore, a third (32.5%) or 41,191 people have never worked.**

The wards with the highest proportions who had not worked were Woodlands (69.3%), Bablake (66.4%) and Earlsdon (65.3%).

In contrast, the wards with the lowest proportions were St Michael's (27.9%), Foleshill (33.9%), Radford and Wainbody (both 46.7%).

Universal Claimants

There are now 38,423 people claiming Universal Credit in Coventry. This has increased by 9.2% (3,243 people) over the last year but more than doubled by 121.5% (21,078 people) since March 2020. Females account for 55.8% and males 44.2% of claims.

Since March 2020, and excluding those aged 65+, the largest change percentage wise was recorded for those aged 60-65 at 173.4% (1,332), followed by those aged 40-44 by 161.5% (2,976); whereas in absolute numbers the biggest change was recorded in the 35-39 cohort which increased by 3,499 people (144.1%).

In terms of duration:

- Those claiming for 0-6 months increased by 13.5% (+724)
- Those claiming for 6 months – 2 years decreased by 32.9% (-5,363) – due to those claiming 1-2 years decreasing by 47.3% (-5,814)
- Those claiming for 2-5 years increased by 58.0% (+7,643)
- Those claiming for over 5 years increased by 73.0% (+238)

Dudley

Dudley currently performs relatively well against national comparators for economic activity and employment. Nevertheless, those claimants seeking work remain heightened, particularly youth claimants (16-24).

In terms of inactivity, 62.4% of those inactive are women, with almost one-in-three of all those inactive being female aged between 35-64.

Conversely, there are over three times more young males (16-19) inactive than females (4,900 vs 1,600).

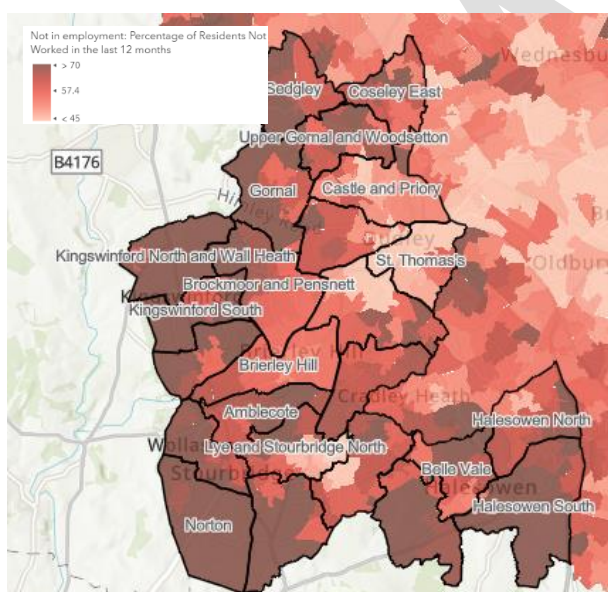
Almost 75% of all those inactive in Dudley are white.

One-in-five (19.3%) of people economically inactive are described as work-limiting disabled.

In addition to those who are work limited disabled, a further 97,900 report a long-term illness, of which 50.7% are in employment, 2.3% unemployed and 47.0% are inactive.

Almost a quarter (24.0%) of those with a long-term illness report 'Depression, Learning Problems, Mental Problems and Nervous Disorders' as a barrier to work with 1,100 unemployed and 7,900 economically inactive.

Residents Not Worked in the last 12 months:



Of the 117,848 usual residents aged 16+ in Dudley who were not in employment the week before the Census 2021, 64.3% (75,739) had not worked in the last 12 months. **Furthermore, a quarter (25.6%) or 30,193 people have never worked.**

The wards with the highest proportions who had not worked were Norton (74.0%), Kingswinford North & Wall Heath (73.9%), Kingswinford South and Pedmore & Stourbridge East (both 72.1%).

In contrast, the wards with the lowest proportions were St Thomas's (46.1%), Castle & Priory (52.9%) and Netherton, Woodside & St Andrews (57.0%).

Universal Claimants

There are now 31,903 people claiming Universal Credit in Dudley. This has increased by 5.9% (1,789 people) over the last year and by 66.9% (12,790 people) since March 2020. Females account for 57.5% and males 42.5% of claims.

Since March 2020, and excluding those aged 65+, the largest change percentage wise was recorded for those aged 40-44 at 110.9% (1,889), followed by those aged 60-65 by 101.9% (1,098); whereas in absolute numbers the biggest change was recorded in the 30-34 cohort which increased by 2,236 people (78.7%).

In terms of duration:

- Those claiming for 0-6 months increased by 18.0% (+734)
- Those claiming for 6 months – 2 years decreased by 30.7% (-3,434), mainly due to those claiming 1-2 years decreasing by 44.9% (-3,746)
- Those claiming for 2-5 years increased by 13.0% (+1,855)
- Those claiming for over 5 years increased by 461.0% (+2,637)

Sandwell

Sandwell has high levels of inactivity.

Those claimants seeking work also remain heightened, particularly youth claimants (16-24).

More women than men are inactive (56.7% vs 43.3%), with 62% described as white.

By far the biggest age cohort of inactivity are those aged 50-64 (both male and female) which accounts for 43.7% of all those inactive.

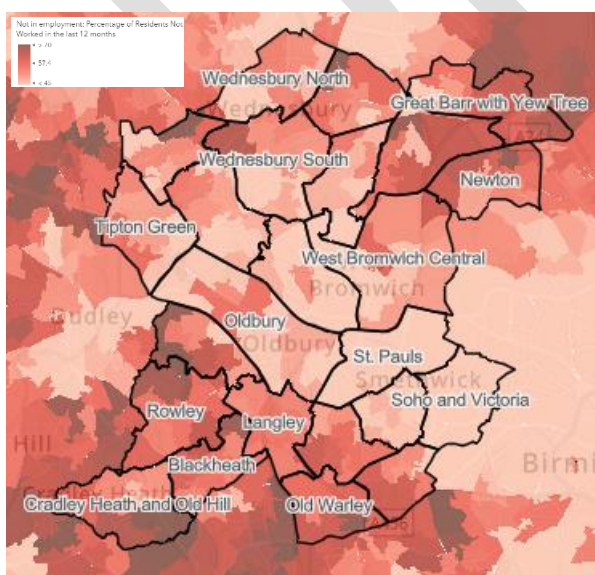
There are 64,500 people inactive in Sandwell, the second highest behind Birmingham. Approaching half of all those (29,000) are described as work-limiting disabled.

In addition to those who are work limited disabled, a further 95,700 report a long-term illness, of which 36.9% are in employment, 2.7% unemployed and 60.3% are inactive (the highest level across the WMCA 7 Met. area).

Around a third (31.3%) of those with a long-term illness report 'Depression, Learning Problems, Mental Problems and Nervous Disorders' as a barrier to work, an increase 5,200 people or 6.9pp in the last year.

There are notable higher levels of those inactive due to looking after the family/home, inactive due to long-term sick and inactive other than the national average.

Residents Not Worked in the last 12 months:



Of the 124,956 usual residents aged 16+ in Sandwell who were not in employment the week before the Census 2021. Of these, 50.2% (62,719) had not worked in the last 12 months. **Furthermore, 38.2% or 47,741 people have never worked.**

The wards with the highest proportions who had not worked in the last 12 months were Old Warley (60.2%), Rowley (59.6%) and Blackheath (59.1%).

In contrast, the wards with the lowest proportions were Soho & Victoria (29.7%), St Pauls (33.1%) and Smethwick (42.5%).

Universal Claimants

There are now 44,148 people claiming Universal Credit in Sandwell. This has increased by 7.1% (2,945 people) over the last year but more than doubled by 106.7% (22,786 people) since March 2020. Females account for 57.3% and males 42.7% of claims.

Since March 2020, and excluding those aged 65+, the largest change percentage wise was recorded for those aged 60-65 at 154.3% (+1,788), followed closely by those aged 40-44 by 154.1% (3,332); whereas in absolute numbers the biggest change was recorded in the 35-39 cohort which increased by 3,815 people (132.5%).

In terms of duration:

- Those claiming for 0-6 months increased by 7.7% (+485)
- Those claiming for 6 months – 2 years decreased by 30.9% (-5,758), mainly due to those claiming 1-2 years decreasing by 44% (-6,052)
- Those claiming for 2-5 years increased by 47.9% (+7,542)
- Those claiming for over 5 years increased by 128.4% (+670)

Solihull

Solihull performs strongly against national comparators for economic activity and employment.

There are however 23,200 people inactive in Solihull.

Almost two-thirds (62.4%) are women, with over one-in-three of all those inactive being female aged between 35-64.

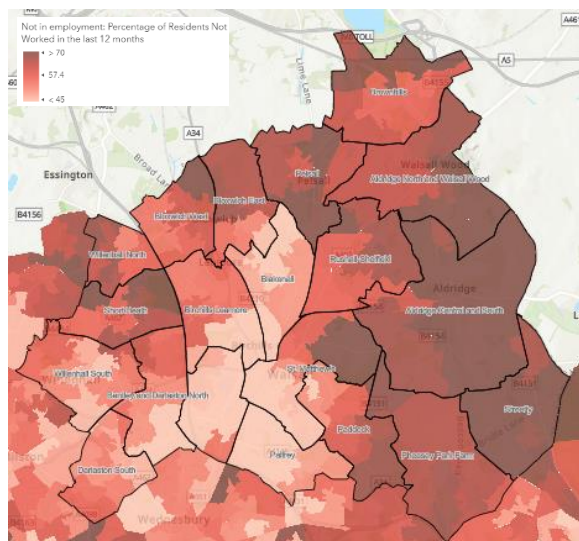
A further 23.7% (5,400) are aged 16-19 both male and female.

Around 40% are described as work-limiting disabled with 93% white.

In addition to those who are work limited disabled, a further 53,000 report a long-term illness, of which 49.6% are in employment, 7.2% unemployed (the highest across the WMCA 7 Met. area) and 43.2% are inactive.

Almost a third (31.0%) of those with a long-term illness report 'Depression, Learning Problems, Mental Problems and Nervous Disorders' as a barrier to work with 1,600 unemployed and 7,300 economically inactive.

Residents Not Worked in the last 12 months:



Of the 76,562 usual residents aged 16+ who were not in employment the week before the Census 2021, 66.4% (50,849) had not worked in the last 12 months. **Furthermore, over one-in-five (22.6%) or 17,281 people have never worked.**

The wards with the highest proportions who had not worked in the last 12 months were Knowle (75.2%), Dorridge & Hockley Heath (73.2%) and Meriden (72.4%).

In contrast, the wards with the lowest proportions were Smith's Wood (55.4%), Kingshurst & Fordbridge (58.3%) and Chelmsley Wood (58.8%).

Universal Claimants

There are now 16,061 people claiming Universal Credit in Solihull. This has increased by 3.1% (482 people) over the last year and by 70.0% (6,611 people) since March 2020. Females account for 60.7% and males 39.3% of claims.

Since March 2020, and excluding those aged 65+, the largest change percentage wise was recorded for those aged 40-44 by 130.6% (1,029); whereas in absolute numbers the biggest change was recorded in the 35-39 cohort which increased by 1,217 people (109.4%).

In terms of duration:

- Those claiming for 0-6 months increased by 5.9% (+119)
- Those claiming for 6 months – 2 years decreased by 36.4% (-2,176), mainly due to those claiming 1-2 years decreasing by 50% (-2,261)
- Those claiming for 2-5 years increased by 16.3% (+1,198)
- Those claiming for over 5 years increased by 566.0% (+1,347)

Walsall

Whilst the rate of economic activity is close to national comparators in Walsall, unemployment is significantly high.

In terms of inactivity, 62.2% of those inactive are women, with almost one-in-three of all those inactive being female aged between 35-64.

Furthermore, inactivity for those aged 50-64 (both male and female) accounts for 43.4% of all those inactive.

There are relatively low numbers of young males and females inactive.

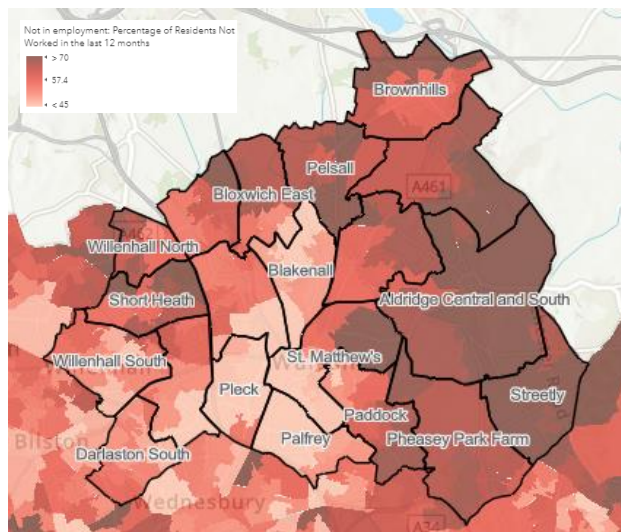
Almost 40% of those inactive are described as work-limiting disabled with 81.6% white.

In addition to those who are work limited disabled, a further 89,100 report a long-term illness, of which 53.5% are in employment, 3.3% unemployed and 43.2% are inactive.

Almost a third (29.4%) of those with a long-term illness report 'Depression, Learning Problems, Mental Problems and Nervous Disorders' as a barrier to work with 1,800 unemployed and 11,800 economically inactive.

Walsall has notable high levels of people inactive due to looking after the family/home.

Residents Not Worked in the last 12 months:



Of the 104,567 usual residents aged 16+ in Walsall were not in employment the week before the Census 2021, 56.9% (59,548) had not worked in the last 12 months. **Furthermore, a third (32.6%) or 34,087 people have never worked.**

The wards with the highest proportions who had not worked in the last 12 months were Streetly (71.8%), Aldridge Central & South (71.6%) and Pelsall (69.8%).

In contrast, the wards with the lowest proportions were Palfrey (37.6%), Pleck (41.6%) and Blakenall (45.2%).

Universal Claimants

There are now 34,516 people claiming Universal Credit in Walsall. This has increased by 7.6% (2,427 people) over the last year and almost doubled by 95.4% (16,854 people) since March 2020. Females account for 57.9% and males 42.1% of claims.

Since March 2020, and excluding those aged 65+, the largest change percentage wise was recorded for those aged 60-65 at 154.3% (1,376), followed closely by those aged 40-44 by 147.9% (2,398); whereas in absolute numbers the biggest change was recorded in the 35-39 cohort which increased by 2,925 people (134.5%).

In terms of duration:

- Those claiming for 0-6 months increased by 3.7% (+180)
- Those claiming for 6 months - 2 years decreased by -28.6% (-3,900), mainly due to those claiming 1-2 years decreasing by -42.5% (-4,293)
- Those claiming for 2-5 years increased by 44.9% (+5,850)
- Those claiming for over 5 years increased by 59.1% (+295)

Wolverhampton

Unemployment remains high in Wolverhampton along with the number of claimants, particularly those claimants aged 16-24. Indeed, Wolverhampton has consistently recorded the second highest rates of youth claimants nationally for the past year (behind Blackpool).

Economic inactivity is particularly prevalent at both ends of the age spectrum (16-24 and 50-64). These two age cohorts account for exactly half of all those economically inactive (50%).

Women account for 63.0% of those inactive, with one-in-three being female aged between 35-64.

Conversely, there are more young males (16-19) inactive than females (5,100 vs 4,200).

Over one-in-three (34%) of those inactive are described as work-limiting disabled with 58.3% white.

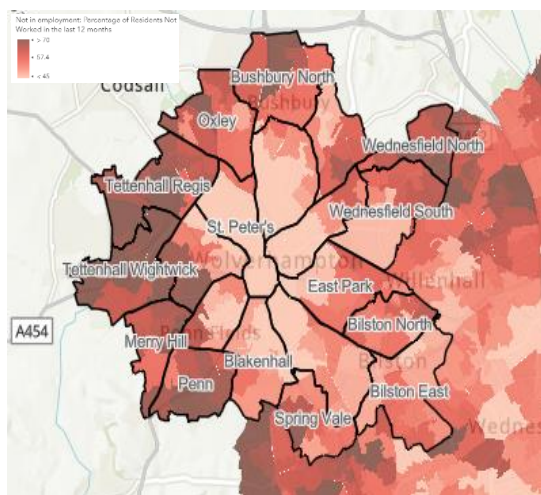
In addition to those who are work limited disabled, a further 64,600 report a long-term illness, of which 47.1% are in employment, 3.3% unemployed and 49.6% are inactive.

Just over a third (35.3%) of those with a long-term illness report 'Depression, Learning Problems, Mental Problems and Nervous Disorders' as a barrier to work with 1,400 unemployed and 14,500 economically inactive.

Of all those with a long-term illness, 'Depression, Learning Problems, Mental Problems and Nervous Disorders' is the most prevalent reason for unemployment.

Wolverhampton has notable high level of people inactive due to looking after the family/home and those inactive due to long-term sick.

Residents Not Worked in the last 12 months:



Of the 97,133 usual residents aged 16+ in Wolverhampton who were not in employment the week before the Census 2021, 54.8% (53,234) had not worked in the last 12 months. **Furthermore, a third (33.3%) or 32,297 people have never worked.**

The wards with the highest proportions who had not worked in the last 12 months were Tettenhall Wightwick (71.0%), Tettenhall Regis (67.3%) and Wednesfield North (66.3%).

In contrast, the wards with the lowest proportions were St Peter's (35.8%), Ettingshall (44.8%) and Blakenhall (44.9%).

Universal Claimants

There are now 37,434 people claiming Universal Credit in Wolverhampton. This has increased by 4.5% (1,618 people) over the last year and by 77.7% (16,374 people) since March 2020. Females account for 55.9% and males 44.1% of claims.

Since March 2020, and excluding those aged 65+, the largest change percentage wise was recorded for those aged 60-65 at 120.2% (1,388), followed closely by those aged 40-44 by 112.4% (2,466); whereas in absolute numbers the biggest change was recorded in the 35-39 cohort which increased by 2,848 people (103.9%).

In terms of duration:

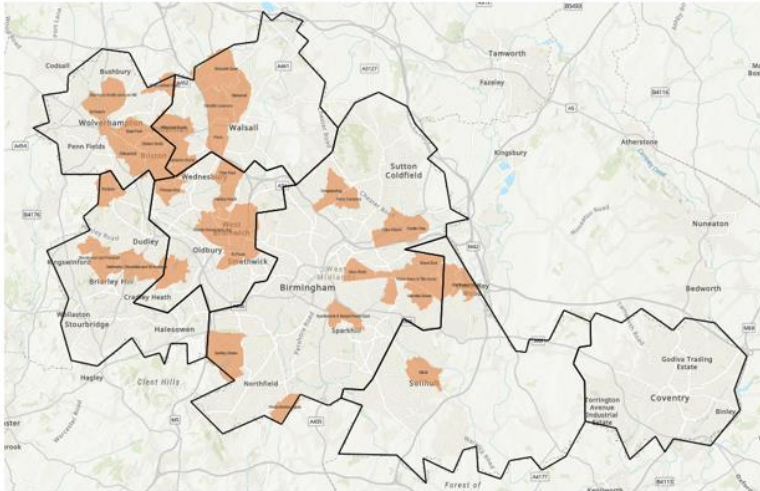
- Those claiming for 0-6 months increased by 3.0% (+154)
- Those claiming for 6 months – 2 years decreased by -28.9% (-4,095), mainly due to those claiming 1-2 years decreasing by -42.6% (-4,445)
- Those claiming for 2-5 years increased by 28.6% (+4,561)
- Those claiming for over 5 years increased by 206.9% (+995)

Longitudinal Ward Analysis

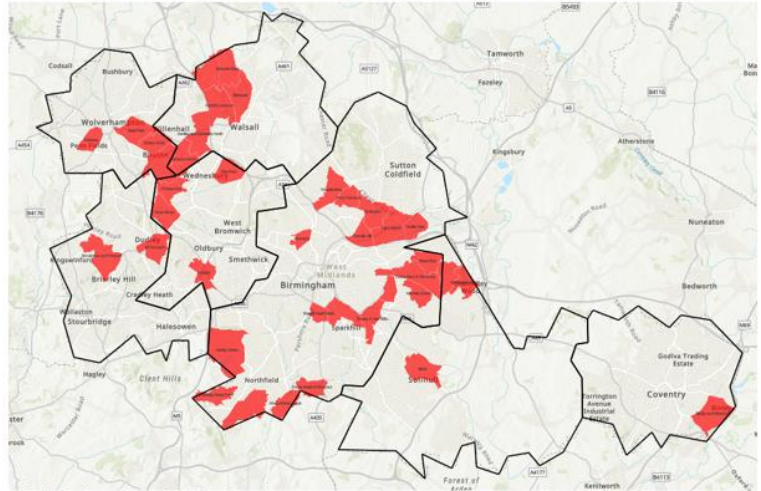
Key workless related indicators (identified in the supporting data tables) have been indexed and put into quintiles to help understand change over time.

The map on the left shows the top 20% most affected wards in 2011 and the map on the right shows the top 20% most affected wards in 2021.

2011:

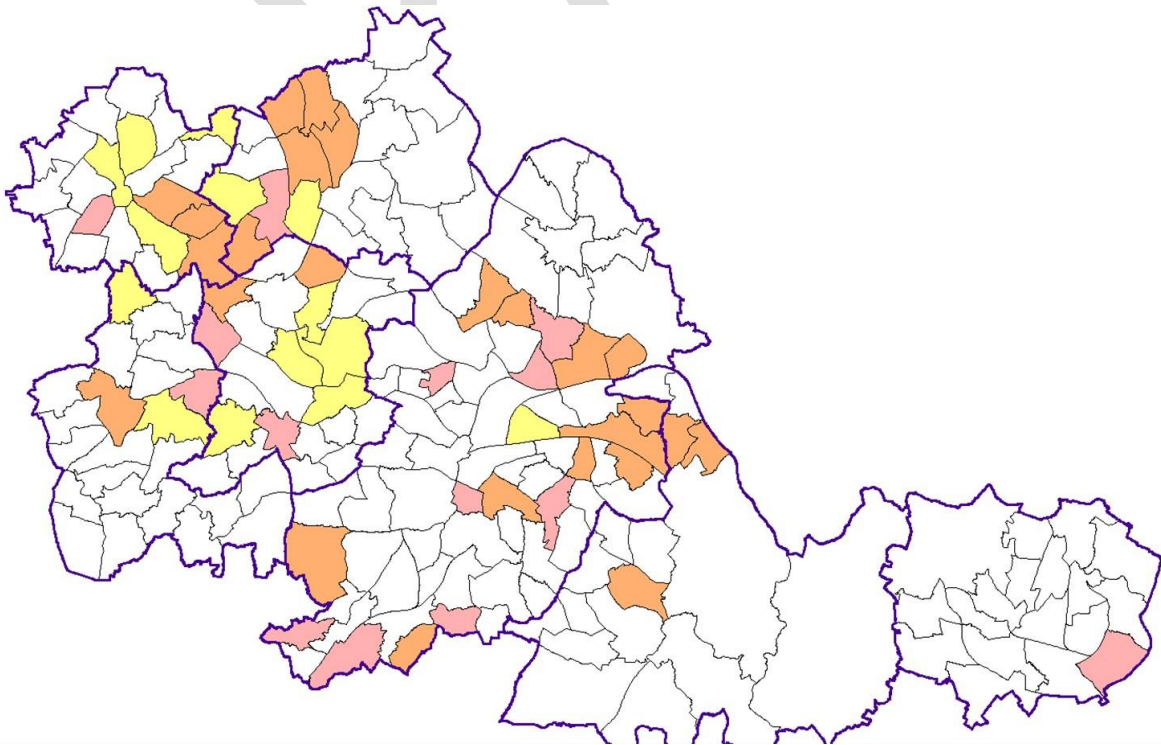


2021:



Interactive versions can be found [here](#). Also a version with all quintiles is available [here](#).

Analysis shows that 25 wards out of 39 were in the topmost affected areas for both 2011 and 2021. These 25 wards are highlighted in the following map in orange (please note yellow indicates top 20% most affected in 2011 and pink indicates top 20% most affected in 2021).



The 25 Wards in top 20% in 2011 and 2021:

| | | | | |
|-------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Bartley Green | Bloxwich East | Darlaston South | King's Norton South | Pype Hayes |
| Bilston East | Bloxwich West | East Park | Kingshurst and Fordbridge | Shard End |
| Bilston North | Brockmoor and Pensnett | Friar Park | Kingstanding | Silhill |
| Birchills Leamore | Castle Vale | Garretts Green | Perry Common | Sparkbrook & Balsall Heath East |
| Blakenall | Chelmsley Wood | Glebe Farm & Tile Cross | Princes End | Yardley West & Stechford |

We are analysing the data to identify which indicators are most acute in these wards and the groups effected.

Economic Growth Board

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Date | Wednesday 12 th July 2023 |
| Report Title | Skills Investment |
| Portfolio lead | Portfolio Holder for Economy and Innovation |
| Accountable Chief Executive | Laura Shoaf, West Midlands Combined Authority email: laura.shoaf@wmca.org.uk |
| Accountable Employee | Clare Hatton, Interim Director for Employment, Skills, Health and Communities Clare.Hatton@wmca.org.uk |
| Report has been considered by | Directors of Economic Development |

Recommendations for action or decision:

The Economic Growth Board is asked to:

- a) Note the level and profile of skills investment for the 12-month period to June 2023, compared with previous years.

1 Purpose

- 1.1 This paper provides a summary of WMCA skills investment for the 12-month period to June 2023, and in comparison with recent years. The data is presented by the local authority of the learner and not the provider. Academic year is taken from the course start date and all spend is assigned to that year. The tables only provide information on Adult Education Budget (AEB) spend and Skills Bootcamp spend (where available). Community learning funding is not included.

2 Summary of Skills Investment

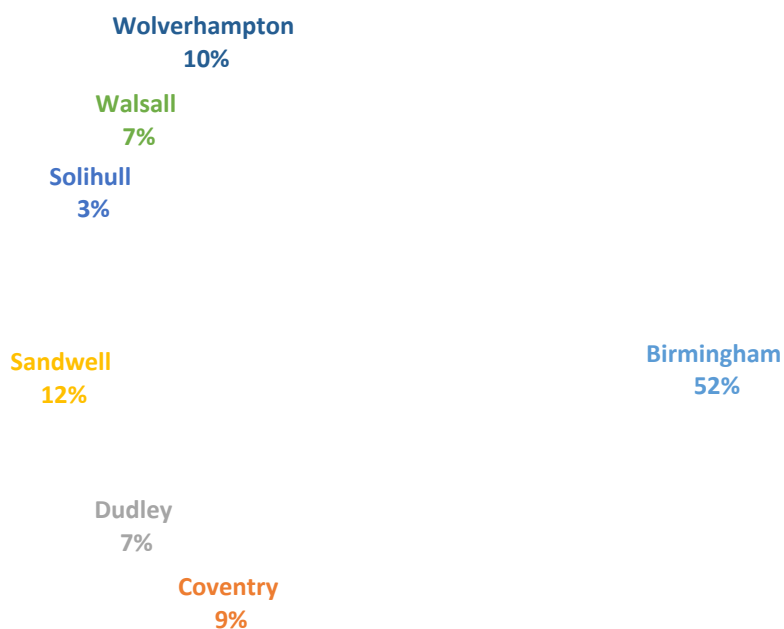
- 2.1 The devolved Adult Education Budget (AEB) for 2022/23 is £131m. In addition, the WMCA administers two pots of National Skills Funding: £8.98m for “Free Courses For Jobs” (FCFJ) and £12.25m for Skills Bootcamps. In total this is a budget of £152million.
- 2.2 To date, total spend for 2022/23 is £82.5m (£81.6 of which has been spent on WMCA residents). The spend to date represents 54% of the total budget. Broken down by allocation: 55% of the AEB budget has been spent, 56% of the FCFJ budget and 45% of the Skills Bootcamps budget.

Total Individual Learning Record (ILR) Spend



| local authority | 2020-21 | 2021-22 | 2022-23 | year to June 2023 |
|-----------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------------|
| Birmingham | £41,655,000 | £52,281,000 | £42,196,000 | £44,307,000 |
| Coventry | £7,609,000 | £8,417,000 | £7,201,000 | £7,125,000 |
| Dudley | £5,030,000 | £7,667,000 | £5,999,000 | £6,410,000 |
| Sandwell | £8,901,000 | £11,258,000 | £10,468,000 | £10,989,000 |
| Solihull | £2,613,000 | £3,316,000 | £2,624,000 | £2,941,000 |
| Walsall | £6,285,000 | £7,142,000 | £5,605,000 | £6,078,000 |
| Wolverhampton | £7,765,000 | £9,602,000 | £7,572,000 | £9,031,000 |
| WMCA total | £79,857,000 | £99,682,000 | £81,665,000 | £86,881,000 |

Distribution of spend 2022/23



AEB Bootcamp Spend*

| local authority | 2021-22 | 2022-23 |
|-----------------|----------|------------|
| Birmingham | £136,000 | £659,000 |
| Dudley | £36,000 | £296,000 |
| Sandwell | £56,000 | £35,000 |
| Solihull | £15,000 | £153,000 |
| Walsall | £61,000 | £44,000 |
| Wolverhampton | £67,000 | £121,000 |
| Coventry | £19,000 | £94,000 |
| WMCA total | £391,000 | £1,402,000 |

Skills Bootcamp Spend

| local authority | 2021-22 | 2022-23 | year to June 2023 |
|-----------------|---------|------------|-------------------|
| Birmingham | £45,000 | £2,033,000 | £2,438,000 |
| Coventry | £4,000 | £384,000 | £425,000 |
| Dudley | £5,000 | £397,000 | £442,000 |
| Sandwell | £15,000 | £423,000 | £466,000 |
| Walsall | £11,000 | £201,000 | £301,000 |
| Wolverhampton | £2,000 | £254,000 | £419,000 |
| Solihull | | £339,000 | £228,000 |
| WMCA total | £82,000 | £4,031,000 | £4,718,000 |

Free Course for Jobs Spend

| local authority | 2021-22 | 2022-23 | year to June 2023 |
|-----------------|------------|------------|-------------------|
| Birmingham | £2,013,000 | £1,957,000 | £2,185,000 |
| Coventry | £521,000 | £439,000 | £453,000 |
| Dudley | £526,000 | £465,000 | £534,000 |
| Sandwell | £691,000 | £817,000 | £915,000 |
| Solihull | £186,000 | £134,000 | £141,000 |
| Walsall | £615,000 | £583,000 | £660,000 |
| Wolverhampton | £781,000 | £598,000 | £699,000 |
| WMCA total | £5,334,000 | £4,994,000 | £5,587,000 |

ESOL Spend

| local authority | 2021-22 | 2022-23 | year to June 2023 |
|-----------------|-------------|-------------|-------------------|
| Birmingham | £10,764,000 | £8,232,000 | £7,593,000 |
| Coventry | £1,177,000 | £981,000 | £979,000 |
| Dudley | £644,000 | £479,000 | £476,000 |
| Sandwell | £1,096,000 | £1,014,000 | £996,000 |
| Solihull | £168,000 | £201,000 | £196,000 |
| Walsall | £428,000 | £419,000 | £415,000 |
| Wolverhampton | £693,000 | £614,000 | £623,000 |
| WMCA total | £14,970,000 | £11,939,000 | £11,278,000 |

Other ILR Spend

| local authority | 2021-22 | 2022-23 | year to June 2023 |
|-----------------|-------------|-------------|-------------------|
| Birmingham | £39,323,000 | £29,064,000 | £32,090,000 |
| Coventry | £6,696,000 | £4,889,000 | £5,269,000 |
| Dudley | £6,456,000 | £4,350,000 | £4,957,000 |
| Sandwell | £9,399,000 | £7,506,000 | £8,609,000 |
| Solihull | £2,946,000 | £2,060,000 | £2,375,000 |
| Walsall | £6,026,000 | £4,189,000 | £4,694,000 |
| Wolverhampton | £8,058,000 | £6,580,000 | £7,287,000 |
| WMCA total | £78,905,000 | £58,638,000 | £65,281,000 |

Notes

* AEB Bootcamp data has only been systematically captured in the ILR since May22 and data may not be complete. Data for the 2022-23 academic year is not yet available through the ILR.

1. 'Other AEB spend' is all AEB programmes which are not Bootcamps, FCFJ or ESOL
2. Data are for academic years (August – September) unless otherwise stated
3. Data for 2022-2023 are for the current academic year and so are partial
4. Does not include community learning
5. Data are taken from the ILR and are subject to amendments

3 Financial Implications

- 3.1 This paper is for information only. There are no immediate financial implications arising from this report.

4. Legal Implications

- 4.1 There are no immediate legal implications arising from this report.

5. Equalities Implications

- 5.1 There are no immediate equalities implications arising from this report.

6. Inclusive Growth Implications

- 6.1 There are no immediate inclusive growth implications arising from this report.

7. Geographical Area of Report's Implications

- 7.1 Devolved Adult Education Budget and grant funding for Bootcamps and Free Courses for Jobs applies to the 7 Met area.

8. Other implications

- 8.1 None

Skills Investment Local Authority Dashboard

June 2023

Skills Investment

The following sets out at a high level how the funding has spent by resident home post code.

To note:

Residents can access training in and part of the region so the relationship of LA based provider to LA resident is not a direct one

Investment does not always equate to take up – for example we have allocated far greater amounts of level 3 FCFJ funding that was accessed - this both a resident demand and a provider delivery issue.

WMCA received the following skills funding in 2022/23:

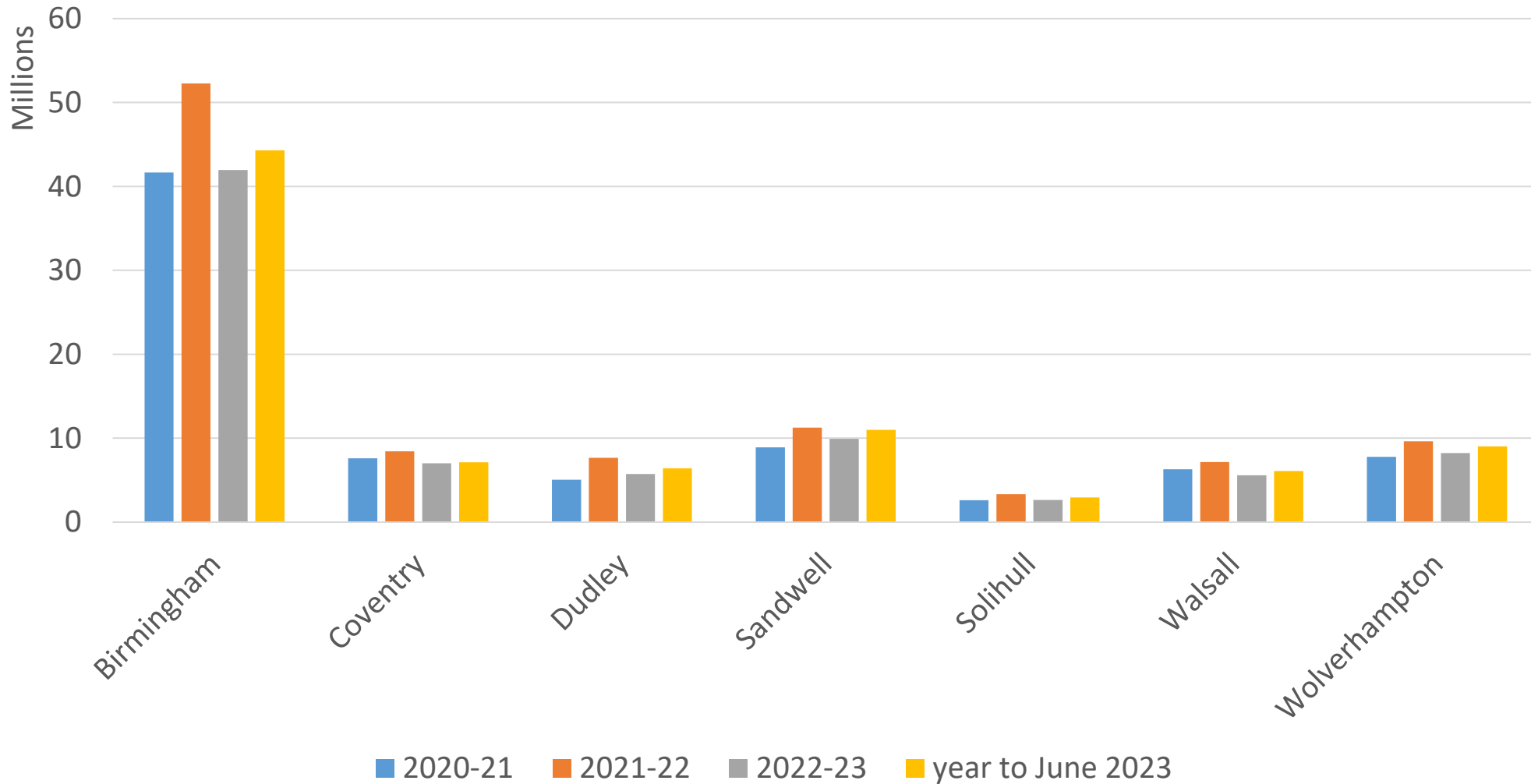
Devolved
Adult Education Budget
£131 million

National Skills Fund –
Free Courses for Jobs
£8.98 million

National Skills Fund –
Bootcamps
£12.25 million

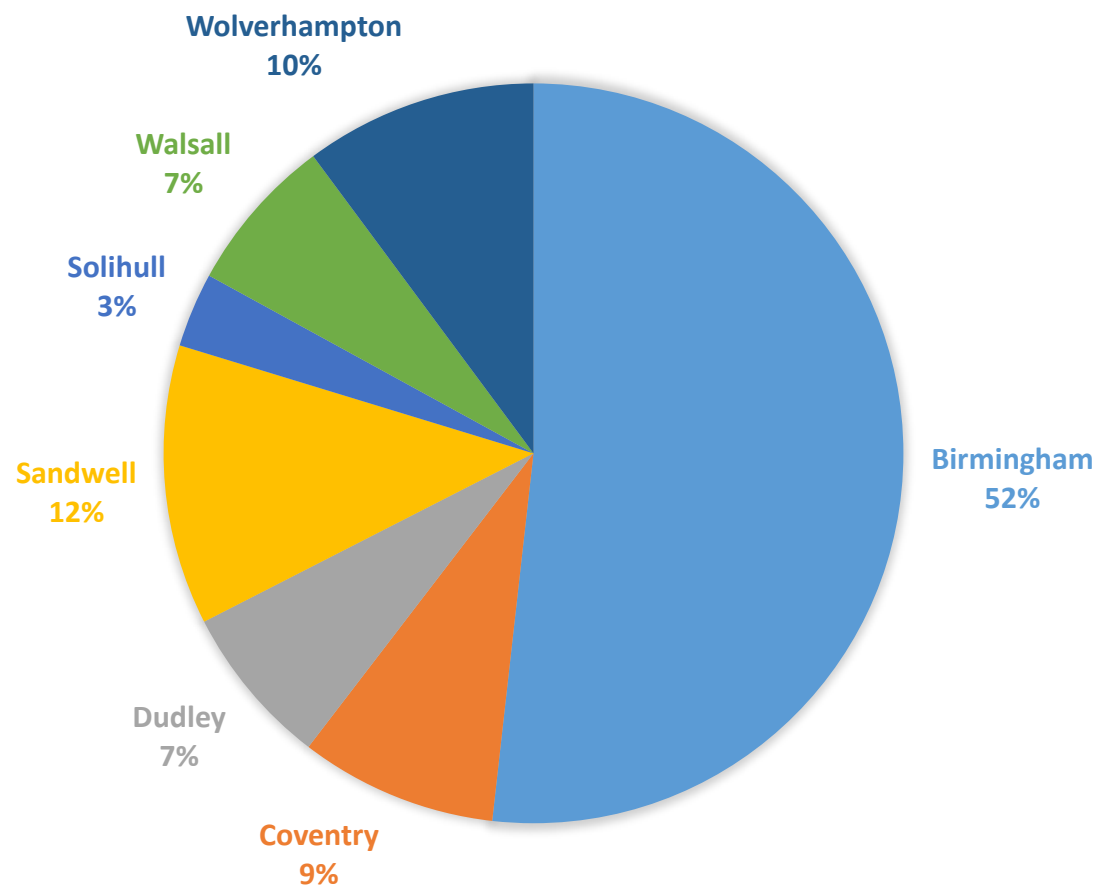
Total Skills Investment

Total AEB Investment



Total Spend 2022/23 (ILR)

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Total investment 2022/23:
£83.2 million

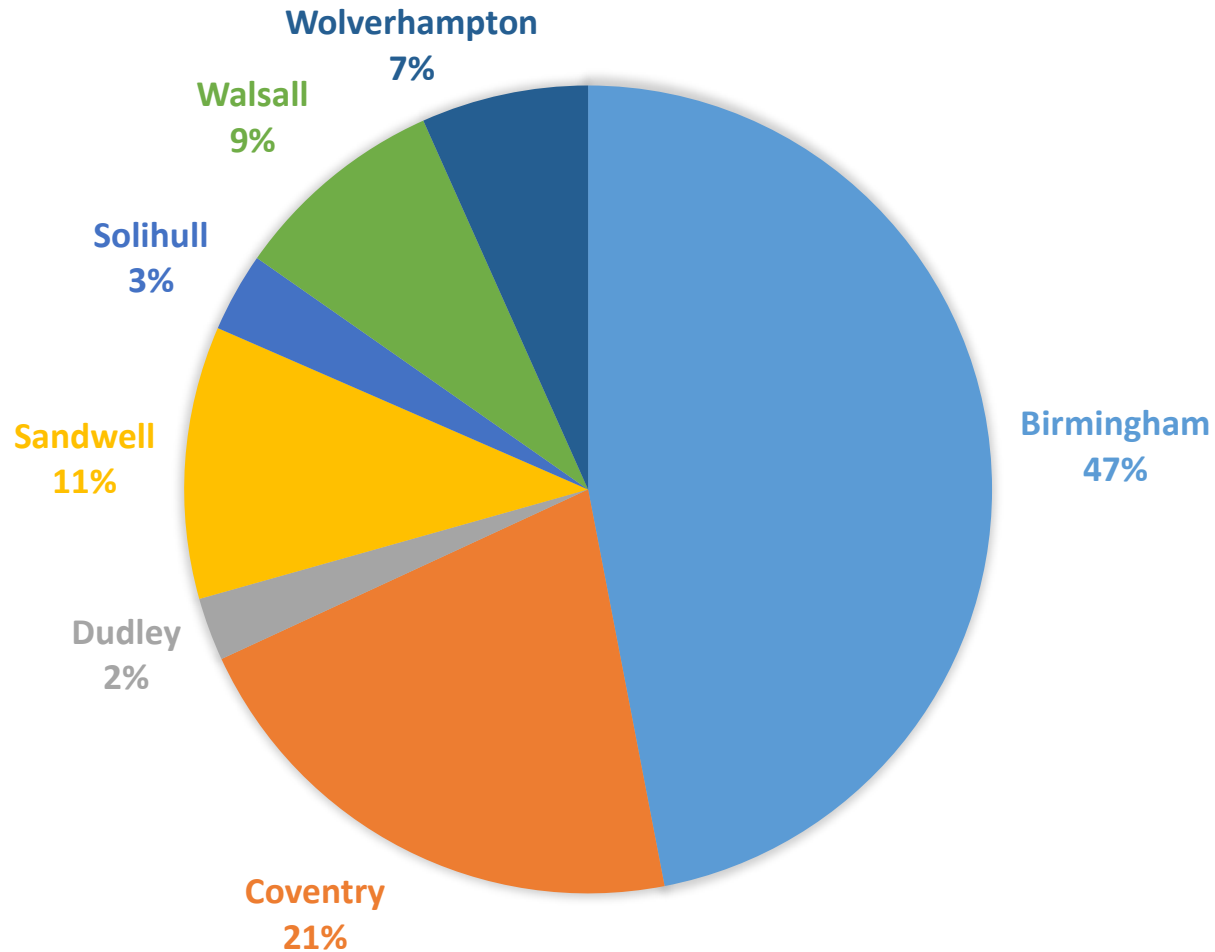
| | |
|---------------|-------------|
| Birmingham | £41,945,000 |
| Coventry | £6,990,000 |
| Dudley | £5,726,000 |
| Sandwell | £9,913,000 |
| Solihull | £2,640,000 |
| Walsall | £5,566,000 |
| Wolverhampton | £8,225,000 |
| Non-WMCA | £1,542,000 |

Total funding in 2022/23 is £152m and investment to-date is £83.2m. This is partly because we are still in-year and partly because not all spend goes through the ILR (e.g., community learning).

Adult Education Budget

AEB Bootcamps 2022/23

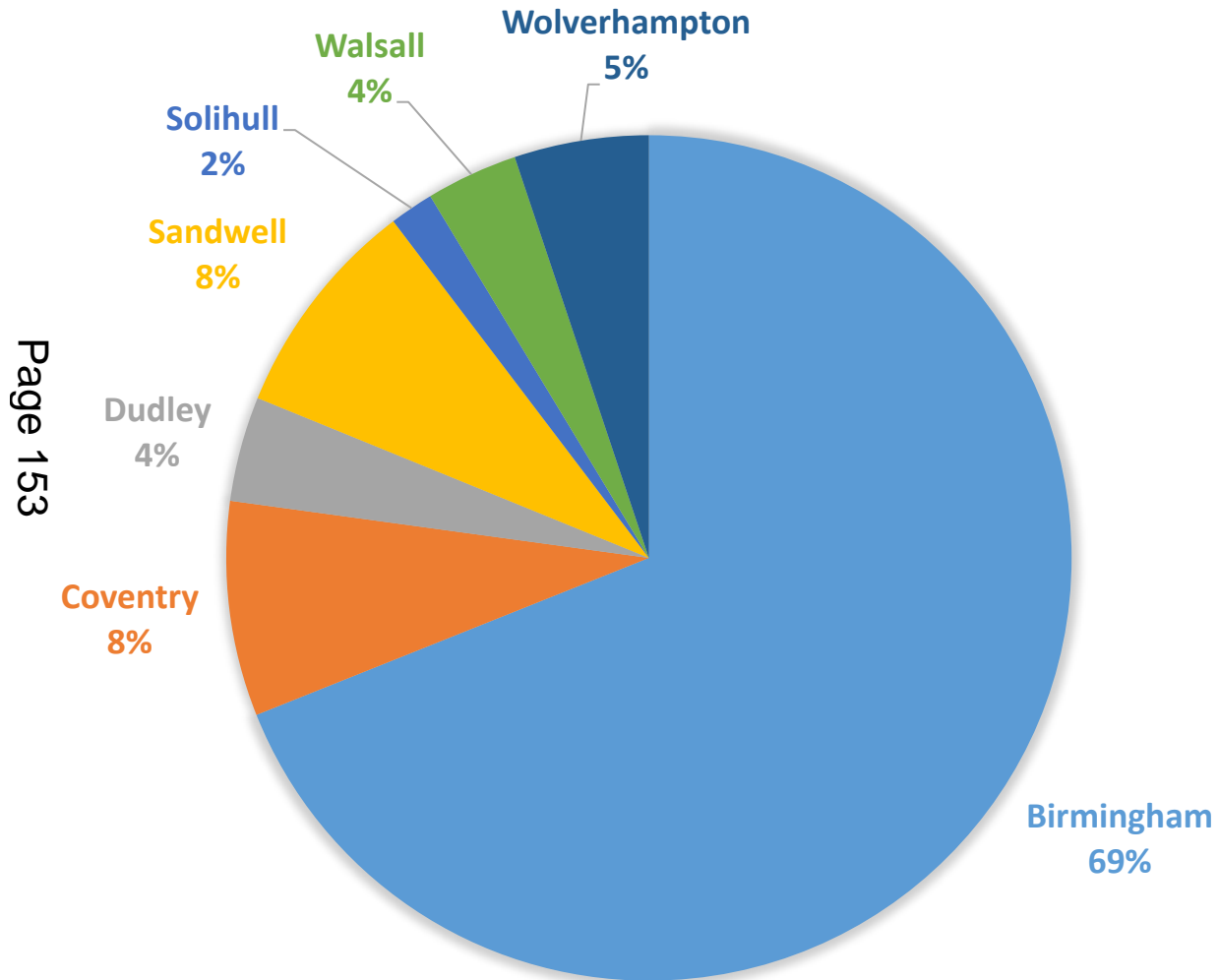
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Total investment 2022/23:
£1.40 million

| | |
|---------------|----------|
| Birmingham | £659,000 |
| Coventry | £296,000 |
| Dudley | £35,000 |
| Sandwell | £153,000 |
| Solihull | £44,000 |
| Walsall | £121,000 |
| Wolverhampton | £94,000 |

ESOL 2022/23

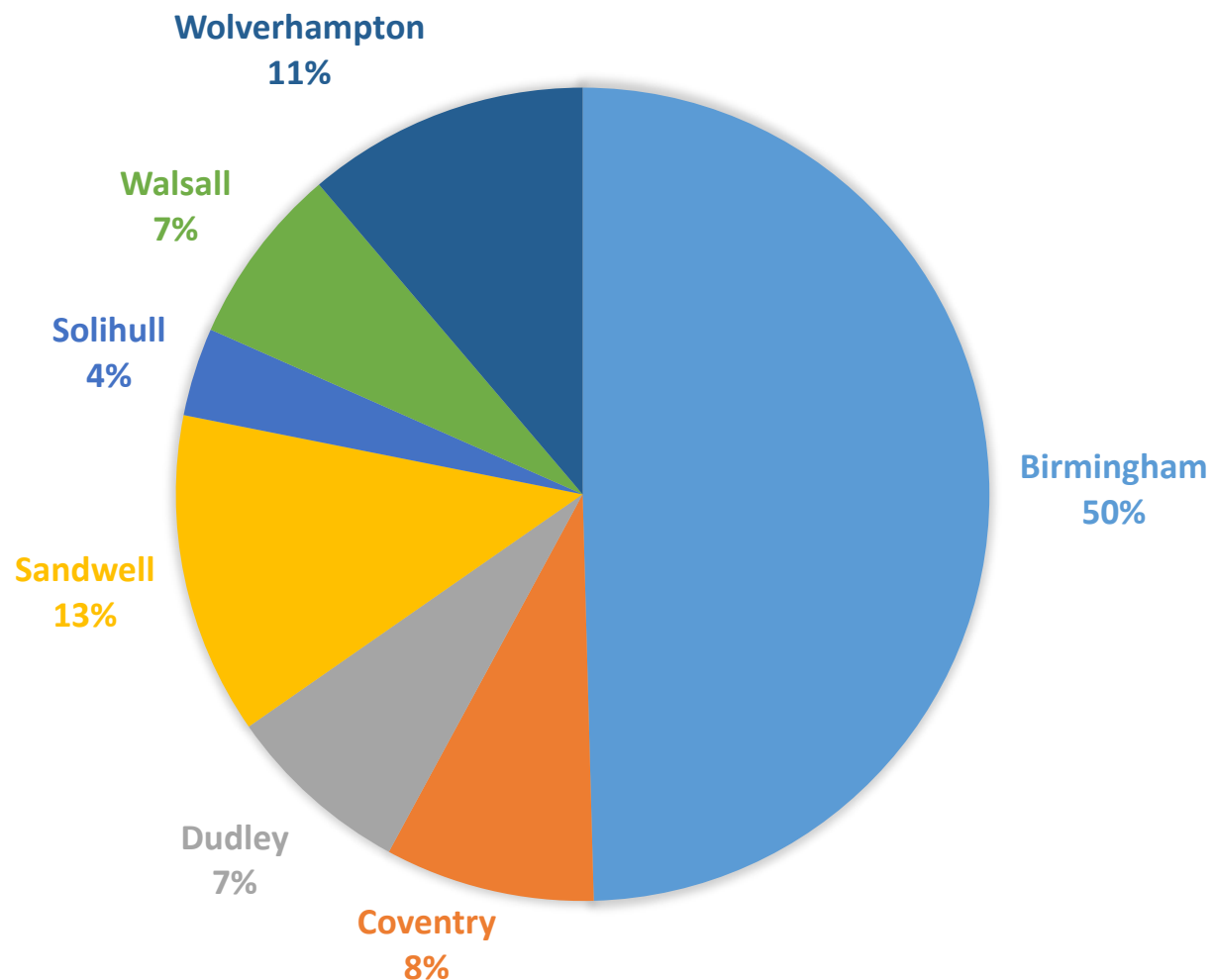


Total investment 2022/23:
£11.9 million

| | |
|---------------|------------|
| Birmingham | £8,232,000 |
| Coventry | £981,000 |
| Dudley | £479,000 |
| Sandwell | £1,014,000 |
| Solihull | £201,000 |
| Walsall | £419,000 |
| Wolverhampton | £614,000 |

All other AEB spend 2022/23

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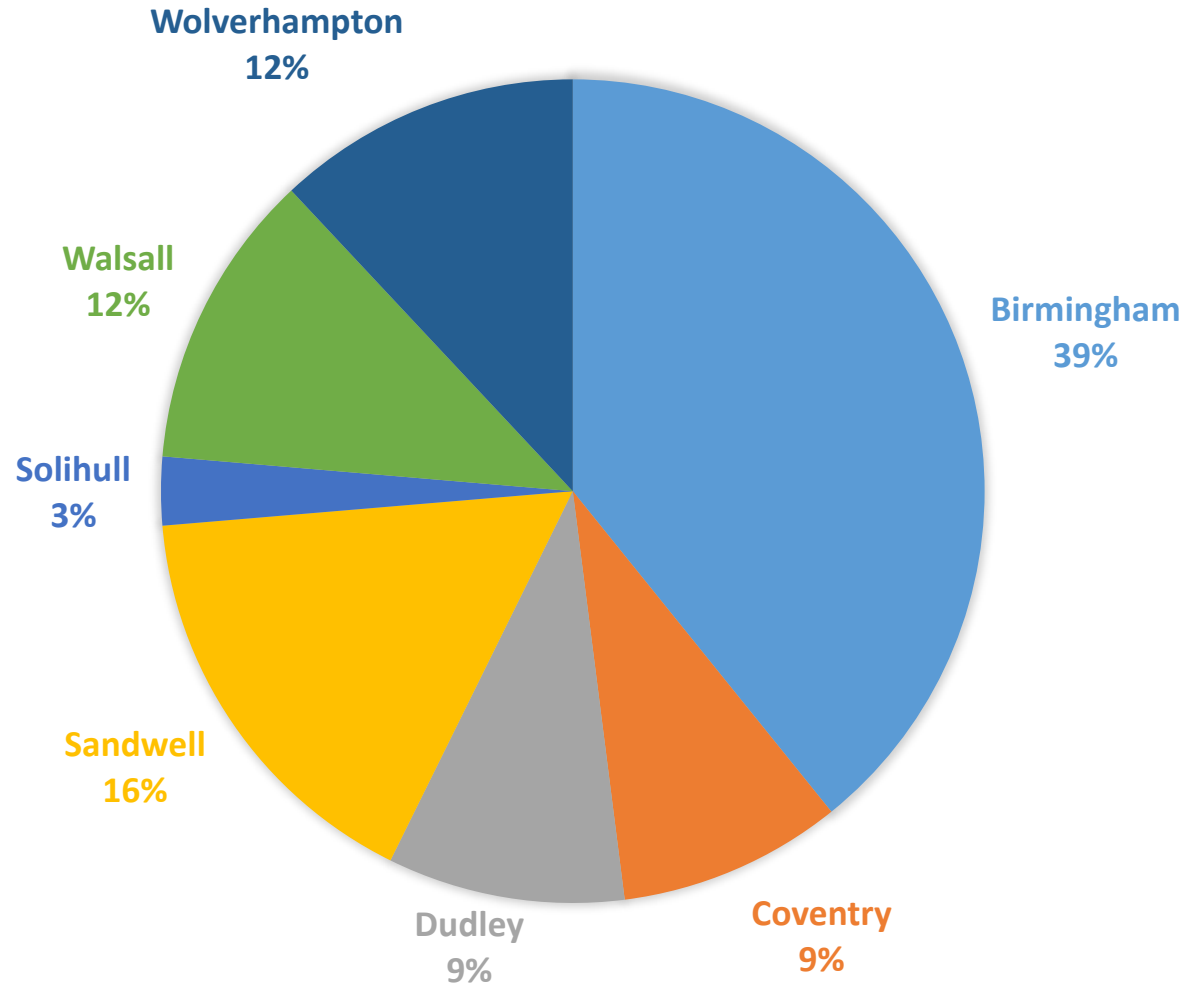


Total investment 2022/23:
£58.6 million

| | |
|---------------|-------------|
| Birmingham | £29,064,000 |
| Coventry | £4,889,000 |
| Dudley | £4,350,000 |
| Sandwell | £7,506,000 |
| Solihull | £2,060,000 |
| Walsall | £4,189,000 |
| Wolverhampton | £6,580,000 |

Other Skills Funding

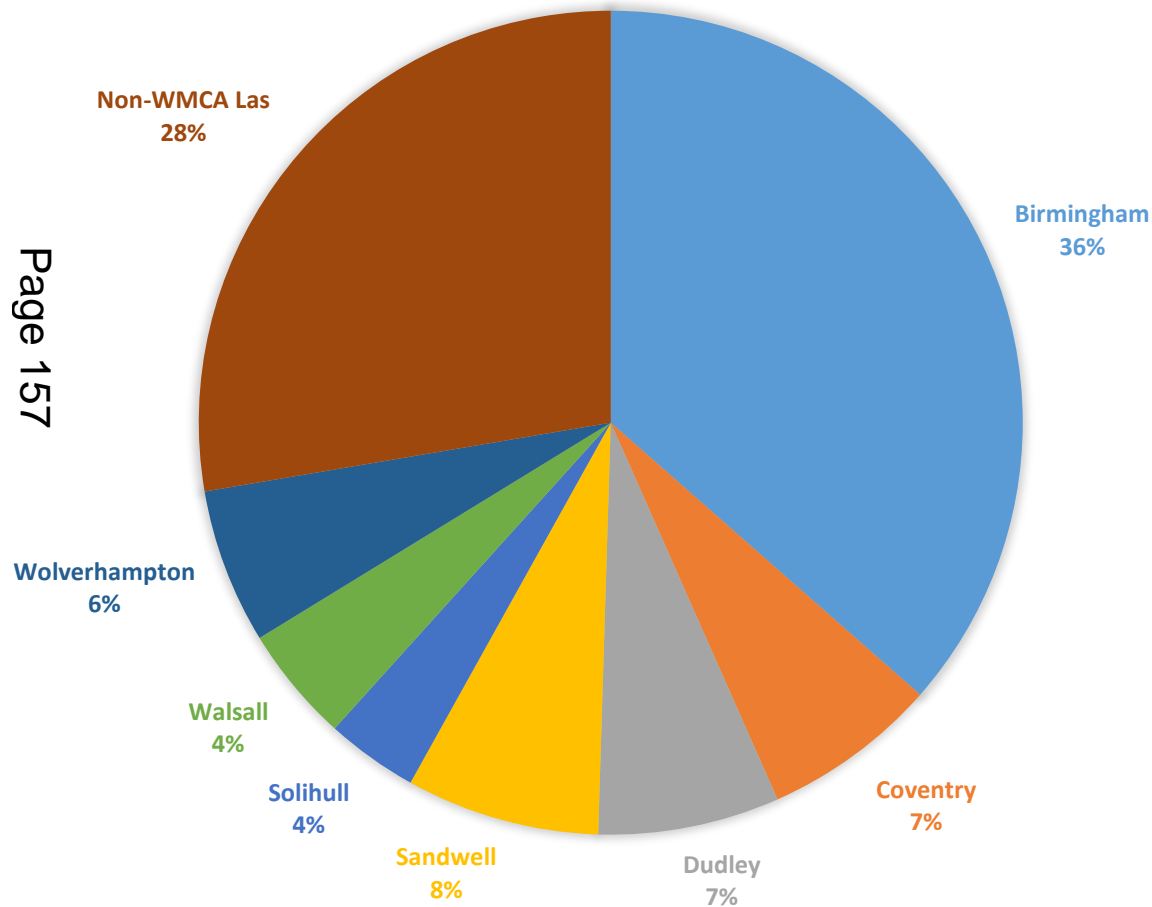
Free Courses For Jobs (level 3) 2022/23



Total investment 2022/23:
£4.99 million

| | |
|---------------|------------|
| Birmingham | £1,957,000 |
| Coventry | £439,000 |
| Dudley | £465,000 |
| Sandwell | £817,000 |
| Solihull | £134,000 |
| Walsall | £583,000 |
| Wolverhampton | £598,000 |

Skills Bootcamps 2022/23



Total investment 2022/23:
£5.57 million

| | |
|--------------------|------------|
| Birmingham | £2,033,000 |
| Coventry | £384,000 |
| Dudley | £397,000 |
| Sandwell | £423,000 |
| Solihull | £201,000 |
| Walsall | £254,000 |
| Wolverhampton | £339,000 |
| Non-WMCA residents | £1,542,000 |

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Economic Growth Board

| | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Date | Wednesday 12 th July 2023 |
| Report Title | Economic Growth Board Work Programme |
| Portfolio lead | Portfolio Holder for Economy and Innovation |
| Accountable Chief Executive | Laura Shoaf, West Midlands Combined Authority email: laura.shoaf@wmca.org.uk |
| Accountable Employee | Joe Baconnet, West Midlands Combined Authority Joseph.baconnet@wmca.org.uk |
| Report has been considered by | Directors of Economic Development |

Recommendations for action or decision:

The Economic Growth Board is asked to:

- a) Note the updated work programme attached at Appendix 1.

1 Purpose

- 1.1 For the Economic Growth Board to update its work programme. EGB's work and decisions will support the region's overall vision to build a healthier, happier, better connected and more prosperous West Midlands.

2 Background

- 2.1 Economic Growth Board (EGB) was established to strengthen democratic leadership, working with business. The Board's work programme is divided into four topic areas based on its terms of reference, plus any standing items.
- 2.2 The revised work programme is attached at Appendix 1 and will continue to evolve as work is required.

3 Financial Implications

- 3.1 There are no immediate financial implications arising from this report.

4. Legal Implications

- 4.1 There are no immediate legal implications arising from this report

5. Equalities Implications



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

6. Inclusive Growth Implications

6.1 The work programme of EGB places inclusive economic growth at the heart of CA decision making.

7. Geographical Area of Report's Implications

7.1 The Economic Growth Board's remit is for the WMCA area with all constituent and non-constituent authorities within that area. Subject to the individual items of work being considered by the EGB, work, policies and programmes might relate to either the 7-met WMCA area, or the wider economic footprint.

8. Other implications

8.1 None

Appendix 1 Updated Work Programme

| | | 22 nd Sept '23 | 16 th Nov '23 | 13th December '23 | 6 th March '24 |
|---|--|---|---|---|---------------------------|
| 1 | Oversight of regional economic strategies, plans, and their implementation, including influencing plans to attract government and commercial investment | <p>Investment Zone progress</p> <p>Overview of the Digital Economy workstream of the West Midlands Digital Roadmap</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Birmingham Tech Cluster Plan <p>Annual Report of the Midlands Engine for its benefits to the West Midlands</p> <p>Or Further education pilot agreement sign-off with Innovate UK*</p> <p>Major Events Fund (Governance and evaluation framework) – WMGC</p> | <p><i>Update on the next steps of the Circular Economy Routemap and progress tbc</i></p> <p>Review Commercial Land Strategy, in line with West Midlands Plan for Growth priorities tbc?</p> <p>Housing & Regen Future Homes Strategy (cluster development)</p> | Midlands Aerospace Alliance Cluster update | |



| | | 22 nd Sept '23 | 16 th Nov '23 | 13th December '23 | 6 th March '24 |
|---|---|---|--|---|--|
| | | International Strategy (WMGC) | | | |
| | | Inclusive Growth | | | |
| 2 | Deliver inclusive economic growth through the West Midlands Jobs Plan, ensuring we link local communities to new jobs and opportunities. | Report on Good Work Local Skills Improvement Plan Leadership & Management Skills in the workforce | Skills Delivery Overview | | |
| 3 | Oversee a coherent and complementary approach to business support across the region. | Business Growth WM Updates Access to Finance (report) and update on West Midlands Co-Invest Fund | Business Growth WM Updates WMGC Progress update | Business Growth WM Updates Night Time Economy Update (?) | WMGC Progress Update |
| 4 | Oversee the work of the Innovation Board and other relevant sub-Boards | Innovation Board update Update Report from the Industrial Energy Taskforce Report from Cultural Leadership | Report on Tourism: work of Tourism and Hospitality Advisory Board | | Innovation Board update Strategic Productivity Partnership report |



| | | 22 nd Sept '23 | 16 th Nov '23 | 13th December '23 | 6 th March '24 |
|---|------------------|--|--|--|--|
| | | ToR of Strategic Productivity Partnership | | | |
| 5 | Standing Item(s) | <p>Economic Conditions Report - Latest economic evidence (including qualitative issues from BIF and Regional Business Council), forecasts and key impact measures</p> <p>Summary Reports – short updates on on-going work & projects</p> | <p>Economic Conditions Report - Latest economic evidence (including qualitative issues from BIF and Regional Business Council), forecasts and key impact measures</p> <p>Foundational sectors update</p> <p>Summary Reports – short updates on on-going work & projects</p> | <p>Economic Conditions Report - Latest economic evidence (including qualitative issues from BIF and Regional Business Council), forecasts and key impact measures</p> <p>Summary Reports – short updates on on-going work & projects</p> | <p>Economic Conditions Report - Latest economic evidence (including qualitative issues from BIF and Regional Business Council), forecasts and key impact measures</p> <p>Summary Reports – short updates on on-going work & projects</p> |

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