

EAST MIDLANDS INCLUSIVE GROWTH FRAMEWORK

2025

CLAIRE WARD
MAYOR OF THE
EAST MIDLANDS



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01. A Message from the Mayor

Unlocking our region's potential and doing things differently

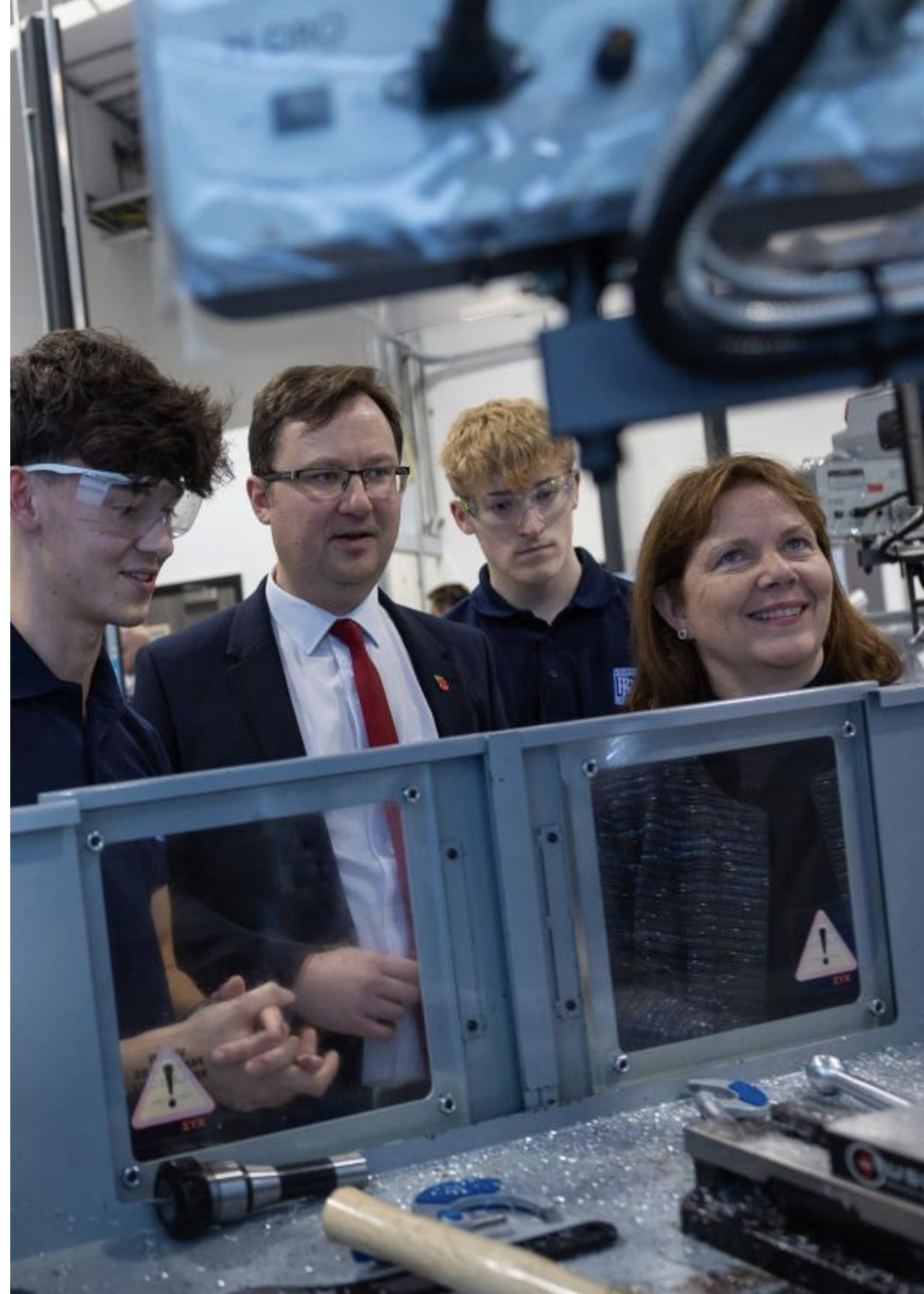
I am proud to be the Mayor of the East Midlands, leading the newly established East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA) since May 2024. In partnership with Derby City Council, Derbyshire County Council, Nottingham City Council and Nottinghamshire County Council and district and borough councils across the region, EMCCA is providing new leadership in tackling our greatest challenges and delivering on our potential. We can and must do this concurrently, because that is the only way we will deliver inclusive growth for the people of our region.

Inclusive growth is a model of growth that values everyone's contributions whilst also sharing out the benefits. It is the type of growth that the East Midlands deserves but does not yet have. For example, our region is home to industrial assets that are the envy of the UK, yet overall productivity remains low. It is a home for innovation in life sciences, but health inequalities are widening. And our natural environment is extraordinary but is subject to the consequences of climate change through flooding and other damage caused by heavy rainfall.

None of these can be addressed by any one organisation or sector working alone. They demand new forms of leadership and collaboration, new tools for delivery, and a clear shared purpose to guide collective action. This work has already started, and we are already making a difference. We have secured over £2bn of new long term transport investment that will better connect communities, and are taking responsibility for adult skills, so that provision is better aligned to the needs of people and businesses in our region. This is a strong start that we can build on by harnessing the assets and potential of our region. The East Midlands is full of energy, creativity and determination. Some people were born here, some came to study and stayed, and others moved for work - all are now building businesses, delivering public services, raising families, and strengthening their communities. This is what shapes our future. Our challenge is to channel and invest into that energy so that we can build, collectively, the future that our people want. Where there is ambition, opportunity will follow.

That is what this East Midlands Inclusive Growth Framework is for: to keep our focus on the future so that we can achieve it together. It responds to the final report of the independent Inclusive Growth Commission, which was published in September 2025, by outlining our plan to deliver on inclusive growth. Our Framework brings together a clear core mission and a set of supporting ambitions, shaped by local voices.

This is a call to action to be part of that change, whether you're a business, a resident, a voluntary organisation, or a public service provider. Together, we can build a system that delivers inclusive growth that is characterised by dignity, opportunity and sustainability for all.



02. Our Mission and Ambitions

For making our region prosperous, sustainable and fairer

The East Midlands has always been a place where people get things done. Across our region, there's already a wealth of good work underway. Local authorities, communities, businesses and civic groups are tackling challenges and making a real difference. But the scale and complexity of the issues we face across housing, health and jobs demand something bigger. They need all of us working together.

As highlighted by the Inclusive Growth Commission's independent analysis, there is now a unique opportunity for EMCCA and the Mayor to step up and fulfil this role. EMCCA will take a strategic view across the region that was simply not possible under the previous, fragmented system of local government in England.

This is why we're taking a **mission-led approach**: aligning the region around a **core mission, supported by six targeted ambitions**. This will help us to drive the kind of system-wide change that no single organisation can solve alone. By focusing investment from EMCCA and our partners, creating a shared purpose that transcends individual places and organisations, and ensuring every community has a stake, we can shape a more prosperous, sustainable and fairer future for the East Midlands.

Core Mission

By 2040, every resident will be proud to call the East Midlands home. All young people will have a fair start and a clear path to progress. A thriving, green and inclusive economy will improve health and wellbeing, widen opportunity regardless of postcode, and empower all residents to shape their places and future.

Key Targeted Ambitions



GROWTH AND OPPORTUNITY

By 2040, the East Midlands will be one of the fastest growing regional economies in the UK. People across the region will have better access to opportunity and be in good, secure and rewarding work. This will be enabled by innovation rooted in our strengths in making, producing and movement, establishing the East Midlands as a leading destination for business investment.



SKILLS FOR GOOD WORK

By 2040, the East Midlands will be a place where people can gain the skills they need for the jobs they want, with high-quality local training, better pay, and clear routes to progress. From first steps into work to careers at the forefront of industry, everyone will have the chance to realise their potential, and more jobs will offer security, purpose and pride.



HOMES AND PLACE THAT ENABLE A GOOD LIFE

By 2040, the housing affordability gap in the East Midlands will be closing, with rents and house prices better aligned to local incomes. Communities will have access to safe and warm housing, suitable to their needs, enabling people to live healthy lives in connected communities.



GREEN GROWTH AND A BETTER ENVIRONMENT

By 2040, the East Midlands will be a UK leader in maximising jobs and opportunities from clean energy and green technologies. Improving everyone's environment will mean creating cleaner, greener communities, with warmer homes, better public transport, greater access to nature, and improved protection from flooding and the environmental impacts of climate change.



CONNECTED COMMUNITIES

By 2040, communities in the East Midlands will benefit from reliable, inclusive and sustainable connectivity, through integrated transport and high-quality digital infrastructure, broadening access to opportunity and reducing reliance on private cars, while driving investment across the region.



HEALTH, WELLBEING AND BELONGING

By 2040, we will significantly reduce the gap in healthy life expectancy between our most and least advantaged communities and improve health and wellbeing for all residents by focusing on prevention, treatment, and support, enabling people to participate fully in their communities and benefit from opportunities around them.

02. Our Mission and Ambitions

For making our region prosperous, sustainable and fairer

Building on the work of the Inclusive Growth Commission, this Inclusive Growth Framework sets out our core mission and six long-term ambitions for the region. These are designed to set strategic direction and will guide how we deliver for the region to 2040.

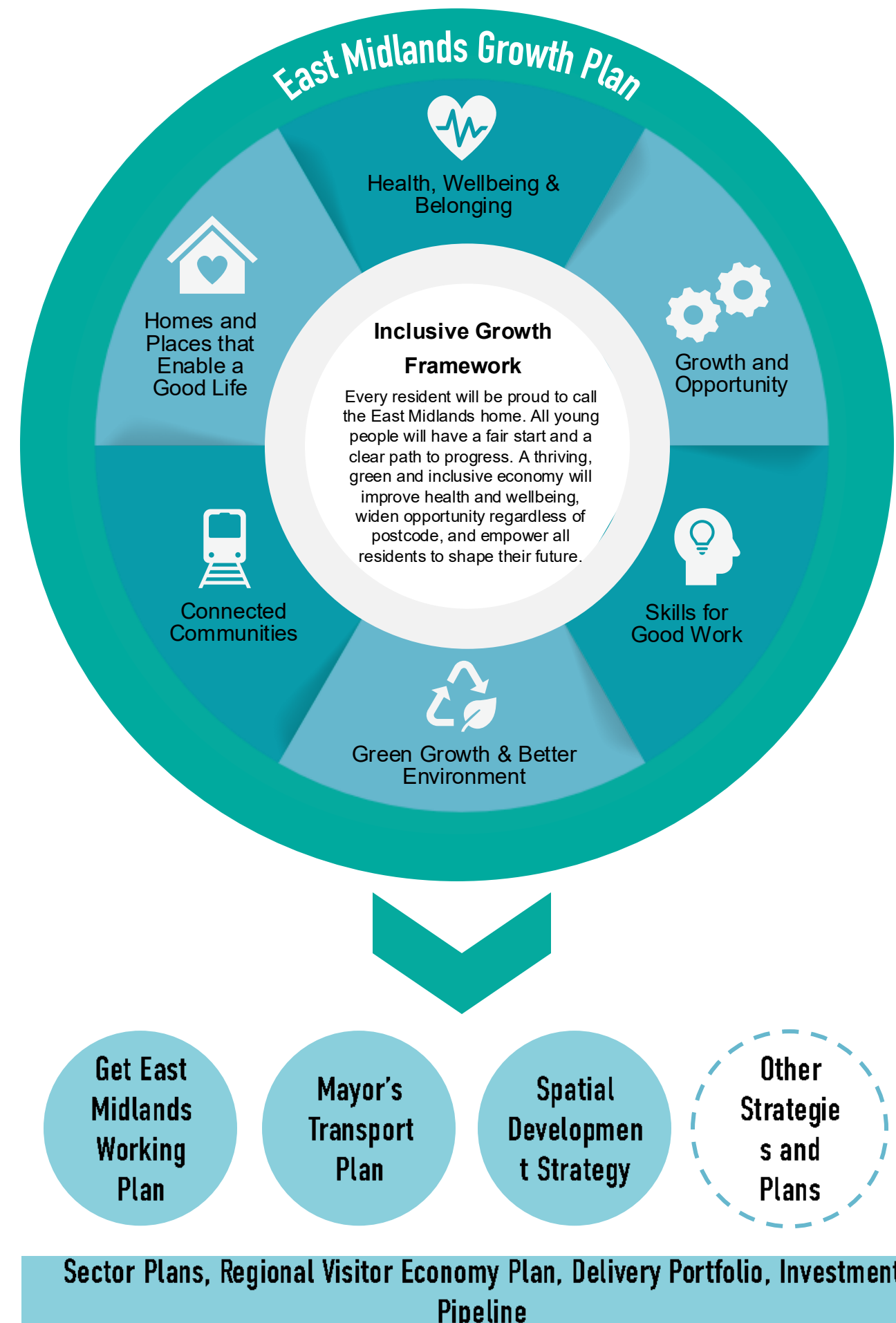
Our core mission and ambitions are embedded across our strategies, including the East Midlands Growth Plan, the Mayor's Transport Plan, our Spatial Development Strategy and the Get East Midlands Working Plan. These ambitions will also flow through to our investment portfolios.

In practice, the Framework will help EMCCA, working with constituent councils and public and private sector partners, to align investment decisions, prioritise interventions, and drive collective action across the region. It will shape how transport infrastructure connects people to new housing and jobs, how we work together with councils and the NHS to improve health and wellbeing outcomes, and with universities and businesses on skills and innovation opportunities.

The Inclusive Growth Commission

In 2024, Mayor Claire Ward and council leaders across the region convened the independent Inclusive Growth Commission to assess the region's unique challenges and opportunities and provide an evidence base to guide investment and resources. With the support of the Royal Society for Arts, Manufactures and Commerce (RSA), the Commission undertook a 12-month exercise to develop practical and tangible recommendations for delivering inclusive economic growth in the East Midlands. This Inclusive Growth Framework builds on the work of the Inclusive Growth Commission and its recommendations for delivering inclusive growth, by setting out the mission and targeted ambitions that will drive partnerships in practice.

The Commission developed the UK's first "**Opportunity Escalator**", to ensure that the Combined County Authority and Mayor, working with local coalitions of people and organisations, can help people overcome barriers to employment and progress into better paid, more secure work. It helps people to get "on" the escalator to job opportunities, and then to get "up" the escalator to access better paid, more secure forms of work. The Escalator can also be used to consider how investments and interventions, such as in transport or skills development, enable more people to access good jobs.



03. Our Regional Opportunity

Why the East Midlands is ready for transformational change

The East Midlands is a region of immense significance to the modern-day UK growth story. It is a region forged in coal and steel, rail and textiles, and now reimagined as a hub for clean energy, life sciences, creative industries, and advanced manufacturing.

Today, we are home to globally recognised names like Toyota, Rolls-Royce, and Alstom. Alongside other key industrial players, these firms provide a stable economic base, drive private investment, and contribute significantly to employment in the region. We drive UK advances in next-generation energy systems, rail innovation, and aerospace engineering. We boast the highest manufacturing employment proportion in the country and a high proportion of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), reflecting strong entrepreneurial energy across our towns and cities.

Yet our full potential remains unrealised. As highlighted in the Inclusive Growth Commission's report (published September 2025), too many places in our region face barriers to good health, education and employment. This limits individual opportunity, weakens the region's social fabric, and holds back the wider regional economy. Our productivity and earnings lag behind national averages. Nominal productivity is only £35.6 per hour, below the national average of £41.9, and average workplace earnings are 5.5% below the national average. Educational attainment is also low, with only 37% of adults holding high qualifications, compared to a national average of 44%. Economic inactivity is a significant challenge, with long-term sickness accounting for 29.5% of inactivity and caring responsibilities for 17.2%.

The creation of the East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA) and the election of our first Mayor, Claire Ward, mark a historic chance to unlock the region's vast potential. With devolved powers, shared purpose, and a mission-led approach, we now have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to unlock transformation that is lasting, inclusive, and locally owned. Realising this opportunity will rely on us working with and alongside our local, regional and national partners. Together, we can deliver inclusive growth by creating high-quality, desirable jobs and tackling the barriers that prevent too many people within the region from accessing opportunity in the first place. As outlined by the Inclusive Growth Commission – we will work with partners to help people get “on and up” a regional “Opportunity Escalator”, supporting them to overcome barriers and move into better paid, more secure work.

EMCCA is an institution that is rooted in people and place, mission-driven, and partnership-based. We have a powerful opportunity to take strategic, coordinated action at scale. With devolved powers over key areas like skills, transport, housing, and economic development and a long-term investment fund, we are developing the mandate, tools and platform to drive systemic, joined up change.

EMCCA's boundary covers the four local authority areas of Derby, Derbyshire, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire in the East Midlands.



04. Using Missions to Drive Change

Our plan for turning big ambitions into action

The challenges we face in the East Midlands don't follow organisational boundaries. Housing challenges connect to health outcomes. Skills shortages affect business growth. Transport links determine where people can access work, education and training. Climate change impacts everything from flood defences to health, food production and insurance costs. Traditional approaches that tackle these issues separately, with decisions made far from the communities they impact, has not delivered the scale of change our region needs.

That is why our core mission and six ambitions are bold and rooted in the real challenges and opportunities of our region. They are unapologetically shaped by our region's context, reflecting what matters for everyone in the East Midlands: access to local opportunity, protecting our region's renowned green spaces, good jobs, reliable and accessible transport, housing to support stronger communities and pride in our places, and better health outcomes for all. They have been shaped through engagement with constituent councils and partners and build on the work of the Inclusive Growth Commission. They provide a clear basis for continued engagement and collaboration, ensuring that EMCCA's powers and convening role, working with national, regional and local partners, are directed where we can make the biggest difference.

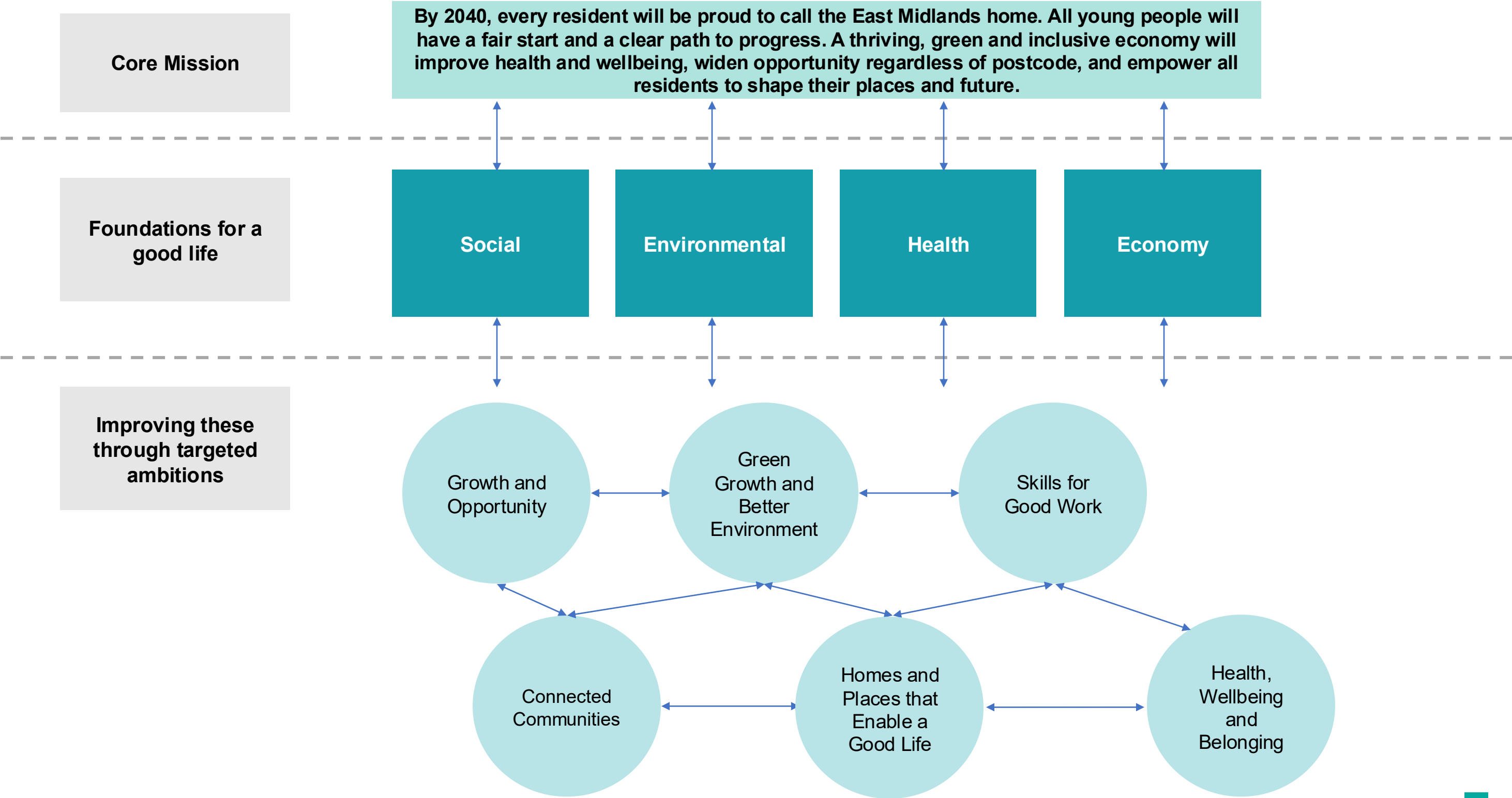
In this section, we bring the core mission and each targeted ambition to life through a **“pen portrait” of success**, illustrating the tangible changes we want to see for people across the region. We focus on what **outcomes** each ambition will mean in practice, examples of what steps EMCCA and our partners can do to achieve this, and initial indicators to **measure success**. Building on the Inclusive Growth Framework, we are developing an **Outcomes Framework** with metrics to measure progress towards each ambition.

Together, the ambitions support our core mission: to shape a more prosperous, sustainable and fairer future for the East Midlands.

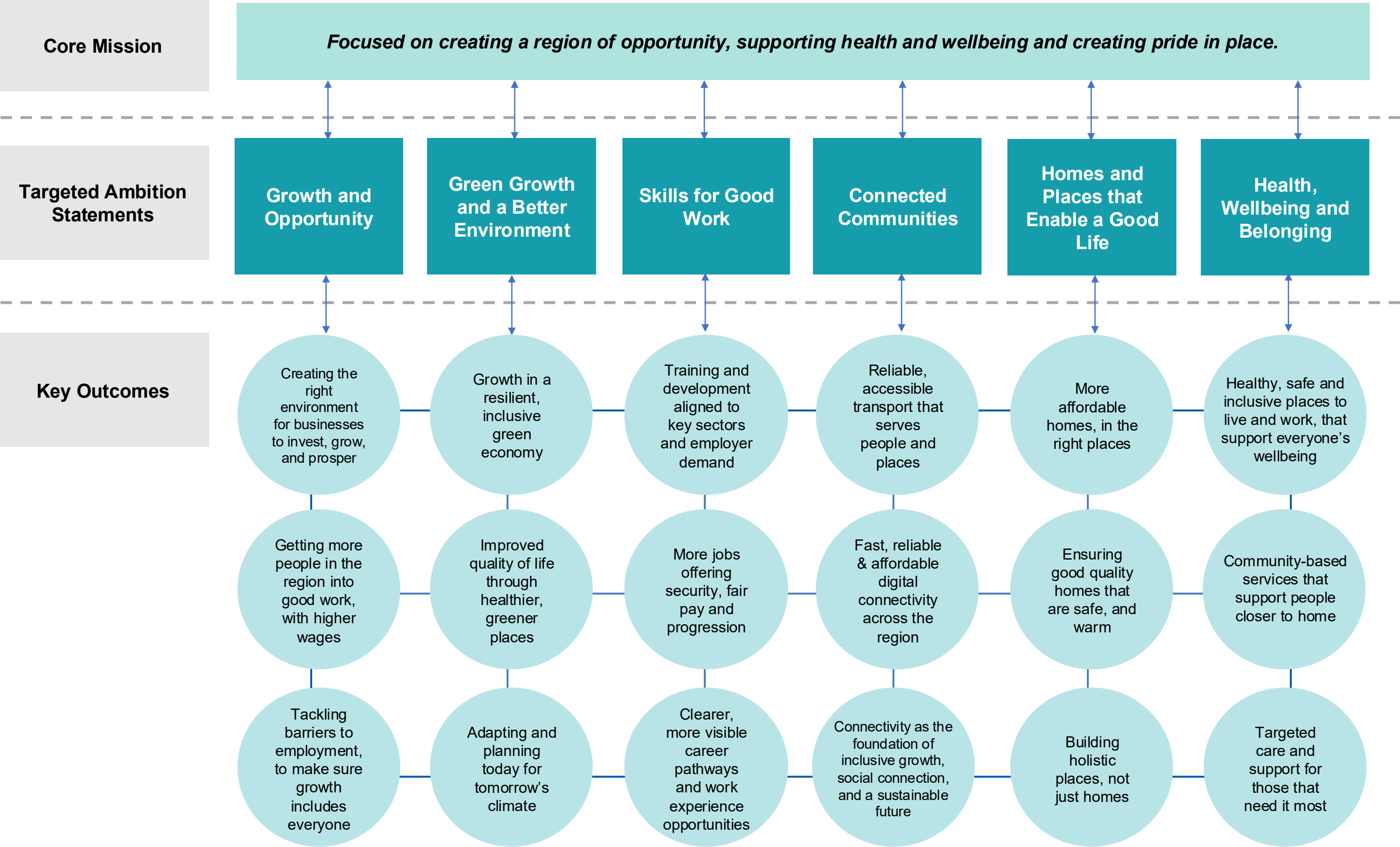


Core Mission and Targeted Ambitions

People’s challenges don’t follow organisational boundaries. Take, for example, our core mission to give every young person a fair start in life. That’s not just about what happens in school, it’s about ensuring every young person, whatever their background or needs, has the right support to learn , grow and find their path. That might mean affordable transport to get to college or training, better digital access in rural areas to access online courses and job opportunities, or flexible learning routes including supported options for young people with SEND needs. It depends on the fundamentals too: a safe place to live, good health, and a supportive community. We are therefore working across organisational siloes to **take a whole-place approach**.



How the Core Mission and Targeted Ambitions relate to Key Outcomes



Core Mission: Creating a region of opportunity

"By 2040, every resident will be proud to call the East Midlands home. All young people will have a fair start and a clear path to progress. A thriving, green and inclusive economy will improve health and wellbeing, widen opportunity regardless of postcode, and empower all residents to shape their places and future."

What success will feel like for people in the East Midlands



Amelia, 14, student from Ilkeston

Amelia lives in Ilkeston with her mum, older sister, and their very vocal cat, Buster. She's 14, curious about how things work, and always up for a challenge. Last year, she joined a youth design group that pitched ideas to improve the town centre. Standing in the community hall, explaining her group's vision for safer crossings and greener spaces, she felt nervous and proud. At school, she's tried coding and a hands-on engineering challenge with a local college. She's not sure what she wants to do yet, maybe design, maybe something else, but she knows she likes solving problems. Her best friend's into coding too. Weekends are for football, painting murals, and pitching in at the community café. Amelia's not sure what comes next, but in the East Midlands, she feels like there's room to figure it out.



Ambition 1: Growth and Opportunity

By 2040, the East Midlands will be one of the fastest growing regional economies in the UK. People across the region will be in good, secure and rewarding work, enabled by innovation rooted in our strengths in making, producing and movement, establishing the East Midlands as a leading destination for business investment.

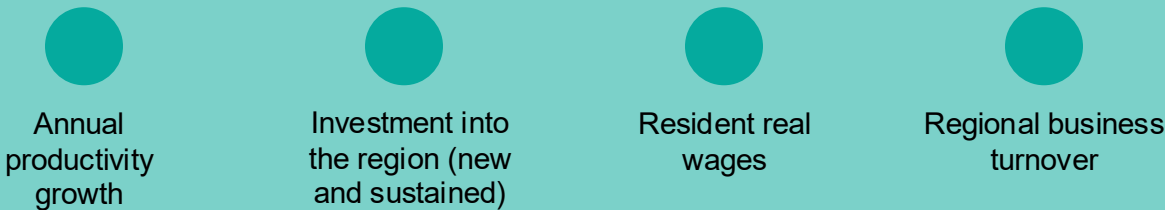
What success will feel like for people in the East Midlands



Nasir, 40, R&D Director at a Medtech company in Nottingham

Nasir leads an R&D team at a medtech company in Nottingham, developing next-generation diagnostic tools. His company set up here for the region's growing life sciences cluster drawn by strong university and NHS links, and a skilled local workforce. He's seen the benefits first-hand: ample lab space, more high-quality jobs and apprenticeships, and more people able to work in cutting-edge industries without leaving home. Recruiting hasn't been a problem either. The culture, green space and quality of life help attract top talent and keep them here. For Nasir, the region is a place where innovation and opportunity go hand in hand.

Progress will be evidenced by changes in:



What will this mean in practice?

Creating the enabling environment for all businesses in the region to invest, grow, and prosper: The East Midlands will become a prime location for business growth and investment, raising the average annual productivity growth rate to 2% and generating an additional £13bn per year for the regional economy. Companies, startups and global players alike, will be confident to take risks, grow and invest.

Getting more people in the region into good work, with higher wages: More growth and more investment in our region will mean better jobs and higher wages. Businesses will be more productive, embracing new technologies and AI meaning they can afford to pay higher wages and create the secure employment that allows people and families to prosper. People will have better access to secure, well-paid work, with employment gaps across the region narrowing. Through the Opportunity Escalator, we will help people overcome barriers and progress into secure, rewarding work.

Tackling the barriers to employment, to make sure growth includes everyone: More people will be empowered to access opportunity and progress, with better social capital connections and improved social mobility. Barriers to employment, from poor health to limited transport connectivity to childcare access, will be addressed. This will enable people of all backgrounds in the region to access opportunity, thrive and progress, with an East Midlands Growth Plan target of 60,000 more people in work by 2035 to reach an 80% employment target.

How will we achieve this?

EMCCA will bring together businesses, universities, and local leaders to attract investment and create more good jobs across the region. We will develop the East Midlands as a leading location for innovation and growth. In practice, this will look like:

Enabling innovation for all types of businesses: We will strengthen university-industry Research and Development partnerships. We will unlock investment and funding opportunities from Research Councils to enable businesses to innovate and grow.

Enhancing our targeted business support offer for the region: We will support more small and medium-sized companies in our region including with access to finance and tailored advice. We will do this through a new business support offer, working closely with the region's businesses, Business Advisory Board, the British Business Bank and central government.

Driving new investment into the region: Our East Midlands Growth Plan outlines strategic growth areas and opportunities for investment. The East Midlands Investment Zone, a £160million government-backed initiative to drive innovation and growth, will help to attract further investment and create jobs. The Mayor will also promote the region to investors overseas this year, including in the USA, Japan and other key markets.

Interventions on "Skills for Good Work" are outlined under Ambition 3.

Ambition 2: Green Growth and a Better Environment

By 2040, the East Midlands will be a UK leader in maximising jobs and opportunities from clean energy and green technologies. Improving everyone's environment will mean creating cleaner, greener communities, with warmer homes, better public transport, greater access to nature, and improved protection from flooding and the environmental impacts of climate change.

What success will feel like for people in the East Midlands



Ellie, 42, parent and homeowner from Mansfield

Ellie is 42 and lives in Mansfield with her two children. She works part-time at a local primary school and has lived in the same red-brick terrace for over ten years. When her home was retrofitted through a local scheme, she noticed the difference straight away, warmer rooms, lower bills, and fewer asthma flare-ups for her youngest. A new green space behind her street, designed to manage flooding, has brought more wildlife and a bit of peace at the end of the day. Her daughter Maya, a recent environmental engineering graduate, just turned down a job in London to stay local, working on a clean energy project through a university and nuclear partnership.

Progress will be evidenced by changes in:



Jobs in green sectors



Total clean energy generation capacity



Air quality



Access to quality green spaces for residents

What will this mean in practice?

Growth in a resilient, inclusive green economy: The region will have high-quality jobs in clean energy, green technologies and low-carbon industries, building on our legacy in energy and manufacturing. Growth will come from major projects like fusion, nuclear, hydrogen and industrial decarbonisation, alongside local initiatives such as community energy, rooftop solar and home retrofits. Towards this we will enable 1GW more of local and community energy projects. People and businesses will benefit from affordable, reliable, low-carbon power that underpins a strong, competitive economy.

Improved quality of life through healthier, greener places: Communities will enjoy cleaner air, greater access to nature and warmer homes, with 12,000 homes retrofitted across the next 10 years. Through the two Local Nature Recovery Strategies and targeted placemaking, air quality will improve, green spaces and waterways expand, and biodiversity will increase. Homes and public buildings will be retrofitted for warmth and efficiency, and towns, cities, and transport will be designed to bring nature into daily life, supporting healthier lives and pride in place.

Adapting and planning today for tomorrow's climate: The region will be better protected from flooding, drought, and other climate risks, with investment in natural flood management, green spaces, and climate-ready buildings. Major flood resilience projects will be in place along the Derwent, Trent and Wye and communities will enjoy greater access to restored green space and nature. By planning ahead for our long-term water needs, the region will have unlocked investment and green finance to ensure it can adapt to climate change.

How will we achieve this?

EMCCA will secure funding and partnerships to make the region a national leader in clean energy and green technologies. We will work with councils and communities to deliver warmer homes, better transport, and stronger protection from climate impacts. In practice, this will look like:

Leading and bringing partners together: We will use our convening power to unite site owners, industry, and government on major clean energy and decarbonisation schemes, and align training and employment support with demand in these sectors. We will drive high-impact energy investment by leveraging England's largest Local Area Energy Plan and using data to prioritise action where it delivers the greatest benefits.

Targeting investment where it makes the biggest difference: We will deploy Investment Zone funding to unlock private capital, enabling infrastructure and industrial decarbonisation projects like the Peak Cluster. We will support community energy schemes, further build on retrofit partnerships and the Local Authority Retrofit Accelerator work, alongside developing green finance tools to sustain investment in climate resilience and biodiversity.

Working in partnership to protect against climate risks: We will enable major flood protection along the Derwent, Trent and Wye Rivers, alongside natural flood management, green spaces, and climate-ready homes and transport. With the Environment Agency, water companies, and councils, we will plan long-term water security for communities and industries.

Using our planning powers to deliver greener places: Through our Spatial Development Strategy, we will align regeneration, housing, and transport to build green communities with energy-efficient homes, walkable streets and accessible green spaces. We will support heat network zoning and the roll-out of priority heat networks, transform disused fossil fuel sites, and enable circular economy hubs where clean energy supports manufacturing and food production.

Ambition 3: Skills for Good Work

By 2040, the East Midlands will be a place where people can gain the skills they need for the jobs they want, with high-quality local training, better pay, and clear routes to progress. From first steps into work to careers at the forefront of industry, everyone will have the chance to realise their potential and more jobs will offer security, purpose and pride.

What success will feel like for people in the East Midlands



Emma, 24, Video Game Designer from Hucknall

Emma has always loved storytelling and games, but for a long time, she never believed she could get a local job that matched her passions. That changed when she attended a careers workshop that opened her eyes to opportunities in the games sector. After telling a careers adviser about her interest, she was signposted to a digital skills bootcamp running at a local college, part of a new creative tech initiative in the region. After a few months of training, she landed a junior design role at a games studio based in Nottingham's growing digital cluster. The job is hybrid and she's learning fast. Now, on weekends, she volunteers at a youth centre in Hucknall, mentoring teenagers who want to break into creative tech. "It's not just a London thing anymore," she says. "There's a path here, I just needed to find it."

Progress will be evidenced by changes in:



Working-age population employment rate



Increase in real earnings among lower-income groups



Reduced disability employment gap



Residents achieving higher qualifications (Level 3 and 4+)

What will this mean in practice?

Training and development aligned to key sectors and employer demand: Investment and growth in priority sectors and more broadly will create demand for new kinds of skills for new kinds of jobs. We will meet this demand locally, and training and development will allow 210,000 more people to gain skills qualifications by 2035. The opportunities created will span a wide range of skill levels and entry points, giving broad access to employment across communities.

More jobs offering security, fair pay and progression: As employment grows across the East Midlands, more of the region's jobs will provide stability, decent wages, and the chance to progress. Employers will raise job quality, ensuring that work is purposeful and rewarding, that workplaces are inclusive, and that employees feel valued and able to build long-term careers. This will mean that growth translates into better outcomes for people, families and communities, including those facing disadvantage or extra challenges.

Clearer, more visible career pathways and work experience opportunities: More young people will leave school with the essential skills and access to high-quality further learning, apprenticeships or support to work. Clearer employment pathways and close integration of regional education and employment partners will help residents of all ages move confidently into local jobs with long-term prospects. This will include roles in high-growth priority sectors as well as the foundation sectors of our economy, supporting people to enter work and to progress to higher pay.

How will we achieve this?

EMCCA will use our powers and skills funding to make sure training matches the needs of local people and employers. This will help more residents access well-paid, secure jobs and create clearer routes to progress in work. In practice, this will look like:

Tailoring skills to business need: As a first step, we will deploy adult skills funding to help people access quality jobs and progress in work. Short courses, such as Skills Bootcamps, will match learner and employer needs. Working with businesses, colleges and universities, we will build the higher-level skills needed across the economy and use an "Opportunity Escalator" to support people into better paid, more secure work.

Increased skills and technical education powers from government: We will seek enhanced 'trailblazer' status, enabling us to design clear, effective pathways for young people from age 16 onwards into high-quality jobs.

Working together to tackle employment barriers: Guided by our upcoming Get East Midlands Working Plan, we will work with partners to raise our employment rate. That means supporting more people facing disadvantage or long-term health conditions, and more young people, to enter paid work. As a first step, our Connect to Work Programme will help people with health-related and complex employment barriers to find and sustain suitable employment.

Expanding access to work experience and work placements: We will work with schools, colleges, training providers and employers to expand access to high-quality work experience for young people, including through T-levels or apprenticeships.

Delivering our 'Youth Ambition' to build aspiration: From primary school upwards, we will raise ambition through education, community and family engagement, helping young people understand what's possible. We will continue to innovate in our careers advice and use digital tools to connect young people with employers. This will be supported by an East Midlands Good Employment Charter to recognise those who invest in local talent and create inclusive workplaces.

Ambition 4: Connected Communities

By 2040, communities in the East Midlands will benefit from reliable, inclusive and sustainable connectivity, through integrated transport and high-quality digital infrastructure, broadening access to opportunity and reducing reliance on private cars, while driving investment across the region.

What success will feel like for people in the East Midlands



Priya, 34, Healthcare Assistant from Gamston

Priya used to drive her children from Gamston to school in West Bridgford, and then rush on to work in Nottingham, arriving stressed from the school run chaos and congested rush-hour roads. With the new segregated cycleways and safer routes to school, she knows they now enjoy getting to school independently, while she has time to hop on the new bus rapid transit into work. Being able to check the real-time information and pay with the app before setting out, means Priya is confident about the best way to make each journey.

Progress will be evidenced by changes in:



Use of and access to public transport



Uptake in active travel across the region



Air quality and transport emissions



Regional coverage and inclusive access to fast, reliable broadband and mobile networks

What will this mean in practice?

Reliable, low-carbon transport that serves people and places: Backed by over £2bn of new funding to 2032, the region will have a modern, low-carbon transport system that gives people choice in how they travel. Public transport will be strengthened and extended, and active travel will be supported by safe cycling and walking routes. More people will choose public and active travel thanks to better services, fares, and reliability, helping to improve air quality and reduce car dependence. This will mean fewer communities at risk of transport poverty, closing the transport accessibility gap.

Fast, reliable and affordable digital connectivity across the region: The region will build on its strong gigabit coverage to achieve fast, reliable and affordable connections everywhere. Rural and harder-to-reach areas will benefit from the rollout of high-quality digital infrastructure across the region, ensuring residents and businesses can work, learn and stay connected.

Connectivity as the backbone of inclusive growth, social connection, and a sustainable future: Transport and digital systems will drive inclusive growth and support the visitor economy: linking people to jobs, education and services, while attracting business investment and spreading opportunity across the region. Transport will strengthen social capital in the region, by enabling stronger connections between and within communities. A low-carbon network will take shape with electric vehicle (EV) charging, and sustainable freight and travel options.

How will we achieve this?

EMCCA will drive transport and digital connectivity investment so that people and businesses can travel and connect more easily. We improve bus, rail, and digital networks so all communities benefit from better access to opportunity. In practice, this will look like:

Leading with devolved transport powers: As the new statutory Local Transport Authority, EMCCA is developing the Mayor's Transport Plan, setting the long-term vision for connectivity, decarbonisation, and aligning future investment to it. We will work with partners, operators, businesses, and communities to improve connections to education, healthcare, and economic hubs, making travel fairer, more inclusive, and better for the visitor economy.

Securing and targeting investment: We will use our role as the Local Transport Authority to prioritise regional investment, and unlock further national funding for bus, rail, mass transit, and active travel. We will work with partners to secure strategic transport investment to unlock key growth areas. These growth areas will adopt measures to reduce car-dependency and enhance place-making.

Delivering new transit infrastructure and taking control of services: We will deliver new mass transit, healthier streets, EV charging, and resilient road networks. We will use devolved powers to run bus policy and operations, improve fares and services, and roll out integrated ticketing and smart mobility apps to make switching transport modes easier. To enable this, we have appointed a Sustainable Transport Ambassador to connect with communities on their sustainable transport needs.

Improving digital connectivity: We will support closing connectivity gaps by working with Building Digital UK, national programmes such as Project Gigabit and the Shared Rural Network, and local partners to extend fast, reliable broadband and mobile coverage to the areas that need it most. Alongside this, we will support local initiatives on digital inclusion, embedding accessibility in public services and strengthening digital skills so that people and communities can fully participate.

Ambition 5: Homes and Places that Enable a Good Life

By 2040, the housing affordability gap in the East Midlands will be closing, with rents and house prices better aligned to local incomes. Communities will have access to safe and warm housing, suitable to their needs, enabling people to live healthy lives in connected communities.

What success will feel like for people in the East Midlands



Harry, 33, Primary School Teacher from Chesterfield

Harry is 33 and teaches at a primary school in Chesterfield. For years, he moved between overpriced, damp rentals that made his asthma worse and made it hard to settle or really feel at home. That changed when he moved into a new, energy-efficient home just a short walk from work. The rent is manageable, the bills are lower, and the air's better. Now, he's part of a close-knit neighbourhood, and for the first time in a while, he's thinking long-term, not just about where he lives, but what comes next.

Progress will be evidenced by changes in:

No. of stalled or strategic sites unlocked for development

No. of new housing units delivered

No. of homes that are affordable, mixed-tenure and energy efficient

Homelessness and rough sleeping indicators

What will this mean in practice?

More affordable homes, in the right places: We will increase the supply of affordable housing and work towards closing the housing affordability gap, building new homes each year in the right locations and with the right mix of types and tenures. These homes will reflect local needs and give families the security to put down roots, helping young people onto the housing ladder, and enabling older residents to live comfortably and securely.

Ensuring good quality homes that are safe and warm: Homes are more than just bricks and mortar, they are the foundation of healthy, sustainable lives. Communities will have access to homes that are safe, energy-efficient, and better adapted for climate change. Existing homes will be retrofitted to cut bills and emissions, while new homes will be built to high standards of quality and sustainability.

Building holistic places, not just homes: This means thinking beyond just housing numbers and creating connected places where people can thrive. Leveraging our key clusters of opportunity from the Trent Arc to the Supercluster, new homes will be developed with access to jobs and transport, services and community spaces. This will improve the quality of daily life and create green communities that foster healthy lives.

How will we achieve this?

We will work with Homes England, central government, local authorities, housing associations, developers and community groups to unlock the new homes and regeneration projects our region needs. Over time, we will help to deliver housing that is more affordable, better quality, and meets the needs of all communities. In practice, this will look like:

Strategic planning and investment across the region: Through our Spatial Development Strategy we will coordinate housing delivery across the region, aligning homes with jobs, transport, and services. We will combine public investment with private finance, using the powers at our disposal to attract long-term funding. This will help to unlock stalled or strategic sites and bring forward the most transformative developments identified in our Vision for Growth (May 2025).¹

Partnerships to scale the right kind of delivery: We will work with Homes England, central government, local authorities, housing associations, developers, and community groups to secure investment, unlock brownfield land, and expand affordable housing. Through these partnerships, we will make sure delivery reflects local needs, from tackling homelessness and housing vulnerability to enabling a balanced mix of homes for all life stages, from student accommodation to retirement living. We will prioritise housing that enables healthy, inclusive and connected communities.

Providing strategic direction on homelessness: We will work with local authorities, health partners, housing associations, and the voluntary sector to tackle homelessness at its root causes. We will champion early intervention: supporting people before they reach crisis point, improving pathways into stable housing, and addressing the links between homelessness, health, and employment. By coordinating regional efforts and securing investment, we will help local partners design and deliver sustainable solutions that reduce homelessness and rough sleeping, ensuring everyone has the security of a safe and stable home.

¹ East Midlands Vision for Growth: <https://www.eastmidlands-cca.gov.uk/what-we-do/the-economy/vision-for-growth/>

Ambition 6: Health, Wellbeing and Belonging

By 2040, we will significantly reduce the gap in healthy life expectancy between our most and least advantaged communities and improve health and wellbeing for all residents by focusing on prevention, treatment and support, enabling people to participate fully in their communities and benefit from opportunities around them.

What success will feel like for people in the East Midlands



Ethan, 22, Trainee Youth Worker from Nottingham and his grandfather

Ethan had been caring for his grandfather full-time, turning down job opportunities to stay at home. But after his grandfather joined a local health and wellbeing hub set up through a regional prevention programme, his health and independence improved. With more support in place, Ethan started training as a youth worker, a role that lets him give back to his community and build a future he once thought was out of reach.

Progress will be evidenced by changes in:



Healthy life expectancy



Social capital and community cohesion



Public safety



Public health indicators

What will this mean in practice?

Healthy, safe and inclusive places to live and work, that support everyone’s wellbeing: The East Midlands will be a place where everyone can live a healthy, active life. Where warm homes, accessible and affordable transport options, and access to parks, nature, rivers, and clean air support healthier places and healthier people. By working with the police, fire services and other system partners, we will enable safer streets and stronger communities. This will build trust, reduce crime and harm, and give residents the security and confidence to participate fully in community life.

Community-based services that support people closer to home: We will strengthen the social capital that connects people and places, building communities with stronger relationships and support at the local level. This will improve wellbeing and help more people in the East Midlands to live longer, healthier lives: remaining resilient, independent, and connected within their communities.

Targeted care and support for people that need it most: People who are vulnerable or sick will be supported by a network of coordinated partners to live independently with the right care and support. Working to support the NHS and health and social care partners, this will help to reduce pressure on the healthcare system.

How will we achieve this?

The government’s health agenda is increasingly focused on prevention, community-based services, and integrated care. This creates a timely opportunity for EMCCA to use our powers to influence health, housing, skills, and transport in ways that improve people’s wellbeing. We will work with the NHS, local authorities and other partners, to help people live longer, healthier lives. In practice, this looks like:

Embedding health considerations in strategic planning: We will prioritise health in transport, housing, planning, and nature provision. This will help to drive safer, greener and more walkable neighbourhoods, with active travel options, quality green spaces, and access to affordable warm homes. We will put population health as a key driver of inclusive growth for the region and encourage commitments from employers and institutions in the region to support healthier workforces (such as active travel support, flexible working policies and workplace mental health schemes).

Championing prevention and population health as regional priorities: We will use the Mayor’s convening role to align partners and encourage investment into regional prevention programmes that prioritise local support services. We will act as the regional advocate for reform, making sure government prevention initiatives, research funding, and health innovation pilots are encouraged in the East Midlands.

Driving collaboration with the NHS, councils, and other health partners: We will improve alignment, explore joint commissioning, and create a coordinated approach to improving health outcomes. This will help to drive future sustainability of the health and care system, and work towards reduced pressure on services.

05. Changing the System Together: A Call to Action

How we'll work with partners across the region

The East Midlands has incredible assets and growing momentum, and across our region there is already a wealth of transformative work underway.

But the scale and complexity of the challenges we face demand more. They require us to work together in new ways, to align our efforts around shared goals, and to create something greater than the sum of our individual parts.

The Inclusive Growth Commission has championed the once-in-a-generation opportunity created by the Mayor and EMCCA to put the East Midlands on a new path for inclusive growth. EMCCA can drive real impact by taking a strategic, joined-up approach. This means convening partners to set direction, build coalitions for change, and focus funding and resources on delivering our core mission and targeted ambitions.

That's why we're organising our work through the Inclusive Growth Framework. It's a new way of working that brings our strategies, investments and delivery partners into one shared plan. It ensures that all parts of the system are pulling in the same direction, guided by clear regional priorities and outcomes for residents. We can use our "Opportunity Escalator" to ensure investments in transport, housing and skills enable more residents to access new job opportunities in the Trent Arc and Supercluster.

As a next step to shape the delivery of these long-term ambitions, EMCCA will initiate a programme of engagement with partners across the region. Our approach will be shaped by local priorities and with a commitment to partnership working. Through ongoing dialogue and collaboration, we will explore how best to translate shared ambitions into practical, collective action.

EMCCA and Mayoral Leadership

As the region's Mayoral Strategic Authority, EMCCA is charged with enabling long-term, economic growth, taken forward under the leadership of Mayor Claire Ward. With current and future powers over economic development, transport, skills, housing and spatial development, EMCCA is well positioned to work with partners toward our core mission of inclusive growth, and the ambitions set out in this Framework.

We will do all of this with our four constituent councils as core members of the EMCCA Board, and with our 15 district and borough councils who are also represented in that decision making. EMCCA will also work alongside businesses, delivery partners, communities and people across the region.



UK Government

EMCCA works in partnership with the UK government to maximise the opportunities of our current powers, functions and funding. We advocate for how further powers and funding would unlock the inclusive growth potential of the region, deliver for residents and support national government missions on growth and opportunity.

The Inclusive Growth Commission highlighted EMCCA as a trailblazer, but only if given the right tools. That means fast-tracking EMCCA for the next stage of devolution, addressing the legacy of underinvestment, securing an integrated multiyear funding settlement, and granting enhanced 'trailblazer' status in education and skills alongside a stronger role in commissioning joined-up health and employment support to reduce inactivity.

Public Sector Partners

We will work with our public sector partners to co-create and drive regional transformation. This includes highway and traffic authorities, Homes England, housing associations, the NHS, integrated care boards (ICBs), police, fire and rescue and education institutions.

Wider System Partners

Businesses, investors, community organisations and residents are central to driving transformation across the region. We'll support businesses to develop and grow, whilst ensuring public investment generates both private returns and public value, backing the risk-takers and innovators who are building our future economic prosperity.

Success depends on everyone seeing their role in the system, businesses creating good quality jobs, residents engaging in democratic processes, investors backing transformational change, and communities co-designing solutions that work for local people. Together, we're building an economy where breakthrough innovations create good jobs, where successful businesses invest back in their communities, and where the East Midlands becomes the go-to place for companies that want to be part of solving global challenges.

The power of our diverse region is that every place has distinctive strengths and contributions. Whether you're in a market town or city centre, a rural community or urban neighbourhood, you have assets, capabilities, and perspectives that are essential for regional success. The next few years will define the East Midlands for decades to come. We have unprecedented opportunities, from newly devolved powers and national investment programmes, to technological advances and growing recognition of our regional strengths. But opportunities alone don't create transformation. This Framework is a call to action, and a basis for partnership working to realise long-term change and inclusive growth for the East Midlands.



Derby

EMCCA will meet its Public Sector Equality Duty, in line with the Equality Act 2010. EMCCA will ensure that our actions to realise the core mission and ambitions set out in this Framework deliver inclusive growth and opportunity for all people and communities across the region.

Changing the System Together

A joined-up approach to deliver change for the region requires solutions to be delivered through a system of partners. EMCCA plays multiple roles, as a strategic authority coordinating across the region, as a partner with local institutions, and as a convenor bringing together businesses and communities around shared goals.

