

Good Growth Strategy

Created: February 2024
Last published February 2024

an economy that supports over 100,000 jobs



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FOREWORD

We want all businesses, residents, families and communities to benefit from economic growth and new opportunities in our city.

This Good Growth Strategy will help to boost our economy in the right way. It focuses on three themes: people, place and productivity. Good growth is about benefitting our people and our planet. It's a sustainable model, a roadmap to economic prosperity and most importantly, a huge opportunity for us to improve the life chances and wellbeing of our residents. It's living up to our goal of *'All Wulfrunians living longer, healthier lives'*.

Delivering this strategy means collaboration and strong partnership working – with the West Midlands Combined Authority, government departments and other city partners.

We are ambitious about good growth in our city which is why we need longer-term financial certainty and significant investment, targeted in the right way, to deliver for local people and businesses.



Councillor
Stephen Simkins
Leader of the Council



Tim Johnson
Chief Executive

OUR STORY

Over the last 10 years the City of Wolverhampton has seen major successes, including the award-winning £1 billion i54 business park, the £150 million Interchange transport hub, the National Brownfield Institute at the University of Wolverhampton's Springfield Campus and the £16 million construction of the i9 office complex – now home to the Department for Levelling Up, Homes and Communities' second headquarters.

We have innovative businesses across a range of sectors, hard-working employees, an expanding skills sector, world class connectivity and a growing arts and culture scene. All of this and much more has led to growth – driving forward our economy and building confidence. Our city economy is now worth £4.7 billion pounds and supports over 100,000 jobs.

But more is needed. The city, like many post-industrial places faces long term social and economic challenges. We believe our industrial heritage is an asset to our economy, but it has left a legacy of brownfield sites that present redevelopment challenges, and the restructuring of our economy has left

pockets of low skills. Productivity levels, the amount of value created for every hour somebody works, have been poor for the UK since the financial crisis and Wolverhampton has also struggled.

We now face a new growing challenge to support our residents and businesses to decarbonise our economy and make our city net carbon neutral by 2041. Wolverhampton made history by becoming the first English city to sign the European Circular Cities Declaration, a major environmental designed to accelerate the adoption of circular economies across the continent. The success of this strategy ultimately relies on delivering not just good growth, but good green growth.

The scale of the prize is significant – up to 2040 the city's economy is projected to grow by £2 billion to £6.7 billion, an increase of 43%. We want to go further and faster. This strategy sets out targeted interventions and priorities which could see us eclipse our projected growth to deliver more jobs and higher incomes for local people.

£1 billion i54 business park,

£150 million Interchange transport hub,
the National Brownfield Institute at the University of
Wolverhampton's Springfield Campus and the
£16 million construction of the i9 office complex



Spot - Boston
Dynamic's
'Robot Dog'

**an economy
worth
£6.7 billion
pounds
by 2040**

increase of 43%





OUR ROLE AS A PARTNER, ENABLER AND LEADER

The City of Wolverhampton Council is one piece of a complex economic system which operates across multiple footprints and actors. Delivering real economic change requires key partners to align around a shared vision. To make that happen, the Council commits to using its role as a partner, enabler and leader to deliver change.

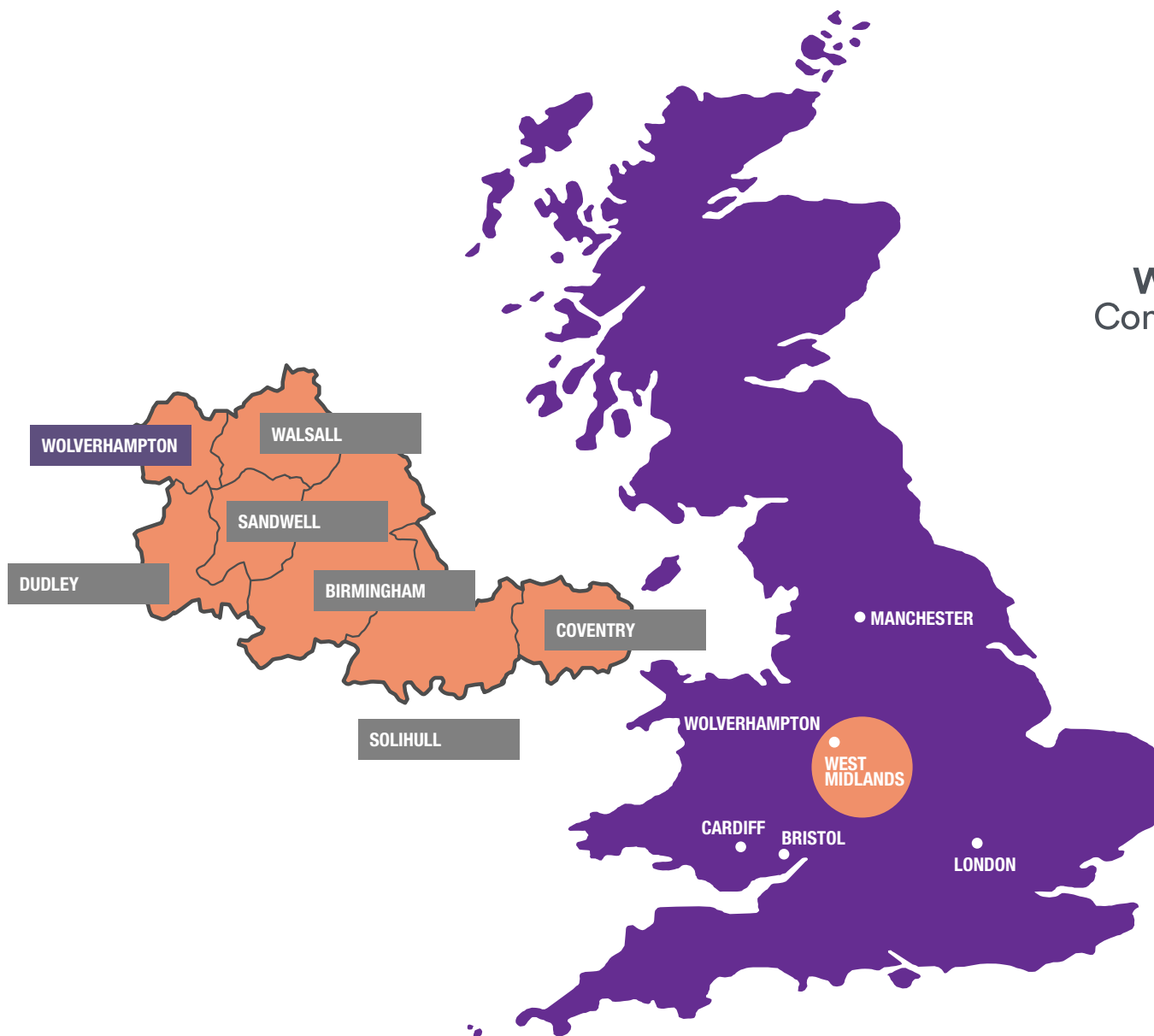
- We'll make it as easy as possible to work with us – streamline our processes, join up our services.
- We'll lead the development of game changing investment through city and regional partnership including the Green Innovation Corridor, i54 western extension and Canalside.
- We'll be a lead partner and applicant for new public funding opportunities to support business investment, skills development, and employment support.
- Preparing our young people and all residents with the skills to support businesses and industries in our city and region.
- We'll use our assets effectively to support and enable good development in our city.
- We'll lead and coordinate Wolverhampton's response on how the city tackles challenges and opportunities associated with climate change and the necessary transition to a net-zero carbon economy.

OUR PLACE IN THE REGION

City of Wolverhampton Council played a pivotal role in setting up the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA), which was established in 2016. Since then the city, alongside six other constituent authorities of the WMCA, have been at the forefront of devolution in England. On the 15 March 2023 a third deeper devolution deal was announced for the region, including:



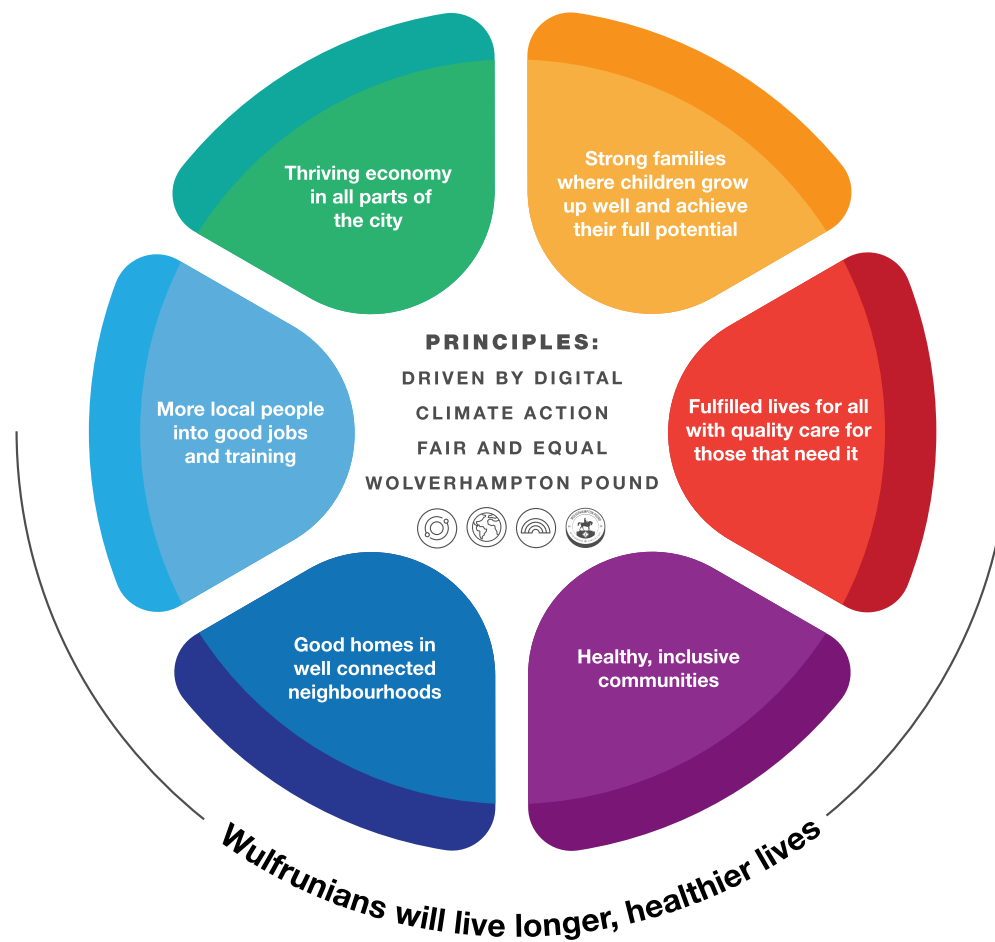
- Housing and regeneration funding worth at least £200 million and a £100 million brownfield land fund.
- Devolution of net zero funding, including for buildings' retrofit from 2025 onwards.
- Further devolution of adult skills and employment powers and flexibilities.
- A new role for WMCA in the governance of the British Business Bank UK funds in the Midlands and stronger relationship with the UK Infrastructure Bank.
- A Strategic Innovation Partnership providing a new and influential role informing the national research and innovation ecosystem.
- Provision of essential infrastructure, especially public transport connectivity, to give communities access to essential services, facilities and opportunities.

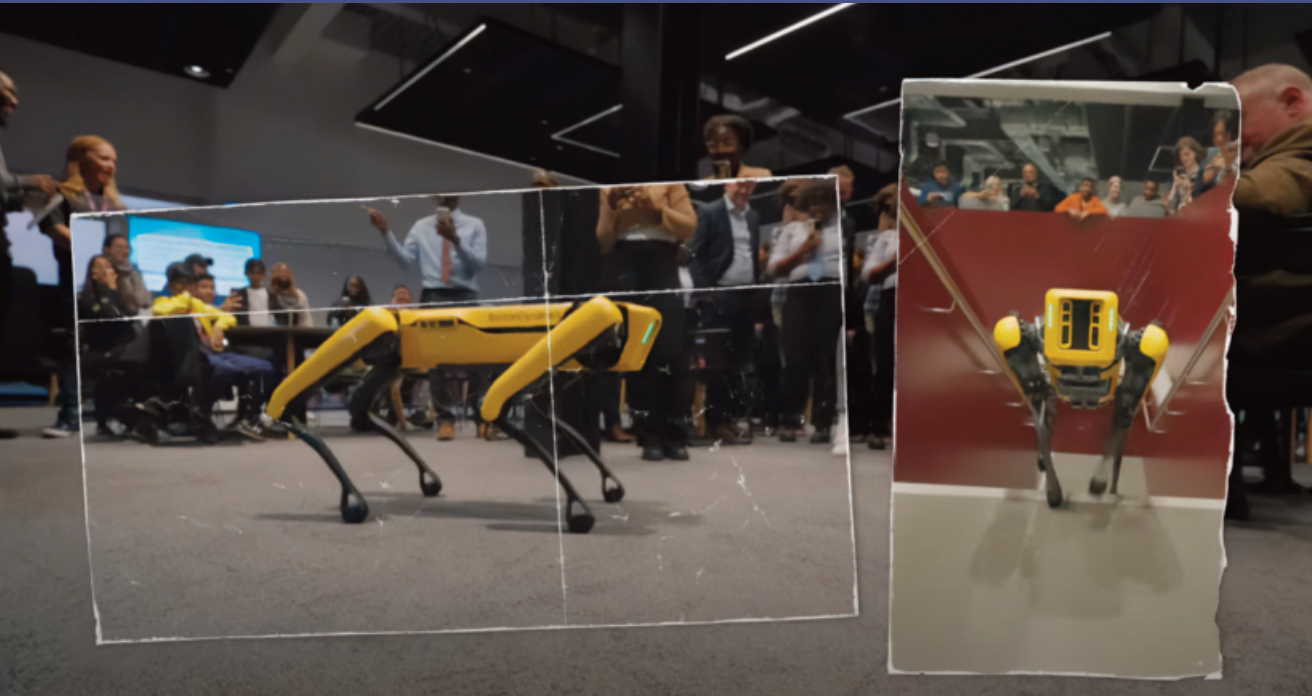


West Midlands
Combined Authority

OUR CITY, OUR PLAN

Our City: Our Plan is our strategic framework for levelling up, co-produced with over 4,500 local people and stakeholders and approved at Full Council on 2 March 2022. We have one plan for our 'place', derived bottom up and collectively owned with clear interface with Levelling Up missions. The plan outlines an overarching ambition that Wulfrunians will live longer, healthier lives, and outlines six priorities.





OUR STRENGTHS

- Wolverhampton was crowned most entrepreneurial city in the UK (Superscript, November 2022).
- 95% of the city is gigabit capable compared to the UK average of 80%
- Over 90 languages are spoken in the city
- 3 million people live within 20 miles of the city centre
- University of Wolverhampton has a consistently high graduate employability rate with over 90% of the University's cohort in employment, education, or running their own business.
- Between 2021 and 2043 Wolverhampton will have grown by more than 34,000 people
- Ranked 6th for the number of female owned business across all local authority areas in the UK

most entrepreneurial city in the UK

(Superscript, November 2022)



WHAT IS GOOD GROWTH TO US?

Climate Action: Wolverhampton is a place at the forefront of a green revolution. We will be pioneers in green growth focused on technology, innovation and manufacturing. Advancing the low carbon economy in the city through transformational schemes like the Green Innovation Corridor.

Driven by Digital: Now more than ever digital skills and connectivity are vital to ensure our businesses can grow and our residents can access training and employment.

Fair and Equal: A city where no one is left behind, with access to jobs, training, housing and healthcare, being available to all in our community. A destination that is nationally and internationally competitive, where new investment and development is spread across the whole of the city.

Wolverhampton Pound: We want to use the combined power of institutions, businesses and communities to retain local wealth, creating new jobs and opportunities. We'll do this in partnership with the city's anchor institutions







PLACE

We are a unique and distinct city a wealth of heritage and history. We have a significant diversity of people, places and traditions, values and beliefs. Our buildings, places and spaces not only reflect the history of our city but present opportunities to shape a new outlook, responding to communities that live and work here.

This section sets out how we will make our places work, putting people first. Creating a city where you don't need a car if you don't want one, delivering jobs and homes in the right places, ensuring our city and local centres thrive, building in resilience and adapting for the future.



Steam Mill canalside development



SUSTAINABLE CITY WITH QUALITY NEIGHBOURHOODS AND WORKPLACES

A thriving, inclusive, resilient and liveable Wolverhampton is vital to improving quality of life for people in our city, as well as creating the conditions to attract further investment to realise our ambitious regeneration plans.

Like many parts of the country, building new homes is a priority for our communities and there is demand for a range of homes to suit many different needs and aspirations. Wolverhampton is an urban area with limited land supply, we will need to be innovative in how we deliver new, quality homes and neighbourhoods which create healthy and attractive places to live. This includes leadership of estate renewal schemes like our £120 million Heath Town redevelopment, and housing vehicle WV Living which provides opportunities for affordable home ownership.

By identifying and promoting redevelopment schemes in our city we can unlock new opportunities. Our Wolverhampton Investment Prospectus highlights key development opportunities in the city, which can act as a catalyst for facilitating wider investment. The City Council is proactive in developing, enabling and encouraging innovative delivery partnerships which bring investment, expertise and resources to transform our city.

We have seen major successes through partnership working. i54 business park, a joint venture between the City Council and South Staffordshire Council, is the UK's most successful enterprise zone with over £1 billion already invested. We're responding to changing business models and growth sectors in our city by supporting a range of work spaces, from office space at i9 in our emerging commercial district, to start up space at IGNITE and prime industrial land across the city.





Increasing reliance on digital connectivity is opening up new opportunities for living and working. Our residents and businesses need access to modern infrastructure so they can benefit from these changes. We're rapidly rolling out a full fibre network across the city, 75% of Wolverhampton is now 5G enabled compared to 52% across the West Midlands and 60% nationally.

Wolverhampton is rapidly developing a city-wide approach to green infrastructure. Building on the city's first solar farm, a joint project between the City of Wolverhampton Council and Wolverhampton NHS Trust, we're developing a clean energy centre in Heath Town, building net zero homes, delivering a network of electric vehicle charging points, enhancing our green space and protecting our natural environment.



SPOTLIGHT


CANALSIDE

We're staying true to the city's identity, enhancing and repurposing the Victorian architecture at canalside to create 1,000 new homes as part of the wider regeneration project.

We have reached a major milestone in the Canalside regeneration plans after completing a land deal with developer Placefirst.

By pooling our resources and working alongside the Canal and River Trust and West Midlands Combined Authority, we're creating a new city centre living community.

INCLUSIVE, LOW CARBON TRANSPORT NETWORK



An effective and efficient transport network is critical to sustaining and growing the city's economic potential. Connecting local people to jobs, education and other services, businesses with their supply chains, and markets and visitors to all that the city has to offer.

Located in the heart of the country, Wolverhampton is at the centre of the national transport network with excellent rail and road links. We've achieved a step change in our city transport infrastructure in recent years, with a new city centre interchange, train station and tram network. We're investing in enhanced multi-modal transport connectivity across our growth corridors, unlocking wider regeneration and economic opportunity.

We can't deliver our vision for transport alone, our network doesn't stop at the city boundary. We will continue to work with our partners in local and national government, transport operators, businesses and those who live and work in the city to develop a transport offer that works for all. A shared

challenge we all have in common is achieving net zero for the city. Transport accounts for 27% of all carbon emissions in Wolverhampton, making it the second highest emitting sector.

Like many cities car travel is still the dominant travel option for many people in Wolverhampton. 54% of people in the city drive a car or van to work which is greater than the national average of 45% (Office of National Statistics 2021). If we are to deliver net zero, we will need to change how we travel.

We understand that there will always be a need for a limited number of cars, but we want to create a city where you don't have to have a car if you don't want one. To reduce the need for cars we must make alternatives much easier, affordable, and safer. We're taking a people centred approach to transport to deliver this change, creating connected neighbourhoods and providing routes for walking, cycling and public transport on major gateways.

We're being innovative in how we design and deliver our future transport offer. Rolling out our electric vehicle charging



Wolverhampton Interchange

network, investing in active travel options and leveraging the opportunity of Smart City technology. Working with our partners we will lead a technology revolution, exploiting our regional strengths in products such connected and autonomous vehicles, as well as battery technology to provide world-class transport services for residents and businesses.

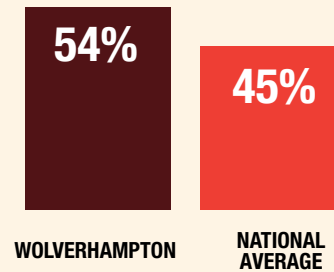
EMISSIONS IN WOLVERHAMPTON

Transport accounts for 27% of all carbon emissions in Wolverhampton

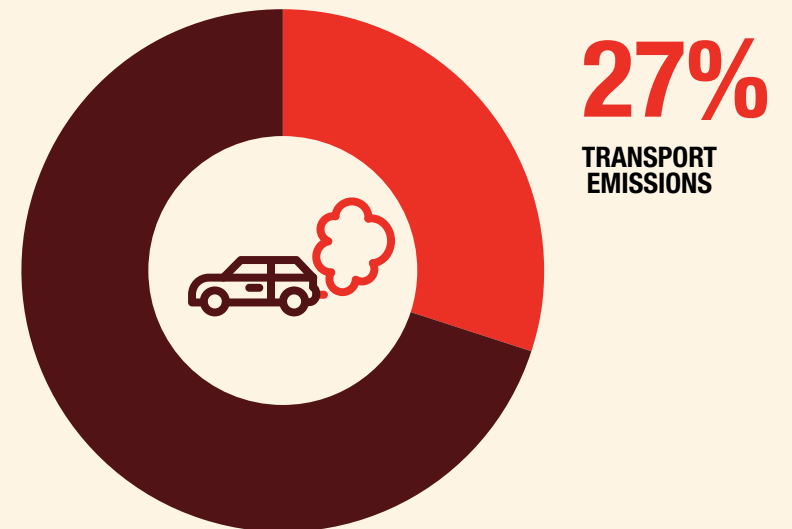
73%
OTHER
EMISSIONS
COMBINED



People commuting by car or van



(Office of National Statistics 2021)



SECURE THE POTENTIAL OF OUR CITY AND TOWN CENTRES

City and town centres are critical parts of our local economy, providing a range of services to local people. They are hubs for independent businesses and provide valued spaces where people can socialise, connect and celebrate local identity through events and festivals.

The way people use our city and town centres has changed. There is a move away from retail to more social, leisure and entertainment activities. This doesn't mean that retail and hospitality are not important for our city, they are a vital part of providing much needed services. What it does mean is that we need to diversify our city and town centres so that we can provide a more balanced offer which attracts more people to come and spend time on our high streets.

One way that we are growing the potential of our city and town centres is by driving the creation of new high-quality housing and workspaces, which increases footfall and demand for amenities and services. Fundamentally, these developments create new communities and a new sense of place.

A key focus of that future sense of place for our city is the prominence of our cultural and creative offer. Wolverhampton is a uniquely diverse and vibrant city, with many different voices which make up our population. Our arts, culture and



creative sectors reflect this landscape. We aren't starting from scratch, with nationally significant cultural assets like Wolverhampton Football Club, The Halls, Wolverhampton Art Gallery and the Grand Theatre. The city has five National Portfolio Organisations funded by Arts Council England. Reflecting the importance of the city's arts and culture offer.

The visitor economy in Wolverhampton has bounced back to pre-pandemic levels. Visitor numbers in 2022 rose by more than 360,000 between 2019 and 2022 to 9.84m, while the visitor economy was worth £406m in 2022, up 21% compared with 2019.

Supporting the growth of our cultural and creative sector is only part of the answer. It is part of a wider integrated approach to city regeneration, development and enhancement, including excellent public transport connectivity, effective city marketing and welcoming public spaces.



Cycling Time Trial, Birmingham Commonwealth Games 2022



SPOTLIGHT THE HALLS

AEG Presents' and the City of Wolverhampton Council's investment sees the restoration of an iconic local institution.

The Grade II listed building is a key part of the city's economic and cultural regeneration and a leading home for live music in the West Midlands.

Since its reopening The Halls has attracted 100,000 visitors to date and boosted the local economy by at least £10 million per year.





**our visitor
economy
was worth
£406 million
pounds in 2022**

up 21% compared with 2019

Priority	Objectives	
<p>Liveable city with quality neighbourhoods and workspace</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work in partnership to create diverse and affordable homes. Use our planning powers, assets and housing delivery vehicles to ensure a range of housing types that meet all needs and aspirations. • Promote mixed use developments providing employment, open spaces, leisure and social infrastructure, supported by walking, cycling and public transport routes. • Ensure that areas have the amenities and services which support local living, including green spaces, locally accessible schools, and community spaces within a healthy, and well-connected environment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take a net-zero carbon approach to development working towards circular economy principles. Promote opportunities to provide multifunctional green infrastructure and renewable energy as an integral part of new and existing building designs. • Support provision of world class digital infrastructure throughout the city supporting digital access for homes, education providers and businesses. • Ensure we have the right employment space to support our diverse range of businesses to grow, as well as providing space to attract new businesses to the city.
<p>Inclusive, low carbon transport network</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable different travel choices providing the opportunity for everyone to have access to the transport options they require, wherever they live in the city or travel into the city. • Support delivery of an equitable transport system which provides choice and access for all, reducing barriers to movement. • Take a whole system approach to the planning and delivery of our transport network, providing a balance of infrastructure dependent on the needs of an area and the people who live there, supporting place making and focusing on liveability. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invest in transport infrastructure to improve strategic connectivity to maximise economic growth across the city, including working with partners to further develop mass transit options and multi-modal schemes. • Be innovative in how we deliver a sustainable low carbon transport network fit for the future, using technology to develop intelligent transport systems and embracing green transport infrastructure.
<p>Securing the potential of our city and town centres</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversify our city and town centres through a blended approach which includes retail and hospitality supported by events and activities in quality public space, as well as city centre living and working. • Maximise the benefits of our unique qualities of diversity and identity, heritage, leisure and arts to boost our visitor, cultural and creative economy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop our evening and night time economy providing diverse and vibrant events, safe and welcoming public spaces, accessible and inclusive high streets, supported by a range of transport options. • Work in collaboration with our business networks and forums including City Centre and Bilston Business Improvement Districts to promote our city and town centres.

Catalytic Projects

- **i54 and the Western Extension:** One of the most successful enterprise zones i54 is a major business park which has delivered over 1,000 new jobs. i54 and the Western extension will provide almost 350,000 sqm of commercial floorspace over 116 hectares of grade A employment space.
- **Canalside:** Hundreds of new homes built along one of the most historic stretches of canal in the country to create a new city centre living community.
- **City Events Programme:** We can already proudly call ourselves an 'Events City' with over 1,000 events held in the city every year.
- **Box Space:** A new £6 million entertainment, hospitality, leisure and retail destination on the Bell Street site. The next phase of a £22million package of investment in the west of the city centre.
- **St George's:** City centre development including historic Grade II listed church will deliver a mix of 400 homes, communal spaces, and green areas connected to the upcoming £61m City Learning Quarter.
- **Wednesfield Investment:** This project aims to support Wednesfield High Street, providing environmental enhancements to the public realm, shop fronts and market which increase footfall, dwell-time with improved seating areas, and support businesses.
- **Full Fibre Rollout:** Futureproofed digital infrastructure is the backbone of a modern thriving economy driving productivity and spreading growth. Additional public buildings and assets are being connected to full fibre public sector network (PSN) building on the initial 170 public sector buildings funded by £4.9 million Local Full Fibre Network grant.



PRODUCTIVITY

Raising productivity is key to increasing wages, raising living standards, and delivering growth.

Productivity is about businesses being able to adapt, pivot and survive through changes, driving efficiencies and ‘working smarter not harder’.

This section sets out the ways in which we can raise productivity in Wolverhampton. It looks at how we can support businesses to access the support they need, stimulate innovation-led growth, and the importance of continuing to promote our city as a place to live, work, study, visit and invest.



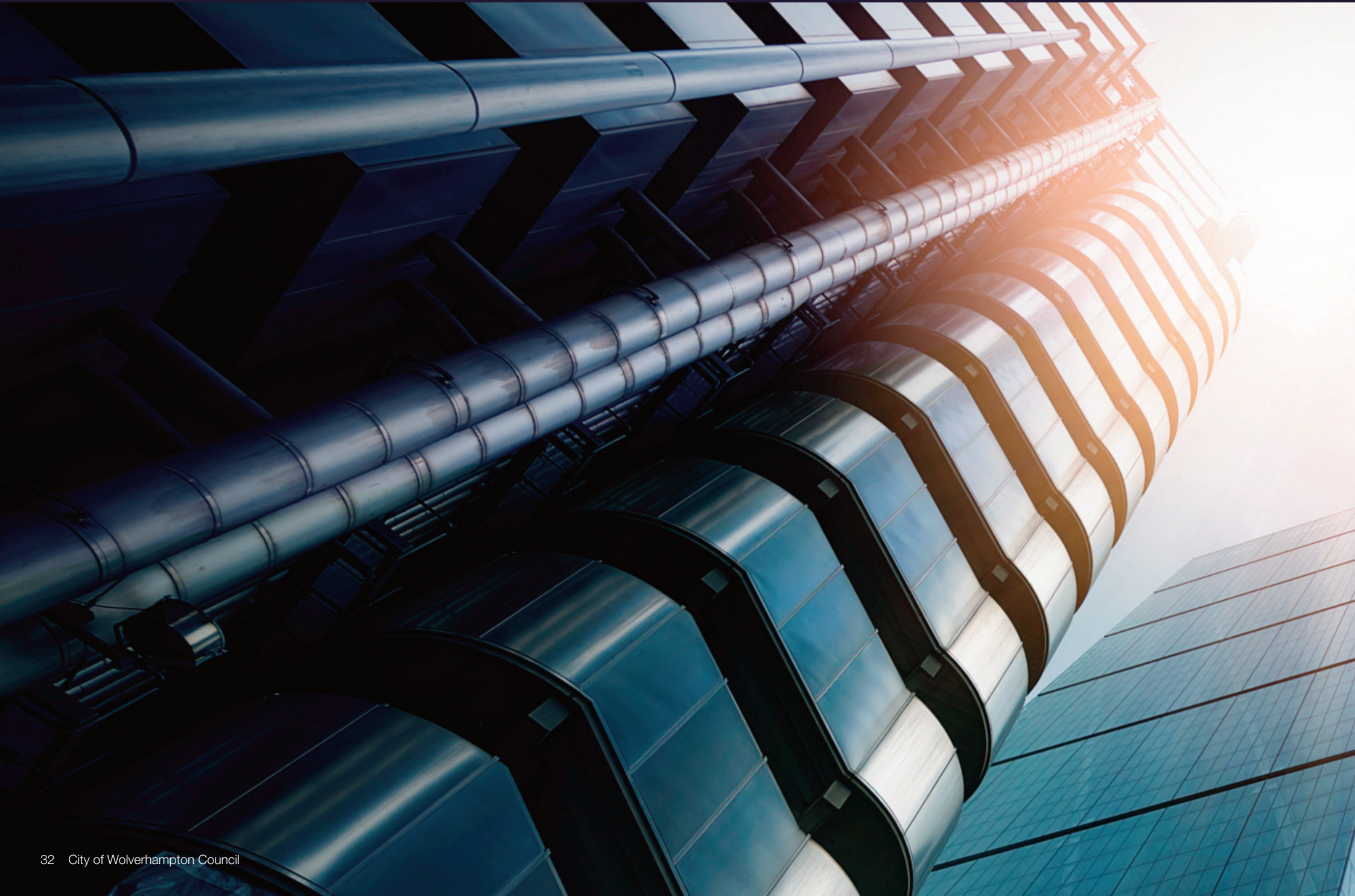
GREEN INNOVATION CORRIDOR

The Council has secured Investment Zone status and up to £20 million of investment from Government to bring forward the Green Innovation Corridor.

The GIC will drive the Green Industrial Revolution, building upon Wolverhampton’s sustainable construction, green credentials and circular economy for transformation that will create quality jobs for local people.









**Every commercial plane flying in the sky contains
actuation systems made in the City of Wolverhampton.**

HELP BUSINESSES AND ORGANISATIONS TO INCREASE THEIR PRODUCTIVITY

We have a pioneering business community in the city, including very high levels of female-led firms (6th of all local authorities in the UK), ethnic-minority owned businesses and social enterprises. These organisations form part of a diverse business ecosystem with major strategic companies, fledgling start-ups, scaleups and innovators.

Attracting more of these high value companies to start up, stay and grow in the city is central to our growth approach. Currently, however, businesses face persistent and serious challenges linked to the cost of doing business, with high energy prices and interest rates, as well as structural challenges related to skills gaps, infrastructure and access to finance.

There is a challenging balance required, between supporting business survival in the here and now, and strategically supporting a more productive, innovative and successful business base for the long-term. To achieve the latter, we will

focus on growing our sector strengths, while also diversifying the business base and wider economy. There are major future opportunities to be harnessed for local economic growth as part of a more mixed economy. For example:

- Harnessing future manufacturing and materials-based opportunities, such as in electric vehicles, lightweighting, future propulsion and automation in all sectors including food and drink.
- Building on Wolverhampton's advanced and sustainable construction cluster, incorporating modern methods, digitisation, brownfield land remediation and regeneration.
- Further developing the city centre's business services and digital offer to attract more high-value activities that drive productivity and agglomeration effects.
- Exploiting the opportunities presented by the green economy and net zero, and driving a circular economy.

We know from engagement with our local businesses that it can be difficult to know where to go to access independent business support. This is because the business support landscape has a large number of providers, offers and services creating a complex environment which can be difficult to navigate. We are a city predominantly made up of SME's with fewer than 15 employees, we need to make it as easy as possible for businesses to access the support they need.

That is why we are developing our new Business Growth offer which will work in partnership with Business Growth West Midlands and other public and private business support providers to help businesses increase their productivity. The new offer will help businesses navigate the complex business support landscape, understand and access the right support for them and provide 1-2-1 support to develop long term growth plans. We've already launched our city centre business hub IGNITE, working in partnership with the University of Wolverhampton and the Black Country Chamber of Commerce.



SPOTLIGHT IGNITE

Ignite was launched in July 2022 as part of the Council's response to the impact of Covid-19 on our city's business base. In its first 12 months Ignite has gained over 560 members.

The hub provides incubation space for small businesses to develop in a safe and supportive environment. It provides them with free access to experienced business professionals and other key resources that will help them grow into more mature and stable businesses.

Ignite is centrally located in the heart of the city, taking a prominent position in our commercial district. It offers first class business support facilities with an offer that continues to grow.

COLLABORATE WITH BUSINESS AND THE UNIVERSITY TO STIMULATE INNOVATION

Technological development, which occurs through the discovery and adoption of innovations, is one of the key drivers of long-term productivity growth. To close the city's productivity gap we need to continue to develop spaces for creativity and collaboration where innovative ideas can be nurtured.

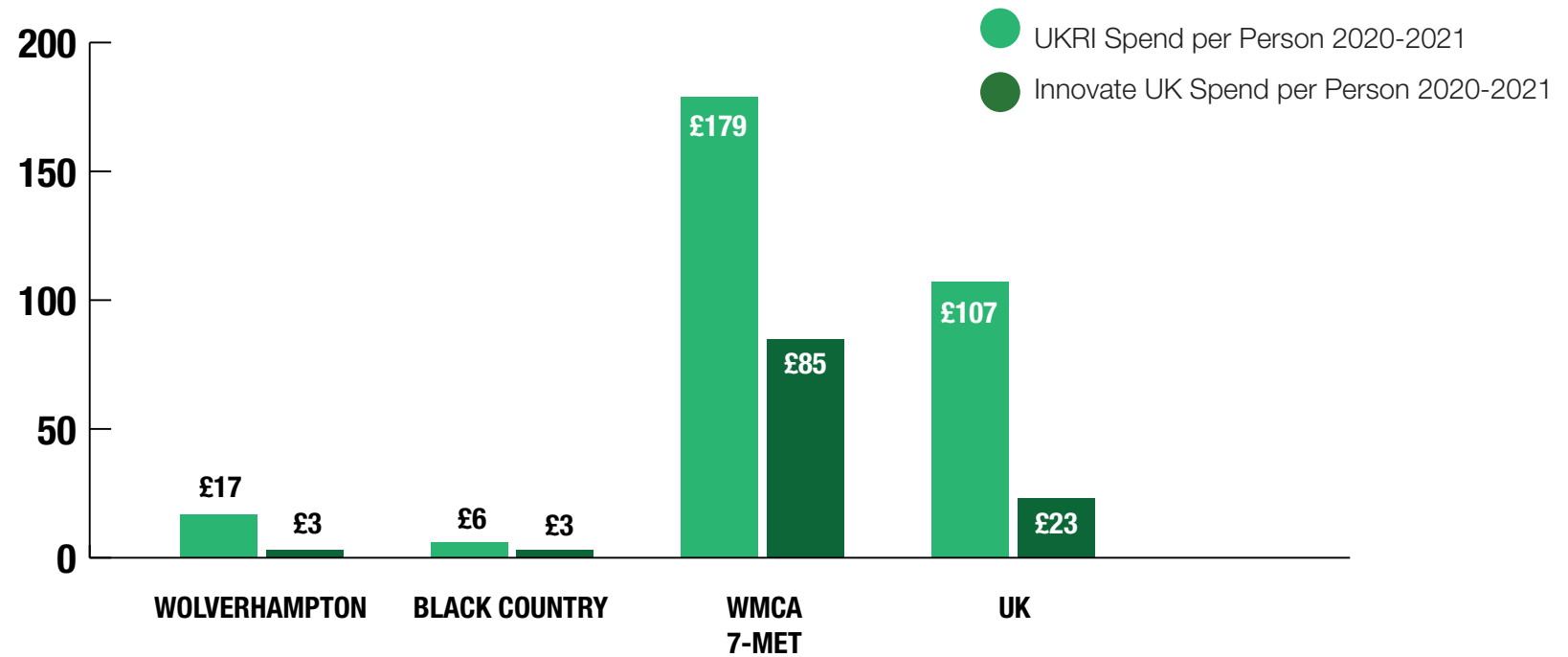
Wolverhampton has a long history of pioneering innovation. The world's oldest original digital computer is the WITCH (Wolverhampton Instrument for Teaching Computing from Harwell), which was used at the University of Wolverhampton in the 1950s. Wolverhampton-based inventor Thomas Parker built the first practical electric car, while the Wolverhampton-built Sunbeam motor car became the first vehicle to reach 200mph when it broke the land speed record.

It is a tradition of ingenuity which has continued today. Every commercial plane flying in the sky contains actuation systems made in the City of Wolverhampton. Moog, whose history in Wolverhampton dates back to 1938, supplies aircraft around the world such as Boeing and Airbus. However it is not just in industry that we find major contributions to the world of research and development.

The University of Wolverhampton's Cyber Research Institute is vital to the sector through its collaboration and innovative research. The National Brownfield Institute, part of the city's Springfield Campus, brings together specialist researchers, consultants, and industry experts to advance research into brownfield land remediation and the circular economy. Our city's university has been host to a number of spinout companies including Disulfican, developing new cancer drugs, Space Audit Systems, a specialist computer software company and Algorid Limited, developing an innovative approach to identification through fingerprinting.

There is still more to do to capture the potential of innovation-led growth. We must address the imbalance in allocation of public research and development funding. The table on the next page shows the disparity between funding for the city when compared the region and UK average. Working with the West Midlands Combined Authority and Innovate West Midlands we will set the case for increased innovation funding for Wolverhampton and the region.

UKRI & Innovate UK Spend per Person 2020-2021 (via UKRI data)

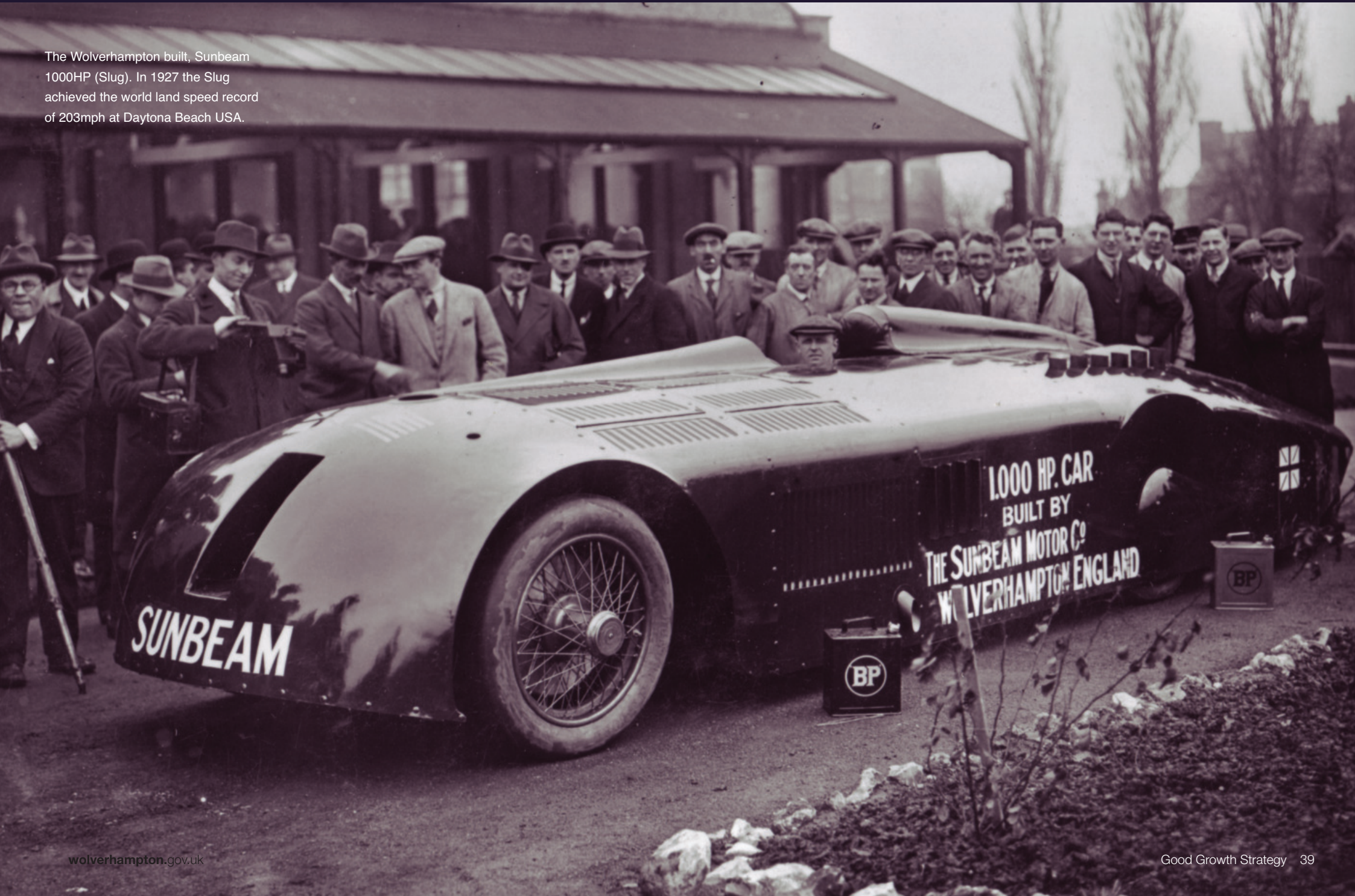


We also need to support more of our SME's to access the advice and funding which can help them identify ways to innovate their business practices to deliver efficiencies, digitise and meet the net zero challenge. One way we are helping to do this is through our Green Innovation Corridor, which will provide incubation and research space drawing together innovation driven entrepreneurs, start-ups and businesses to share ideas and access support.

WORLD ————— LAND SPEED RECORD

203mph

The Wolverhampton built, Sunbeam 1000HP (Slug). In 1927 the Slug achieved the world land speed record of 203mph at Daytona Beach USA.







SPOTLIGHT GREEN INNOVATION CORRIDOR

The aim of the Green Innovation Corridor is to build on Wolverhampton's growth as a centre for sustainable construction and create skilled jobs for local people in the emerging green economy.

It will focus on creating high value jobs in specialist sectors, support student retention, harness home grown talent, develop new opportunities for business investment and growth, and leverage private sector funding.

The early phases for the Green Innovation Corridor will focus on the development of sites at and near the University of Wolverhampton Springfield Campus and Science Park with the longer term vision to connect and link these key city assets to the city centre and the advanced manufacturing cluster in the north of Wolverhampton.

MAXIMISE THE CITY'S INVESTMENT POTENTIAL

Our city needs to continue to welcome inward investment and to promote and provide the opportunities for a range of major developments for new homes, workplaces, jobs, leisure, culture and social infrastructure.

Attracting investment can take many different forms. This includes new businesses setting up in the city, existing companies expanding and government and public sector relocations. More than two-thirds of all inward investment jobs created in the



UK each year are as a result of expansions from existing investors. While new arrivals are a valuable contribution to the Wolverhampton economy, the most significant source of jobs and investment in the next few years is likely to be from companies already located here.

There are also major opportunities for the city to attract investment and new businesses to the city. Many businesses are looking at reshoring and rethinking their supply chains with concerns over resilience, costs and carbon footprint. This is a trend accelerated by the pandemic, but which has been underway for many years. Shorter supply-chains are being implemented that offer resilience against global events. A study by the Chartered Institute of Procurement & Supply (CIPS), shows 40% of organisations in the UK switched at least one international supplier to a domestic alternative in 2021.

Our approach to attracting and retaining investment is developing a strong Wolverhampton offer. This includes identifying, promoting and in some cases preparing sites to ensure availability for development, growing our city talent pipeline, targeted business support offer and showcasing all that the city has to offer. In September 2023, Wolverhampton Business Week celebrated its



tenth anniversary, with hundreds of people from the city and beyond engaging in a wide range of events to support and celebrate local businesses and investment.

Identifying new companies and investors from outside of the city will be done largely in partnership with West Midlands Growth Company and Department for Business & Trade across a range of sectors including automotive; aerospace; digital; energy; business services and government relocations. There is scope for Invest Wolverhampton to be proactive in certain sectors where there is a clear niche, nationally-significant strength, such as sustainable construction.

SPOTLIGHT CITY CENTRE HOUSING SHOWCASE

More than 200 delegates attended the City Centre Living Showcase at the WV1 Restaurant and Bar at Molineux Stadium. The event outlined how the city centre was being reimagined and how new urban living opportunities were being brought forward by the city council with public and private sector partners that would revitalise the area. In total, developments to deliver 6,500 new homes were showcased.

6,500 new homes



They include:

1,300 at Brewers Yard,

1,000 at City Centre West,

799 at Canalside South,

391 at St. George's,

366 at Horseley Fields,

342 at the Royal Quarter,

181 at Sunbeam,

163 at Steam Mill and Sackworks.

Priority	Objectives	
<p>Support businesses and organisations to increase their productivity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simplify routes to support for local businesses by providing information on a range of support options through a single front door, both online through our Business Growth website and face to face at our city centre business hub, IGNITE. • Support businesses to understand their support needs offering 121 support to help business explore the challenges they face and identify the best package of assistance to help them grow. • Provide intelligence and insight on local business need using our CRM platform to track, collate and monitor up to date and accurate information on local business need. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage business to take up support: the Hub will promote business support generally and specific priority services to ensure businesses understand the help on offer and the potential growth benefits it can unlock. • Ensure that publicly funded support for businesses is aligned with the Council's long-term strategic objectives and delivers economic impact which benefits the city. • Work with our partners to deliver targeted business support programmes and initiatives where there is a gap in the current market and an evidence of local need.
<p>Collaborate with businesses and the University to stimulate innovation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support local businesses to identify innovation opportunities and connect them with funding and support through our Business Growth Offer. • IGNITE start up hub will provide wrap around support for spin outs. • Create the right environment and workspace for innovation to collaborate and thrive through established locations like I54 and our new Green Innovation Corridor. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage research and development in green technologies which can lead to new business opportunities. • Work in collaboration with the University of Wolverhampton and other research institutions to increase links between industry and research to create the right conditions for innovation.
<p>Maximise the city's investment potential</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen our global position as an attractive place for inward investment and first-choice location for a range of companies to be based here. • Identify and promote major development sites to secure investment across the city. • Join up our city growth offer with our inward investment priorities to identify target sectors and functions for investment of existing businesses and to attract new businesses to the city. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build an even closer relationship with investors and strategic employers through effective account management to better understand their needs and how they can contribute to growth in our city. • Deliver our soft-landing platform for investors to make Wolverhampton the easiest Council in the country to work and invest with.

Catalytic Projects

- **Start Up Support:** Working in partnership with Black Country Chamber of Commerce, with funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, we will deliver aims to increase the number of new enterprises, ranging from sole trader and micro business to small, medium-sized and large enterprises, including social enterprises.
- **IGNITE:** Wrap around business support and incubation space at our city centre hub. In partnership with the University of Wolverhampton and the Black Country Chamber of Commerce.
- **Green Innovation Corridor:** Phase 1 of a wider regeneration scheme to unlock the green economic potential of our city and launch a step change in reaching net zero for Wolverhampton.
- **Net Zero and SME Grant Support:** We're delivering a package of grant support to local SME's in partnership with Business Growth West Midlands.
- **Growth Advice:** Delivering 121 growth advice and support to city businesses. Helping to identify their challenges and opportunities so they can maximise all of the opportunities in our city and wider region.
- **Marketing Our City:** Delivering a package of annual events which showcase all that our city has to offer, raising the profile and attracting investment to Wolverhampton.



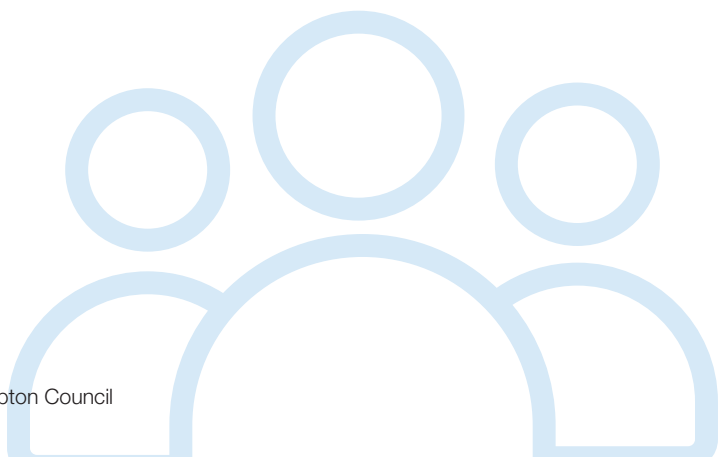
PEOPLE



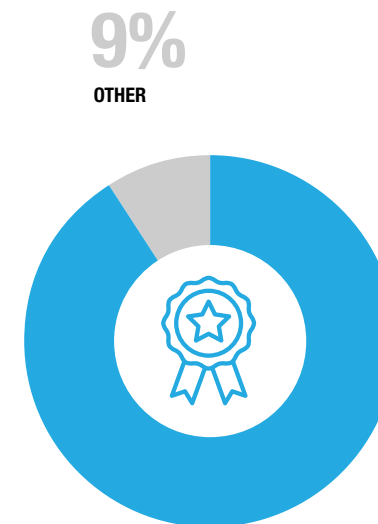
People are our city's greatest asset.

There has never been greater demand for well skilled people, with every sector and industry facing shortages and recruitment challenges. There is currently an ongoing disconnect in the labour market, between continued heightened levels of claimants seeking work and a record number of job vacancies.

This section looks at how we will continue to raise skills levels in the city ensuring that our training and learning offer meets the needs of business and local people, the importance of health and wellbeing for entering and staying in work, and how we will build local economic resilience through the Wolverhampton Pound.



OFSTED RATINGS IN WOLVERHAMPTON




91%

OF WOLVERHAMPTON'S SCHOOLS ARE RATED GOOD OR OUTSTANDING BY OFSTED





EDUCATION, SKILLS AND EMPLOYMENT SYSTEM THAT MEETS LOCAL NEED



Skill levels in the city have been steadily increasing with the numbers of local people securing higher level qualifications at record numbers.

However, there remain areas for improvement and the current education, skills and employment system in the city faces a number of challenges arising from a legacy of deindustrialisation, low aspirations, pockets of entrenched worklessness, relatively low pay, low skill levels, and more recently the Covid-19 pandemic and the cost of living crisis.

The Council is committed to continuing to drive up skills outcomes for our residents and has set out its holistic whole life approach to Education, Skills and Employment in a new Council led strategy which seeks to bring together partners to improve employment outcomes for local people and increase local economic growth.

Through this strategy we want to enhance the city's talent pool so that local people can get good quality jobs, businesses can access the skills they need to grow and we can attract new enterprise to our city. The role of academic and business

partnerships in developing skills for the future is vital, both in connecting employers to education and skills providers, and ensuring that courses are being developed that align with the evolving needs of companies.

A key opportunity for Wolverhampton is integrating our industry specialisms with our approach to talent. These will be focused across our strategic sectors both large and growing, as well as our critical foundational sectors. Through the development of sector focused action plans we will identify and align the skills needs of businesses to help them grow and residents. These sectors will be further supported through business support, spatial development and infrastructure investment. A challenge going forward is how we develop both the hard and soft skills which local people need to secure well paid jobs of the future.

There has been significant change within many industries post pandemic, digitisation of services has increased significantly since people adjusted to doing things online during lockdown. Businesses need to be able to adapt to shifts in consumer demand in order to survive.

MOST IN-DEMAND SKILLS IN WOLVERHAMPTON

Frequency in Job Postings

TOP 10 HARD SKILLS



TOP 10 SOFT SKILLS



SPOTLIGHT CITY LEARNING QUARTER

The aim of the scheme is to futureproof our skills system.

c. £60 million state-of-the-art learning hub in the heart of the city co-locating adult education, library and college facilities, supporting more local people into good jobs and training and enabling further housing development.

A partnership between the City of Wolverhampton Council and Wolverhampton College will also safeguard hundreds of jobs and increasing footfall in the city centre, as the scheme will see thousands of students located at the new city centre campus.

WORK WITH OUR PARTNERS TO SUPPORT HEALTH AND WELLBEING



Research from The Health Foundation shows that a local area's employment rate is related to how long people are likely to live, and how many years they can expect to live in good health. In places with higher economic inactivity people are more likely to have a lower healthy life expectancy.

The Covid pandemic accelerated the need to move beyond mere economic growth as the sole measure of a successful economy. Understanding the broader impact of economies on all individuals and communities is crucial, necessitating the integration of social and equality indicators to monitor progress.

Addressing the existing inequalities within Wolverhampton is paramount for genuine levelling-up, ensuring that every person in the area reaps the benefits of economic growth and prosperity, irrespective of their geographical location, ethnicity, age, or gender.

As adults in employment spend a large proportion of their time in work, our jobs and our workplaces can have a big impact on our health and wellbeing. In fact, employment can impact

both directly and indirectly on the individual, their families and communities. Therefore, work and health-related worklessness are important public health issues, both at local and national level.

There is clear evidence that good work improves health and wellbeing across people's lives, not only from an economic standpoint but also in terms of quality of life. 'Good work' means having not only a work environment that is safe, but also having a sense of security, autonomy, good line management and communication within an organisation.

Combined costs from worklessness and sickness absence amount to around £100 billion annually, so there is also a strong economic case for action. Addressing and removing health-related barriers requires collaborative work between partners from across the private, public and third sectors at both national and local level.

Enabling people with health issues to obtain or retain work, and be productive within the workplace, is a crucial part of the economic success and wellbeing of our city.



SPOTLIGHT

BILSTON HEALTH AND WELLBEING HUB

Bilston scheme to deliver a new state-of-the-art Health and Wellbeing Hub in the town that brings together a number of partners and providers from the NHS, social care and wellbeing, and leisure sectors.

The hub will be an anchor within the community, investing in early intervention and prevention, giving access to a campus that builds resilience, integrates and transforms primary and community services and brings care closer to people's homes - connecting people, communities and place.

It will be located in the centre of the town next to WV Active Bilston-Bert Williams, bringing people to the town centre - and connecting to extensive public space improvements and Bilston's public transport hub.

BUILD COMMUNITY WEALTH THROUGH THE WOLVERHAMPTON POUND

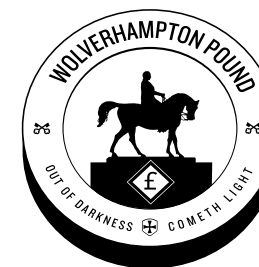
For us, the Wolverhampton Pound is about building economic resilience for businesses and local people.

At its core community wealth-building (CWB) is a place-based approach which uses the strengths and assets of a local place to drive economic change. While different areas have interpreted the approach differently, they all share a common objective of generating local wealth to benefit the most disadvantaged communities.

Our approach to community wealth building is centred around ensuring fair employment and just labour markets, making financial power work for our local place and growing local and community ownership of the economy. One of the main objectives of the Wolverhampton Pound is to embed social value in the City to help leverage local spend and employment and make the City the best it can be for our communities.

Although the Wolverhampton Pound presents a new overarching approach to economic development for the city, many of the actions and priority areas associated with it are not. Organisations across the city, in particular those in our VCS, have been leading initiatives to support the growth of community wealth.

Acting alone the Council will have limited impact. The Wolverhampton Pound approach has been developed collaboratively with five key city partners who have made a commitment to work together as the Wolverhampton Anchor Network to deliver the priorities.



WOLVERHAMPTON POUND

SPEND LOCAL FOR MORE JOBS AND OPPORTUNITIES


Priority	Objectives	
<p>An education, skills and employment system that meets local needs</p>	<p>Working with partners to deliver our Education, Skills and Employment strategy, and Wolves at Work Transformation Programme, we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure we have a range of higher-level skills and training support available in the city aligned to growth sectors to support productivity and higher wage jobs. • Work with partners to maximise the number of apprenticeship and training opportunities for young people and adults in the city. • Work with our partners including businesses, job centres, training providers, colleges and the University to develop flexible pathways for local people who are in work to retrain and progress. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish clear pathways and entry routes for unemployed adults, particularly those from underrepresented groups to access employment in growth sectors or where there are skills shortages. • Build on the city centre youth hub at The Way, using our community hubs to deliver co-located employment and skills support to young people in their local areas.
<p>Tackle health and wellbeing barriers to work</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with partners at DWP to deliver inclusive employment support opportunities for all raising awareness of support to create inclusive opportunities. • Work with employers and other city partners to champion inclusive employment practices to ensure there is a pathway to success for all residents in our city and healthy workspaces. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with partners and stakeholders to provide a profile of mental health and wellbeing across the city that includes both risk and protective factors. • Work with our local businesses and anchor partners to support development of healthy, inclusive workplaces and employment.
<p>Grow community wealth through the Wolverhampton Pound</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure public and private investment opportunities create good work opportunities for local people and support our businesses to grow. • Undertake an annual spend analysis our five anchor institutions, understanding where we currently spend locally and where we could do more. • Analyse anchor supply chains to develop a 10-year procurement and commissioning pipeline. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify priority areas to direct more of our collective anchor network spend locally. • Incorporate and monitor social value/local employment clauses through the council's supply chain. • Leverage agreements with investors and partners to maximise benefits for local people, including by securing the delivery of S106 skills and training opportunities.



Catalytic Projects

- **City Learning Quarter:** A significant city centre learning hub consisting of a prime location for the College, the Council's Adult Education service and Central Library enabling improved learning, skills, apprenticeship and employment levels with enhanced accessibility for students, employers and residents.
- **Wolves at Work:** Wolves at Work seeks to improve labour market access and opportunities for disadvantaged communities, increase employment rates and to support inclusive economic growth.
- **Bilston Health and Regeneration Programme:** New state-of-the-art Health and Wellbeing Hub in the town that brings together a number of partners and providers from the NHS, Social Care and Wellbeing and Leisure sectors. The wider programme will also include investment in Bilston city centre and high street.
- **Employment and Skills Hubs:** Building on the city's Youth Employment Hubs we will launch our city centre Adult Skills Hub at i10 which will support local people into work, improve their career prospects and gain new skills.
- **Cost of Living Support:** Building financial resilience for families through our cost of living support. Since 2020 we've awarded £15 million to help all those experiencing financial difficulties as a direct result of the cost of living crisis.

DELIVERING GOOD GROWTH



The delivery of this Strategy will be a major priority for the Council working across all sectors, public, private, community and voluntary.

It must also engage local communities in the delivery effort and inspire a sense of confidence in Wolverhampton's economic potential and future. The key ingredient of this is collective leadership, delivering our growth ambition will require strong entrepreneurial, whole-place leadership, bringing together business, political leaders, formally and informally, to drive system change.

Anchor Institutions

A key feature of the delivery of this strategy will be the role of Wolverhampton's Anchor Institutions. These are our large and influential private and public sector employers and other institutions which can, in each of the key priorities, play a lead role in creating good growth. This could involve using their purchasing power to drive growth at a local level in Wolverhampton and providing employees with opportunities for in-work progression.

Anchor institutions share a number of key characteristics including:

- **Spatial immobility:** have strong ties to an area and are invested in it
- **Size:** tend to be large employers and have significant purchasing power
- **Land and assets:** occupy various sites across the city and have good community reach

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City of

CITY OF OPPORTUNITY



Economic Insight and Indicators

The Council already collects and monitors a number of indicators to understand how the local economy is performing. Those indicators included in the Our City Our Plan relating to the economy are below. As part of the consultation on the Good Growth Strategy we will continue to refine and add to our economic indicators.

Economic Insight and Indicators					
Theme		Indicators			
	Place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of rapid charging electric car points in the city % of premises in the city with full fibre coverage Number of new builds completed in the city 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % of new builds that are affordable housing (against planning target) Net additional dwellings in the city % of housing stock that is empty / empty homes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing affordability ratio Total crime recorded per 1000 population Energy efficiency of housing stock 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carbon reduction against 2024/25 target
	Productivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Businesses that survive one year in city Businesses that survive five years in the city 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % of premises in the city with full fibre coverage Wolverhampton based businesses supported by the Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of new investment opportunities generated by the Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public R&D spend in Wolverhampton (Innovate UK and UKRI)
	People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of working age adults (16-64) claiming unemployment benefits Number of young adults (18-24) claiming unemployment benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Levels of 16-17 year olds Not in Education, Employment or Training % of population with no qualifications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % of working age population qualified to level 3 and 4 % of population in skilled occupations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % of physically inactive adults (Public Health Outcomes Framework)

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