



Greater Birmingham  
& Solihull  
Local Enterprise Partnership

# A GREATER BIRMINGHAM FOR A GREATER BRITAIN



STRATEGIC ECONOMIC PLAN

2016–2030

**“We need to be backing innovation, helping our educational establishments to grow their ideas and inventions into real life business. With 600 businesses supported, and 17,000 people helped into employment, the GBSLEP is a great example of what can be done when you have vision and go out there and help your area.”**

**THERESA MAY**

**PRIME MINISTER**

Speaking at the GBSLEP 'Driving Regional Growth' fringe event at Conservative Party Conference 2016



# FOREWORD

**When we published our Strategy for Growth in 2013, we set a clear goal: to regain Greater Birmingham & Solihull's status as the major driver of the national economy outside of London.**

We have made remarkable progress together over the past three years. There is a real buzz about Greater Birmingham & Solihull. The transformation in our economy is clear – we are a leading area for inward investment, business start-ups and job creation. And we believe our track record of delivery means that we have earned the right to be bold.

What's more, the LEP Board recognises that a bold approach is exactly what is required in the light of Brexit. Whilst there is uncertainty now and there will undoubtedly be challenges to come, we are also moving into a period of huge opportunity. Greater Birmingham has the assets, the talent and the resolve to prosper, whatever the negotiations may bring. That's why, in this Strategic Economic Plan 2016–30, we are raising our game. Our vision is for Greater Birmingham to take its place amongst the global elite: a truly global city region by 2030, one that establishes our leadership in innovation in our key sectors, and leverages our international connections to the full.

The Government has made clear the need for an industrial strategy that addresses the country's longstanding challenges with productivity, increases our resilience to economic shocks, and leads to an economy that raises prosperity and extends opportunity to everyone.

Our timing could not be better. Since March of this year, the Greater Birmingham Chambers of Commerce, the Confederation of British Industry, the EEF, the Federation of Small Businesses the Institute of Directors, leading academics and our local authority partners have been working together to produce a strategy that demonstrates how we can create a high-skilled, high-waged economy to which all of our citizens have access, thus improving the life chances of everyone that lives and works here.

We have all the ingredients we need to achieve our ambitious vision. HS2 presents a once in a generation chance to deliver growth and opportunity on an unprecedented scale, and sets Greater Birmingham apart as genuinely unique. Nowhere else in Europe can boast of two brand new high speed rail station sites, within touching distance of a major airport, at the heart of the strategic road and rail networks and with a series of

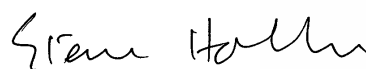
nationally significant economic assets already in place. To say this is a game changer for us is an understatement.

Our advanced manufacturing industry is already the envy of the world. And I am particularly excited about our life sciences opportunity. Our Life Sciences Commission has identified huge potential for Greater Birmingham to become a 21st century life sciences hub, leveraging major investment from global pharma and driving growth while accelerating patient access to new treatments.

It would be remiss of the GBSLEP Board not to talk about the challenges we face: chief amongst them are productivity and skills. The Board is under no illusions about the scale of these challenges and, as this strategy sets out, we are absolutely determined to overcome it. It is right that we have set ourselves ambitious targets – meeting them will require a new approach and a huge effort by all of us. And while we have made significant progress with unemployment – some parts of Greater Birmingham have a claimant rate below 1% – there remains a persistent and significant challenge in parts of Birmingham and north Solihull that we must make a priority. More broadly, the LEP Board is clear that we must ensure that the benefits of economic growth and the opportunities that it affords are felt right across our area. That's why, on behalf of the Board, I am making a personal commitment to a more inclusive economy – and one that ensures a better quality of life for everyone that lives and works here.

Our success to date has been achieved through strong partnerships working in pursuit of a shared goal. We can rightly be proud of our collective leadership in securing greater influence over our local economy, and our record on job creation and growth is making a real difference to people's lives. In this, our Strategic Economic Plan 2016–30, I am pleased to confirm that through the consultation on our draft Plan, we have received your overwhelming support for our vision, objectives and priorities for our city region – hence this Strategy is clear about our shared goals; our shared successes; our shared challenges. Now, working together, we must make good on our promises.

On behalf of the LEP Board, I am pleased to present our Strategic Economic Plan 2016–30 and I look forward to working with you to deliver a Greater Birmingham for a Greater Britain.



**Steve Hollis**  
Chair  
Greater Birmingham & Solihull  
Local Enterprise Partnership



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## About the LEP

The Greater Birmingham & Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (GBSLEP) is a partnership of business, public sector and further and higher education leaders with a mission to grow the economy of Greater Birmingham & Solihull ('Greater Birmingham').

Our LEP covers the nine local authority areas of Birmingham, Solihull, East Staffordshire, Cannock Chase, Lichfield, Tamworth, Redditch, Bromsgrove and Wyre Forest, which have a combined population of nearly 2 million people and an economy worth £41.7 billion employing 848,000.

## The opportunity

**Greater Birmingham is the main driver of the UK economy outside London and the Midlands Engine having achieved the highest growth rate of any UK city region, and is the leading LEP area for attracting foreign direct investment (FDI) into the UK.**

We are experiencing an economic renaissance which is being catalysed by the arrival of HS2 which will bring central Birmingham within 49 minutes of central London and make Birmingham Airport the UK's first and only high-speed rail connected airport.

We have established ourselves as one of the largest professional and financial centres outside of London, recently attracting HSBC's ring-fenced banking HQ and Deutsche Bank's front-office.

Our advanced manufacturing and engineering industry is at the heart of a world-class Midlands' automotive, aerospace and rail technologies cluster. It makes a major contribution to FDI attraction into the UK and the West Midlands' position as the most significant exporting region outside London and the South East, and the only one with a trade surplus with China.

We have burgeoning digital and creative, life sciences and low carbon energy technologies clusters which are leading the way in developing and commercialising new technologies which will be key to delivering smarter, more sustainable and more inclusive growth.

We believe that the opportunity presented by HS2 and the strength of our global connections; the quality of our supply chains and business environment; the strength of our research institutions and science parks; the entrepreneurialism and youthfulness of our population; the quality of our cultural assets; and the ambition of our partners and growth plans mean that Greater Birmingham is strongly positioned to be globally competitive and play a key role in the UK's future growth.

## Our Strategic Economic Plan

Our Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) sets out our vision and strategy for delivering smarter, more sustainable and more inclusive growth for the benefit of our area, the wider West Midlands city region and the UK as a whole. It also identifies the contribution that we will make to the delivery of the ambitious growth targets set by the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA). It has been developed in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders and partners on whom its successful delivery will depend.



Paradise Birmingham

## Our mission, vision and objectives

Our **MISSION** is to create jobs and grow the economy – and, in doing so, to raise the quality of life for all of those that live and work here.

Our **VISION** is for Greater Birmingham to be a top global city region that drives the Midlands Engine and is the major driver of the UK economy outside London – harnessing our strengths and assets for the benefit of our area and the wider UK economy.

To realise our vision, our **OBJECTIVES** are to:

- Increase business and workforce productivity and competitiveness – particularly by raising skills levels and stimulating demand-led innovation
- Increase private sector investment, including overseas investment
- Increase business survival and growth
- Increase exports particularly amongst Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs)
- Enable more inclusive growth that delivers benefits more widely and reduces unemployment – particularly in parts of Birmingham and North Solihull with high rates.

## Our targets

We recognise the importance of setting out clear, measurable goals by which we will measure our performance and tailor our activity.

Our headline targets are to:

- Create 250,000 jobs by 2030 and be the leading Core City LEP for private sector job creation
- Grow our economy by £29bn (GVA) by 2030 and be the leading Core City LEP for output per head
- Increase the % of the working age population qualified to NVQ3+ to the national average by 2025
- Increase our labour productivity (GVA per capita) to the national average by 2030
- Decrease our unemployment rate to the national average by 2020 and have the lowest unemployment amongst the LEP Core Cities by 2030
- To be recognised as the leading Core City LEP for Quality of Life by 2030

## Our strategy

Our strategy is focused on four areas to deliver smarter, more sustainable and more inclusive growth:

### INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

**Developing and realising the potential of our strengths and assets in key sectors and technologies**

**A WORLD LEADER IN INNOVATION & CREATIVITY**

Commercialising cutting-edge research and innovation

**TAKING FULL ADVANTAGE OF OUR GLOBAL CONNECTIONS**

Exploiting our role as an international gateway

**STRONGER CONDITIONS FOR GROWTH**

Spreading opportunity and prosperity to all sections of society



These priorities are underpinned by eleven key opportunities and challenges across the three Pillars of our agenda. They include:

## BUSINESS

- Stimulate demand-led innovation
- Increase SME internationalisation and export
- Grow key markets for inward investment
- Strengthen business support and access to finance including for scale-ups

## PEOPLE

- Increase skills and reduce unemployment

## PLACE

- Harness the transformational opportunity presented by HS2
- Enhance connectivity and mobility
- Deliver major growth and regeneration opportunities

- Increase the supply of viable housing and high quality employment land, and ensure delivery meets needs and aspirations
- Develop thriving local and town centres
- Enhance and harness the potential of our cultural and creative assets

### Making it happen

Our SEP is a **VISION-LED STRATEGY** that sets out our key priorities for the long term, in making Greater Birmingham a leading, global city region by 2030.

Whilst GBSLEP has a significant capital portfolio, we do not have all the resources we need to deliver this SEP in our direct control. How we work with and influence partners across the public, private and education sectors is therefore crucial.

Accordingly, our SEP will be the basis for future bids for funds; the framework through which we seek to direct the resources under our control, and the means by which we will seek to corral and influence those of our partners and wider stakeholders.



The regeneration of Silverwoods in north Worcestershire



Resorts World Birmingham at the NEC complex

# PURPOSE

**Much has changed since we published our Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) in March 2014. We have made considerable progress in delivering the ambitious agenda we put forward, but challenges remain and new opportunities have arisen.**

GBSLEP is a key partner in the WMCA, and an economic driver of the Midlands Engine. It also has very close working relationships with Worcestershire and Stoke & Staffordshire LEPs with shared ambitions to support businesses and promote growth in the overlap areas.

Nationally, a new Government has come to power with an emerging policy direction and a key challenge of withdrawing the United Kingdom from the European Union.

We recognise that Brexit means that there are likely to be challenges ahead. Whilst the result of the referendum on EU membership has led to political uncertainty and global economic conditions remain challenging, our strengths as a location for global investment remain unchanged: our excellent national and international transport connections; our high quality, cost-competitive business infrastructure; our world-class universities and large graduate talent pool; and our world-class cultural assets and quality of life offer. We need to work together to turn these into opportunities. This SEP sets out our approach, working in partnership to deliver benefits across the Midlands Engine and UK plc.

Now more than ever, we are determined to ensure that effort and resource are directed to maximum effect and we are focused on securing from Government the funding and powers needed for effective action at the sub-national level, working with our neighbouring LEPs, the WMCA and our partners across the Midlands. The time is therefore right for us to review and update our SEP.

Our updated SEP will guide these interactions and our own activities going forward. Our approach has been developed in collaboration with a wide range of partners from the public, private and education sectors, and built on consultation with all our stakeholders across Greater Birmingham.

The result is a strategy that sets out how we as a LEP will contribute to the delivery of the ambitious growth targets set by the WMCA and drive forward the Midlands Engine for Growth.

**“JLL has always firmly believed that the key to attracting investment is for Birmingham to think of itself as a top European city, not just as part of the UK.”**

**BEN KELLY**

**DIRECTOR OF CAPITAL MARKETS • JLL**



Attracted

**81** NEW FDI PROJECTS

in 2015/16



**104,100** ADDITIONAL PRIVATE SECTOR

**JOBS**



since 2010 – outperforming national growth rate

**20,200**

NEW BUSINESSES

born in the GBSLEP 2015



**13.5%**

ECONOMIC GROWTH RATE

in the last five years



**36.4k**



Unemployment claimant numbers reduced from 64.6k in 2013 to 36.4k today (2016)

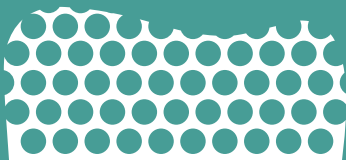
**<1%**

of people in Tamworth and Lichfield claim unemployment benefits

**TOP UK REGIONAL CITY**

Birmingham ranked top UK regional city for quality of life

(Mercer Living Index)



**6,000**



people moved from London to Birmingham in 2015, the most popular destination of any UK city

**£29bn**



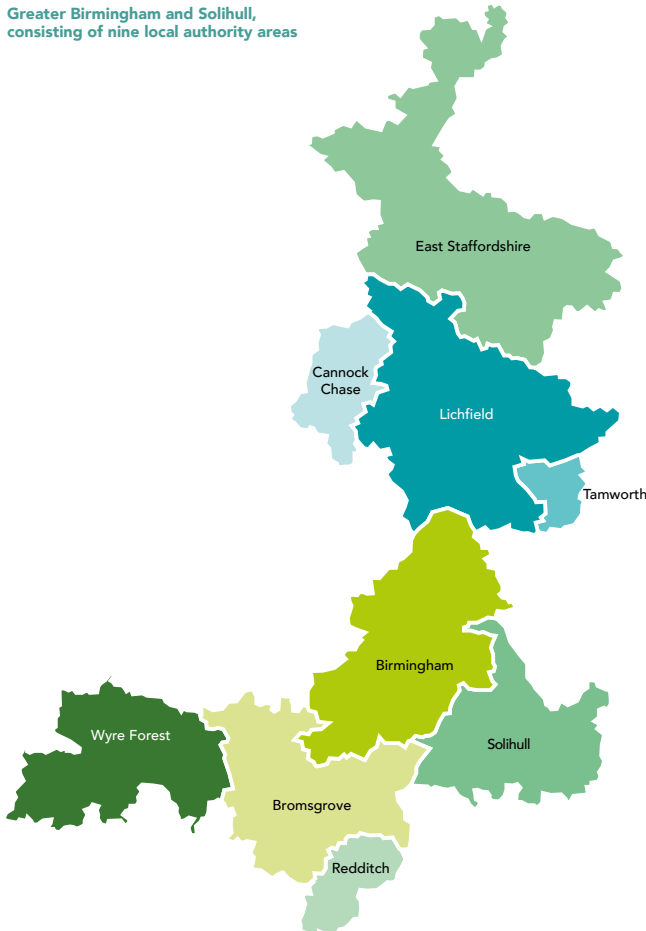
West Midlands region exported £29bn of goods in 2015, more than any UK region outside London and the South East

# WHO WE ARE

**The Greater Birmingham & Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (GBSLEP) was established in 2010 as a partnership of business, public sector and further and higher education leaders. Our mission is to create jobs, grow the economy and, in doing so, raise the quality of life for all of our residents. We are constituted as a company limited by guarantee, and company members include the Greater Birmingham Chambers of Commerce, the Hereford & Worcestershire Chambers of Commerce, the Engineering Employers' Federation, the National Farmers Unions, the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors and the Federation of Small Businesses.**

Greater Birmingham spans nine local authority boundaries: Birmingham, Solihull, East Staffordshire, Cannock Chase, Lichfield, Tamworth, Redditch, Bromsgrove and Wyre Forest. We have a population of nearly 2 million people, are home to 848,000 jobs and have an economy worth £41.7 billion.

Greater Birmingham and Solihull, consisting of nine local authority areas



The area is home to one of the largest professional and financial centres outside of London, with a world-leading advanced manufacturing base, burgeoning creative and cultural industries and emerging strengths in life sciences. We are the location of choice for international companies such as Cadbury, Deutsche Bank and Jaguar Land Rover.

Our five universities and nine further education (FE) colleges work closely with businesses to provide high quality education and skills training across the patch, developing skills from entry to post-graduate degree level and across all industrial and business sectors. We have a student population of around 76,000 and each year, 100,000 young people and adults are educated and trained in the FE system, creating a highly skilled supply chain to fill existing and new job opportunities.

Ours is an increasingly young and diverse population. Over a third of those that live here are aged 24 and under, well above the UK average of 30.6% and the highest percentage of any LEP in the country. Over a quarter of the population is from a black and minority ethnic background (BME) compared to 14% nationally. Birmingham has a particularly high BME population, with an unprecedented variety of cultures, identities, faiths, and languages that have transformed the social landscape, home to 187 nationalities and recognised as the best Core City in terms of languages spoken.

Greater Birmingham is located at the centre of the UK's motorway and rail network and its geographical position means that it is within four hours travel time of 90% of the UK's population and business. HS2 represents a major transformational catalyst for our area which, combined with the potential and excellent global connectivity of Birmingham Airport, will even further enhance Greater Birmingham's standing as an outward-facing, globally connected city region that trades with the world. Our world-class cultural and sporting offer, beautiful countryside, excellent connectivity and affordability compared to London and the South East are acting as a magnet to visitors and investors, businesses looking to grow, and people looking to raise a family.

As a key partner within the WMCA (along with the Black Country and Coventry & Warwickshire LEPs), we have played a major role in the development of the SEP for our three LEP geography and the negotiation of our devolution deal, which are set to deliver economic growth further and faster, and to close our income and expenditure gap. We are also a key partner in the Midlands Engine for Growth.

We are all of these things – and many more.

Ours is a heritage founded on leadership in commerce, innovation, social mobility and civic pride. From small beginnings as a collection of market towns, the Midlands Enlightenment positioned our region at the forefront of science, technology and trade, while Joseph Chamberlain’s blueprint for municipal government not only became a model for other cities to follow at the time, it has come to the fore once again. Government’s localism and devolution agendas present us with the opportunity to capitalise on our unique strengths, to recapture our heritage, and to once again establish ourselves as world leaders.



Birmingham Town Hall, from which Chamberlain transformed civic government



Boulton, Watt and Murdoch - leaders of the Midlands Enlightenment

Home to over

**60,000  
BUSINESSES**

and

**1m JOBS**

Greater Birmingham & Solihull has  
an economy worth

**£40bn**

Greater Birmingham & Solihull has  
a population of

**2m**

# WHAT WE'VE ACHIEVED

Since the recession of 2008, the economy of Greater Birmingham has undergone an economic renaissance. Our leading performance for job creation, attracting foreign investment, exporting and private sector are evidence that Greater Birmingham is the major driver of the UK economy outside of London.

From 2009 to 2014, Greater Birmingham saw a 16.3% growth in its economy, the **highest rate of growth of any UK city region outside London**. The number of private sector jobs has risen by 104,100 since 2010, outperforming the national rate of growth.

Greater Birmingham has been **the leading LEP area for attracting foreign direct investment (FDI)** in recent years. Despite the pre-EU referendum unease of investors over the last quarter, the area has attracted 81 new FDI projects in 2015/16, creating and safeguarding 5,176 jobs, and representing an increase of 86 % from 2011/12. In the wider West Midlands region 11,119 new jobs were created, more than any other region outside London.

Over the last two years, Birmingham has seen **the largest number of new company start-ups** outside of London with over 14,000 in 2015 (and over 18,000 in 2014). The West Midlands region exports more goods than any other UK region outside London and the South East, and is the only region to have a trade surplus with China.

The **transformation of Birmingham city centre** continues, catalysed by the prospect of HS2 and subsequent major investment, including the £1 billion Curzon Investment Plan.

Plans for UK Central (UKC) in Solihull promise to **unlock the major growth opportunity offered by the co-location of the HS2 interchange station, the NEC and Birmingham Airport**, which provides excellent global connectivity and is one of the most important economic drivers in the West Midlands region.

North Worcestershire and Southern Staffordshire are integral to the wider growth of the Greater Birmingham area, offering high quality employment opportunities and places to live, surrounded by renowned environmental assets such as Cannock

Chase and growing visitor attractions such as Drayton Manor Park and the West Midlands Safari Park. Much of Greater Birmingham's strength in advanced manufacturing and transport and logistics is based in the districts, which also boasts low unemployment and growing wages.

Greater Birmingham's renaissance and its strengthening international connections have made it **one of Britain's most popular destinations for international visitors** and visitor numbers and revenue stand at an all-time high, with 61.2 million visiting Greater Birmingham in 2015 leading to a total economic impact of £8.1 billion.

Greater Birmingham's growing importance as **the UK's largest financial and professional services centre outside London** is evident in the location of HSBC's ring-fenced banking HQ in Birmingham and Deutsche Bank's 'front-of-office' activities which were moved from London.

Our **digital and creative clusters are growing strongly**, an important driver for our regeneration and growth plans and source of high growth potential companies in growing markets such as digital health.

Our advanced manufacturing and engineering base continues to be a **major driver for UK growth**, particularly our automotive industry which accounted for nearly three quarters of advanced manufacturing investments into the UK in 2014/15 and has accounted for a large proportion of UK exports.

Greater Birmingham's attractiveness to the life sciences industry is increasingly apparent in growing interest from global pharmaceuticals in **our world-leading clinical trials infrastructure** and the success of 'home-grown' companies such as diagnostics firm The Binding Site.

Major investments by our universities are supporting growth in our key sectors. Our universities are committed to working collaboratively with industry and other institutions across the Midlands to maximise the potential of **our world-leading expertise in key technologies** through initiatives such as the 'Energy Research Accelerator' and the Midlands Engine Low Carbon Transport programme.

Working in partnership across the public, private and academic sectors, the GBSLEP has played its part in contributing to the upturn in economic fortunes. The £275m **City Centre Enterprise Zone Investment Plan** is helping to unlock key development sites such as the £500m Paradise scheme, and has supported infrastructure and public realm improvements including



the Metro Extension and the redesign of Centenary Square. With the extension of the Enterprise Zone to cover the **Curzon Masterplan** area, the £1 billion investment plan will ultimately deliver 77,000 jobs, 2,000,000 sqm of employment space, 4,000 new homes, and lever in over £1.7 billion of private sector investment.

Our £379m **Growth Deal is driving growth across the LEP area**, supporting projects which bring forward sites for housing and employment use, improve connectivity, regenerate local areas and improve skills outcomes in key growth sectors. In total, the projects brought forward through the Deal will deliver 30,000 jobs, 7,000 homes, 650,000 sqm of employment space, will upskill 12,500 people, and will lever in £170m of public and private sector investment.

Our **Growth Hub is improving access to business support**, whilst business access to finance has been improved through a variety of national and European funded programmes. The Growth Hub will support as many as 15,000 businesses to grow, export and employ more people over its life to 2021. Unemployment in our districts has been near to the levels that would normally be associated with full employment and we have also seen **significant reductions in unemployment** supported by our Work Coaches initiative with the Department for Work and Pensions. As of September 2016, over 17,000 people from our most deprived communities have been supported into employment, with a further 14,000 supported into work experience opportunities.

We have led the way in establishing the **Midlands HS2 Growth Strategy**, the first of its kind in the country, setting out how we will maximise the benefits of high speed rail for our businesses, our people and our places – which was instrumental in the WMCA's first devolution agreement.

By demonstrating our capacity to deliver, we have earned the right to be ambitious. We recognise that if Greater Birmingham is to realise its potential, we need to build on the successful partnership working shown to date and bring together individuals and organisations from business, public sector, universities, further education providers and social enterprise to achieve our objectives. In doing so, we need to strengthen our position on the world stage, and address the underlying issues which will impede our ability to drive further economic growth.



Arena Central, Birmingham, enabled by the Enterprise Zone



Friarsgate in Lichfield, enabled by the GBSLEP Growth Deal programme



The Institute for Translational Medicine

# HOW IT ALL FITS TOGETHER

## Our neighbouring LEPs

GBSLEP shares a number of its district authorities with the Stoke-on-Trent & Staffordshire and Worcestershire LEPs. Since inception, we have forged strong and productive working relationships and jointly funded key projects such as Friarsgate (Lichfield) and the Hoobrook Link Road (Wyre Forest) that have benefitted the businesses and residents of our shared areas.

## Our role in the West Midlands Combined Authority

We are working with the other members of the WMCA, including our neighbouring LEPs in the Black Country and Coventry & Warwickshire, to make the West Midlands the best region in the UK to do business.

Our shared SEP, Making our Mark, sets out how we will use our combined capacity and devolution to go further and faster in enabling economic growth for the benefit of communities across the West Midlands.

In this, our SEP for Greater Birmingham, we set out the contribution that we will make to the economic growth of the West Midlands, as its Core City LEP area and principle international gateway and how we will deliver our contribution to our shared WMCA targets by creating 250,000 more jobs and £29bn additional GVA by 2030.

We recognise the even greater importance of global positioning post-Brexit and we set out how we will help deliver the WMCA priority to maximise the benefits of HS2 and how to increase connectivity and take greater advantage of our global connections for the benefit of the wider region.

It sets out the contribution we will make to increasing the region's competitiveness for international trade and investment and how we will address key areas of challenge identified by the WMCA through investment in skills, demand-led innovation, business support and supply chain development.

It sets out how we will seek to build on our key areas of competitiveness in sectors, most of which are shared priorities with our WMCA partners: advanced manufacturing, particularly for transport technologies, creative and digital, energy, environment and infrastructure, and medical and life sciences, business and professional services, and food and drink processing and production.

It states our commitment to the WMCA priority to accelerate the rate of new housing development, and strengthen the supply of high quality employment land.

It identifies our contribution to balanced economic growth that will benefit the whole region and improve life chances by investing in wider connectivity and developing thriving local and town centres, and by ensuring that local people are inspired and skilled to fill the employment opportunities created.

## Our role in the Midlands Engine

The Midlands Engine for Growth brings together ten LEPs, including GBSLEP, who together with their local authorities, universities, businesses and other partners have come together to respond to the Government's economic and productivity challenges. Partners have agreed to collaborate around promotion, innovation, access to finance, skills and, through Midlands Connect, transport connectivity. The impact of this collaboration is to enable individual LEP projects and programmes to make a greater impact as part of the wider Midlands Engine.

Greater Birmingham is one of the major economies in the Midlands and as such, we see ourselves as a key partner in this nationally significant initiative. Our SEP sets out the key areas in which we will work with our partners to take forward the priority areas and in doing so, how we will work together to build on our collective strengths to grow the economy of the Midlands Engine and the UK as a whole.





## BUSINESS-LED PARTNERSHIP OF PRIVATE, PUBLIC AND ACADEMIC SECTORS

The area covered by the GBSLEP has a population of nearly 2 million, contains 918,000 jobs and has a GVA of about £35.5 billion. It enjoys a concentration of economic drivers second only to London.

### Unique characteristics:

- A voluntary business-led partnership of the private, public and academic sectors set up as a Company Limited by Guarantee
- Spans nine local authority areas
- Tasked with setting the area's economic strategy through its SEP and delivering through partnerships
- Focused on creating jobs and economic growth
- Negotiates deals with government in return for LGF, freedoms and flexibilities.

## LEGAL BODY WITH POWERS OF DECISION MAKING

WMCA is based on the functioning economic geography of three LEP areas: GBS; Black Country and Coventry & Warwickshire. Ninety per cent of the area's population of 4 million live and work in this area. The region's economy is worth £80 billion of GVA.

### Unique characteristics:

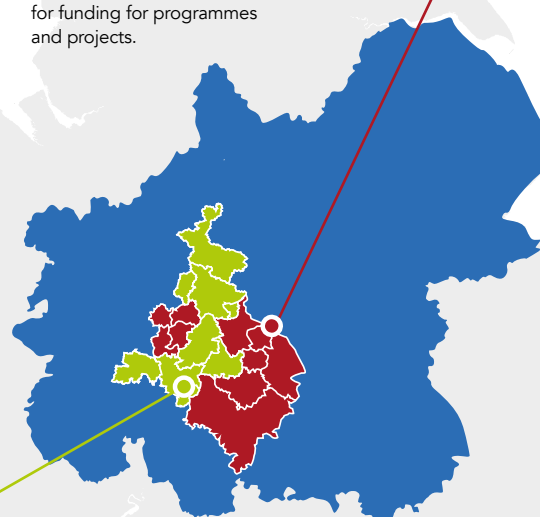
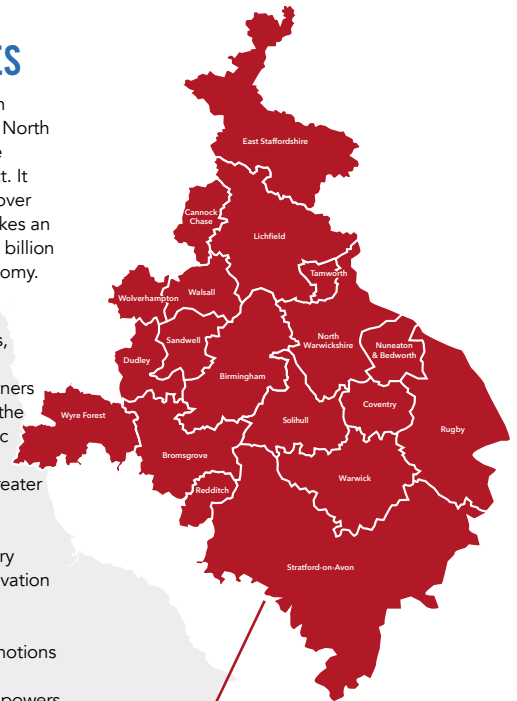
- A legal body with powers of decision making granted by parliament
- Currently seven constituent members (LA) with ultimate voting rights and eight non-constituent members (five LAs and three LEPs), with more LAs to formally join
- A metro mayor for the West Midlands will be elected in May 2017
- Will drive forward a series of joint objectives in support of economic growth and public service reform as outlined in its SEP
- Negotiated a Devolution Deal with the government to receive powers and funding from Whitehall, made possible due to the strong governance arrangements in place.

## COLLABORATION OF 10 LEPs, 86 LOCAL AUTHORITIES, 27 UNIVERSITIES

The Midlands Engine region stretches from Wales to the North Sea and the northern Home Counties to the Peak District. It covers a population of just over 11.5 million people and makes an annual contribution of £222 billion in GVA to the national economy.

### Unique characteristics:

- A collaboration of 10 LEPs, 86 LAs, 27 universities, businesses and wider partners
- Sets the private sector as the primary driver of economic growth
- Designed to accelerate greater economic growth and productivity improvement
- Sponsored by the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills
- Focused on connectivity, innovation, skills and promotions & marketing
- Will not receive devolved powers or funding streams from Whitehall
- Able to make bids to government for funding for programmes and projects.



Also part of Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire LEP

Also part of Worcestershire LEP

# OUR MISSION AND CORE OBJECTIVES

Our mission remains clear – to create jobs and grow the economy of Greater Birmingham and in so doing raise the quality of life for all of the LEP’s population.

The successful delivery of our mission relies on:

- **Increasing business and workforce productivity and competitiveness** – particularly by raising skills levels and stimulating demand led innovation
- **Increasing private sector investment** including overseas investment
- **Increasing business survival and growth**
- **Increasing exports** particularly amongst Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs)
- **More inclusive growth** that delivers benefits more widely and reduces unemployment, particularly in those parts of Birmingham and North Solihull with persistently high rates.

This Plan sets out how we will focus our efforts around these core objectives developing our competitive strengths in key sectors and technologies to deliver more inclusive and sustainable growth.

# OUR GUIDING VISION

Our vision remains to be the major driver of the UK economy outside London. However, we are raising our level of ambition: to become a top global city region by 2030.

As demonstrated by its recent successes, Greater Birmingham is already strongly positioned. We are recognised internationally for our advanced engineering and automotive supply chains, and increasingly regarded as a UK financial services centre, a world-leading centre for clinical trials and an international visitor destination.

We want to build on our international connections and competitive strengths, our diversity and our culture of creativity and innovation to continue to develop a diverse and resilient economy that is attractive to private sector investment.

In the face of Brexit, global integration and a growing consumer class which trades internationally, we will ensure that Greater Birmingham maintains a strong international outlook and identity.



Diwali celebrations on Soho Road  
Courtesy of Soho Road BID

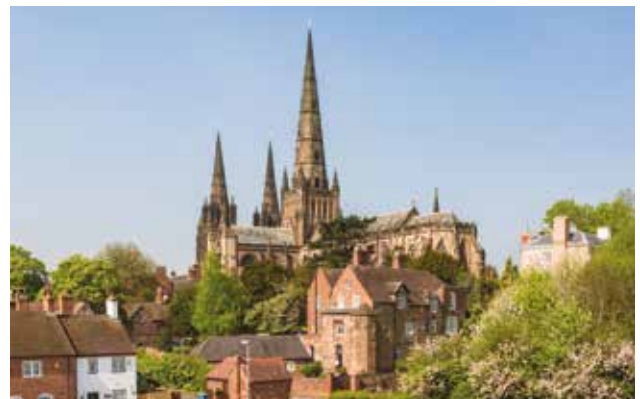


Birmingham Airport

**OUR VISION** is to be a top global city region that drives the Midlands Engine and: harnesses its traditions of creativity, innovation and design, its diversity and youthfulness, its global connections and technology and sector leadership, its world-class cultural assets and quality of life, to inspire, develop, retain and attract talent, for smarter, more sustainable and more inclusive growth.



Symphony Hall



Lichfield Cathedral

# OUR TARGETS

**We have set challenging but realistic targets against our core objectives and our updated vision (see overleaf).**

These build on our previous targets to 2020, reflecting progress to date and extending them to 2030 (2025 in the case of our skills target) to show the contribution Greater Birmingham will make to the ambitious targets set by the WMCA for our three-LEP geography.

We have also added an additional target for productivity, to better reflect our mission and core objectives.

In recognition of its importance, we have added a new measure for quality of life, based on Pricewaterhouse Cooper's Good Growth for Cities index.







Whilst Greater Birmingham has made very strong progress on private sector job creation, we recognise that some of our economic growth targets, particularly to increase economic output (GVA) per head of population to the national average by 2020, are proving more challenging.

Therefore, whilst our new target for growth in economic output (GVA) is consistent with the contribution expected towards the Combined Authority target, we have refocused our GVA per head target on becoming the leading core city LEP area by 2030.




To achieve this, we are focussed on increasing productivity (particularly by increasing skills and demand-led innovation) and have refocused our target for increasing working-age qualification levels on meeting the national average by 2025.

Recognising that productivity gains can be achieved at the expense of employment gains, it is critical to pursue a combined approach focused on job creation, driving up business and workforce productivity and competitiveness through workforce development and innovation, supporting businesses to survive and grow, along with direct interventions to reduce unemployment.

## Our targets 2010–2030

KPI	Progress	WMCA Target
Create 250,000 private sector jobs by 2030 and be the leading Core City LEP for private sector job creation	+104,100 42% delivered 	+505,000 jobs
Increase GVA by £29bn by 2030	+2.2bn 8% delivered 	+75bn GVA
Decrease unemployment to the National Average by 2020 and to have the lowest unemployment amongst the LEP Core Cities by 2030	Gap (leading LEP <sup>1</sup> ) down by 1.5% points 43% delivered 	WMCA claimant count down by 21,766 WMCA employment rate 80% by 2030
GBSLEP to be the leading Core City by 2030 for GVA per head	Gap (leading LEP <sup>1</sup> ) down by 2.3% points £382 per head 5% delivered 	WMCA GVA per head at National Average by 2026 5% above by 2030
Increase % of working age population with NVQ3+ to the National Average by 2025	Gap up by 0.5% points 	WMCA residents with NVQ4+ at National Average by 2030
Increase productivity rates to the National Average by 2030	Gap up by £1.31 per hour 	No specific productivity target focus on growth sectors
GBSLEP to be the Leading Core City LEP for Quality of Life by 2030	GBSLEP rank unchanged at 5th	No specific combined Q of L

### Key

-  Current position is below 2010 baseline
-  Above baseline but below profile to reach target
-  Above baseline and on profile to reach target

<sup>1</sup> The West of England is currently the Core City LEP area with the lowest unemployment rates and highest GVA per head.



“All options were on the table when we started thinking about the location of HSBC UK’s new head office but Birmingham emerged as our number one choice. The revitalisation of the UK’s second biggest city and its connectivity make it a really attractive home for UK businesses and their employees.”

**NIGEL HINSELWOOD**

**HEAD OF UK AND DEPUTY CEO • HSBC BANK PLC**





# OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

**Greater Birmingham is already a major economy of national significance, with an annual GVA of nearly £40 billion and home to over 60,000 businesses and one million jobs. Our ambition is to continue the process of transformation into an economy of international significance, greatly increasing our contribution to the UK plc.**

We have a critical mass of genuinely transformational opportunities: the arrival of HS2 and the development it will enable in Birmingham city centre and UK Central, the devolution of powers and funding to the WMCA, and our role as a key partner in the Midlands Engine for Growth. The size and scale of these opportunities mean that today, the Greater Birmingham opportunity is unique. Capitalising on these strengths, we aim to be a top global city region: a major international gateway for the UK economy, and a significant international marketplace.

Our three interlinked strategic priorities are guided by this vision, and set out our approach to an industrial strategy:

## INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

**Developing and realising the potential of our strengths and assets in key sectors and technologies to drive greater and more inclusive growth**

**A WORLD LEADER IN INNOVATION & CREATIVITY**

Commercialising cutting-edge research and innovation

**TAKING FULL ADVANTAGE OF OUR GLOBAL CONNECTIONS**

Exploiting our role as an international gateway

**STRONGER CONDITIONS FOR GROWTH**

Spreading opportunity and prosperity to all sections of society

# OUR INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

The SEP sets out the contribution that we will make to delivering the national industrial strategy.

In particular through our SEP we will seek to ensure that:

- Our **advanced manufacturing supply chain, particularly for transport technologies (automotive, aerospace and rail)**, continues to be globally competitive as part of a wider Midlands offer
- Our **HS2 supply chain and workforce** are equipped to take advantage of the opportunities arising from HS2, including construction and engineering including digital, and other major planned infrastructure investments, and that the opportunity is taken to develop and showcase a globally competitive offer
- That Greater Birmingham continues to play a key role in the UK's **financial and professional services sector** and that the sector's role in driving growth is fully realised
- Our leading infrastructure for the accelerated assessment and translation of new drugs, devices and diagnostics is extended into more disease areas so that we can capture a sizeable share of the predicted \$900bn growth in the global **life sciences** market and secure benefits for patients
- We harness the potential of our world-class **cultural and creative** assets, unlocking the potential of creativity to drive new enterprise, innovation and growth across our economy
- Complementary energy, digital, building and transport system innovations can take place that will enable the West Midlands and the UK to secure a position of global leadership in the emerging \$3trn market for smart and distributed **energy systems**
- Our businesses, supply chains and workforce are equipped to take advantage of the opportunities arising from **disruptive and emerging technologies** including digital and open data, intelligent and smart systems, advanced materials and low carbon energy

Our SEP sets out how we will seek to build on our competitive strengths and capture future opportunities: supporting and enabling our businesses, supply chains and workforce to maximise their potential as part of an inclusive and sustainable growth agenda. These are cross-cutting themes throughout the rest of our strategy.



Jaguar Land Rover production line, Solihull



The BioHub Birmingham, transforming medical innovation into enterprise

# A WORLD LEADER IN INNOVATION AND CREATIVITY

Greater Birmingham already hosts organisations operating at the cutting edge of research and innovation. Our expertise extends to advanced manufacturing and transport technologies, digital and creative industries, the cultural sector, medical and life sciences, and environmental technologies. Commercialising our research and innovation capability is key to developing an industrial strategy to capture the high value, high growth sectors of the future, and driving the benefits of that strategy across the UK. In an increasingly competitive global economy, constant innovation is essential.

Our priority is to continue nurturing and combining our strengths in science, technology, engineering and the arts, informed by the findings of the Midlands Engine Science and Innovation Audit, with a focus on stimulating higher levels of demand-led innovation and increasing the rate at which new ideas and solutions are generated and translated into economic growth.

We recognise that innovation is key to our ability to increase business and workforce productivity and competitiveness, attract investment, boost our exports and increase our rates of business starts, survival and growth. We recognise the potential offered by disruptive and emerging technologies, including intelligent systems technologies, to enable increased productivity and more inclusive and sustainable growth.

We will **stimulate demand-led innovation** by developing a conducive and supportive environment in which innovators, entrepreneurs, universities and science parks, large companies and public organisations work together to develop new solutions with commercial potential.

In so doing we will **enhance and harness the potential of our cultural and creative assets** as drivers of creative-led innovation.

“I’m extremely pleased to announce Wayra UK as a new resident to the ‘TechBrum’ cluster and the further strengthening of the UK’s start-up ecosystem. Birmingham itself is an entrepreneurial hotspot. Not only does the city have the highest number of new start-ups and active businesses outside of London; it also boasts incredible transport links; access to talent through four leading universities; a lively entertainment and cultural scene; a diverse population with an insatiable appetite for business and all the right ingredients to foster further innovation.”

**GARY STEWART**

**DIRECTOR • WAYRA UK**



The Energy Research Accelerator at Aston University



Custard Factory, Digbeth

# TAKING FULL ADVANTAGE OF OF OUR GLOBAL CONNECTIONS

**Greater Birmingham will be first to connect to the new high speed rail system, opening up new international gateways for the UK at Birmingham city centre and Airport. This means that, at the current time, we are in a unique position to take advantage of both the connectivity benefits of the network, and its catalytic impact on the physical redevelopment of areas around the new stations and on local skills supply chains.**

As well as our transport links, we will leverage our international businesses and supply chains, our universities and our diverse population to achieve higher rates of investment (including overseas investment), boost our exports (particularly amongst SMEs) and grow our visitor economy.

We want to remain the leading LEP area for attracting foreign direct investment by **growing key markets for inward investment** and positioning Greater Birmingham – and the West Midlands – as a leading global destination for foreign direct investment (FDI).

We will continue to target those sectors and markets in which we have most competitive advantage, working with our WMCA partners to create strong regional offers and also, where appropriate, collaborating on a Midlands Engine level in globally competitive sectors such as automotive.

Our current focus sectors are advanced engineering; business, professional and financial services, digital and creative, infrastructure and environmental technologies, life sciences, and food and drink. We will also remain agile, adapting our investment tactics and plans to cope with the global economic changes that unfurl over the next fifteen years.

We will work to **enhance and harness the potential of our cultural and creative assets** as key to our offer to global investment and talent, and our fast-growing international visitor economy.

We will seek to **increase SME internationalisation and exports**, in a wide range of global markets. We recognise that supply chain competitiveness and resilience, including through innovation, are key to boosting our exports. We will remain focused on engaging with our Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs), Tier 1 and 2 suppliers, and our principal procuring organisations, in conjunction with our neighbouring LEP and wider Midlands Engine partners, to develop and promote our supply chains. Stimulating and supporting innovation within our supply chains will be central to our approach, through cross-sector collaborations.

We will also seek to engage our universities, science parks, large global companies and our SMEs in a collaborative and coordinated approach to using their international connections to grow our overseas markets for inward investment and export.

We will continue to focus on **harnessing the transformational opportunity presented by HS2** by preparing our businesses and people to take advantage of the increased connectivity, supply chain and employment opportunities arising from it, and by engaging with HS2 Ltd to explore the opportunities for stimulating innovation that builds on our sector strengths and the opportunities presented by disruptive technologies.



Artist's impression of the Interchange Station at UK Central



“I’m delighted that Greater Birmingham is making this investment in the future, working to maximise the potential of HS2 by investing in jobs and housing – and encouraging more business investment.”

**THERESA MAY**

**PRIME MINISTER**

“Providing even greater connectivity to destinations that our region’s businesses want is a priority. Global connectivity supports trade and attracts inward investment, so we have a vital role in the Midlands to further improve this by growing access to long haul markets and helping to rebalance the UK’s economy.”

**PAUL KEHOE**

**CHIEF EXECUTIVE • BIRMINGHAM AIRPORT**



Birmingham Airport is key to Greater Birmingham's role as an international gateway

# STRONGER CONDITIONS FOR GROWTH

Greater Birmingham has a dynamic private sector that drives economic growth across the UK and enables us to make the most of the opportunities created through the first two priorities. However, there are still many structural supply-side barriers preventing these businesses reaching their full potential. This prevents wealth spreading to all sections of society, and limits the effectiveness of the GBSLEP area as a single systemic functional unit contributing to the growth of the UK as a whole. These barriers include not having access to an appropriately skilled workforce, housing shortages that limit the area's ability to attract and retain skilled workers, the lack of suitable quality business locations, flood risk, environmental quality, climate change and poor digital and physical connectivity.

We will ensure that our economy is founded upon a skilled workforce and an attractive, supportive and stimulating environment for investors and businesses, entrepreneurs and innovators— including a targeted focus on strengthening our competitiveness in key sectors.

Our number one priority will be to **increase skills and reduce unemployment** by ensuring that local people are inspired and skilled to fill the employment opportunities created through economic growth and that they continue to develop their skills throughout their careers, thereby driving productivity and attracting new investment. There will be a geographical focus to our work given the challenges of low skills levels and the high unemployment levels in parts of Birmingham and north Solihull. We will also seek to retain and attract talented individuals and entrepreneurs by developing and promoting Greater Birmingham as an attractive place to live, work and succeed.

We will **stimulate demand-led innovation** by strengthening our innovation ecosystem and developing a more integrated and accessible offer through our Growth Hub with increased availability of support and finance for innovation in businesses and innovative firms (including for leadership and management development).

We will continue to **strengthen business support and access to finance, to increase business start-up, survival and growth rates ('scale-ups')**, helping businesses to access support and finance more easily by continuing to develop our Growth Hub in conjunction with our neighbouring LEPs and by ensuring the alignment and integration of our partners' activities around priority needs. We will focus resources as far as possible on 'high growth' potential companies ('scale ups') which have the ability to succeed in the long term and make a significant contribution to achieving our productivity targets.

We will focus on leveraging our global connections to **deliver major growth and regeneration opportunities** across our area and to **develop thriving towns and local centres**.

We will work to **increase the supply of housing and high quality employment land** to meet the needs and aspirations of households and investors.

We will continue to secure investment, and stimulate and support innovation to **enhance connectivity and mobility** across the area including to international gateways.

We will work to **enhance and harness the potential of our cultural and creative assets** as key to Greater Birmingham's quality of life and its offer to investors, talented individuals and visitors.



The Skills show 2015 at the NEC



“The economic prospects for this area are fantastic. This is the place to be – to feed your business with talented people at all levels of your organisation.”

ALAN VOLKAERTS

JAGUAR LAND ROVER



# OUR KEY AREAS OF FOCUS

To achieve our core objectives and our strategic priorities we will focus on the following opportunities and challenges which are aligned with the three pillars that underpin our economy: Business, People and Place.



## BUSINESS

- Stimulate demand-led innovation
- Increase SME internationalisation and export
- Grow key markets for inward investment
- Strengthen business support and access to finance including for scale-ups



## PEOPLE

- Increase skills and reduce unemployment



## PLACE

- Harness the transformational opportunity presented by HS2
- Enhance connectivity and mobility
- Deliver major growth and regeneration opportunities
- Increase the supply of viable housing and high quality employment land, and ensure delivery meets needs and aspirations
- Develop thriving local and town centres
- Enhance and harness the potential of our cultural and creative assets



# STIMULATE DEMAND-LED INNOVATION



**BUSINESS**

## The challenge

The UK faces a major productivity challenge. Labour productivity lags behind the other six members of the G7 industrialised nations by 18%, and Germany by 34%.

Innovation – the creation and application of new ideas – is key to increased productivity and growth. For example, if Greater Birmingham were to close its productivity gap through innovation there is potential to grow the economy by over £4bn.

The UK's research strengths are key to its competitiveness for inward investment. However, there is more to be done to commercialise research findings and ensure their diffusion and adoption.

Furthermore, whilst the number of firms identified as innovative has increased in recent years, a large proportion are not (47% across the UK and 44% in the West Midlands).

## The opportunity

Greater Birmingham has a strong base of innovation assets and partners who are actively bringing forward world-changing new ideas and technologies and transferring them to industry and new enterprise:

- Leading academic and research institutions
- World-leading innovative companies which are investing large amounts in R&D
- A fast-growing number of innovative start-ups in growing market areas such as digital health
- A strong network of science parks and incubators
- Strong public-private-academic innovation partnerships

Furthermore, we believe that there is more than can be done to increase the rate at which new ideas and solutions are generated and translated into economic growth, and to take advantage of the opportunities presented by disruptive and emerging technologies.

## Our response

We will continue to nurture and combine our strengths in science, technology, engineering and the arts, informed by the findings of the Midlands Engine Science & Innovation Audit, but broadening the scope of what we mean by innovation to include a significantly greater focus on stimulating demand-led innovation.

We will:

- Encourage collaborative, challenge-led, cross-sector approaches to define innovation needs and solutions
- Engage large companies to support them to 'nurture' innovation within their supply chains
- Support the activities of our universities to work with local businesses to deliver innovation in new products, processes and services and to support supply chain innovation
- Work with our public sector partners and HS2 Ltd. to identify opportunities for them to play a greater role in stimulating innovation e.g. via new models of commissioning, procurement and public sector Intellectual Property and data release
- Work to strengthen our innovation ecosystem by developing a more integrated and accessible offer through our Growth Hub with increased availability of support and finance for innovation in businesses and innovative firms (including for leadership and management development)
- Promote Greater Birmingham as an attractive and supportive location for innovative individuals and companies

## STEAMHOUSE

STEAMhouse is a £48.3m scheme which aims to transform the former Typhoo tea factory in Birmingham into a new form of collaborative innovation centre focused around STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and maths), ensuring that the needs of the creative economy are more closely aligned to scientific and technological developments.



STEAMhouse is part of the vision to transform Typhoo Wharf  
Courtesy of Node Urban Design

“STEAMhouse will link the flourishing creative economy across the West Midlands with the needs of local authorities and businesses, providing arts-driven solutions to real-life problems and bringing academic and research expertise out of the shadows into the world of commerce.

Hundreds of small and medium-sized creative businesses in the region are already showing the UK economy the way forward but with the support of STEAMhouse in developing new forms of production, they will be able to thrive more than ever.”

PROFESSOR JULIAN BEER

PRO-VICE-CHANCELLOR RESEARCH • ENTERPRISE AND BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT

BIRMINGHAM CITY UNIVERSITY

# INCREASE SME INTERNATIONALISATION AND EXPORT



**BUSINESS**

## The opportunity

Exporting plays an important role in productivity growth and firm growth, and SMEs that trade overseas tend to grow twice as fast as those that do not. Whilst only one in five West Midlands SMEs currently export, between 9% and 12% have the characteristics to become exporters and just over half that do export could become 'persistent' rather than 'occasional' exporters.

As the world's first truly global exporting city and one of the most diverse and outward-looking areas of the UK, we have a huge opportunity to build on historic traditions and new talents to make the most of our international connections and catalyse economic growth.

If non-exporters could be successfully encouraged to export and occasional exporters encouraged to be more persistent exporters (an estimated 3,300 SMEs across the West Midlands), then an additional £35m GVA could be added to the West Midlands economy in year 1 and £1.15bn GVA could be added to the UK economy.

## The challenge

The challenge is to increase the number of SMEs trading overseas – particularly those who are not currently but which have the potential to do so or those which are occasional exporters but with potential to become persistent exporters - including those involved in international supply chains and those involved in 'new to the market' innovation. Particularly, in view of Brexit, the challenge is to support SMEs to enter international markets beyond the EU.

## Our response

We will:

- Continue to work with our wider partners across the West Midlands and Midlands Engine to promote our combined strengths in target export markets including via joint overseas trade missions
- Work with partners (including the Department for International Trade (DIT) and university business schools) to identify and target support at those SMEs which may have unrealised export potential – i.e. those who are actively innovating but not currently exporting or who are intermittent exporters –

drawing on international best practice, private sector contributions and our international connections

- Continue to work with our partners across the West Midlands and Midlands Engine to develop our supply chain competitive and resilience, including initiatives which engage our Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs) and Tier 1 and 2 suppliers to identify and respond to key gaps and to stimulate and support innovation and investment

In particular, we will continue to focus on developing our automotive, aerospace and rail supply chains. This will include applying disruptive and emerging technologies such as low carbon, energy and digital technologies, and by drawing on our key strengths in areas such as advanced materials and sensor technologies which will be confirmed through the Midlands Engine Science & Innovation Audit.

However, we will also look at developing our competitiveness for export in other areas in which we are or have the potential to be globally competitive including digital and creative services, construction and civil engineering, medical technologies, food processing and manufacture, environmental technologies, transport and logistics and business, professional and financial services.

A key focus in our approach will be engaging and supporting our partners in working with our supply chains and innovative firms to grow their exports in a wide range of overseas markets.



The ExploreExport event, which toured the UK as part of Export Week

# GROW KEY MARKETS FOR INWARD INVESTMENT



## The opportunity

Greater Birmingham has been the leading LEP area for attracting foreign direct investment (FDI) in recent years. Despite the pre-EU referendum unease of investors over the last quarter, the area has attracted 81 new FDI projects in 2015/16, creating and safeguarding 5,176 jobs, and representing an increase of 86 % from 2011/12. In the wider West Midlands region 11,119 new jobs were created, more than any other region outside London.

Foreign investment has been predominately driven by the advanced manufacturing sector – representing 31% of all FDI projects in 2015/16 – closely followed by the IT, creative and digital sector (23% of the total) and business, professional and financial services (15% of the total) All three sectors have been heavily targeted as part of the region's strategy to diversify its economy and create the greatest employment opportunities for the local workforce.

Our competitive strengths for attracting inward investment include excellent access to large domestic markets, world-class supply chain expertise and infrastructure, competitive costs, availability of land, easy access to world-class research institutions, strong clusters and networks and a supportive environment.

Our ambition is to build on these strengths and develop robust propositions that position Greater Birmingham, as part of the West Midlands, as a dynamic city region able to compete globally as a destination for investment in the future.

## The challenge

Key challenges in growing target inward investment markets include:

- Development of a pipeline of compelling, investible propositions suitable to cope with the post-Brexit, global economic environment and beyond
- Continuing to develop our supply chain strengths and resilience, particularly in those sectors in which we currently have, or have the potential for, global competitive advantage
- Ensuring and developing a strong pipeline of skilled workers across all of our key, target sectors
- Sustaining and expanding our infrastructure so that it is world-class
- Developing and augmenting the attractiveness of our quality of life offer



The UK R&D centre of Chinese automotive company Changan is located at Birmingham Business Park



American advanced engineering company HydraForce has invested in a £10m facility at the Advanced Manufacturing Hub



## Our response

We will continue to engage with both our public sector and commercial partners to strengthen and deploy our assets and offer, to grow targeted inward investment sectors in which Greater Birmingham is globally competitive including advanced engineering (automotive, aerospace, environmental technologies and rail); business, professional and financial services; ITEC including digital and creative media, life sciences and food and drink.

We will seek to diversify our footprint of target FDI countries, creating bespoke solutions to a range of markets to ensure the region has the agility necessary to cope with the changing global environment.

As part of this overall approach we will:

- Collaborate with public and private sector companies to promote our combined strengths in key target markets, working proactively to diversify our footprint of investment countries, therefore enabling us to manage changes in the global economy
- Collaborate closely with UKTI, aligning our overseas sales missions and marketing programmes to maximise benefits wherever possible
- Continue to maximise the opportunities evolving from central government’s creation of six public sector hubs
- Continue to work with our partners across the West Midlands and the ‘Midlands Engine’ to develop our key supply chains
- Work as part of the WMCA to deliver compelling, joined-up investor offers accessible via ‘one front door’ and joined up with our respective Growth Hubs
- Continue to deliver our strategic account management programmes to support our major investors

**“Birmingham is number 1 in the UK for real estate investment prospects, and number 6 in Europe.”**

**PWC & URBAN LAND INSTITUTE**

**EMERGING TRENDS IN REAL ESTATE: EUROPE 2016**

# STRENGTHEN BUSINESS SUPPORT AND ACCESS TO FINANCE INCLUDING FOR ‘SCALE-UPS’



## The opportunity and challenge

Greater Birmingham has the highest number of business start-ups per annum outside London and our rate per head of population is above the core city LEP average.

Our initial growth rate for business start-ups is one of the highest amongst LEP areas, however overall our survival rate for business starts (52.6%) has been slow to recover from the recession of 2008 and remains slightly below average.

Furthermore, whilst our area has improved its performance for incidence of high growth firms (‘scale ups’), along with other parts of the Midlands, there remains a significant gap with the London and the South East.

The key challenge we face is to increase initial survival rates and then sustained growth amongst a higher proportion of businesses, noting that firms are three to four times more likely to grow once they achieve a £1 million turnover.

## Our response

We will:

- Deliver the next phase of our Growth Hub in collaboration with our neighbouring LEP Growth Hubs to further enhance and align our combined offer to engage more businesses, including social enterprise, with the right support at the right time, include support for workforce development, new product and process development and export
- Continue to work with our partners in the West Midlands and wider Midlands Engine to bring forward initiatives to develop our key supply chains including our advanced manufacturing supply chains
- Continue to deliver strategic account management with our major employers
- Support businesses to take advantage of opportunities arising from major investment, particularly HS2 via delivery of the HS2 Supply Chain programme
- Influence the development of the Midlands Engine Investment Fund to reflect our access to finance needs, and implement a sustainable investment advice and brokerage service through the Growth Hub in order to identify and address outstanding gaps – such as the lack of a business angels network
- Align our business support and access to finance interventions with our aspirations to become world leading in innovation and creativity, and to develop our competitiveness and supply chains in key sectors and technologies
- Develop a ‘scale up’ programme to support businesses with high growth potential
- Look at how we can build on our pilot support programme for Mid-Sized Businesses
- Develop and deliver support services that deliver accelerated growth through existing strengths within the GBSLEP area, for instance in BME-led businesses and start-ups and social enterprise

“The Greater Birmingham Growth Hub has been an invaluable service for Celsius by directing us to the fantastic team at Business Enterprise Support. Not only have we learned a lot – we were also given a lead that’s now turned into a client. I would thoroughly recommend the Growth Hub to any local businesses looking to grow.”

SHELLEY LLOYD

JOINT MANAGING DIRECTOR • CELSIUM

# INCREASE SKILLS AND REDUCE UNEMPLOYMENT



## The opportunity

Game-changing investments such as HS2 mean that jobs in Greater Birmingham are forecast to increase significantly, with an additional 68,000 lower skilled jobs and 100,000 more medium and high skilled jobs due to be created between 2015-30. In order to drive this growth, it is clear that we must develop, retain and attract more talent.

We want local people to be inspired and skilled to fill these employment opportunities and continue to develop their skills throughout their careers, thereby driving productivity and attracting new investment. This will mean improving on the current low level of resident skills and reducing unemployment to ensure all residents have the opportunity to take advantage of job opportunities created in the area, thereby making Greater Birmingham even more productive. The creation of apprenticeships and the use of the apprenticeship levy are significant opportunities to support our development of a skilled and aspirational workforce.

Greater Birmingham will also benefit from the devolution agreement secured by the WMCA, which has devolved the management of the Adult Education Budget to the WMCA and enabled co-design of the new Department for Work and Pensions Work and Health Programme within the WMCA.

## The challenge

Low skills and high unemployment are unquestionably the two biggest challenges that we face. They are a barrier to increasing our productivity as a city region, and constrain our people's life chances.

Whilst the area has a diverse economic base with a range of sector strengths, the working age population has a relatively poor skills profile; with a low proportion of its working age population with NVQ2, NVQ3, NVQ4 and degree level or high qualifications and a higher than average proportion with no qualifications. Skill levels are improving, but if the LEP is to achieve its aim of becoming a top global city region we need to do more, and to close the long-standing skills and employment gaps between the area and the UK/Core City LEP average.

The weak skills position has a direct bearing on employment outcomes for Greater Birmingham residents. The employment rate in Greater Birmingham is well below the national average. The sector growth in Greater Birmingham is dependent on a supply of highly skilled workers, but many employers experience difficulties in recruiting staff with the skills levels that they require. Unless the GBSLEP can improve skills in its workforce it will continue to lag behind other areas in terms of resident employment. This will only worsen as the jobs mix in the area shifts to demand a more highly skilled workforce.

A low employment rate results in high unemployment and economic inactivity. However, if they can be encouraged and skilled appropriately for the future labour market, unemployed people represent a significant potential pool of additional labour.

Whilst many parts of Greater Birmingham have low unemployment rates, high unemployment and low employment is distinctly concentrated in areas of Birmingham and North Solihull. A number of these areas demonstrate a persistent unemployment rate over 8%. While some residents are close to the labour market, others have complex needs and disadvantages, as well as facing multiple barriers to employment. The challenges are significant and we need to do more in these areas with well thought-out, collaborative interventions.

We have a population that is younger and more culturally diverse than the rest of the UK, offering both challenges and opportunities. Our young people are better qualified than the older residents they are replacing in the labour market, but the population of Greater Birmingham is forecast to increase by nearly 250,000 by 2030 and we will have to create jobs just to maintain current employment rates. The approach we take now will be key to our future success.

## Our response

We have three key themes in our skills framework:

**IGNITE** – targeting those in education and training to raise aspirations and ensure that the right advice and support is in place for young people to achieve their ambitions: igniting interest in jobs, raising awareness of career pathways, inspiring and influencing career choices. We will:

- Create a dynamic partnership between business and skills providers, with an increasing role for employers in supporting education, inspiring success and raising aspirations
- Enable a closer alignment of Careers Education Information Advice and Guidance, learning and preparation for work, creating a single source of information that invigorates and inspires young people
- Work with employers to create work experience, pre-employment and job opportunities related to key growth sectors and major developments in the LEP area

**ACCELERATE** – targeting those in work, to make skills and career progression including to higher level academic or vocational skills the norm, and drive increased productivity. We will:

- Create a demand-led local skills system which aligns with supply and makes the most of apprenticeship provision and vocational education – leading, in turn, to a thriving FE, higher education and training ecosystem

- Enable skills supply to match demand in key growth sectors, using the expertise of Skills Sector Champions

**RETUNE** – targeting unemployed people and those in employment whose skills no longer match labour market demand, ensuring they can gain skills or re-train to access the jobs created. We will:

- Support people out of work to become economically active and to contribute to the talent pipeline, focussing in particular on areas of highest unemployment and deprivation
- Build on existing public and voluntary sector programmes to break the cycle of deprivation and contribute to skills development, enabling more people to participate in the economy and ensuring inclusive growth

Finally, a key part of our skills agenda will be to increase the number of apprenticeships provided, particularly in key growth sectors, and ensure that employers in Greater Birmingham area are well equipped to maximise the opportunities presented through the Apprenticeship Levy. This is a cross-cutting theme across all areas of our strategy.



The Aviation Engineering Training Centre at Solihull College



Artist's impression of National College for High Speed Rail



# HARNESS THE TRANSFORMATIONAL OPPORTUNITY PRESENTED BY HS2



## The opportunity

As set out in the *Midlands HS2 Growth Strategy*, HS2 presents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to drive productivity, economic growth and prosperity across the Midlands.

The two HS2 stations will drive new areas for regeneration, housing and business growth. The Birmingham Curzon Investment Plan and growth plans for UK Central in Solihull have set out the opportunity to create more than 52,000 jobs and £1.25 billion in GVA per annum. With an associated package of local transport investments, HS2 provides the opportunity to dramatically transform East Birmingham and North Solihull, two areas of long-standing deprivation. Birmingham Airport has huge potential and the ability to open up access to key international markets for thousands of the region's businesses, and will be significantly bolstered by HS2 bringing 35 million people within two hours' travel.

HS2 will also further enhance Greater Birmingham's attractiveness as an investment location.

HS2 Ltd's decision to base the national construction headquarters in Birmingham will create 1,500 jobs. The city will co-host the National College for High Speed Rail, and the supply chain is already concentrating in the Midlands. In turn, this presents a significant opportunity to overcome long-standing challenges with low levels of attainment and stubborn levels of unemployment in the city.

HS2 also represents a potential significant opportunity to stimulate demand-led innovation that builds our supply chain strengths including in advanced manufacturing and construction in the application of key disruptive technologies including digital and low carbon.

## The challenge

Whilst HS2 presents a huge opportunity for the Midlands Engine, the West Midlands and Greater Birmingham in particular, there are a number of barriers that must be overcome to ensure that our people, our businesses and our places can fully capitalise on it.

HS2 and the associated infrastructure projects will deliver new job opportunities in the West Midlands on an unprecedented scale. Our analysis concludes that the majority of those opportunities will require NVQ Level 3+ qualifications – an area in which Greater Birmingham lags behind the national average.

Large capital infrastructure investments such as Crossrail and the 2012 London Olympic Games make significant contributions to economic growth through supply chain activity. HS2 will be no exception. However, supply chains in key industries face varied barriers to growth that, unchecked, will prevent them from taking full advantage.

In order to create world-class places, both Birmingham Curzon and the UK Central Hub require huge investment in infrastructure to enable growth to come forward. Furthermore, significant connectivity enhancements are required to ensure that people and businesses can access the station sites and associated development zones and fully participate in the economic opportunities created.



Artist's impression of the entrance to Curzon Street station

## Our response

Our approach, as set out in the 'Midlands HS2 Growth Strategy', uses HS2 to build an economic, social and environmental legacy for the Midlands. It builds on the region's fundamental strengths, which lie in its people, businesses and places. We are targeting new investment to unlock regeneration schemes, form new social and educational structures and through our transformational Midlands Connect partnership, open up the region's connectivity locally, nationally and internationally.

**PEOPLE** – We will ensure that local people are inspired and skilled to fill the opportunities that arise and that they continue to develop their skills throughout their careers, driving productivity and attracting new investment. This will include:

- The implementation of the HS2 Skills Strategy
- The construction of the National College for High Speed Rail

**BUSINESS** – We will ensure that local and regional businesses are ready and able to capitalise on the thousands of new business opportunities that will be generated in the construction of HS2, and in the subsequent economic opportunities that being one of the most connected locations in the country will generate. This will include:

- The further development and delivery of the HS2 Supply Chain and Business Support programme

- Exploring opportunities with HS2 Ltd. to stimulate demand-led innovation that increases the competitiveness of our supply chains including in advanced manufacturing and engineering and construction

**PLACE** – Greater Birmingham will be home to two world-class, landmark stations, each acting as destinations in their own right and will be catalysts for regeneration and growth in their own localities and across the wider region. The development zones surrounding the stations will complement the overall strength of the Midlands as the place to visit, live and do business. This will include:

- The delivery of the Birmingham Curzon Masterplan to maximise the regeneration potential of HS2 through a £724m programme of activity that will integrate the new rail terminus into the heart of the city centre
- Capitalising on the UK Central Hub, one of the strongest economic bases in the UK today, with potential to generate major growth and make a significant contribution to the UK economy
- The delivery of the HS2 Connectivity Programme, supporting our broader vision to harness the unrivalled connectivity and investment opportunities by effectively connecting the HS2 stations and their associated development zones to other transport hubs, local communities and the wider region.



Artist's impression of Metro line through Curzon Street station



Artist's impression of Arden Cross development at the heart of UK Central

# ENHANCE CONNECTIVITY AND MOBILITY



## The opportunity

Our vision is for a fully integrated and globally connected Greater Birmingham, befitting our economic growth ambitions and creating a sustainable, attractive and economically vibrant city region that offers greater choice, stronger and more resilient networks, and an environment that supports an improved quality of life. Our transport networks are enablers of spatial and sectorial growth. They are vital to making our places viable and attractive places in which to live and do business; crucial to our businesses getting their goods and services to market, and key to ensuring that our people have access to economic and leisure opportunities.

Birmingham Airport is the region's largest airport, serving a record 10.2 million passengers in 2015. Furthermore, growth continues at record levels and it has recently announced new services to numerous destinations including Dubai, Doha, Delhi and New York.

The Airport is one of the most important economic drivers in the West Midlands region. Through the diverse range of activities at the Airport, the wide range of users of air services and through multiplier effects, the Airport supports economic activity across a wide range of sectors in the regional economy. Its impact is set to increase once Phase 1 of HS2 is completed in 2026. Birmingham Airport will become the UK's first and only high-speed rail connected airport, dramatically enlarging its catchment area and plugging more businesses across the UK into international opportunities.

Midlands Connect is making the case for delivering nationally important transport infrastructure in our region, complementing the investment in HS2 and significantly enhancing our global connectivity by bringing more business and people within reach of our key economic assets.

The establishment of the WMCA has enabled the definition of the Key Route Network (KRN), the 7% of non-trunk road network that carries 50% of all people and freight across the West Midlands metropolitan area. The KRN will enable a long-term strategic view as to how to balance the competing needs for roadspace, to ensure it can effectively support economic growth objectives whilst providing reliable, fast, high-volume public transport.

Birmingham Connected and Solihull Connected set out long-term plans to improve the connectivity of our metropolitan areas, with local transport plans in place for our districts. GBSLEP has also put in place a Low Carbon Transport and Mobility Strategy to support more choice, greater efficiency and improved quality of life in our local transport networks.

The rapid pace of change in our transport and digital networks presents the opportunity to move towards a truly smart city region. The increased prevalence of smartphones combined with decreased costs of deploying wireless connectivity is creating the perfect conditions for the Internet of Things. By harnessing big data and the potential of automation, the Internet of Things will enable autonomous vehicles (which are already being trialled in Coventry) and mobility as a service, revolutionary opportunities to reduce waste and improve efficiency on our transport networks.



Significant improvements are being made to the Midland Metro network

## The challenge

To fully realise our ambitions to become a global city region, Birmingham Airport needs to grow to increase the destinations it reaches and therefore to meet the needs of businesses and investors. Significant connectivity enhancements are required to ensure that people and businesses can conveniently access the Airport.

Greater Birmingham and the West Midlands faces a growing challenge to meet increased demand for mobility from businesses and people. Congestion is a major barrier to productivity. Cities that do not move do not work. Across the West Midlands metropolitan area, congestion costs as much as £2.3bn per annum and with national forecasts suggesting that traffic levels are set to rise by over 50% between 2010 and 2040. Businesses face an increasing challenge to get their goods to market and people to access employment and leisure opportunities.

The resilience of our highway network is poor, and adding new capacity in already congested urban areas is expensive, time-consuming, inefficient and often exacerbates the problem, with additional capacity likely to induce additional traffic and lead to worse outcomes, such as demand for parking and poorer air quality. The challenge is compounded by the significant volumes of infrastructure investment in the West Midlands over the next 20+ years which, if left unchecked, have the potential to cause significant and widespread disruption on our networks.

The transport sustainability challenge has been estimated at costing the West Midlands £2.3bn per annum. Transport accounts for around a fifth of UK greenhouse gas emissions. The main source of emissions is the use of petrol and diesel in road transport, which affects air quality at the roadside. In the West Midlands, emissions account for 630 premature deaths linked to respiratory and cardiovascular problems each year. As well as emissions, the increasing use of cars and the declining travel by cycle and foot has led to widespread inactivity costing the UK an estimated £7.4 billion per year, partly due to absenteeism at work.

The level of digital infrastructure across Greater Birmingham is generally strong, and we are on course to meet the national targets by 2017. However, there are pockets of our urban centres that are poorly served, and many of our rural areas are, and will likely remain, hard to reach with wired solutions. Our focus to date has been largely on increasing speeds, and needs to turn more to the quality of provision required to meet the needs of our people and businesses and wider policy considerations into the future.

While the Internet of Things presents virtually endless possibilities, it also potentially exposes companies to security challenges and private citizens to privacy and data sharing concerns. Core challenges for Greater Birmingham are to put in place the public infrastructure required to enable the Internet of Things, along with solutions for partners to store, track and analyse big data.



Public transport corridor improvements on Lode Lane, Solihull



Road improvements to de-risk employment land in East Staffordshire



## Our response

We will:

- Facilitate the growth of Birmingham Airport to maximise the economic benefits that it creates for the region, enabling our business to access key overseas markets and making Greater Birmingham an even more attractive destination for inward investment
- Continue to work with Midlands Connect to deliver increased national connectivity
- Reduce demand, ensuring that capacity on key routes is released by negating unnecessary trips. This means investing in towns and local centres to ensure that very short distance trips can be made safely by walking, cycling and public transport, and by working with employers to support flexible working partners, reducing demand at peak times
- Increase capacity by investing in infrastructure that provides faster and more reliable journeys within and between our towns and local centres and the regional economic hub, providing more efficient, affordable and sustainable access to economic and leisure opportunities
- Improve efficiency by supporting our research institutions to continue to strive for transport innovation. This means investing in new transport technology and harnessing the power of digital to complement investments in physical infrastructure, paving the way for the transport innovations of tomorrow (such as autonomous vehicles) and enabling mobility as a service
- Implement our Low Carbon Transport and Mobility Strategy
- Support the development and delivery of the next phase of digital infrastructure, beyond hardwired broadband solutions

## SERENDIP SMART CITY INCUBATOR

Located on the first floor of the £8 million iCentrum building, the Serendip Smart City Incubator co-locates promising start-ups with commercial partners in one of four 'quarters': Digital Health, Intelligent Mobility, Internet of Things and Barclays Eagle Labs. As part of the Incubator, start-ups benefit from free co-working space for six months, access to mentoring and Wayra UK's network and knowhow, as well as training in entrepreneurship and business skills. To complement Serendip, start-ups are also able to leverage a state-of-the-art event and meet-up space on the ground floor for up to 500 people. The firm is also more aware of how to develop its networks as a way to market itself to potential clients.



The iCentrum expansion of the innovation Birmingham campus



# DEVELOP THRIVING TOWNS AND LOCAL CENTRES



## The opportunity and challenge

Greater Birmingham is a rich and varied geography, with a network of places that collectively provide for jobs, housing, leisure and cultural opportunities, and overall good quality of life.

While Birmingham city centre is the regional economic hub and a natural focal point for growth and investment, with UK Central emerging as a powerhouse in its own right, the surrounding towns and local centres are vital parts of our social and economic fabric, and provide distinct and complementary offers to the city centre.

Our ambition is to strengthen all parts of Greater Birmingham and to create a network of vibrant, thriving strategic town and local centres that people take pride in, with excellent connections to residential, commercial and leisure opportunities as well as the region's major economic opportunity areas.

## The challenge

Around 180,000 people commute into the city centre every day. With significant economic growth forecast, and with much of the associated housing growth needing to be developed outside of Birmingham's administrative boundaries, demand for movement between Birmingham and the surrounding towns and local centres will only increase.

Our town and local centres face specific challenges to their competitiveness as they make the transition from a retail dominated core to wider social hubs that can offer a variety of opportunities including leisure, culture and residential. This will require carefully targeted policy planning and investment to ensure that they can remain vibrant and can support the wider growth of Greater Birmingham.

Our challenge is to ensure that our towns and local centres can continue to be regenerated and developed as a key part of our success story, working in tandem with our more established nodes of economic growth and strengthening the offer of Greater Birmingham as place to live, work and invest in. A key part of this challenge will be to ensure that growth is sustainable,

and that development is brought forward in such a way as to maximise the benefits of our environmental assets.

## Our response

We will work with our neighbouring LEAs and other established local partnerships to:

- Undertake research to inform an investment strategy to support local centres
- Develop a package of investment to support the development of new opportunities in our towns and local centres, ensuring that they can play their part in our ongoing economic success story by:
  - Supporting the growth of our indigenous businesses
  - Supporting the regeneration of our high streets
  - Strengthening local cultural and environmental assets
  - Unlocking residential opportunities to drive activity and footfall into our town centres
  - Improving connectivity within towns and local centres, and to Greater Birmingham's economic hubs



Aerial view of Solihull town centre

# DELIVER MAJOR GROWTH & REGENERATION OPPORTUNITIES



## The opportunity

With its recent history of growth, huge potential and highly competitive cost base, Greater Birmingham has gained an excellent reputation as a magnet for inward investment.

Although we have identified challenges with long-term housing and employment land capacity to accommodate our growth ambitions, there are considerable commercial and residential opportunities to unlock across Greater Birmingham.

A selection of these opportunities is presented below.

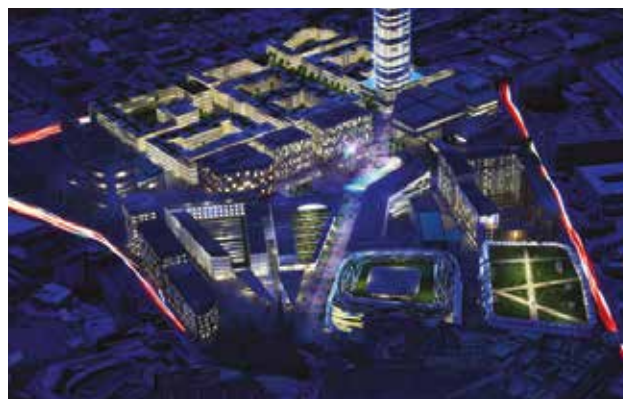
### Birmingham city centre

- Our **City Centre Enterprise Zone** was founded in 2011 to encourage business growth, investment and the creation of jobs. With its £275 million investment plan, it is the most successful Enterprise Zone in the country and is on course to create 40,000 new jobs, 1.385 million square metres of new floor space and to lever in £2.205 billion of private sector capital investment. The newly-published **Curzon Investment Plan**, which will maximise the benefits of HS2 arriving in Birmingham city centre, brings the total investment to over £1 billion, creating a further 36,000 jobs, 0.600 million square metres of floor space, 4,000 new homes and £1.7 billion of private sector investment over to 2046.
- **Birmingham Smithfield** is one of the largest and most attractive city centre regeneration opportunities in the UK. Covering 14 hectares of land, the site has all the ingredients to become a hugely successful and vibrant space, yielding 300,000 square metres of commercial floor space and 2,000 homes, creating a legacy for the city and an international exemplar of sustainable development.
- The **Snow Hill** district of Birmingham city centre, which is home to some of the city's most valuable assets and supports over 35,000 employees, will benefit hugely from the arrival of HS2. The Snow Hill Masterplan, developed with the Colmore Business Improvement District, sets out plans for the creation of 200,000 square metres of new office space, 4,000 new residential units and 10,000 jobs.

### UK Central

UK Central in Solihull is a unique concentration of global businesses and strategic economic assets. By 2026, as part of the investment in high speed rail, the HS2 Interchange station will be at the heart of the Arden Cross development: a mixed use, 140 hectare global business hub with the potential for 245,000 square metre commercial space, 2,000 new homes and 20,000 jobs. It is the only development opportunity in the UK of its kind with an airport connected to a high speed rail terminal, a series of global businesses and at the heart of the strategic road and rail networks. Masterplans for UK Central and its key assets, including Birmingham Airport and the NEC, are forthcoming.

- **The NEC** is the UK's premiere events venue, hosting over 500 events every year with over 33,000 exhibiting companies. Indoors, the NEC offers 182,000 square metres of indoor space and over 392 acres of hard-standing outdoor space. Opportunities to further enhance the offer and range of the facilities, including the potential for a film studio complex, are being considered.



Birmingham Smithfield

## Districts

- **Redditch Eastern Gateway** is an identified employment site situated on the outskirts of Redditch. The Gateway's strategic location takes full advantage of the M40/M42 motorways and just a 20 minute drive time to Birmingham International Airport and railway station, with the potential for 100,000 square metres of high-profile employment development, 2,000 jobs and an additional £90 million of GVA. GBSLEP is working closely with Worcestershire LEP on this opportunity.
- **Branston Locks** is a proposed Sustainable Urban Extension to the growth point of Burton-upon-Trent in East Staffordshire, which has been funded by Stoke-on-Trent & Staffordshire LEP through their Growth Deal. Over 161 hectares in size, it benefits from excellent links to the national motorway network and sits on the primary corridor between the West Midlands and East Midlands conurbations. A range of investment opportunities are available in commercial property development and housing development, yielding up to 2,500 new homes, 90,000 square metres of employment land and 4,000 square metres of commercial floor space.
- The recent closure of the **Rugeley Power Station** has created a significant regeneration opportunity in Lichfield and Cannock Chase. A taskforce has been assembled to support the workforce in the short to medium term, and to work with the owners of the site to create a development planning brief that will create employment opportunities at the site into the future. GBSLEP is working closely with Stoke-on-Trent & Staffordshire LEP on this opportunity.

## The challenge

The majority of these sites have outline planning permission and are investible, shovel-ready opportunities that are primed to deliver jobs and growth. Our challenge is to secure appropriate investment and ensure that in developing these sites, they meet our broader vision and that we focus on quality, rather than the easiest and fastest solutions.

## Our response

We will:

- Deliver our £1 billion City Centre and Curzon Enterprise Zone Investment Plans
- Continue to identify and deliver major growth and regeneration opportunities across Greater Birmingham, working with the Stoke-on-Trent & Staffordshire and Worcestershire LEPs
- Support the development of masterplans for key sites to drive up the quality of design, environmental standards and accessibility
- Secure investment in priority sites and the infrastructure required to unlock them to support our ambition to create new jobs and homes
- Market and promote our portfolio of sites, working with our neighbouring LEPs, the WMCA and the Midlands Engine



Rugeley Power Station, which has been decommissioned, provides significant potential for regeneration



Aerial view of the Redditch Eastern Gateway opportunity

# INCREASE THE SUPPLY OF VIABLE HOUSING AND EMPLOYMENT LAND, AND ENSURE DELIVERY MEETS NEEDS AND ASPIRATIONS



## The opportunity

Our aim is for Greater Birmingham to be renowned for its sustainability and resilience, with an unrivalled quality of life offer. We will create the right environment for our businesses and people to flourish, and will ensure that our plans meet the needs and aspirations of those that live, work and invest here.

High-quality housing is crucial to attracting and retaining talented individuals, and to improving quality of life. Equally, high-quality employment land is vital to attracting greater investment and encouraging more businesses to start and grow here.

## The challenge

Our Growth Deal stands to create some 7,000 new homes and 0.641 million square metres of commercial floor space by 2021, with the City Centre Enterprise Zone due to create a further 2,000,000 square metres of floor space by 2046. However, across the wider LEP area, there is growing pressure to meet demand for housing and employment land, particularly for strategic employment sites.

Supporting housing growth is crucial to sustaining the economic growth of Greater Birmingham. Major priorities for GBSLEP are to ensure that the rate of house building is significantly accelerated and that the homes that are built are of an appropriate mix of tenure and affordability to match the needs and ambitions of our communities.

Our environmental assets are a key part of what attracts people to live in Greater Birmingham, so a key part of this challenge is to ensure that growth is sustainable and that developments are brought forward in a manner that is considerate of our great environmental assets.

In addition, land for employment sites, particularly strategic employment sites that can attract internationally mobile capital, is in short supply. Whilst Greater Birmingham has a healthy pipeline of sites for office development, the supply of land for large industrial units falls severely short: it is estimated that just 3 years of growth can be accommodated at present. While Peddimore and UK Central offer considerable potential, the former requires considerable infrastructure investment and the latter has no formal planning status at present.



Supporting housing development through our Unlocking Sites programme



Unlocking land for development in East Staffordshire



## Our response

We will:

- Publish the Spatial Plan for Growth, setting out the scale and distribution of housing and employment growth in Greater Birmingham to 2031
- Bring forward well located, quality and readily available land for housing and employment
- Develop specific measures that will accelerate the rate of house building by working with industry to understand and overcome its key challenges and barriers
- Ensure an appropriate mix of tenure and affordability of homes across Greater Birmingham, with new developments meeting the needs and aspirations of our communities
- Maximise the productive use of employment land, reflecting the needs of both aspirational indigenous businesses and those to attract FDI
- Work with the WMCA workstreams including the Land Commission



Centric Mews, a mixed tenure housing development located in the newly created Smiths Wood Village centre in Solihull



The Advanced Manufacturing Hub in Birmingham is a regional investment site reclaimed from derelict land



# ENHANCE AND HARNESS THE POTENTIAL OF OUR CULTURAL AND CREATIVE ASSETS



PLACE

## The opportunity and challenge

A rich and diverse cultural offering lies at the heart of all of the world's thriving and prosperous city regions. We want to harness the potential of our cultural assets at all scales and unlock the potential of creativity to drive new enterprise, innovation and growth across our economy.

We recognise that the quality of our cultural assets (including environmental assets) are key to our ability to retain and attract investment and talent and to the quality of life of our residents.

Our region's strong tradition of creativity, innovation and design, and our ethnically diverse and youthful population represent major assets for creative economy growth. We are seeing high rates of employment growth in our creative and digital sectors which also represent Greater Birmingham's growing attractiveness to entrepreneurs looking to set up and grow outside the capital.

The opportunity to capitalise on our cultural assets and to harness the potential of our creative sector has never been greater. The momentum being generated by our improving international connectivity and the transformational regeneration plans being delivered across the LEP area are driving increased visitor numbers and represent a major opportunity for our existing cultural assets and the development of new ones.

This opportunity is recognised by our cultural institutions who have come together to form the 'Culture Central' partnership and who are working with the wider business community, academia and the public sector to explore new investment-based models at a time of significant funding challenge.

## Our response

We will work with our partners, locally and in the WMCA, to create opportunities to safeguard and enhance our cultural and creative assets and to develop new ones as part of our regeneration and growth plans. We will:

- Continue to support partners to create and bring forward opportunities for investment and funding for cultural and creative sector initiatives across our geography
- Continue to promote Greater Birmingham as a location for cultural and creative investments, reflecting our particular areas of strength and distinctiveness
- Continue to work with partners to create a climate and framework for business support and access to finance via our Growth Hub in which creative and cultural businesses and supply chain can grow to their full potential
- Put creativity at the heart of our plans to stimulate demand-led innovation and for workforce development



City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, playing in Symphony Hall

“The region is perfectly placed to be a global leader for culture. Our current mix of major international cultural institutions, year round festival offer and thousands of creative businesses is an exciting foundation from which to build our future investments. The creation of Culture Central is a clear statement of intent from the sectors’ leaders to work collaboratively and ambitiously to extend our already excellent current capabilities and make the region an international centre of excellence for culture and creativity.”

GARY TOPP

DIRECTOR • CULTURE CENTRAL



Sampad Arts 'Wordplay'



Tamworth Castle

# MAKING IT HAPPEN

Our SEP is a vision-led strategy that sets out our key priorities for the long term, in making Greater Birmingham a leading, global city region by 2030. In doing so, we have set out clear, measurable targets and responses to each of the key opportunities and challenges that will help us to meet our core objectives and strategic priorities.

The responsibility for driving the SEP will ultimately reside with the LEP Board. To make delivery a reality, GBSLEP has three primary roles:

- **Agitator** – shouting up for the city region, using influence to bring in greater funding and devolution from the government, and greater investment from the private sector and internationally
- **Enabler** – bringing together existing partners and organisations within the area, supporting and guiding their activity and resources to deliver shared priorities
- **Commissioner** – using resources directly aligned to the LEP to guide investment into priorities that support the strategy.

With our Enterprise Zone, Growth Deal and Growth Hub, we have many more means at our disposal to make a real difference to our economy than we did at our inception, and significant scope to invest in capital projects in particular. But we do not have all the resources that we need to achieve our ambitions, and whilst we have an extensive capital programme, revenue funding is increasingly scarce.

Therefore, our roles as agitator and enabler are crucial.

We have demonstrated to Government that we can be trusted to deliver and, by playing a leading role in WMCA and the Midlands Engine, we are confident in our ability to secure greater funding and powers for our area.

We recognise that our partners – particularly the local authorities – have had, and will continue to have, a huge role to play. But the delivery of large parts of this strategy requires the actions of third parties and, in addition to deploying the funds under the control of the LEP Board, our role is increasingly to work with more key partners locally, regionally and nationally. In particular, we recognise that there are significant opportunities to work with business improvement districts, social enterprises and trades unions in pursuit of a shared vision.

The SEP is therefore essential in this context, and will be the basis for future bids for funds; the framework through which we seek to direct the resources under our control and, crucially, the means by which we will seek to corral and influence those of our partners and wider stakeholders.

GBSLEP will develop an implementation plan that sets out how we will work with partners to achieve our ambitions.



“Our innovation comes from our people; we seek out and recruit the very best talent because we know that they are the key to our success. That is exactly what we are doing by creating a presence for the company in Birmingham. Birmingham feels like a city that has some big plans and is on the cusp of big things. We wanted to get in there first.”

PETE MARSDEN

CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER • ASOS





## Local authority members



## Business representative members



LEP Executive  
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@gbslep #GBS2030

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Local Enterprise Partnership  
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