EAST MIDLANDS GROWTH PLAN

Delivering a fairer, more inclusive future

2025–2035

CLAIRE WARD
MAYOR OF THE
EAST MIDLANDS

East Midlands
Combined County
Authority

My Vision for Growth

A foreword from the Mayor of the East Midlands

As Mayor of the East Midlands, I have made a commitment to deliver inclusive growth, a model of growth that values everyone's contributions, invests in their prospects, and shares out the benefits.

Too many people in this region are held back from achieving their potential by things that can be changed: the quality and supply of homes, preventable or manageable health conditions, or the accessibility and reliability of public transport. We will deliver growth, but how we do that is the difference between bringing the people of the East Midlands with us or leaving them behind.

That is why this plan is different. It sets out a deliberate strategy to hardwire inclusivity into everything we do so that every part of our region benefits, and every person has the chance to progress.

Over the next ten years we will work alongside businesses and employers, local leaders, and communities to achieve that vision for this region. It's about putting the East Midlands on the front foot: attracting new investment, improving skills, upgrading our infrastructure, and ensuring the proceeds of growth are felt in every community.

This plan defines our ambitions for the next decade of growth. It puts our strengths front and centre, and sets out how we will measure progress, where we want to get to, and the first steps we're taking to get there. Most importantly, it commits us to growth that is not only ambitious in scale, but balanced, inclusive, and rooted in the lives of the people we serve.

This plan has been shaped in collaboration with leaders across the region and I welcome further contributions as we start to deliver. It is a shared project for the East Midlands. Your ideas, energy, and experience will help us turn ambition into action and deliver the change our region needs to become the best place to live, work, and learn.

Claire Ward

Mayor of the East Midlands

"It's about putting the East Midlands on the front foot: attracting new investment, improving skills, upgrading our infrastructure, and ensuring the proceeds of growth are felt in every community."

Delivering for our Region

A foreword from the Chief Executive of the East Midlands Combined County Authority

As the first permanent Chief Executive of the East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA), I am honoured to lead this organisation at a transformative moment for our region. Serving a population of more than two million people and an economy of more than £60 billion, we are now poised to harness the true scale and ambition of what this region can become.

This plan marks our first regional economic blueprint since we were established, and it is far greater than simply a vision on a page. It is a plan for delivery, anchored in partnership, building capability and system leadership.

We are already building internal capacity, launching investment funds, and cultivating strong relationships with our businesses, anchor institutions, universities and colleges, and civil society.

Designed to help us achieve our core mission and ambitions, the East Midlands Growth Plan is our guiding strategy for the region.

And we are already bringing together partners behind shared goals across transport, skills, housing, innovation and net zero infrastructure to truly harness the heft of this great region. We want to ensure that growth creates opportunity for every community and every neighbourhood.

We will deliver real outcomes: better-paid jobs, rising productivity, thriving innovation clusters, more sustainable places and wider access to opportunity. EMCCA's role is to ensure ambition is matched by capability, and vision is turned into action.

We are the EMCCA Family. Thank you to our councils, businesses, local institutions, voluntary organisations, and communities that have shaped this plan. I look forward to our continued close working to deliver a stronger, fairer and more resilient East Midlands.

Amy Harhoff

Chief Executive, East Midlands Combined County Authority

"We will deliver real outcomes: better-paid jobs, rising productivity, thriving innovation clusters, more sustainable places and wider access to opportunity. EMCCA's role is to ensure ambition is matched by capability, and vision is turned into action."

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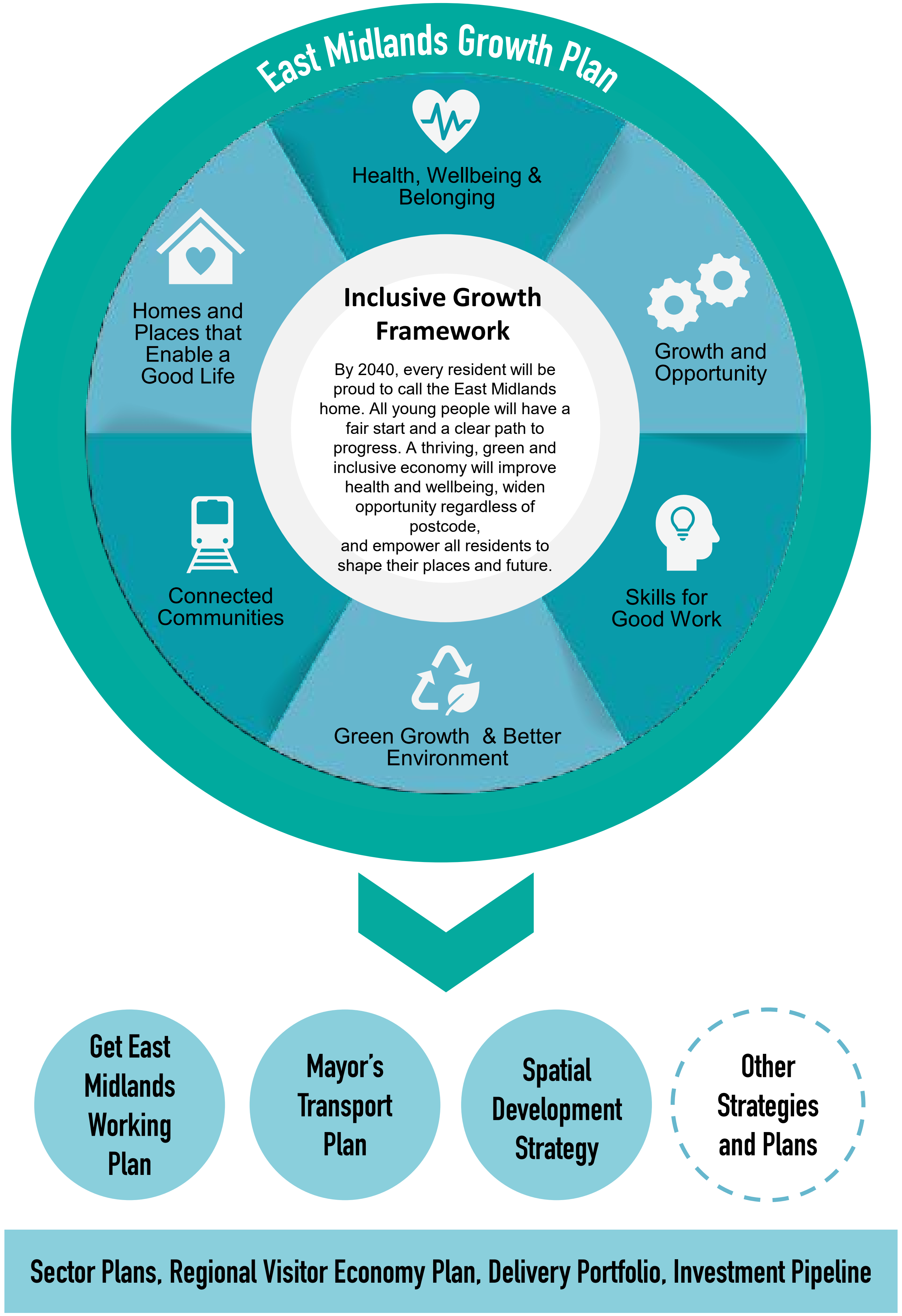
Our Inclusive Growth Mission

The East Midlands region of Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire has a rich industrial heritage, and modern strengths across clean energy, MedTech, life sciences, advanced manufacturing, and the digital, creative and cultural sectors. We have two expanding, innovative cities, a diverse mix of towns and large rural areas with huge natural assets. Under the leadership of Mayor Claire Ward and the East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA), our core mission is to deliver inclusive growth – growth that creates opportunities to empower all to shape their places and futures

Building on the work of the East Midlands Inclusive Growth Commission, our Inclusive Growth Framework (published alongside this Growth Plan) sets out six targeted ambitions to support this 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.

Our Growth Plan is the first major step in delivering this mission. It translates the ambitions of the Inclusive Growth Framework into a clear set of actions and investment priorities from 2025 to 2035. Our Growth Plan also sets the basis for our upcoming Mayor's Transport Plan, Get East Midlands Working Plan, and Spatial Development Strategy. We will work with local, regional and national partners to deliver this plan.



Achieving our ambition for the economy over 10 years will deliver

£13bn

More in our economy and ensuring everyone feels the benefits of growth

£2bn+

Investment in new and improved transport infrastructure

60,000+

More people in work with an 80% employment rate

210,000

More people with skilled qualifications

100,000+

More homes built

1GW

Additional community clean energy generation

Challenges and Opportunities

Our economy has real strengths including a strong manufacturing base, and world-leading potential for clean energy development. We benefit from a central location and connectivity to the rest of the UK and the presence of globally significant firms such as Rolls-Royce, Toyota, and Boots.

The Trent Arc connecting Derby and Nottingham, and major sites including the East Midlands Freeport are hubs for innovation and employment. This is alongside the towns, villages and rural areas across Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire that provide industrial capacity, skills and supply chains. From the priority sectors in the Government's Industrial Strategy, we have strengths in advanced manufacturing, MedTech and life sciences, clean energy, and digital, creative and cultural sectors. In addition, we have a strong visitor economy, and established strengths in sectors such as aggregates and minerals, defence and logistics.

We need to connect these assets to ensure the region is more than the sum of its parts as our productivity lags below the national average; growth driven more by workforce expansion than efficiency. Our businesses face barriers to scaling, innovating and attracting investment. Deprivation is most acute along the corridor from the north of the region in towns like Ashfield and Mansfield to further south in Nottingham and Derby.

Population

2,285,000[1]

Nominal GVA

£60 billion[2]

Nominal GVA Growth (2020-23)

22.3%[3]

7.6%pt. lower than national avg

Employment in 2025*

75.8%[4]

0.2%pt. higher than national avg

Businesses (Active enterprises)

74,652[5]

Across 88,652 business sites

Gross Disposable Household Income per capita in 2022

£19,379[6]

17.0% lower than national avg

Claimant Count in July 2025

3.8%[7]

0.3%pt. lower than national avg

Average house price in 2025

£241,000[8]

*10.4% lower than national avg***

Productivity

How much value our working residents and businesses create for every hour worked, key to driving growth and prosperity

20% growth in micro, small or medium enterprises, in line with national average (2014-2024)[9]

Productivity is only £35.60 per hour (below national average)[10]

Largest manufacturing employment base (6.1% of UK)[11]

People

The skills, jobs, and incomes of our residents, showing how people are experiencing opportunities for progression in the region

2.3% decline in the working age population share (2004-2024)[12]

Large proportion of apprenticeship qualifications (above national average)[13]

Earnings growing but lag 15.3% below national average[14]

Place

The homes, transport, and infrastructure across our region, shaping whether every community feels the benefits of growth

Housing supply is rising four times faster than the national average, but the temporary accommodation level exceeds national rates (2014-24)[15]

225% growth in renewable energy capacity (above national average, 2014-2023)[16]

32.5% deprivation gap (above national average), concentrated in the centre of the region[17]

** %pt. refers to percentage points which is used to compare values containing percentages. Employment figures are based on a rolling average from Oct 2023-March 2025 to account for seasonality trend.*

*** Average house price is for East Midlands as an ONS region rather than EMCCA, due to data limitations.*

Our Strategy for Inclusive Growth

We are taking an approach to economic growth that purposefully directs investment where it matters most to ensure rising living standards and the creation of empowering opportunities. Our strategy to achieve this is built around three pillars that work together to deliver inclusive growth across the region. This approach has been shaped by engagement with partners and analysis of our economy, health, environment and social fabric, helping us identify both the enablers of growth and the barriers to inclusion (see Appendix 5). In each section, we set out clear actions to realise our ambitions and deliver transformational change.

Pillar 1: Our Enablers of Growth

Investing in our six enablers of growth is the primary way we can achieve a faster, fairer, more inclusive, form of economic growth across the *whole* region. Our focus is on creating opportunities for all types of households and businesses, being sensitive to place characteristics, and recognising the need to be proactive in shaping preferred outcomes through policy and investment. Our enablers are:

- **Jobs and Skills** to help people get into work and progress through meaningful careers.
- **Business Partnerships** to proactively attract investment and provide support to businesses to scale and expand.
- **Connectivity** between people and places through sustainable, reliable transport and digital networks.
- **Housing and Place** to enable affordable, sustainable and well-located communities.
- **Clean Energy and Climate Resilient Infrastructure** to power a greener, more resilient economy.
- **Innovation** to turn ideas into growth by boosting productivity, competitiveness and global reach.

Pillar 2: Our Sectoral Priorities

Inclusive growth requires growing businesses, and good jobs. We have identified five high impact sectors that demonstrate the clearest potential to achieve that at scale and across the whole region.

Four align directly with the government's Industrial Strategy: clean energy, MedTech and life sciences, advanced manufacturing, and digital, creative and cultural Industries. Our fifth, visitor economy, represents a significant regional opportunity.

In addition to our high impact sectors, we have established strengths in aggregates, minerals, and low carbon construction, logistics, and defence.

By connecting established strengths with high impact opportunities, we can ensure a wide range of sectors play a significant role in delivering a fairer, more inclusive region.

Pillar 3: Our Approach to Place

A thriving economy requires with thriving places, recognising that every community has different strengths, challenges, and opportunities. Our approach to place will combine investment in physical infrastructure with a focus on building social capital.

This means creating conditions for communities where residents can access good jobs, businesses can grow, and young people have clear pathways to opportunity. At its core, we aim to deliver inclusive, sustainable growth that strengthens both the economic and social fabric of our communities.

Enablers of Growth

Our enablers of growth are aligned with our Inclusive Growth Framework ambitions for what life looks like in the East Midlands by 2040. Our ten-year Growth Plan has a key role to play in moving us towards these ambitions by 2035, with specific goals and actions for each enabler.

Clean Energy and Climate-Resilient Infrastructure

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

Jobs and Skills

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.

Innovation

The East Midlands will be known as a birthplace of globally competitive ideas. Innovation will accelerate the growth of exportable firms, strengthen our regional identity, and support every sector to adapt and thrive. Businesses will start, scale and stay in the East Midlands because of the strength of our innovation ecosystem.

Connectivity

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.

Housing and Place

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

Business Partnerships

The East Midlands will be a leading destination for business investment through attracting global capital and supporting businesses to set up, scale and export.

Jobs and Skills

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.

In 10 years, this will mean:

60,000 — **Supporting at least 60,000 more people into employment and achieving the 80% employment rate target**

Increased Earnings — **Enabling local incomes to increase to at least the national average.**

210,000 — **Supporting 210,000 more residents to achieve qualifications across levels, putting us on track to exceed the national average**

Priority actions include

- ✓ Develop and implement a new Local Skills Improvement Plan for a more responsive regional adult skills system
- ✓ Publish and implement our Get East Midlands Working Plan to tackle systemic barriers to employment, including health and childcare
- ✓ Adopt and develop an Opportunity Escalator to connect people to good jobs, and enable pathways for progression
- ✓ Deliver the Adult Skills Fund, Free Courses for Jobs and Skills Bootcamps and Connect to Work Programme
- ✓ Launch a new East Midlands Good Employment Charter
- ✓ Deliver our Youth Ambition to provide young people with the support, opportunities, and voice they need to thrive.

Connectivity

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.

In 10 years, this will mean:

£2bn — **Improving our transport infrastructure by investing over £2bn in transport funding by 2032**

More choice — **Enabling healthy, inclusive and sustainable options, that reduces car dependency**

Public transport — **Communities will be linked through even better public transport and new mass transit will be well in development**

Priority actions include

- ✓ Deliver a step change in improved transport infrastructure through the Mayor's Transport Plan and over £2bn of investment to 2032
- ✓ Begin construction of new tram or light rail systems, helping connect more communities
- ✓ Deliver the Mayor's Pledge to improve our walking, wheeling and cycling infrastructure
- ✓ Invest millions of funding into improving and maintaining our roads, to future-proof our assets and improve reliability
- ✓ Take control of bus policy and operations through our new devolved transport powers
- ✓ Make rail services more accessible and better integrated with other modes of transport

Business Partnerships

The East Midlands will be a leading destination for business investment through attracting global capital and supporting businesses to set up, scale and export.

In 10 years, this will mean:

Increased Exports	**Increasing exports from £26.5bn to £63bn, representing a 9% annual growth rate**
SME Growth	**Boosting the number of fast-growing SMEs in the region by 25% to over 1200**
Leading Destination	**The East Midlands will become a leading destination for global investment**

Priority actions include:

- ✓ Ensure the right business advice and support is available to enable more businesses to start, scale and export
- ✓ Develop a brand for the East Midlands that attracts new business investment and showcases our strengths to a domestic and international audience
- ✓ Develop a joined-up investor offer on opportunities in the region
- ✓ Promote the region overseas to drive increased exports and foreign investment growth, including to key markets such the USA, Germany, and Japan
- ✓ Work with our regional partners to build a pipeline of investible opportunities
- ✓ Work with businesses, trade unions and national government to improve the business environment, support good jobs and stimulate further growth

Innovation

The East Midlands will be known as a birthplace of globally competitive ideas. Innovation will accelerate the growth of exportable firms, strengthen our regional identity, and support every sector to adapt and thrive. Businesses will start, scale and stay in the East Midlands because of the strength of our innovation ecosystem.

In 10 years, this will mean:

New Facilities	**New innovation facilities in the region to support sectoral cluster needs and national priorities**
Increased Investment	**More investment in innovation, by increasing successful Innovate UK applications from organisations in the region by 25%**
More innovation	**Enabling 2,700 more businesses to engage in innovation**

Priority actions include:

- ✓ Support the delivery of the £160 million 10-year East Midlands Investment Zone Strategy and Investment Plan to unlock innovation, including in advanced manufacturing and clean energy
- ✓ Work with our Innovation Advisory Board and regional partners to pursue funding of up to £20 million from UKRI's Local Innovation Partnerships Fund
- ✓ Work with universities to strengthen pathways to the commercialisation of research, and colleges and training providers to develop the technical skills needed to grow innovative businesses
- ✓ Work with partners to support the development of innovation facilities that support sector and national priorities

Housing and Place

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

In 10 years, this will mean:

100,000	**Delivering over 100,000 new homes over 10 years**
Strategic Development	**Use our powers and convening role to develop vibrant mixed-use developments**
12,000	**12,000 homes retrofitted with energy efficiency measures, contributing to lower bills**

Priority actions include:

- ✓ Support delivery of more than 100,000 new homes in the region, though partnership working with national government, Homes England and local authorities
- ✓ Develop our first regional Spatial Development Strategy to set priorities for land use, infrastructure and investment and to unlock opportunities that support communities, businesses and the environment
- ✓ Work with local authorities and the Net Zero Hub to enable retrofit delivery of 2,500 homes and 5,000 energy saving and generating measures
- ✓ Support the delivery of up to 2,000 new homes on brownfield land by investing up to £36.5m through the Government's Brownfield Housing Fund
- ✓ Develop a region-wide housing strategy in partnership with our local planning authorities
- ✓ Mobilise efforts to address homelessness and housing vulnerability by establishing a regional Homelessness Taskforce

Clean Energy and Climate Resilient Infrastructure

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

In 10 years, this will mean:

Resilience	**Securing new investment in major flood resilience infrastructure**
1GW	**Delivery of 1GW of public sector and community energy projects**
Clean Energy Infrastructure	**Transformation of decommissioned power stations and major new investment in clean energy infrastructure**

Priority actions include:

- ✓ Deploy £15.7 million of East Midlands Investment Zone capital to attract private capital and drive industrial transformation, including nuclear and fusion
- ✓ Unlock major investment across fusion, nuclear fission, hydrogen, wind, solar, heat networks and Carbon Capture, Utilisation and Storage (CCUS)
- ✓ Drive targeted, high impact energy investment leveraging the outputs of England's largest Local Area Energy Plan with Digital Twinning
- ✓ Roll out low-carbon heat network zones in high impact areas
- ✓ Align local projects with national funding and grid upgrade opportunities through the Government's Clean Power 2030 Action Plan
- ✓ Secure funding for major flood resilience infrastructure along the Derwent, Trent and Wye rivers

High Impact Sectors for Growth

From the Government's Industrial Strategy, we have identified clean energy, advanced manufacturing, MedTech and life sciences, and digital, creative and cultural industries as high impact sectors in the East Midlands. And we have gone further, identifying the visitor economy as a key sector for inclusive growth, given the potential the region's natural environment, heritage and culture has to offer.

In addition to these high impact sectors, established strengths in the region – Defence (closely linked to advanced manufacturing), aggregates, minerals and low carbon construction, and Logistics - present opportunities for growth, security and resilience.

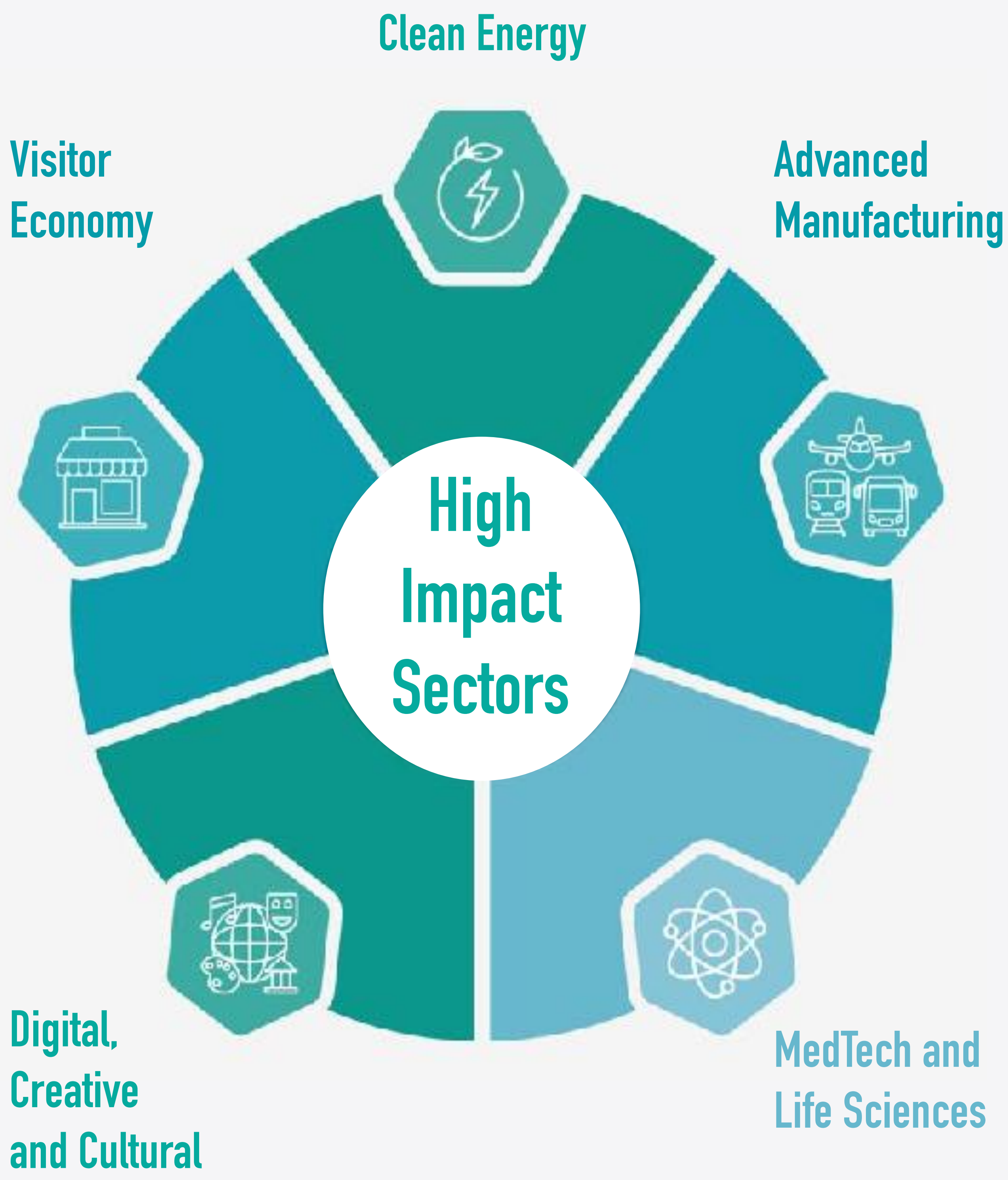
We will work with national Government, businesses and partners on opportunities for growth across these sectors, including where these are closely aligned with the Government's Industrial Strategy. This sectoral approach is designed to complement a cross-economy approach with our enablers of growth. And through our Opportunity Escalator approach we will ensure residents can access jobs in these sectors, including through skills and training pathways and transport connections.

High Impact Sectors

- **Clean Energy –** Building on the legacy of the East Midlands as an energy producer, we are poised to transform decommissioned power stations into Megawatt Valley 2.0, critical to securing the UK's energy security and net zero transition and poised to create employment opportunities in the region for generations to come.
- **Advanced Manufacturing** – Industrial giants in the region are global leaders in advanced automotive, rail, aerospace and defence manufacturing. With forecasts indicating significant growth, there is an opportunity to drive forward international export competitiveness and regional supply chain development creating significant productivity gains and employment opportunities across the region.
- **MedTech and Life Sciences** – With our capabilities in MedTech and life sciences we can realise the opportunity to turn one of the country's leading clusters for clinical research into a globally recognised force for improving global health outcomes.
- **Digital, Creative and Cultural** – With Nottingham home to the fastest growing cluster of digital, creative and cultural activity outside of London, regional clusters at the intersection of creative and digital, such as games and animation subsectors, have potential to generate new job opportunities.
- **Visitor Economy** – With the Peak District National Park, Sherwood Forest, the Derwent Valley Mills and top-level sports venues, the East Midlands attracts 77 million visitors annually, we have potential to improve our visitor economy offer and convert more visits into overnight stays.

Established Strengths

- **Defence** – The East Midlands is central to the UK's defence manufacturing future, with Derby at the heart of propulsion and reactor technologies that are critical to national security, clean energy and international partnerships like AUKUS.
- **Aggregates, Minerals, and Low Carbon Construction** – With a shift towards low-carbon energy in the production of critical aggregates and minerals, the region will drive innovation and job creation in modern construction methods and strengthen national supply chain resilience in a more volatile world.
- **Logistics** – The East Midlands is at the crossroads of the country, with the M1 providing strong connectivity. Our logistics sector enables goods, services and ideas to move efficiently to where they are needed. It underpins the success of high impact sectors in the movement of supply chain components and final manufactured goods.



High Impact Sectors: Actions

We will work with central Government, businesses and local, regional and national partners to unlock opportunities in our high impact sectors.

Actions include:

Clean Energy

- ✓ **Closing the Green Skills Gap:** Collaborating with the UK Atomic Energy Authority (UKAEA), UK Industrial Fusion Solutions (UKFIS), regional authorities and education partners to develop the skills needed for nuclear and fusion projects.
- ✓ **Attracting Investment:** Working with national programmes such as the UK Atomic Energy Authority (UKAEA)-led fusion investment pipeline and the £1 billion Clean Energy Supply Chain Fund to attract investment and boost exports.
- ✓ **Improving Energy Capacity:** National plans include a doubling of annual clean energy investment to over £30 billion by 2035 and up to £10 billion per year in transmission network upgrades will help to support the delivery of low-carbon infrastructure.

Advanced Manufacturing

- ✓ **Supporting Careers in the Sector:** Bringing more people into the sector through a flexible education and training system that collaborates with manufacturers. Academic partnerships are in place with all our universities.
- ✓ **Leveraging Innovation Funding:** Greater collaboration with the knowledge economy to secure funding for more Micro, Small and Medium Sized Enterprises and drive growth. UKRI's £100 million programme for R&D clusters provides a further opportunity to expand regional innovation activity.
- ✓ **Advocating for Energy Access:** Employers in the region are working tirelessly to grow their businesses while reducing emissions, but without priority access to the gas and electricity grids, including for high-energy defence and propulsion facilities as well as Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF), future growth could be constrained.

Digital, Creative and Cultural

- ✓ **Increasing Access to Creative and Digital Skills Training:** This includes building awareness of creative careers through national programmes like the Government's £9 million Creative Careers Service (2025-28).
- ✓ **Supporting Academic-Business Partnerships:** Enabling partnerships where there is clear correlation between universities providing high-quality courses in game development and the concentration of related businesses.
- ✓ **Enhancing Digital Connectivity:** Ensuring our region is digitally connected, especially improvements in rural areas, will allow more people to access jobs in this sector.
- ✓ **Supporting investment in digital, creative and cultural innovation:** This will include UK Research and Innovation (UKRI)'s national investment programmes, and the Government's commitment to increase public and private R&D investment in the creative industries.

MedTech and Life Sciences

- ✓ **Driving Investment in Innovation:** National investment of up to £600 million in the Health Data Research Service (HDRS) presents a major opportunity for the region. With a fairer share of government investment, we can accelerate growth and create a cluster that rivals any other in the UK.
- ✓ **Improving Digital Infrastructure:** Making sure our digital infrastructure meets the needs of businesses as they start, scale and expand in the region.
- ✓ **Building a Skills Pipeline Fit for the Future:** Ensuring more residents have the qualifications they need to pursue jobs in this field. Jobs in the MedTech and life sciences sector mainly require a degree level or above.

Visitor Economy

- ✓ **Visit East Midlands:** Create an integrated regional structure to maximise the resources available to reach our ambitious growth target, and to further promote the region's assets and experiences to national and international markets.
- ✓ **Supporting high-quality job creation:** Develop a regional Centre of Excellence for visitor economy skills, including hospitality, heritage and culture.
- ✓ **Developing infrastructure:** Leverage our capital spending to support major infrastructure projects and identify new uses for our heritage assets. Emerging developments like the Trent Sports Quarter and PEAK Resort show how private and public sector investment create new attractions and experiences.
- ✓ **Enabling accommodation:** Commission an updated strategic accommodation study for the region to support commercial partnerships and promote investment and regeneration opportunities. We will support the development of new accommodation and increase overnight stays.

Visitor Economy Ambition: The East Midlands will become a destination for year-round, high-value tourism. By creating compelling reasons to visit and stay overnight, building on the regional offer, and embedding sustainability and technology, the visitor economy will support more skilled jobs, greater GVA, and vibrant places across both cities and rural areas.

In 10 years, we will:

- ✓ Increase the number of overnight visitors by 50%, as we strengthen the visitor economy offering.
- ✓ Visitors will spend an extra 50% more in our economy over their stays than they do currently, reflected by more options across high-value experiences, restaurants, hotels, and entertainment such as arts and sports.
- ✓ Grow our visitor economy, currently worth £5.3 billion, by 20%, growing the industry by £1 billion and generating 6,750 new jobs.
- ✓ Benefit our wider supply and value chains, increasing indirect GVA by a further £730 million and generating an additional 4,150 jobs.

Our Approach to Place

Our Vision for Growth identifies a set of Strategic Growth Areas across the region. Through our Growth Plan, we will take steps to unlock investment and new jobs across these areas.

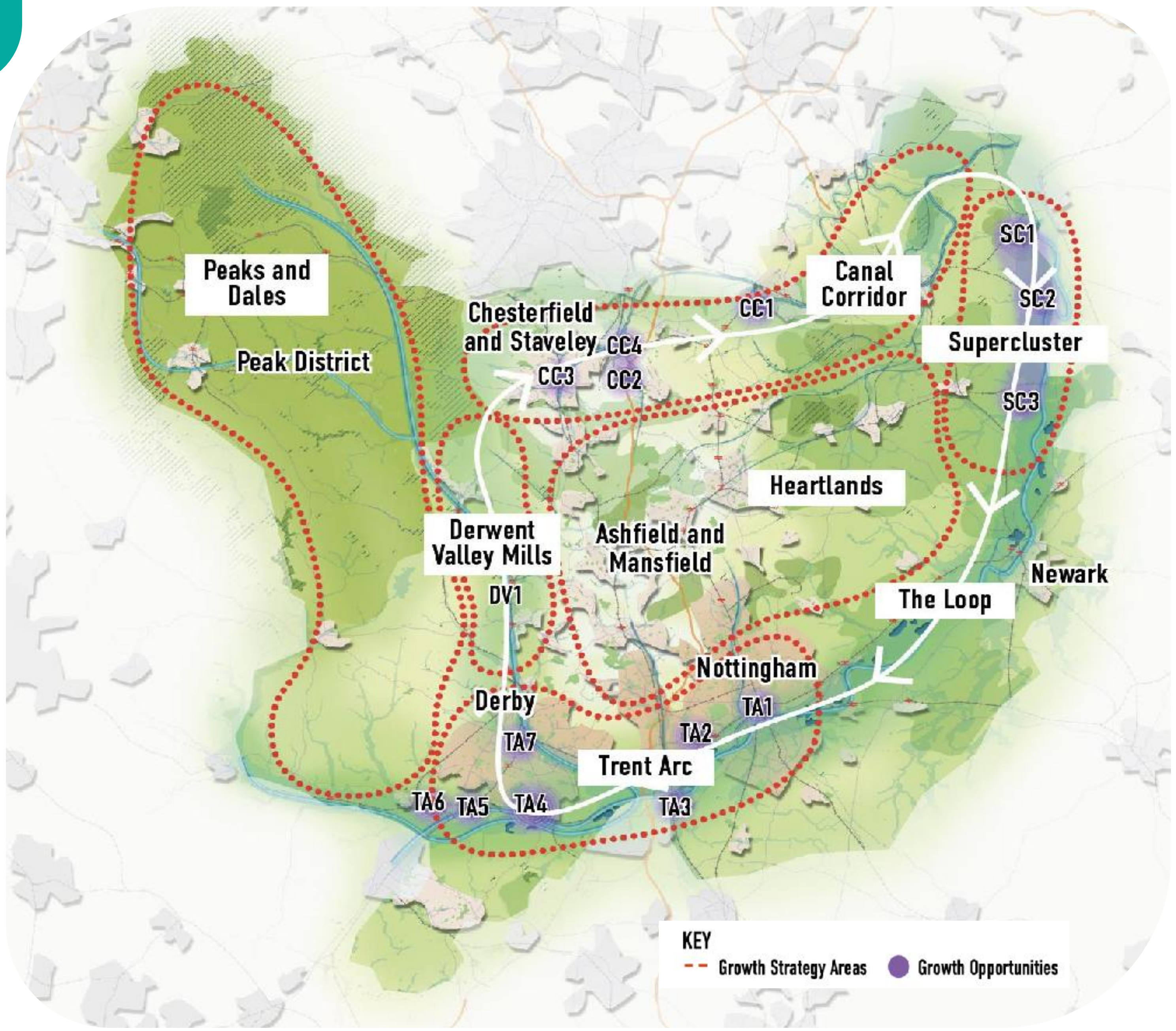
The **Trent Arc** will bring together major employment and growth opportunities, including Derby and Nottingham city centres, the East Midlands Freeport, Infinity Park Investment Zone, and the former coal-fired power stations at Ratcliffe-on-Soar and Willington. Home to global brands in aerospace and marine propulsion, nuclear Small Modular Reactors (SMRs), rail, and automotive, the area is also renowned for engineering and life sciences. It has the potential to deliver **£2.4bn uplift in GVA**, **30,000 new homes**, and **40,000 new high-quality jobs**.

The **Supercluster** centres on three former coal-fired power stations at West Burton, Cottam, and High Marnham. West Burton has been selected as the UK site for the STEP Fusion energy prototype project, which will anchor a world-class clean energy and innovation hub, comparable to the European Organisation for Nuclear Research (CERN). This cluster will drive global exports and a new wave of investment in net zero technologies, AI, and digital industries. Regionally, it could generate **£930m GVA uplift**, **create 15,000 new jobs and 6,800 new homes**, and inspire more local pride

The **Canal Corridor** is an opportunity to link our heritage, natural assets and future industrial development. The corridor would connect Chesterfield, Worksop and Retford, creating interconnected business and service economies, as well as a unified visitor economy offer. In the longer term and as the Supercluster develops, it is likely that the construction and future operations workforce will be located here too. It has the potential to deliver a **£400m GVA uplift**, **7,800 new high-quality jobs**, and almost **4,000 new homes**.

Recognising our region's unique strengths in making and moving, government has allocated **£160 million in public funding** for the **East Midlands Investment Zone (EMIZ)**. EMIZ currently supports advanced manufacturing and green industries across three sites in the region (see box right). Together, these sites **will attract private investment of £383m**, fast-track the development of zero-carbon technologies, create over **4,000 new high-quality jobs**, bring **over 180 hectares of brownfield land back into use**, contributing to the East Midlands' leading role in the UK's net zero transition.

The scale of opportunity is reinforced by the East Midlands Freeport, the UK's only inland freeport. It is a hub of global industry and green innovation, spanning three nationally significant sites: **East Midlands Airport and Gateway Industrial Cluster (EMAGIC), Ratcliffe-on-Soar Power Station, East Midlands Intermodal Park (EMIP).** Together, these assets are shaping a modern, clean, and resilient ecosystem that is underpinned by a **long-term £1bn investment strategy** to ensure businesses can compete in global markets across several of our high impact sectors.



Project spotlight: East Midlands Investment Zone sites

- ✓ **Infinity Park, Derby:** A £200 million innovation and commercial park with 40 hectares, already home to advanced manufacturing and logistics occupiers, alongside key innovation and skills facilities.
- ✓ **Hartington Staveley, Chesterfield:** A 100+ hectare brownfield regeneration site, supported by a £25.2 million Town Deal, set to become a hub for advanced manufacturing and high-value employment in a major growth corridor.
- ✓ **Explore Park, Worksop:** A 100,000 square metres commercial space which is home to Europe's largest pre-assembly manufacturing facility, anchored by Laing O'Rourke, with consent for a further 50,000m². The site will support nuclear energy (including SMRs and fusion), data centres, defence, housing, transport, and healthcare infrastructure.

Working in Partnership to Deliver

Mayoral Strategic Authority working in partnership
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 and employment, housing and spatial development and the environment, EMCCA is well positioned to set out this Growth Plan and work with local authority and wider system partners to deliver on it.

We will do this with our four constituent councils as core members of the EMCCA Board, and with our 15 district and borough councils who are also part of our decision making. We will work with national, regional and local partners, across the public and private sector, including:

- Local Authorities
- Strategic and neighbouring Authorities
- Central Government and Executive Agencies
- Businesses and Trade Unions
- Anchor Institutions
- Education and Skills organisations
- Wider public sector organisations
- Voluntary and community organisations
- Strategic investors and intermediaries

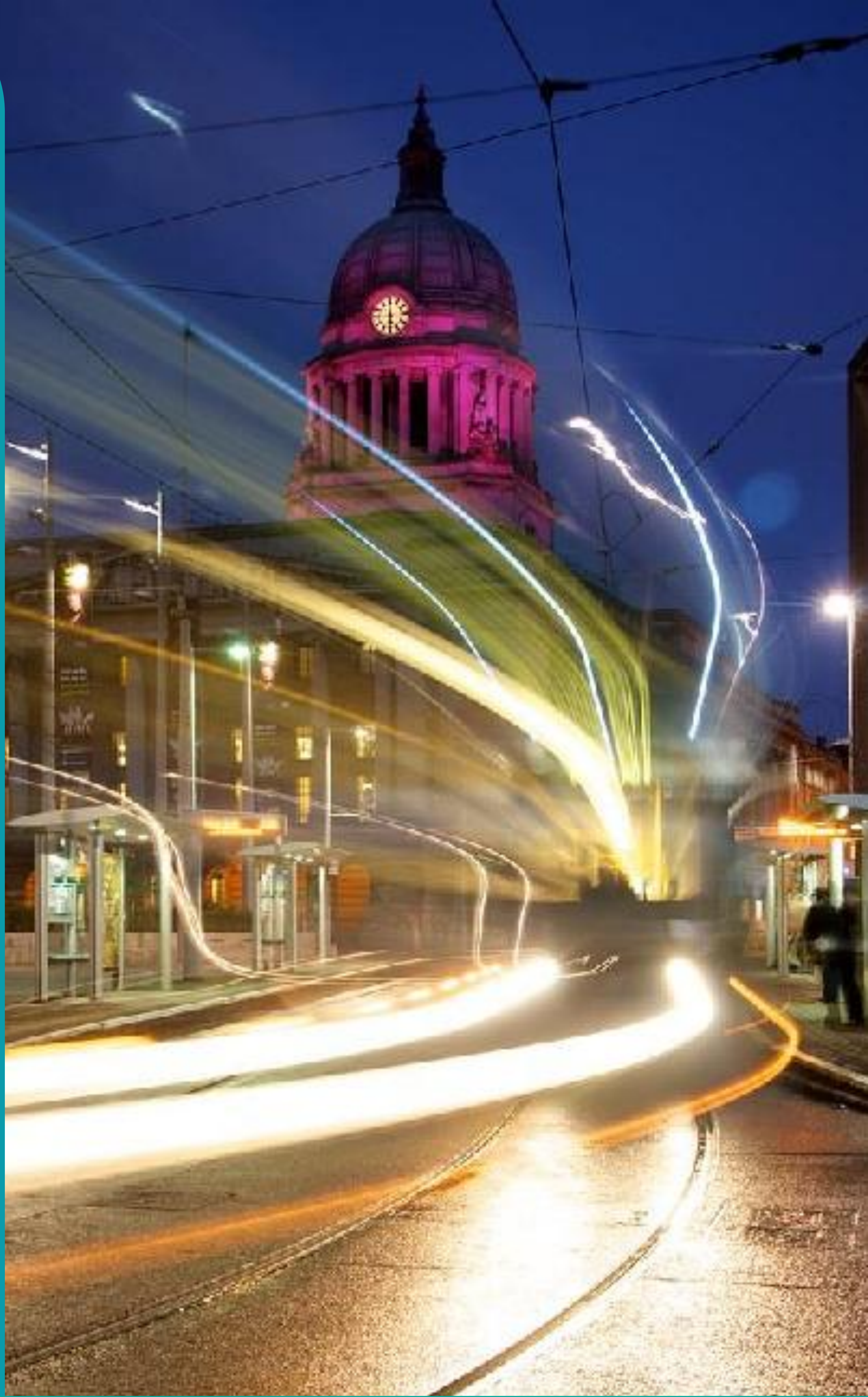
Deepening devolution
The Inclusive Growth Commission highlighted EMCCA as a trailblazer, but only if given the right tools. That means fast-tracking EMCCA for the next stage of devolution, addressing the legacy of underinvestment, securing an integrated multi-year funding settlement, and granting enhanced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

We will work closely with national and regional partners on harnessing the opportunities of current and future devolution arrangements and to champion the long-term interests and inclusive growth potential of the East Midlands.

A call to action
Our Growth Plan is a first step towards delivering inclusive growth across the region. Alongside our Inclusive Growth Framework, it is a call to action, and commitment that EMCCA will work with partners towards realising our core mission and ambitions for the region.

We will develop and undertake a structured programme of engagement with local authorities, wider system partners and the public towards delivering our core mission of inclusive growth, and to maximise the potential of partnership working. In delivering this plan, we will continue to develop and iterate our approach, working with and learning from others, to realise the full potential of our region.

01 Our Growth Mission



The East Midlands

Spanning Derby, Derbyshire, Nottingham, and Nottinghamshire, and working closely with 15 district and borough councils, the East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA) brings together a diverse but connected geography.

With a population approaching 2.3 million and a geography covering nearly 5,000 square kilometres, the East Midlands is a vibrant and diverse area. It's a place with a rich industrial heritage forged in energy production and manufacturing – and has a modern business base that serves well the national priority for growth in the Government's Industrial Strategy.

The East Midlands is home to thriving cities, and a strong blend of market towns, employment hubs and rural communities.

Our cities – Derby and Nottingham – are twin engines of regional growth, innovation and creativity across a single economic geography: the Trent Arc. From BioCity Nottingham to Infinity Park Derby, and the East Midlands Freeport, we are building the infrastructure and ecosystems that can power inclusive, innovation-led growth.

Our towns are the backbone of the region, places of character, enterprise, and connection. From diverse market towns with deep manufacturing roots to growing service centres, they play a critical role in linking our rural and urban economies and ensuring opportunity can reach every part of the region.

Our unique rural landscapes and natural heritage are not only part of who we are, they are economic assets. Home to Sherwood Forest, the legendary domain of Robin Hood – and the Peak District National Park, the UK's first national park, millions of visitors are drawn each year. Our visitor economy sustains communities, and showcases the best of our environment, culture, and hospitality.

Across all these places the East Midlands has been a crucible of industry. We powered Britain's Industrial Revolution through coal, rail, and textiles, and today we are at the forefront of clean energy, MedTech, life sciences, and advanced manufacturing, with a fast-growing ecosystem in the digital, creative and cultural sector. With global players like Rolls-Royce and Toyota, and game-changing projects like the STEP Fusion site our industrial heritage is fast evolving into a cutting-edge future.

The leadership of EMCCA will drive forward regional, national, and international partnerships that over the next decade will create an economy that connects our people and places to these new and evolving opportunities to deliver a fairer, more inclusive future. Our offer to residents, investors, businesses, and government is therefore clear: a region of enormous potential, ready to lead once again.

Our Regional Strategy

East Midlands Inclusive Growth Commission
We established an Inclusive Growth Commission in 2024 to develop a practical set of recommendations for achieving inclusive economic growth across the region. The Commission's independent chair and range of national and local experts engaged extensively with local leaders, businesses, and communities to identify the region's strengths and challenges.

One of the Commission's central recommendations was the adoption of an Opportunity Escalator approach – ensuring people and places across the East Midlands can access the support, skills, and opportunities they need to thrive. The Commission also emphasised the importance of recognising the diverse needs and assets of different communities, and the unique potential created by establishing EMCCA and electing the first regional Mayor of the East Midlands to take a truly strategic, region-wide approach.

The evidence base and recommendations from the Commission's Interim and Final Reports published in March and September 2025, respectively, underpin our regional strategy for inclusive growth.

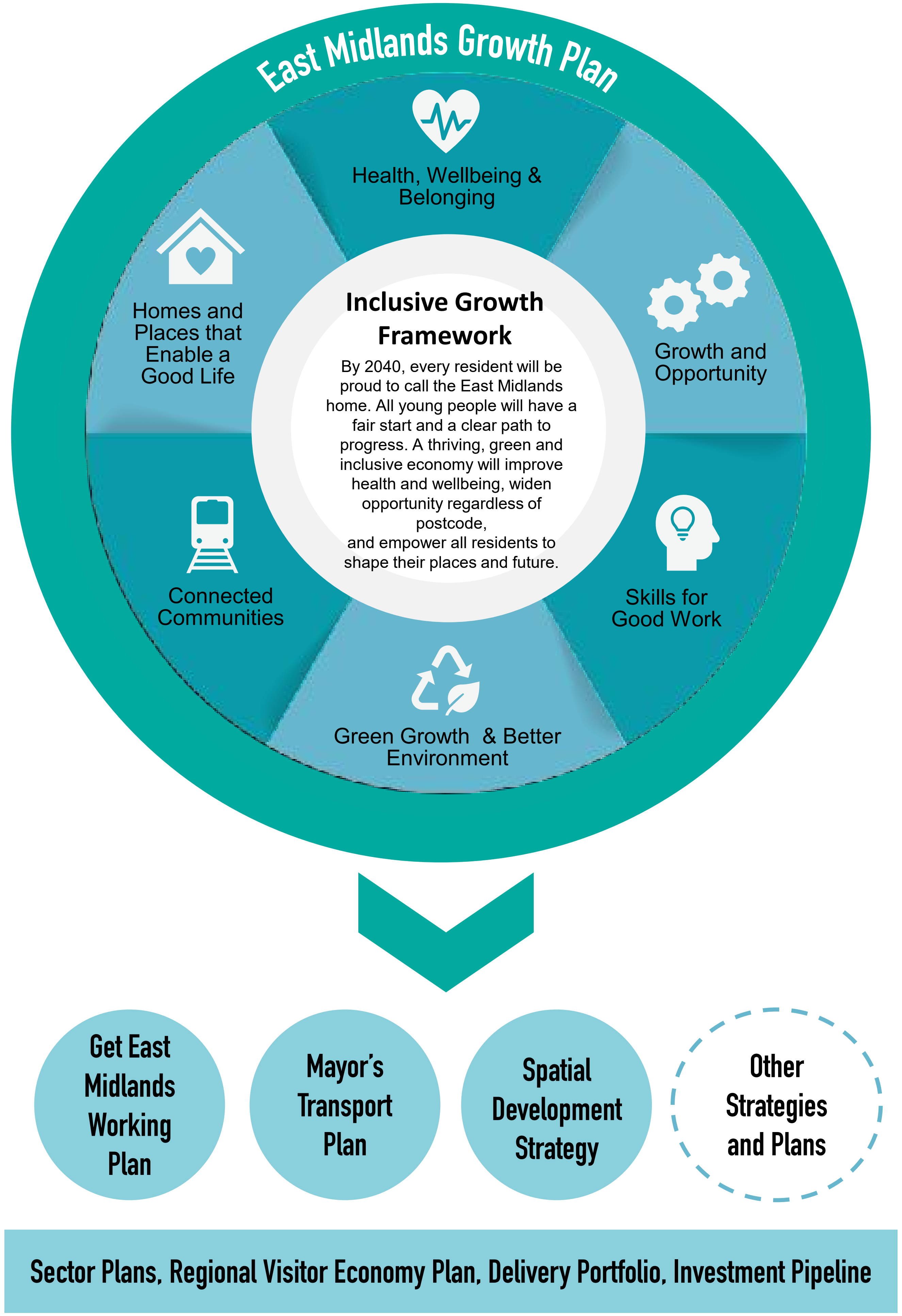
East Midlands Inclusive Growth Framework
Our regional strategy for inclusive growth is guided by a core mission: to deliver growth that raises prosperity and opportunity for all, to ensure it is truly inclusive. The Framework articulates our long-term mission and six ambitions for the region to drive collective action with partners to 2040.

The Framework provides the basis for EMCCA to work with our system partners in the public and private sectors, and at local, regional and national level, towards common goals. Our ambitions are defined so that growth is not only faster, but also fairer. We want to see everyone, regardless of postcode or background, reach their potential.

East Midlands Growth Plan
Our Growth Plan is the first major step in delivering our core mission. It translates the ambitions of the Framework into a clear set of actions and investment priorities for inclusive economic growth from 2025 to 2035.

This Growth Plan also sets the priorities for our place across a wider context of strategic plans, including our upcoming Mayor's Transport Plan, Get East Midlands Working Plan and Spatial Development Strategy. Together, they form a coherent, outcome-focused approach to inclusive growth.

The plan will also guide the development of an East Midlands Investment Pipeline, supported by project spotlights that showcases priority investment opportunities.



Our Inclusive Growth 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.

To help achieve this, our ambition for the economy is clear: the East Midlands will be one of the fastest growing and most inclusive 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.

Achieving our ambition for the economy over 10 years will deliver

£13bn

More in our economy and ensuring everyone feels the benefits of growth

£2bn+

Investment in new and improved transport infrastructure

60,000+

More people in work with an 80% employment rate

210,000

More people with skilled qualifications

100,000+

More homes built

1GW

Additional community clean energy generation

02
Challenges and Opportunities

Our Economy

Our economy has real strengths including a strong manufacturing base, and world-leading potential for clean energy development. We benefit from a central location and connectivity to the rest of the UK and the presence of globally significant firms such as Rolls-Royce, Toyota, and Boots.

The Trent Arc connecting Derby and Nottingham, and major sites including the East Midlands Freeport are hubs for innovation and employment. This is alongside the towns, villages and rural areas across Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire that provide industrial capacity, skills and supply chains. From the priority sectors in the Government's Industrial Strategy, we have strengths in advanced manufacturing, MedTech and life sciences, clean energy, and digital, creative and cultural sectors. In addition, we have a strong visitor economy, and established strengths in sectors such as aggregates and minerals, defence and logistics.

We need to connect these assets to ensure the region is more than the sum of its parts as our productivity lags below the national average; growth driven more by workforce expansion than efficiency. Our businesses face barriers to scaling, innovating and attracting investment. Deprivation is most acute along the corridor from the north of the region in towns like Ashfield and Mansfield to further south in Nottingham and Derby.

Population
2,285,000[1]

Nominal GVA
£61.6 billion[2]

Nominal GVA Growth (2020-23)
22.3%[3]
7.6%pt. lower than national avg.

Employment in 2025*
75.8%[4]
0.2%pt. higher than national avg.

Businesses (Active enterprises)
74,652[5]
Across 88,652 business sites

Gross Disposable Household Income per capita in 2022
£19,379[6]
17.0% lower than national avg.

Claimant Count in July 2025
3.8%[7]
0.3%pt. lower than national avg.

Average house price in 2025
£241,000[8]
*10.4% lower than national avg.***

Productivity

How much value our working residents and businesses create for every hour worked, key to driving growth and prosperity

20% growth in micro, small or medium enterprises, in line with national average (2014-2024)[9]

Productivity is only £35.60 per hour (below national average)[10]

Largest manufacturing employment base (6.1% of UK)[11]

People

The skills, jobs, and incomes of our residents, showing how people are experiencing opportunities for progression in the region

2.3% decline in the working age population share (2004-2024)[12]

Large proportion of apprenticeship qualifications (above national average)[13]

Earnings growing but lag 15.3% below national average[14]

Place

The homes, transport, and infrastructure across our region, shaping whether every community feels the benefits of growth

Housing supply is rising four times faster than the national average, but the temporary accommodation level exceeds national rates (2014-24)[15]

225% growth in renewable energy capacity (above national average, 2014-2023)[16]

32.5% deprivation gap (above national average), concentrated in the centre of the region[17]

** %pt. refers to percentage points which is used to compare values containing percentages. Employment figures are based on a rolling average from Oct 2023-March 2025 to account for seasonality trend.*

*** Average house price is for East Midlands as an ONS region rather than EMCCA, due to data limitations.*

Productivity

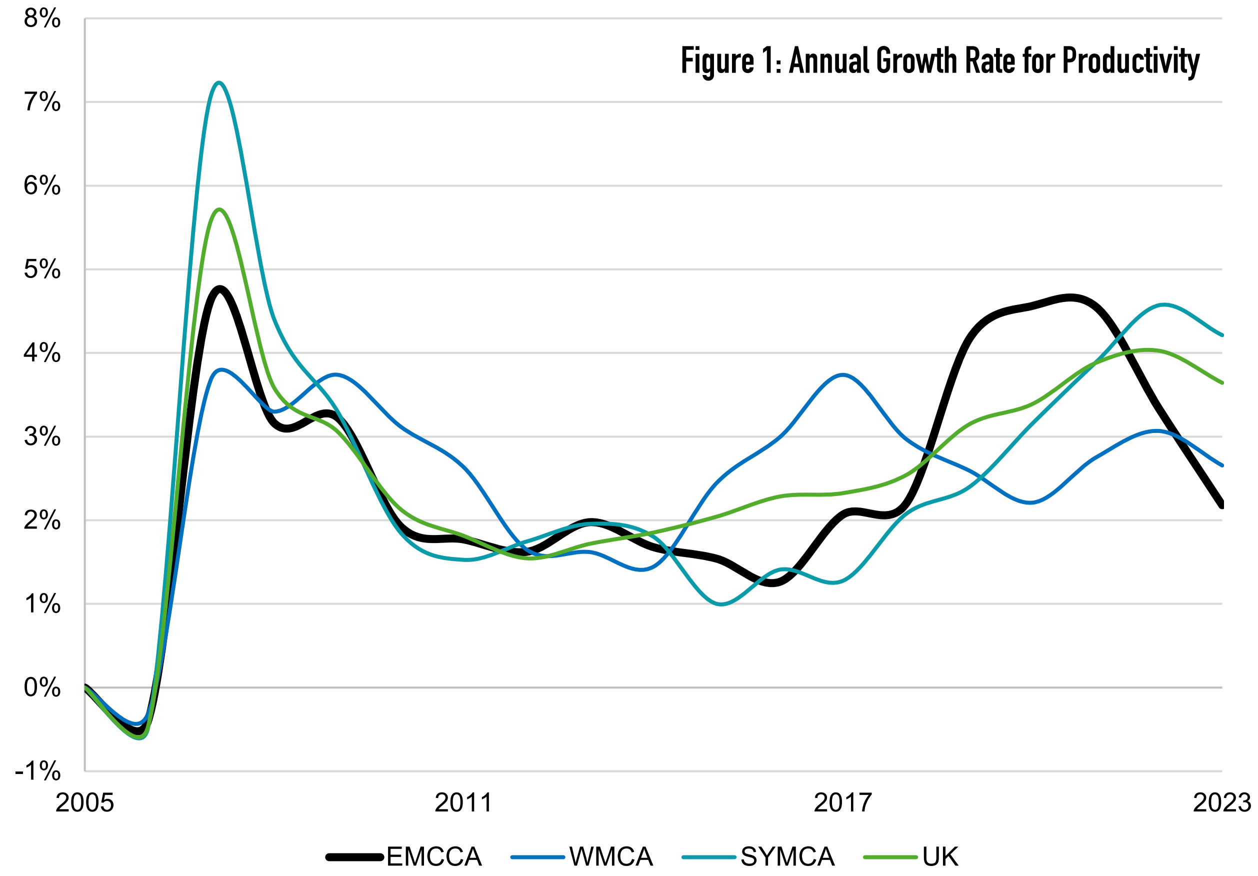
Productivity has been stagnant for far too long.

Productivity is a measure of how efficiently our business base uses ‘inputs’ such as its workforce, capital equipment and technology to produce goods and services.

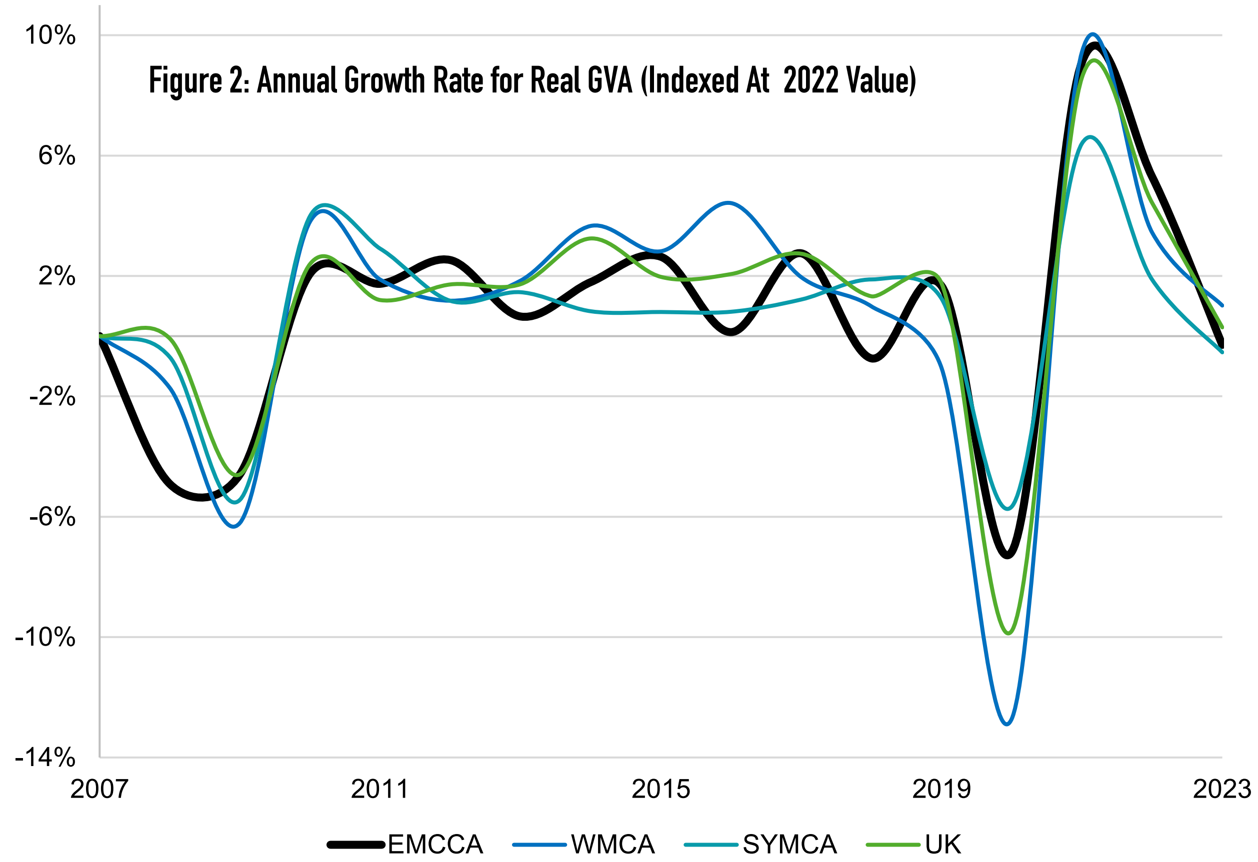
Historically, although our economy has maintained a low unemployment rate, productivity has not kept pace with other regions (Figure 1). Over the past decade, Gross Value Added (GVA), a measure of economic output, has been primarily driven by workforce expansion rather than productivity gains, meaning that while employment has increased, many jobs have not contributed significantly to long-term economic growth and rising living standards.

While the region’s economy grew in the early 2000s, this growth was relatively low, partly due to the decline of the coal mining industry (Figure 2). Between the 1990s and early 2000s, this decline led to 40,300 job losses in Nottinghamshire and 13,700 in Derbyshire. By 2004, fewer than half of these jobs had been replaced, leaving a shortfall of 29,000 jobs[18] and contributing to a decline in productivity.[19]

More recently, productivity dipped between 2022-23, largely reflecting pressures in manufacturing, such as the UK’s changed trading relationship with the European Union (EU) and the energy price shock following Russia’s illegal invasion of Ukraine. This underscores how external shocks can quickly affect economic performance, making resilience crucial for long-term economic wellbeing.



ONS, Subregional Productivity



ONS, Regional Gross Value Added

WMCA refers to the West Midlands Combined Authority and SYMCA refers to the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority

Business Environment

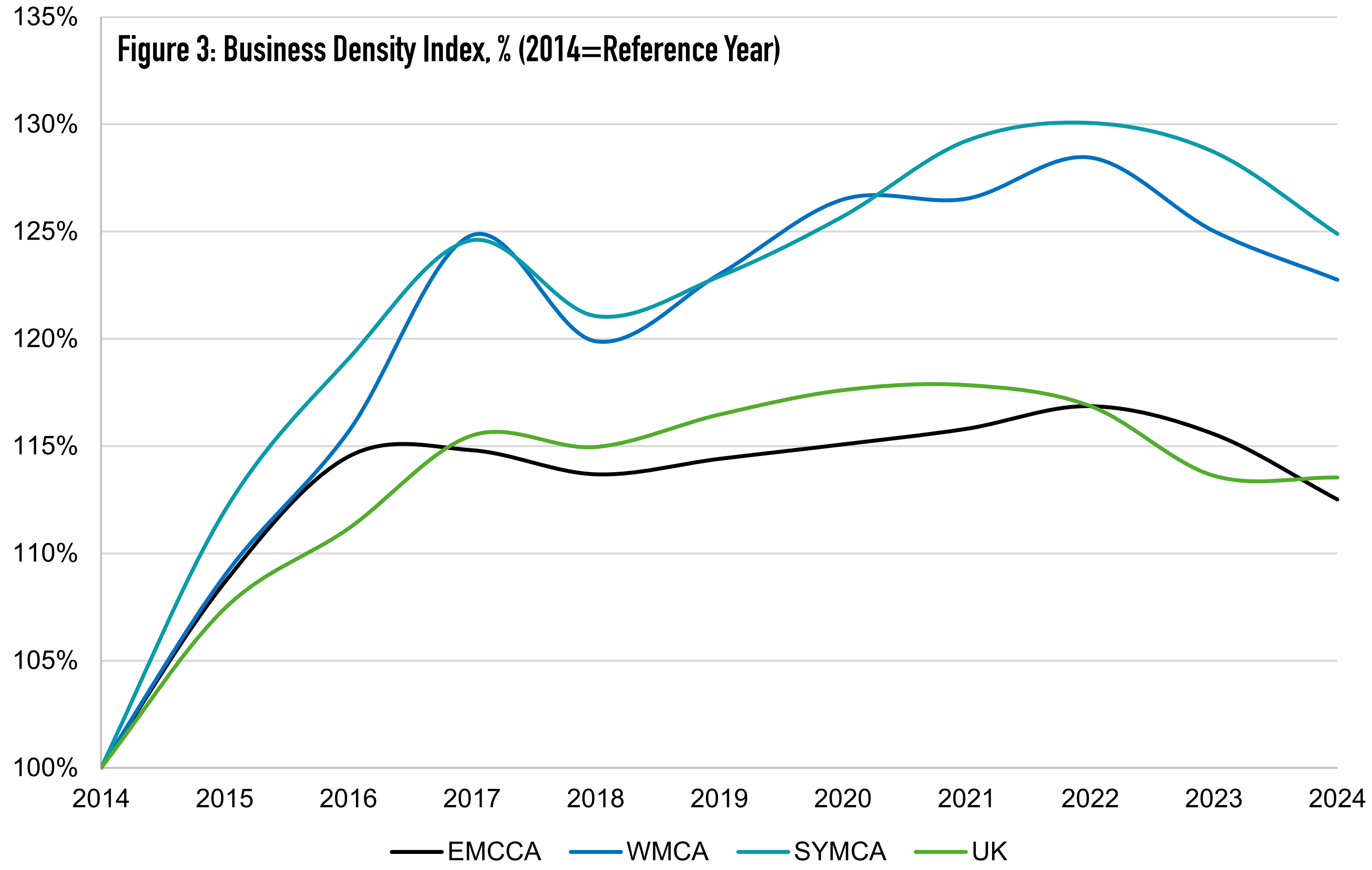
Despite having a strong and diverse business base, the East Midlands faces challenges in productivity and business growth.

One key issue is the number of businesses relative to the size of our population (business density, see Figure 3). Growth in business density has stalled, meaning we're not seeing enough new firms being created or existing ones expanding. This means fewer opportunities for local people, slower wage growth, and weaker local economies. When businesses aren't growing, it affects everything from the availability of good jobs to the vibrancy of our town centres and the strength of public services funded by business rates.

We are home to global industrial giants such as Rolls-Royce and Toyota. These types of businesses provide a stable economic base, accounting for a large proportion of employment, and drive productivity enhancing investment that also has a positive impact on their supply chains. While large businesses are typically more resilient, the impacts of external shocks can be far-reaching given their scale and dependency on their supply chain, often made up of SMEs.

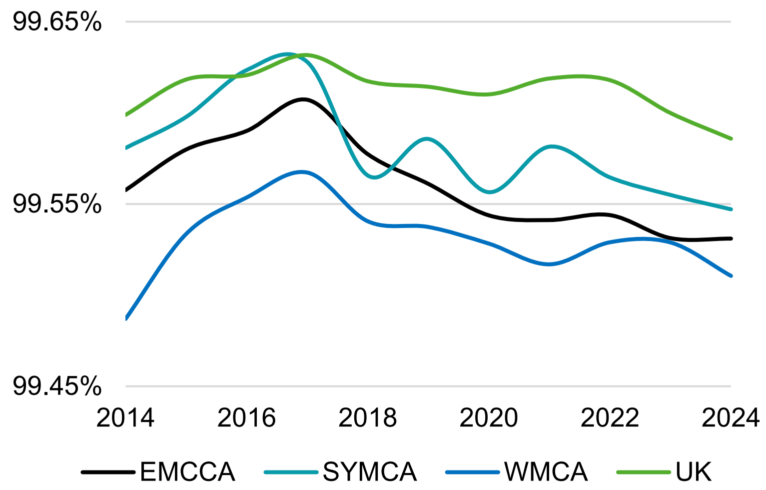
The East Midlands has a high proportion of MSMEs (micro, small and medium-sized enterprises) (Figure 5). These businesses are critical to local economies, but many face barriers that prevent them from scaling, such as limited access to finance, fragmented support services, and difficulty reaching new markets. While the number of MSMEs grew significantly between 2014 and 2020, that momentum slowed after the pandemic. As a result, many businesses struggle to adapt, diversify or innovate.

Figure 3: Business Density Index, % (2014=Reference Year)



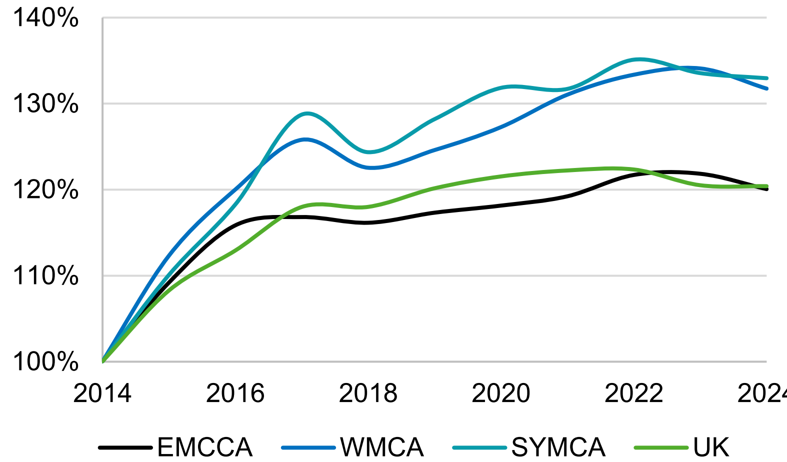
ONS, UK Business Count

Figure 4: Share of Micro, Small And Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)



ONS, UK Business Count

Figure 5: Count of MSMEs Index, % (2014=Reference Year)



ONS, UK Business Count

WMCA refers to the West Midlands Combined Authority and SYMCA refers to the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority

Exports and Innovation

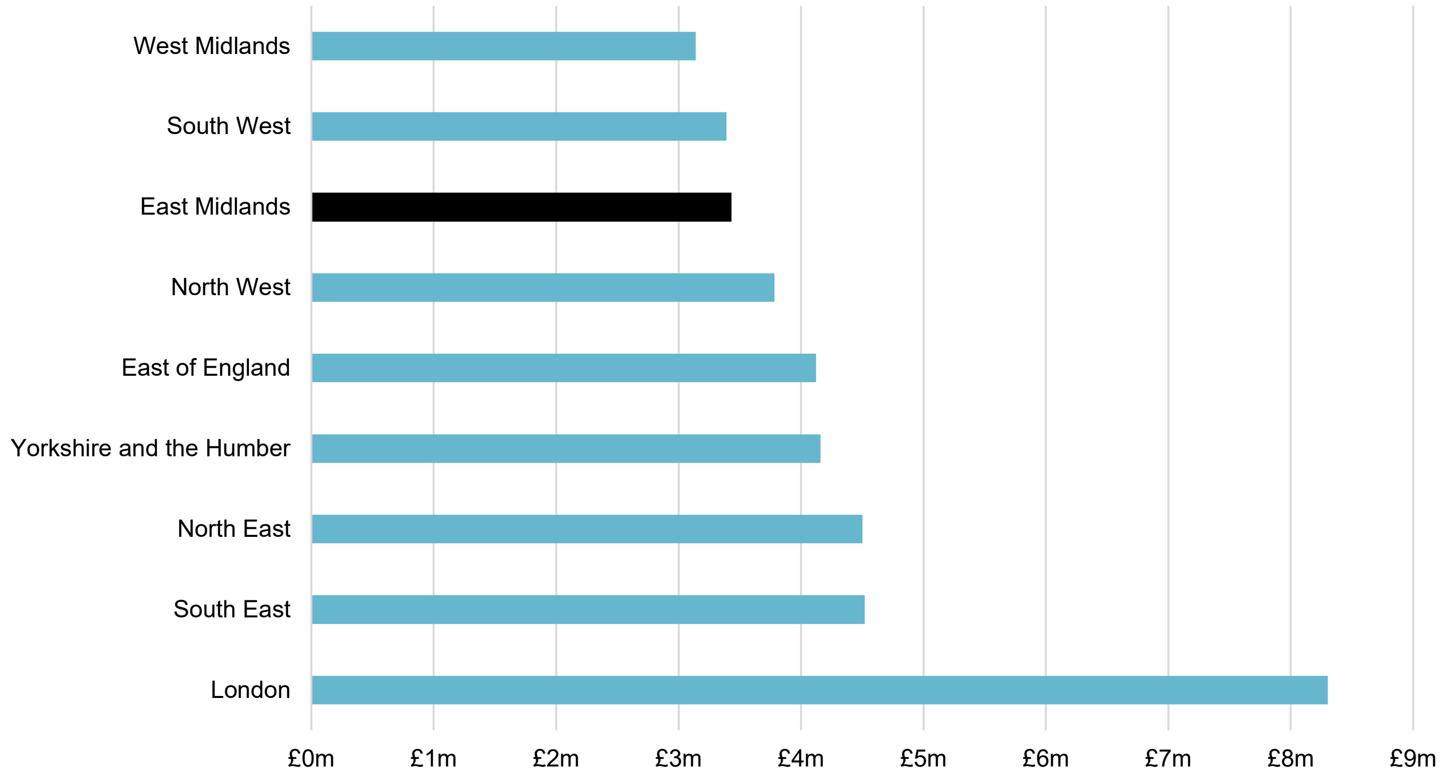
To grow, our economy requires a stronger focus on industries with the potential to export and innovate.

Innovation is what allows businesses to develop new products, improve services, and solve problems in smarter ways. It's how we create better jobs, attract investment, and stay competitive in a fast-changing world. It's also how we build resilience and respond effectively to future shocks, particularly important in the context of AI and other emerging technologies. A focus on innovation will allow us to anticipate disruption, adapt rapidly, and lead in shaping the future economy.

But right now, our innovation ecosystem is holding us back. Access to research funding is disproportionately low for firms in the region. The wider East Midlands region[20] has the 3rd lowest research funding allocation per head by Research England (Figure 6)[21], amounting to £3.4 million per 100,000 population, which is 41.3% of London's per capita allocation. In absolute terms, the region received a total of £171.1 million in 2023/2024, accounting for 6.5% of the total research funding allocated in England. That limits the ability of our universities and research institutions to invest in the ideas, partnerships and infrastructure that drive innovation.

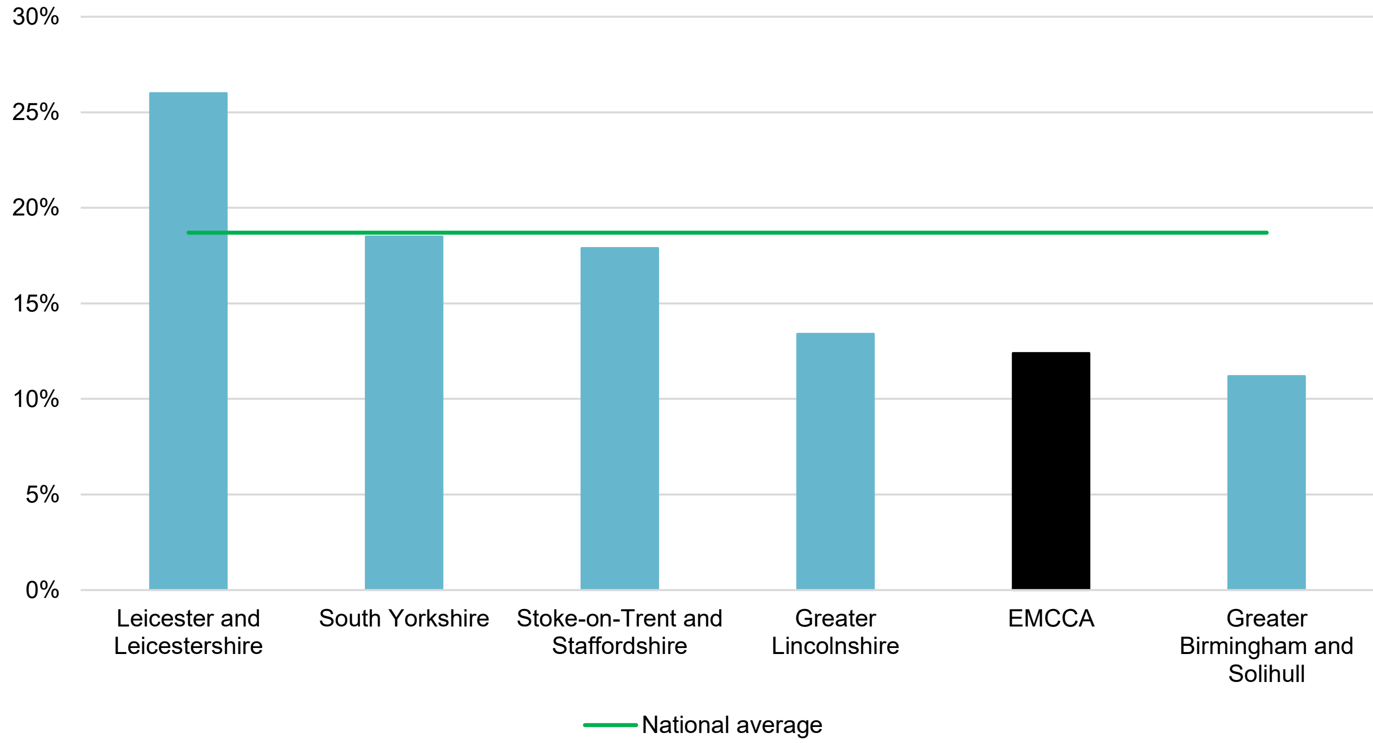
This has real consequences. Between 2020 and 2022, 30.9% of our businesses were involved in innovative processes, similar to the national average of 29.6%. However, only 12.4% of our businesses introduced products which had never been produced before (Figure 7), significantly lower than the national average (18.7%). Without the environment to support to develop new ideas, our firms struggle to compete, grow, or break into new markets.

Figure 6: Total Research Funding Per 100,000 Population, £ Millions (2023/24)



UKRI, Research England funding allocations

Figure 7: Proportion of Businesses Introducing Unique Products, % (2020-22)



DBT, UK Innovation Survey 2023

Skilled Workforce

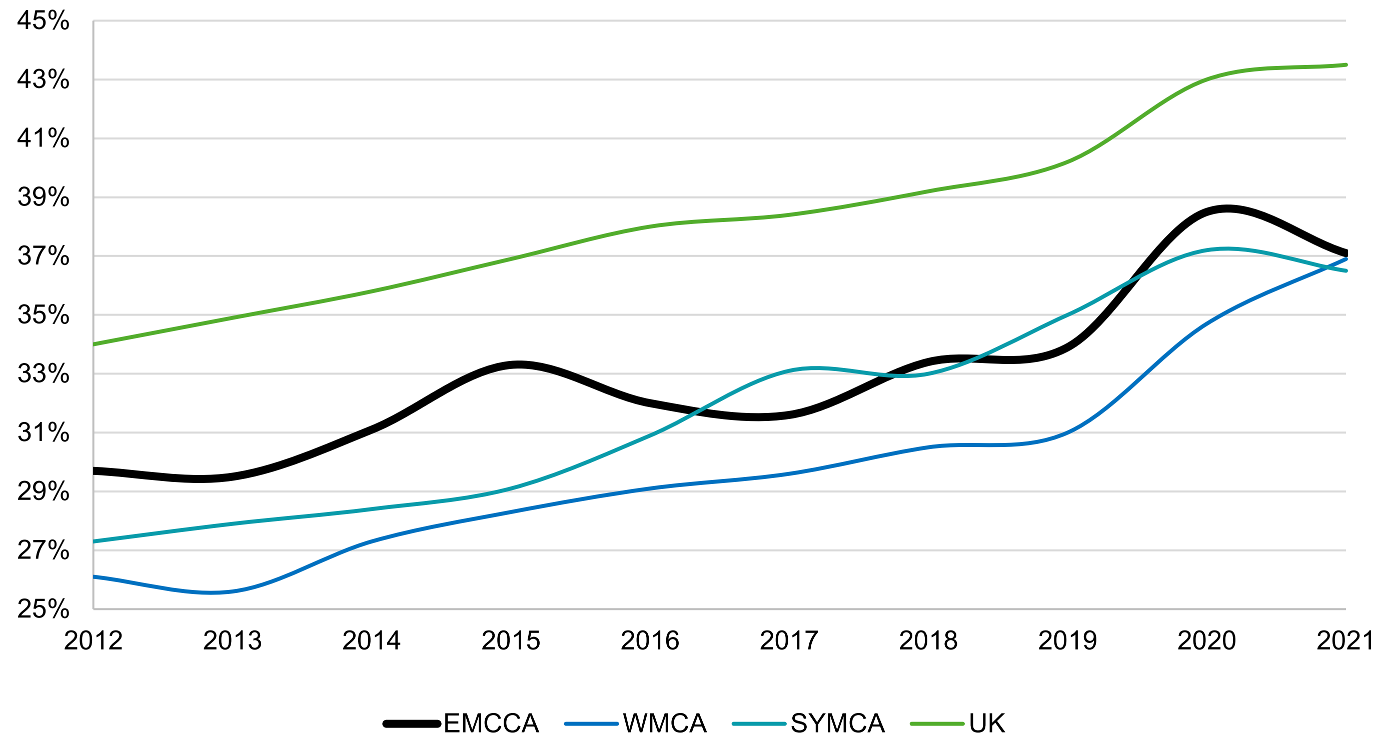
We must harness our strong base of colleges, universities and apprenticeships to drive higher skills and lower inactivity.

Workforce qualifications in the East Midlands remain below the national average (Figure 8). There is a persistent misalignment between the qualifications people hold, the skills development opportunities available, and the needs of local employers. This misalignment is evident in the high number of unfilled vacancies in scientific, research, engineering and technical roles in the region. As the job market increasingly demands degree-level qualifications and above (Figure 9), addressing these gaps is both an immediate and long-term challenge. This requires sustained investment in higher education, further education, and vocational training, including expanding access to scholarships, improving educational infrastructure, training and developing and attracting skilled teaching professionals for higher education and further education.

Alongside this, the region's strong base of trade apprenticeships is a unique asset. The proportion of residents with trade apprenticeships is higher here than the national average and neighbouring regions. Building on this strength will be essential to widening pathways into skilled employment and supporting economic resilience.

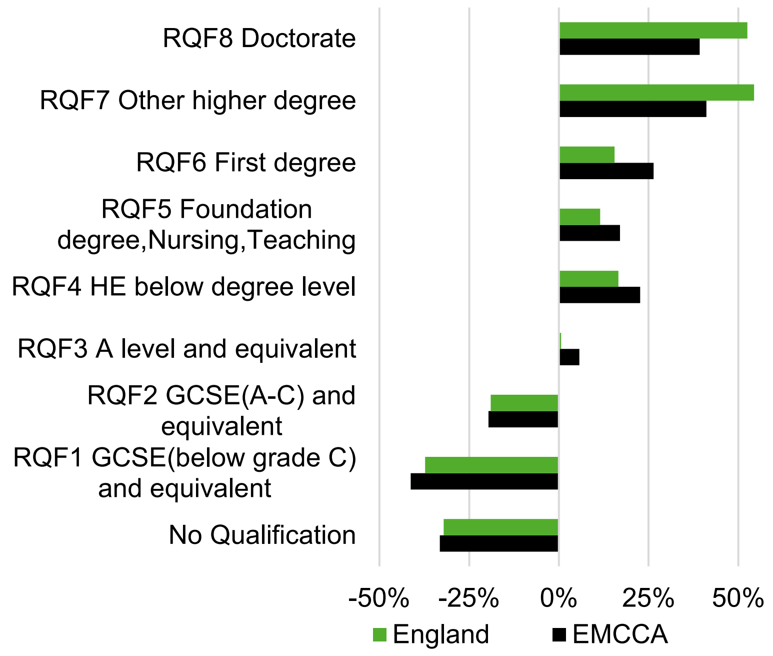
However, economic inactivity remains a significant concern, with long-term sickness accounting for 29.5% of inactivity and caring responsibilities accounting for 17.2% (Figure 10). The Inclusive Growth Commission report highlights that mental health and anxiety disorders are major barriers for younger workers, while physical health conditions such as musculoskeletal disorders are significant for older workers. Both are large-scale drivers of health-related inactivity among working-age adults in our region.

Figure 8: Proportion of Working-Age Population With High-level Qualification, %



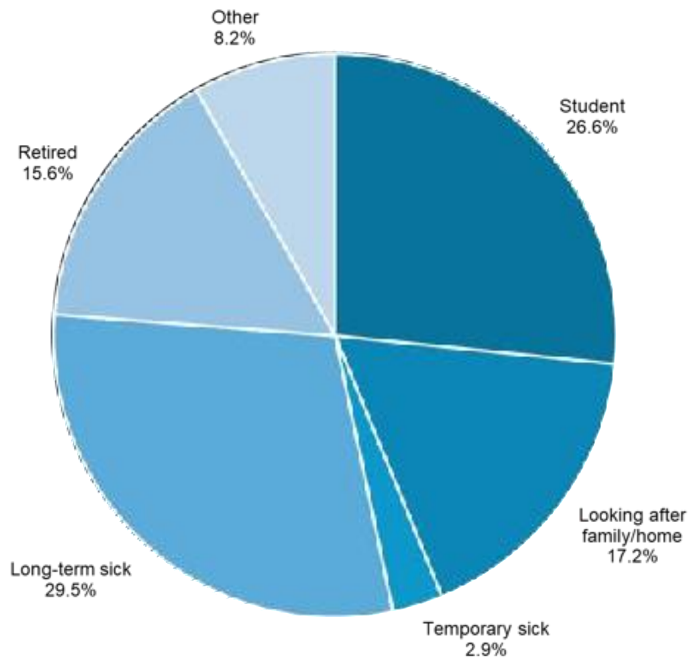
ONS, APS

Figure 9: Predicted Employment Change By Qualification Level, % (2023-2035)



DfE, local skills dashboard, 2023

Figure 10: Economic Inactivity % (2023/24)



ONS, APS, 2012-21

**Higher Qualifications refers to National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Level 4 and above*

WMCA refers to the West Midlands Combined Authority and SYMCA refers to the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority

Deprivation and Inequality

To prosper, we must tackle deprivation so more people can access good work and opportunity.

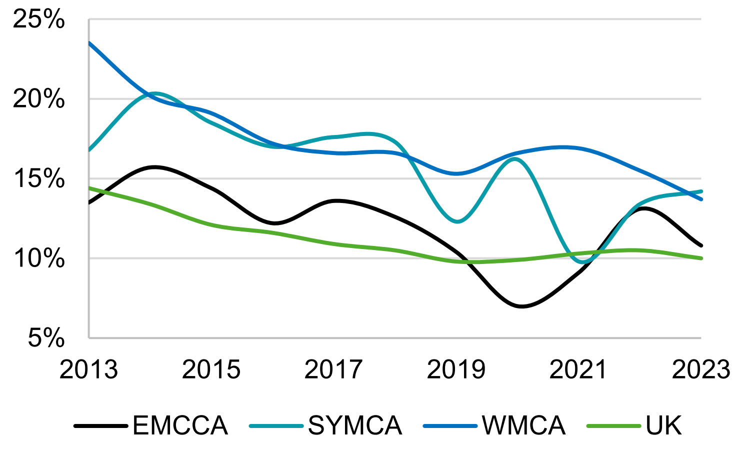
Too many people in the East Midlands are being held back by deep-rooted disadvantage. Deprivation is concentrated in the centre of our region, with residents in Nottingham, Erewash and Mansfield facing some of the most acute economic and social challenges. In these areas, the income deprivation gap reaches up to 45 percentage points, meaning they experience a higher level of income inequality and poverty (Figure 13). This places Nottingham 27th, Erewash 38th, and Mansfield 42nd among the local authorities with the greatest deprivation challenges in England (out of the 316 for the measure in England). Deprivation also affects smaller towns and rural communities, which are often overlooked because county-level averages mask local hardship.

Children growing up in workless households face additional barriers. This affects their wellbeing, educational outcomes and future employment prospects, contributing to a cycle of poverty that can span generations (Figure 11).

Health inequality is a particularly serious issue. A higher proportion of our residents report being in bad or very bad health compared to the national average (5.9% vs. 5.2%) (Figure 12). Poor health limits people's ability to work, learn and participate in community life. It restricts access to opportunity and career progression.

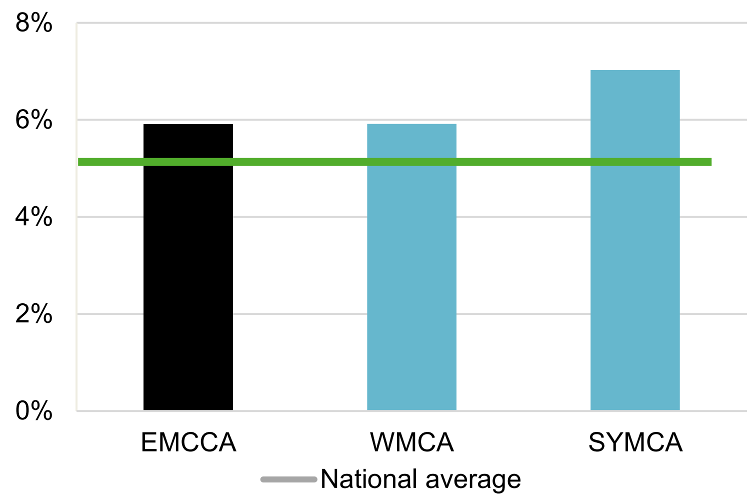
The Inclusive Growth Commission's findings show that deprivation and social capital are closely linked. Building communities with strong ties, both within and between them, can improve wellbeing and support economic mobility.

Figure 11: Percentage of Children Under 16 In Workless Households (%)



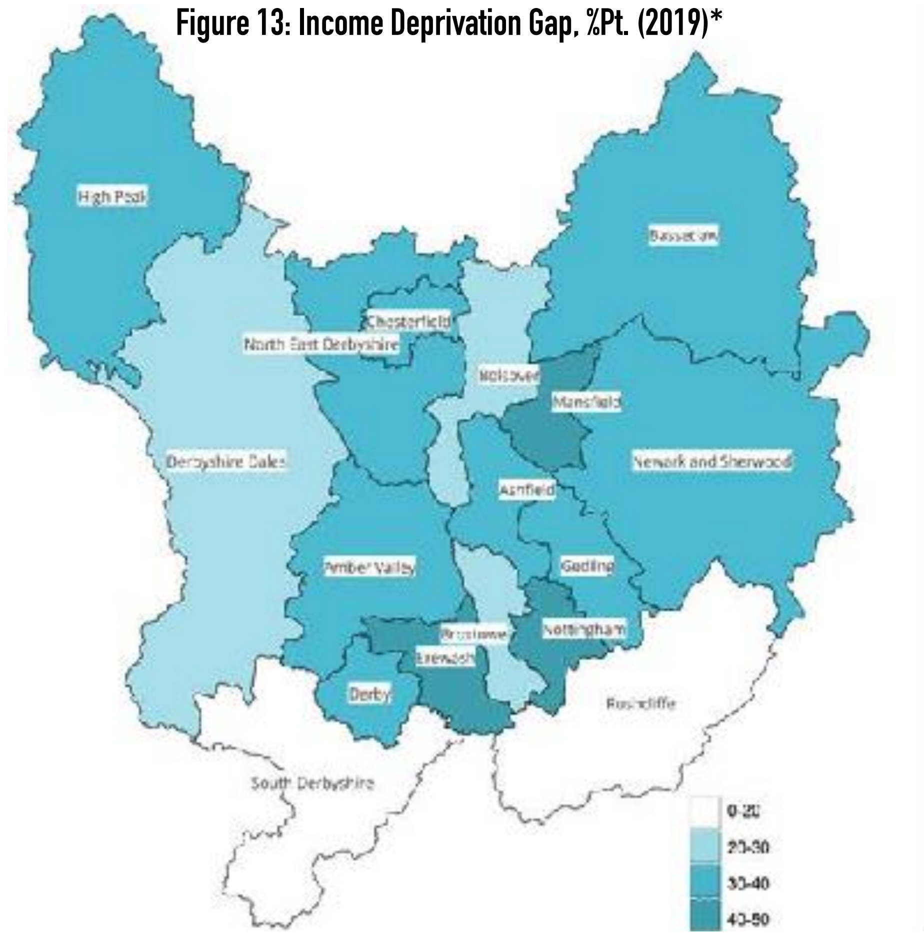
ONS, APS

Figure 12: Proportion of Population in Bad or Very Bad Health, % (2021)



ONS, General Health

Figure 13: Income Deprivation Gap, %Pt. (2019)*



ONS, Income Deprivation based on MHCLG, English Indices of Deprivation

**Deprivation gap* *measures the difference between the most and least income-deprived neighbourhoods within a local authority. It is calculated by subtracting the lowest income deprivation rate from the highest. (ONS)*

WMCA refers to the West Midlands Combined Authority and SYMCA refers to the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority

Housing

Affordable, energy-efficient homes are essential to connect people with jobs and opportunity, and to meet future demand.

Our market housing delivery has increased at four times the rate of affordable housing delivery since 2014/15 (Figure 16). There are significant pressures on housing supply across the region, particularly in Derby and Nottingham. Our cities have experienced a dramatic rise in the number of households in temporary accommodation (520% increase on average for both cities) compared to 62% nationally. In 2022, both cities recorded at least one resident in temporary accommodation per 1,000 people, five times the regional rate. This is not only a human tragedy, but also disrupts community links, networks, education, and employment, with wider economic impacts.

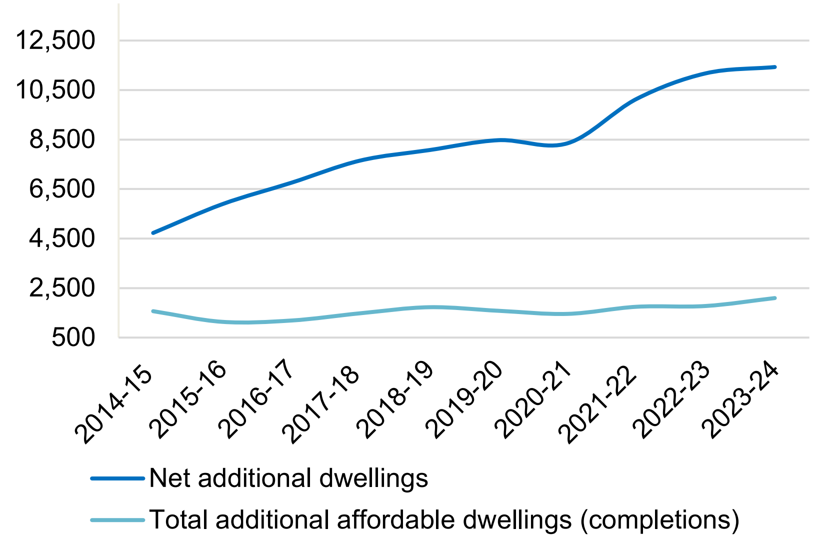
The rise in households in temporary accommodation is linked to worsening affordability, with a 165.1% rise between 2019 and 2023 (vs. 44.7% for the national average) (Figure 18). This issue is particularly acute in our cities, as Nottingham and Derby account for over two-thirds of our region's households in temporary accommodation. This issue is compounded by house prices increasing faster than resident earnings, which has driven up the median house price to earnings ratio (Figure 17). As a result, housing in the East Midlands is less affordable compared to our neighbouring areas (6.5 vs. WMCA at 6.3 and SYMCA at 5.4) but still more affordable than the national average (7.7), indicating that this is a national issue.

While our region has a diverse housing stock, this brings further challenges for energy efficiency and meeting modern standards. Only 46.5% of the EMCCA's 1.02 million homes have a good efficiency rating (EPC Band C rating or above), compared to England's average of 49.9%.[22] Furthermore, 17.0% of housing is in 'non-decent' condition (vs. 14.5% nationally) due to having at least one instance of not meeting basic legal health and safety standards, not being in a reasonable state of repair, not having modern facilities and services, or poor insultation and/or heating.[23]

While housing supply has been improving, it is crucial that affordable, energy efficient housing keeps pace with demand. Providing affordable housing with low energy bills and preventing further increases in temporary accommodation will be essential for ensuring long-term housing stability for all residents, which is pivotal for regional growth.

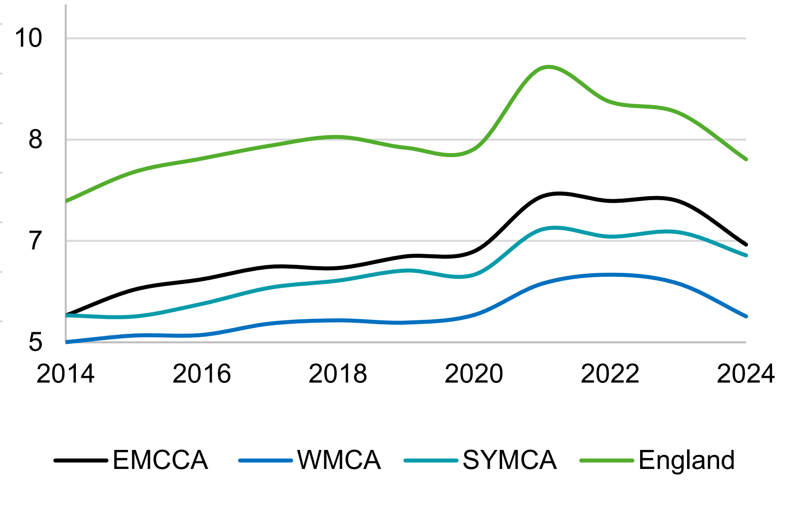
Additionally, aligning housing availability with transport links and workforce demand, particularly in the Housing Market Areas around our cities, will be key to matching people's places of employment with where they live. New housing must also be sustainable, meeting energy efficiency standards and incorporating nature-based solutions (such as nesting spaces for swifts) to exceed wherever possible national Biodiversity Net Gain requirements.

Figure 16: Overall and Affordable Housing Supply Level



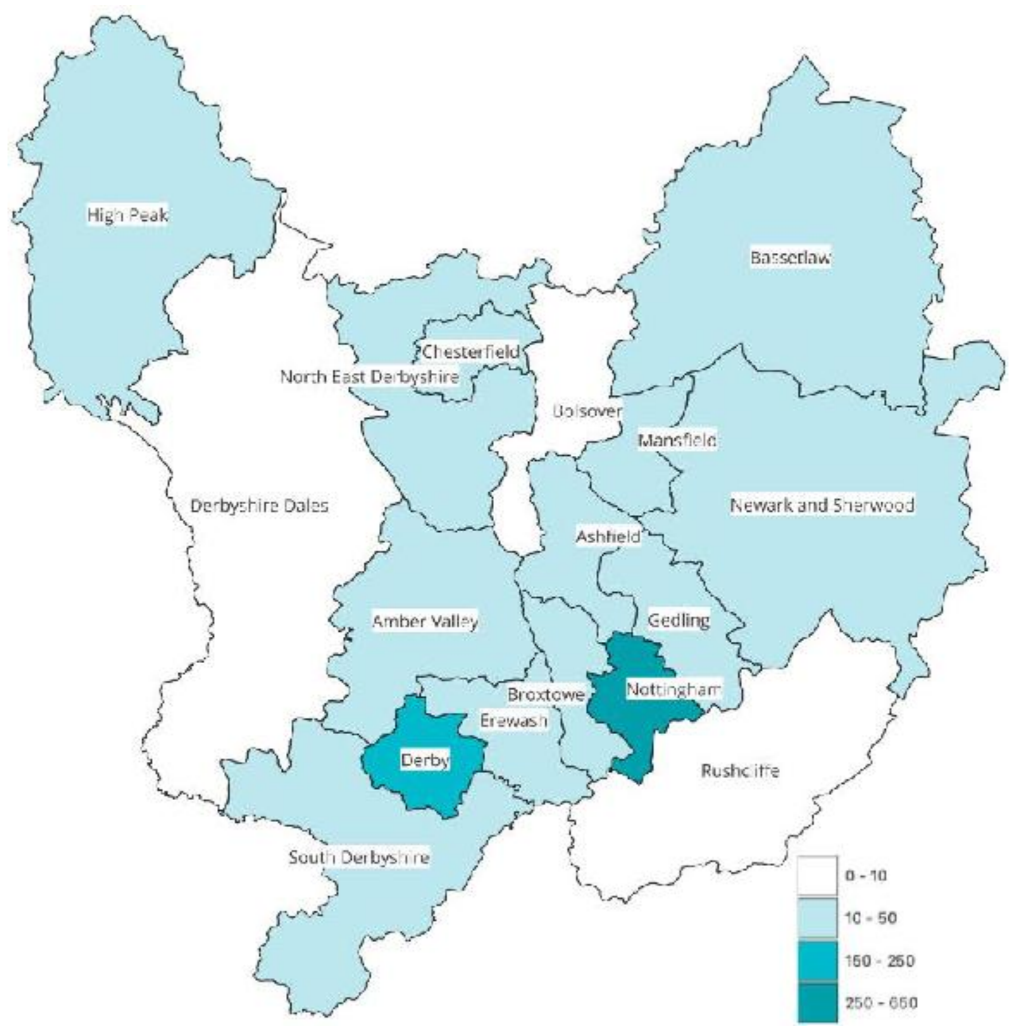
MHCLG

Figure 17: Ratio of Median Housing Price to Median Gross Annual Workplace-Based Earnings



MHCLG

Figure 18: Number Of Households Experiencing Homelessness (2024)



MHCLG, Table on Homelessness

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Transport and Digital Connectivity

The East Midlands is the crossroads of the nation. Better transport and digital links will unlock the benefits of our strategic location.

The East Midlands is unrivalled in the UK for our central location, with strong east-west and north-south links. Our geography makes us the UK's crossroads for movement and making, with direct access to national road and rail networks, East Midlands Airport, and distribution hubs that serve the whole country.

Despite this, the East Midlands receives the lowest per-person investment in transport infrastructure from the Government (Figure 20). A lack of investment in public transport infrastructure leads to fewer public transport options and lower passenger numbers.

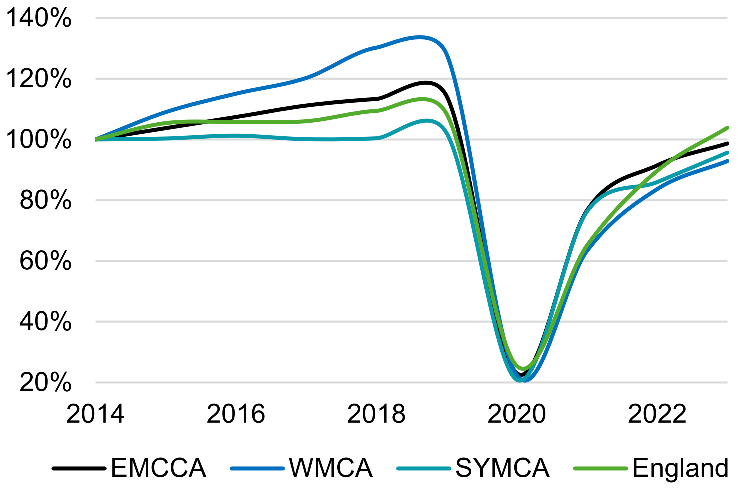
This is exacerbated by high emissions from private commuter vehicles. Long and costly commutes make transitions from welfare to work more challenging, which is further constraining the labour market.

Most commuters in the region rely on road transport, with the East Midlands having the lowest share of rail commuting in the UK. Currently, we also have the lowest proportion of people living within a five-minute drive of a rail station in England. We need to work with partners to improve the options for traveling by rail in our region and encourage rail use (Figure 19). We also need to work to address how the lack of integrated ticketing discourages public transport usage.

In terms of our digital connectivity, we perform relatively better than the national average (84.4%), with 87.0% of homes and businesses able to access gigabit-speed fixed broadband (Figure 21). While cities in the East Midlands benefit from good digital connectivity, rural areas experience significantly slower broadband speeds and reduced 4G/5G coverage, with some areas lacking service entirely. Seven of our areas fall below the national average for gigabit broadband availability with the most significant digital connectivity challenges in Derbyshire Dales (54.4%) and High Peak (64.2%). This makes it harder to retain skilled workers and grow businesses and poses a serious challenge to building an inclusive economy. Limited digital access also impacts the visitor economy and restricts the ability of businesses to thrive in remote and hybrid working environments.

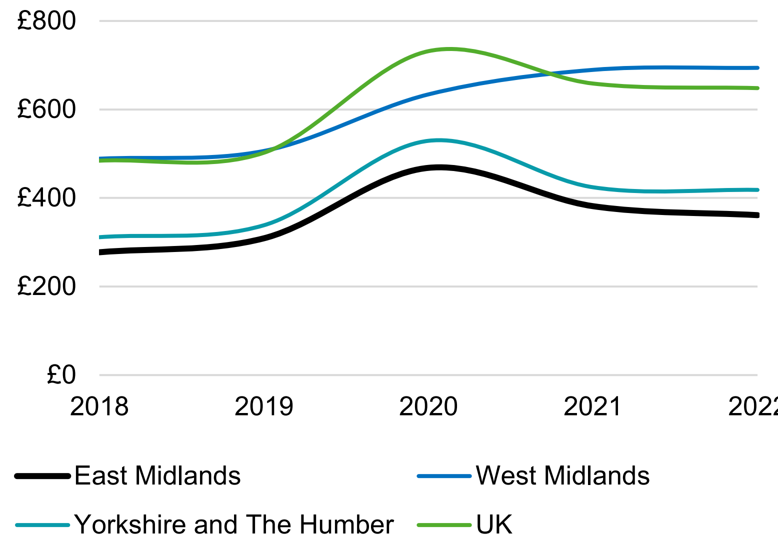
Better transport and increased digital investment in the East Midlands will have local benefit while boosting productivity for the whole of the UK.

Figure 19: Rail Footfall Index, %



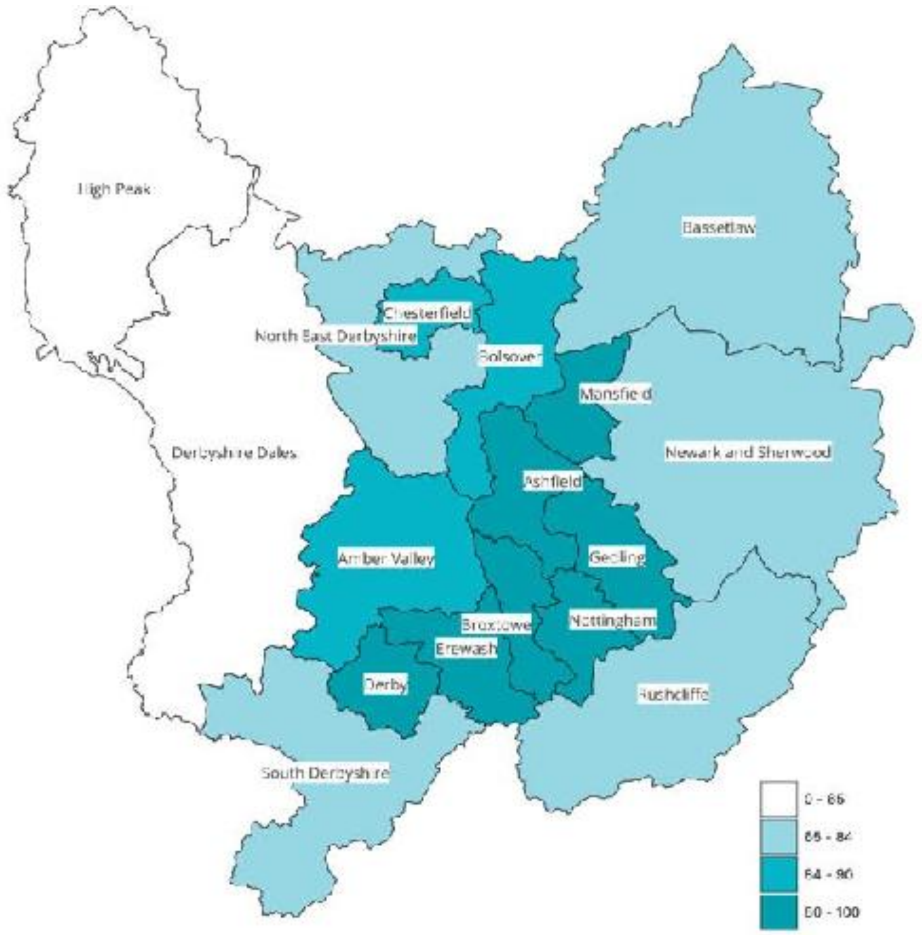
ORR, Passenger entries and exits and interchanges by station

Figure 20: Transport Investment Per Head By HM Treasury, £



ICC using HM Treasury, Country and Regional Analysis

Figure 21: Access to Gigabit-Speed Fixed Broadband Y, % of Premises (2025)



Ofcom, Connected Nations update, Spring 2025

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Energy Infrastructure and Environmental Resilience

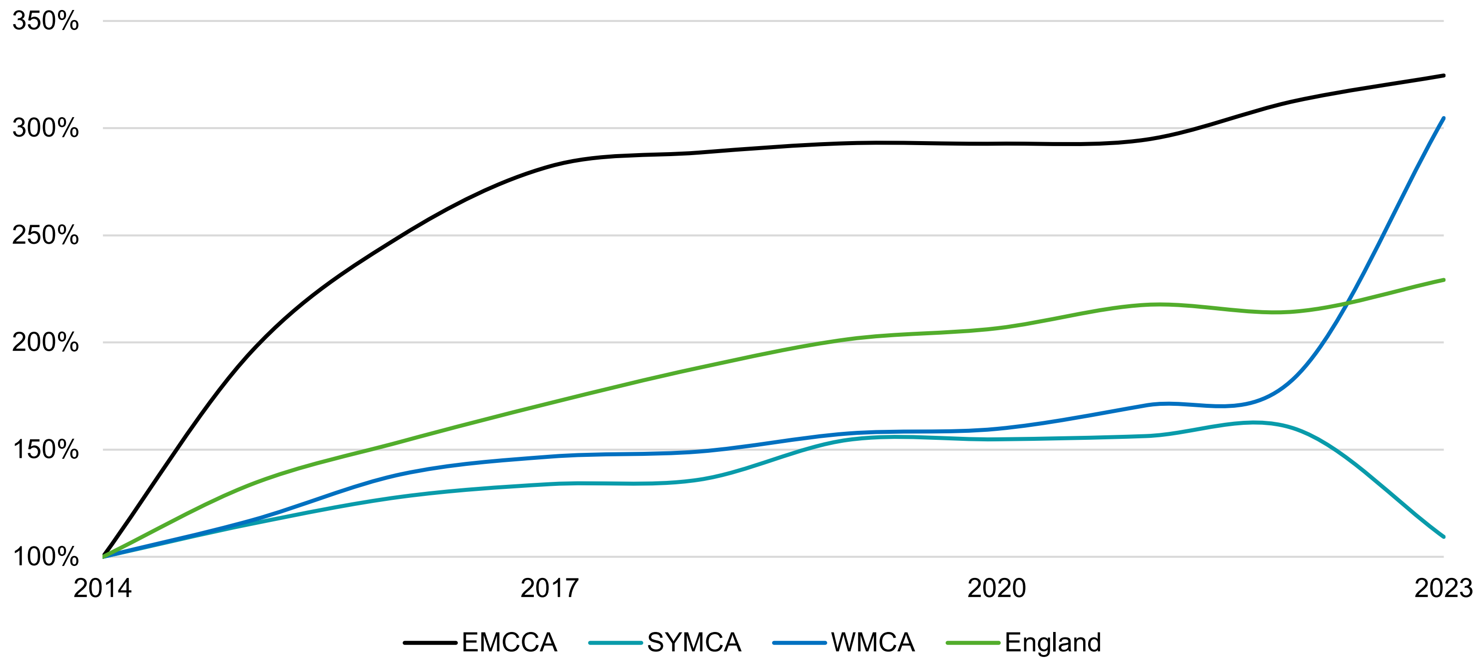
Expanding clean energy and protecting against climate risks will secure sustainable growth and strengthen our competitiveness.

The East Midlands must expand clean energy capacity and improve resilience to support inclusive and sustainable growth. A unique opportunity lies in our existing decommissioned energy sites, which can be repurposed as new clean energy infrastructure. Renewable capacity has already tripled in the past decade (Figure 22), supported by research strengths such as the University of Nottingham's Energy Institute and Nottingham College's Green Skills Centre, which are helping to develop the technologies and skills needed for the next generation of clean power. Yet energy demand is rising, especially from our high impact sectors.

Since 2010, the wider East Midlands [24] has added 3.5 GW of new capacity but retired nearly twice as much, including 95% of our coal capacity—27% of the UK's total—despite having just 3.3% of the UK population.[25] We must attract clean power and new industry at scale, while improving energy efficiency and low-carbon heating (e.g. heat pumps, infrared, heat networks). Emissions are falling slowly, with only a 24-percentage point improvement compared to 94% in WMCA and 102.2% nationally (Figure 23).

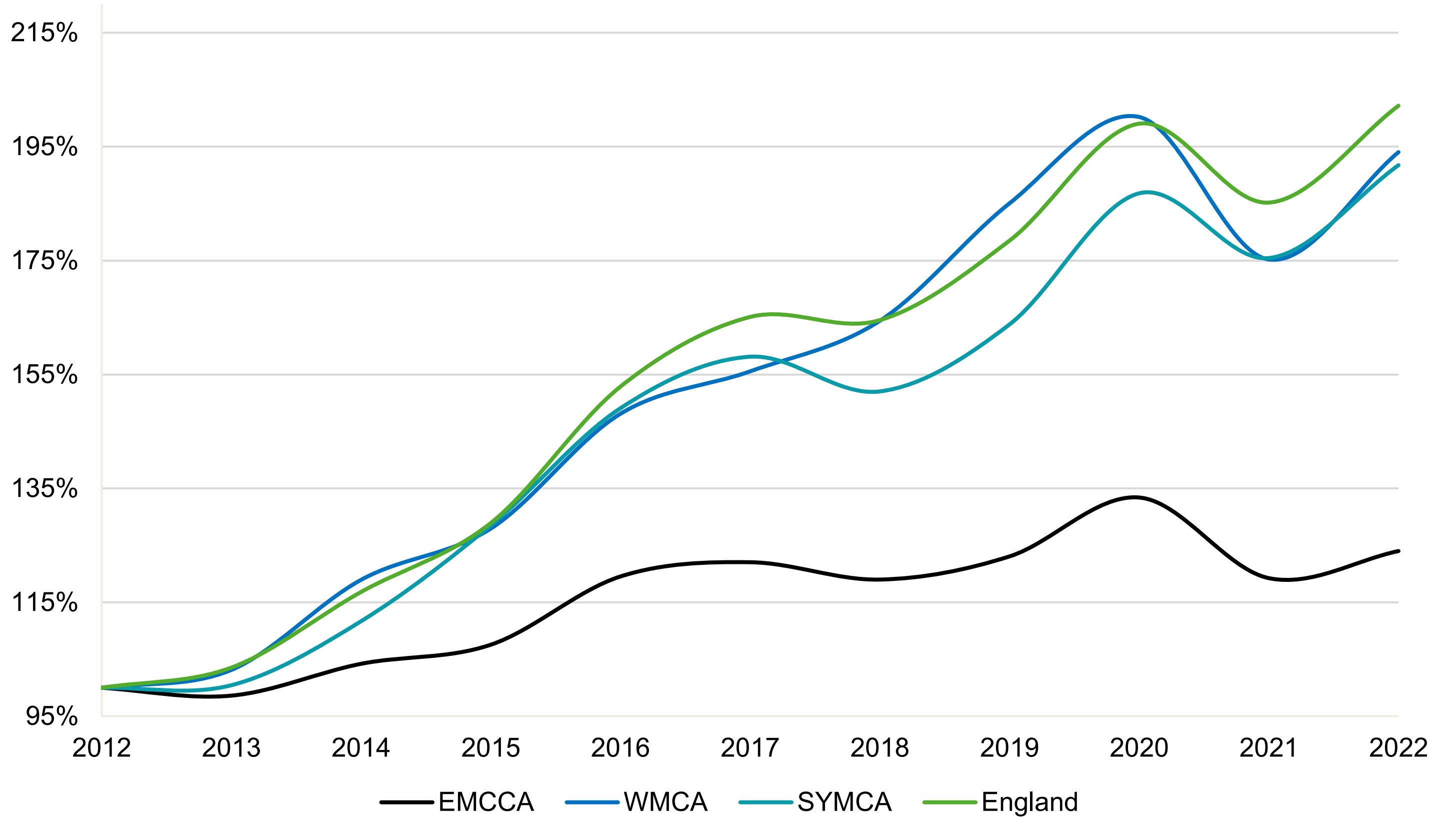
Environmental resilience is now critical to competitiveness, investment attractiveness, and liveability. This includes preparing for climate risks, especially flooding, which threatens towns, infrastructure, and development land. Areas along the Derwent, Trent, Erewash, and Wye face repeated disruption, as seen during Storm Babet in 2023. Without investment in flood defences, drainage, and natural retention, growth will be constrained.

Figure 22: Renewable Energy Capacity Index, %



DESNZ, Renewable energy by local authority

Figure 23: Industry And Commercial Emissions Reduction Per Head Index, %



DESNZ, Greenhouse Gas Emissions

WMCA refers to the West Midlands Combined Authority and SYMCA refers to the South Yorkshire Combined Authority

03 Unlocking Growth

Our Strategy for Inclusive Growth

We are taking an approach to economic growth that purposefully directs investment where it matters most to ensure rising living standards and the creation of empowering opportunities. Our strategy to achieve this is built around three pillars that work together to deliver inclusive growth across the region. This approach has been shaped by engagement with partners and analysis of our economy, health, environment and social fabric, helping us identify both the enablers of growth and the barriers to inclusion (see Appendix 5). In each section, we set out clear actions to realise our ambitions and deliver transformational change.

Pillar 1: Our Enablers of Growth

Investing in our six enablers of growth is the primary way we can achieve a faster, fairer, more inclusive, form of economic growth across the *whole* region. Our focus is on creating opportunities for all types of households and businesses, being sensitive to place characteristics, and recognising the need to be proactive in shaping preferred outcomes through policy and investment. Our enablers are:

- **Jobs and Skills** to help people get into work and progress through meaningful careers.
- **Business Partnerships** to proactively attract investment and provide support to businesses to scale and expand.
- **Connectivity** between people and places through sustainable, reliable transport and digital networks.
- **Housing and Place** to enable affordable, sustainable and well-located communities.
- **Clean Energy and Climate Resilient Infrastructure** to power a greener, more resilient economy.
- **Innovation** to turn ideas into growth by boosting productivity, competitiveness and global reach.

Pillar 2: Our Sectoral Priorities

Inclusive growth requires growing businesses, and good jobs. We have identified five high impact sectors that demonstrate the clearest potential to achieve that at scale and across the whole region.

Four align directly with the government's Industrial Strategy: clean energy, MedTech and life sciences, advanced manufacturing, and digital, creative and cultural Industries. Our fifth, visitor economy, represents a significant regional opportunity.

In addition to our high impact sectors, we have established strengths in aggregates, minerals, and low carbon construction, logistics, and defence.

By connecting established strengths with high impact opportunities, we can ensure a wide range of sectors play a significant role in delivering a fairer, more inclusive region.

Pillar 3: Our Approach to Place

A thriving economy requires with thriving places, recognising that every community has different strengths, challenges, and opportunities. Our approach to place will combine investment in physical infrastructure with a focus on building social capital.

This means creating conditions for communities where residents can access good jobs, businesses can grow, and young people have clear pathways to opportunity. At its core, we aim to deliver inclusive, sustainable growth that strengthens both the economic and social fabric of our communities.

3.1 Enablers of Growth

Enablers of Growth

Our enablers of growth are aligned with our Inclusive Growth Framework ambitions for what life looks like in the East Midlands by 2040. Our ten-year Growth Plan has a key role to play in moving us towards these ambitions by 2035, with specific goals and actions for each enabler.

Clean Energy and Climate-Resilient Infrastructure

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

Jobs and Skills

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.

Innovation

The East Midlands will be known as a birthplace of globally competitive ideas. Innovation will accelerate the growth of exportable firms, strengthen our regional identity, and support every sector to adapt and thrive. Businesses will start, scale and stay in the East Midlands because of the strength of our innovation ecosystem.

Connectivity

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.

Housing and Place

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

Business Partnerships

The East Midlands will be a leading destination for business investment through attracting global capital and supporting businesses to set up, scale and export.

Jobs and Skills

Our Ambition: 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.

We are building with our learner providers and businesses a region-wide skills and employment approach to underpin our vision of an agile, opportunity-rich workforce, helping our residents access better paid, high-growth careers, particularly around key investment sites.

Our plans to grow the economy are accompanied by steps we will take to provide realistic, tangible paths to progress to higher pay and more secure employment for people in different places across the region.

We're driving a step change in adult upskilling through programmes like the Adult Skills Fund, helping more residents gain qualifications, closing the skills gap with the rest of the UK, boosting graduate retention, and building a world-class workforce that attracts major investment.

To achieve this, we're tackling systemic barriers to sustainable employment, including poor health, transport, inefficient housing and childcare access. Our Connect to Work Programme will help people with health-related and complex employment barriers. We're also creating a seamless, region-wide system that aligns training, job support, and health services to expand pathways into work and reduce poverty.

We are equipping the next generation with the skills and confidence to succeed in a fast-evolving economy, expanding access to work experience, T-Level placements, Skills Bootcamps, and high-quality apprenticeships. In partnership with Skills England, we're ensuring apprenticeships meet regional needs, enabling faster upskilling and helping employers build resilient, modern workforces.

We are making the East Midlands a magnet for talent, both nationally and globally, with wages that meet or exceed the national average. We're working with universities and employers to attract and retain top talent.

Our skills system will be responsive to new opportunities as they emerge, as we invest in the skills infrastructure to meet the demands of our most transformative sites, securing additional funding and supporting the growth of high-quality education providers. Together we are making the East Midlands a brilliant place to live, work, and build a career.

In 10 years, this will mean:

60,000

Supporting at least 60,000 more people into employment and achieving the 80% employment rate target

Increased Earnings

Enabling local incomes to increase to at least the national average

210,000

Supporting 210,000 more residents to achieve qualifications across levels, putting us on track to exceed the national average

Jobs and Skills

The first steps we will take over the next 2 years to build capacity to deliver, develop and enable change:

Skills

- ✓ Develop and implement a new Local Skills Improvement Plan in partnership with the Federation of Small Businesses, laying the foundations for a more responsive adult skills system aligned to local demand and our economic priorities.
- ✓ Support Derby College to deliver the new Construction Technical Excellence College (CTEC) in the East Midlands. Work with the Further Education sector and Government to capitalise on future Technical Excellence College opportunities to build capacity and develop the workforce for our high impact sectors.
- ✓ Continue the delivery of the Adult Skills Fund, Free Courses for Jobs and Skills Bootcamps, maximising the impact and reach of the funding for our residents and businesses year on year.

Employment

- ✓ Publish and implement our Get East Midlands Working Plan built upon a regional partnership to tackle systemic barriers to employment, including poor health and childcare access.
- ✓ Mobilise and deliver the £44m Connect to Work programme to support disabled people and those with health barriers into work, a key action within the Get East Midlands Working Plan.
- ✓ Launch a new East Midlands Good Employment Charter to establish shared commitments on job quality, pay progression, diversity, and workforce resilience. We will work with public sector partners in their role as local employers and through their use of social value in procurement. We will also develop our learning network to scale innovation in careers advice and employer engagement.

Pathways

- ✓ Adopt and develop an Opportunity Escalator to connect people to good jobs, and enable pathways for progression
- ✓ Adopt the Youth Ambition as EMCCA's commitment to enabling young people to thrive.
- ✓ Launch and develop our Youth Committee as a mechanism to make young people's voices heard.
- ✓ Deliver the £10m Youth Guarantee Trailblazer to transform how young people transition into work.
- ✓ Work with our schools, colleges, employers, DfE and DWP to develop an all-age careers offer that starts in schools, provides inspiration through workplace encounters, and supports career switching.
- ✓ Invest in flexible, high-quality adult learning that supports individual ambition, closes key skills gaps, and enables residents to access well-paid, high-growth careers, particularly around major investment sites.

The longer-term steps we will take to create the 10-year transformational system-wide changes that residents will see and feel:

Skills

- ✓ Re-engineer our skills system so it is designed for local needs, life-long learning, and distinct economic opportunities, including the development of AI. We will work with employers, learning providers, central government and other partners to reshape the skills system around our key sectors, growth corridors, and local communities.
- ✓ Equip residents with the skills needed to access high quality jobs by improving access to relevant further and higher education, apprenticeships and in-work training. To close the skills and opportunity gap, we will give particular focus to places where participation has historically been low, or opportunity has felt out of reach.

Employment

- ✓ Enable more people to find and stay in good work thanks to a more inclusive labour market with employers providing good jobs in line with an East Midlands Good Employment Charter. Working with partners we'll create a joined-up offer to support those furthest from the labour market or with additional needs, including health.
- ✓ Build employer engagement into our approach to aspiration, skills and careers advice, including through a regional career learning network to test and scale innovative models.
- ✓ Enable a coherent and joined up system of employment support that delivers change to spread the benefits of growth throughout our communities.

Pathways

- ✓ Deliver our Youth Ambition to provide young people with the support, opportunities, and voice they need to thrive.
- ✓ Make youth voice and youth leadership central to our work and to shaping the future of our region.
- ✓ Support early years development and stronger school outcomes by working with the Department for Education, local authorities, education partners and youth services, ensuring every child is ready to start school and every young person can transition confidently into education, employment or training.
- ✓ Work in collaboration with universities, colleges, education providers, employers, and other partners to make the region a magnet for talent by boosting graduate retention, attracting national and international expertise, and raising regional wage levels to meet or exceed the national average.
- ✓ Implement a system-wide Opportunity Escalator approach that helps people to develop skills, supports the development of new jobs, and connects people to good jobs with clear pathways for progression.
- ✓ Residents will be able to access lifelong education and good work, get high-quality all age careers advice, and get individualised help to tackle barriers to learning and work.

Connectivity

Our Ambition: 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.

We are growing a thriving economy that operates on the backbone of strong transport and digital connectivity that links communities, businesses and services and that opens doors for our communities to jobs, education and innovation.

We are empowered as the region's transport authority to lead the transformation of our transport systems and make the case for our region in national policy and investment decisions.

By improving our transport and digital networks, we will reduce inequalities, boost economic growth and ensure that every part of our region – whether urban, rural or remote – can stay connected and compete in a fast-changing world.

With an unprecedented £2bn in transport funding to 2032, we're investing at a transformative scale in connecting our communities and improving how residents, visitors and businesses experience travel in the region.

Through the Mayor's Transport Plan, on which we will begin consultation in Autumn 2025, we will make it easier to travel into and across our region by improving public transport services, creating high quality cycling and walking infrastructure, and ensuring that our highways are well-maintained. We'll harness the best of transport innovation and smart technologies to support our aims for residents' journeys, business travel and freight transport. Specifically, we will work on linking communities to key employment and economic centres across and beyond our region. This will mean transforming how residents move around the region, including a particular benefit for young people accessing education and job opportunities.

We're also focused on enabling cleaner and greener forms of transport and giving people and businesses options that are in line with our net zero goals. We're investing to create active, safe and healthy neighbourhoods.

We know that digital connectivity is vital alongside physical connectivity, so we will work with partners to support the development of digital infrastructure to connect all communities.

In 10 years, this will mean:

£2bn	**We will have improved our transport infrastructure by investing over £2bn in transport funding by 2032**
More choice	**We will enable healthy, inclusive and sustainable options, that reduces car dependency.**
Public transport	**Communities will be linked through even better public transport and new mass transit will be well in development**

Connectivity

The first steps we will take over the next 2 years to build capacity to deliver, develop and enable change:

Transport Infrastructure
- ✓ Secured a step-change in transport investment levels with over £2bn of multi-year transport funding to 2032.
- ✓ Develop and adopt the Mayor's Transport Plan, setting our strategic direction and laying out the framework for our future investment in local transport.
- ✓ Signed the Mayor's Pledge to improve our walking, wheeling and cycling infrastructure in July 2025.
- ✓ Appointed Alan Simpson as Sustainable Travel Ambassador in February 2025 to connect with community needs on sustainable travel.
- ✓ Welcome the launch of Rail Campus Derby and the commitment to bring Great British Railways to Derby.
- ✓ Invest millions of funding into improving and maintaining our roads, to future-proof our assets and improve reliability.

Transport Operations
- ✓ Take control of bus policy and operations through our new devolved transport powers.
- ✓ Make journey planning and switching transport modes easier through the launch of our shared mobility app.
- ✓ Commence work to identify how and where mass transit systems can best support our region.

Digital
- ✓ Engage with Building Digital UK (BDUK) and regional partners on bringing fast and reliable broadband and better mobile coverage to the areas that need it most, including through Project Gigabit and the Shared Rural Network.
- ✓ Promote digital inclusion by working with local partners and engage with national initiatives focused on the connectivity between people and communities.

The longer-term steps we will take to create the 10-year transformational system-wide changes that residents will see and feel:

Transport Infrastructure
- ✓ Deliver a step change in improved transport infrastructure in the region, through the delivery of the Mayor's Transport Plan and with over £2bn of investment to 2032.
- ✓ Begin construction of new tram or light rail systems, helping connect more communities.
- ✓ Make it easier to switch to electric vehicles (EVs) through an increase in publicly available EV charging points.
- ✓ Healthy street environments will support more people to walk more often, improving public health, safety and the vibrancy of our neighbourhoods.
- ✓ New high-quality cycling infrastructure will safely connect where people live, work, and go to school.
- ✓ Work with partners to secure the transport investment needed to unlock key growth areas set out in our Vision for Growth.

Transport Operations
- ✓ Enable more people to choose bus travel and reduce reliance on private cars, with improved services, fares and bus priority measures.
- ✓ Make rail services more accessible and better integrated with other modes of transport and integrated into new mixed developments around stations.
- ✓ Support roll out of integrated ticketing systems for public transport, making it easier to choose public transport options.
- ✓ Make our transport system more inclusive, closing the gap on transport accessibility, supporting independent mobility and enhancing opportunity for all.

Digital
- ✓ Communities and businesses will benefit from a significant upgrade in mobile coverage and access to gigabit broadband. We will work with Building Digital UK (BDUK) and regional partners to support the UK's goal of 99% gigabit coverage by 2032.
- ✓ Embed digital inclusion in public services and strengthen digital skills across the region.

Business Partnerships

Our Ambition: The East Midlands will be a leading destination for business investment through attracting global capital and supporting businesses to set up, scale and export.

To grow a stronger, more inclusive economy, we need to do two things in tandem: attract new investment into the East Midlands and help more of our own businesses to innovate, scale and stay here.

Local growth and inward investment go hand in hand. When we support local firms to grow, we build the confidence and momentum that attracts further investment. But public sector investment alone cannot deliver the scale of transformation we need. Inward investment creates opportunities for local businesses to expand, diversify and compete globally.

The East Midlands has a unique opportunity. Our economic profile shows a high proportion of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), many of which are deeply rooted in their communities and supply chains. These businesses are the backbone of our economy, but too many still face barriers to raising growth capital.

Nationally, female founders secured just 8.2% of equity deals in 2023 and Black founders less than 0.25% of venture funding over the past decade, gaps that show the system isn't working fairly. To unlock the entrepreneurial potential of our region, we must improve access to finance, widen investor networks, and create a simpler, tailored advice and support system.

We will make it easier for every business, regardless of size, sector or stage of development, to do something new. We're embedding a culture of innovation and growth across our business base, especially among SMEs. In parallel, we will engage with the British Business Bank, businesses and investors to unlock greater private investment and strengthen networks that fuel high impact start-ups and scale-ups across the region.

We're also taking a more strategic approach to inward investment. Through the East Midlands Investment Zone and a joined-up regional offer, we're showcasing our strengths to the world, and making it easier for investors to navigate the region and find opportunities that match their ambitions. We will continue to work closely with our Business Advisory Board, which plays a vital role advising us on how to boost private sector growth.

In 10 years, this will mean:

Increased Exports

Increasing exports from £26.5bn to £63bn, representing an average 9% annual growth rate

SME Growth

Boosting the number of fast-growing SMEs in the region by 25% to over 1200

Leading Destination

The East Midlands will become a leading destination for global investment

Mayor Claire Ward and David Williams (Chair) with members of the Business Advisory Board

Business Partnerships

The first steps we will take over the next 2 years to build capacity to deliver, develop and enable change:

Business Growth
- ✓ Ensure the right business advice and support is available to deliver on the priorities in the Growth Plan. This includes ensuring public investment is focused on interventions that drive economic growth through enabling more businesses to start, scale and export.
- ✓ Develop a brand for the East Midlands that attracts new business investment and showcases our strengths to a domestic and international audience.
- ✓ Improve access to finance through our work with partners, including pursuing opportunities associated with the British Business Bank's additional £6.6bn Industrial Strategy Growth Capital funding announced in June 2025.
- ✓ Ensure businesses have access to the skilled staff they need to support business growth by investing in skills and training and adopting the Opportunity Escalator. The Escalator will help support staff recruitment and retention as well as identify pathways to upskilling to support business needs.

Exports and Investment
- ✓ Use our reach as a Mayoral Strategic Authority to promote investor opportunities, develop a joined-up offer and win new investment to the region. This will include developing a clear long-term offer for institutional investors.
- ✓ Promote the region overseas to drive increased exports and foreign investment growth, including to key markets such USA, Germany, and Japan.
- ✓ Work with our regional partners including to build a pipeline of investible opportunities
- ✓ Ensure our businesses have the right expertise and support on how to export overseas, including working with UK Export Finance, which has expanded its lending capacity to £13 billion.
- ✓ Explore opportunities from the £27.8 billion National Wealth Fund, which is designed to support growth sectors and crowd-in private investment.

Business Voice
- ✓ Develop proactive, structured engagement with institutional investor groups to build upon on the work and recommendations of the Inclusive Growth Commission.
- ✓ Work with businesses, trade unions and national government to improve the business environment, support good jobs and stimulate further growth. This will include continued engagement with our Business Advisory Board.

The longer-term steps we will take to create the 10-year transformational system-wide changes that residents will see and feel:

Business Growth
- ✓ Earn a reputation as the most welcoming, proactive Mayoral Strategic Authority for investors, supported by a dedicated investment team and partnership working to unlock increased investment in the region.
- ✓ Work with partners, including the British Business Bank, to explore innovative finance models to de-risk and crowd-in private investment across the region.
- ✓ Explore the adoption of successful social finance initiatives, that generate positive social impact alongside financial returns.

Exports and Investment
- ✓ Attract investment into major regeneration areas set out in Our Vision for Growth, including the Trent Arc, the Supercluster, and the Canal Corridor.
- ✓ Attract new businesses to set up in the region and enable more existing businesses to expand by increasing foreign direct investment in the East Midlands.

Business Voice
- ✓ Continue to engage closely with businesses, trade unions and investors and embed partnership working during the implementation of this plan.

Innovation

Our Ambition: The East Midlands will be known as a birthplace of globally competitive ideas and businesses. Innovation will accelerate the growth of exportable firms, ensure all communities can participate and benefit, strengthen our regional identity, and support every sector to adapt and thrive. Businesses will start, scale and stay in the East Midlands because of the strength of our innovation and investment ecosystem.

We are unlocking the full potential of our innovation system by attracting new investment into our innovation base and businesses into our key sectors, investing in the commercialisation of research, and through the adoption of innovation across all sectors.

Our approach ensures inclusivity, so every community can develop new ideas and breakthrough products.

To accelerate this, we have established an Innovation Advisory Board to drive coordinated action with business and regional partners and are making strategic investments such as an initial £6.5 million through the East Midlands Investment Zone to power an Innovation Accelerator, expand spin-out finance, and strengthen university-industry Research and Development (R&D) partnerships. Low-carbon R&D will be clustered at hubs like the Supercluster, Infinity Park Derby, the Zero Carbon Innovation Centre, the Nottingham Energy Institute and the Integrated Energy Grids Laboratory.

We will empower our region's universities to expand their translation of cutting-edge research to market ready products and services and forge even stronger, more dynamic links between academia and industry. This includes working closely with UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), Innovate UK, and the Department for Business and Trade (DBT) to expand access to funding and bolster innovation support. We will work with colleges on innovative models to deploy cutting edge skills, for example through the forthcoming Automated Distribution and Manufacturing Centre at Vision West Nottinghamshire College.

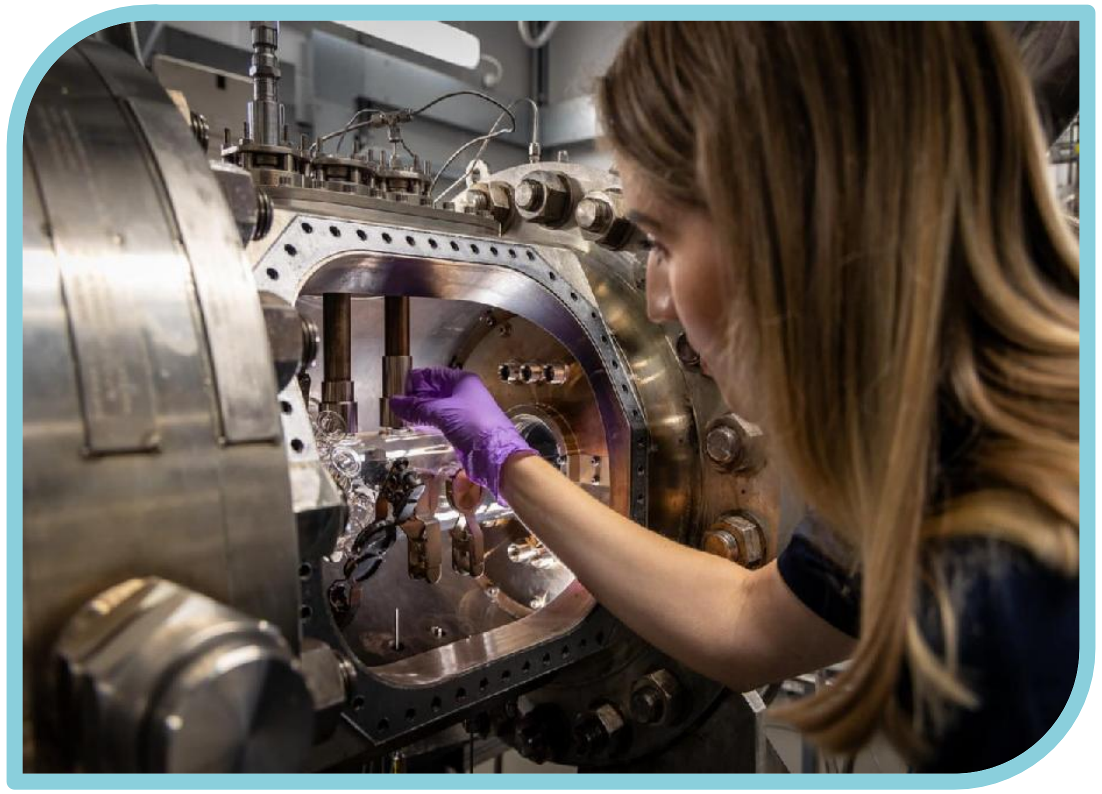
We will bring together all business support and innovation partners to make it easier for innovators to find the support they need and for those offering support to become larger than the sum of their parts. Innovation is not just for labs and tech firms. It's about helping every business to adapt, improve and grow. That might mean adopting a new process, entering a new market, or developing a new product. For some, it will be their first step into innovation. For others, it will be about scaling up and exporting globally.

In 10 years, this will mean:

New Facilities — **New innovation facilities in the region to support sectoral cluster needs and national priorities**

Increased Investment — **More investment in innovation, by increasing successful Innovate UK applications from organisations in the region by 25%**

More innovation — **Enabling 2,700 more businesses to engage in innovation**



Innovation

The first steps we will take over the next 2 years to build capacity to deliver, develop and enable change:

Ecosystem Development

- ✓ Continue bringing together expert voices from business, research, the public sector and beyond through the Innovation Advisory Board to unlock the region's potential through innovation.
- ✓ Build on the roadmaps developed by the East Midlands Investment Zone and identify, evidence and articulate our regional innovation strengths in key clusters.
- ✓ Work with our Innovation Advisory Board and regional partners to pursue funding of up to £20 million from UKRI's Local Innovation Partnerships Fund to drive further growth in regional innovation clusters.
- ✓ Unlock investment and build innovation partnerships through developing an East Midlands Innovation Action Plan with Innovate UK.

Innovation-Led Business Growth

- ✓ Grow the innovation infrastructure in our region by connecting businesses with the space and facilities they need to enable future growth.
- ✓ Work with universities to strengthen pathways to the commercialisation of research, and colleges and training providers to develop the technical skills needed to grow innovative businesses.
- ✓ Enhance our innovation potential by convening businesses and sector representatives and helping them to articulate their innovation offer to funders.
- ✓ Support businesses along supply chains to stimulate innovation across the system.

The longer-term steps we will take to create the 10-year transformational system-wide changes that residents will see and feel:

Ecosystem Development

- ✓ Support the delivery of the £160 million 10-year East Midlands Investment Zone Strategy and Investment Plan to unlock inclusive growth and innovation, including in advanced manufacturing and clean energy.
- ✓ Work with partners to support the development of innovation facilities that support sector and national priorities.

Innovation-Led Business Growth

- ✓ Enable more businesses to innovate, undertake R&D and develop new products and services by achieving a 25% increase in successful applications for Innovate UK funding.
- ✓ Enable 2,700 more businesses to engage in innovation activities (3.6 percentage point increase in innovation active firms)

Case study: Midlands Mindforge, Unlocking Innovation-Led Growth

Midlands Mindforge is a mission-driven investment company co-founded by eight Midlands universities, including Nottingham, Loughborough, Leicester, and Warwick. It will back science and technology spinouts across clean technologies, AI, and life sciences, helping to translate the East Midlands' research excellence into globally competitive businesses.

The initiative aims to raise up to **£250 million** to invest in high impact, IP-rich companies founded by university innovators. By anchoring investment in the region's universities and innovation clusters, Midlands Mindforge will support the creation of breakthrough businesses in some of the UK's most strategically important sectors.

Midlands Mindforge showcases how to deliver inclusive, innovation-led growth in partnership by supporting the scale-up of deep tech firms, creating skilled jobs, and building long-term investment capacity.

Housing and Place

Our Ambition: The housing affordability gap in the East Midlands will be closing, with house prices aligning with local incomes. Every community will have access to safe and warm housing, suitable to their needs, enabling people to live healthy lives in connected communities.

We are committed to transforming housing delivery across the region, increasing and sustaining the number of homes built and retrofitted to meet long-term community needs. We are supporting the delivery of well-designed, energy-efficient homes, fostering a diverse and resilient housing market.

Through our *Spatial Development Strategy*, we will help the region deliver the new target of 10,860 homes per year – this will mean over 100,000 new homes over 10 years.

We will strive to bring forward affordable housing solutions with mixed types and tenures in line with local needs, removing one of the key barriers to opportunities. We are enabling the delivery of affordable, energy-efficient homes and retrofitting existing housing stock, to reduce energy bills, cut emissions, and create more comfortable, future-proofed homes.

Alongside this, we are regenerating unused buildings and land to unlock development potential, preserve heritage, and revitalise town and city centres.

Using our new devolved powers, we are unlocking large-scale brownfield regeneration, with sites like Nottingham Broad Marsh set to realise ambitions for a new vibrant, sustainable and well-connected city centre neighbourhood. This, and similar developments in the future, will drive housing growth, create new public spaces, and support economic renewal through thriving communities.

Through our new regional housing strategy, delivered in partnership with our local authorities and Homes England, we are championing a place-led approach to development, supporting growth that is sustainable.

In 10 years, this will mean:

100,000	**Delivering over 100,000 new homes over 10 years**
Strategic Development	**Use our powers and convening role to develop vibrant mixed-use developments**
12,000	**12,000 homes retrofitted with energy efficiency measures, contributing to lower bills**

Housing and Place

The first steps we will take over the next 2 years to build capacity to deliver, develop and enable change:

Housing

- ✓ Support the delivery of up to 2,000 new homes on brownfield land by investing up to £36.5m through the Government's Brownfield Housing Fund.
- ✓ Accelerate affordable housing delivery by working with partners to secure a meaningful share of the Government's £39bn Affordable Housing Programme, ensuring delivery reflects local priorities and supports mixed-tenure, inclusive neighbourhoods across the region.
- ✓ Work with local authorities and the Net Zero Hub to enable retrofit delivery of 2,500 homes and 5,000 energy efficiency and generating measures.
- ✓ Develop a region-wide housing strategy in partnership with our local planning authorities.

Strategic Development

- ✓ Bring forward developments with the greatest potential including those outlined in the Vision for Growth. This includes the clean energy Supercluster in the northeast of the region and Trent Arc that connects Derby and Nottingham.
- ✓ Develop our first regional *Spatial Development Strategy* to set priorities for land use, infrastructure and investment and to unlock opportunities that support communities, businesses and the environment.
- ✓ Unlock stalled or strategic sites to create great places and increase housing delivery. We will leverage our Strategic Place Partnership with Homes England to increase the quality, pace and scale of housing delivery and place making.

Safety and Inclusivity

- ✓ Mobilise efforts to address homelessness and housing vulnerability by establishing a regional Homelessness Taskforce.
- ✓ Work with partners to support veterans and vulnerable groups at risk of housing exclusion.
- ✓ Implement our Regional Action Plan for Building Safety ensuring that high-rise residential buildings meet modern safety standards.

The longer-term steps we will take to create the 10-year transformational system wide changes that residents will see and feel:

Housing

- ✓ Support delivery of more than 100,000 new homes in the region, through partnership working with national government, Homes England and local authorities.
- ✓ Address fuel poverty and high energy bills by scaling up local retrofit and energy efficiency schemes.

Strategic Development

- ✓ Enable town and city centre regeneration in the region that supports transport, utilities, social and environmental infrastructure.
- ✓ Support vibrant, mixed-use and new developments, that are well-connected to employment opportunities, public services, and sustainable transport.
- ✓ Use new statutory powers to designate Mayoral Development Areas and establish Development Corporations, enabling strategic regeneration aligned with our upcoming Spatial Development Strategy.

Safety and Inclusivity

- ✓ Reduce homelessness and housing vulnerability ensuring more people are in safe, stable long-term housing.

Clean Energy and Climate Resilient Infrastructure

Our Ambition: The East Midlands will be a UK leader in maximising jobs and opportunities from clean energy and green technologies. We will improve everyone's environment by creating cleaner, greener communities, with warmer homes, better public transport, greater access to nature, and improved protection from flooding and the impacts of climate change.

We are enabling a resilient, smarter energy system across the region, creating high quality sustainable jobs, ones that will enable people to thrive in the future and the region to win in the competition for new industry. We are decarbonising how we power, build and move with infrastructure that accelerate progress towards energy security and net zero, lowering costs, and improving efficiency for residents and businesses.

To achieve this, we're prioritising action across the economy. We recognise that clean energy and climate resilient infrastructure are essential to future-proofing all sectors preparing for the effects of climate change and supporting long-term sustainable growth.

We will coordinate and support a regional retrofit and energy efficiency programme that integrates skills, finance, and community action to improve the energy performance of homes and buildings. This will reduce household emissions, enhance wellbeing, tackle fuel poverty, and contribute to national retrofit goals (see actions in Housing and Place section).

We'll advocate for strategic grid upgrades by making the case for investment in future energy capacity and access for businesses and communities. We'll push for faster connections, priority access for high impact clean industries, and a more resilient, lower-cost energy system across the region.

We're also supporting the growth of clean energy supply chains in energy-intensive sectors such as manufacturing, aggregates, chemicals, and logistics, helping firms access reliable clean energy, adopt low-carbon technologies and build resilience to energy price volatility.

Investing in clean energy infrastructure will create jobs in fusion, nuclear fission, hydrogen, solar, heat networks, carbon capture, storage, and retrofit. These sectors will help make homes and buildings warmer, greener, and more affordable to run.

We'll also strengthen community resilience to climate risks through improved flood protection, including natural flood management, enhanced biodiversity, and better access to green spaces. Preserving and enhancing the natural environment is central to our approach. Working with local partners, we'll direct investment toward interventions that support both climate resilience and environmental quality.

In 10 years, this will mean:

Clean Energy Infrastructure	**Transformation of decommissioned power stations and major new investment in clean energy infrastructure**
1GW	**Delivery of 1GW of public sector and community energy projects**
Resilience	**Securing new investment in major flood resilience infrastructure**

Image credit: Lindum Group

Clean Energy and Climate Resilient Infrastructure

The first steps we will take over the next 2 years to build capacity to deliver, develop and enable change:

Clean Energy

- ✓ Deploy £15.7 million of East Midlands Investment Zone capital to attract private capital and drive industrial transformation, including in nuclear and fusion.
- ✓ Empower public sector and community led energy schemes through targeted funding, partnerships and support to increase these schemes by 5MW.
- ✓ Drive targeted, high impact energy investment leveraging the outputs of England's largest Local Area Energy Plan with Digital Twinning.
- ✓ Identify suitable sites for investment in utility scale clean energy generation.
- ✓ Mobilise finance, skills and delivery models to scale retrofit partnerships.
- ✓ Align local projects with national funding and grid upgrade opportunities through the Government's Clean Power 2030 Action Plan.

Climate Resilience

- ✓ Establish an expert Nature and Biodiversity Taskforce to prioritise natural capital restoration and climate resilience.
- ✓ Roll out low-carbon heat network zones in high impact areas.
- ✓ Develop business cases for investment in flood resilience, nature recovery and access to green spaces.
- ✓ Support the delivery of Local Nature Recovery Strategies for Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire.

The 10-year transformational system wide changes that residents will see and feel:

Clean Energy

- ✓ Unlock major investment across fusion, nuclear fission, hydrogen, wind, solar, heat networks and Carbon Capture, Utilisation and Storage (CCUS) capitalising on our strengths and supply chain potential.
- ✓ Make the East Midlands the UK's next clean energy hub, driving innovation, trade and high-value export opportunities.
- ✓ Advance the transformation of decommissioned power stations for clean energy generation and storage uses and co-location of symbiotic sectors that enable a circular economy approach to manufacturing, food production and other relevant industries.
- ✓ Expand opportunity for people to upskill or reskill into clean energy sectors in collaboration with businesses and skills providers.
- ✓ Make significant progress in support of government's Net Zero 2050 ambition by enabling the reduction industrial and commercial emissions.
- ✓ Meet and exceed the national decarbonisation target by enabling a more resilient, lower-cost energy system that supports green growth.

Climate Resilience

- ✓ Secure funding for major flood resilience infrastructure along the Derwent, Trent and Wye rivers.
- ✓ Identify and develop priority heat network zones.
- ✓ Complete several projects that deliver access to green space, natural flood management and nature recovery.

Spotlight: Our Role In Accelerating the Net Zero Transition

Building on our clean energy infrastructure actions, EMCCA is well placed to accelerate the East Midlands' transition to net zero, linking local delivery with strategic investment and devolved powers. As a Mayoral Strategic Authority, EMCCA can coordinate across transport, energy, and planning systems to scale up local authority efforts, unlocking investment in clean energy, retrofit, climate adaptation, and nature recovery.

We are committed to tackling climate change and the global climate crisis. We are on a journey to becoming net zero by 2050 in line with national ambitions. EMCCA's regional role adds significant value by enabling joined-up delivery across council boundaries, supporting strategic initiatives and clean industrial zones, coordinating community retrofit and local energy projects, decarbonising transport through shifting to other types of transport, as well as greener vehicles, and aligning funding streams to support flood resilience and nature-based solutions.

Together, these efforts intertwined with nature recovery and improved access to green spaces, will help reduce emissions, improve air quality, lower household energy costs, and position the East Midlands as a national leader in clean and inclusive growth. This includes capturing economic opportunities from decarbonising manufacturing and industrial processes, building on the region's advanced manufacturing strengths to drive innovation and skilled jobs.

Our role as a Mayoral Strategic Authority, working with partners and constituent councils, means that we are operating in an ever-shifting landscape where views will change and evolve in time. Our cities are demonstrating leadership and successful delivery in the transition to net zero.

Nottingham City Council declared a climate and ecological emergency in 2019 and is aiming to be the first carbon neutral city in the UK by 2028. Under its Carbon Neutral Nottingham 2028 (CN28) programme, its operational emissions fell by 20% in 2022/23 alone. Derby City Council has committed to becoming a net zero carbon authority by 2035, outlined in its Climate Change Action Plan 2025–2027. Notable progress already includes upgrading 5,560 street lighting assets to LEDs, saving 329 tonnes of carbon emissions a year, just one of 35 priority projects driving their net zero journey.

3.2 High Impact Sectors

High Impact Sectors for Growth

From the Government's Industrial Strategy, we have identified clean energy, advanced manufacturing, MedTech and life sciences, and Digital, Creative and Cultural Industries as high impact sectors in the East Midlands. And we have gone further, identifying the visitor economy as a key sector for inclusive growth, given the potential the region's natural environment, heritage and culture has to offer.

In addition to these high impact sectors, established strengths in the region – defence (closely linked to advanced manufacturing), aggregates, minerals and low carbon construction, and Logistics present opportunities for growth, security and resilience.

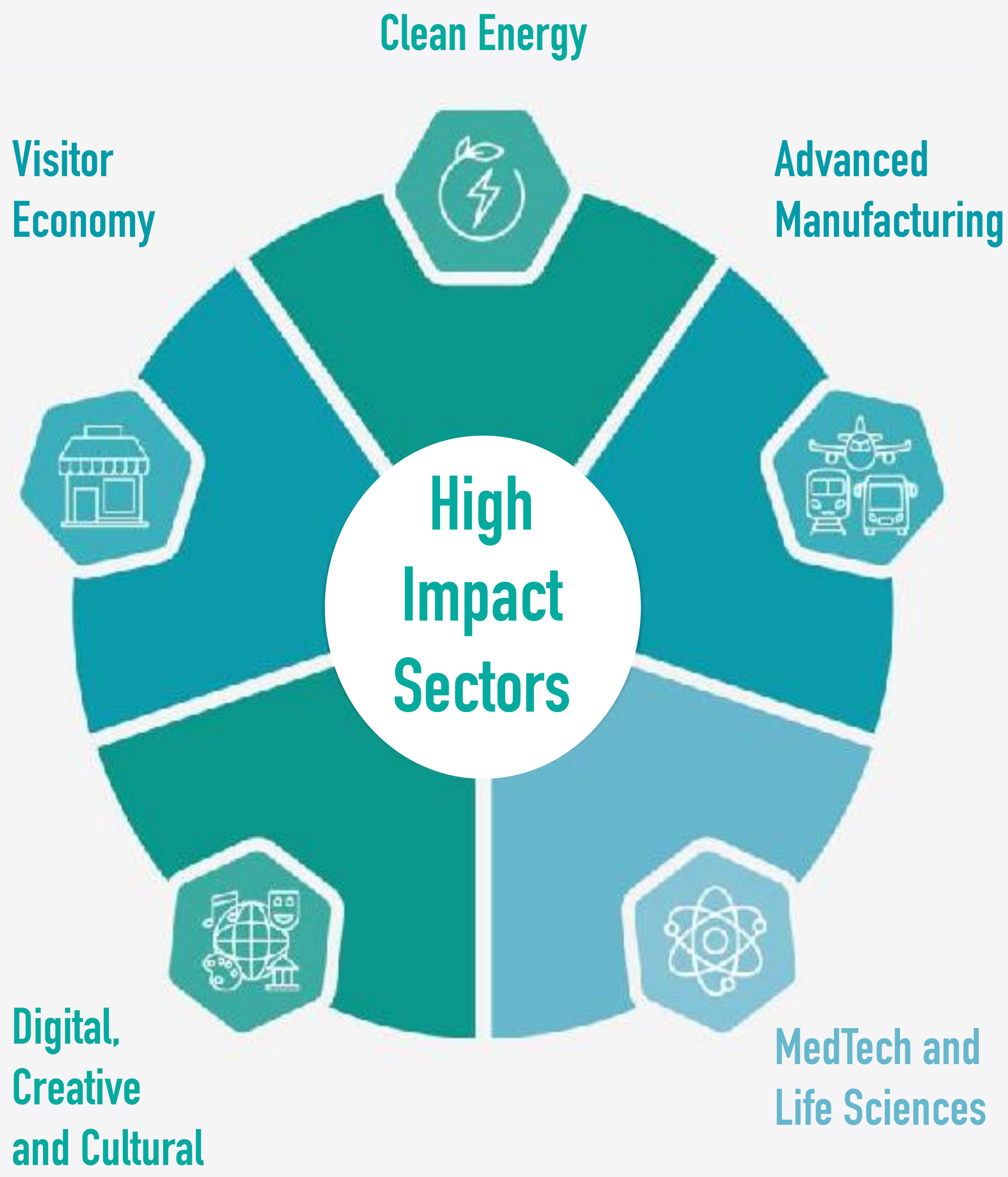
We will work with national Government, businesses and partners on opportunities for growth across these sectors, including where these are closely aligned with the Government's Industrial Strategy. This sectoral approach is designed to complement a cross-economy approach with our enablers of growth. And through our Opportunity Escalator approach we will ensure residents can access jobs in these sectors, including through skills and training pathways and transport connections.

High impact Sectors

- **Clean Energy –** Building on the legacy of the East Midlands as an energy producer, we are poised to transform decommissioned power stations into Megawatt Valley 2.0, critical to securing the UK's energy security and net zero transition and poised to create employment opportunities in the region for generations to come.
- **Advanced Manufacturing** – Industrial giants in the region are global leaders in advanced automotive, rail, aerospace and defence manufacturing. With forecasts indicating significant growth, there is an opportunity to drive forward international export competitiveness and regional supply chain development creating significant productivity gains and employment opportunities across the region.
- **MedTech and Life Sciences** – With our capabilities in MedTech and life sciences we can realise the opportunity to turn one of the country's leading clusters for clinical research activities into a globally recognised force for improving global health outcomes
- **Digital, Creative and Cultural** – With Nottingham home to the fastest growing cluster of digital, creative and cultural activity outside of London, regional clusters at the intersection of creative and digital, such as games and animation subsectors, have potential to generate new job opportunities.
- **Visitor Economy** – With the Peak District National Park, Sherwood Forest, the Derwent Valley Mills and top-level sports venues, the East Midlands attracts 77 million visitors annually, we have potential to improve our visitor economy offer and convert more visits into overnight stays.

Established Strengths

- **Defence** – The East Midlands is central to the UK's defence manufacturing future, with Derby at the heart of propulsion and reactor technologies that are critical to national security, clean energy and international partnerships like AUKUS.
- **Aggregates, Minerals, and Low Carbon Construction** – With a shift towards low-carbon energy in the production of critical aggregates and minerals, the region will drive innovation and job creation in modern construction methods and strengthen national supply chain resilience in a more volatile world.
- **Logistics** – The East Midlands is at the crossroads of the country, with the M1 providing strong connectivity. Our logistics sector enables goods, services and ideas to move efficiently to where they are needed. It underpins the success of high impact sectors in the movement of supply chain components and final manufactured goods.



Clean Energy

Building on the legacy of the East Midlands as an energy producer, we are poised to become a global leader of new fusion and nuclear clean energy, driving energy production, innovation and employment opportunities in the region for generations to come.

The East Midlands is emerging as a national leader in clean energy technology and generation. While the entire clean energy sector is vital to our green transition, the greatest growth opportunity lies in fusion and nuclear energy. With assets like the STEP programme (Spherical Tokamak for Energy Production), the world's first prototype fusion power plant, and associated R&D, alongside rising global demand for new nuclear technologies like small modular reactors (SMRs) and advanced modular reactors (AMRs), the region has distinct capabilities to lead this transformational growth opportunity for the UK.

West Burton is set to host one of the world's first prototype fusion power plants, placing the East Midlands at the forefront of next-generation clean energy. This complements our existing and growing strengths in nuclear technologies, underpinned by expertise in defence, modular construction, advanced manufacturing, a robust nuclear skills base, and cutting-edge innovation from the University of Nottingham and the University of Derby. The region is already attracting more private investment in nuclear than any other renewable technology, reinforcing its role in the UK's net zero strategy. Anchored by Rolls-Royce, Derby is at the heart of the UK's nuclear submarine programme, now expanding due to the £9bn AUKUS Pact. Rolls-Royce and the University of Derby's Nuclear Skills Academy will continue to train the next generation of nuclear engineers.

Beyond defence, the East Midlands is developing next-generation nuclear applications, including propulsion systems for space. A strong supply chain of ready-for-nuclear SMEs, supported by advanced manufacturing, engineering, and automation capabilities, underpins this growth and positions the region to capture emerging opportunities.

Additionally, our region is home to other clean energy growth opportunities in sectors like Carbon Capture, Usage, and Storage (CCUS) and hydrogen. We are home to the Peak Cluster, a nationally significant CCUS project decarbonising 40% of the UK's cement industry, as well as East Midlands Hydrogen, the largest inland hydrogen cluster in the UK comprising hydrogen generators, technology manufacturers, innovators and end-users. Supply chains in the region around solar, heat networks and retrofit also continue to grow from strength to strength.

Actions to make the most of the opportunity:

- ✓ **Closing the Green Skills Gap:** The clean energy sector is driven by long term major projects, particularly in nuclear fission and fusion. This means a stable demand for talent in nuclear roles. To meet this need, we are leading a collaboration with UK Atomic Energy Authority (UKAEA), UK Industrial Fusion Solutions (UKFIS), regional authorities and education partners to develop the skills needed for nuclear and fusion projects. The sector currently faces a significant skills gap with particularly high vacancy rates for Production Engineers (35.7%), Power Distribution Engineers (30.0%), and Technicians (22.2%).
- ✓ **Attracting Investment:** Increasing investments in clean energy technology innovation will require greater collaboration between research and industry. National programmes such as the UK Atomic Energy Authority (UKAEA)-led fusion investment pipeline and the £1 billion Clean Energy Supply Chain Fund will help us in supporting businesses to bring clean energy technologies to market and access export opportunities.
- ✓ **Improving Energy Capacity:** Improving energy capacity and connectivity is essential for attracting future opportunities in clean energy. National plans include a doubling of annual clean energy investment to over £30 billion by 2035 and up to £10 billion per year in transmission network upgrades will help to support the delivery of low-carbon infrastructure.

Project spotlight: West Burton Power Station, STEP Fusion Energy Prototype Project

West Burton has been selected as the site for the UK's flagship Spherical Tokamak for Energy Production (STEP), a game-changing fusion energy programme led by UKAEA and UKIFS. Backed by £2.5 billion in investment from government over the next five years and forming the cornerstone of the East Midlands Supercluster, the development will transform West Burton into a globally significant clean energy and innovation campus.

The prototype fusion power plant will anchor a new fusion ecosystem of research institutions, innovative supply chains, and advanced manufacturing, generating up to 19,470 full time equivalent jobs and £1.5bn GVA annually on a national level and delivering long-term inclusive growth. The STEP site will support high-level technical training, attract global talent, and position the East Midlands at the forefront of the UK's clean energy transition.

With planning underway and delivery targeted by 2040, West Burton will power the region's ambition to become a global clean energy superpower, unlocking economic opportunity and technological leadership for future generations.

Spotlight: Megawatt Valley 2.0

We're repurposing five former coal fired power station sites along the River Trent, once known as Megawatt Valley, turning our industrial heritage into our future strengths.

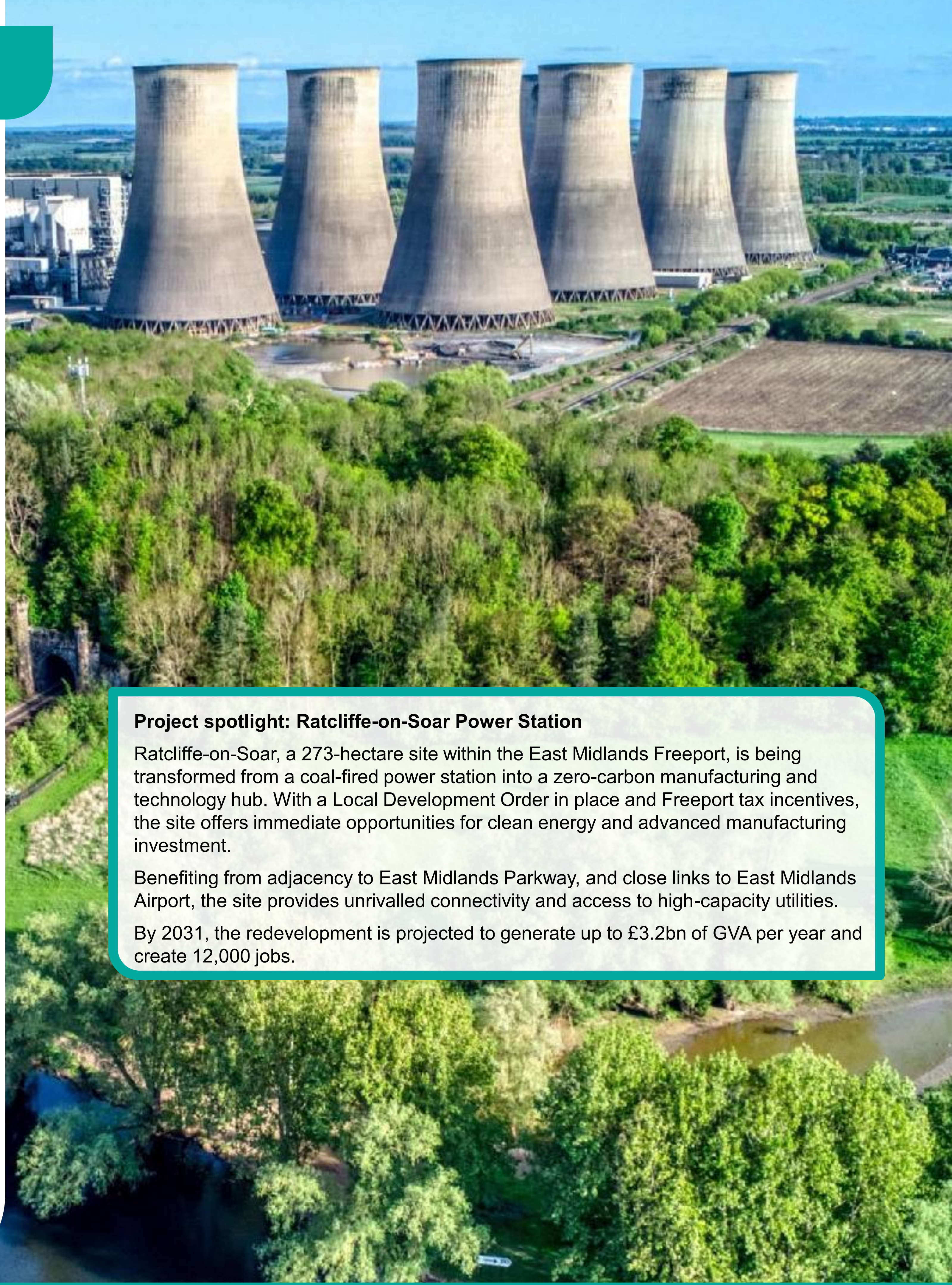
The Supercluster

New Jobs	New Homes	GVA
15,000	6,800	£930m

The Supercluster centres on three former coal-fired power stations: West Burton, Cottam, and High Marnham, with West Burton selected as the UK site for the STEP Fusion energy prototype project. STEP will anchor a world-class clean energy and innovation hub, comparable to the European Organisation for Nuclear Research (CERN).

This cluster will drive global exports of technology and skills, create new jobs and homes, and inspire more local pride. It will host a discovery centre for schools, investors, and the public, and support future technologies such as nuclear, green hydrogen, AI, and digital sectors, leveraging existing grid links and low-carbon power. A new R&D campus, net zero homes, sustainable transport, and leisure facilities will help attract and retain talent, establishing a globally recognised centre of excellence.

We are looking for partners to work with us and deliver three significant growth and investment opportunities within the Supercluster to help us become a global exporter of technology and expertise in decarbonising industries.



Project spotlight: Ratcliffe-on-Soar Power Station

Ratcliffe-on-Soar, a 273-hectare site within the East Midlands Freeport, is being transformed from a coal-fired power station into a zero-carbon manufacturing and technology hub. With a Local Development Order in place and Freeport tax incentives, the site offers immediate opportunities for clean energy and advanced manufacturing investment.

Benefiting from adjacency to East Midlands Parkway, and close links to East Midlands Airport, the site provides unrivalled connectivity and access to high-capacity utilities.

By 2031, the redevelopment is projected to generate up to £3.2bn of GVA per year and create 12,000 jobs.

Advanced Manufacturing

Industrial giants in the region are global leaders in advanced automotive, rail, aerospace and defence manufacturing. With forecasts indicating significant growth, there is an opportunity to drive forward international export competitiveness, and supply chain development with widespread employment opportunities across the region.

The East Midlands is home to several global leaders in the manufacture of advanced transport manufacturing and defence equipment. Major employers in this sector include Alstom, JCB, Rolls-Royce and Toyota. Rolls-Royce's propulsion and reactor design work in Derby, tied to national submarine and SMR programmes further strengthens our position in sovereign manufacturing capabilities. We want to ensure that these businesses remain here and thrive and that new businesses in this sector can grow.

The 'planes, trains, automobiles and submarines' cluster focused up and down the M1 corridor and beyond, linking key towns in Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire, is already globally significant and is home to the most important transport and defence manufacturing opportunity in the UK. All our Original Equipment Manufacturers are already working closely with our universities and colleges to grow our domestic workforce and retain it locally, and to support the commercialisation of new products and processes.

The announcement of the Great British Railways Headquarters in Derby and the establishment of Rail Campus Derby in October 2024 cemented our role as the rail capital of the UK. Over 11,000 highly skilled rail workers are employed in Europe's largest and most diverse rail cluster here, with an emerging cluster in Hartington Staveley.[26] Derby has the largest concentration of locomotive and rolling stock manufacturers in the UK.

Toyota UK's plant at Burnaston, South Derbyshire, employs over 2,300 people[27] and is involved in driving forward developments for both the East Midlands Freeport and the East Midlands Hydrogen Partnership as it develops world leading technologies for decarbonised transport. The East Midlands Freeport is investing over £25 million in seed funding, including £5 million in the Zero Carbon Innovation Centre, and £2 million in the Future Energy Skills Hub, aiming to unlock £9 billion in GVA and support 28,000 direct and indirect jobs, including jobs linked to the STEP Fusion site at West Burton.[28] Between them, these businesses are at the centre of a unique industrial cluster that means manufacturing productivity in Derby is 60% higher than the regional average and 40% above the national average.

Actions to make the most of the opportunity:

- ✓ **Supporting More People to Find Careers in the Sector**: The sector faces a skilled worker shortage. Bringing more people into the sector will be done through supporting a flexible education and training system that collaborates with manufacturers. Academic partnerships are in place with all our universities such as with University of Nottingham's Institute for Aerospace Technology (IAT) and Power Electronics Machining Centre (PEMC), and University of Derby's Rail Research and Innovation Centre.
- ✓ **Leveraging Innovation Funding:** There is a high proportion of UKRI funding allocated to aerospace businesses, with wider Midlands receiving 41% of grants awarded to the aerospace industry between 2013 to 2022.[29] Greater collaboration with the knowledge economy can secure further funding for more MSMEs and drive growth. UKRI's £100 million programme for R&D clusters provides a further opportunity to expand regional innovation activity.
- ✓ **Advocating for Energy Access:** Employers in the region are working tirelessly to grow their businesses while reducing emissions, but without priority access to the gas and electricity grids, including for high-energy defence and propulsion facilities as well as Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF), future growth could be constrained.

Case study: Zero Carbon Innovation Centre, driving the UK's net-zero transport transition

The Zero Carbon Innovation Centre (ZCIC), launched in March 2025 at the University of Nottingham's Jubilee Campus, is a nationally significant initiative focused on decarbonising the UK's hardest-to-abate transport sectors, including aerospace, automotive, rail, and marine. Backed by £5 million from the East Midlands Freeport, alongside funding from the UK Research Partnership Investment Fund and partner universities, the Centre forms part of a wider £70 million co-investment programme.

ZCIC provides world-class facilities to help industry develop and scale zero-carbon technologies. Its capabilities include an advanced electrical machine manufacturing line, megawatt-scale hydrogen propulsion testing, and cutting-edge robotics and digital-twin platforms. These open-access facilities enable businesses to prototype, test, and commercialise clean transport solutions in collaboration with leading researchers.

By accelerating the deployment of zero-carbon transport technologies and supporting the growth of regional supply chains, ZCIC strengthens the East Midlands' position at the forefront of the UK's clean industrial revolution.

Spotlight: Defence

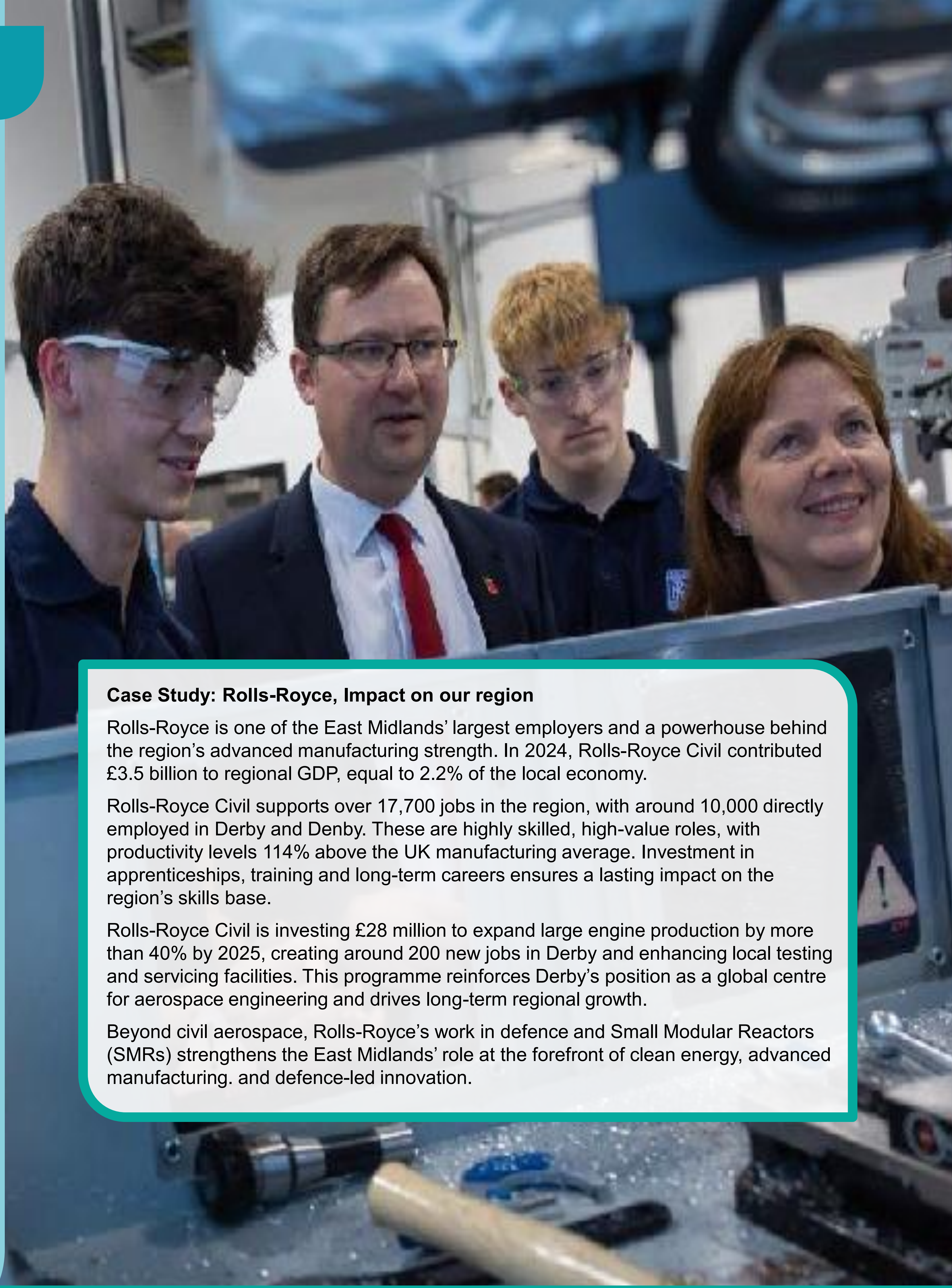
Employees	Companies	GVA[30]
30,500	149	£4.05bn
		16.2% of UK sector

The East Midlands is central to the UK's defence manufacturing future, with Derby at the heart of propulsion and reactor technologies that are critical to national security, clean energy and international partnerships like AUKUS. Rolls-Royce's expansion of its Raynesway site, supported through a £9 billion submarine propulsion investment from the Ministry of Defence, will deliver major new production capabilities and create up to 1,000 jobs.[31] This programme anchors sovereign manufacturing capacity in our region and reflects Derby's national leadership in propulsion engineering.

The same core capabilities support the UK's Small Modular Reactor (SMR) programme, where Rolls-Royce is acting as the lead supplier. Drawing on our region's deep expertise in advanced manufacturing and nuclear engineering, the SMR programme will bring forward new clean energy infrastructure and future export markets, with most components expected to be manufactured in the UK.

In the region, we are aligning with national momentum to scale innovation and strengthen supply chains. The UK Government has committed £400 million to a new Defence Innovation Fund, alongside a pledge to direct at least 10% of its equipment budget to novel and dual-use technologies such as drones, AI-enabled platforms and advanced materials. These technologies build on many of the strengths already present across our manufacturing base.

We are supporting the ecosystem needed to make the most of this opportunity, from the Nuclear Skills Academy in Derby, to academic centres such as the University of Nottingham's Institute for Aerospace Technology and the University of Derby's Rail Research and Innovation Centre, which are advancing secure systems, propulsion, and digital engineering. As defence investment rises nationally and the supply chain diversifies, we are well placed to help deliver the UK's future capability and secure lasting regional benefit in the process.



Case Study: Rolls-Royce, Impact on our region

Rolls-Royce is one of the East Midlands' largest employers and a powerhouse behind the region's advanced manufacturing strength. In 2024, Rolls-Royce Civil contributed £3.5 billion to regional GDP, equal to 2.2% of the local economy.

Rolls-Royce Civil supports over 17,700 jobs in the region, with around 10,000 directly employed in Derby and Denby. These are highly skilled, high-value roles, with productivity levels 114% above the UK manufacturing average. Investment in apprenticeships, training and long-term careers ensures a lasting impact on the region's skills base.

Rolls-Royce Civil is investing £28 million to expand large engine production by more than 40% by 2025, creating around 200 new jobs in Derby and enhancing local testing and servicing facilities. This programme reinforces Derby's position as a global centre for aerospace engineering and drives long-term regional growth.

Beyond civil aerospace, Rolls-Royce's work in defence and Small Modular Reactors (SMRs) strengthens the East Midlands' role at the forefront of clean energy, advanced manufacturing. and defence-led innovation.

MedTech and Life Sciences

With our capabilities in MedTech and life sciences we can realise the opportunity to turn one of the country's leading clusters for clinical research and associated activities into a globally recognised force for improving public health outcomes

MedTech and Life Sciences is a consistently growing sector that combines innovative clinical research and MedTech logistics and packaging. It also benefits from strong GVA growth for professional, scientific and technical activities and a high employment concentration.[32] The sector bridges academia and industry, integrating clinical research with advancements in digital health. It is supported by a robust business environment with high business longevity.

Two of the key subsectors are Clinical Research Organisations and logistics and packaging, driven by the presence of two major clinical trial organisations and several large packaging firms. Nottingham has a particular strength in the data science underpinning clinical research, with companies like Sygnature and Perceptive forming part of a broader regional cluster that includes Experian. Our local companies are critical for the major pharmaceutical organisations, undertaking most of the research and development. All four major hospitals in the region contribute to medical research, as do our three universities.

BioCity Nottingham is one of the UK's largest innovation and incubation centres for MedTech businesses and plans to double its footprint to meet demand. The region also hosts national assets such as the Sir Peter Mansfield Imaging Centre and the Biodiscovery Institute, alongside a cluster of spinouts and digital health ventures that create an integrated ecosystem for innovation and commercialisation. However, our strengths in this sector are often overlooked in favour of areas like the Golden Triangle in the South, representing a missed opportunity to showcase the tremendous growth potential in the region.

With further support for start-up and scale-up facilities, the supply chain clustered between Nottingham, Derby and Loughborough can elevate the region from national to global prominence. Originally anchored by the global headquarters of Boots, the sector now includes companies such as Conygar, Chesapeak PLC, and Pennine Healthcare. Initiatives such as Midlands Mindforge, which aim to attract significant private venture capital into innovative new and growing companies, will be critical to ensuring we can compete nationally and globally.

Actions to make the most of the opportunity:

- ✓ **Driving Investment in Innovation:** There has been years of underinvestment by the public sector into innovation in the East Midlands. The Midlands has 10% of the MedTech workforce and have received less than 2% of public innovation funding.[33] Our success to date has been largely thanks to local partnerships. National investment of up to £600 million in the Health Data Research Service (HDRS) presents a major opportunity for the region. With a fairer share of government investment, we can accelerate growth and create a cluster that rivals any other in the UK. Additionally, an agile Midlands wide network including academics, businesses and clinicians can support the growing MedTech innovation ecosystem.
- ✓ **Improving Digital Infrastructure:** We will focus on making sure our digital infrastructure meets the needs of businesses as they start, scale and expand in the region.
- ✓ **Building a Skills Pipeline Fit for the Future:** Jobs in the MedTech and life sciences sector mainly require a degree level or above. We're working to ensure that more of our residents have the qualifications needed to pursue jobs in this field.

Case Study: BioCity Nottingham, Pioneering Nottingham's Life Sciences

BioCity Nottingham is the UK's largest bioscience innovation incubator, established in 2003 through a partnership between the University of Nottingham, Nottingham Trent University, and the East Midlands Development Agency. Based in former Boots research laboratories, it provides more than 116,000 sq. ft of laboratory and office space across three buildings in the heart of Nottingham.

Today, BioCity is home to over 70 life-science and contract research companies, offering specialist facilities and business support to accelerate growth. Its model reduces barriers for start-ups by providing access to infrastructure that would otherwise be cost-prohibitive.

Financially self-sustaining, BioCity has become a cornerstone of Nottingham's innovation economy. Building on the city's track record in medical research and biopharmaceuticals, it continues to attract high-value businesses, drive spin-out success, and strengthen the East Midlands' position as a leading life-sciences cluster.

Digital, Creative and Cultural

With Nottingham the home to the fastest growing cluster of digital, creative and cultural activity outside of London, the region is at the forefront of immersive technologies and creative innovation across game development, animation and video production activities.

The digital, creative and cultural sector in the East Midlands is a major economic driver; dynamic and innovative, its independent spirit shapes our regional economy and sense of place. Productivity levels are significantly above the national average and jobs in this sector can be high-wage and knowledge-intensive. Supporting business growth in this sector can attract more of these roles to the region.

Innovations from this sector often set standards adopted across other industries. Games technologies like digital twins and immersive experiences frequently lead to high-value high productivity applications in other fields, boosting our regional competitiveness. We have outstanding regional strength in Creative Technology (CreaTech), with international expertise in our universities including University of Nottingham's mixed reality lab, trailblazing creative immersive experiences. Bloc Digital in Derby uses immersive tech, 3D modelling and animation to support industrial sectors, alongside cultural assets such as Derby's QUAD and Museum of Making which bridge digital creativity and heritage. Expanding this sector will help other industries adopt new technologies. Skills developed in this sector are transferable to other high impact creative and technical activities.

The wider Midlands region hosts 12% of the UK's workforce in this sector, the largest concentration outside of London.[34] Clusters are emerging in Nottingham (particularly around the Creative Quarter) and Derby, with sub sector hubs in the High Peak and Mansfield. And Nottingham has the fastest growing GVA for creative and digital industries outside of London. Employment in these industries is rising faster in Nottingham than London, highlighting the city's growth potential.

This growth is driven by businesses at the intersection of creative and digital skills, such as game development, animation and video production. Firms like Experian and Games Workshop and smaller businesses like Art of Football and Commify show the strength of this specialism. Immersive technology in Nottingham and the wider East Midlands forms one of three key clusters across the Midlands, distinguished by close collaboration between R&D-focused, innovation-active creative and digital companies and leading universities. Cultural assets such as Derby's Museum of Making and the revitalised Nottingham Castle with its immersive Robin Hood experience provide rich heritage content for our Extended Reality (XR), gaming and virtual-production studios.

Cultural infrastructure plays a key role; venues such as Broadway Cinema, Backlit, Derby Theatre and Nottingham Playhouse support creative talent, immersive media and experimental story-telling, creating new content and audience engagement. Organisations like New Art Exchange and Nottingham Contemporary showcase regional and global talent, reflecting our diversity and international connectivity. The East Midlands was a pioneer in the community arts movement, and we continue to break boundaries today with projects like Derbyshire Makes, uncovering radical creativity in our communities.

Actions to make the most of the opportunity:

- ✓ **Increasing Access to Creative and Digital Skills Training**: The skills required for this sector are specialised and technical, and will require targeted training and education initiatives to make sure that more people can access opportunities. This includes building awareness of creative careers through national programmes like the Government's £9 million Creative Careers Service (2025-28).
- ✓ **Supporting Academic-Business Partnerships**: Key academic partners include Nottingham Trent University's Confetti Institute of Creative Technologies, the University of Derby's Digital Technology for Rail programme, and the University of Nottingham's Horizon Digital Economy Centre, and Virtual and Immersive Production Studio. There is a clear correlation between universities providing high-quality courses in game development and the concentration of related businesses.[35]
- ✓ **Enhancing Digital Connectivity:** Ensuring that our region is digitally connected, especially in rural areas and villages, will allow for more people across the region to access jobs in this sector.
- ✓ **Supporting investment for digital, creative and cultural innovation and infrastructure:** We will work with universities, businesses and organisations in the sector to pursue opportunities to invest in innovation and infrastructure. This will include UK Research and Innovation (UKRI)'s national investment programmes, and the Government's commitment to increase public and private R&D investment in the creative industries. We will use our resources to help leverage or unlock these opportunities and work with national bodies such as Arts Council England and the British Film Institute.

Visitor Economy

The East Midlands will become a destination for year-round, high-value tourism. By creating compelling reasons to visit and stay overnight, building on the regional offer, and embedding sustainability and technology, the visitor economy will support more skilled jobs, greater GVA, and vibrant places across both cities and rural areas.

Employees	Companies	GVA[36]
52,029	5,130	£5.3bn 4.1% of UK sector

This sector tells the story of our region nationally and internationally. The East Midlands is a place of natural, historical and industrial grandeur, innovative experiences and urban independence. It's the backbone of a vibrant cultural, creative and sporting life, that everyone can be part of. Our region attracts 77 million visitors annually.[37]

We are rightly famous for globally significant places such as the Peak District National Park, Sherwood Forest as the home of Robin Hood, and Derwent Valley Mills UNESCO World Heritage Site and top-level cricket, football and water sports.

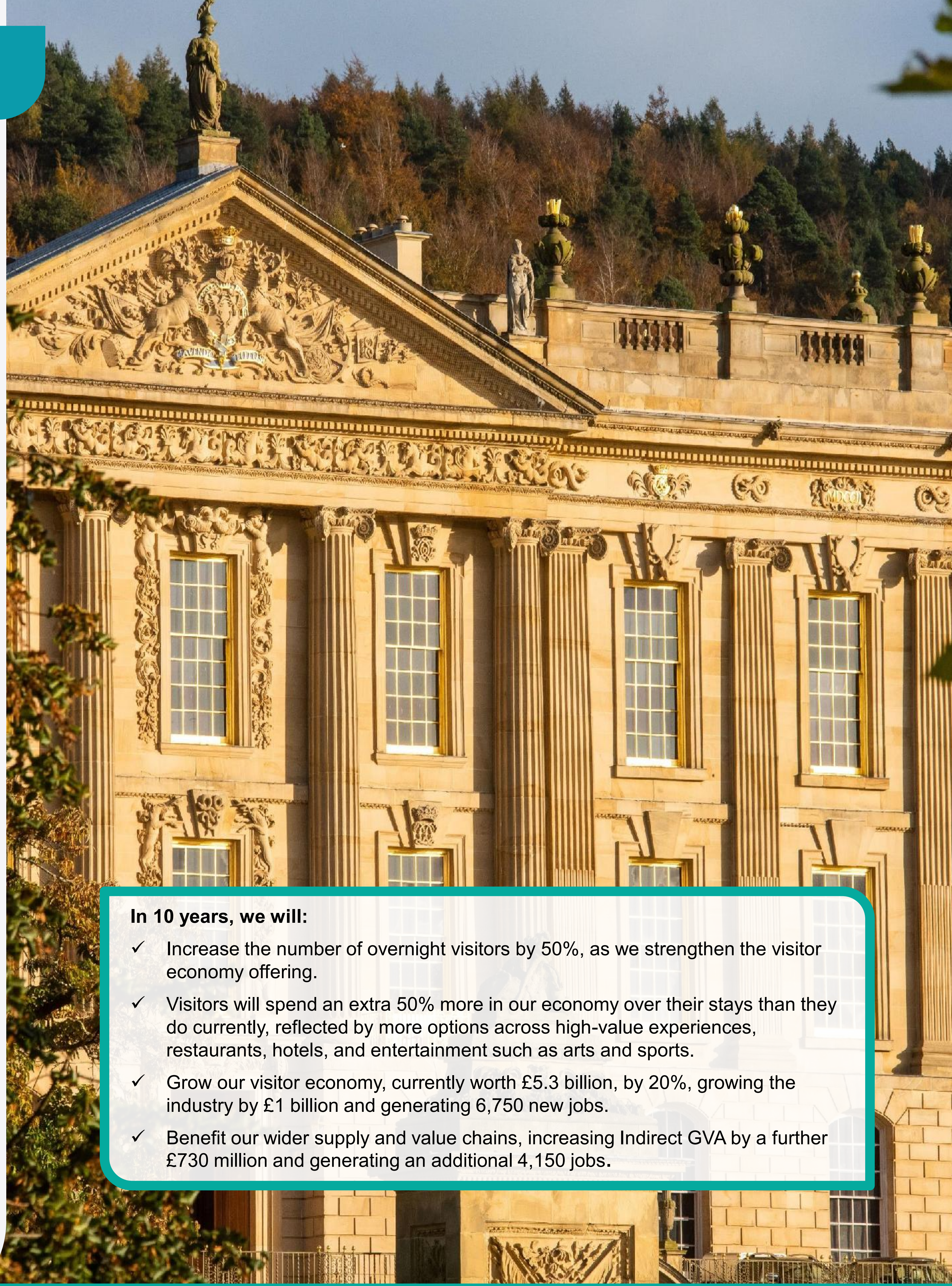
Our connectivity is strong, located in the heart of England with excellent transport links through mainline rail, international airport and the M1.

We are asset-rich but we do not punch our weight in attracting domestic and international visitors, and neither Derby nor Nottingham currently rank among the UK's top 15 cities for overnight visitor spending, despite their size and offerings.[38]

This presents a significant growth opportunity to create the conditions for day visitors to stay longer, with overnight visitors typically spending over twice as much money as day visitors.[39]

The visitor economy can be a driver for enhancing the attractiveness and liveability of our cities and towns. Strengthening the offer for business tourism, conferencing and events, including providing high-quality experiences for those visiting our major companies, can encourage extended family visits and ultimately help attract and retain skilled talent.

Given the strength of our gaming and augmented reality sector, we have the potential to diversify the visitor experience by incorporating innovative experiences like virtual and augmented reality.



In 10 years, we will:

- ✓ Increase the number of overnight visitors by 50%, as we strengthen the visitor economy offering.
- ✓ Visitors will spend an extra 50% more in our economy over their stays than they do currently, reflected by more options across high-value experiences, restaurants, hotels, and entertainment such as arts and sports.
- ✓ Grow our visitor economy, currently worth £5.3 billion, by 20%, growing the industry by £1 billion and generating 6,750 new jobs.
- ✓ Benefit our wider supply and value chains, increasing Indirect GVA by a further £730 million and generating an additional 4,150 jobs.

Visitor Economy

Actions to make the most of the opportunity:

- ✓ **Visit East Midlands:** We will create an integrated regional structure and single front door to maximise the resources available to reach our ambitious growth target, and to further promote the region's assets and experiences to national and international markets.
- ✓ **Supporting high-quality job creation**: We will ensure growth of the sector leads to entry level roles leading to high quality, high wage jobs. Projects like Sherwood Forest's 5G Testbed and Trials Programme showcase how digital skills can be applied to enhance the visitor offer while supporting conservation of natural assets. We will leverage our devolved powers in relation to skills and work with sector partners to develop a regional Centre of Excellence for visitor economy skills, including hospitality, heritage and culture.
- ✓ **Developing the infrastructure:** Emerging developments like the Trent Sports Quarter and the PEAK Resort show how private and public sector investment create new attractions and experiences. We will use our capital spending capacity to leverage major infrastructure projects and ensure that plans including the Vision for Growth integrate growth in the visitor sector, unlocking regeneration in our places. This will include identifying where we can bring new uses to our heritage assets, bringing new life to much-loved buildings. We will work with partners and funders to identify an events framework that will drive visitors and profile.
- ✓ **Prioritising housing and accommodation supply:** Increasing overnight stays requires supplying high-quality accommodation. We will commission an updated strategic accommodation study for the region to support commercial partnerships and promote investment and regeneration opportunities to grow new accommodation. We will integrate the requirement for affordable, sustainable housing for the local population working in the sector through our strategic land and housing interventions.
- ✓ **Maximising our digital creative potential:** Harnessing our creative-tech strength to roll-out 5G-powered VR/AR experiences will enrich experiences and anchor high-value jobs. We will convene closer links between universities and studios, supported by stronger digital networks and targeted upskilling to accelerate ideas from pilot to market.
- ✓ **Elevating green opportunities:** The installation of the hydroelectric Water Wheel at Cromford Mill and green transport plans at the PEAK Resort demonstrate how a sustainability-first approach enhances the visitor experience. We will support initiatives that help to decarbonise operations and upskill the workforce alongside preserving our heritage and attracting new visitors. This will help drive productivity and sustain the many communities in which the visitor economy is a key employer and fundamental to our inclusive growth ambition.
- ✓ **Connecting for work, leisure and community:** Enhancing low-carbon transport connectivity, particularly east-west links, will better integrate our cities with rural areas. East Midlands Airport, already a leading freight hub, offers significant potential to expand as a passenger gateway. Strengthening digital connectivity is also crucial as gaps persist in key tourist locations. Better connectivity between Derby and Nottingham can further complement each city's unique visitor offers. We will ensure that the Mayor's Transport Plan integrates the connectivity we need for visitors, residents and businesses.

Spotlight: Visitor Economy Impact

Additional GVA (Direct)	Additional GVA (Indirect)
£960m	£730m

Additional Jobs (Direct)	Additional Jobs (Indirect)
6,750	4,150

The visitor economy illustrates well what we mean by connecting established strengths with high impact opportunities. By investing in the Visitor Economy, we will attract more tourists and drive increased spending across sectors, including the arts, sports, and leisure. This in turn will enrich the region's attractiveness for residents and job-seekers as well as the strength and diversity of our social and cultural offerings.

By increasing both overnight visits and spending by 50% by 2035, key sectors can benefit from growth and demand for new jobs:

- Accommodation: £180 million GVA and 1,950 new full-time jobs
- Hospitality (food and beverages): £110 million GVA and 1,900 new full-time jobs

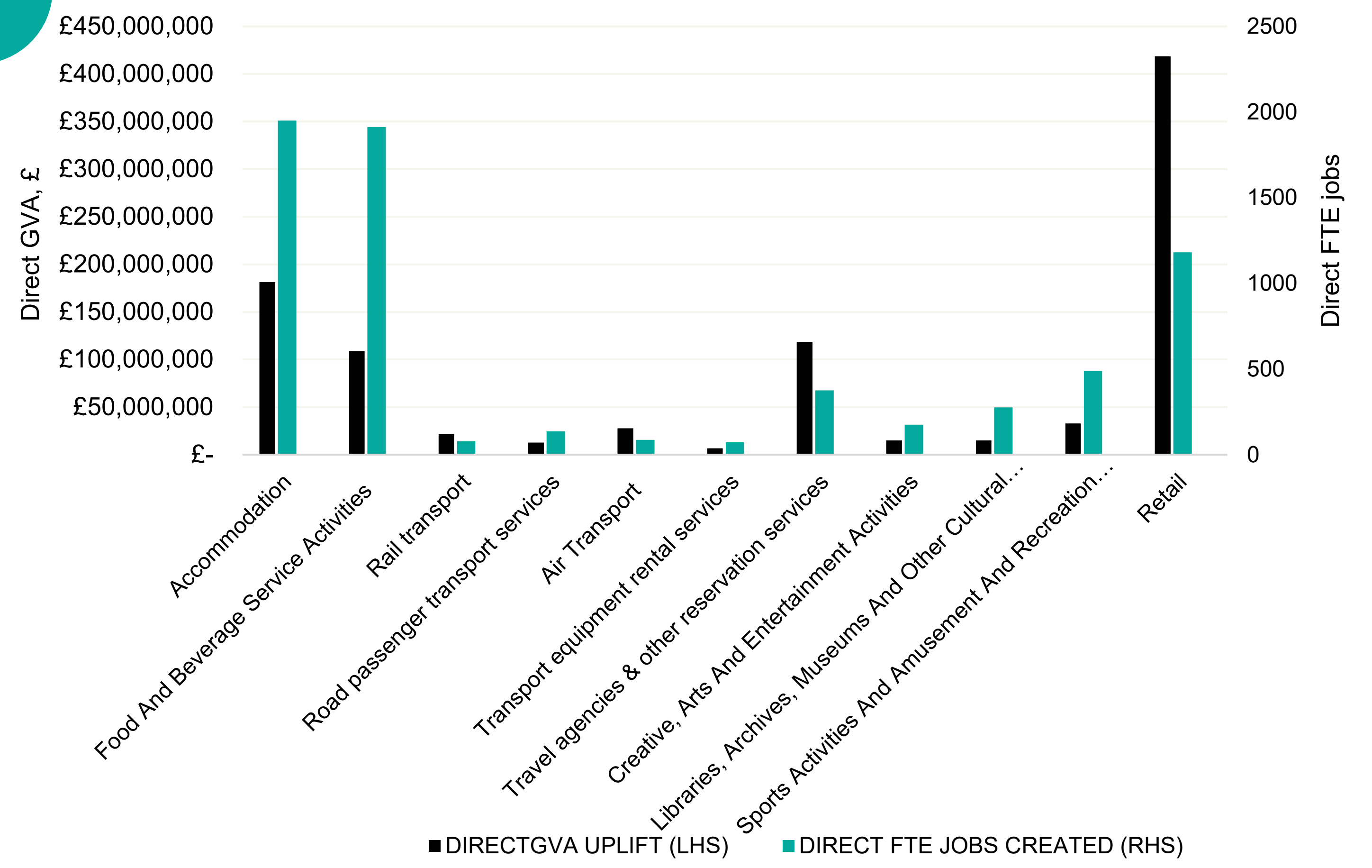
But it is not just these sectors that stand to benefit.

- Our retail industry could grow by as much as £420 million in GVA and with an additional 1,200 new jobs to meet demand, as new visitors spend directly across our high streets and physical shops.
- Our sports sector could grow by as much as £420 million in GVA and with additional 500 new jobs, reflecting the attractiveness of our sports offering.
- The East Midlands Airport could create an additional £28 million in GVA and support 87 jobs through increasing the number of international and domestic visitors.

Our local supply and value chains also stand to benefit by £730 million and 4,150 new full-time jobs to meet the demand across the visitor economy, including for:

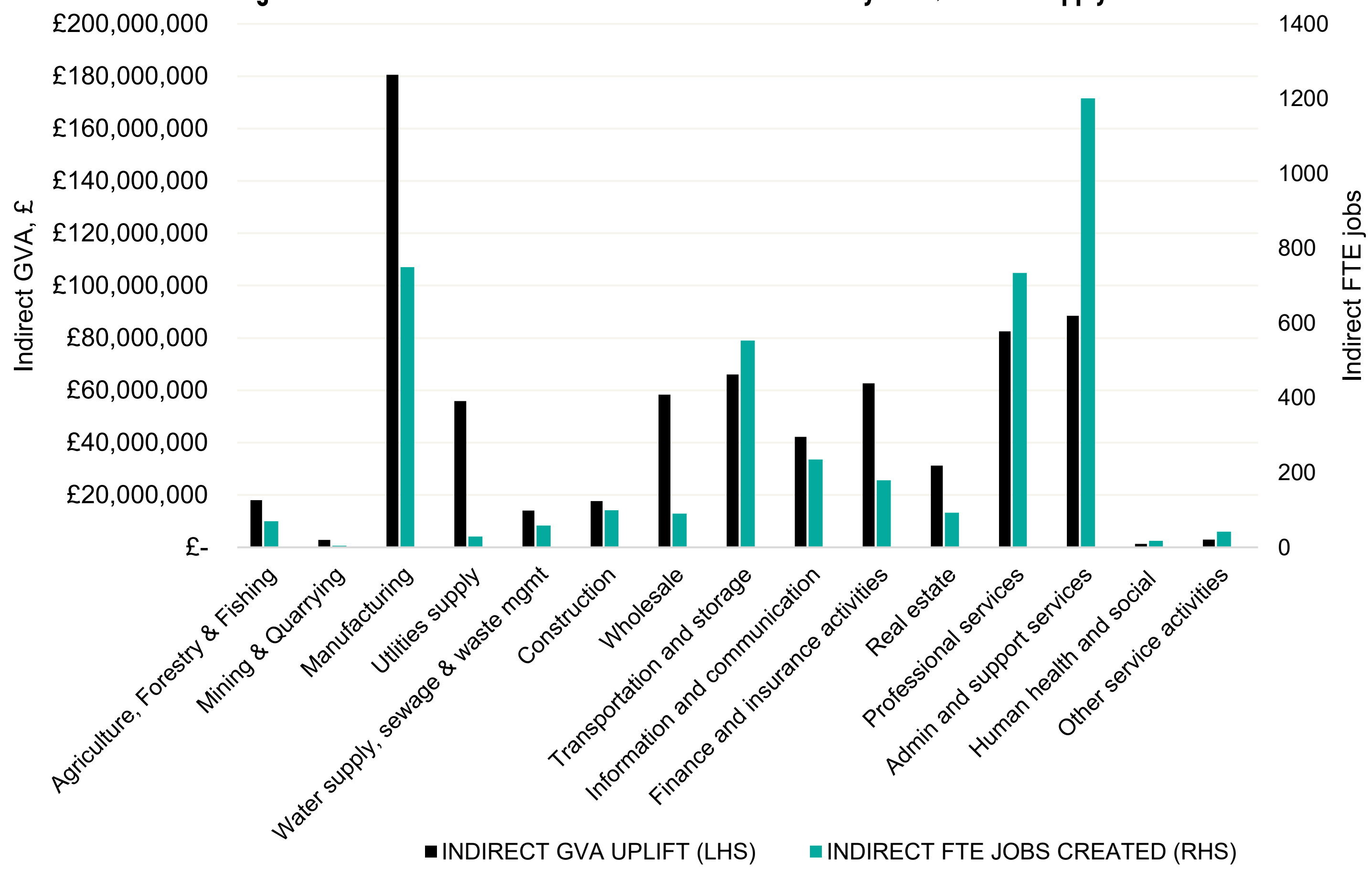
- Manufacturing (+£180 million GVA and 750 new jobs, largely due to demand for food processing as spending in restaurants increases).
- Agriculture (+£18 million GVA and 70 jobs, again due to the demand on restaurants).
- Construction (+£18 million GVA and 100 jobs, as hotels and restaurants seek to renovate, expand and even build to meet the demand). This also creates positive effects for Real Estate and Financial and Insurance services.
- Professional Services (+£82 million GVA and 735 jobs, as increasing employment and business growth creates demand for tax and payroll services, legal services, and even advertising and marketing).

Figure 27: Placement of Direct GVA and New FTE Jobs by 2035, EMCCA Visitor Economy



ONS Satellite Accounts (2022), ONS Employment Multipliers (2025), STEAM visitation spend data (2023)

Figure 28: Placement of Indirect GVA and New FTE Jobs by 2035, EMCCA Supply & Value Chains



ONS Input-Output tables modelling

Spotlight: Aggregates, Minerals and Low Carbon Construction

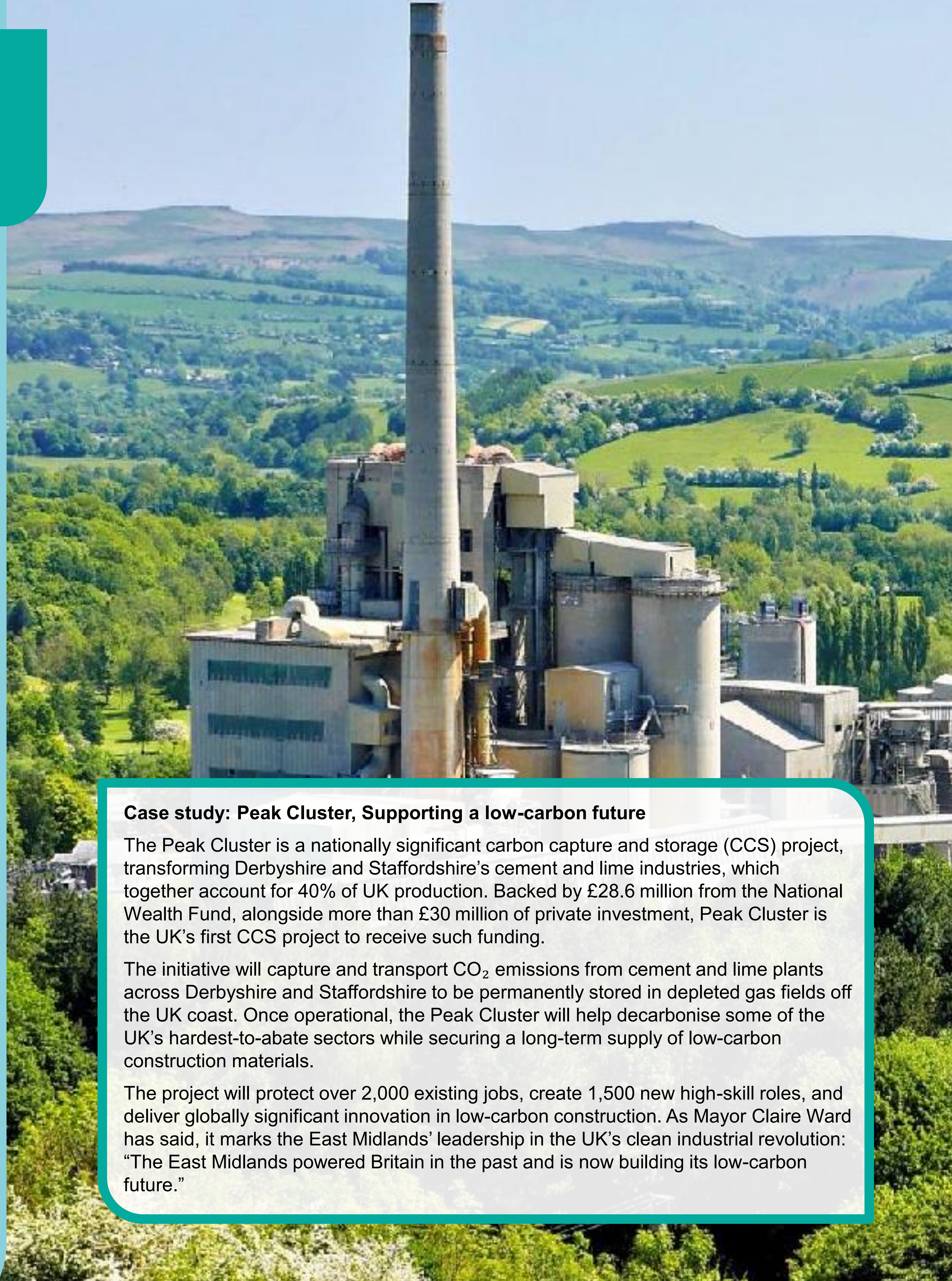
For centuries, the East Midlands' aggregates, minerals, and construction industries have underpinned the UK's growth. Today, these sectors remain vital, contributing £1.14 billion to the regional economy and employing 1,300 people across 36 companies.[40] Derbyshire stands out as a leading UK producer of minerals, supplying essential raw materials for national construction and infrastructure projects.

The success of these activities is of national importance. As highlighted in the Government's Industrial Strategy, global supply chains are increasingly volatile, making the long-term resilience of domestic supplies of critical minerals essential. These inputs enable growth across a wide range of high impact opportunities.

This is also highly productive sector, with outputs well above the UK average, supported by a strong R&D and innovation base. Over £3 million has been invested in digital and low-carbon skills courses, reinforcing the region's capability to adapt and lead. Global firms such as Tarmac, Breedon, SigmaRoc, and Holcim UK anchor a diverse supply chain spanning logistics, engineering, ceramics, composites, and advanced manufacturing.

With decarbonisation as a key driver, the sector is embracing digital adoption, carbon capture, and automation to boost efficiency and cut emissions. It also plays a pivotal role in enabling other industries, from glass and steel to housing and infrastructure, to achieve their net zero targets.

Collaboration across regional boundaries, including with Staffordshire, Cheshire, and Merseyside, is building the infrastructure needed for large-scale carbon capture and storage. Together, these efforts position the East Midlands as a national leader in low-carbon construction, combining established sectoral strength with a clear pathway to inclusive, resilient, and sustainable growth.



Case study: Peak Cluster, Supporting a low-carbon future

The Peak Cluster is a nationally significant carbon capture and storage (CCS) project, transforming Derbyshire and Staffordshire's cement and lime industries, which together account for 40% of UK production. Backed by £28.6 million from the National Wealth Fund, alongside more than £30 million of private investment, Peak Cluster is the UK's first CCS project to receive such funding.

The initiative will capture and transport CO_2 emissions from cement and lime plants across Derbyshire and Staffordshire to be permanently stored in depleted gas fields off the UK coast. Once operational, the Peak Cluster will help decarbonise some of the UK's hardest-to-abate sectors while securing a long-term supply of low-carbon construction materials.

The project will protect over 2,000 existing jobs, create 1,500 new high-skill roles, and deliver globally significant innovation in low-carbon construction. As Mayor Claire Ward has said, it marks the East Midlands' leadership in the UK's clean industrial revolution: "The East Midlands powered Britain in the past and is now building its low-carbon future."

Spotlight: Logistics

Logistics underpins the success of our high impact sectors and growth opportunities, ensuring that goods, services, and ideas move efficiently to where they are needed.

The sector is already a major strength for our region, contributing almost £5 billion to the economy and supporting more than 41,000 jobs, with productivity well above the national average.[41]

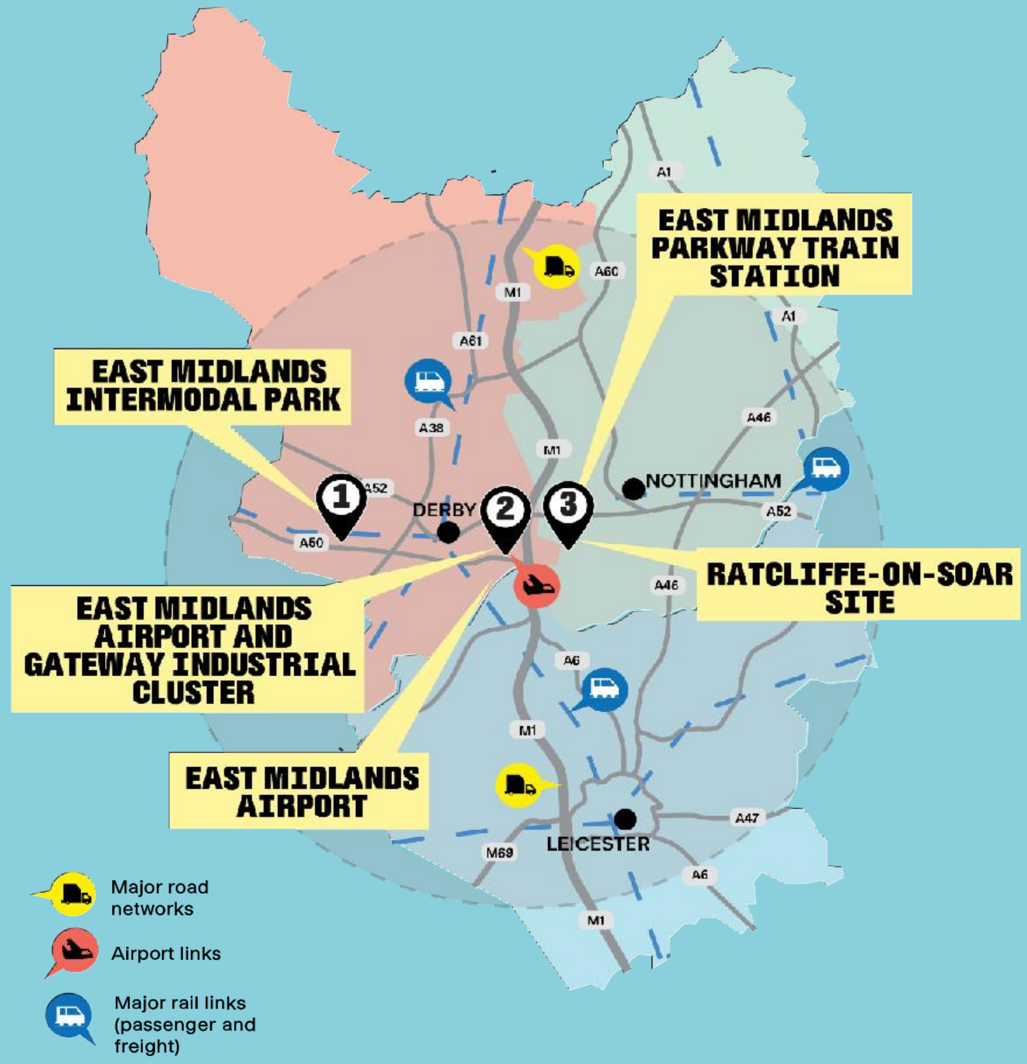
Our position at the heart of the UK makes the East Midlands one of the best-connected regions, with 90% of the UK population reachable within four hours.

This advantage is reinforced by the East Midlands Freeport, the UK”s only inland freeport. The freeport is a hub of global industry and green innovation, spanning three nationally significant sites:

- **East Midlands Airport and Gateway Industrial Cluster (EMAGIC)**
- **Ratcliffe-on-Soar Power Station**
- **East Midlands Intermodal Park (EMIP)**

Together, these assets are shaping a modern, clean, and resilient logistics ecosystem that will drive growth, attract investment, and ensure businesses can compete in global markets across several of our high impact sectors.

As the demand for greener and more efficient supply chains grows, logistics will also play an even greater role in delivering inclusive and sustainable growth for the region.



Project Spotlight: East Midlands Intermodal Park (EMIP)

The East Midlands Intermodal Park (EMIP) in South Derbyshire is a 173-hectare rail-connected business park set to become one of the UK’s most significant hubs for advanced logistics and sustainable manufacturing. It is being delivered through a public-private delivery partnership.

EMIP is designed to foster supply chain collaboration, attract high-value industries such as automotive, aerospace, and advanced manufacturing, and support the transition to low-carbon freight by shifting goods from road to rail.

As part of the East Midlands Freeport, EMIP will benefit from tax incentives and simplified customs processes, while also exploring opportunities for hydrogen production, storage, and use to support the region’s clean energy transition.

With a delivery timescale of five years plus and recognition as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project, EMIP will provide cutting-edge manufacturing and distribution capacity, boost local employment and skills, and reinforce the East Midlands’ role in the UK’s net zero economy.

Project spotlight: Cinderhill Employment Park

Cinderhill Employment Park is a strategically located 175-acre site near Ripley and Belper, adjacent to the A38 and just 8 miles from Derby.

Derbyshire County Council in partnership Harworth Group PLC has planning consent for up to 1.34 million square feet of industrial and logistics space (B2/B8). The site will help meet regional and national employment needs.

A £214 million gross development value (GDV) scheme with capacity to create around 2,500 jobs, Cinderhill is poised to deliver large-footprint, infrastructure-ready development aligned with East Midlands Investment Zone ambitions.

With a delivery window of 1-7 years and S106 agreements nearing completion, the site is shovel-ready from 2027. Strong road connectivity, access to a skilled workforce, and recognised status in local plans make Cinderhill a compelling opportunity for investors seeking scalable, sustainable growth.

3.3 Our Approach to Place

Whole Economy Place-Based Approach

Spatial Vision for Growth

A thriving economy starts with thriving places. That is why our approach to growth is rooted in the strength and vitality of the communities people call home. Guided by our spatial Vision for Growth, we are shaping a future that recognises the distinct identity, challenges, and potential of every part of the East Midlands.

We know that the barriers facing each place are different and so are the solutions. Some communities need help to unlock stalled regeneration schemes or bring disused buildings back into productive use. Others need better transport links, faster digital connectivity, or access to cultural and civic assets, including well-designed shared spaces that bring people together.

But across the region, the ambition is the same: to create places where households want to raise families, businesses want to invest and grow, and visitors want to stay. In this section we spotlight the most investment-ready opportunities from our Vision for Growth, including the Trent Arc and the Canal Corridor and details of the East Midlands Investment Zone.

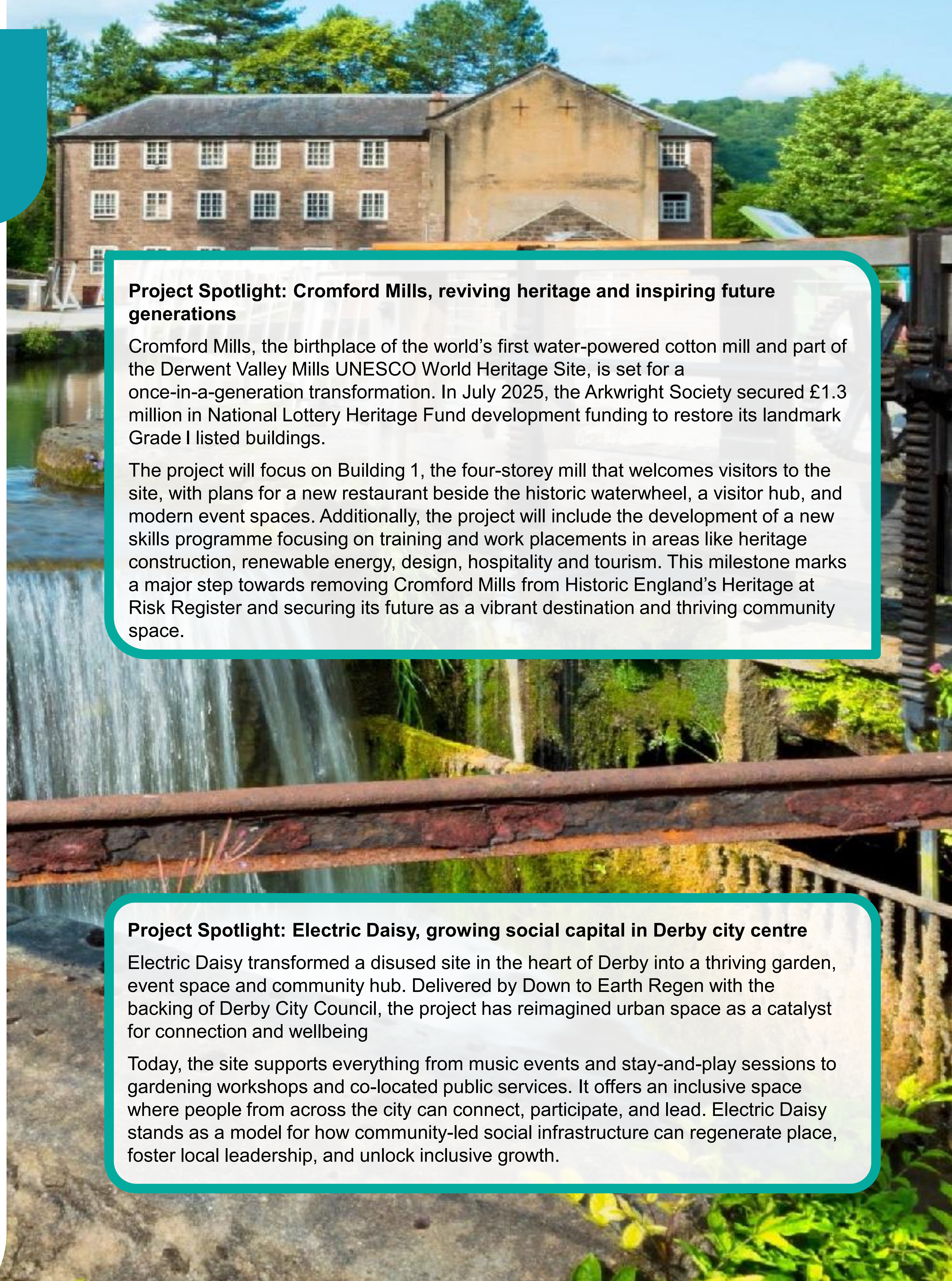
Investing in Social Capital

Thriving places depend not only on investment in physical infrastructure but also on the strength of social connections and the opportunities they create. That is why we are also committed to investing in social capital, the networks, trust, and relationships that enable people and communities to flourish. This includes creating the conditions for young people to thrive, building aspiration and opportunity in the places they call home.

The Derby Promise is a powerful example of how inclusive collaboration between employers, educators, and cultural partners is already broadening horizons and unlocking opportunity. Building on this success, we will develop an East Midlands Promise, as recommended by the Inclusive Growth Commission, to ensure every young person across the region can access high-quality careers guidance, meaningful work experience, and personal development support.

The case for this approach is clear. The Inclusive Growth Commission's final report found that weakening social connections and low levels of trust are holding back economic potential across the East Midlands. It recommended the UK's first-ever mayoral strategy to strengthen social capital, recognising that improving networks and relationships is essential for unlocking social mobility and inclusive growth.

These ambitions are brought to life in our Growth Opportunity Project Spotlights, which showcase the first wave of place-based investments designed to deliver not just economic returns, but stronger, more connected communities.



Project Spotlight: Cromford Mills, reviving heritage and inspiring future generations

Cromford Mills, the birthplace of the world's first water-powered cotton mill and part of the Derwent Valley Mills UNESCO World Heritage Site, is set for a once-in-a-generation transformation. In July 2025, the Arkwright Society secured £1.3 million in National Lottery Heritage Fund development funding to restore its landmark Grade I listed buildings.

The project will focus on Building 1, the four-storey mill that welcomes visitors to the site, with plans for a new restaurant beside the historic waterwheel, a visitor hub, and modern event spaces. Additionally, the project will include the development of a new skills programme focusing on training and work placements in areas like heritage construction, renewable energy, design, hospitality and tourism. This milestone marks a major step towards removing Cromford Mills from Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register and securing its future as a vibrant destination and thriving community space.

Project Spotlight: Electric Daisy, growing social capital in Derby city centre

Electric Daisy transformed a disused site in the heart of Derby into a thriving garden, event space and community hub. Delivered by Down to Earth Regen with the backing of Derby City Council, the project has reimagined urban space as a catalyst for connection and wellbeing

Today, the site supports everything from music events and stay-and-play sessions to gardening workshops and co-located public services. It offers an inclusive space where people from across the city can connect, participate, and lead. Electric Daisy stands as a model for how community-led social infrastructure can regenerate place, foster local leadership, and unlock inclusive growth.

Growth Strategy Area: The Trent Arc

New Homes	New High-Quality Jobs	GVA
30,000	40,000	£2.4bn

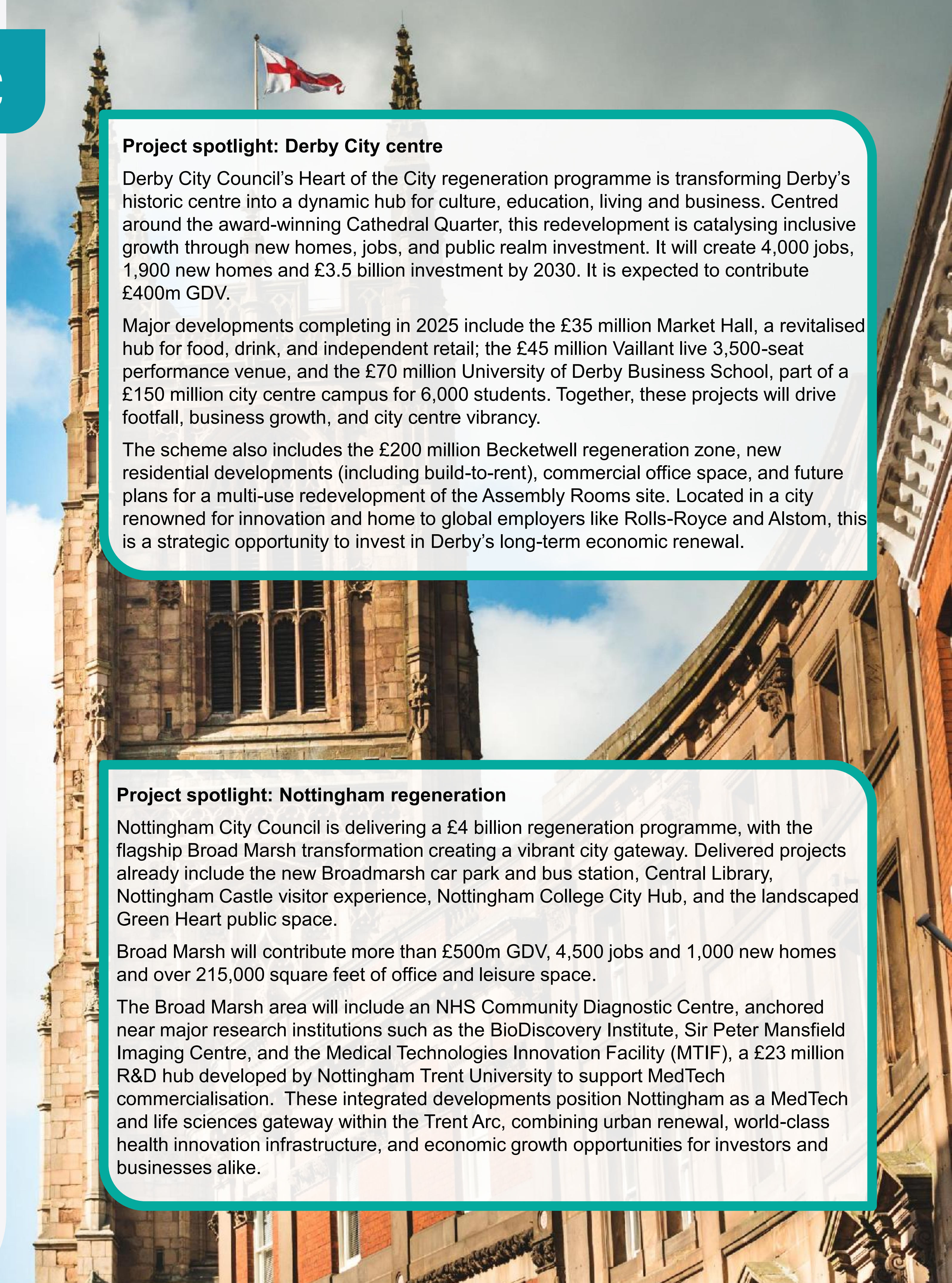
The Trent Arc is one of the largest transformational opportunities in the United Kingdom. It will be a trailblazing, nature-led urban network linking Derby and Nottingham, connected via three Midland Mainline stations: Derby, East Midlands Parkway, and Nottingham.

The Arc will bring together major employment and growth hubs, including Derby and Nottingham city centres, the East Midlands Freeport, Infinity Park Investment Zone, and the former coal-fired power stations at Ratcliffe-on-Soar and Willington, the latter offering major opportunities for clean energy transition projects and energy-intensive uses such as AI and advanced manufacturing.

Additionally, there will be opportunities for major investment in natural capital. We will reimagine the meaning of a new town supporting the development of thriving places. These will be complemented by higher-density housing in the city centres, alongside new residential growth at Infinity Garden Community (South Derbyshire) and Toton (Broxtowe, Nottinghamshire).

Delivery will be underpinned by transport upgrades, including M1 Junction 24 and enhanced public transport, and significant investment in green and blue infrastructure, notably natural capital assets such as Attenborough Nature Reserve. Innovative land and fair funding models linked to community benefits will be explored to support delivery and ensuring our people share the benefits.

Partnerships will allow us to take this significant growth and investment opportunity forward. This will realise projects from major city centre regeneration programmes; from cutting edge industrial and technology centres; to new communities.



Project spotlight: Derby City centre

Derby City Council's Heart of the City regeneration programme is transforming Derby's historic centre into a dynamic hub for culture, education, living and business. Centred around the award-winning Cathedral Quarter, this redevelopment is catalysing inclusive growth through new homes, jobs, and public realm investment. It will create 4,000 jobs, 1,900 new homes and £3.5 billion investment by 2030. It is expected to contribute £400m GDV.

Major developments completing in 2025 include the £35 million Market Hall, a revitalised hub for food, drink, and independent retail; the £45 million Vaillant live 3,500-seat performance venue, and the £70 million University of Derby Business School, part of a £150 million city centre campus for 6,000 students. Together, these projects will drive footfall, business growth, and city centre vibrancy.

The scheme also includes the £200 million Becketwell regeneration zone, new residential developments (including build-to-rent), commercial office space, and future plans for a multi-use redevelopment of the Assembly Rooms site. Located in a city renowned for innovation and home to global employers like Rolls-Royce and Alstom, this is a strategic opportunity to invest in Derby's long-term economic renewal.

Project spotlight: Nottingham regeneration

Nottingham City Council is delivering a £4 billion regeneration programme, with the flagship Broad Marsh transformation creating a vibrant city gateway. Delivered projects already include the new Broadmarsh car park and bus station, Central Library, Nottingham Castle visitor experience, Nottingham College City Hub, and the landscaped Green Heart public space.

Broad Marsh will contribute more than £500m GDV, 4,500 jobs and 1,000 new homes and over 215,000 square feet of office and leisure space.

The Broad Marsh area will include an NHS Community Diagnostic Centre, anchored near major research institutions such as the BioDiscovery Institute, Sir Peter Mansfield Imaging Centre, and the Medical Technologies Innovation Facility (MTIF), a £23 million R&D hub developed by Nottingham Trent University to support MedTech commercialisation. These integrated developments position Nottingham as a MedTech and life sciences gateway within the Trent Arc, combining urban renewal, world-class health innovation infrastructure, and economic growth opportunities for investors and businesses alike.

Growth Strategy Area: The Canal Corridor

New Homes	New High-Quality Jobs	GVA
3,900*	7,800*	£473m*

The Canal Corridor is an opportunity to link our heritage, natural assets and future development. The proposed corridor would connect Chesterfield, Worksop (including the Explore Park EMIZ site) and Retford, extending into Rotherham (South Yorkshire) and Gainsborough (Lincolnshire). These market towns were historically connected by the Chesterfield Canal, once vital for transporting coal, stone and farm goods.

Now mainly a leisure asset, parts have recently been restored. A new Canal Corridor Strategy aims to link growth around Chesterfield station and the East Midlands Investment Zone sites at Staveley and Worksop to the Supercluster.

Spanning multiple counties and districts, the area will benefit from diversifying its economy and improving transport and digital links. EMCCA and partners will work together to create distinct but connected business and visitor offers.

As the Supercluster grows, the Corridor is expected to host construction and operations workers, requiring town expansions and new social infrastructure.

These outcomes reflect Chesterfield and Staveley sites but do not include the wider Canal Corridor.

Project spotlight: Markham Vale Enterprise Zone

Markham Vale is an 85-hectare Enterprise Zone at Junction 29A of the M1, transforming a former colliery into a leading business and logistics hub. Developed through a partnership between Derbyshire County Council and Henry Boot, the site has attracted £88 million in public investment and over £130 million in private capital.

Already home to more than 70 businesses, Markham Vale has the potential to create around 4,100 jobs. The development integrates green infrastructure and restored habitats, positioning it as a flagship example of sustainable industrial regeneration.

With direct motorway access, proximity to national rail and freight routes, and a strong investor track record, Markham Vale showcases the East Midlands' role as a centre for advanced manufacturing, logistics, and clean growth. It offers significant opportunities for inward investment and long-term business expansion, reinforcing EMCCA's spatial vision and the region's contribution to the UK's industrial strategy.

Project spotlight: Chesterfield Town Regeneration

Chesterfield is undergoing one of the most ambitious regeneration programmes in the East Midlands, with over £2 billion of investment underway or planned. Guided by the Chesterfield Growth Strategy 2030, Chesterfield is transforming its town centre and unlocking new opportunities across housing, business, and connectivity.

Flagship projects include the £20 million Levelling Up Fund-backed Revitalising the Heart of Chesterfield scheme, delivering a new Canal Corridor, improved public realm, and a modernised marketplace by January 2026. Alongside this, major developments such as Chesterfield Waterside, Peak Resort, Markham Vale, and Staveley are redefining the town's role as a contemporary, prosperous destination.

Backed by Chesterfield Borough Council and strong investor interest, these projects will create thousands of jobs, deliver high-quality housing and community assets, and strengthen Chesterfield's position as a thriving hub for business, leisure, and inclusive growth in the East Midlands.

Growth Strategy Area: East Midlands Investment Zone

Private Investment	New High-Quality Jobs	Brownfield Hectares
£383m	4,300	180+

Recognising our region's unique strengths in making and moving, the government has allocated £160 million in funding for the East Midlands Investment Zone (EMIZ). The EMIZ supports advanced manufacturing and green industries across three sites in the region: Infinity Park in Derby, Hartington-Staveley in Chesterfield and the Explore Advanced Manufacturing and Research Park at Worksop. These sites sit across the Canal Corridor and the Trent Arc.

The East Midlands Investment Zone (EMIZ) is expected to attract at least £383 million in private investment and create up to 4,300 new high-quality jobs.

With anchor commitments from Rolls-Royce and Laing O'Rourke and world-class R&D support from the University of Nottingham, University of Derby, and Nottingham Trent University, EMIZ provides tax incentives, rates retention, and bespoke industry-aligned facilities.

Together, its sites will fast-track the development of zero-carbon technologies, attract international investment, and reinforce the East Midlands' leading role in the UK's net zero transition.

Project spotlight: East Midlands Investment Zone sites

- ✓ Infinity Park, Derby: A £200 million innovation and commercial park with 40 hectares, already home to advanced manufacturing and logistics occupiers, delivering up to 8,000 jobs, alongside key innovation and skills facilities.
- ✓ Hartington Staveley, Chesterfield: A 100+ hectare brownfield regeneration site, supported by a £25.2 million Town Deal, set to become a hub for advanced manufacturing and high-value employment in a major growth corridor.
- ✓ Explore Park, Worksop: A 100,000 square metres commercial space which is home to Europe's largest pre-assembly manufacturing facility, anchored by Laing O'Rourke, with consent for a further 50,000m². The site will support nuclear energy (including SMRs and fusion), data centres, defence, housing, transport, and healthcare infrastructure.

Project Spotlights

Our Vision for Growth identifies a set of Strategic Growth Areas across the region. Within these, the East Midlands Growth Plan showcased several Project Spotlights, sites with planning or delivery frameworks already in place.

Growth Strategy Areas:
- ✓ Trent Arc
- ✓ Supercluster
- ✓ Canal Corridor
- ✓ Derwent Valley Mills
- ✓ Peaks and Dales
- ✓ Heartlands
- ✓ The Loop

Project Spotlights:
- ✓ SC1 West Burton B Power Station – STEP Energy Fusion Prototype Project
- ✓ TA1 Nottingham Regeneration
- ✓ TA3 Ratcliffe-on-Soar Former Power Station
- ✓ TA4 Infinity Park Derby (Investment Zone)
- ✓ TA6 East Midlands Intermodal Park (EMIP, Freeport)
- ✓ TA7 Derby City Centre
- ✓ CC1 Explore Park, Worksop (Investment Zone)
- ✓ CC2 Markham Vale Enterprise Zone
- ✓ CC3 Chesterfield Town Regeneration
- ✓ CC4 Hartington and Staveley (Investment Zone)

Other Spatial Growth Projects:
- ✓ SC2 Cottam Former Power Station
- ✓ SC3 High Marnham Former Power Station
- ✓ TA2 Toton and Chetwynd
- ✓ TA5 Willington Former Power Station
- ✓ DV1 Derwent Valley Mills

04
Implementing Our Plan

Working in Partnership to Deliver

Mayoral Strategic Authority delivering regional growth
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 set out this Growth Plan and work with local authority and wider system partners to deliver on it.

We will do 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. This includes national, regional and local partners, across the public and private sector.

Taking a system-wide approach to outcomes
The East Midlands Inclusive Growth Framework provides a basis for cooperation and partnership across our regional system to maximise its potential. We are developing an Outcomes Framework that will be embedded into EMCCA's decision making to guide how we prioritise, coordinate, and monitor delivery. This will serve as the common thread linking our core mission to delivery on the ground by aligning EMCCA's diverse initiatives with a clear set of outcomes.

Underpinned by robust governance arrangements
EMCCA's formal governance structures, the EMCCA Board and its thematic and advisory committees, will oversee and drive the delivery of this Growth Plan. We will continue to evolve this structure in line with the Inclusive Growth Commission's recommendations on strengthening system leadership and partnership delivery.

EMCCA will meet its public sector equality duty, in line with the Equality Act 2010, in carrying out its responsibilities under the Growth Plan. EMCCA will ensure that the Growth Plan investments deliver not only strong economic returns but also wider social value, aligned with local priorities, our ambitions and the national missions.

Deepening devolution and public service reform
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.

EMCCA will work with local authorities across the region on a smooth transition to unified local government arrangements from 2028. We will work with partners across local and national government, health, police, fire and the wider public sector on reforms to public services. We will use current and future powers, including by convening partners, to put citizens at the heart of delivering public services.

Delivery System and Place Coalition

We will work with local, regional and national partners to deliver inclusive growth. Our partners include:

- ✓ **Local Authorities:** Our four Constituent Councils and members of the EMCCA Board comprise Nottingham City Council, Nottinghamshire County Council, Derby City Council and Derbyshire County Council. 15 district and borough councils across the region are our partners and have representation at EMCCA Board.
- ✓ **Strategic and neighbouring Authorities:** Mayoral Strategic Authorities on deepening devolution, and on shared ambitions for inclusive growth. This includes the Peak Partnership with Greater Manchester Combined Authority and South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority and the East-West Midlands Compact with West Midlands Combined Authority. We also work with neighbouring local authorities outside of Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire, including Leicestershire County Council on the East Midlands Freeport.
- ✓ **Central Government and Executive Agencies:** Government departments, in addition to their agencies and Arm's Length Bodies. These include Innovate UK, UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), Homes England, Skills England and the Environment Agency.
- ✓ **Businesses and trade unions**: Business representative organisations such as the East Midlands Chamber, Confederation of British Industry (CBI), Make UK, and the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB), alongside organisations such as Marketing Derby and Marketing Nottingham and Nottinghamshire. Our Business Advisory Boad, and businesses of all sizes from small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) to large corporations. Trade Unions, such as the Midlands Trades Union Congress (TUC) and its affiliates.
- ✓ **Anchor institutions:** Major employers and community organisations that anchor local economies. This includes the East Midlands Freeport, prominent regional cultural venues, and leading research centres.
- ✓ **Education and Skills:** Schools, colleges, universities and independent training providers. Academic partners such as the University of Nottingham, University of Derby, and Nottingham Trent University, as well as the EMCCA Colleges Group of seven local further education colleges that drive research, skills development, and innovation.
- ✓ **Housing:** Housing associations and developers that build and manage private and social housing.
- ✓ **Public sector partners:** Including NHS partners and Integrated Care Boards, Police and Crime Commissioners, Fire and Rescue Authorities and transport partners such as Great British Rail and National Highways. We also work with public investors like the National Wealth Fund, the British Business Bank and Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) funds. We work with organisations like Midlands Innovation to drive regional innovation.
- ✓ **Voluntary and community organisations:** Including local voluntary and community sector organisations. Those delivering local energy and nature-based solutions such as Wildlife Trusts and the Peak District National Park Authority. We also work with charitable foundations and National Lottery Fund partners.
- ✓ **Strategic investors and intermediaries:** Including asset owners and asset managers as well as Venture Capital funds including Midlands Mindforge and other national and international investors.

Thank You

We extend our sincere thanks to colleagues from our constituent councils, district and borough councils, East Midlands Freeport, universities and the Innovation Advisory Board, further education colleges, businesses in the region and Business Advisory Board, and many more, whose contributions have been integral to the development of the East Midlands Growth Plan.

05 Bibliography

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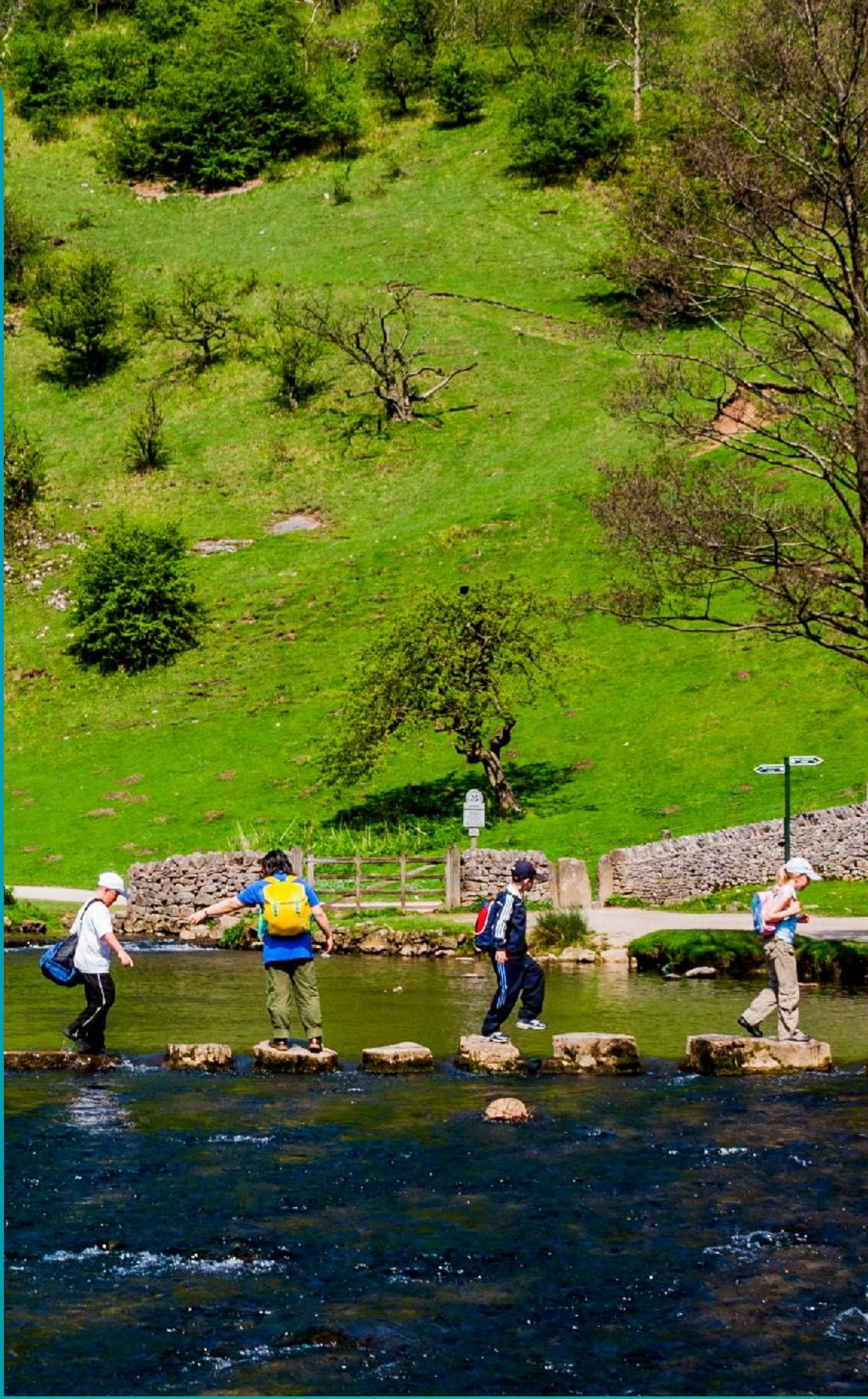

Annotated Bibliography

Citations are included in the plan, but this report also drew extensively on additional sources for context, specific insights and additional data. Here is how those sources were reviewed:

To understand the regional profile and identify the enablers of growth, various socioeconomic indicators were analysed which were predominantly drawn from:

- **Office for National Statistics (ONS):** Multiple datasets were analysed to understand economic and socioeconomic trends. Specifically, the ONS was used in understanding the labour market trends, economic activity, regional economic performance, housing affordability, general health and social mobility.
- **UK government departments**: Databases across government departments such as *DESNZ, DfE, DWP, DfT* and *MHCLG* were analysed to understand Challenges and Opportunities for areas such as education, transport, housing, sustainability and employment.

To analyse the sectors of our economy, we reviewed the below data sources:

- **The Data City:** Provided real-time data including for recently formed sectors such as the clean energy sector which is not captured in the ONS due to SIC code data limitations. Factors from the GVA to the Innovate UK grants were collected which helped develop a comprehensive understanding of sectors.
- **Office for National Statistics (ONS):** Provided time-series data for GVA and Employment levels for sectors which helped develop an understanding of labour market dynamics.

Beyond the quantitative analysis, a desk review was undertaken of over 118 data sources including sectoral reviews, strategies and policy documents. Of those reviewed, significant data was drawn from:

- **Midlands Engine**: Multiple data sets and documents were reviewed which provided insight into the regional profile and investment opportunities, particularly around growth sectors such as nuclear clean energy and the gaming industry. Workshops on specific clusters such as Aerospace and Nuclear were attended to understand the specific stakeholders and unique opportunities. These workshops helped in getting a deeper insight over the strengths, challenges and the infrastructure in place for the region.
- **Regional Growth Plans:** Plans from the constituent councils, districts and boroughs were reviewed for insights into key priorities across the region.
- **Universities:** Several publications produced by universities in our and neighbouring regions were reviewed for insights into the knowledge economy and innovation activities across sectors. Additionally, materials from universities informed the understanding of the ecosystem of partners that will support the ambition of the plan.

End Notes

1. ONS. *Population Estimates*. 2024
2. ONS. *Regional Gross Value Added by Industry* (Table 2c). 2023. Note: This is a nominal estimate of GVA from April 2025.
3. ICC using ONS. *Regional Gross Value Added by Industry* (Table 2b). 2020-23 and *Inflation and Price Indices*. 2025 which is used to adjust Real GVA in 2025 terms.
4. ONS. *Employment rate (aged 16 to 64, seasonally adjusted)*. 2025.
5. ONS. *UK Business; activity, size and location*. 2024.
6. ONS. Regional gross disposable income, UK. 2022.
7. ONS via NOMIS, Claimant count by sex and age: Claimants as a proportion of residents aged 16-64, July 2025.
8. ONS. *UK House Price Index*. January 2025. Note that only the wider East Midlands has official comparable data available with the UK house price average.
9. ONS. *Business Counts*. 2024.
10. ONS. *Subregional productivity*. 2023 for Nominal GVA per hour.
11. ONS. *Business Register and Employment Survey.* 2023. Note, EMCCA has the highest manufacturing employment proportion in comparison to all the Combined Authorities and London (region).
12. ONS. *Population Estimates.* 2023.
13. ONS. *APS.* 2021. Note, trade apprenticeships was used as a measure which is observed as qualifications in ONS.
14. ONS. *ASHE, Workplace Analysis: Median Earnings.* 2024.
15. MHCLG. *Live tables on housing supply: net additional dwellings. 2024* and MHCLG. *Live tables on Homelessness.* 2024.
16. DESNZ, *Renewable energy by local authority.* 2023.
17. ONS. *Income Deprivation* based on MHCLG. *English Indices of Deprivation.* 2019.
18. Beatty, C., Fothergill, S., & Powell, R. Twenty Years On. *Has the Economy of the UK Coalfields Recovered?* Sheffield Hallam University, Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research. 2005.
19. ICC using ONS. *Subregional productivity*. 2023 for Nominal GVA per hour and CPI Index to adjust inflation.
20. The wider East Midlands includes Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire (except for North Lincolnshire and North East Lincolnshire), Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire, and Rutland.
21. The funding figure includes non-recurrent QR funding, recurrent QR and HEIF grants, recurrent RCIF allocations, further AY allocations, funding for museums, galleries, and collections, as well as non-recurrent FY allocations for 2023-24.
22. ONS. *Energy efficiency of housing in England and Wales.* 2024. This dataset provides proportions of homes with an EPC rating of C and above as of March 2024, but not for the number of homes, and only at the local authority level. To generate an aggregate across the EMCCA, these proportions were calculated against the housing stock totals, also for local authority dwellings and as of March 2024: MHCLG. *Live Tables on affordable housing supply: number of dwellings by tenure and district, England. 2024.*
23. MHCLG. *English Housing Survey: local authority housing stock condition modelling.* 2023. A home is considered non-decent if it has at least one issue of not meeting basic legal health and safety standards (homes with a Category 1 hazard are automatically included as non-decent), not being in a reasonable state of repair, not having modern facilities and services, or poor insultation and/or heating. The data include all tenures.
24. The wider East Midlands includes Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire (except for North Lincolnshire and North East Lincolnshire), Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire, and Rutland.
25. ICC using data from RWE, TotalEnergies, InterGen, EDF, and Uniper which summed up data on capacity of the relevant power plants and ONS. Population Estimates. 2022.
26. The Data City. 2025. This data may be underestimating due to data limitations and due to it not including defence manufacturing.
27. Toyota UK Magazine, Toyota People. *The team members who have been at Toyota since the start, 2017.*
28. East Midlands Freeport.

End Notes

29. Midlands Engine, Aerospace in the Midlands. 2024.
30. The Data City. 2025.
31. Rolls Royce. 2025.
32. Midlands Health Innovation. Midlands MedTech Sector Analysis. 2024.
33. Midlands Health Innovation. Midlands MedTech Sector Analysis. 2024.
34. Midlands Engine. Digital Creative & Video Games Midlands Cluster Snapshot. 2023.
35. Nottingham Trent University. Department of Knowledge Exchange. Creative and Digital Industries in Nottingham. 2022.
36. STEAM Model Tourism Economic Impact. 2023 (Derbyshire) and 2023 (Nottinghamshire) for GVA where 'value of tourism' is used and 'jobs created' is used to identify the number of jobs. ONS Business Counts. 2024 for business count where the SIC code of 'accommodation and food service activities' is used as a proxy.
37. STEAM Model Tourism Economic Impact. 2023 (Derbyshire) and 2023 (Nottinghamshire).
38. Centre for Cities. Spending Time: the role of the visitor economy in UK Cities. 2024.
39. Centre for Cities. Spending Time: the role of the visitor economy in UK Cities. 2024.
40. The Data City. 2025.
41. The Data City. 2025.

Appendix sources

42. ONS. Subregional productivity. 2023.
43. Net graduate retention rate is the same as graduate net gain rate, defined as 'The amount of graduates who reside in the travel to work area (TTWA) minus the amount of individuals who studied KS4 there, divided by the amount of individuals who studied KS4 in the TTWA, for the tax year 2018/19.' (ONS).
44. ONS. Distance Travelled to Work. Census 2021.

CLAIRE WARD
MAYOR OF THE
EAST MIDLANDS

East Midlands
Combined County
Authority