

3.0 WISE August 2024 Annex

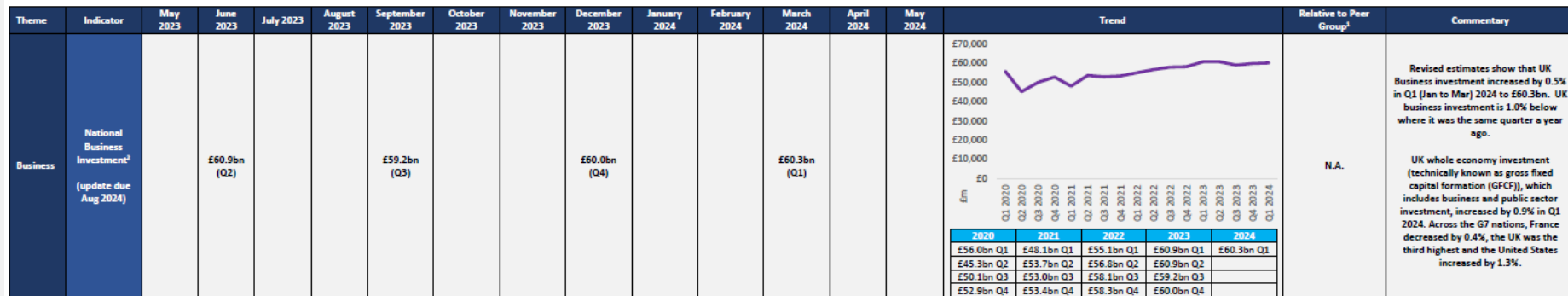
3.1 WMCA Dashboard (prepared by the Economic Intelligence Unit)

WMCA ECONOMIC DASHBOARD – JULY 2024



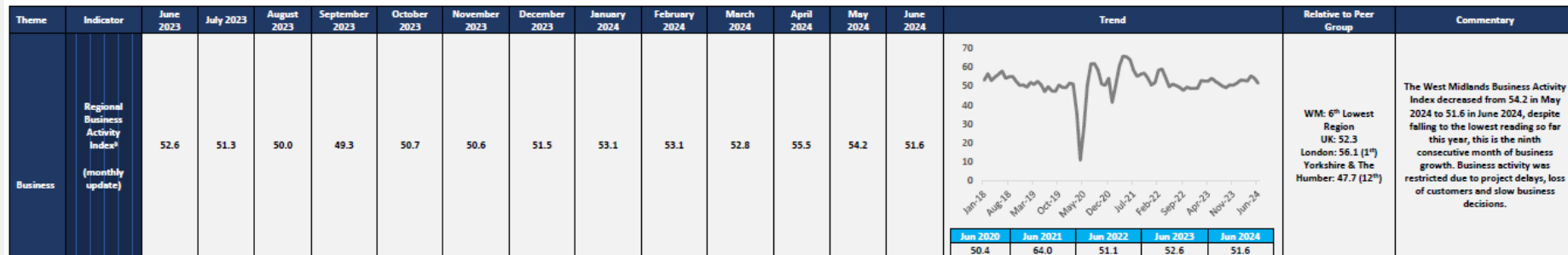
National

Six Weekly Business Dashboard



Regional

Monthly Business Dashboard



The Dashboard has been updated to reflect the WMCA 7 Met. geography where available.

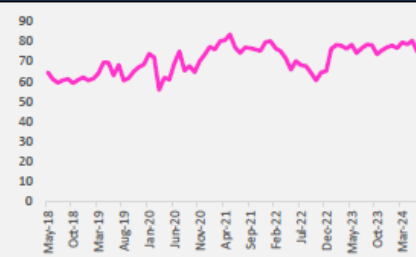

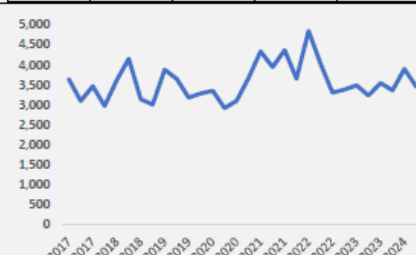
¹ Comparisons vary depending on geography; Birmingham has been compared to Bristol, Cardiff, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester and Newcastle. Due to data availability, the WM 7 Met. has been either compared to other combined authorities (following what is available Greater London Authority is not always included), (traditional combined authorities are Greater Manchester CA (GMCA), Sheffield City Region, West Yorkshire CA, Liverpool City Region CA, Tees Valley CA, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough CA, West of England CA, North East CA and North of Tyne CA, however for claimants/ONS labour market activity new CAs are now available meaning the 11 will be - GMCA, South Yorkshire, West Yorkshire, Liverpool City Region, Tees Valley, WMCA, Cambridgeshire & Peterborough, West of England, York & North Yorkshire, East Midlands and the North East) or NUTS 2 / ITL 2 geography. The West Midlands region has been compared to other regions in the UK. No comparators have been included for UK-wide.

² Office for National Statistics (ONS). Business investment in the UK: January to March 2024 provisional results – released June 2024.

³ NatWest, UK regional growth tracker report for June 2024 – released July 2024.

WMCA ECONOMIC DASHBOARD – JULY 2024



Theme	Indicator	June 2023	July 2023	August 2023	September 2023	October 2023	November 2023	December 2023	January 2024	February 2024	March 2024	April 2024	May 2024	June 2024	Trend	Relative to Peer Group	Commentary										
Business	Regional Future Business Activity Index ⁴ (monthly update)	74.4	76.8	78.5	78.4	73.8	75.7	77.2	78.1	76.8	79.7	78.7	80.5	74.8	 <table><tr><th>Jun 2020</th><th>Jun 2021</th><th>Jun 2022</th><th>Jun 2023</th><th>Jun 2024</th></tr><tr><td>69.1</td><td>77.1</td><td>70.3</td><td>74.4</td><td>74.8</td></tr></table>	Jun 2020	Jun 2021	Jun 2022	Jun 2023	Jun 2024	69.1	77.1	70.3	74.4	74.8	WM: Highest Region South East: 7(2 nd) Scotland: 62.1 (12 th)	The West Midlands Future Business Activity Index decreased from 80.5 in May 2024 to 74.8 in June 2024, the latest reading is an eight-month low. However, firms were still optimistic due to product diversification, expectation of lower interest rates, client demand and marketing.
	Jun 2020	Jun 2021	Jun 2022	Jun 2023	Jun 2024																						
	69.1	77.1	70.3	74.4	74.8																						
WMCA (7 Met.) Enterprise Deaths ⁵ (quarterly – update due Oct 2024)	3,445 (Q2)			2,825 (Q3)			3,600 (Q4)			4,040 (Q1)			2,985 (Q2)	 <table><tr><th>Q2 2020</th><th>Q2 2021</th><th>Q2 2022</th><th>Q2 2023</th><th>Q2 2024</th></tr><tr><td>2,590</td><td>3,205</td><td>4,190</td><td>3,445</td><td>2,985</td></tr></table>	Q2 2020	Q2 2021	Q2 2022	Q2 2023	Q2 2024	2,590	3,205	4,190	3,445	2,985	WMCA: 2 nd Highest Met. Area / 6 Greater Manchester: 3,215 (1 st) Tyne & Wear: 840 (6 th)	In Q2 2024, there were 2,985 business deaths in the WMCA area. A decrease of 26.1% when compared to Q1 2024 (UK -14.0%). Quarter on year quarter analysis (between Q2 2023 and Q2 2024) shows a 13.4% decrease in business deaths across the WMCA area (UK -10.2%).	
Q2 2020	Q2 2021	Q2 2022	Q2 2023	Q2 2024																							
2,590	3,205	4,190	3,445	2,985																							
WMCA (7 Met.) Enterprise Births ⁶ (quarterly – update due Oct 2024)	3,230 (Q2)			3,545 (Q3)			3,360 (Q4)			3,900 (Q1)			3,445 (Q2)	 <table><tr><th>Q2 2020</th><th>Q2 2021</th><th>Q2 2022</th><th>Q2 2023</th><th>Q2 2024</th></tr><tr><td>2,915</td><td>3,945</td><td>4,025</td><td>3,230</td><td>3,445</td></tr></table>	Q2 2020	Q2 2021	Q2 2022	Q2 2023	Q2 2024	2,915	3,945	4,025	3,230	3,445	WMCA: 2 nd Highest Met. Area / 6 Greater Manchester: 3,790 (1 st) Tyne & Wear: 1,130 (6 th)	In Q2 2024, there were 3,445 business births in the WMCA area. A decrease of 11.7% when compared to Q1 2024 (UK -3.7%). Quarter on year quarter analysis (between Q2 2023 and Q2 2024) shows a 6.7% increase in business births across the WMCA area (UK +6.9%).	
Q2 2020	Q2 2021	Q2 2022	Q2 2023	Q2 2024																							
2,915	3,945	4,025	3,230	3,445																							

⁴ NatWest, UK regional growth tracker report for June 2024 – released July 2024.⁵ ONS, Business demography, quarterly experimental statistics, low-level geographic breakdown, UK – released July 2024. The chart covers to Q2 2024.⁶ ONS, Business demography, quarterly experimental statistics, low-level geographic breakdown, UK – released July 2024. The chart covers to Q2 2024.

WMCA ECONOMIC DASHBOARD – JULY 2024



Annual Business Dashboard

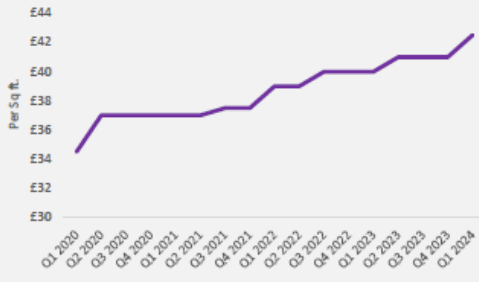
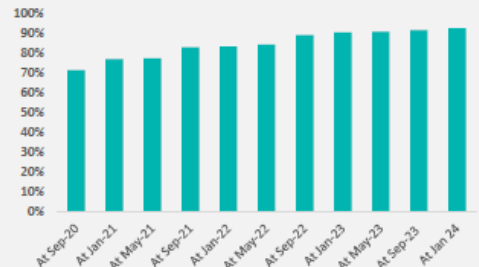
Theme	Indicator	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Trend	Relative to Peer Group	Commentary
Business	WMCA (7 Met.) High Growth Enterprises ⁷ (annual – update due Nov 2024)	430	455	415	380	340	345		WMCA: 3 rd Highest CA GMCA: 490 (1 st) Tees Valley: 70 (10 th)	The latest available data for the WMCA area shows that the number of high growth enterprises has increased after 3 consecutive years of declines. There was a total of 345 high growth enterprises in the WMCA area in 2022, an increase of 1.5%, the UK increased by 7.4% since 2021.
	WMCA (7 Met.) Enterprise Births ⁸ (annual – update due Nov 2024)	13,795	15,785	15,310	14,125	16,550	15,435		WMCA: 2 nd Highest CA GMCA: 16,070 (1 st) Tees Valley: 2,470 (10 th)	Enterprise births in the WMCA area decreased by 6.7% (-1,115) since 2021 to 15,435 in 2022. Over this period, the UK decreased by 7.4%.
	WMCA (7 Met.) Enterprise Deaths ⁹ (annual – update due Nov 2024)	13,735	13,670	12,080	13,830	13,365	14,700		WMCA: 2 nd Highest CA GMCA: 15,530 (1 st) Tees Valley: 2,690 (10 th)	Enterprise deaths in the WMCA area increased by 10.0% (+1,335) since 2021 to 14,700 in 2022. Over this period, the UK increased by 5.2%.
	WMCA (7 Met.) 3 Year Enterprise Survival Rates ¹⁰ (annual – update due Nov 2024)		52.8% (2015 birth)	43.4% (2016 birth)	47.7% (2017 birth)	46.9% (2018 birth)	50.4% (2019 birth)		WMCA: Lowest CA UK: 55.9% West of England: 59.2% (1 st) Liverpool City Region: 51.7% (9 th)	The WMCA area performs better on short-term survival (1 year enterprise survival rates are higher than the UK average), but lags behind when it comes to longer-term survival (2-5 years enterprise survival rates in the UK are higher). Of the 15,310 enterprise births in 2019 in the WMCA area, 50.4% (7,710) were still active after 3 years compared to 55.9% for the UK.
	WM 7 Met. Innovation Active Businesses ¹¹ (Biennial – update due May 2026)		36.8% (2016-18)		45.0% (2018-20)		31.7% (2020-22)		WM 7 Met.: 8 th Lowest/ 40 UK: 36.3% Berkshire, Buckinghamshire & Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire, Wiltshire & Bath/Bristol area: 45.0% (Joint 1 st) Outer London – East & North East: 27.0% (40 th)	Trends in the proportion of businesses that are innovation active continues to fluctuate. Following the national trend (decreasing from 44.9% in 2018-2020 to 36.3% in 2020-22), the WM 7 Met. Area decreased from 45.0% in 2018-20 to 31.7% in 2020-22.

⁷ ONS, Business Demography (provisional for 2022), UK 2022 – released November 2023⁸ ONS, Business Demography (provisional for 2022), UK 2022 – released November 2023⁹ ONS, Business Demography (provisional for 2022), UK 2022 – released November 2023¹⁰ ONS, Business Demography (provisional for 2022), UK 2022 – released November 2023¹¹ Department for Business and Trade, UK Innovation Survey 2023 – released May 2024



WMCA ECONOMIC DASHBOARD – JULY 2024

Quarterly Place Dashboard

Theme	Indicator	March 2023	April 2023	May 2023	June 2023	July 2023	August 2023	September 2023	October 2023	November 2023	December 2023	January 2024	February 2024	March 2024	Trend	Relative to Peer Group	Commentary																									
Place	Birmingham City Centre Rent ¹² (Quarterly – update due Aug 2024)	£40.00 Per Sq ft (Q1)			£41.00 Per Sq ft (Q2)			£41.00 Per Sq ft (Q3)			£41.00 Per Sq ft (Q4)			£42.50 Per Sq ft (Q1)	 <table><tr><th>2020</th><th>2021</th><th>2022</th><th>2023</th><th>2024</th></tr><tr><td>£34.50 Q1</td><td>£37.00 Q1</td><td>£39.00 Q1</td><td>£40.00 Q1</td><td>£42.50 Q1</td></tr><tr><td>£37.00 Q2</td><td>£37.00 Q2</td><td>£39.00 Q2</td><td>£41.00 Q2</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>£37.00 Q3</td><td>£37.50 Q3</td><td>£40.00 Q3</td><td>£41.00 Q3</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>£37.00 Q4</td><td>£37.50 Q4</td><td>£40.00 Q4</td><td>£41.00 Q4</td><td></td></tr></table>	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	£34.50 Q1	£37.00 Q1	£39.00 Q1	£40.00 Q1	£42.50 Q1	£37.00 Q2	£37.00 Q2	£39.00 Q2	£41.00 Q2		£37.00 Q3	£37.50 Q3	£40.00 Q3	£41.00 Q3		£37.00 Q4	£37.50 Q4	£40.00 Q4	£41.00 Q4		Birmingham: 4 th Highest / 9 Bristol: £46.00 (1 st) Cardiff: £25.00 (9 th)	The city's prime rent increased on the quarter to £42.50 per sq. ft and was up 3.7% on last year.
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024																																					
£34.50 Q1	£37.00 Q1	£39.00 Q1	£40.00 Q1	£42.50 Q1																																						
£37.00 Q2	£37.00 Q2	£39.00 Q2	£41.00 Q2																																							
£37.00 Q3	£37.50 Q3	£40.00 Q3	£41.00 Q3																																							
£37.00 Q4	£37.50 Q4	£40.00 Q4	£41.00 Q4																																							
	WMCA (7 Met.) Gigabit broadband Connectivity ¹³ (tri-annual – update due Summer 2024)			90.6% premises (As of May 2023)				91.3% premises (As of Sep 2023)				92.3% premises (As of Jan 2024)			 <table><tr><th>At Sep-20</th><th>At Jan-21</th><th>At May-21</th><th>At Sep-21</th><th>At Jan-22</th><th>At May-22</th><th>At Sep-22</th><th>At Jan-23</th><th>At May-23</th><th>At Sep-23</th><th>At Jan 24</th></tr><tr><td>70%</td><td>78%</td><td>78%</td><td>82%</td><td>82%</td><td>82%</td><td>88%</td><td>88%</td><td>88%</td><td>90%</td><td>92.3%</td></tr></table>	At Sep-20	At Jan-21	At May-21	At Sep-21	At Jan-22	At May-22	At Sep-22	At Jan-23	At May-23	At Sep-23	At Jan 24	70%	78%	78%	82%	82%	82%	88%	88%	88%	90%	92.3%	WMCA: Highest CA UK: 78.5% Tees Valley: 91.4% (2 nd) North East: 73.6% (10 th)	As of January 2024, 92.3% of premises in the WMCA area had gigabit broadband availability - significantly above the UK-wide figure of 78.5%.			
At Sep-20	At Jan-21	At May-21	At Sep-21	At Jan-22	At May-22	At Sep-22	At Jan-23	At May-23	At Sep-23	At Jan 24																																
70%	78%	78%	82%	82%	82%	88%	88%	88%	90%	92.3%																																

¹² Avison Young, The Big Nine – created May 2024.

¹³ Ofcom, connected nations – released April 2024.

WMCA ECONOMIC DASHBOARD – JULY 2024



Quarterly Economy Dashboard

Regional

Theme	Indicator	March 2023	April 2023	May 2023	June 2023	July 2023	August 2023	September 2023	October 2023	November 2023	December 2023	January 2024	February 2024	March 2024	Trend	Relative to Peer Group	Commentary
Economy	Regional Exports in Goods ¹⁴ (quarterly – update due September 2024)	£31.6bn (Year to Q1 2023)			£33.4bn (Year to Q2 2023)			£34.1bn (Year to Q3 2023)			£34.9bn (Full Year 2023)			£35.4bn (Year to Q1 2024)	<p>Year to Q1 2020: £23.5bn Year to Q1 2021: £23.5bn Year to Q1 2022: £25.5bn Year to Q1 2023: £31.5bn Year to Q1 2024: £35.4bn</p>	WM – 3 rd Highest Region South East: 11.4% (1 st) Northern Ireland: 3.1% (12 th)	Since the year ending Q1 2023, the West Midlands region's total value in goods exports increased by £3.8bn (+11.9%) to £35.4bn in the year ending Q1 2024. The overall value of UK trade in goods exports decreased by 5.9% to £360.7bn. The West Midlands had a trade deficit of £6.7bn in year ending Q1 2024.
	Regional Imports in Goods ¹⁵ (quarterly – update due September 2024)	£42.7bn (Year to Q1 2023)			£42.5bn (Year to Q2 2023)			£42.7bn (Year to Q3 2023)			£42.5bn (Full Year 2023)			£42.1bn (Year to Q1 2024)	<p>Year to Q1 2020: £29.5bn Year to Q1 2021: £29.5bn Year to Q1 2022: £36.5bn Year to Q1 2023: £42.5bn Year to Q1 2024: £42.1bn</p>	WM – 5 th Highest Region South East: 18.6% (1 st) Northern Ireland: 1.6% (12 th)	Since the year ending Q1 2023, the value of West Midlands region imports decreased by £616m (-1.4%) to £42.1bn in the year ending Q1 2024. UK-wide total imports decreased by 8.7% to £579.3bn.

¹⁴ HMRC, UK regional trade in goods statistics – released June 2024. Data is not comparable across the dashboard.¹⁵ HMRC, UK regional trade in goods statistics – released June 2024. Data is not comparable across the dashboard.

WMCA ECONOMIC DASHBOARD – JULY 2024



Annual Economy Dashboard

Theme	Indicator	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Trend	Relative to Peer Group	Commentary
Economy	WMCA FDI Projects ¹⁶ (annual – update due June 2025)							70		WM 7 Met.: 3 rd Highest IFL 2 / 29 Inner London - West: 333 (1 st) Southern Scotland: 11 (29 th)	<p>New geographical data shows in 2023/24 there were 70 single site FDI Projects in the WMCA area.</p> <p>Data has been suppressed for the Black Country LEP. However, insights for Coventry & Warwickshire LEP shows there was a decrease by 12.0% (-6) to 44 and Greater Birmingham & Solihull LEP decreased by 22.4% (-17) to 59.</p> <p>The UK had an overall decrease of 6.0% to 1,555.</p>
	WMCA FDI New Jobs ¹⁷ (annual – update due June 2025)							6,082		WM 7 Met.: 2 nd Highest IFL 2 / 29 Inner London - West: 12,824 (1 st) Lincolnshire: 182 (29 th)	<p>New geographical data shows in 2023/24 there 6,082 new jobs created from FDI Projects in the WMCA area.</p> <p>Data has been suppressed for the Black Country LEP. However, insights for Coventry & Warwickshire LEP shows there was a decrease by 32.4% (-1,034) to 2,161 and Greater Birmingham & Solihull LEP increased by 31.4% (+1,187) to 4,963.</p> <p>The UK had an overall decrease of 10.1% to 71,478.</p>
	WMCA (7 Met.) Smoothed GVA per Hour ¹⁸ (Annual – update due June/July 2025)	£31.70	£32.40	£33.30	£34.10	£34.50				WMCA: 4 th Lowest CA / 10 UK: £39.70 West of England: £39.60 (1 st) South Yorkshire Mayoral CA: £31.60 (10 th)	<p>In 2022, GVA per hour in the WMCA area was £34.50. Since 2021, the WMCA area increased by 1.2% (+£0.40) and the UK increased by 1.5%. When compared to 2019, GVA per hour in the WMCA area increased by 6.5% (+£2.10) while the UK increased by 8.5%.</p> <p>In 2022, UK GVA per hour was £39.70 meaning the WMCA area had a shortfall of £5.20.</p>

¹⁶ Department for Business and Trade (DBT), inward investment results – released June 2024.¹⁷ DBT, inward investment results – released June 2024.¹⁸ ONS, regional and subregional labour productivity – released June 2024, please note Greater London Authority has been excluded for the peer group.

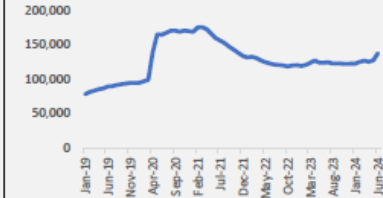
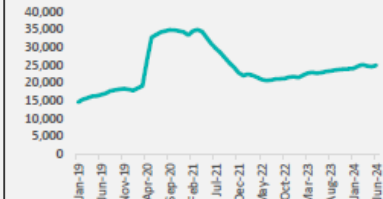
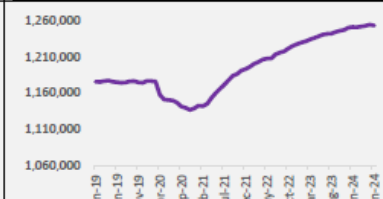

WMCA ECONOMIC DASHBOARD – JULY 2024

Theme	Indicator	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Trend	Relative to Peer Group	Commentary
	WMCA (7 Met.) Total GVA – Chained Volume Measures in 2019 Money Value¹⁹ (Annual – update due TBC 2025)	£70.6bn	£69.8bn	£61.0bn	£66.2bn	£68.9bn				WMCA: 2 nd Highest CA / 10 GMCA: £81.5bn (1 st) Tees Valley CA: £14.4bn (11 th)	Continuing the economic recovery following the Covid-19 pandemic, the WMCA area total GVA increased from £66.2bn in 2021 to £68.9bn in 2022. This equated to a 4.1% (+£2.7bn) annual increase which matched the UK growth rate.
Economy	WMCA (7 Met.) Exports in Services²⁰ (Annual – update due TBC 2024)	£7.9bn	£8.2bn	£7.4bn	£7.3bn					WM 7 Met.: 11 th Highest ITL 2 / 31 Inner London - West: £96.5bn (1 st) Cornwall & Isles of Scilly: £562m (36 th)	Since the year ending 2020, the WMCA's total value in service exports decreased by £123m (-1.7%) to £7.3bn in 2021. The overall value of UK trade in service exports increased, by 6.8% (to £330.7bn) in 2021. The WMCA had a trade surplus of £3.6bn in 2021.
	WMCA (7 Met.) Imports in Services²¹ (Annual – update due TBC 2024)	£3.8bn	£4.1bn	£4.0bn	£3.6bn					WM 7 Met.: 13 th Highest ITL 2 / 41 Inner London - West: £38.1bn (1 st) Cornwall & Isles of Scilly: £170m (36 th)	Since 2020, the value of WMCA imports decreased by £408m (-10.2%) to £3.6bn in 2021. UK-wide total imports increased by 12.5% to £189.6bn.

¹⁹ ONS, Regional economic activity by gross domestic product, UK: 1998 to 2022 – released April 2024.²⁰ ONS, International trade in UK nations, regions and cities: 2021 – released June 2023.²¹ ONS, International trade in UK nations, regions and cities: 2021 – released June 2023.

WMCA ECONOMIC DASHBOARD – JULY 2024

Monthly People Dashboard

Theme	Indicator	June 2023	July 2023	August 2023	September 2023	October 2023	November 2023	December 2023	January 2024	February 2024	March 2024	April 2024	May 2024	June 2024	Trend	Relative to Peer Group	Commentary										
People	WMCA (7 Met.) Claimants (16+) ²² (monthly update)	124,225 (6.7% of Pop. aged 16-64)	124,505 (6.8% of Pop. aged 16-64)	123,075 (6.7% of Pop. aged 16-64)	123,025 (6.7% of Pop. aged 16-64)	122,825 (6.7%, of Pop. aged 16-64)	122,440 (6.6% of Pop. aged 16-64)	122,735 (6.7% of Pop. aged 16-64)	122,890 (6.7% of Pop. aged 16-64)	125,425 (6.8% of Pop. aged 16-64)	127,035 (6.9% of Pop. aged 16-64)	127,435 (6.8% of Pop. aged 16-64)	127,730 (6.9% of Pop. aged 16-64)	138,080 (7.5% of Pop. aged 16-64)	 <table><tr><th>Jun 2020</th><th>Jun 2021</th><th>Jun 2022</th><th>Jun 2023</th><th>Jun 2024</th></tr><tr><td>164,985</td><td>159,730</td><td>123,120</td><td>124,225</td><td>138,080</td></tr></table>	Jun 2020	Jun 2021	Jun 2022	Jun 2023	Jun 2024	164,985	159,730	123,120	124,225	138,080	WMCA: Highest CA UK: 3.9% GMCA: 5.4% (2 nd) York & North Yorkshire: 2.0% (10 th)	There were 138,080 claimants in the WMCA area in June 2024. Since May 2024, there has been an increase of 8.1% (+10,350) claimants in the WMCA, the UK increased by 3.7% When compared to June 2023, the WMCA increased by 11.2% (+13,855), the UK increased by 8.3%.
	Jun 2020	Jun 2021	Jun 2022	Jun 2023	Jun 2024																						
	164,985	159,730	123,120	124,225	138,080																						
	WMCA (7 Met.) Youth Claimants (18-24) ²³ (monthly update)	22,855 (8.0% of Pop. aged 18-24)	23,150 (8.2% of Pop. aged 18-24)	23,325 (8.2% of Pop. aged 18-24)	23,580 (8.3% of Pop. aged 18-24)	23,745 (8.4% of Pop. aged 18-24)	23,895 (8.4% of Pop. aged 18-24)	23,955 (8.4% of Pop. aged 18-24)	24,035 (8.5% of Pop. aged 18-24)	24,675 (8.7% of Pop. aged 18-24)	25,100 (8.8% of Pop. aged 18-24)	24,745 (8.7% of Pop. aged 18-24)	24,555 (8.6% of Pop. aged 18-24)	24,905 (8.8% of Pop. aged 18-24)	 <table><tr><th>Jun 2020</th><th>Jun 2021</th><th>Jun 2022</th><th>Jun 2023</th><th>Jun 2024</th></tr><tr><td>33,530</td><td>30,975</td><td>20,675</td><td>22,855</td><td>24,905</td></tr></table>	Jun 2020	Jun 2021	Jun 2022	Jun 2023	Jun 2024	33,530	30,975	20,675	22,855	24,905	WMCA: Highest CA UK: 5.0% Tees Valley: 7.6% (2 nd) York & North Yorkshire: 2.5% (10 th)	In June 2024, there were 24,905 youth claimants in the WMCA area. Since May 2024, there was an increase of 1.4% (+350) youth claimants in the WMCA area, the UK decreased by 0.6%. When compared to June 2023, the WMCA increased by 9.0% (+2,050) while the UK increased by 5.8%.
Jun 2020	Jun 2021	Jun 2022	Jun 2023	Jun 2024																							
33,530	30,975	20,675	22,855	24,905																							
WM 7 Met. Seasonally Adjusted Payrolled Employees ²⁴ (monthly update)	1,240,505	1,241,530	1,241,977	1,244,303	1,246,083	1,247,166	1,250,323	1,251,181	1,250,983	1,251,731	1,252,754	1,254,316	1,253,249	 <table><tr><th>Jun 2020</th><th>Jun 2021</th><th>Jun 2022</th><th>Jun 2023</th><th>Jun 2024</th></tr><tr><td>1,149,978</td><td>1,165,324</td><td>1,207,756</td><td>1,240,505</td><td>1,253,249</td></tr></table>	Jun 2020	Jun 2021	Jun 2022	Jun 2023	Jun 2024	1,149,978	1,165,324	1,207,756	1,240,505	1,253,249	WM 7 Met.: 3 rd Highest NUTS 2 / 41 Surrey, East & West Sussex: 1,315,599 (1 st) Highlands & Islands: 208,633 (41 st)	The latest (provisional) figures show that there was a monthly fall in payrolled employees for the WM 7 Met. area (-0.1%, UK +0.1%). There were over 1.25m payrolled employees in the WM 7 Met. area in June 2024. When compared to June 2023 payrolled employees were 1.0% higher (+12,744 in the WM 7 Met. area – above the UK growth of 0.8%).	
Jun 2020	Jun 2021	Jun 2022	Jun 2023	Jun 2024																							
1,149,978	1,165,324	1,207,756	1,240,505	1,253,249																							
WMCA (7 Met.) Employment Rate ²⁵ (quarterly – update due Oct 2024)	69.8% (Year Ending Jun 2023)			70.3% (Year Ending Sep 2023)				70.5% (Year Ending Dec 2023)			69.6% (Year Ending Mar 2024)				WMCA: Lowest CA UK: 75.4% West of England: 79.9% (1 st) Tees Valley: 70.0% (9 th)	In the year ending March 2024, the employment rate in the WMCA area was 69.6%, compared to 75.4% UK-wide. The WMCA area increased by 1.0pp and the UK was unchanged when compared to the year ending March 2023. For the WMCA area to reach the UK rate of 75.7%, an additional 108,512 people are required to be employed.											

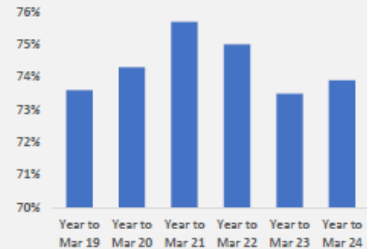
²² ONS/DWP, claimant count – released July 2024.

²³ ONS/DWP, claimant count – released July 2024.

²⁴ ONS, Earnings and employment from Pay As You Earn Real Time Information – released July 2024.

²⁵ ONS, Annual Population Survey – released July 2024. Please note, figures are not comparable across the dashboard.

WMCA ECONOMIC DASHBOARD – JULY 2024

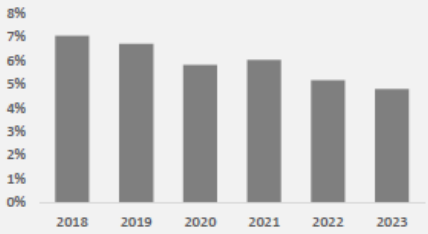
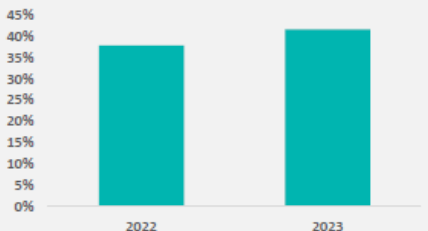
Theme	Indicator	June 2023	July 2023	August 2023	September 2023	October 2023	November 2023	December 2023	January 2024	February 2024	March 2024	April 2024	May 2024	June 2024	Trend	Relative to Peer Group	Commentary
People	WMCA (7 Met.) Economic Inactivity Rate ²⁶ (quarterly – update due Oct 2024)	25.2% (Year Ending Jun 2023)			24.7% (Year Ending Sep 2023)			24.4% (Year Ending Dec 2023)			26.1% (Year Ending Mar 2024)					WMCA: Highest CA UK: 21.5% Tees Valley: 25.8% (2 nd) West of England: 17.7% (10 th)	In the year ending March 2024, the economic inactivity rate in the WMCA area was 26.1%, a decrease of 0.4pp from the year ending March 2023. The UK decreased by 0.2pp to 21.5%. The WMCA area had a higher percentage of people that were inactive when compared to the UK in three categories; students (30.6% vs 26.6%), looking after the family/home (23.6% vs 19.0%) and long-term sick (30.5% vs 27.6%)
	WMCA (7 Met.) Modelled Unemployment ²⁷ (quarterly – update due Oct 2024)	6.6% (Year Ending Jun 2023)			6.5% (Year Ending Sep 2023)			6.6% (Year Ending Dec 2023)			5.7% (Year Ending Mar 2024)					WMCA: Highest CA England: 3.9% Tees Valley: 5.6% (2 nd) York and North Yorkshire: 2.2% (10 th)	In the year ending March 2024, the modelled unemployment rate in the WMCA area was 5.7%, compared to 3.9% for England-wide. The modelled unemployment rate for the WMCA area decreased by 0.9pp when compared to the year ending March 2023. England's modelled unemployment rate increased by 0.2pp.
	WMCA (7 Met.) Economic Activity Rate ²⁸ (quarterly – update due Oct 2024)	74.8% (Year Ending Jun 2023)			75.3% (Year Ending Sep 2023)			75.6% (Year Ending Dec 2023)			73.9% (Year Ending Mar 2024)					WMCA: Lowest CA UK: 78.5% West of England: 82.3% (1 st) Tees Valley: 74.2% (9 th)	In the year ending March 2024 the economic activity rate in the WMCA area was 73.9%, compared to 78.5% UK-wide. The economic activity rate for the WMCA area increased by 0.4pp and for the UK, increased by 0.2pp when compared to the year ending March 2023. For the WMCA area to reach the UK rate of 78.5%, an additional 85,886 people are required.
	WMCA (7 Met.) Unique Job Postings ²⁹ (monthly update)	127,851	119,455	97,287	85,668	86,207	93,131	70,684	75,814	77,505	77,357	68,521	69,384	67,478		WMCA: 2 nd Highest CA GMCA: 75,250 (1 st) Tees Valley: 10,309 (10 th)	There were 67,478 unique active jobs postings in June 2024. This has decreased by 1,906 since May 2024. When compared to June 2023, unique job postings decreased by 60,373.

²⁶ ONS, Annual Population Survey – released July 2024. Please note, figures are not comparable across the dashboard.²⁷ ONS, modelled based estimates of unemployment – released July 2024. Please note, figures are not comparable across the dashboard.²⁸ ONS, Annual Population Survey – released July 2024. Please note, figures are not comparable across the dashboard.²⁹ Lightcast – accessed July 2024.

WMCA ECONOMIC DASHBOARD – JULY 2024



Annual People Dashboard

Theme	Indicator	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Trend	Relative to Peer Group	Commentary
People	WMCA (7 Met.) Not In Education, Employment or Training (NEET) ³⁰ (annual – update due TBC 2024)		7.1%	6.7%	5.8%	6.0%	5.2%	4.8%		England: 5.2%	In 2023, in the WMCA area, 4.8% of residents aged 16-17 years old were NEET (including not known). This has decreased by 0.4pp in the WMCA area, while for the UK there was an increase of 0.5pp since 2022.
	WMCA (7 Met.) Working Age Population with No Qualifications ³¹ (annual – update due Apr 2025)						10.6%	9.0%		WMCA: Joint 2 nd Highest CA (with North East) UK: 6.6% Sheffield City Region: 10.9% (1 st) West of England: 3.8% (10 th)	For the WMCA area, 9.0% (164,000) of the working age population had no qualifications in 2023, a decrease of 10.9% (-20,000) since 2022. While for the UK, 6.6% had no qualifications, an annual decrease of 2.9%. To match the UK proportion, 43,118 residents in the WMCA area would need to gain a qualification.
	WMCA (7 Met.) Working Age Population with RQF4+ Qualifications ³¹ (annual – update due Apr 2025)						37.8%	41.6%		WMCA: 4 th Lowest CA UK: 47.1% West of England: 53.3% (1 st) North East: 35.7% (10 th)	For the WMCA area, 41.6% (758,500) of the working age population had RQF4+ qualifications in 2023, an increase of 15.6% (+102,100) since 2022. For the UK, 47.1% were qualified to RQF4+ levels, an annual increase of 5.9%. There was a shortfall in the WMCA area (to reach the national average) of 98,847 people.
	WMCA (7 Met.) Average Life Satisfaction Score ³² (annual – update due 2024)	7.54 (Year Ending Mar 2017)	7.51 (Year Ending Mar 2018)	7.56 (Year Ending Mar 2019)	7.56 (Year Ending Mar 2020)	7.38 (Year Ending Mar 2021)	7.44 (Year Ending Mar 2022)	7.38 (Year Ending Mar 2023)		WMCA: Joint 4 th Highest CA (with Sheffield City Region) UK: 7.45 North of Tyne: 7.56 (1 st) Liverpool City Region: 7.30 (10 th)	For the year ending March 2023, the average life satisfaction score for the WMCA area was 7.38 (out of 10), below the UK-wide average of 7.45. Since the year ending March 2022, there was a decrease of 0.06 for the WMCA area compared to a decrease 0.09 UK-wide.

³⁰ Department for Education, Participation in education, training and NEET age 16 to 17 by local authority – released July 2023. Participation estimates are based on data collected in March each year. In order to ensure the most robust estimates of NEET and not known rates an average of December/January/February data is used for an estimate around the end of the calendar year.

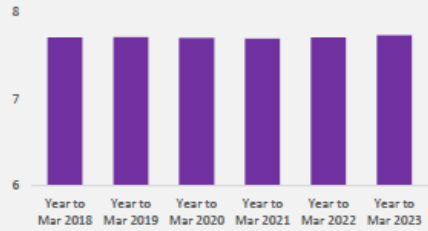


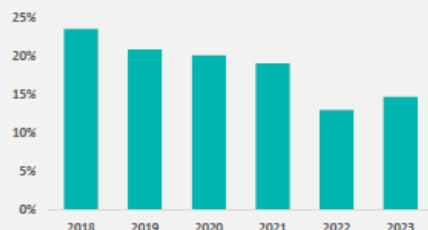
³¹ ONS, Annual Population Survey – released April 2024. Please note, National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) estimates have been replaced with estimates on a Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) basis. RQF based estimates are available from the Jan - Dec 2022 survey period, while estimates prior to Jan - Dec 2022 remain on an NVQ basis.

³² ONS, Annual Population Survey – released April 2024. Please note, National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) estimates have been replaced with estimates on a Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) basis. RQF based estimates are available from the Jan - Dec 2022 survey period, while estimates prior to Jan - Dec 2022 remain on an NVQ basis.

³³ ONS, Annual personal well-being estimates – released November 2023. Respondents were asked "Overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays? Where 0 is 'not at all satisfied' and 10 is 'completely satisfied'"

WMCA ECONOMIC DASHBOARD – JULY 2024



Theme	Indicator	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Trend	Relative to Peer Group	Commentary
People	WMCA (7 Met.) Average Worthwhile Score ³⁴ (annual – update due 2024)	7.71 (Year Ending Mar 2017)	7.71 (Year Ending Mar 2018)	7.71 (Year Ending Mar 2019)	7.70 (Year Ending Mar 2020)	7.70 (Year Ending Mar 2021)	7.71 (Year Ending Mar 2022)	7.73 (Year Ending Mar 2023)		WMCA: 3 rd Highest CA UK: 7.73 North of Tyne: 7.75 (1 st) West of England: 7.61 (10 th)	For the year ending March 2023, the average worthwhile score for the WMCA area was 7.73 (out of 10), now matching the UK-wide average. Since the year ending March 2022, there was an increase of 0.02 for the WMCA area compared to a decrease 0.04 UK-wide.
	WMCA (7 Met.) Average Happiness Score ³⁵ (annual – update due 2024)	7.37 (Year Ending Mar 2017)	7.39 (Year Ending Mar 2018)	7.40 (Year Ending Mar 2019)	7.35 (Year Ending Mar 2020)	7.24 (Year Ending Mar 2021)	7.38 (Year Ending Mar 2022)	7.43 (Year Ending Mar 2023)		WMCA: 2 nd Highest CA UK: 7.39 North of Tyne: 7.44 (1 st) West Yorkshire: 7.20 (10 th)	For the year ending March 2023, the average happiness score for the WMCA area was 7.43 (out of 10), above the UK-wide average of 7.39. Since the year ending March 2022, there was an increase of 0.05 for the WMCA area compared to a decrease 0.06 UK-wide.
	WMCA (7 Met.) Average Anxiety Score ³⁶ (annual – update due 2024)	2.81 (Year Ending Mar 2017)	2.71 (Year Ending Mar 2018)	2.74 (Year Ending Mar 2019)	2.89 (Year Ending Mar 2020)	3.30 (Year Ending Mar 2021)	3.12 (Year Ending Mar 2022)	3.15 (Year Ending Mar 2023)		WMCA: 3 rd Lowest CA UK: 3.23 Greater Manchester: 3.40 (1 st) North of Tyne: 3.03 (10 th)	For the year ending March 2023, the average anxiety score for the WMCA area was 3.15 (out of 10), below the UK average. Since the year ending March 2022, there was an increase of 0.03 for the WMCA area compared to an increase 0.11 UK-wide.
	WMCA (7 Met.) Living Wage Foundation Rates (All) ³⁷ (annual – update due Nov 2024)	23.7%	23.5%	20.8%	20.1%	19.0%	13.0%	14.7%		WMCA: Joint 4 th Highest CA (with Sheffield) UK: 12.9% Tees Valley: avg. 18.9% (1 st) Cambridgeshire & Peterborough: avg. 9.0% (10 th)	In 2023, approximately 14.7% of all jobs were earning below the Living Wage Foundation rates in the WMCA area. Since 2022, following the national trend, the proportion increased by 1.7pp (nationally +0.6pp).

³⁴ ONS, Annual personal well-being estimates – released November 2023. Respondents were asked "Overall, to what extent do you feel the things you do in your life are worthwhile? Where 0 is 'not at all worthwhile' and 10 is 'completely worthwhile'".

³⁵ ONS, Annual personal well-being estimates – released November 2023. Respondents were asked "Overall, how happy did you feel yesterday? Where 0 is 'not at all happy' and 10 is 'completely happy'".

³⁶ ONS, Annual personal well-being estimates – released November 2023. Respondents were asked "Overall, how anxious did you feel yesterday? Where 0 is 'not at all anxious' and 10 is 'completely anxious'".

³⁷ ONS, Number and proportion of employee jobs with hourly pay below the living wage – released January 2024

3.2 EIU Review of Key Sectoral Headlines, Regional Economic Shocks, Investment, Deals, and Opportunities

HEADLINES	
SECTOR	KEY INSIGHTS
Cross Sector	<p>Outlook</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The new Labour Government has placed economic growth at the heart of their plans for the next five years and plan to achieve the 'highest sustained growth in the G7'. The latest data shows that the UK's economic recovery is starting to put down roots. Recent data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) reveals monthly real gross domestic product (GDP) is estimated to have grown by 0.4% in May 2024 after showing no growth in April 2024. Real gross domestic product is estimated to have grown by 0.9% in the three months to May 2024 compared with the three months to February 2024, driven by a growth of 1.1% in services output. But the lagged impact of tighter monetary policy will continue to emerge over the next year, with nearly 4m borrowers set to see their mortgage costs rise by the end of 2026. Another limiting factor will be tight fiscal policy settings. The new Labour Government has inherited plans for more than 3% of GDP worth of tax rises and spending restraint over the next five years, and its manifesto proposed only minor tweaks. But EY ITEM Club think the government will be keen to create room for higher departmental spending allocations. The government's fiscal challenges would be eased if they could improve the UK's poor growth performance. Planning reform is one idea pushed by the government. Raising investment would be another route to stronger growth. Stronger momentum in the first half of this year has caused the EY ITEM Club to revise its forecast for GDP growth in 2024 to 1.1%, from 0.7% three months ago. They still expect GDP growth of 2% in both 2025 and 2026. The boost to household spending power from lower inflation will be the main driver of stronger activity over the next few years, with a less cautious attitude from consumers meaning that solid income growth should translate into a more impressive pickup in spending. KPMG report global GDP growth is forecast to slip to 2.5% in 2024, returning to 2.7% in 2025, while the UK will see growth of 0.5% expected this year, and 0.9% in 2025, according to the latest KPMG Global Economic Outlook. PwC expect national output to grow by around 1% this year, 1.7% next year and even faster in 2026. Whilst the economy in the West Midlands is predicted to grow by 0.7% this year, up from 0.2% in 2023. The PwC Framework for Growth has calculated that the UK could have a potential GDP uplift by £923bn by 2035 in 2023 price terms if the UK adopts a successful industrial strategy. The latest NatWest Purchasing Managers Index (PMI) reports the West Midlands Business Activity Index decreased from 54.2 in May 2024 to 51.6 in June 2024, despite falling to the lowest reading so far this year, this is the ninth consecutive month of business growth. Business activity was restricted due to project delays, loss of customers and slow business decisions. The UK Business Activity Index decreased from 53.0 in May 2024 to 52.3 in June 2024. The West Midlands Future Business Activity Index decreased from 80.5 in May 2024 to 74.8 in June 2024, the latest reading is an eight-month low. However, firms were still optimistic due to product diversification, expectation of lower interest rates, client demand and marketing. <p>Trading Environment</p>

HEADLINES

SECTOR	KEY INSIGHTS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Consumer Prices Index including owner occupiers' housing costs (CPIH) rose by 2.8% in the 12 months to June 2024, the same rate as the 12 months to May. The Consumer Prices Index (CPI) rose by 2.0% in the 12 months to June 2024, the same rate as the 12 months to May 2024. • Though the EY ITEM Club thinks inflation is unlikely to fall much further, it appears that the period of high inflation is now over, which should prompt a steady improvement in household spending power. • However, high wage growth is bearing down on businesses, with research showing labour costs are the main external pressure on firms forcing them to put up prices and hold back on investment. • Interest rates have been reduced by 0.25 percentage points, to 5%, marking the first drop since March 2020, which is likely to lead to lower mortgage repayment deals. The Bank of England had held rates at a 16-year high of 5.25% since August 2023, as it attempted to tackle rising prices across the UK. The last time rates were dropped was in the early days of the coronavirus pandemic, they were slashed to a record low of 0.1% in an attempt to boost the economy. • NIESR's measure of underlying inflation, which excludes 5% of the highest and lowest price changes to eliminate volatility and separate the signal from the 'noise', fell to 1.7%, remaining around the lowest levels in nearly three years. • Despite this, the latest British Chamber of Commerce Quarterly Economic Survey reveals business confidence has increased, with 58% of firms expecting an increase in turnover in the next twelve months. Despite a boost in conditions and confidence most firms (75%) are still not increasing investment, with wide sectoral variations. • Locally, Greater Birmingham Chambers of Commerce's latest quarterly business report reveals the region's businesses are demonstrating an "underlying resilience" – with signs of economic stabilisation across several indicators, as well as a welcome fall in the number of firms reporting recruitment difficulties. Similar results were reported in Coventry and Warwickshire as business confidence strengthened. This comes amid confidence among Black Country firms grew in the second quarter of the year. • Mid-sized businesses in the Midlands plan to invest millions over the next five years, according to accountancy and business advisory firm BDO LLP, with a significant number prioritising the sourcing of new capital. • The British Business Bank Small Business Equity Tracker 2024 Report reports following the market downturn in the middle of 2022, equity investment for smaller businesses has fallen to levels previously seen in 2019, down 48% to £8.8bn. London accounted for 63% of investment and 49% of deals in 2023. The West Midlands accounted for 1.4% of investment and 3.3% of deals. • Small businesses in the West Midlands secured £120m of equity investment across 71 deals during 2023, a 21% decrease in the number of deals compared to the previous year. • While the KMPG M&A study shows that mid-market private equity investment activity in the UK declined by 11% to 321 transactions in the first half of 2024, as challenging macroeconomic conditions persisted. However, against pre-pandemic M&A activity (H1 2019), 2024's figure reflects an increase in activity of 25%, suggesting the market has begun to normalise. • West Midlands SMEs have welcomed the Growth Guarantee Scheme launched by the British Business Bank to help smaller businesses in West Midlands access the finance they need to invest and grow.

HEADLINES

SECTOR	KEY INSIGHTS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New data from EY-Parthenon reveals that nearly one-in-five UK-listed companies issued a profit warning in the past year. Rising costs were cited by more than a quarter of businesses as a key driver behind warnings in Q2 2024. Midlands companies issued 15 profit warnings in the first half of 2024, an increase from the same period last year. • Furthermore, 'Red Flag Alert' analysis from Begbies Traynor reports the level of firms in 'significant' financial distress rose by 8.5% to 601,950 in Q2 2024 since the previous quarter, and was up rapidly in the following sectors: Travel & Tourism (+20.1%), Hotels & Accommodation (+16.4%), Health & Education (+12.4%) and Bars & Restaurants (+12.2%). There were 75,144 companies in significant financial distress in the Midlands, and a further 4,918 in critical distress. • This comes amid new business demography data reveals there were 2,985 business deaths in the WMCA in Q2 2024, and 3,445 business births in the WMCA area. • West Midlands (64) businesses accounted for 7% of administrations in the first six months of 2024. A total of 879 businesses across the UK filed for administration between 1 January and 30 June – marking a 16% increase compared to the same time period in 2023 and 42% rise in comparison to 2022. • The UK recorded 985 Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) projects in 2023, up 6% from 2022 and ranking it second in Europe, according to the latest EY UK Attractiveness Survey. While FDI in the UK increased overall in 2023, the resurgence was predominantly led by Greater London, Scotland and the West Midlands. The West Midlands is now home to the UK's third highest number of FDI projects and attracted 127 FDI projects last year, a 72% increase on 2022 and the region's highest total on record. In Europe's top ten best performing regions for attracting FDI projects in 2023, Scotland and the West Midlands were sixth and seventh respectively. • Grant Thornton research reports 54% of mid-market firms plan to increase their company's strategic focus on international markets over the next 12 months. Despite geopolitical and economic uncertainty, UK mid-market firms continue to see the importance of international expansion as a key driver for future growth. From acquiring new customers to accessing new talent pools and skilled workers around the world, business leaders know that finding new markets not only helps them grow, but also diversifies risk on the demand and supply side of their business. • This comes as the government announce a new Trade Strategy. • The latest Global Entrepreneurship Monitor research reveals that despite the geographical variances, economic shocks generate a rising entrepreneurial tide across the whole of the UK. London's performance post-Covid is striking, with the West Midlands having the second highest Total early-stage Entrepreneurial Activity (TEA) rate. Fear of failure remains a significant obstacle to new start-ups, especially those started by women. Although women are no longer half as likely as men to start a new business (for every 10 businesses set up by men, 7 are set up by women) whilst immigrant and non-white continue to be the most entrepreneurial groups. • The ScaleUp economy of now 34,180 businesses, remains vital to the UK in every sector and locality, representing half of all SME turnover output despite making up less than 0.6% of the SME population. This reinforces the resilience of scaleups both in traditional sectors such as wholesale and retail and the strength of our evolving science and tech base which

HEADLINES	
SECTOR	KEY INSIGHTS
	<p>continues to grow. There are 875 scale ups in Greater Birmingham and Solihull, 440 in Coventry and Warwickshire, 435 in the Black Country.</p> <p>Labour Market</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Payrolled employees in the UK increased by 54,000 (0.2%) between April and May 2024, and rose by 265,000 (0.9%) between May 2023 and May 2024. The early estimate of payrolled employees for June 2024 increased by 16,000 (0.1%) on the month and increased by 241,000 (0.8%) on the year, to 30.4 million. • In April to June 2024, the estimated number of vacancies in the UK decreased by 12,000 on the quarter to 904,000. Vacancies decreased by 30,000 on the quarter to 889,000. Vacancies decreased on the quarter for the 24th consecutive period but are still above pre-coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic levels. • Annual growth in employees' average regular earnings (excluding bonuses) in Great Britain was 5.7% in March to May 2024, and annual growth in total earnings (including bonuses) was 5.7%. • The KPMG and REC, UK Report on Jobs report permanent placements declined in the Midlands during June following just one month of growth. Billings for temporary staff picked up again in the sixth month of 2024 and at the most pronounced rate for over two years. • The latest British Chamber of Commerce Quarterly Recruitment Survey reveals 74% of firms that attempted to recruit over the past three months faced challenges hiring, with Construction and engineering firms are the most likely to be facing recruitment problems (82%). • Prime Minister Keir Starmer has launched Skills England, a government body aimed at developing a nationwide skills strategy and providing levy funds for businesses to spend on training and future-proofing the workforce.
Manufacturing and Engineering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Make UK/BDO Regional Manufacturing Outlook reports significant job boosts across the devolved nations' respective manufacturing sectors. The West Midlands performance across the key indicators of manufacturing activity is quite mixed. Whilst there are no superstar performances, the region matched its average balance for order books growth compared to last year, reporting at +23%. This is followed by the reporting for investment intentions which finds that an average balance of +22% of manufacturers indicate they plan to increase their capital expenditure. This is unsurprising, given the region's dominance to automotive and mechanical equipment manufacturers that are investing heavily in new technologies, such as electrification and clean energy solutions. • AND Digital, TechWM, and more have teamed up to help West Midlands manufacturers introduce AI to their operations. The AI Adoption Acceleration Programme will welcome eight businesses from across the West Midlands looking to enhance their technological integrations. • Optimism among manufacturers fell slightly in July, after rising in April for the first time in nearly three years, according to the CBI's latest quarterly Industrial Trends Survey. Output volumes were broadly unchanged in the quarter to July, following a similar result in the three months to June, and under-performed expectations for modest growth. However,

HEADLINES	
SECTOR	KEY INSIGHTS
	manufacturers continue to expect output to increase over the next three months, with growth expectations the strongest since March 2022.
Construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monthly construction output is estimated to have grown by 1.9% in volume terms in May 2024; this follows a fall of 1.1% in April 2024 (revised from a fall of 1.4%). The increase in monthly output came from increases in both new work (2.7%), and repair and maintenance (0.8%); anecdotal evidence from survey returns noted that warmer weather contributed to increased output in May.
Retail, Hospitality, and Tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retail sales volumes (quantity bought) are estimated to have fallen by 1.2% in June 2024, following a rise of 2.9% in May 2024. Sales volumes fell across most sectors, with department stores and clothing retailers broadly returning to their Quarter 1 (Jan to Mar) 2024 levels. The British Beer and Pub Association estimates that almost 20 million more pints have been enjoyed during the Euros, valued at more than £93 million in extra sales, bringing a welcome boost to Midlands pubs. In spite of craft beer companies facing notable challenges in recent years, the wider brewing industry is still doing well and the industry has seen a steady increase in active companies over the past decade, which at the end of 2023 reached 1,623. However, there has been a drop in the investment being made into breweries in 2023. Beauhurst have investigated the most valuable suppliers and manufacturers in sportswear, equipment, and activetech. The West Midlands is home to 151 companies, (8% of the UK total), and home to GymShark which is worth over £1bn and has contributed £87.5m to the UK economy. West Midlands Combined Authority has launched its £1 million Activate programme, which will run for two years offering a package of business support aimed at helping cultural creative organisations develop. More people visited the West Midlands in 2023 than ever before, according to new data from the West Midlands Growth Company, with more than 145 million people spending time in the region. The record-breaking figure of 145.4 million represents an increase of more than four million people (3%) compared to data from 2022, when the region hosted the Commonwealth Games. The visitor economy in the West Midlands is now worth £16.bn, up £2.2bn (15%). The number of jobs supported by tourism in 2023 reached 143,988, the highest figure recorded and the most since Covid-19 restrictions were introduced in 2020.
Digital / Tech	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The UK and 90 other countries have negotiated a set of new rules designed to make global trade faster, fairer, cheaper and more secure. Once in force the E-Commerce Joint Initiative will permanently ban customs duties on digital content, lower costs for UK businesses and help protect UK consumers from online fraud. The majority of SMEs are still not using artificial intelligence, despite a growing acceptance by businesses that it will help boost productivity. Research carried out by the British Chambers of Commerce reveals 43% of firms have no plans to use AI technology.

HEADLINES	
SECTOR	KEY INSIGHTS
Transport Technologies and Logistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The number of passengers coming through Birmingham Airport last month was up 12% on June 2023. The airport handled 1,265,262 people arriving and departing over the course of June, despite being hit by problems of long delays through security this summer. In a bid to support aerospace research and development (R&D) projects for sustainable travel, the UK Government has announced more than £100m in funding for new-technology projects such as zero-emission hydrogen flight and sustainable propulsion systems. The funding will be delivered through the Aerospace Technology Institute (ATI) Programme for five aerospace R&D projects. Rolls-Royce has launched a new research programme, in collaboration with Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), to explore the use of hydrogen as a zero-carbon aviation fuel. This initiative aims to address three present challenges to using hydrogen as a low-carbon aviation fuel, including fuel combustion, fuel delivery and fuel systems integration with an engine.
Environmental Technologies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The latest Climate Change Committee's (CCC) annual progress report to the UK Parliament on its net-zero transition emphasises that only one-third of the emissions reductions the UK must deliver to achieve its legally binding 2030s targets are backed with credible policies, with particularly weak plans in sectors other than electricity generation. The UK's new Labour government must urgently reinstate the net-zero plans shelved by its predecessor in order to "limit the damage" caused by the previous government's policy rollbacks. Planning barriers to onshore wind development have been lifted by the new Government. However, challenges with supply chains and skilled workers remain. Developers are also grappling with supply chain inflation and grid connection delays. Great British Energy have announced plans to use British seabed owned by the Crown Estate to build windfarms. New research in Oxera's 'Growth Zero: Reframing net zero as a driver of growth' report has found that 'supercharging' net-zero policies could unlock nearly £765bn between now and net-zero, while accelerating decarbonisation in line with legally binding targets.

NEW ECONOMIC SHOCKS			
COMPANY	LOCATION	SECTOR	DETAIL
Streetbike	Halesowen	Retail	The well-known motorcycle dealership Streetbike in Halesowen has closed its doors, leading to 18 redundancies. The company is now undergoing a voluntary liquidation process after enduring a sustained period of trading difficulties.
Hawes Lane GP Surgery	Sandwell	Healthcare	Hawes Lane GP Surgery has abruptly closed due to bankruptcy, leaving its 4,000 patients without a permanent doctors.
sk:n	Birmingham/ Wolverhampton	Health	800 jobs have been lost after skin clinic operator sk:n collapsed. Staff were told that the group's 70 clinics around the UK were closing immediately. The company had branches in Birmingham City Centre and Wolverhampton.

NEW ECONOMIC SHOCKS

COMPANY	LOCATION	SECTOR	DETAIL
Carpetright	Various	Retail	The closure of multiple Carpetright stores has been announced and redundancies have been made. Branches in Wolverhampton, Wednesbury and Oldbury all closed. Carpetright has been bought in a rescue deal by rival Tapi Carpets, but stores in Oldbury, Wednesbury and Wolverhampton are not included in the deal.

NEW INVESTMENT, DEALS AND OPPORTUNITIES

COMPANY	LOCATION	SECTOR	DETAIL
Bromwich Hardy	Coventry	Commercial Property	A development of offices on a historic former factory site in Coventry has been brought to market by commercial property agent Bromwich Hardy. The entire five-storey property has now been refurbished, with Bromwich Hardy having 26,851 sq ft on the ground, first and second floor available for letting.
Knights	Birmingham/ Solihull	Legal Services	Legal services business Knights has strengthened its presence in the West Midlands with the acquisition of a firm which can trace its history back to 1876. The deal, worth £12.5m, brings more than 100 professionals to the group. Thursfields, which employs about 100 people, has offices in Worcester, Birmingham , Kidderminster and Solihull .
Harworth Group	Dudley	Housing	Harworth Group's plans to build 50 affordable homes in Brierley Hill have been recommended for approval. Lined up is a mix of semi-detached, terraced and back-to-back house types providing two and three bedrooms. It is proposed that the scheme would provide 100 per cent affordable housing with grant aid being provided through Homes England.
Deltron Group	Dudley	Manufacturing	Private equity firm LDC has made a minority investment in a Dudley-based company which maintains and repairs elevators, service lifts and stairlifts. Employing 94 people, Deltron Group maintains 9,000 units across the UK, with more than 1,700 customers across both the public and private sectors.
Sephora	Birmingham	Retail	Beauty giant Sephora has confirmed that it will open a store at Hammerson's Bullring in Birmingham city centre as part of its continued retail expansion across the UK. The Bullring is the latest addition to the company's portfolio.
Hamilton Leisure	Wolverhampton	Leisure	A fitness centre which ceased trading is to be given a multi-million pound redevelopment after plans were lodged by its new owners. Hamilton Leisure wants to carry out major redevelopment work at the former Chris Jewkes Fitness Centre in Tettenhall, Wolverhampton.
ARC Electrical UK Services	Dudley	Building Technologies	A fast-growing electrical specialist has capped a record year by investing in new offices in Upper Gornal. ARC Electrical UK Services has moved into a 2,500 sq ft facility on Dormston Trading Estate, providing a larger home for the business to expand and giving it a dedicated training space for staff.

NEW INVESTMENT, DEALS AND OPPORTUNITIES

COMPANY	LOCATION	SECTOR	DETAIL
The Manufacturing Technology Centre (MTC)	Coventry	Manufacturing /Technology	The Manufacturing Technology Centre (MTC), based in Coventry, has launched a new hub focused on sustainable additive manufacturing (AM). The initiative aims to drive research and development to support the creation of net-zero products with full circularity.
Paragon Bank	Solihull	Banking	Paragon Bank Structured Lending has provided £30m of funding across three separate deals. The £30m of finance was provided to three companies, including one new-to-bank client specialising in debt purchasing and two existing clients operating in the specialist finance market. The new-to-bank client, Perch Group, secured £10m of funding to facilitate the next stage of its growth plans.
Holtec	West Midlands	Energy	The West Midlands has played host to US nuclear power giant Holtec, as it looks to find a home for its £1.3bn Small Modular Reactor (SMR) factory. The winning site is projected to contribute £1.5bn GVA to the local economy over 15 years and generate thousands of jobs including 3,600 just in the construction phase.
MIGSO-PCUBED (MP)	Birmingham	Business Services	Project management consultancy MIGSO-PCUBED (MP) has selected Alpha Tower in Birmingham for its new Midlands hub. From its new Birmingham base, MP plans to create 100 skilled jobs by 2026, including project controllers, project managers, project consultants, and change managers.
Clarity Software	Solihull	Technology	A Clarity Software has been acquired by US group Inktavo in a deal supported by prominent advisers. Clarity Software is a management information system (MIS) software vendor specialising in job pricing, inventory management, and production management for the sign and graphics industry and other markets. The acquisition of Clarity looks to further enhance Inktavo's product offerings and expand its geographical reach.
Fortress Safety	Wolverhampton	Engineering	Wolverhampton-based Fortress Safety, a King's Award-winning specialist in machinery safety and interlocking, has expanded with the acquisition of a company which supplies electrical safety warning indicators. Remlive's electrical safety warning indicators provide a visual reminder that a circuit is live. The move aims to enhance the Fortress product portfolio by integrating Remlive's advanced live circuit detection technology.
Logik Logistics	Coventry	Logistics	Debrett's and Frontier Development Capital (FDC) have exited Logik Logistics after backing the firm in a management buyout deal. Logik which provides transport solutions to the automotive, aerospace and retail industries, including JLR, BMW, Aston Martin and Amazon, has been acquired by Danish logistics firm, Danx Carousel.
AC Steels	Walsall	Manufacturing	An established steel manufacturer has secured an almost 35,000 sq ft warehouse in Aldridge in a deal arranged by Harris Lamb. The 34,000 sq ft facility has now been taken by AC Steels on a ten-year lease. Having operated since 2008, AC Steels specialises in the manufacture and

NEW INVESTMENT, DEALS AND OPPORTUNITIES

COMPANY	LOCATION	SECTOR	DETAIL
			processing of a range of steel products, which it supplies to a number of sectors throughout the UK.
Marston's	Wolverhampton	Food & Drink	The deal to sell Marston's remaining stake in its brewing interests has completed. The group, based in Wolverhampton, announced that it was selling the 40 per cent interest in Carlsberg Marston's Brewing Company for £206 million.
Tata Elxsi	Coventry	Engineering/ Technology	Tata Elxsi has announced it will create a wave of high-value technology and engineering jobs, reinforcing the group's commitment to the West Midlands. The design and technology services provider is bolstering operations at its Coventry-based design hub. It plans to recruit for roles over the next three years, committing to invest in the West Midlands, which represents its largest presence outside of India.
Sandwell College/ Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS Trust	Sandwell	Healthcare	Sandwell College and Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS Trust have signed an agreement which is expected to secure hundreds of job and training opportunities for people in the region each year. The deal centres on a new £18m Learning Campus in Smethwick, which is set to open as part of the Midland Metropolitan University Hospital site in 2025.
Clearbell Property Partners	Wolverhampton	Commercial Property	Clearbell Property Partners has bought a new industrial asset in Wolverhampton for £7.725 million. The site of around 100,000 sq ft at Parkside Industrial Estate, off Hickman Avenue, consists of 11 units. Plans are underway for comprehensive upgrades to enhance the site's functionality, appearance, and sustainability, including improving EPC ratings.
Wintech	Wolverhampton	Engineering	Wolverhampton-based Wintech, which specialises in façade engineering, has bought out SDP Consulting Engineers which it said would help it grow its service offering.
EyeCare	Brierly Hill	Retail	The Merry Hill shopping centre will welcome independent eyewear and care provider EyeCare Merry Hill to the centre, creating 15 jobs.

The West Midlands Insights on Society and Economy (WISE) newsletter is a monthly publication by the West Midlands Combined Authority that sets out the social and economic trends that matter to the West Midlands. The newsletter contributes to our understanding of the economic conditions of the West Midlands, as part of the wider regional research and intelligence ecosystem. Further information is available on the West Midlands research and insights website at wmca.org.uk/research and previous issues are available at wmca.org.uk/wise.

This edition was prepared by Phillip Nelson, Victoria Tidy, and Tawfieg Zakria, and incorporates commissioned content from the Economic Intelligence Unit (EIU) and other regional partners.