

Britain's Reindustrialisation Region

**A Blueprint for a New Age of
Industrialisation in the West Midlands**





Foreword - Mayor

Richard Parker, Mayor of the West Midlands

The West Midlands has always been a place that makes things happen.

For generations, our region has been at the forefront of industrial change – inventing, designing and making products that have transformed Britain and the world. That heritage is an essential part of who we are today, but this Blueprint for Reindustrialisation is not about looking backwards, it is about harnessing the skills, ingenuity and industrial capabilities that run deep through our economy to lead a new age of industrialisation.

The opportunity is enormous. Electric and autonomous transport, new energy systems, AI and robotics, investment in defence and national resilience, and advances in health technologies are all reshaping the global economy. At the same time, our creative, digital, financial and professional industries are changing what it means to be a modern industrial region.

The West Midlands has the ingredients to succeed: world-leading businesses, thousands of specialist SMEs, six great universities, four Catapult Centres and nationally significant capabilities in automotive, batteries, advanced manufacturing, energy and transport.

Our Growth Plan has set a clear direction: backing the sectors where we have a competitive advantage and creating the conditions for businesses to invest and people to succeed. This Blueprint takes the next step, connecting those strengths into a modern industrial economy that can invent, commercialise, manufacture and export at scale.

The Chancellor has spoken of a new age of industrialisation. The West Midlands is ready to lead that national mission – combining government investment and ambition with regional leadership, local knowledge and the expertise of industry.

For me though, reindustrialisation must be about people. Growth only matters if people feel its benefits in their everyday lives: through better jobs, higher wages and household incomes, clearer opportunities for young people and greater security for workers as industries change.

That will require government, councils, businesses, universities, colleges and communities to work differently and invest for the long term.

For the West Midlands, reindustrialisation and adaptation are in our DNA. Our region helped forge the modern industrial world, and we are now ready to lead the new age of industrialisation – creating a more productive, resilient and prosperous region – a trailblazer for Britain's industrial future.





Maevig
Electric Motorbikes,
Coventry

Summary: A Blueprint for a New Age of Industrialisation

The West Midlands Reindustrialisation Blueprint is a companion to our Growth Plan. It sets out how deeper devolution, combined with stronger integration of sectors, assets and production processes, can enable the region to spearhead the UK's transition to a modern industrial economy.

West Midlands – A Reindustrialisation Trailblazer

The West Midlands is Britain's Reindustrialisation Region – a national trailblazer for translating the Modern Industrial Strategy into productive investment, innovation, production, exports and prosperity.

Reindustrialisation is part of our economic DNA. Few places combine the scale, diversity and depth of productive capabilities found in the West Midlands. The region engineers, tests and manufactures vehicles, batteries and components, but also produces software, games, medical technologies, creative content, intellectual property and professional solutions.

The common thread is productive capacity and agility: the ability to invent, design, make, commercialise and export products and services as markets evolve.

We are not starting from scratch. The Growth Plan, Project MADE, the Innovation Accelerator, the restructuring of the West Midlands Growth Company, the £50 million LIPF programme, our supply-chain programmes, DRIVE35,

Midlands Mindforge, the West Midlands Investment Zone, West Midlands Futures Fund and the High Speed 2 provide powerful foundations for transformation...

...Reindustrialisation provides the organising mission that connects them.

A New Age of Industrialisation

This Blueprint recognises that a modern industrial economy is a system, rather than simply a collection of sectors. Successful reindustrialisation means retaining and upgrading existing capabilities while continually recombining them around new technologies, opportunities and markets.

In practice, this means an economy where technology adoption drives higher productivity and value, innovation is commercialised and retained locally, capital flows into productive assets, clusters generate deeper supply chains and labour markets, public investment increasingly crowds in private capital, and knowledge and technology diffuse rapidly between firms and sectors.

Most importantly, further devolution and new ways of working will enable us to translate economic success more rapidly into better jobs, higher wages and household incomes, greater economic security and stronger communities.

The objective is not simply higher productivity or more jobs, but to create and retain more value within the West Midlands and ensure that it is transmitted into everyday prosperity.

The fundamentals of our blueprint are simple: support our diverse businesses and workforce to more quickly adapt to new markets, focus intervention more directly on the specific needs of our regional economy, and use the opportunity of greater devolution to help us get there.

Industrial technology demonstration of an AI robot

Clusters, specialisms and markets

The Blueprint moves beyond a conventional sector strategy. The Growth Plan's six high-growth clusters remain fundamental, but we recognise that the future industrial economy will increasingly be driven by agility, collaboration and innovation across sectors. Our approach, therefore, focuses on how our core capabilities combine sectors and assets:

- **Future mobility:** vehicles, batteries, propulsion, aerospace, light rail, logistics, advanced materials and precision engineering.
- **New energy systems:** storage, smart grids, advanced construction, power electronics, heat systems and industrial electrification.
- **Science and technology for human health:** diagnostics, medical devices, NMR, biotech, pharmaceuticals, sensors and digital health.
- **Intelligence for modern industry:** AI, robotics, quantum, automation, cyber, connectivity and industrial software.
- **Content, experiences and IP:** screen, games, music, design and immersive technologies.
- **Finance and professional services for industry:** finance, fintech, engineering, legal and professional expertise.
- **Systems that protect Britain:** aerospace, defence, cyber, battery manufacturing, autonomous systems and security technologies.

Focus: Areas for action

We have identified five areas where focused action can build on the region's strengths and accelerate the evolution of our modern industrial economy. Aligned with our Growth Plan ambitions and enabled in part through our Integrated Settlement, these are:

Accelerate SME modernisation – build a West Midlands 'Mittelstand', providing holistic support and accessible finance to our SME base while accelerating the adoption of AI, automation, digital technologies and low-carbon production.

Commercialise innovation and accelerate diffusion – connect universities, Catapults, R&D assets and regulatory expertise more systematically with firms, finance and markets, shortening the journey from innovation through commercialisation to production at scale.

Rewire the skills system around the worker – create clearer pathways into growing industries, secure greater regional control over skills and workforce investment, and enable talent to remain, transition and adapt within the region as industries change.

Power reindustrialisation – secure the affordable, reliable power and grid capacity required by a pipeline of industrial sites, while using the West Midlands' own smart-energy capabilities to develop and demonstrate new solutions.

Enable social transmission – connect industrial policy with employment, skills, procurement, transport, communities and public-service innovation so that productivity growth translates into higher household incomes, greater economic security and wider prosperity.

Rewiring for Reindustrialisation: New ways of working

Reindustrialisation will require the West Midlands to rewire how government, industry and institutions work together.

Devolution provides the opportunity to move beyond transactional relationships towards a long-term partnership in which national scale and resources are combined with regional economic leadership, local knowledge and industrial capability.

The Blueprint proposes deeper collaboration across five areas:

Investment and competitiveness – bringing public finance institutions together around regional priorities and giving the West Midlands greater influence over the investment required for reindustrialisation.

Innovation and R&D – connecting research, demonstration, procurement and finance to accelerate technologies from development through commercialisation to industrial scale.

Procurement and markets – using major public spending in defence, health, transport, energy and infrastructure to create markets and opportunities for regional supply chains.

Employment and skills – integrating employment, training and talent transition around the needs of people, businesses and priority industries.

Infrastructure and place – aligning industrial land, transport, energy, housing and digital infrastructure with the long-term requirements of industrial growth.

Together, these reforms would establish a new partnership between the West Midlands and government: devolving responsibility, aligning investment and national policy behind regional strengths, and giving the West Midlands greater capacity to deliver national industrial priorities through place.

To support the next age of industrialisation in the West Midlands, WMCA is committed to work in partnership with government to consider how we can:

- Devolve British Business Bank functions and funding to the West Midlands
- Commit to developing the West Midlands as one of Europe's leading battery clusters
- Secure trading arrangements with the EU that ensure initiatives such as Made in Europe do not undermine the competitiveness of West Midlands industry
- Create stronger direct links between West Midlands industry and government, including through a Reindustrialisation Envoy working to deliver on Project MADE's recommendations
- Devolve an additional allocation of near-to-market innovation funding to the West Midlands from 2027–28, rather than waiting until 2031
- Give WMCA greater influence over the deployment of UKRI and other nationally funded applied R&D activity, particularly for industrial adoption and scaling
- Establish a West Midlands Future Mobility regulatory sandbox, initially focused on very light rail and connected and autonomous mobility technologies
- Establish a West Midlands AI and Robotics regulatory sandbox, accelerating deployment in healthcare, energy infrastructure, defence and dual-use technologies, the built environment, manufacturing and logistics
- Establish a Midlands Defence Deal, including £200 million of Defence Investment Plan funding deployed in the Midlands and mechanisms to connect regional suppliers with future defence requirements
- Devolve £300 million of automotive, aerospace and related manufacturing supply-chain funding over four years, allowing business investment, innovation, skills and infrastructure support to be integrated around regional industrial priorities
- Accelerate the devolution of employment and skills powers and funding, enabling the West Midlands to build an integrated industrial skills and employment system
- Co-invest in a West Midlands Talent Transition Fund, helping workers retrain, move into adjacent industries, join SMEs or establish new businesses
- Designate the West Midlands as the national demonstrator for the Neighbourhood Energy Transition Fund, using local deployment to stimulate clean-energy supply chains, reduce energy costs and create skilled employment
- Designate the West Midlands as a Light Rail Accelerator, supporting technologies developed in the region to move from publicly enabled demonstration through commercial deployment to export.

The Proposition

The West Midlands has the conditions, assets and ambition to spearhead the UK's reindustrialisation mission.

Reindustrialisation is part of our DNA. In the post-war period, the West Midlands demonstrated its capacity to reinvent and expand its industrial base, combining investment, innovation, skills and deep supply chains with innovation in public services to become one of Britain's great engines of prosperity. Our industrial economy has continued to evolve and adapt, but we need to go further and faster, applying our inherent capacity for reinvention to the technologies and markets that will drive the next generation of growth and prosperity.

A new age of industrialisation is about more than manufacturing. The West Midlands makes vehicles, batteries and engineered components, but also games, software, films, medical technologies and intellectual property, alongside the professional services that support and finance them. The common thread is productive capacity: the ability to invent, design, engineer, commercialise and export products and services that can scale and generate lasting economic value. Our deep industrial heritage gives us the capabilities to continually pivot and adapt to new markets and opportunities. This Blueprint seeks to harness that agility, alongside our strengths in invention, testing, commercialisation and production.

This journey is already well underway. The West Midlands Growth Plan backs high-growth clusters, stronger and more diverse supply chains, applied innovation, AI adoption, skills and stronger investment

leadership. Reindustrialisation provides the organising mission that connects these interventions: building the productive capacity of the West Midlands economy at scale and translating it into higher productivity, investment and prosperity.

Our Investment Zones will unlock £5.5 billion of development and create new capacity for the modern industrial economy, supporting 30,000 new jobs. High Speed 2 will fundamentally reshape the economic geography of the West Midlands and the UK, enabling new commercial relationships and institutional collaborations. Modern, specialised sites, with game-changing connectivity will diversify the regional economy, strengthen regional assets and elevate the West Midlands' role within a broader, more dynamic national industrial economy.

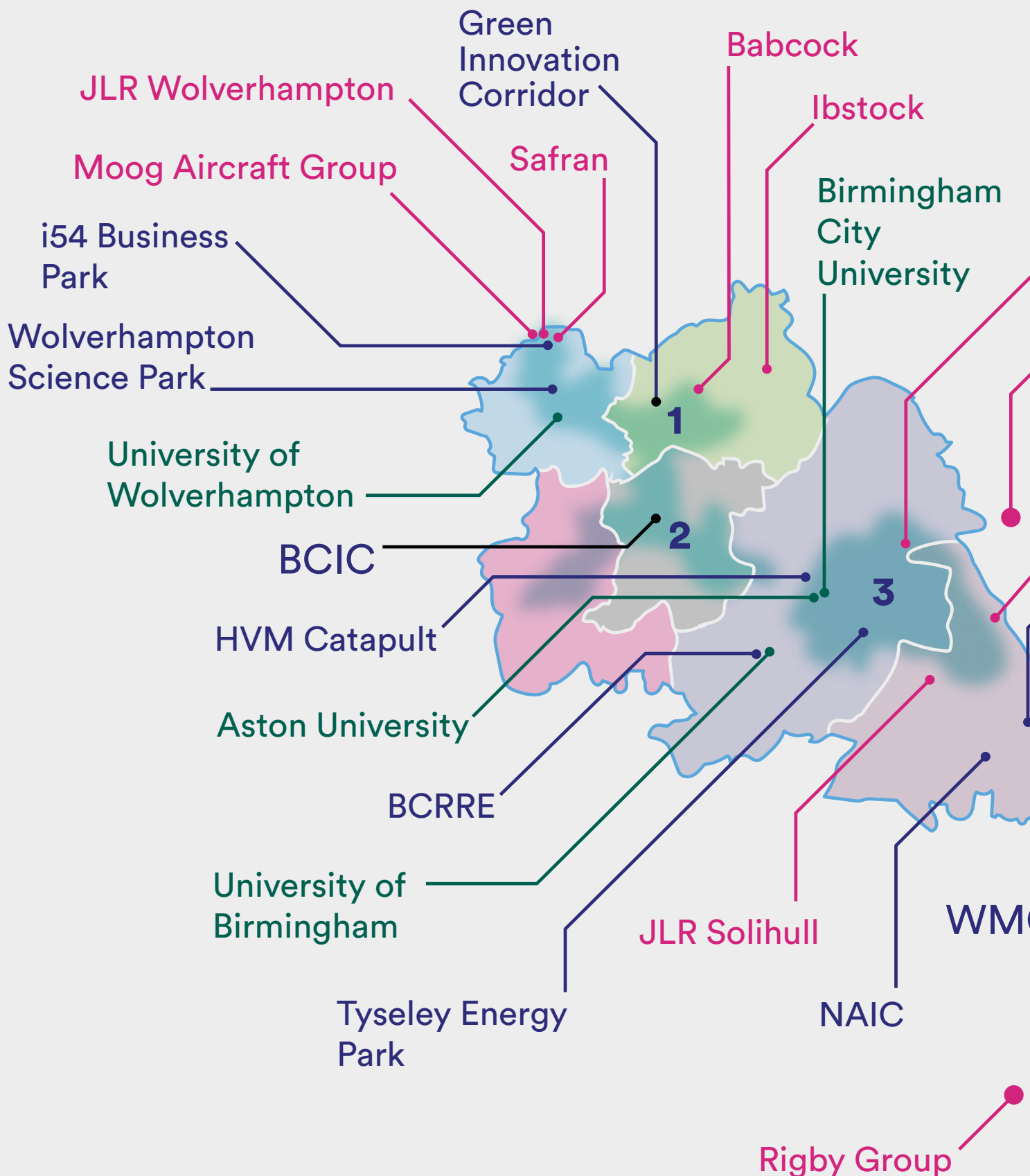
Our businesses and universities are already working alongside the MSA and Local Authorities to elevate our ambition through Project MADE. Led by the private sector, this builds upon the region's industrial assets ensuring these are better connected and mobilised alongside more rapid adoption of technology. Reindustrialisation provides an opportunity to further embed this experience and ambition, through devolution and greater regional autonomy.

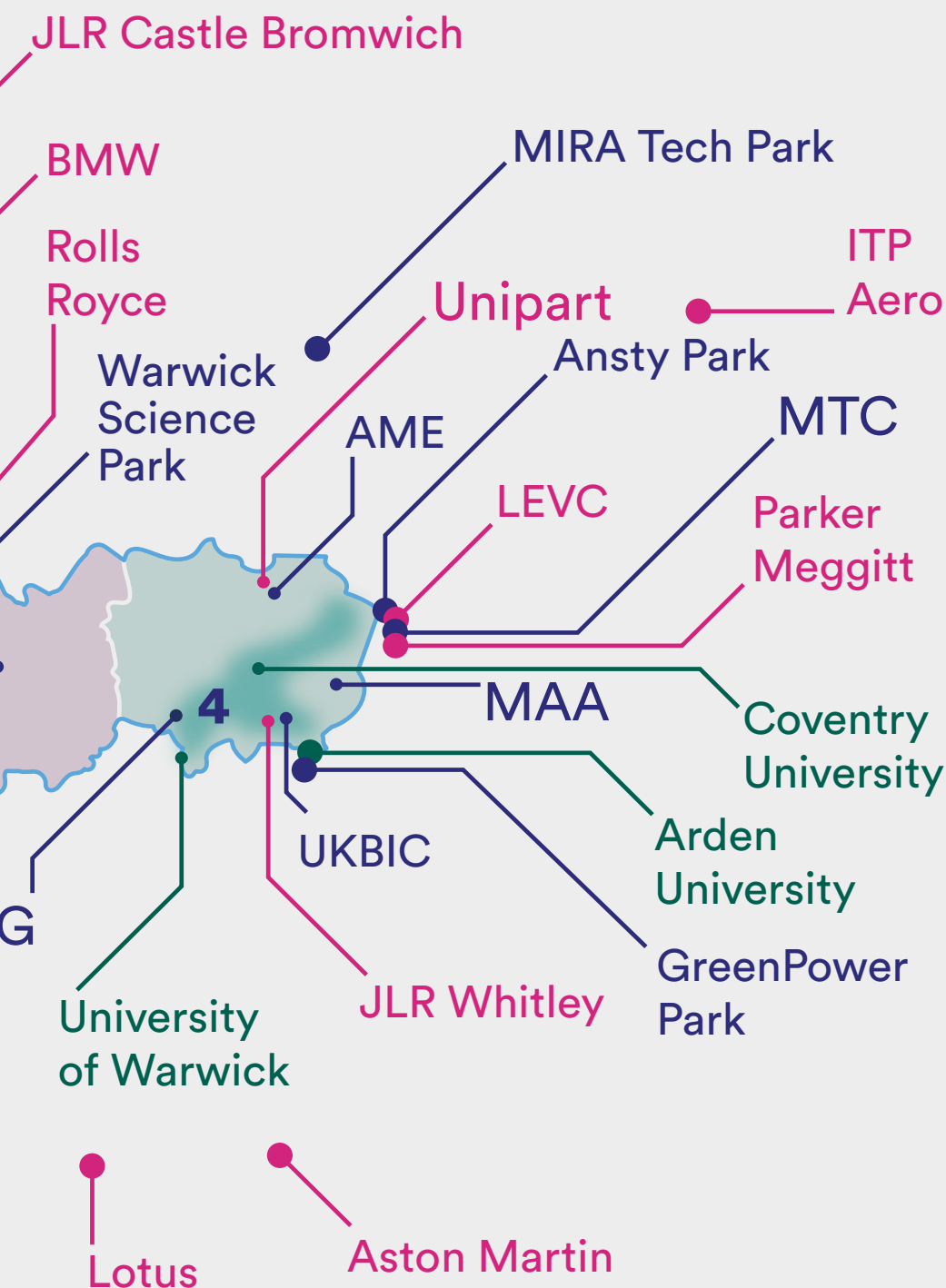
The government's aspiration to 'Rewire the State' provides the foundation to speed up reindustrialisation. This Blueprint, seeking to capitalise upon this new context, assumes a new way of working with government and new relationships between the collective public sector and the market.

Why the West Midlands?

- Scale and industrial depth: manufacturing alone supports around 273,000 regional jobs and contributes about £22bn annually
- A diversified growth base: the Growth Plan identifies six high growth clusters with comparative advantage and estimates that tailored cross-cutting interventions could add up to £3.2bn GVA and 45,000 jobs
- Unrivalled breadth of innovation capability - the only region to have four Catapults and six major Research Universities
- Assigned funding at scale: The West Midlands Futures Fund provides a multi-billion pound regional investment platform designed to align WMCA, national and institutional capital behind the region's Growth Plan, using public investment to unlock and crowd in private finance
- Specialisation alongside diversity: 60% of UK's automotive R&D takes place in the West Midlands
- Frontier technology meets industrial application: recognised strengths include AI, advanced connectivity, quantum and cyber security alongside engineering, mobility, energy and logistics
- Global reach: International supply chains across multiple sectors
- A major creative production economy: content creation, video games, music, performing arts, design and CreaTech, reinforced by anchors including the BBC and Digbeth Loc Studios
- Life sciences with manufacturing relevance: the region has the UK's largest medical devices cluster, with 600+ firms, supporting over 34,000 jobs and over £16bn turnover
- Deep services capability: business, professional and financial services account for an estimated 178,300 jobs and £17bn GVA, with productivity above the regional average
- Institutional capital on the doorstep: LGPS Central is headquartered in Wolverhampton, with c.£56bn under stewardship and partner funds collectively representing c.£100bn
- Urban scale – the UK's second city, and a conurbation of almost 3m people. Capacity for growth and ideal 'sandbox' environment.

Key growth sites and assets across the West Midlands





- Assets
- Businesses
- Universities
- WMCA boundary

WMCA Boroughs:

- Wolverhampton
- Walsall
- Dudley
- Sandwell
- Birmingham
- Solihull
- Coventry

Growth Corridors

- 1 Wolverhampton Walsall Growth cluster
- 2 Black Country Growth Corridor
- 3 Birmingham and North Solihull Gateway
- 4 Coventry Growth Arc



Brainport Eindhoven-
Netherlands

What is Reindustrialisation?

A focus on reindustrialisation represents an important evolution in the UK's economic mission. Whilst the Modern Industrial Strategy identifies where Britain has the potential to grow, reindustrialisation describes how we turn those strengths into productive capacity, investment, production, exports and prosperity.

It demands a whole-system approach to production and the economy, recognising that industries, technologies, supply chains, skills, infrastructure, capital and energy are increasingly interconnected and it will be their combined capacity and evolution which will define future economic growth.

For the West Midlands, this creates an opportunity to build on the foundations established through the Growth Plan and our targeted sector activity, connecting these strengths into a more integrated and productive regional industrial system.

Success will not be measured solely in terms of headline economic growth or the performance of any given sector, but by the strength of our production system and the extent to which the region develops the key attributes of a successful reindustrialised economy.

Reindustrialisation in practice: Global exemplars

Our West Midlands Futures report and Growth Plan are informed by how other regions have achieved economic transformation. This has shaped how the West Midlands thinks about economic evolution and what we can learn from elsewhere to support our mission.

In considering our approach to reindustrialisation, we have drawn upon examples of places which have undertaken or are on a similar journey. Our approach to reindustrialisation is informed by the experience of:

- Brainport Eindhoven, Netherlands
- The Basque Country, Spain
- Baden-Württemberg, Germany
- Gothenburg and Västra Götaland, Sweden
- Ulsan, South Korea
- Guadalajara, Mexico

Each of these regions has a strong industrial heritage but has built explicit strategies which recognise that reindustrialisation is not about recreating the industrial economy of the past, but about retaining, upgrading and recombining the productive capabilities a region already possesses and applying them to the technologies and markets of the future.

Their experience helps us understand what a successful reindustrialised economy might look like and provides inspiration on how the West Midlands might get there. They also provide benchmarks against which we can track process, ensuring that we continue to remain globally significant and competitive.

Brainport Eindhoven – building an integrated high-tech industrial ecosystem

Building on established strengths in electronics and engineering, the region has brought together anchor companies, specialist SMEs, universities and research institutions with government and skills providers around a long-term strategy to deepen technological capability and regional supply chains.

This increasingly extends beyond conventional industrial policy into transport, housing, energy and talent, recognising that these are prerequisites for continued industrial expansion. The outcomes have been substantial: the region has become one of Europe's leading centres for semiconductor and advanced technology manufacturing, characterised by very high R&D intensity, productivity, exports and high-value employment.

Brainport demonstrates the importance of moving beyond individual sectors and interventions towards an integrated industrial ecosystem. Major businesses and inward investments create greater regional value when connected systematically to local suppliers, innovation institutions, skills provision, infrastructure and investment.

Basque Country – long-term transformation of an established industrial economy

From the 1980's onwards Basque Government chose to restructure and modernise its industrial economy rather than manage its decline. Over several decades it combined cluster development, technology centres, R&D, workforce development, internationalisation and close government-industry collaboration, progressively moving towards advanced manufacturing, energy and other knowledge-intensive activities. The region is internationally renowned for its successful industrial transformation and its coherent, sustained policy approach. The region has retained a substantial manufacturing base while becoming one of Spain's wealthiest and most productive regions.

Existing firms, engineering knowledge, workers, supply chains and institutions provide capabilities that can be recombined around new technologies and markets. The Basque experience also demonstrates the value of policy consistency: reindustrialisation is not a short-term programme, but a process of structural transformation sustained over decades.

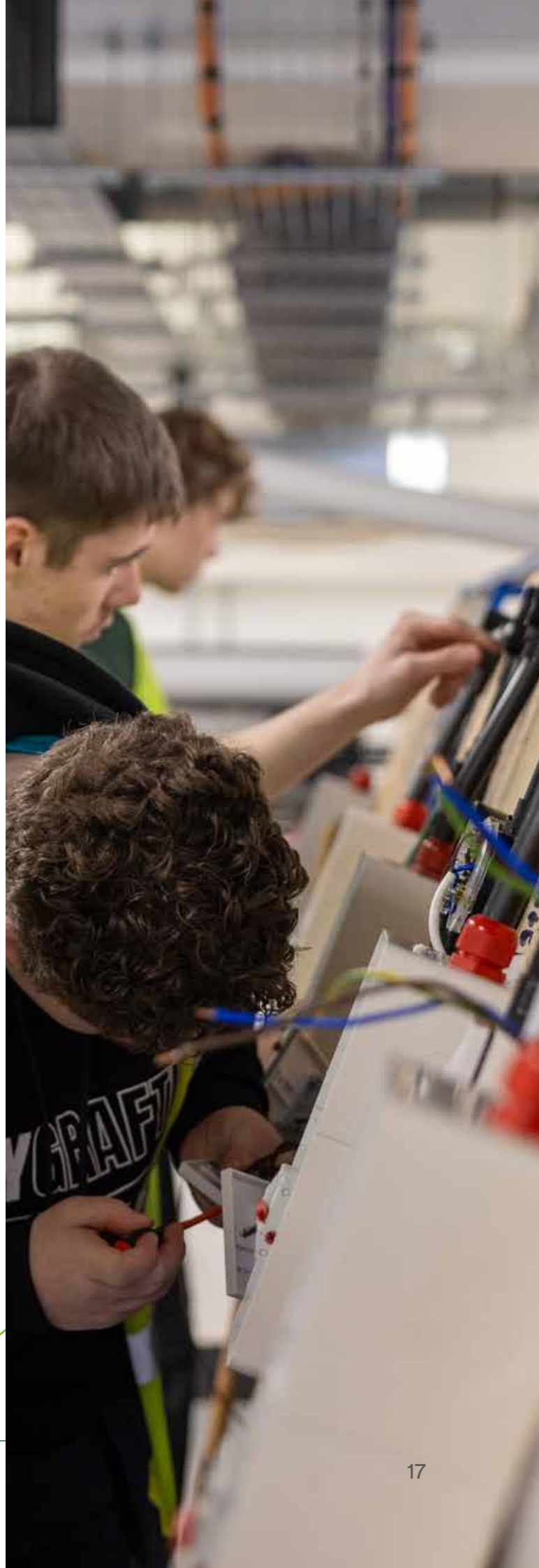


Baden-Württemberg – managing the transition of an industrial powerhouse

Baden-Württemberg's approach is built upon an explicit 'Strategic Dialogue' for the Automotive Sector bringing together government, industry, research institutions, workers and other partners to manage the transformation of its automotive and engineering base through electrification, digitalisation and new production technologies.

Over the last decade, its programme has initiated more than 70 projects covering areas including batteries, electric motors, hydrogen, digital production, autonomous vehicles, energy infrastructure, workforce development and support for SME suppliers. This has helped create an organised regional response to technological disruption in an economy whose prosperity remains heavily dependent upon manufacturing.

Baden-Württemberg's central lesson is that reindustrialisation need not mean replacing mature industries with entirely new ones. Instead, policy can help existing firms, workers and supply chains migrate towards new technologies and markets. This means supporting not only frontier investments in EVs, batteries, aerospace or clean technologies, but ensuring that thousands of established SMEs have the technology, capital, skills and market intelligence required to participate in that transition.



Gothenburg and Västra Götaland – using net zero to drive industrial renewal

Building on longstanding strengths in automotive, engineering, chemicals, logistics and energy, the region has made industrial electrification a central component of its development strategy. This involves new products and components alongside changes in production processes, skills, research, testing and demonstration facilities and energy infrastructure. The region has also established an Industrial Transition Council bringing together key actors around the practical requirements of transition. The scale of the ambition is significant: major industries expect their electricity requirements to rise from around 6 TWh to 14 TWh during the first half of the 2030's.

Electrification of transport, buildings and industry creates new markets for vehicles, components, batteries, power electronics, energy systems and associated professional and digital services. But it also demonstrates that energy infrastructure must be treated as an economic development intervention: without sufficient grid capacity and affordable, reliable power, industrial ambitions cannot be realised.

Ulsan – diversifying industrial capabilities into the industries of the future

Historically dominated by automotive manufacturing, shipbuilding, petrochemicals and heavy industry, Ulsan has increasingly sought to apply its engineering, manufacturing and supply chain capabilities to hydrogen, electric vehicles and batteries, advanced materials, cleaner production and digitally enabled manufacturing. Ulsan has become a national testbed for the application of AI and digital technologies to manufacturing.

Ulsan illustrates the importance of defining industrial strategy around capabilities as well as sectors. Skills in engineering, materials, systems integration, precision production and supply chain management can potentially be deployed across automotive, aerospace, defence, energy and other markets.

Rather than asking only which industries should grow, Ulsan's reindustrialisation strategy identifies the productive competencies in which the region can achieve global advantage and the future markets into which they can be deployed. This provides a route to diversification that builds resilience without discarding the industrial capabilities already embedded within the regional economy.



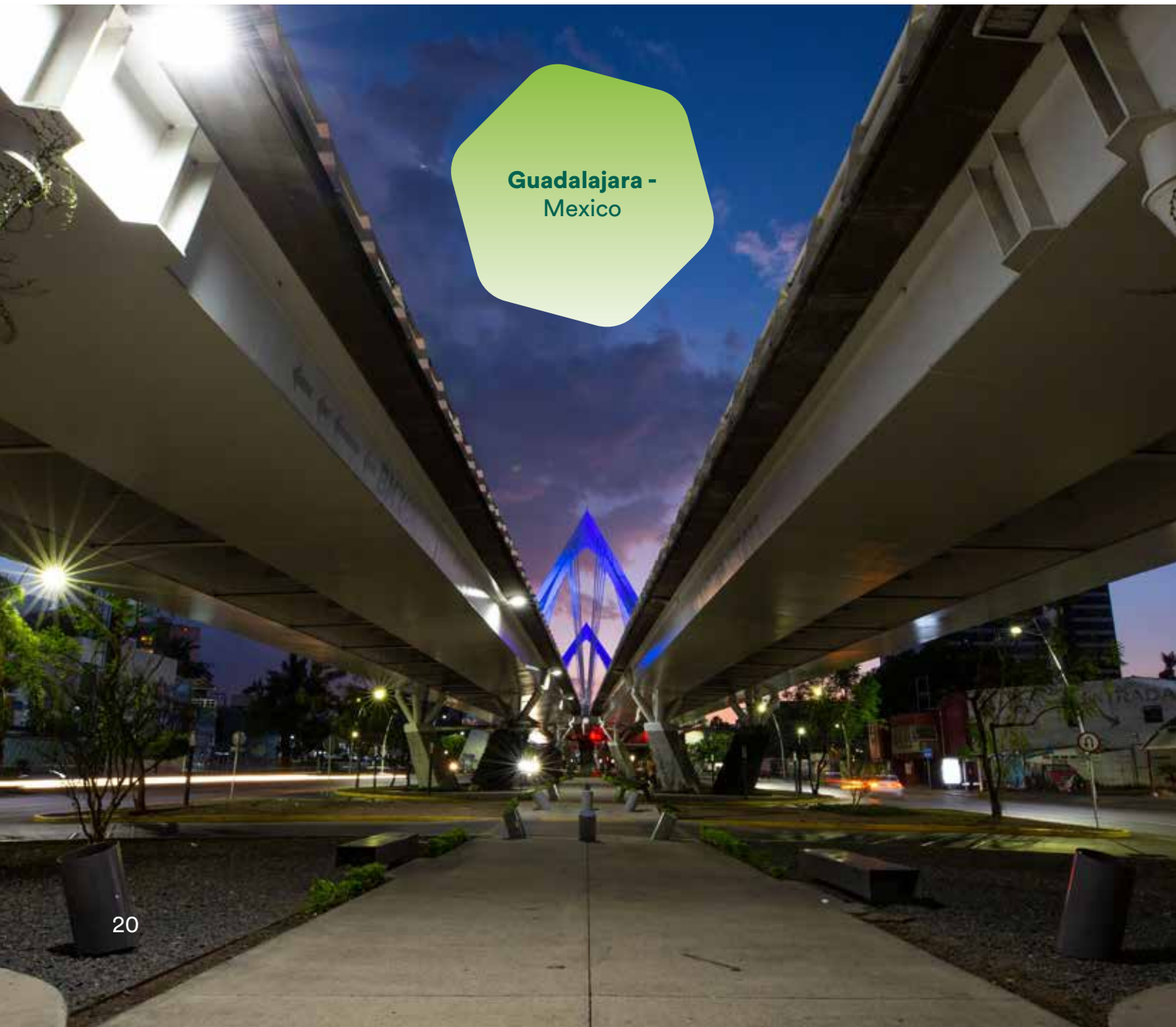
Gothenburg,
Sweden

Guadalajara/Jalisco – moving up global value chains

Initially developing as an important location for multinational electronics assembly and manufacturing, Guadalajara became known as Mexico's "Silicon Valley". Over time, regional economic development has increasingly sought to deepen the ecosystem around that manufacturing base through engineering, software, design, R&D, semiconductor capabilities, technical education and the development of domestic technology businesses. Their strategic objective is therefore not simply to increase manufacturing volumes

but to capture more of the knowledge, technology and value associated with the products being manufactured.

Guadalajara's approach recognises that reindustrialisation should not simply seek to increase the number of regional firms supplying major manufacturers, but to move those firms into progressively higher-value positions within national and global supply chains. That means developing capabilities in design, engineering, digital technologies, intellectual property, advanced components and systems integration as well as production itself.



Guadalajara -
Mexico

Markers of success: The future industrial economy of the West Midlands

The understanding of our core capabilities, set out within the Growth Plan, aligned with the experience of other regions globally, allows us to describe what the markers of a successful future industrial economy might be in the West Midlands.

These are not measures of success, nor are they target activities, they are the attributes, behaviours and processes that will epitomise our reindustrialised economy.

- Adoption of technology drives higher-value activity. Technology delivers rapid increases in productivity; higher value drives increase in wages and incomes, enabling prosperity across the region.
- Perceptions of the region's SMEs change. Capital flows into productive assets, crowding finance and reducing risks. Specialisms become further embedded as companies can rely on greater investment and cost certainty.
- Genuine clustering positively influences supply chains and labour markets. The region realises the benefits of agglomeration, raising the profile and productivity of specific locations and the West Midlands as a whole.
- Transmission of social benefits. The combination of devolution and reindustrialisation allows stronger, more responsive translation of social benefits. Strong public services, civil society and a successful everyday economy are seen as key components of a successful future economy.
- Knowledge and technology diffusion. Knowledge and ideas created in the West Midlands are realised and embedded in the region. Mobility within and between clusters creates greater diffusion of innovation and ideas.
- Sectors reach maturity, ensuring benefits are self-reinforcing. Initial public investment in reindustrialisation is succeeded by private investment.
- Public Sector leads in the creation of new markets. Government is deliberate in buying goods and services, underpinning innovation and growth in the West Midlands.
- Leadership is enhanced. A new generation of industrial leaders emerges in the West Midlands, alongside international talent drawn to the region



Future
automotive
technology
testing

Why Reindustrialisation matters

Our history has shown us that the case for reindustrialisation is ultimately a case for prosperity.

Our Growth Plan is clear; wages and living standards depend on the productivity and value created by West Midlands businesses: higher productivity supports better-paid jobs, stronger household incomes and wider social outcomes. Our ambition to drive employment and raise living standards is only possible if we are intentional in our approach to build an inclusive economy where benefits are felt by all.

This matters because economic growth alone has not consistently delivered prosperity across the region. The 2026 State of the Region report shows that despite progress, growth remains spatially uneven, in-work poverty remains significant, and too many communities have yet to experience meaningful improvements in living standards.

These wider social outcomes do not happen by chance; they are determined through consistent choices to unlock the region's full potential to ensure growth is for everyone. We will therefore (as the West Midlands has in the past) choose to ensure that reindustrialisation happens alongside new models of participation and innovation in public services.

This will not happen in isolation, we need to work across disciplines to make sure that we deliver a socially purposeful model of growth, so that every investment and innovation improves socio-economic mobility. Reindustrialisation is not simply an industrial policy. It is a means of ensuring that the West Midlands' next period of economic transformation is experienced by its residents as rising wages, greater security, better opportunities and renewed confidence in the places in which they live.



Digital and
immersive
technologies
**Birmingham
City University**

Clusters, specialisms and markets

A key strength of the West Midlands economy is its industrial composition. We are widely recognised as the region most able to claim strengths across all eight of the Modern Industrial Strategy's target sectors.

This is the starting point for our approach to reindustrialisation. Building on the Modern Industrial Strategy, our Growth Plan identifies six high growth clusters with the foundations and comparative advantage to accelerate growth:

- Advanced engineering, light electric vehicles and batteries
- Clean Tech and Smart Energy Systems
- Health & medical devices, diagnostics and associated digital healthcare
- Digital, tech and creative
- Next Generation Services
- Defence technologies

Key to our vision for reindustrialisation is an understanding that companies within these distinct sectors will often participate and collaborate in the same supply chains and hence should be viewed collectively as the engine of reindustrialisation.

This Blueprint seeks to elevate these connections, focusing on integration and recognising the shared needs and opportunities associated with a modern, productive economy. To do this, we broaden our approach, so that alongside the 'vertical' support we offer our key sectors, we also think 'horizontally' about what and how we produce and the markets in which they are traded.

Markets which will define a New Age of Industrialisation in the West Midlands

The future of the industrial economy will be defined by what we make and by how effectively we integrate our specialist clusters to create comparative advantage.

We know that our strength is in the ability for firms to operate beyond traditional sector boundaries and to adapt to new markets. We have therefore, identified seven markets that align particularly strongly with the West Midlands' existing capabilities.

These are not simply opportunities to access growing global markets; they also address important national and public priorities – from energy and health to mobility and national security. This creates an opportunity to put government procurement and market creation at the heart of our approach to reindustrialisation.

Technology driving future mobility

Electrification represents perhaps the most significant reorganisation of automotive and mobility supply chains in a generation.

The West Midlands combines one of Britain's largest concentrations of advanced manufacturing and automotive activity with nationally significant capabilities in batteries, propulsion, aerospace, advanced materials and applied R&D. Around a third of British-made cars are already produced in the West Midlands, while the region contains major innovation assets spanning battery industrialisation, propulsion, manufacturing and mobility.

As the UK transitions to new forms of mobility, a reindustrialised West Midlands will be at the forefront of designing, engineering and making the complex

products and mobility systems on which the future economy depends. This means connecting capabilities in vehicles, batteries, propulsion systems, aerospace technologies, light rail, logistics, advanced materials, defence and precision-engineered components.

Assets including UKBIC, WMG, the Manufacturing Technology Centre and Advanced Propulsion Centre, HORIBA MIRA, University of Birmingham's Centre for Railway Research and Education provide an exceptional platform for moving technologies from research and demonstration into commercial production, while helping existing firms adapt to changing global markets. JLR, Safran, Moog, Aston Martin, Bosch and a huge number of SMEs provide the depth and breadth which sets the region apart as Europe's leading automotive R&D cluster.

Reindustrialisation in Action

Brandauer

Founded in 1862, Brandauer demonstrates how a traditional Birmingham manufacturer can continually reinvent its productive capability. Having originally manufactured pen nibs, the company is now an internationally competitive precision metal-stamping and tooling specialist, supplying 15 sectors across 26 countries. A long-running relationship with WMG has supported innovation activity, contributing to a reported 60% reduction in waste, 10% cost savings and diversification into electrification. The company is increasingly applying its precision-engineering expertise to power storage, batteries and electric mobility.

Reindustrialisation in action: reinventing traditional metalworking capability, combining established manufacturing skills with innovation to compete in emerging technologies and global markets.

Reindustrialisation in Action

Connected and Automated Mobility

Solihull has established itself as a nationally recognised centre for Connected and Automated Mobility (CAM). Since 2020, Solihull Council has worked with innovation partners to deploy automated vehicles in real-world public environments, progressing from proof-of-concept trials towards increasingly complex operational settings. Projects including SCALE are helping create an environment in which new mobility technologies can be developed, tested and demonstrated, complementing the wider West Midlands' strengths in automotive engineering, digital technologies and advanced manufacturing. In October 2027, Solihull will host the ITS World Congress at the NEC Birmingham, bringing around 15,000 international transport leaders, innovators and investors to the region.

Reindustrialisation in action: Practical sandboxing - using real-world deployment and demonstration to accelerate the commercialisation of next-generation mobility technologies, attract investment and connect digital innovation with the West Midlands' established automotive and advanced manufacturing capabilities.

Transition to new energy systems

Britain is undergoing a fundamental transformation of its energy system, driven by electrification, decarbonisation and the need for greater energy security and resilience.

The West Midlands has a nationally recognised comparative advantage in smart energy systems, combining major energy companies, specialist SMEs and world-leading innovation assets. This includes the Energy Systems Catapult and Tyseley Energy Park alongside businesses including National Grid, Cadent, E. ON and Hitachi Energy.

Reindustrialisation provides an opportunity for the West Midlands not simply to consume the technologies required for the energy transition, but to design, manufacture and integrate them. This encompasses energy storage, smart grids, heat systems, batteries, power electronics, industrial electrification, low-carbon building technologies and energy-management systems.

This can draw upon engineering and production capabilities developed within automotive and the built environment, alongside academic research and innovation, creating a double benefit: supporting a cheaper, cleaner and more secure energy system while creating new markets for West Midlands businesses.

Reindustrialisation in Action

GreenPower Park

GreenPower Park represents one of the region's largest opportunities to create new industrial capacity. The 308-acre former Coventry Airport site has planning permission for up to 5.7 million sq ft of development focused on battery manufacturing, advanced industry and clean energy. The proposition combines industrial land with power, planning, infrastructure and proximity to UKBIC and the wider Coventry-Warwick automotive and R&D ecosystem. £23 million of Investment Zone funding is supporting enabling infrastructure and grid connectivity, creating an investment-ready location for major manufacturing projects.

Reindustrialisation in action: assembling powered land, planning, infrastructure and innovation capability to accommodate nationally significant advanced manufacturing investment.

Science and technology to improve human health

The UK faces structurally rising demand for healthcare as its population ages and health needs become increasingly complex. Technology provides an important route to improving outcomes and productivity while creating significant new markets.

The West Midlands has the largest medical device cluster in the UK, comprising more than 700 firms, over 14,000 jobs and around £6 billion of turnover. This sits alongside world-class clinical research, engineering expertise, Birmingham Health Innovation Campus and one of the UK's largest and most diverse clinical trial environments.

Reindustrialisation can connect these strengths in medicine, engineering, data and life sciences to develop and manufacture technologies that diagnose disease earlier, improve treatment and enable people to live healthier lives. These include diagnostics, pharmaceuticals, medical devices, sensors, biotech, precision-engineered healthcare products and digital and data-driven health technologies.

Systems that protect Britain

Growing geopolitical uncertainty is creating increased demand for resilient domestic capabilities in defence, aerospace, security and strategically important supply chains.

The West Midlands' concentration of advanced engineering, aerospace, automotive, battery, materials and precision-manufacturing capabilities creates an opportunity to meet growing UK and allied demand for defence, aerospace, autonomous and security technologies.

The significance of the opportunity lies partly in transferable industrial capabilities. Engineering, materials, propulsion, power systems, cyber warfare, software and precision manufacturing developed for automotive and aerospace can be applied to defence and other strategic markets. Diversification can therefore strengthen national resilience while providing established West Midlands suppliers with routes into new, growing markets.

Reindustrialisation in Action

A&M EDM

A&M EDM has built the UK's largest commercial spark and wire-erosion capacity, combining 36 EDM machines with 39 CNC milling and turning centres. Since 2021, the company has invested millions in machinery, digital systems, renewable energy and inspection equipment, strengthening its ability to manufacture complex components for demanding markets including aerospace. Through the Supply Chain Transition Programme, A&M EDM is now exploring opportunities in defence and nuclear Small Modular Reactor supply chains.

Reindustrialisation in action: modernising an established Black Country manufacturer while transferring advanced engineering capabilities and skills into strategic new markets.

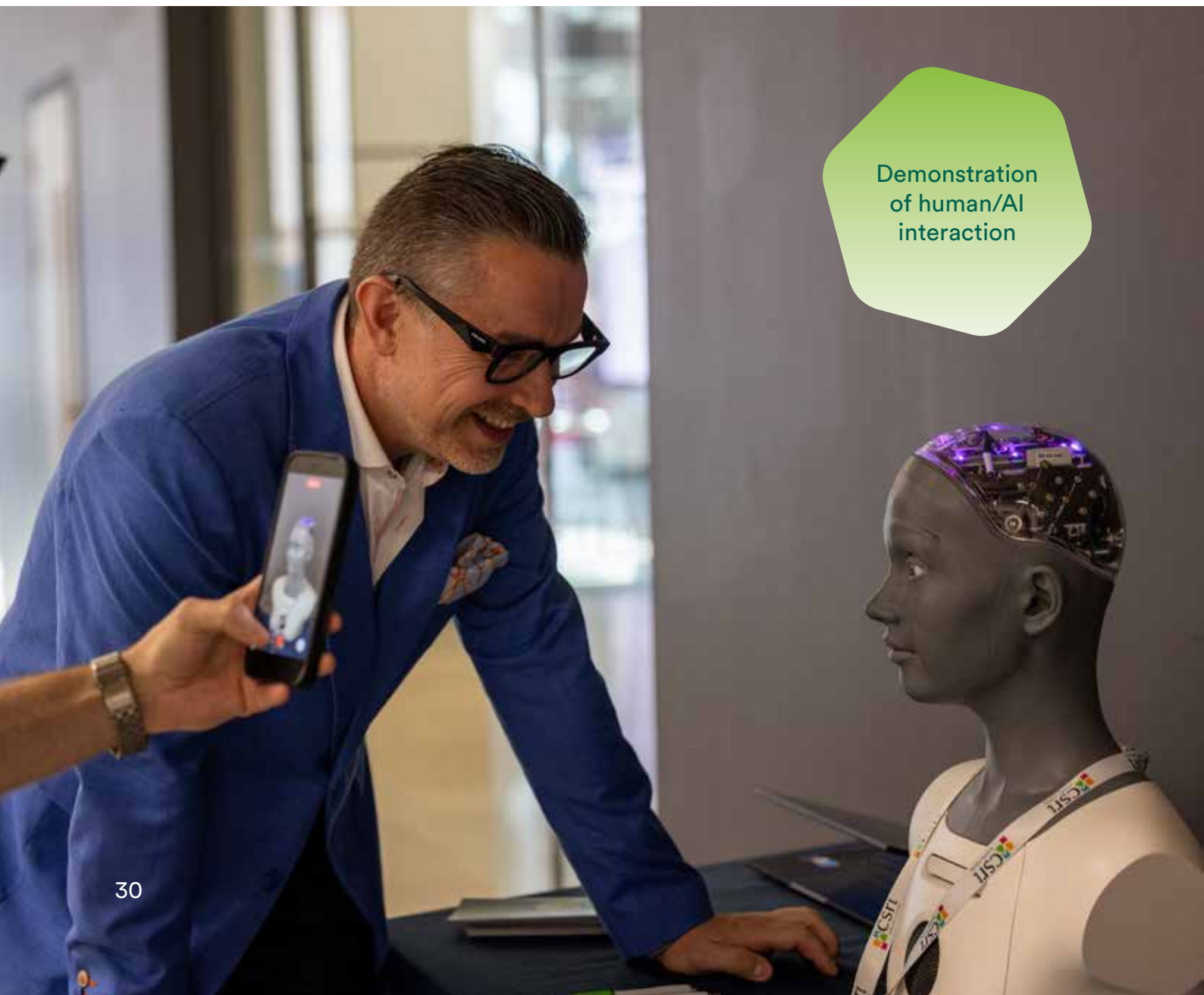
Intelligence for modern industry

The ability to adopt and exploit AI and digital technologies will be one of the defining characteristics of a successfully reindustrialised economy.

The West Midlands combines one of the UK's largest concentrations of manufacturing businesses with growing capabilities in AI, cyber, quantum, robotics, advanced connectivity and software. This creates a distinctive opportunity to become a leading region for the industrial application of physical AI and digital technologies.

The opportunity extends beyond developing a standalone technology sector. AI applications, industrial software, cyber security, connected systems, automation, robotics and data products can diffuse throughout the region's production system – increasing productivity, improving products and transforming how businesses design, manufacture and operate.

This combination of a substantial industrial base and emerging digital capabilities, alongside improved coordination, should provide the basis for the West Midlands to become a national demonstrator for the application of AI to modern industry.



Content, experiences and IP for the world

Modern reindustrialisation must encompass creative and cultural production. Creative industries are both important markets in their own right and sources of technologies, design capabilities and intellectual property that increasingly influence the wider economy. They also provide the recreation, civic identity and pride which provide the attraction and societal glue in a modern industrial economy.

The West Midlands combines internationally recognised strengths in games, screen, music, design and digital technologies with significant new creative assets and a young and diverse population. The region is home to more than 15,000 creative enterprises with anchor investments including the BBC's new Digbeth base and Digbeth Loc Studios. The West Midlands is also the only place in the UK with Local Innovation Partnership Funding for both Creative Technologies and Creative Places Growth Fund.

Through reindustrialisation, the West Midlands can increasingly become a place where world-class ideas are turned into commercially valuable content, experiences, technologies and intellectual property. Growth in film, television, games, music and digital content can be complemented by the wider diffusion of design, virtual production, immersive technologies and AI into other industries.

Reindustrialisation in Action

Digbeth Loc Studios

Digbeth is becoming a compelling example of creative-industry reindustrialisation. Former factories and warehouses are being repurposed as film studios, production facilities and creative workspaces, connecting Birmingham's manufacturing past with its future production economy. Digbeth Loc Studios has attracted major film and television activity, complemented by BBC investment elsewhere in the district. Screen production creates demand beyond creative professionals, including set construction, lighting, sound, engineering, post-production, logistics and specialist technical services, creating opportunities for a deeper local supply chain around major anchor investments.

Reindustrialisation in action: transforming a historic manufacturing district into a modern production cluster built around infrastructure, technical skills, specialist suppliers, intellectual property and globally traded creative content.

Finance and Professional Services upon which industry depends

Reindustrialisation requires more than technology and production capacity. Businesses need access to the finance, legal, technical and professional expertise that enables them to invest, innovate, commercialise intellectual property, trade and scale.

The West Midlands already has one of Britain's largest concentrations of business, professional and financial services outside London. These activities account for an estimated 178,300 jobs and £17 billion of GVA, with productivity substantially above the regional average.

Our ambition is that this develops further as the financial and professional infrastructure for reindustrialisation. As firms continue to restructure mid and back office functions, this will mean connecting expertise in finance and fintech, engineering and technical services, law, data, intellectual property, investment and specialist consultancy more systematically to the region's new industrial economy.

Proximity to this expertise can become a competitive advantage: helping West Midlands businesses secure capital, protect and commercialise ideas, enter international markets and scale – while ensuring that more of the value generated through reindustrialisation is captured within the region.

Reindustrialisation in Action

Birmingham Knowledge Quarter

Birmingham Knowledge Quarter is being developed as an innovation district bringing together Aston University, Birmingham City University, businesses, public institutions and Investment Zone resources. Emerging specialisms include life sciences, digital health and advanced manufacturing. Its industrial significance lies in strengthening the transition between research and commercial production by providing laboratories, innovation facilities, business space, skills and connections through which university knowledge can generate products, spin-outs and manufacturing opportunities. Its location also creates opportunities to connect new science and technology businesses with Birmingham's existing engineering base.

Reindustrialisation in action: building the translational environment through which research and innovation can become commercial products, productive businesses and new industrial sectors.



The Mayor of the
West Midlands
with colleagues
at NatWest Bank

Advanced
manufacturing
workspace for
virtual welding
**Birmingham City
University**



Focus: What we need to do

The West Midlands will become an exemplar for a new age of industrialisation by mobilising the productive strengths identified in the Growth Plan; modernising its firms and supply chains; accelerating the diffusion and commercialisation of innovation; investing in its workers; and securing the energy and finance required for transformation.

Crucially, we will judge success not simply by how much the economy grows, but by how effectively that growth is transmitted into higher productivity, better wages, rising household incomes and greater prosperity across the region.

To deliver this, we have identified five areas of focus. These align with the ambitions of our Growth Plan and respond directly to the challenges identified by industry through Project MADE.

Accelerate modernisation and adoption amongst SMEs

We need to turn the Growth Plan's commitment to productivity and technology adoption into a region-wide programme to modernise the West Midlands' SME base. This means accelerating the adoption of AI, automation, advanced manufacturing, digital technologies and low-carbon production, enabling thousands of existing businesses to raise productivity, enter new markets and participate in the industries of the future.

A West Midlands 'Mittelstand' approach will draw on the strengths of the German model while adapting it to the particular capabilities of our region. It would put SMEs at the heart of reindustrialisation by identifying high-potential industrial businesses and providing the patient capital, technology, skills, innovation connections and market access they need to evolve into the region's next generation of industrial champions.

We have already brought together our business support under a single brand, Business Growth West Midlands, and a regional delivery agency, the West Midlands Growth Company, alongside

the successful delivery of Made Smarter. Together with the region's strong professional and business services sector, these provide a foundation for accelerating modernisation across the SME base.

The next stage requires greater coordination and scale, ensuring that West Midlands firms benefit fully from national programmes supporting technology adoption and business growth. Bringing UK government investment in technology adoption in the West Midlands together with regional programmes and stronger links to private investment could provide the catalyst for a new era of SME-led industrial growth.

Alongside this, we need new approaches to financing industrial transition, including specialist lending and equity products designed around the needs of growing and modernising industrial businesses. We already coordinate investment to deepen the region's venture capital market through the £25 million West Midlands Co-Invest Fund and £10 million Midlands Mindforge, deployed alongside private capital. However, there remains scope for much stronger coordination between the development of investible businesses and the supply of patient equity and growth finance.

Reindustrialisation in Action

Samuel Heath

More than 200 years after its foundation, Samuel Heath continues to manufacture high-value brass products from its Birmingham factory, combining traditional metalworking and craft skills with increasingly sophisticated production technology. Made Smarter support has improved the availability of live information from factory machinery, giving managers greater visibility over production and opportunities to improve efficiency. Digital technology is therefore reinforcing rather than replacing the company's established manufacturing expertise, helping it remain competitive while continuing to produce high-value physical products in Birmingham.

Reindustrialisation in action: combining industrial heritage and skilled manufacturing with digital factory systems to sustain competitive urban production.

Reindustrialisation in Action

4T2 Sensors

Birmingham-based 4T2 Sensors develops advanced sensing technology for industrial manufacturing. Its CIPSense system provides real-time measurement during Cleaning-in-Place processes, helping manufacturers reduce cleaning time, water, chemicals and energy use while maintaining product quality and safety. Having proved the technology in food and beverage production, the company is adapting it for pharmaceutical and personal-care manufacturing. WM Supply Chain Transition Programme support is helping 4T2 Sensors navigate the additional regulatory requirements and transfer a locally developed technology between industrial sectors.

Reindustrialisation in action: diffusing industrial technology proven in one sector into higher-value regulated manufacturing, increasing the market reach of regional innovation.

Reindustrialisation in Action

Lawton Tubes

Long-established family manufacturer Lawton Tubes is investing around £20 million in a new Coventry headquarters and manufacturing facility, substantially increasing its productive capacity. The company's copper products serve traditional plumbing and building-services markets but increasingly supply healthcare infrastructure, defence, data centres and other growing sectors. Lawton also exports internationally, demonstrating how an established regional manufacturing capability can find new applications and markets. The investment combines additional physical capacity with diversification, positioning a century-old manufacturer within industries driving future demand.

Reindustrialisation in action: renewing an indigenous manufacturer through investment in productive capacity, exports and diversification into defence, digital infrastructure and healthcare.



Commercialise innovation and accelerate diffusion

The emphasis needs to shift from simply generating innovation to commercialising and diffusing it – ensuring that more of the intellectual property, productive capacity and economic value created through innovation remains in the places that helped catalyse it.

This means supporting innovative firms to access the full range of capabilities they need to scale: not only grant funding, but skills, premises, private finance, networks, demonstrator facilities, and access to new supply chains, procurement opportunities and export markets.

The West Midlands Innovation Board, under independent business leadership, has championed innovation across the region for eight years. It has overseen the West Midlands Innovation Accelerator, which generated the highest level of private co-investment among the national pilot areas and is on course to leverage more than £4 of private investment for every £1 of public funding, alongside the newly announced Local Innovation Partnership Fund.

Our six universities and four Catapult Centres are a differentiator for the region. Successful reindustrialisation will depend upon us harnessing the knowledge

and ideas that exist in the region. Empowering academic collaboration and in a more connected UK, will be critical to establishing a coherent innovation ecosystem.

Catapult Centres will become even more important in the West Midlands' reindustrialisation infrastructure, moving beyond applied R&D to help firms – particularly SMEs – adopt and diffuse new technologies, develop workforce capabilities and translate innovation into productive industrial capacity. Embedding Catapults more deliberately within our clusters and supply chains will connect research, demonstrator facilities, skills and industrial partners, helping the West Midlands capture more of the economic value generated by its innovation.

Prototyping, demonstration and testing infrastructure also needs to expand. The Government's approach to regulatory sandboxes provides an opportunity to accelerate this, allowing businesses, regulators and public partners to test new products and approaches in real-world conditions. Used alongside the region's R&D assets, Catapults and industrial clusters, sandboxes can shorten the journey from innovation to commercial deployment, attract investment and give West Midlands firms a first-mover advantage in emerging markets.

Reindustrialisation in Action

Symbiotex

Wolverhampton-based Symbiotex is developing seaweed-derived biomaterials as biodegradable alternatives to fossil-fuel-based plastics. Crucially, the material is supplied in pellet form and designed to work with existing plastics-processing machinery, potentially allowing manufacturers to adopt lower-carbon materials without replacing entire production systems. An R&D award is supporting development of anti-static packaging for printed-circuit-board transport casings. The opportunity therefore extends beyond a new material to the potential transformation of established plastics-manufacturing processes.

Reindustrialisation in action: using materials innovation to decarbonise an established manufacturing process while creating new products and supply chains.

Reindustrialisation in Action

Ecobat

Walsall-based Ecobat focuses on the collection, diagnosis, dismantling and recycling of batteries, including emerging lithium-ion batteries from electric vehicles and energy storage systems. Significant investment in 2024 enabled its expansion into on-site recycling. This forms part of Ecobat's wider battery recycling network across the United States and Europe and enables the recovery of critical battery materials such as lithium, cobalt and nickel for reuse in future battery production. This supports domestic battery manufacturing and supply chains. End-of-life recovery is a critical part of developing our ecosystem by reducing dependence on raw materials.

Reindustrialisation in action: next-gen circular economy activity building on Walsall's strengths in materials recovery.

Rewire the Workforce System around the worker

Reindustrialisation will only succeed if we rewire the workforce system around people as well as businesses. Alongside supporting firms to grow, we need to give residents a more active stake in economic transformation, ensuring they can access, progress through and benefit from the opportunities created by growth.

This means moving beyond fragmented employment and skills programmes towards a joined-up system that supports people through every stage of their journey – from education and training into employment, progression and lifelong learning. For young people in particular, this means changing perceptions of industrial careers and creating clear technical and vocational pathways from age 14, connected to the industries, occupations and good jobs of the future, with strong links to employers, apprenticeships, further education and higher education.

Our Growth Plan and West Midlands Works provide a clear vision for creating the jobs of the future. Rewiring the State provides the opportunity to align education, skills, employment and workforce planning around that vision in place, enabling residents to move more easily between learning and work while giving employers access to the talent they need.

We are developing dedicated Workforce Plans for our high-growth clusters, building on national Jobs Plans to provide a clearer line of sight between economic opportunity, workforce demand and resident progression.

Delivering this effectively will require even greater regional influence and control over education, skills and employment levers, including technical pathways from age 14 and post-16 education. This will enable us to respond more effectively to changing labour-market demand and create stronger pathways into good jobs, higher skills and sustained progression.

Power Reindustrialisation

Industrialisation has always been shaped by access to power. The next era will be no different. Reindustrialisation will require long-term planning, coordination and investment in the West Midlands' energy system, including grid capacity and connections, local generation, storage and smart energy systems.

Learning from Innovate UK and BCIC's 'Repowering the Black Country' project, we need to treat energy simultaneously as an industrial constraint and a growth opportunity. Securing the affordable, reliable and increasingly low-carbon power required for industrial investment is imperative. At the same time, using the West Midlands' Clean Tech and Smart Energy capabilities to develop and manufacture the technologies required for the energy transition offers a significant 'double benefit' from reindustrialisation.

We have already invested more than £30 million of WMCA funding in helping businesses to decarbonise and reduce energy bills, with a particular focus on

energy-intensive businesses. We have also identified a distinctive regional strength in smart energy systems that complements wider energy generation across the country.

The next stage must be more strategic, ensuring that long-term decisions about powering reindustrialisation are increasingly shaped within the region. The Midlands Engine Energy Security White Paper makes the case for integrated regional energy planning, bringing together industrial demand, Local Area Energy Plans, Local Growth Plans and the emerging Regional Energy Strategic Plan (RESP).

For the West Midlands, this means anticipating where future energy-intensive manufacturing and growth will occur and ensuring that affordable, secure and increasingly low-carbon power is available ahead of demand. Planning now for the industrial economy of 2040 will make energy certainty and resilience central to the region's offer to businesses and investors.

Reindustrialisation in Action

Repowering the Black Country

Repowering the Black Country has developed an approach to industrial decarbonisation suited to an economy dominated by thousands of manufacturing SMEs rather than a few large emitters. Its model combines factory-level energy efficiency with shared zero-carbon energy hubs, renewable generation, resource efficiency and circular supply chains. The programme helped unlock more than £25 million for industrial energy-efficiency activity and provided foundations for further work through the Black Country Industrial Cluster. Its significance lies in treating energy infrastructure and industrial competitiveness as interconnected challenges.

Reindustrialisation in action: developing a place-based model through which dispersed manufacturing SMEs can collectively access the energy, infrastructure and investment needed for a low-carbon economy.

Enable social transmission

We must make the connection between reindustrialisation and prosperity explicit rather than assuming that economic growth will automatically reach households and communities. Some of the interventions that shape health, wellbeing and quality of life may not immediately appear to be part of an industrial strategy, but inclusion and prosperity must be seen as vital in a new age of industrialisation; we therefore, must be strong and deliberate in forming connections between these two agendas.

This requires us to align the design of skills, employment, procurement, transport, wellbeing and place-based interventions so that higher business productivity is accompanied by better jobs, higher wages, greater household security, improved health and stronger communities and public services across the region.

The West Midlands Growth Plan and West Midlands Works already emphasise the importance of creating the good, high-value jobs of the future. We have also begun to align good-work approaches, social value, the social economy and community-led business support more closely with the highest-growth-potential parts of the economy.

Our community-led business support can help ensure that growth reaches communities, but it remains relatively small in scale, as do our Social Economy programmes. We will seek to scale these approaches while establishing much closer links between reindustrialisation, wellbeing and prevention.

Central to this will be learning from the West Midlands' own industrial history. Successful industrial economies have never been built by factories, technology and infrastructure alone. Philanthropy, public-service innovation, good housing, education, health, and strong social and cultural infrastructure have historically helped translate industrial success into wider prosperity. Reindustrialisation gives us the opportunity to build these connections deliberately into the modern industrial economy from the outset.



Rewiring for Reindustrialisation: New ways of working

Rewiring the State, devolution and the new relationships and responsibilities they create will be fundamental to accelerating reindustrialisation in the West Midlands.

It will demand new forms of collaboration between central, regional and local government, business, higher and further education, and other institutions. This means working around a shared set of priorities, underpinned by the Growth Plan, while recognising the benefits of stronger regional leadership and coordination.

The West Midlands will increasingly operate through shared ambitions, combining the scale and resources of national government with regional economic leadership, local knowledge and the capabilities of industry.

This means moving beyond transactional relationships between tiers of government towards a long-term partnership in which

powers, resources, intelligence and accountability are shared. This will give the region greater freedom to integrate interventions around its industrial strengths, while providing government with a clearer mechanism for delivering national growth, resilience and industrial strategy through place.

Project MADE provides an important, differentiation foundation for this approach, demonstrating the potential to organise partners around the needs of the region's industrial economy rather than traditional institutional or departmental boundaries. The next phase will build on this model, creating stronger joint delivery arrangements between government and the West Midlands and aligning investment, innovation, skills, infrastructure and procurement behind common reindustrialisation priorities.

Project MADE

Project MADE is an industry-led, ten-year plan to establish the West Midlands as the UK's leading advanced manufacturing supercluster. It seeks to better connect the region's exceptional manufacturing base, supply chains, universities and applied R&D assets, turning innovation into scaled production, investment and high-value jobs. By 2035, its ambition is to support £44 billion of annual output, 50,000 new jobs and £1.6 billion of investment.

Project MADE provides an important delivery platform for the Reindustrialisation Blueprint. Its demand-led approach to connecting innovation, supply chains and production can help deliver the Blueprint's ambitions for an Industrial Supply Chain Operating System, accelerated SME modernisation and innovation diffusion, while the wider Blueprint complements MADE through action on energy, finance, workforce transition, economic security and ensuring that industrial growth translates into higher incomes and prosperity across West Midlands communities.

To begin this process, there are five areas where we can build on existing momentum, using new powers and relationships to accelerate the evolution of our industrial economy.

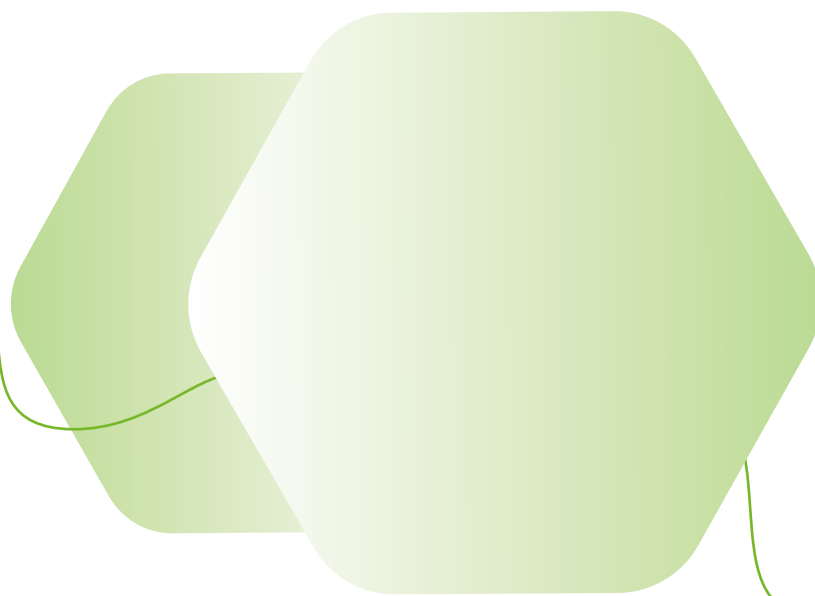
Investment and competitiveness

We are already working to blend and deploy capital flexibly from a range of public finance institutions, directing investment towards the sectors, sites and infrastructure needed to support reindustrialisation. This means bringing together the activities of the National Wealth Fund, British Business Bank, Homes England, Office for Investment, Great British Energy, Innovate UK and the Crown Estate in support of this Blueprint.

Our local authorities provide detailed intelligence on specific locations and businesses, creating stronger routes from local opportunities to major investment. Their day-to-day relationships with businesses also provide real-time insight into sentiment, investment intentions and barriers to growth, enabling the region to respond more quickly to issues affecting productivity and competitiveness.

The next stage is to deepen our partnership with government to:

- Devolve British Business Bank functions and funding to the West Midlands, enabling the region to assemble public and private capital around its reindustrialisation priorities and recycle returns into future investment.
- Commit to the West Midlands as one of Europe's leading battery clusters, supporting the evolution of sites and assets serving automotive, defence and other advanced manufacturing sectors.
- Secure trading arrangements with the EU that ensure initiatives such as Made in Europe do not undermine the competitiveness of West Midlands industry, particularly in relation to key manufacturing inputs and supply chains.
- Create stronger direct links between West Midlands industry and government, including through a Reindustrialisation Envoy working to Project MADE's recommendations that unlock private investment and growth.



Reindustrialisation in Action

West Midlands and WestTech London, convened by the University of Warwick and Imperial College London

The West Midlands and the WestTech London innovation ecosystems have come together to create a pathway from research and invention to scale-up and production. Brought together by the University of Warwick and Imperial College London, with partners across the West Midlands and WestTech London, the Scale-up Pathway links West London's strengths in research, deep tech, entrepreneurship and investment with the West Midlands' capabilities in applied R&D, engineering, advanced manufacturing and industrial scale-up.

The Pathway will create a supported route through which technologies, companies and talent can move between two leading regional ecosystems – helping ideas progress from research and start-up through demonstration, scale-up and commercial production.

HS2 will support this West Midlands-West London pathway, creating a new innovation line connecting Arden Cross Health Tech Campus and Birmingham Knowledge Quarter at Curzon Street with Old Oak Innovation Cluster, enhancing the connectivity between the two complementary clusters.

Reindustrialisation in action: connecting the West Midlands and WestTech London innovation ecosystems capabilities, creating a pathway from research and invention to scale-up and production, with HS2 ultimately unlocking its full potential to turn complementary regional strengths into productive growth.

Innovation and R&D

The breadth of research expertise, innovation assets and testing infrastructure in the West Midlands is a central pillar of the region's reindustrialisation. Together, these capabilities give the region strengths across the modern industrial lifecycle, from research and development through demonstration and commercialisation to industrial-scale production.

The opportunity is now to establish the West Midlands as a national demonstrator in key markets, particularly future mobility and defence, connecting Catapults, universities, regulatory sandboxes, public procurement, industrial sites and growth finance to accelerate the journey from R&D to industrial scale. Our university partners are already starting to think differently about their role; a new partnership between University of Warwick and Imperial College, is the first of its kind to recognise the power of connection between the West Midlands and London via HS2.

Devolution enables us to better convene and empower our innovation assets and institutions to go further and faster.

To support government should:

- Devolve an additional allocation of near-to-market innovation funding to the West Midlands from 2027-28, rather than waiting until 2031.
- Give WMCA greater influence over the deployment of UKRI and other nationally funded applied R&D activity in the region, particularly where it supports commercialisation, industrial adoption and scaling.
- Establish a West Midlands Future Mobility regulatory sandbox, initially focused on very light rail and connected and autonomous mobility technologies.
- Establish a West Midlands AI and Robotics regulatory sandbox, accelerating deployment in healthcare, energy infrastructure, defence and dual-use technologies, the built environment, manufacturing and logistics.

Reindustrialisation in Action

MIRA Technology Park

MIRA Technology Park brings together vehicle engineering, testing, research, skills and commercial development around one of the UK's most significant automotive technology assets. The site combines HORIBA MIRA's specialist engineering and testing infrastructure with a cluster of mobility and technology businesses, providing access to facilities that would be prohibitively expensive to replicate individually. This combination enables companies to move more easily between R&D, testing, validation and commercialisation, helping retain more of the value generated by automotive and mobility innovation within the region.

Reindustrialisation in action: creating an industrial ecosystem in which shared testing, engineering, skills and commercial infrastructure accelerate the transition from technology development towards production.

Procurement and markets

The West Midlands Growth Plan already directly supports our high-growth clusters to adapt to new markets and opportunities across both the public and private sectors. The £50 million Supplier Readiness and Transformation Fund is helping firms adapt to the transition towards electrified vehicle supply chains, while the Supply Chain Transition Programme has supported 70 SMEs to diversify into new, higher-value markets by applying their capabilities to emerging supply chain opportunities.

The opportunity is now to use public procurement more deliberately to drive reindustrialisation, giving local high-growth businesses greater visibility of major defence, NHS, transport, energy and infrastructure procurement pipelines. This starts with partnering with government to:

- Establish a Midlands Defence Deal, including £200 million of Defence Investment Plan funding deployed in the Midlands and mechanisms to connect regional suppliers with future defence requirements.
- Devolve £300 million of automotive, aerospace and related manufacturing supply chain funding over four years, allowing business investment, innovation, skills and infrastructure support to be integrated around regional industrial priorities.
- Develop supplier capability alongside procurement, working with WMCA to ensure SMEs can meet the accreditation, technology, finance and capacity requirements needed to compete for and win major contracts.

Reindustrialisation in Action

Coventry Very Light Rail

Coventry Very Light Rail demonstrates how public infrastructure requirements can stimulate industrial innovation. Coventry City Council and WMG have developed a light-rail concept intended to reduce the cost and disruption associated with traditional tram systems, combining a lightweight vehicle with innovative track technology. The project creates opportunities in vehicle manufacture, materials, engineering, infrastructure and specialist supply chains. Successful commercialisation could provide a lower-cost transit option for other cities, turning a local transport challenge into an exportable manufactured system.

Reindustrialisation in action: using regional demand and public procurement as a platform for developing new transport technology, manufacturing capability and exportable intellectual property.

Coventry VeryLightRail



Employment and skills

WMCA and our constituent authorities have already developed a deep partnership to enable as many people as possible to participate in the opportunities created by reindustrialisation. This includes multi-agency West Midlands Works Hubs in every local authority area, integrating employment, skills, health, careers and wider support around residents and local industrial opportunities. The 3,000 Futures programme is also creating structured pathways for young people into the industries, occupations and leadership roles that will shape the region's industrial future.

The next stage is to devolve greater responsibility to the local level, enabling support to be designed more closely around the needs of individuals, businesses and places. This starts immediately

with investment in a West Midlands Apprenticeship Brokerage Service, connecting employers, young people and adults with apprenticeship opportunities in industries critical to reindustrialisation. The next stage would see government:

- Accelerate the devolution of employment and skills powers and funding, enabling the West Midlands to build an integrated industrial skills and employment system around its priority clusters.
- Co-invest in a West Midlands Talent Transition Fund, helping workers affected by industrial restructuring to retrain, move into adjacent industries, join SMEs or establish new businesses.



Infrastructure and place

The evolution of East Birmingham MDC, Coventry's GreenPower Park, Arden Cross, the Wolverhampton Green Innovation Corridor and Junction 10 in Walsall, alongside a network of specialist industrial sites, town centres and high streets, will provide the locations for innovation, scaling and industrial adaptation.

The West Midlands Local Transport Plan will make these places more accessible and provide safe, sustainable public transport connecting residents to opportunity. HS2 will reshape the region's economic geography, creating new opportunities for commercial and research collaboration with London and strengthening connections between complementary economic assets.

The evolution of Local Plans and our Regional Spatial Development Strategy provides an opportunity to create a shared long-term commitment to industrial land, energy, grid capacity, transport, housing and digital infrastructure. The Regional

Energy Strategic Plan will explicitly reflect the future energy requirements of reindustrialisation, including anticipated industrial electricity demand, grid connections and strategic employment locations.

Alongside this momentum, there are two areas where government can accelerate both innovation and game-changing infrastructure investment:

- Designate the West Midlands as the national demonstrator for the Neighbourhood Energy Transition Fund, using local deployment to stimulate clean-energy supply chains, reduce energy costs and create skilled employment.
- Designate the West Midlands as a Light Rail Accelerator, supporting technologies developed in the region to move from publicly enabled demonstration through commercial deployment to export.

Reindustrialisation in Action

Walsall Growth Zone at M6 J10

Walsall Growth Zone comprises over 64 hectares of brownfield land with capacity for 1.9 million sqft of high quality industrial floorspace. Nearly £140m has been invested by DfT, National Highways and WMCA in strategic road infrastructure and a new station at Darlaston. This focuses on providing the right employment land, with enabling infrastructure, to provide the platform for inward investment and local business expansion. 1 million sqft is in delivery, with £100m of investment at SPARK by Origin, a joint venture between HBD and Feldberg Capital, nearing completion of 620,000 sqft of high quality floorspace by 2027. Walsall Council's business rates retention borrowing mechanism up to 2049 will fund c.£80 million of remediation and enabling investment to unlock delivery with the private sector. The council is proactively enabling the next 900,000 sqft of floorspace, including its Gasholders development of mid-size units suited to local businesses.

Reindustrialisation in action: creating oven-ready, high-quality sites for inward investment, local grow-on space and logistics for the Wolverhampton to Walsall Growth Cluster.





West Midlands
Combined Authority